

SENSIBILITY AND COMMUNITY

Glenn Bradley Holman

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Philosophy

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

© Glenn Bradley Holman, March 1996



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395 rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-612-18462-5

Canada

ABSTRACT

Herein I defend a notion of community as sensibility. First I review the predicament of moderns and of liberalism as discerned by Michael Sandel, Alasdair MacIntyre and Charles Taylor. The particular problems raised around liberalism, modern moral emotivism and relativism are outlined. Criticisms of Sandel and of feminist sympathies with MacIntyre's identification of the unsituated individual are reviewed. The distinction between group/location and a 'system of desires', conflated by Sandel, emerges as important. Marilyn Friedman's and Iris Young's criticisms of the ideal of community are invoked in showing MacIntyre's view of narrative unity and moral tradition to be unacceptable. Taylor's notions of 'shared horizons' and common moral sources are similarly condemned. Sensibility as community constitutes selves and this notion meets five demands that I argue a theory of community should meet. Sensibilities are ways of being-in-the-world which provide the context of virtues and the only foundation for criticisms of other forms of life. We are, I argue, 'affected' by sensibilities by learning new articulations and hence our constitutive values are ultimately revisable.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For her inspiration, interest and encouragement, I thank my thesis advisor, Sheila Mason. Also I thank the members of my committee for their close readings and helpful editorial suggestions. For her tireless concern and assistance I thank also Eudene at the Sir George Williams philosophy department. Many ongoing discussions throughout my years at Concordia have contributed to the development of the ideas presented here. In this regard, I wish to mention especially Lily Petrovic, my dear friend, fellow student, and neighbour for years, as well as Jennifer Dales. For her selfless hospitality during my extended stays in Montreal throughout the revising process and defense, I thank also Piper Huggins.

In addition, the close friendships and associations I have enjoyed over seven years of study have sustained me, inspired me, and when appropriate, distracted me. I want especially to mention Dr. Ki Namaste, Joerg Steifarth at Humbolt University, the loony leftists at the Link and at the Concordia University Students Association, Dominic Brunet, Heidi Foss, Samantha Sherwood, RJ, Stephanie, Pookie, Chris, Mark, Jose, Mia, Rasta, and all the boys at La Trac including Paul Laroche and Andre Duarche. In B.C., I thank Kristen Hutchison and Rebecca, Ev Maan and Levi, Nickolaos Stagias and Rob Skender. In Ontario, I thank Dominick Skender and Tracy Conelly. In Berlin, I thank Heidi Modro, Tim Brown and Andreus.

I also acknowledge the governments of Ontario and Canada who together have ensured that I complete my studies with a massive debt, in a climate that is hostile to higher education in the humanities and thus one in which my MA is a liability.

I want to acknowledge the joy and support that my long-time friend Steve Stretch has brought to my life. The tragic and untimely loss of this unique individual earlier this year has been felt by many and has changed my life forever.

Most of all I thank profoundly my mother, Arlene, and Susan. I dedicate this work to you Mom; your openness to unassimilated otherness has inspired and affirmed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
 <u>Part One: The Modern Predicament.</u>	
Chapter One. Michael Sandel: The Constitution of the Liberal Agent.....	7
Chapter Two. Alasdair MacIntyre: "A Theatre of Illusions".....	19
Chapter Three. Charles Taylor: The Ethic of Authenticity	27
 <u>Part Two: The Communitarian Response.</u>	
Chapter Four. Sandel. Community as Constitutive.....	32
Chapter Five. MacIntyre: Practices, Narrative Unity, and a Moral Tradition.....	40
Chapter Six. Taylor: Horizons of Meanings.	58
 <u>Part Three: Towards a Theory of Community.</u>	
Chapter Seven. What Should We Expect from a Theory of Community?.....	73
Chapter Eight. Sensibility is a Way of Being <i>In</i> and <i>Towards</i> the World	76
Chapter Nine. Sensibilities are Value Systems.....	85
Conclusion.....	102
Bibliography.....	106

I had fallen in love and I had no language.

- Jeanette Winterson

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis I will suggest the form that a theory of community should take. I will be defending a notion of community as sensibility. This work has been especially motivated by the question: Can we be 'liberal' regarding the 'good for man' without jeopardizing the intensity and certainty with which we adhere to our own belief systems? Can we, that is, at once hold fast to the belief that *x* is a sort of 'hypergood' (Taylor) which provides the standards by which we judge our various other ends, and simultaneously acknowledge that the 'hypergood', *y*, of another may be appropriately adhered to in terms of her own life? Can we be both dogmatic and liberal? Can I discern that surrendering my life to Christ, for example, is the right path to salvation and yet admit that you may find a path of your own consonant with an equally valid way of life?

I think that the belief that we *can* is the basis of liberalism. It is the modern ideal which animates the rights-bearing, autonomous self. It is a belief obtained by rationally self-interested individuals in a hypothetical 'original position' (Rawls). Because a society has concurred that no one good is the good for all persons - we are left free to pursue our own forms of life with minimal limitations. This belief also fuels relativism.

A belief that we *cannot* achieve this ideal is behind contemporary formulations of the ideal of community that have been together termed 'communitarianism'. Communitarians seem to be arguing that the perspective required to be relativists or liberals is one not available to us. By stepping out of our belief system, or reasoning without regard to it, our own commitments become jeopardized, or our identities are flattened. Thus Taylor simply denies that the perspective required in order to maintain a relativist position is available to us at all. Sandel

argues that Liberalism implies a moral anthropology which is an unacceptable description of beings whose community affinities constitute their identities. MacIntyre argues that all debate and moral conflict goes on within a tradition.

The fact that traditions have historically provided frameworks in which persons could orientate their lives in accordance with clear, uncomplicated roles, makes contemporary moral life seem beleaguered with uncertainty and nihilism by comparison. That is, the absence of an internalized, unquestioned telos deprives our actions of moral context.

This is a concern that predominates in Taylor's and MacIntyre's ideas. Similarly for Sandel, deontological ethics implies that community is a mere 'optional extra' in our lives. Taylor's response to the 'fragmentation' of moral life engendered by relativism and pluralism takes the form of an retrieval of moral sources. What unites the three communitarian positions considered in what follows is their attempt to resituate selves in community. Hence, self-knowledge takes the form of reflection upon constitute affinities, attachments and shared frameworks, common 'horizons'. The relevant moral question becomes 'who am I?' rather than 'what should I do?'. (Sandel) The response to the former involves a survey of attachments rather than a rational choice.

As persons embedded in tradition and constituted by community, our identity and mode of thought is intertwined with our forms of life. Because we cannot simply shed these, we can neither be the rational self-interested individuals behind a 'veil of ignorance' (liberal), nor the pluralist who can evaluate other ways of life as equally valid (relativist). Hence the communitarian need not worry about the effect of liberalism or relativism on one's convictions since liberalism and relativism are untenable positions.

For communitarians, the alternative to a self embedded in traditions, frameworks and constitute communities is an atomistic, autonomous individual whose moral conflict can only be resolved by disengaged reason. Taylor and MacIntyre rely on this dichotomy in their reasoning. A communitarian view becomes the only alternative to an unacceptably narrow view of selves and moral life.

One response to communitarianism has been a criticism of the tendency of its advocates to idealize community and recommend the conservation of tradition. Iris Young and Marilyn Friedman have been particularly articulate in revealing the antiquarian conservatism contained within these positions. For Friedman, communitarianism neither supports a critique of oppressive communal views nor recognizes difference within communities. At the same time however, Friedman and others want to maintain that attention to one's situation (embeddedness in social identity) remains a central component of an adequate understanding of the political and moral self.

This indicates that communitarians may be relying on a false dichotomy between, on one hand, atomistic selves, radical choice and instrumental reason and, on the other, the recognition of a common purpose and location within a tradition. We can maintain the insights of communitarianism regarding attentiveness to one's constitute identity without locating persons within unchallengeable frameworks or traditions. What we need is a theory of community which can account for the way in which traditional or shared ends are revisable without lapsing into an individualistic, atomic view of selves lacking any constituent affinities.

I want to show the direction a theory of community should take in order to achieve this. My suggestion will involve reconceptualizing community as sensibility. Such an approach will

maintain a notion of the self as deriving its identity from its attachments while providing room for shifting affinities and contested traditions. A sensibility is developed and maintained within groups and constitutes our identity. It is a value-laden form of life. Yet the multitude of available sensibilities permit us the autonomy lacking in communitarian theories. Various sensibilities afford us different perspectives on a given situation. On this model, moral choice is never 'radical', as choices are always made in accord with the values of a sensibility. Whether I take a romantic or pragmatic view of a situation determines the course of action I will be compelled to take. Not any point of view is available to me however. I am limited to those perspectives which I have acquired and learned to enact through relating to others.

Part One of the text which follows will review the modern predicament as discerned by Sandel, MacIntyre and Taylor. This is included in order to provide the context of the communitarian responses presented in Part Two. The particular problems with liberalism, modern moral emotivism, and relativism as identified by Sandel, MacIntyre and Taylor respectively will also be presented in Part One. The discussion of Sandel in Chapter One will include a survey of some criticisms of his reading of Rawls, especially that which argues that Sandel's view of community is not necessarily opposed to that of Rawls. The chapter on MacIntyre will include a brief survey of some feminist literature which concurs with his criticisms of an abstract point of view. Many feminists identify this perspective as a particularly male orientation.

Part Two presents the responses of Sandel, MacIntyre and Taylor (Chapters Four, Five, and Six, respectively) to the predicament of modernity as reported in Part One. I will argue in Chapter Four that it is not clear whether Sandel wants to use 'community' to denote a distinct

system of desires (as I do) or to refer to a group of persons or 'society'. I argue that this distinction is an important one. In Chapter Five, I show that MacIntyre has failed to make this distinction. He seems to think that society should be able to achieve moral consensus based on shared first principles. (MacIntyre, 184-5) He defines virtue and the good in terms of practices, then the narrative unity of a single life and finally the concept of a tradition. I find that his use of the latter two is unacceptable and I invoke Friedman's and Young's criticisms of this ideal of community. In the chapter on Taylor, I similarly criticize the notion of society as 'shared horizons' and of his view that contemporary Westerners are heirs to common moral sources.

In **Part Three**, I try to show the direction that I think a theory of community should take. In Chapter Seven, I state five demands that such a theory should meet. In Chapter Eight, I introduce the notion of sensibility as that which constitutes selves. Sensibility is the morally relevant connection between individuals and communities of location. It represents common discourses and shared understandings. In Chapter Nine, I show how sensibilities give sense to virtues but are not 'practices', a notion of MacIntyre's which I argue is seriously constraining. Nor are sensibilities orientations toward 'the good', because what counts as good can only be determined in accordance with the values of a sensibility. This amounts to the possibility that values which we may consider to be evil can only be condemned from within a sensibility. I argue that communitarians, in taking moral orientations to be orientations to the 'good', effectively deny the possibility of evil community or that the ideal of public virtue may breed totalitarianism. (Chansky, 252) Criticism of a form of life is only possible given the availability of other sensibilities. By learning to articulate differently, and by coming to see things from a new perspective, we may reevaluate even our most central beliefs. I conclude Chapter Nine by

describing how a person may be 'affected' by a sensibility and thusly come to revise her perspective.

Are we, as selves who are constituted by systems of value able to maintain a liberalism about the good without sacrificing our commitment to what is valuable? While what follows will not answer this question definitively, it will recommend a better formulation of the problem. Perhaps in coming to accept the fact of very real differences in sensibility, we are better to ask ourselves how we can think of persons as constituted by their values and concerns without jeopardizing an openness to unassimilated otherness. It seems to me that it is this openness that cannot be accounted for by the new communitarians, and thus that the latter question should be of greater concern. Although a theory of community as sensibility may not answer it, it does bring this openness to difference to the fore.

PART ONE: THE MODERN PREDICAMENT

CHAPTER 1. MICHAEL SANDEL: THE CONSTITUTION OF THE LIBERAL AGENT

Michael Sandel's exhaustive critique of Liberalism focuses on Rawls's 1971 text, A Theory Of Justice, although it is often directed more generally toward deontological liberalism and at times, even appears to be aimed at seventeenth-century science and philosophy and the 'disenchanted' world it affirmed.

On Sandel's reading of Rawls, the liberal notion of agent stems in part from Kantian transcendentalism. However Rawls was centrally concerned with avoiding such metaphysical suppositions. (Sandel, 23) Kant's transcendental subject is that which is 'back there' and is antecedent to the particularities of experience. (Sandel, 28) Rather than a sensible *object* which is determined by laws of nature and of cause and effect, the self is a *subject* prior to experience and, thus, inhabits a world not merely sensible but intelligible - capable of autonomy and self-regulation in accordance with principles rather than the laws of nature. (Sandel, 9) In this way, the deontological self is thought of as free rather than merely empirical, autonomous rather than conditioned. For Sandel, this notion of self is indispensable and necessary to a deontological ethic, such as Rawls' Liberalism.

Traces of Kantianism are evident in Rawls' theory of justice. Indeed: "[d]eontological themes find similar expression in much contemporary thought". (Sandel, 4) Despite the lack of any ordinary teleological assumptions or psychological theories in liberalism, Sandel argues that liberalism does in fact imply a certain theory of the person:

For justice to be primary, certain things must be true of us. We must be creatures of a certain kind, related to human circumstance in a certain way. In particular, we must stand to our circumstance always at a certain distance, conditioned to be sure, but part of us always antecedent to any conditions. (Sandel, 10)

In this way alone, it seems to Sandel, can agency in a liberal sense be possible.

The agent of deontological liberalism is very different from that of teleological conceptions. According to the latter, Rawls argues, the relation of a self to its ends is confused. Rather, he claims, the "self is prior to the ends which are affirmed by it". (Rawls, 560) Sandel interprets this priority of self over ends as meaning:

...that I am not merely the passive receptacle of the accumulated aims, attributes, and purposes thrown up by experience, not simply a product of the vagaries of circumstance, but always, irreducibly, an active, willing agent, distinguishable from my surroundings, and capable of choice. (Sandel, 19)

An end, for Rawls, is always chosen - and chosen by a self, individuated prior to her aims, ambitions and desires.

While on one hand, Sandel identifies a moral imperative in this claim (to respect individual autonomy and dignity), he also believes there is an epistemological sense of the priority of self implied by Rawls' theory. This priority lies in the need to identify the subject independently of her contingent wants and aims. Without this distinction, Rawls thinks we will be left with what Sandel terms a "radically situated subject", (Sandel, 21) for whom any change in attributes would induce a concomitant change in identity. (Sandel, 20) Such an implication Rawls wants to avoid.

In this distinction however, Sandel detects a false dichotomy between two inadequate accounts of the self: "between a radically situated subject and a[n abstract] disembodied one".

(Sandel, 21) These alternatives, in Sandel's estimation are "seriously constrained".

What results from Rawls attempt to avoid one alternative, is the pervasive notion that the unity of the self is established antecedently, "prior to the choices it makes in the course of its experience". (Sandel, 21) Hence deontological metaphysics engenders and grounds prevalent liberal conclusions:

The theme common to much classical liberal doctrine that emerges from the deontological account of the unity of the self is the notion of the human subject as a sovereign agent of choice, a creature whose ends are chosen rather than given, who comes by his aims and purposes by acts of will, as opposed, say, to acts of cognition. (Sandel, 22)

He locates this picture of the subject clearly in Rawls' text:

Thus a moral person is a subject with ends he has chosen, and his fundamental preference is for conditions that enable him to frame a mode of life that expresses his nature as a free and equal rational being as fully as circumstances permit. (Rawls 561)

This implies, in Sandel's view, that the subject is always prior to her values and ends, never fully constituted by them, an *a priori* sovereign agent. (Sandel, 22)

LIBERAL MORAL ANTHROPOLOGY

We have looked at Sandel's analysis of the subject that is entailed by deontological liberal theory, particularly that of Rawls. We have also seen how Rawls considers the subject to be morally and epistemologically prior to its ends. Sandel goes on to show how this strain in Rawls' theory is closely connected to the idea of the primacy of justice, which analogously must be prior to other values. Again, this "must" is claimed to work as both a moral imperative (to

respect the distinction between persons as agents of choice) and as an epistemological requirement (to provide an archimedean point to assess societal structure(s)). (Sandel, 16-17)

Hence,

justice is not merely one important value among others to be weighed and considered as the occasion requires, but [according to liberals] rather the means by which values are weighed and assessed. (Sandel, 15)

Sandel urges us to think of liberalism as requiring justice to be the "value of values" (Sandel, 16) and in this way as securing liberty.

What emerges then is a picture of liberty according to which the primacy of justice allows members of a society to "realize their nature" as "free reigning selves"¹ with guaranteed "sovereign agency". (Sandel, 22) This picture is of a liberalism "prominent in the moral and legal and political philosophy of the day". (Sandel, 1) It is of a familiar societal ideal in which persons are free to choose their own individual aims, interests and conceptions of the good, without being coerced into an assumed teleology or theory of the good or 'rightful ends of man'.

Sandel is not content with the picture of the self drawn by liberal theorists:

As long as it is assumed that man is by nature a being who chooses his ends rather than a being, as the ancients conceived him, who discovers his ends, then his fundamental preference must necessarily be for the conditions of choice rather than, say, for conditions of self-knowledge. (Sandel, 22)

This is an undesirable state of affairs for Sandel, one to which he says Rawls fails to pay sufficient attention. In Sandel's view, Rawls is primarily concerned with the moral theory produced by a hypothetical original position. This device is Rawls' alternative to Kant's

¹ Sandel, 23. See Rawls, pages 574-6.

transcendental metaphysics. While the original position permits objective reasoning over principles, it does not "land us in the realm of transcendence". (Sandel, 24) In Sandel's view, this preoccupation with moral theory has resulted in a neglect of the moral anthropology produced by the original position. (Sandel, 48)

In coming to understand the moral subject, Sandel proposes a methodology. He argues that this assumption, that man is by nature a being who chooses his ends rather than discovers them, is best assessed by "the nature of the moral subject as we understand it, which is to say by the constitutive understanding we have of ourselves". (Sandel, 48) He points out that the original position shapes the conception of the moral subject implicit in Rawls' theory of justice, just as the conception itself shapes the principles of justice. (Sandel, 49) It follows then that a critique of the original position will help to erode this distinctly modern moral anthropology, which in turn "should help...to assess the central claims of the conception as a whole". (Sandel, 26)

Given Sandel's methodology, it is not merely on the status of the original position that Rawls' conception of the antecedently individuated self will stand or fall, but also on reflection upon our own understanding of ourselves. Put another way, Sandel is inviting us to see if this modern notion *resonates* with us. He wants to convince us that the "vision contained in the original position, mutual disinterest and all" (Sandel, 48) is inconsistent with our self understandings. And should he succeed, he will have achieved much if we understand, as he does, that this vision of the self is part of the structure of Rawls' theory and not a mere heuristic device making no claims as to human nature.² It must be remembered, however, that these are

² See Sandel, pages 48-9.

separate claims, and we will return to them.

In isolating Rawls' moral anthropology, Sandel asks us what must be true of someone for whom justice is the first virtue. A number of stipulations, both explicit and implicit, can be discovered in Rawls' text. The first feature of this moral subject is its plurality. It is a "necessary presupposition of the possibility of justice" (Sandel, 50) that there is more than one member of society. Each subject in the just society must be distinct and characterized by a separate system of ends. (Sandel, 50) Further, each is an antecedently individuated subject who only secondarily forms relationships. (Sandel 53) The related conclusion is that each is a subject of possession standing at a distance from her respective ends (Sandel 54):

To be a deontological self, I must be a subject whose identity is given independently of the things I have, independently, that is, of my interests and ends and my relations with others. Combined with the idea of possession, this notion of individuation powerfully completes Rawls' theory of the person. (Sandel, 55)

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

In Rawls' estimation, there is no reason to suppose that his theory implies that persons do or should have individualistic ends. In his A Theory Of Justice, he stipulates that only the bounds of a person are fixed in advance.³ This is a position he maintains in his 1993 work Political Liberalism⁴, in which he denies that his theory of justice presupposes any metaphysical understanding of the self. For his purposes, there need only be a political conception of the self.

³ See Rawls' discussion of this, pages 544-550.

⁴ New York: Columbia University Press.

Sandel points out however, that a self which is antecedently individuated is a self that is necessarily distanced from its interests. After all, it is a 'subject of possession'. Sandel thinks that on a liberal account such as Rawls', our identities must be fixed and, therefore:

No commitment could grip me so deeply that I could not understand myself without it. No transformation of life purposes and plans could be so unsettling as to disrupt the contours of my identity. No project could be so essential that turning away from it would call into question the person I am... 'my public identity as a moral person is not affected by changes over time in my conception of the good' (Rawls). (Sandel, 62)

In short, our various attachments are unable to engage our identity:

And it rules out the possibility that common purposes and ends could inspire more or less expansive self-understandings and so define a community in the constitutive sense, a community describing the subject and not just the objects of shared aspirations. (Sandel, 62)

At issue are what Sandel calls "intrasubjective understandings" which at times allow that:

...the appropriate description of the moral subject may refer to a plurality of selves within a single, individual human being, as when we account for inner deliberation in terms of the pull of competing identities.... (Sandel, 63)

Sandel's contention is that Rawls denies the possibility of this sort of self understanding by implication. (Sandel, 63)

This issue turns on a fundamental difference between competing notions of community. According to Sandel, a Rawlsian community is a possible aim of individuals, and a mere attribute of a well ordered society. (Sandel, 64) He argues that community is better thought of in the "constitutive sense". (Sandel, 64) The potential of community to constitute identity, along with the implications for reflection, choice, and the status of the good that stem from such a notion of community function as a counter example to Rawls' theory of justice. Sandel attempts

to refute liberalism by showing that our subjecthood, particularly in relation to the communities that constitute us, is such that it cannot be accounted for or admitted by deontologists. The moral anthropology implied by Rawls' theory is incommensurable with our self-understandings.

Hence, in order for Sandel's argument to convince us, we must first be convinced that the moral anthropology which is attributed to Rawls is, in fact, an implication of the assumptions and postulates of the theory of justice as outlined. In addition, we must be in accord with Sandel's self-understandings. That is, we must agree that those certain indispensable aspects of moral experience unaccounted for by deontological liberalism are, in fact, aspects of our (common) moral experience. The conditions are twofold: we must accept

(a) that a voluntarist notion of agency is a key ingredient of Rawls' conception which implies a particular moral anthropology. We'll call this the 'implication premise'.

(b) that one's self is constituted by one's community as Sandel describes. Let's call this his 'communitarian thesis'.

Now it is possible that a particular notion of agency is implied by liberalism and that this entails a conception of the moral subject, while not ruling out the possibility of a constitutive conception also. Recall that Rawls maintains that his theory implied only a political conception of the individual. Hence, we need another premise:

(c) that these conceptions are inconsistent with each other.

Critics most often attack Sandel's first and final premises (a) and (c) together, while either accepting (b) or leaving it uncontended. In other words, some critics have questioned whether Sandel has gotten Rawls' position straight and, if not, whether liberalism necessarily makes a strong conception of community impossible. Fewer have questioned whether the self

is in some way constituted by community.

Jan Narveson, in a critical notice of Sandel's book, finds the very idea of a self standing apart from its objects to be "strange", and not necessarily a component of justice:

the idea that in order to assume the perspective of justice we somehow need to be able to detach ourselves from every possible end is as unnecessary as it is incoherent. (Narveson, 229)

Narveson calls interpretations that isolate this assumption in liberalism a "confusion". Here he questions (a), the implication premise. In addition, Narveson wonders what Sandel is attempting to show by describing strong constitutive allegiances as demanding more than liberal justice. If Sandel doesn't mean to imply that, for example, protecting his murderous nephew from authorities would be *just* he asks:

...then what is the point of these pronouncements? That Rawls theory does not allow people to be like that? But why not? All it says is that people who behave like that are not being *just*. The theory need not deny that they *exist*. So what is the point here? Perhaps that such people may be incapable of justice? Perhaps they are; but it is unclear what follows from this, other than that the rest of us are going to have to be on the watch for people like that, because they are going to pose problems. (There are, and they do). (Narveson, 232-3)

Hence Sandel's critique seems misdirected, as his positive account of self and community are not inconsistent with Rawls's moral anthropology and the liberal project (c). To the contrary, Narveson asserts that we sometimes need to appeal to justice for "resolving problems of certain kinds".

Laurence Thomas, in his review essay of a recent book by Owen Flanagan, similarly addresses the inconsistency claim when he points out that "it is true that there are many ways to rank lives independent of the body politic". Here he is suggesting that liberal theory is only

and affinities. He too questions Sandel's interpretation of Rawls also in adding, "and Sandel was wrong to suggest that Rawls is committed to thinking otherwise". (Thomas, 128)

Indeed many contributions to the debate have considered Sandel's criticisms to be irrelevant altogether. John Tomasi has characterized Sandel's project as an attack on a "caricature" of liberalism, according to which defensive, atomistic selves are incapable of sustaining genuine commitments in an ever-more legalistic society, the first virtue of which is justice. (Tomasi 523) With Amy Gutman⁵, he argues that "Sandel now seems to be mistaken about the object of Rawls' claim, and about the nature of the claim". (Tomasi, 523) He later disputes Sandel's inconsistency claim, arguing that liberalism makes the demands that citizens recognize their rights, but does so "without attempting to tell the whole story about the kinds of persons they should be". (Tomasi 536)

Recently, Roberto Alejandro, in his provocatively entitled article "Rawls' Communitarianism", contradicts Sandel's interpretation of Rawls (the implication premise). His criticism takes the case further, suggesting not only that the antecedently individuated self has no place outside the arena of the body politic, but that it is not present in Rawls' theory at all. He attempts to show that for Rawls, "individuals are shaped by institutions and communities of interest", and hence do not have fixed identities prior to experience as Sandel interprets. (Alejandro, 92-3)

For Alejandro, this mistake is the result of conflating the *core* of the Rawlsian self with the self's *identity*. While the former is individuated and fixed in advance, the latter is formed

⁵ See her article, "Communitarian Critics of Liberalism". *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 14, 1985, page 311.

by values, attachments and the gradually emerging ends acquired through association. (Alejandro, 93) The original position only implicates this core of the self, not the self as an identity. (Alejandro, 94) The core, in Rawls' account is then mere potentiality⁶ and for Alejandro, it is then difficult to see how Sandel can consider it an "individuated self" at all, particularly given Rawls' notion of self-identity:

When Rawls points out that the social system shapes the kind of persons individuals want to be and the sort of person they already are; when he insists that individuals develop the sense of justice in association with others; and, finally, when he argues that individuals need at least one community of shared interests to confirm their worth, he displaces the emphasis on a self that is always prior to its ends in favour of a community which contributes to constitute the individual's identity. (Alejandro, 94)

Whereas Sandel considers a Rawlsian community to be an attribute, Alejandro considers Rawls to agree with Sandel's claim that community is "the most important good" and is "constitutive of the person's identity". In any case, he argues that the distinction between attributes and constituents is never spelled out in Sandel's text.

In fact, Alejandro takes issue with a number of absolutized distinctions upon which Sandel seems implicitly to be relying. He argues that distinctions between feelings/self-understandings, choice/discovery and the capacity for choice/the capacity for reflection, are not sharply distinguishable. (Alejandro, 94-5)

While Alejandro certainly challenges what I have called Sandel's implication premise by attributing two parts to the Rawlsian self, one of which (identity) is strikingly similar to Sandel's notion of the self, he is also able to challenge the inconsistency premise.

⁶ See Rawls, page 509.

These criticisms have been visited not to settle any disputes over Sandel's claims or criticisms, but rather to emphasize that Sandel's interpretation of Rawls is by no means universally conceded. Nor do (an increasing number of) liberals and others feel that Sandel's characterization of a constituted self is inconsistent with Rawls notion of self and with the liberal project in general.

A number of critics have recently entered the debate with a very different sort of challenge to Sandel's work. Focusing on (b), the communitarian thesis, they raise challenging concerns over some features of this sort of account of self and community. These will be considered in Part Two.⁷ Next however, I wish to consider two other thinkers who have arrived at conclusions about the self similar to those of Sandel, although by taking different routes.

⁷ (In Chapter five).

CHAPTER 2. ALASDAIR MACINTYRE: "A THEATRE OF ILLUSIONS"

Alasdair MacIntyre, whose important book After Virtue predates Sandel's work by a single year, is similarly critical of prevalent notions of the self in modernity, but emphasizes the specifically moral dimension of those notions. Like Sandel, MacIntyre problematizes the modern notion of agency, which he considers to be primarily emotivist. According to this view, the self is capable of evading necessary identifications with particular contingent states of affairs (what Sandel would consider community). The modern agent is able *qua* agent to stand back from its situation and its identity and take on an abstract, universal point of view. Disagreement on moral matters then becomes "dignified" by the title "pluralism":

This democratic self which has no necessary social content and no necessary social identity can then be anything, can assume any role or take any point of view, because it *is* in and for itself nothing. (MacIntyre, 60)

In this aspect of his critique of modernity, he anticipates the voices of many feminist ethicists.

Moral psychologist Carol Gilligan in her landmark text, In a Different Voice, related the concern with matters of care and relationships at work in the moral reasoning of her female subjects. This, she demonstrates, is in stark contrast to a predominantly male notion of moral judgement arising from abstract, universalized principles. Such appeals to principles emphasize respect for individual rights and reciprocal non-interference based on assumptions of equity, fairness, justice and a highly individuated concept of persons.

In contrast to this, Gilligan found that women tended to grasp contextual detail of particular situations in moral testing. This contextual detail attended issues of care and

responsibility intertwined with the empathy and compassion of interpersonal relationships.⁸

Gilligan's analysis of these differently oriented voices has engendered a genre of feminist writings on ethics, many of which have extended and explored Sandel's and MacIntyre's critique of the modern notion of the individual. For example, Annette C. Baier has pointed out that justice-oriented Kantian society provides nothing to ensure that people who have and respect rights will have any other relationship to each other,

other than the minimal relationship needed to keep such a civil society going....Their rights and respect for rights are quite compatible with very great misery [attributable to] social and moral impoverishment. (Baier 1987, 47)

Non-interference, she claims, can lead to the neglect of the young or powerless. We need, she urges, a place for trust in moral theory, rather than merely what she has elsewhere termed the "traffic rules for self-asserters" (Baier 1993, 32) that boys and men tend to consider the essence of moral life. Further, she has argued that progression to a "Gilligan-style moral maturity" cannot be cultivated without closer cooperation from others than that ensured by respect for rights and justice. In a merely just society, those who orientate their moral life around care and responsiveness become vulnerable to exploitation. (Baier 1987, 49)

Linda J. Nicholson, in her essay "Women, Morality and History", attempts to uncover this masculine bias in Western moral theory, showing how "abstract norms and rules play a greater role in the development of male gender identity." (Nicholson, 90) Boys and men evidence stronger concerns with rights, autonomy and, thus, non-interference than do women

⁸ See Marilyn Friedmans discussion of this in her essay, "Beyond Caring: The De-Moralization of Gender".

and girls, who orientate more toward relationships and interdependence in moral evaluation.⁹

Virginia Held similarly considers a paradigm of self-interested or mutually disinterested individuals relating contractually to "overlook or to discount in very fundamental ways the experience of women". (Held, 113) She suggests an alternative to the paradigm of "economic man" which presupposes a different moral ontology. The paradigm of "mothering persons" takes into consideration the non-contractual nature of the relationship between mother and child, and emphasizes its non-commodial, permanent, unequal, responsive and empowering dimensions. This paradigm does not assume human beings to be independent, self-interested, autonomous individuals.

Although among feminists there is no universal agreement as to how to address the gender blind or gender biased nature of modern moral concepts, they generally involve an appeal to "a more realistic and politically accurate notion of a self as socially constructed and complex, defined in the context of relationships with others" in place of "the isolated, independent, rational agent of traditional moral theory". (Sherwin, 19) For reasons that will emerge in the next chapter, such appeals are at their most constructive and useful when they seek to augment rather than to replace notions of justice.

Now although many of these feminist analyses seem to echo Sandel's and MacIntyre's identification and critique of the universal and abstract character of modern individualist morality, it must be stressed that the agreement often ends there. Some women have expressed specific serious concerns over what is characterized as a "conservative", even "oppressive",

⁹ Nicholson, 90. She is, however, critical of Gilligan's "implicit false generalization" (98), which she says could be seen to be biased against non-Western, non-white and non-middle-class women as was Kohlberg's, only now "minus the sexism" (100).

strain in these writers' work. Communitarian thinkers are often considered to be "perilous allies" (Young) for feminists.

MacIntyre traces the particular historical emergence of the modern moral agent to the loss of "traditional boundaries provided by a social identity and a view of human life as ordered to a given end". (MacIntyre, 32) This *telos* resulted from pre-modern and traditional membership in various social groups. As constitutive of one's identity, characteristic moral orientation developing out of membership were part of the substance of a person, defining at least in part one's obligation and duty. The predicament of "our own culture" is only intelligible against this historical background. (MacIntyre, 35)

With modernity, specifically with the emergence of a notion of the 'is/ought' fallacy¹⁰, moral concepts and arguments "radically change their character" and "moral judgements change their import and meaning". (MacIntyre, 56) He concludes from this:

that moral judgements are linguistic survivals from the practices of classical theism which have lost the context provided by these practices. (MacIntyre, 57)

This loss of traditional structure and content "was seen by the most articulate of their philosophical spokesmen as the achievement of the self of its proper autonomy". (MacIntyre, 58) It is this notion of the autonomous self which has been considered by many feminists to be exclusionary, and by MacIntyre to have "disturbing" implications.

¹⁰ See MacIntyre's interesting discussion of the is/ought fallacy, functional concepts, and moral arguments in MacIntyre, 54-6.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

That this moment of decisive change brought about tremendous social and political consequences is undeniable. (MacIntyre, 1) As MacIntyre observes, "abstract changes in moral concepts are always embodied in real, particular events". (MacIntyre, 53)

James D. Chansky has argued, however, that MacIntyre's attention to history is inadequate. He contends that in his preoccupation with the history of the ideas of good in the Western moral tradition, MacIntyre excludes sufficient attention to ideas and acts of evil. Hence:

We cannot reject Eichmann's claim that he sought to live his life in accordance with the Kantian categorical imperative as shedding no light on the meaning of that idea; particularly when we may want to claim that the White Rose conspiracy to assassinate Hitler and the martyrdom of philosophy professor Kurt Huber do stand as revelations of the meaning of the imperative. (Chansky, 249)

Now while it is not clear at all that MacIntyre would reject Eichmann's claim on these grounds, Chansky's observation is that MacIntyre does overlook some important "undeniable facts" about the relation of moral ideas to living historical groups. For example Nazi ideology, far from abandoning moral ideology, actualized the events of the Second World War only because there were "a set of great moral ideas at work here". (Chansky, 252) I will return to Chansky's article in developing the notion of evil in relation to practices and community in the final section.

The emergence of the individual as the distinctively modern self has moral as well as social and political consequences. One such consequence is the utilitarian project, which MacIntyre interprets as a newly devised teleology that sought to provide new status to partially transformed rules of morality. (MacIntyre, 60) This project is seen to have failed with Sidgwick who concludes that our basic moral beliefs are "irreducibly heterogeneous" and yet must be accepted nonetheless without appeal to reasoned argument. (MacIntyre, 62-3) Moore, who

borrowed without acknowledgement these two conclusions, makes the same pronouncement in *Principia Ethica*, but takes them to be an "enlightening and liberating discovery". (MacIntyre, 63)

Analytic philosophers, rather than devising a new teleology, instead attempted to revive the Kantian project by presenting the authority of the appeal to moral rules as grounded in the nature of practical reason. In this way they attempted to find some new categorical status for moral rules.¹¹ This very often took the form of rights but as MacIntyre argues, the concept of rights is historically local in character requiring particular institutions and practices, and thus:

Lacking any such social form, the making of a claim to a right would be like presenting a check for payment in a social order that lacked the institution of money. (MacIntyre, 65)

Yet, despite the failure of utilitarianism and analytic philosophy in the moral sphere, everyone "philosopher and non-philosopher alike" continue in their use of language as if one of these projects had succeeded. Hence:

Contemporary moral experience as a consequence has a paradoxical character. For each of us is taught to see himself or herself as an autonomous moral agent; but each of us also becomes engaged by modes of practice...which involve us in manipulative relationships with others. Seeking to protect the autonomy that we have learned to prize, we aspire ourselves not to be manipulated by others; seeking to incarnate our own principles and stand-point in the world of practice, we find no way open to us to do so except by directing towards others those very manipulative modes of relationship which each of aspires to resist in our own case. The incoherence of our attitudes and our experience arises from the incoherent conceptual scheme which we have inherited. (MacIntyre, 66)

¹¹ MacIntyre, 60. Such attempts are far from the ethics of Aristotle, in which there is little mention of rules at all. The educated moral agent will do what is virtuous, according to the *Ethics*, *because* it is virtuous on the basis of true and rational judgements (see MacIntyre, 140-1). The point MacIntyre wants to emphasize is that there is an important connection between practical intelligence and the virtues of character which is at odds with dominant modern views. (MacIntyre, 145 and 151-2)

While the modern self is one that is seen to be endowed with rights, it is also a self that has inherited a notion of utility. Both of these are "moral fictions" for MacIntyre.¹²

A central character of both of these fictions is clearly that they purport to provide a foundation for moral claims or, in MacIntyre's words, "an objective and impersonal criterion". (MacIntyre, 68) Both in this way seek to replace concepts of older and more traditional morality.

Despite this common aim, MacIntyre argues that rights serves one set of purposes in a social setting of autonomous moral agents, while "the concept of utility was devised for quite another set of purposes". (MacIntyre, 68) One problem with the notion of an autonomous, rights-bearing agent then is that there is no rational way of rejecting claims which appeal to utility, even when (as is often the case) they threaten to compromise the rights of the individuals involved. It is not difficult to recall or imagine instances of this. Claims invoking rights and appeals to utility are equally contingent justifications and cannot clearly be weighed against one another. Thus, "moral incommensurability is itself the product of a particular historical conjunction". (MacIntyre, 68) Appeals to rationality in such a climate can conceal the "arbitrariness of the will and power at work" in moral debate. "To a disturbing extent our morality will be disclosed as a theatre of illusions". (MacIntyre, 74)

¹² A notion of human beings as naturally endowed with rights is one that doesn't even enter Western languages until as late as 1400, and in Japan until as late as the nineteenth century. Since that time, MacIntyre reminds us that "every attempt to give good reasons for believing that there *are* such rights has failed". Hence MacIntyre accords to "natural or human rights" the epistemological status of unicorns and witches. (MacIntyre, 67)

Utility itself is "not a clear concept" at best and a "fiction" at worst. MacIntyre argues that utility as a quasi-technical term was introduced to "make plausible" an accompanying calculus of prospective pleasures and pains. Even this specific employment of the term is suspect as "[t]he objects of natural and educated human desire are irreducibly heterogenous and the notion of summing them either for individuals or for some population has no clear sense". (MacIntyre, 67-8)

MacIntyre has given us the historical context of the moral predicament of modernity and has set the foundations for a positive account of moral life. Before we consider his neo-Aristotelean solution, I would like to consider another outspoken critic of modernity who similarly uses historical analysis as a springboard to an alternative notion of the self.

CHAPTER 3. CHARLES TAYLOR: THE ETHIC OF AUTHENTICITY

The Modern self for Taylor is "a function of a historically limited mode of self-interpretation" (Taylor 1989, 111) however fixed and unchangeable it may feel. (Taylor 1989, 112) Central to our modern notion of self is a sense of inwardness (Taylor 1989, 111), as distinguished from the outer world of objects, an inner domain of private thought or an unconscious unexplored interior. Taylor traces the genesis of this sense back to Plato.

Whereas Plato's substantive conception of reason connects rationality to a perception of natural order (Taylor 1989, 121), Montaigne represents a turning point for the notion of the 'inner'. What Montaigne discovered upon reflection was not the stable, unchanging core of universal human nature but, instead, ubiquitous perpetual change. (Taylor 1989, 178-9) Hence each of us is left to reflect individually in hopes of discovering what we are. Taylor sees Montaigne as emphasizing modes of original expression.

This is a project of a different sort than the transformation represented by Descartes, which Taylor calls 'internalization'. (Taylor 1989, 124, 182) With Descartes, moral sources are constructed as representations rather than construed as discovered, and the test of ideas of these becomes certainty. (Taylor 1989, 144) Less than being attuned to cosmic order, rationality for Descartes lies in our capacity to construct order, and the external becomes objectified. Descartes, on Taylor's interpretation, presents instrumental control as the model of rational mastery (Taylor 1989, 149), which calls for disengagement,¹³ always the correlative of 'objectification'. (Taylor 1989, 160)

¹³ See Taylor 1989, 161-4, for an insightful critique of the modern notion of disengagement.

Locke went beyond Descartes, rejecting any notion of innate ideas, thus "giving vent to his profoundly anti-teleological view of human nature". (Taylor 1989, 164-5) Locke's notion of disengagement is more thoroughgoing than Descartes', permitting rational control which "can extend to the recreation of our habits and hence of ourselves". (Taylor 1989, 171) Hence the self for Locke consists in a power to objectify and remake, rather than in the particular features objectified. This 'punctual agent' is nothing else in Taylor's view than a *self* and an *I*. (Taylor 1989, 175) Taylor concludes:

Thus if we follow the theme of self-control through the vicissitudes of our western tradition, we find a very profound transmutation, all the way from the hegemony of reason as a vision of cosmic order to the notion of a punctual disengaged subject exercising instrumental control. And this, I would argue, helps to explain why we think of ourselves as 'selves' today. (Taylor 1989, 174)

When the eighteenth century arrives, what Taylor understands as the modern individualistic self has developed two facets: self-responsible independence and recognized particularity. At the same time, this modern individualism was one of personal commitment, in that there existed a notion that the whole will must endorse one's way of life.

Taylor sees these two facets of modern identity coming together as in the form of a dualism of subject and object (Taylor 1989, 188-9), and this dualism extends to individual and community. Rather than community membership going without saying, it must now be explained by consent because people start off as social atoms. (Taylor 1989, 135) Political life, then, is not prior to the establishment of individual identity but rather is instrumental, an optional end. (Taylor 1989, 196)

As a consequence of this, Taylor tells us, people have come to demand immunities in the form of universal subjective rights. (Taylor 1989, 305) Like MacIntyre, he points to an

incoherence in moral life engendered by the juxtaposition of rights with various ends accorded significance by this culture. These ends include productive work, the family with the moral compulsion to explore and express the feelings connected to love, universal benevolence, the elimination of suffering and self-expression. (Taylor 1989, 305-6)

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

Taylor detects in contemporary culture and society, a widely felt sense of loss and decline. Although this loss is sometimes one that is considered to have occurred in the latter part of this century, his book The Malaise of Modernity extends some of the themes developed in his earlier extensive treatment of the modern sense of self in articulating this prevalent sense.

He frames his discussion first in terms of individualism and loss of meaning, secondly around notions of instrumental reason and its primacy. Thirdly, he discusses the subtle loss of freedom that has resulted from the fading of moral horizons and the eclipse of ends attributed in part to individualism and instrumental reason. Taylor's critique of modernity shares much with MacIntyre's and to a lesser extent Sandel's, in that it firmly sets modern ideals, notions of self, and conflicting ideas in an appropriately historical context. At times, these contingent historical developments have seemed arbitrary, as with the "moral fictions" (MacIntyre) of right and utility, the primacy of justice (Sandel) and a notion of inner life contributing to self-determining freedom (Taylor).

For Sandel, deontological liberals advocate the priority of justice partly because people have at times incompatible systems of ends. MacIntyre argues that moral debate nevertheless continues, without conclusive appeal to reason or universal criteria or shared ends. The

contemporary assumption is that all are permitted their own way of life. Taylor explains that this individualism has fueled a relativism grounded in a principle of mutual respect, and points to a variety of influential books which document this phenomenon. This relativism in Taylor's view is a "profound mistake", leading people to "lose sight of concerns that transcend them". (Taylor 1991, 15) Taylor points out the moral force driving what he calls the "ideal of authenticity".

According to this ideal, people find themselves called toward self fulfillment, yet remain unaware of the moral ideal behind liberalism, which banishes "discussions about the good life to the margins of political debate". (Taylor 1991, 17-8) The prevalence of the view that reason does not ground moral positions (moral subjectivism), and a sharp distinction between the methodology of social science and moral ideals has "thickened the darkness around the moral ideal of authenticity". (Taylor 1991, 21) A soft relativism and the affirmation of the power of choice have developed out of this ideal, and Taylor wishes to retrieve the ideal of authenticity from these "deviant" products.

Taylor argues that the picture we have inherited of ourselves is one of a being of inner depths. This we have seen. That picture becomes distorted when making contact with that inner voice means being original, true to oneself and recognizing one's own potential irrespective of common moral horizons.

Like Sandel, Taylor is critical of a notion of independence according to which we are fulfilled by relationships with others, but not dependent on others to define ourselves. A result of this is that people seem less rooted in their communities of origin, and see relationships as more revocable. These trends, Taylor tells us, can be variously interpreted as a move towards narcissism and egoism or, in light of the ideal of authenticity, as an increase in self-

responsibility. (Taylor 1991, 76-7)

It is against the former cultural pessimism that Taylor wishes to retrieve our inherited and prevalent ideal of authenticity without resorting to a distorted cultural optimism. (Taylor 1991, 79) As we shall see, he proposes entering sympathetically into the ideal which animates "our" culture, showing "what it really requires". (Taylor 1991, 70)

PART 2: THE COMMUNITARIAN RESPONSE

CHAPTER 4. SANDEL: COMMUNITY AS CONSTITUTIVE

Sandel was shown to be making three claims. These were (a) the implication premise, (b) the communitarian thesis, and (c) an argument of inconsistency. We've seen that in Sandel's view, Rawls' theory of justice implies a particular moral anthropology. We've seen also that many of the features which Sandel attributes to the Rawlsian self are also significant features of the modern agent as described by MacIntyre and Taylor. That in which the self consists on Sandel's view however remains to be elaborated. We now turn to this positive account which arises in contrast to Rawls' notions of community and self.

In Sandel's view:

The assumptions of the original position thus stand opposed in advance to any conception of the good requiring a more or less expansive understanding, and in particular to the possibility of community in the constitutive sense. On Rawls' view, a sense of community describes a possible aim of antecedently individuated selves, not an ingredient or constituent of their identity as such. (Sandel, 64)

In this constitutive conception, community will instead be considered capable of penetrating the self profoundly, to reach beyond the motivations to the subject of motivations. (Sandel, 149) It describes "not just a *feeling* but a mode of self-understanding partly constitutive of the agent's identity". (Sandel, 150) One's identity, on this "strong view", is defined somewhat by the community of which one is a part. For such a person:

community describes not just what they *have* as fellow citizens, but also what they *are*, not a relationship they choose (as in voluntary association) but an

attachment they discover, not merely an attribute but a constituent of their identity. (Sandel, 150)

Now Alejandro has claimed that Rawls views the individual's membership in associations not merely as an attribute, but as a substantial character trait (Alejandro, 77) and that Rawlsian individuals are not wholly autonomous but rather have capacities for judgement which may be compromised by community membership. (Alejandro, 80) He argues that these individuals need communities of shared interests which provide standards of worthiness and criteria for self-esteem. Sandel takes Rawls' intersubjective passages less seriously however. He argues that in such passages,

much is couched in metaphor, and often the metaphor is mixed. Intersubjective and individualistic images appear in uneasy, sometime infelicitous combination, as if to betray the incompatible commitments contending within. (Sandel, 151)

Generally, he maintains that a conception that is based on individualism, as Rawls' theoretically is, cannot capture "in all cases" the "moral vocabulary of community in the strong sense". (Sandel, 151) Justice as fairness thus "fails to take seriously our commonality". (Sandel, 174) Rawls regards the bounds of the self to be fixed, and our commonality is relegated to an aspect of contingent goods.

The notion of community as constituent of identity is not entirely clear in Sandel's book. In fact, he tells us as much about what community in the strong sense is not than what it is. Community is not, for example, a mere instrument. On an instrumental account, which Rawls also wants to avoid, we can recognize the "conventional individualist assumptions" which provides the basis of the account. Taking for granted self-interested motivation, this conception views agents as regarding social arrangements as a "necessary burden", to aid in achieving their

private ends. Neither, Sandel argues, is Rawls' account of community acceptable. For although it is less individualistic than the instrumental account, this "sentimental conception" assumes that subjects who may share ties and have benevolent aims are antecedently individuated. Thus the bounds of the subject cannot be redrawn or relaxed despite the engagement of feelings and sentiment. (Sandel, 149)

For Sandel, community must constitute the shared self-understandings of the participants and must also be embodied in institutional arrangements; thus, cannot be mere sentiment or attribute. We must be:

subjects constituted in part by our central aspirations and attachments, always open, indeed vulnerable, to growth and transformations in the light of revised self-understandings. (Sandel, 172)

Communities in the constitutive sense are defined by self-understandings which comprehend a wider subject than the individual alone. Thus, in reflecting, one is turning

its lights inward upon itself, to inquire into its constituent nature, to survey its various attachments and acknowledge their respective claims, to sort out the bounds - now expansive, now constrained - between the self and the other, to arrive at a self-understanding less opaque if never perfectly transparent, a subjectivity less fluid if never finally fixed, and so gradually, throughout a lifetime, to participate in the constitution of its identity. (Sandel, 153)

Reflection, rather than will, helps the subject to play a role in shaping the contours of its identity. (Sandel, 152) And this is why for Sandel, "the question of community leads naturally to the question of reflection". (Sandel, 153) Instead of deciding what ends to choose (summoning the will), the relevant moral question for the agent is "who am I?" (seeking self-understanding). The alternatives before one engage one's identity; and deliberation consists in assessing "competing descriptions of the person I am", looking for a "more adequate account

of the way my identity is engaged in the alternatives before me". (Sandel, 181)

It follows that this constitutive conception has serious implications for the concept of choice, as does the communitarian project in general. On Rawls' account, decision consists in perceiving clearly that which is already there: wants and preferences. Voluntaristic agency equates planning one's life or conceiving of the good with simply matching "the ends I already have with the best available means of satisfying them". (Sandel, 163)

Sandel points to the epistemological difficulty in this conception when he argues that values and ends would require an independent sanction if they are to regulate wants and desires. A conception of good must be more firmly grounded than merely in one's happening to hold them intensely. (Sandel, 165) Hence, another feature of community emerges, namely, that

communities of various sorts could count as distinct 'systems of desires' in this sense, so long as they were identifiable in part by an order or structure of shared values partly constitutive of a common identity or form of life. (Sandel, 167)

A community involves then a "hierarchical ordering of qualitatively distinguishable desires". (Sandel, 167) This hierarchy is grounded in a way of life reflected by

a common vocabulary of discourse and a background of implicit practices and understandings within which the opacity of the participants is never fully disclosed. (Sandel 172-3)

This brings us to what I wish to argue is at best a certain tension and at worst an incoherence in Sandel's positive account of community.

Like MacIntyre and Taylor, in the process of articulating in a general way a positive account of constitutive communities and systems of desire, Sandel offers concrete examples of communities. He speaks of "ties to family and friends" and "devotion to city or nation, to party

or cause". (Sandel, 182) He talks about the "common identity" of "family or community or class or people or nation" (Sandel 143) and of the "wider subject...whether a family or tribe or city or nation or people" (Sandel, 172). In such cases, Sandel is using the term 'community' to denote a particular group of actual persons, sometimes grouped by location, at other times (less frequently) grouped by commonalities (devotion to a party or cause, class membership, ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic communities). (Sandel 31) Hence, when we wish to check Sandel's assertion against our own experience, we can find community not only by looking within but also around us. That is, although the connection to persons is intangible, community does nonetheless consist of people we can see and touch, and presumably depends on a degree of interaction with actual persons.

There are however other occasions on which Sandel seems to detach the notion of community from actual persons, and emphasizes instead attendant sensibilities. For example, when he speaks of "distinct systems of desires" (Sandel, 167) as constituting community, he seems to be doing just this. The good of community he tells us was seen to "penetrate the person" and thus to constitute his identity and partly define "who he was".

Rather than referring to people who live in certain common ways, community is here portrayed as a way of life itself. And although this point may seem self-evident, it is worth articulating for two reasons. This point plays a decisive role in preserving communitarianism from a variety of disturbing implications reflected in numerous criticisms and charges. At the same time, this observation is an important one because the notions of community as persons, and community as way of life (sensibility) are not always compatible and yet both are invoked at different times depending on the point being emphasized by Sandel, MacIntyre or Taylor.

Now one may respond quite sensibly that there is no tension here at all. One could point out that a community is defined, as on Sandel's account, by "a family or tribe or city or class or nation or people" and that, while this community is marked by "a common vocabulary of discourse and a background of implicit practices and understandings", it remains a community of people just the same. Hence communitarianism doesn't present us with a tension between community as persons and community as sensibility or background, but rather presents us with a notion of community as *marked* by the latter but *consisting* of the former (persons) without inconsistency.

Yet I wish to argue that it is not at all the case that community insofar as it is constitutive of our identity is consistently maintained by communitarians as merely "marked" by our sensibility or background. Rather, community is sometimes equated with sensibility, not necessarily attached to persons, and at other times used to designate specific people (for example, our fellow citizens). We can see that these are distinct uses simply by asking ourselves whether we share sensibilities with our fellow citizens. Although in most cases we may be similar in different ways and to varying degrees to our compatriots, in many instances the answer must be a resounding no. Thus, it becomes problematic to speak of community without making this clear distinction. When Sandel's subject reflects upon a "wider subject", is she reflecting upon herself together with others, or is she reflecting upon her constitutive sensibilities? Sandel describes subjects as consisting of a plurality of selves within an individual.

Similarly, I will be maintaining that as persons, we are individually constituted by the sensibilities available to us, and as a system of desires they have the status of 'forms of life', independent of the persons who live in accord with them. An individual person can have systems

of desires, but to speak of a certain community as a distinct system of desires is hopelessly general, and often stereotyping. This is the case unless we mean community as a particular sensibility. Attending to this notion of community as sensibility which, although inconsistently, is present in communitarian texts, will explain more clearly how we are constituted by community, how various communities can have simultaneous claims on us and, perhaps most importantly, how we may 'arbitrate' between them. In this last application, the notion will have serious implications for choice and the revising of values (competing allegiances).

Reconsider in this light, Sandel's remarks in response to liberal arguments for affirmative action:

Each of us moves in an indefinite number of communities, some more inclusive than others, each making different claims on our allegiance, and there is no saying in advance which is *the* society or community whose purposes should govern the disposition of any particular set of our attributes and endowments. (Sandel, 146)

Now this passage follows Sandel's assertion that "there is no such thing as '*the* society as a whole' or '*the* more general society'". It seems to me that at least this claim should be self-evident.

What concerns me in this passage, however, is that despite this important observation (that there is no single abstract society) Sandel continues to use 'society' and 'community' almost interchangeably. By presuming that the purposes of 'society' governs disposition, Sandel leaves himself vulnerable to charges of conservatism. Whereas if we consider dislocated communities in the form of sensibilities to hold this governing power, persons need not maintain societal status quo. On such a model, there is room for a self-determining faculty governing in accordance with the multitudinous sensibilities available to the agent. In other words, I am free

to act in accordance with other sensibilities than that of my family, tribe or nation, assuming that I have access to them.

At the same time, we maintain a 'thick' notion of persons, situated in communities, rather than individuated in advance. A sensibility is a system of desires which may direct us in accord with its internal logic, but a system that has been acquired in the process of forging identity among others. This process of acquiring a range of sensibilities is what I will call being 'affected'. In flushing out this notion of community as sensibility, I will show that its central tenets are implicit in communitarian writings (consider MacIntyre's "practices" and "characters" and Taylor's "background") but are present alongside an unacceptable notion of community as 'society'. Before doing so, it will be helpful to explore both MacIntyre's and Taylor's positive accounts of community and the self as developed in response to modern accounts.

CHAPTER 5. MACINTYRE: PRACTICES, NARRATIVE UNITY AND A MORAL TRADITION

Like Sandel, MacIntyre is critical of the notion of justice in its modern formulations. He claims that our pluralist culture is unable even to achieve the prior agreement in rules that liberalism requires. In his view, Rawls and Nozick make incommensurable claims about the nature of justice. The presuppositions of individualistic pluralism contain no criterion for legislating between claims to legitimate entitlement (Nozick) and claims based on redistribution in accordance with basic needs (Rawls). (MacIntyre, 228-9)

Further, MacIntyre argues that both these concepts of justice limit the possible bonds between persons involving private and competing interests. While Rawls "explicitly makes it a presupposition of his view that we must expect to disagree with others about what the good life for man is", Nozick ignores "the concept of community required for the notion of desert to have applications". (MacIntyre, 233)

Thus, nowhere in these liberal theories can one find an account of community which could provide the basis for judgements about virtue and injustice. Society seems unable to achieve moral consensus (MacIntyre, 235), and this may be the result of a lack of shared moral first principles. (MacIntyre, 236) On these grounds, MacIntyre rejects modern systematic politics in favour of an allegiance to "the tradition of the virtues". (MacIntyre, 237)

Rather than making his case directly against liberalism, MacIntyre opposes his alternative account to Nietzsche's project. He interprets Nietzsche's "great man" as a "pseudo concept", representing individualism's final escape from its consequences. (MacIntyre, 240-1) While

Nietzsche sought to ground moral authority in the individual, MacIntyre favours an Aristotelian account, in which rules are subordinated to virtues. (MacIntyre, 239) If the great man can be the origin of morality, then MacIntyre contends that this would be so only on account of the individual's isolation and self-absorption. Accepting, as MacIntyre does, that we understand the good in terms of practices, narrative unity, and moral tradition, goods can only be discovered by entering into relationships of community bound by a shared understanding of those goods.

This Aristotelian conception is opposed not only to Nietzsche's individualism but to liberal individualism in general, as Nietzsche's great man is merely one more facet of incoherent modern moral culture. Against this, MacIntyre appeals to an alternative, virtue-based way of envisaging a society which lends itself to intelligible and rational articulation. (MacIntyre, 241) I will argue that MacIntyre fails to restate the Aristotelian tradition convincingly.

In making his case, he first relates goods to practices, then to the narrative unity of a single life and then to the moral traditions of communities. In connecting virtue to practices, MacIntyre does make a helpful, albeit distorted, observation about moral life. I will expand on this useful notion of practices and discuss its deficiencies in the final part of this work. In this chapter, I wish to address both the notion of the narrative unity of a single life and the concept of a moral tradition, which together are key to understanding MacIntyre's account of the virtues and the 'good for man'. I will argue that in connecting the good to the moral traditions of a community, MacIntyre becomes susceptible to the criticisms directed at Sandel's notion of community as constituting selves, although to a more troubling degree.

A LIFE CONCEIVED AS A NARRATIVE WHOLE

In reviewing a number of conceptions of virtue, ranging from the Homeric to those of Ben Franklin and Jane Austen, MacIntyre observes that they are incompatible not only in their characterization of virtues but also at the meta-level of theory, i.e. in their conceptions as to what virtue is. He tells us that Homeric virtue involved the fulfilment of a role. (MacIntyre, 171) Aristotle attaches virtues to man rather than roles, positing them in relation to the good life. (MacIntyre, 172) While virtue in the New Testament has the same logical and conceptual structure as in Aristotle's account, the good is of a supernatural sort. In contrast, for Franklin, virtue held some sort of utility in achieving success.

Now, we may recall from Chapter Three that MacIntyre is disturbed by moral incommensurability and thus it should not surprise us that we find him looking for a common denominator in these accounts. What is surprising is that he finds one. He concludes that what these conceptions share is the recognition of the need to define virtue in terms of some prior account of the social and moral life.

Taking this common feature to be necessary, MacIntyre formulates the requisite background to his account as practices which involve certain standards of excellence in the achievement of goods. (MacIntyre, 177) By 'practice' MacIntyre proposes to mean:

any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realised in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended. (MacIntyre, 175)

We will look critically to the notion of practices in Chapter Nine.

For now, what is important to note is that MacIntyre does not restrict all virtues to practices. Rather, he argues that we need the notion of a life conceived as a whole. This stipulation mirrors a similar notion in Aristotle's definition of happiness (recall: "the active exercise of the faculties of the soul in conformity with excellence or virtue...during a complete lifetime"¹⁴). Beyond merely this correspondence, MacIntyre offers us three reasons why such a notion should be so, none of which is very convincing.

First, a moral life without the notion of a life conceived as a narrative whole would be one pervaded by too many conflicts and would be invaded by a "certain subversive arbitrariness". (MacIntyre, 189) Incompatible claims of virtues grounded in practices would lead, MacIntyre tells us, to the need for criterionless choices between these claims. He comes to this conclusion, I believe as the result of a misleading dichotomy underlying much of his account of virtue. The form it takes here is the supposition that unless a virtue is exercised in accordance with the unity of one's whole life, one can make only 'radical choices' occurring without regard to *any* context whatsoever.¹⁵

That we may be pulled in often conflicting directions by opposing sensibilities does not mean that the ensuing decisions, resolutions or actions are typically random in nature or lacking any grounds. That is, it is not the case that either we act out of accord with some sort of unified understanding of our lives or that we are consequently arbitrary in our moral compulsions. For sometimes we find that two conflicting courses of action are imbedded in two sorts of narratives - both of which, on varying interpretations, could count as constitutive stories. For example, I

¹⁴ Nicomachean Ethics, Book I.

¹⁵ This is a tenet of Taylor's theory also. See his "What is Human Agency?" in Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers 1. Cambridge University Press, 1985.

may be faced with a choice between, say, moving West to join some friends in a business endeavour and going overseas to continue travels in Europe. Perhaps the proposed business endeavour is an idea that has circulated between myself and my prospective partners for some time. Perhaps it is a dream we have shared for a long time, one that has been the subject of many enthusiastic conversations. Suppose also that I have just returned from an annual trip overseas during which I continued a lifelong challenge to explore the continent thoroughly. In this situation I find that two aspects of my person, two sensibilities, entail two decisions in equal accord with my aspirations and identity. In this case the decision is not a matter of making either a radical choice or one attuned to a unified understanding that I have of my life. Rather, it is a decision between two aspects of my personal commitments, each intertwined with competing life stories.

MacIntyre argues that our choices cannot be grounded in practices alone as the context of virtues. If we think of moral orientations as providing the context of virtues, rather than practices, the fact that they conflict is an accurate reflection of a pervasive state of affairs. For going into business and travelling overseas in the above example may be conflicting options in a single life and yet both be in equal accord with value systems with which I have come to identify. Multiple moral orientations, even though at times conflicting, offer moral resources more suitably complex than an imposed unity of our lives.

I certainly agree that we must explain how conflict can be and is resolved without reference to a radical choice. But I also think that we need to explain the complexity of moral life and account for the frequency of deep moral conflicts within an individual, especially when these conflicts are situated in radically opposed systems of desires having equal claim on our

allegiance.

According to MacIntyre, a practice does not provide a sufficient context for some virtues. This is his second reason for extending context to the whole of a life. He uses justice and patience as examples of virtues which cannot be adequately and completely conceived of without an "overriding conception of the *telos* of a whole human life". (MacIntyre, 188) Using Aristotle's view of justice as desert, MacIntyre argues that desert is merited by contribution to communal goods, and that goods internal to practices need to be ordered and evaluated for justice to be meaningful in this way. MacIntyre is here presuming that communities have some goods in common and that there is some sort of discernable end toward which our lives are, or should be, moving which provides the criteria for a hierarchy of goods.

This notion of life as moving toward some appropriate end, or narrative quest, is central to understanding MacIntyre's insistence on conceiving of a life as a narrative whole. It provides the unity of a life, and also the criterion by which a life can be considered a success or failure. (MacIntyre, 203) MacIntyre understands that in order to understand some virtues fully, we require a conception of the good for man, toward which we are all moving or of which we are seeking understanding. (MacIntyre, 204) Presumably, on such a view, inner moral conflict is merely a confusion, a temporary distraction from a unified quest. This familiar representation of moral life fails to take seriously not only the variety of ends before different people, but the variety of values constituting the moral life of an individual person. Part of what makes moral life so rich, far from a single narrated quest, is this variety of ends seen from shifting perspectives, in different lights, through changing interpretations, each of which could, for often disparate reasons, stand as suitable and appropriate objects of a quest.

While presuming a single set of criteria may order various goods and ends in a simple way, I see no reason to assume simplicity to be either preferable to or more prevalent than complexity in moral life. In other words, there is no reason to make a virtue of creating single hierarchies, within a life or among a people. A justice perspective, for example, is one way of entering or characterizing a moral situation among others and cannot be assumed in advance of situations to be some paradigmatic shared good.

This is true of patience also. On MacIntyre's account, patience is a good to which other goods must often be subordinated. While the interests of a practice itself may seem to involve giving up, patience sometimes requires that I persist. (MacIntyre, 188-9) There occurs to me no reason to connect patience to a whole life's narrative. I think that MacIntyre's point here is that persistence and diligence in activities (teaching, negotiating) is characterological, and cannot be made sense of in terms of the pursuit of goods internal to practices. That practices do not provide a sufficient context for some virtues seems to me more a deficiency in MacIntyre's notion of a practice than in any differentiating, special status of the virtues of justice or patience.

Special status seems to have been granted as well to the virtues of integrity and constancy, on MacIntyre's account. That "singleness of purpose" is a virtue that applies to the totality of a life is MacIntyre's third reason for extending moral context beyond practices. (MacIntyre, 189) Part of the reason for the uncritical adoption of this trait as a virtue is MacIntyre's assumption of the unity of a life and the notion of the 'good for man'.

I see no reason, however, to assume that integrity and constancy are overriding virtues. While in some contexts they are impressive and admirable traits, they can equally be undesirable attributes (in what would the integrity of a Klan member consist?). In any case, they cannot be

declared virtuous in advance. If I were to evaluate the moral life of another, I would not necessarily consider her single-mindedness as a virtue. While some (with "purity of heart") may "will one thing", others may hold views and goals that are revisable, and I may be more inclined to find the latter more admirable. While we do expect that almost all of the manners and norms of another's behaviour remain, for the most part, constant from one day to the next, there's no reason to elevate constancy to the level of virtue.

One of MacIntyre's central reasons for extending the context of virtues to life as a unified whole is his assumption that the alternative is undesirable. This is clear in his characterization of what he calls the philosophical obstacles to thinking of a life in this way. (MacIntyre, 190) The atomistic thinking of analytic philosophers reduces all activity to a 'basic action' and a sharp distinction between roles and the individual who fills them results in conceiving of activity as a series of unconnected episodes.

Hence, MacIntyre thinks that unless we think of life as organized into a unified, directed narrative whole, we are left with a notion of life as a "sequence of individual actions and episodes". (MacIntyre, 190) As I have suggested, this is a misleading dichotomy but it does fuel MacIntyre's conception.

It is partly why he holds that "someone who genuinely possesses a virtue can be expected to manifest it in different types of situations". (MacIntyre, 191) It seems to me however, that thinking of virtues as something one possesses is problematic. Different types of situations can not only affect the appropriateness of a virtue but also dictate what counts as a virtue. In other words, we do not bring a set of virtues to a situation, confident that acting in accordance with it will bring about virtuous behaviour. To do so would be to ignore the moral particularity of

a situation. Rather, what in some situations may be a virtue, may be a vice in another, or may be a virtue for unexpected reasons, or could result in inappropriate behaviour. (This is true of what we call honesty.) And the heterogeneous meanings of our actions are not always apparent to us: "what I say and do always has a multiplicity of meanings, ambiguities, plays, and these are not always coherent".¹⁶

Owen Flanagan, in his recent book Varieties of Moral Personality, also criticises the familiar hypothesis that moral responsiveness is consistent across tasks and domains. He suggests caution in making generalizations about persons that are not indexed to certain kinds of situations and correlatively caution in making generalizations of situations that are not indexed to kinds of persons. (Flanagan, 260)

Flanagan observes that the hypothesis that responsiveness is consistent across tasks and domains is related to, perhaps a corollary of, the hypothesis that the moral person is a unity. (Flanagan, 263)

I will argue that one is virtuous only by taking on or enacting a sensibility in which a type of behaviour or disposition is, relative to the situation, a virtue. Further, a virtue is a virtue only insofar as it is internal to a sensibility. We do not possess virtues in isolation, without a context to make a trait or disposition a virtue. For Flanagan, "distinct moral traits develop and function in very different ways in one and the same person". (Flanagan, 270)

Nonetheless, MacIntyre provides us with examples of persons who maintained certain virtues throughout their lives: Hector's courage, Eleanor Marx's compassion. What MacIntyre admires here is that both these lives are characterized by certain virtues: "And the unity of a

¹⁶ Young Ideal, 310. Young is here summarizing an idea of Julia Kristeva's.

virtue in someone's life is intelligible only as a characteristic of a unitary life, a life that can be conceived and evaluated as a whole". (MacIntyre, 191) MacIntyre's concept of self, which is entailed by his account of virtue, is one unified by a narrative commencing at birth and running until death.

It seems to me, however, that sometimes, when we reflect on our life, we may find it difficult to think of it as a unity. Perhaps the boundaries of ourselves have been deeply engaged by transforming experience as Sandel suggests. Indeed, in trying to make sense of our lives, some of the most profound accounts we can give are ones that emphasize the contradictions in our outlook and aspirations, or recount the uprooting of taken-for-granted values.

MacIntyre tells us that thinking of our lives as narrative unities is "natural" (MacIntyre, 192) and "clearly correct" (MacIntyre, 191), and suggests that when this conception ceased to be generally available in the progress ("if we can call it such") towards modernity, we suffered a loss. (MacIntyre, 32) While I do think that extending to our lives the coherence and order of a narrative is comforting, perhaps at times a need, I think it often involves self-deception and falsification, and usually oversimplification. That I come to a disparately new understanding is not necessarily part of a unified movement toward truth, but often the result of looking at something *differently*. John Kekes has argued that the discovery of a new way of being or the enlargement of moral possibility "has nothing to do with facts" (Kekes, 6) but rather with deepening sensitivity.

Now while relating a revised view to an end, like 'improved understanding' or 'fairer outlook', may be comforting or simpler, the alternative to a *telos* of this sort is not a 'view from

nowhere'.¹⁷ The revised view which is merely different is likely intertwined with a series of values and terminologies that make it a perspective. A perspective (as a moral orientation) has norms, languages, values, a history bound up with it and (as a motive for activity) is far from an isolated, individual, random action or episode. Nor is a perspective in accord with which I act one that is necessarily connected with my life as a whole. I may take on a variety of perspectives over a period of time, and I am capable of a variety of perspectives on a single situation.

MacIntyre is correct in saying that we cannot:

characterise behaviour independently of intentions, and we cannot characterise intentions independently of the settings which make those intentions intelligible both to agents themselves and to others. (MacIntyre, 192)

however, because he also maintains a false dichotomy he is inclined to further relate those settings and intentions to the narrative unity of an agent's life. I disagree, then, that narrative history is "the basic and essential genre for the characterisation of human actions". (MacIntyre, 194)

Now, while reference to personal or historical context does provide a simple explanation of behaviour, occasional behaviour which resists or contradicts this simple narrative must be regarded as an aberration. On MacIntyre's account, reevaluating the direction of one's life or one's values or motivations opens one to charges of inconsistency. In any case, it would be difficult to see how this could be done at all. For, in MacIntyre's account, the atypical behaviour is likely to be interpreted as isolated, random and senseless, unless it can be related to the unity

¹⁷ Here the reference is, of course, to Nagel.

of a life. We need a more sophisticated context than the causal and temporal order of the narrative unity.

Once MacIntyre makes his arguments in support of viewing one's life as a unity, he urges us to think of this narrative as having a certain "teleological character". (MacIntyre, 200) In his view, "we live out our lives in light of certain conceptions of a possible shared future". (MacIntyre, 200) He argues that the present is always informed by an image of the future, of an end. Such a conception extends the metaphor of living a narrative to include the forward directedness of narration. While events and actions occur and are performed in novels in order to advance the story toward a certain end, I think that to argue that an end always informs the present is to mistakenly privilege goal-oriented activity. Like in the case of speech, I think that many other activities are less productive than MacIntyre's account implies. Hence, I would argue that some activities (e.g. playful ones) may be *less* rather than *more* intelligible when placed in a narrative context than when understood in other ways.¹⁸ Although we may be able to characterise many aspects of our lives as a narrative quest, the metaphor seems misplaced in relation to certain activities, or at least overly dramatic.

As characters imbedded in narratives, MacIntyre considers "the key question for men" to be "of what story or stories do I find myself a part?". (MacIntyre, 201) Like Sandel, who saw moral questioning less in terms of "what ends should I choose?" but rather as "who am I", MacIntyre is acutely aware that identities can dictate certain decisions and favour some values over others. For MacIntyre, understanding any society "including our own" is only possible through the stock of stories constituting its original dramatic resources. (MacIntyre, 203) I want

¹⁸ See MacIntyre, page 196.

to suggest that MacIntyre could perhaps be unaware of the extent of the sheer number of diverse and conflicting stories that constitute the society that he probably has in mind. While recognizing the constitutive capacities of stories in one's identity is a step in the right direction, the numbers of stories that impact even on a single person's identity is considerable. There are surely more ways of being in the world, ways of constituting one's narrative than there are persons. And this is why it is difficult to speak even in terms of "our society", as MacIntyre does, and as we will see, Taylor does as well.

Now, it may be that I am misconstruing MacIntyre's use of the term 'stories'. He may have meant something more general. Perhaps he would agree that the story of a life involves many diverse shifts in direction, cross-cutting paths and changing moral orientations on the part of its characters. But it is with this presumption, that there is something more unifying and general than sensibilities, that I take issue.

And this is true as much on the level of the individual subject as it is on a societal level. Hence I take issue also with MacIntyre's assertion that the self "inhabits a character whose unity is given as the unity of a character". (MacIntyre, 202) Rather, just as society consists not of a single set of stories, I agree with Flanagan that the self is not a single character in a single narrative. It is true that a sensibility may dominate in given circumstances (I will be the confident entrepreneur at this meeting; I will play the buffoon to make a mockery of this ritual) but I will argue that there are as many sensibilities available to us as we have learned to enact.

To this MacIntyre would respond that a diversity of sensibilities with equal status available to one person would make it difficult to speak of a 'self': "we have to be able to respond to the imputation of strict identity". (MacIntyre, 202) I have argued, however, that this

type of unification of the self is unnecessary, and it can be deceptive to think of our lives as single narratives, albeit perhaps simpler. Even Sandel employed the metaphor of a plurality of selves within a single subject.

COMMUNAL TRADITIONS

MacIntyre is concerned with empiricist accounts of the self such as Locke's and Hume's, which are given in terms of psychic states and events and which omit the background that the understanding of virtue requires. We have seen that he has provided that background with the concept of a story and the kind of unity of character which a story requires. I have been resisting narrative understandings of the self, interpreting behaviour in terms of a single good or *telos*, and viewing the entire life in terms of a single quest. I have made some indications of how the account of self and community I will recommend differs from MacIntyre's. In Chapter Four, I showed that although the notion of a community constituting the self was an important one, hints that Sandel may equate *community* with the *society* we live in were less useful. I indicated at the outset that MacIntyre makes similar suggestions, although to a more troubling degree. In the remaining part of this chapter, I wish to show how he moves from the notion of the narrative unity of a life to the importance of communal tradition.

One part of this progression, although it is difficult to pinpoint exactly where it happens, occurs when rather than speaking of goods internal to practices, or goods intertwined with the *telos* of a single life, MacIntyre begins to speak of the good for man. By this he seems to mean that the good for man is the common denominator of the good for the unity of each person. (MacIntyre, 203) Another part of this move from individual life to community occurs with his

observation: "I am never able to seek for the good or exercise the virtues *qua* individual". (MacIntyre, 204) He claims that we all approach our own circumstances as bearers of a particular social identity, whether son, uncle, guild-member, professional or citizen of a nation. (MacIntyre 204) What is good for an individual is thus what is good for that role. (MacIntyre 205) These are the moral starting points that we inherit which give our lives their moral particularity.¹⁹ There is a keen observation in these assertions. I agree with this insofar as it generally reflects a communitarian view of the self as intertwined with social roles and statuses.

What is troubling is the strong statement that the self *must* find its moral identity in and through its memberships in communities such as family and neighbourhood. Though the phrase "moral starting point" seems at first mitigating, what gets MacIntyre into trouble is a stronger claim. He holds that the story of my life is "always embedded in the story of those communities from which I derive my identity" (MacIntyre, 205) and remarks that what I am "is in key part what I inherit, a specific past that is present to some degree in my present", I am ("like it or not") "one of the bearers of tradition". MacIntyre defines 'traditions' as the terms of arguments about goods (Taylor's 'webs of interlocution'), as the "mode of thought" (MacIntyre, 206) in which reasoning takes place, a "historically extended, socially embodied argument" in part about "the goods which constitute that tradition". (MacIntyre, 207) It appears that the agent is left with the alternatives of accepting the terms of a tradition or to rebel against them.

Such a rebellion, however, is not morally neutral in MacIntyre's account, for such a

¹⁹ One wonders how particular a life can be, given that such general categories endow us with our particularity. As I will argue in Chapter Seven, any theory of community must show not only what unites persons as members of communities but how they can maintain their distinctness.

"corruption" of tradition is the result of a destructive lack of virtue. Having an adequate sense of the traditions to which one belongs or which confront one is a virtue itself on his account. Traditions are corrupted by "lack of justice, lack of truthfulness, lack of courage, lack of the relevant intellectual virtues". (MacIntyre, 207) Can we gather from this that MacIntyre would regard all those who fail to uphold a tradition, or fail to argue on its terms as unjust, lying, cowardly simpletons?

This would be an unpalatable characterisation of, for example, feminist philosophers, some of whom make it their quest to challenge the terms of debate, and undermine predominant oppressive modes of thought.

At the outset of Chapter Two, I showed that many feminists support the general project of providing a richer conception of selves. I cautioned that in many cases the similarity ends there. Marilyn Friedman in her essay "Feminism and Modern Friendship: Dislocating the Community" while agreeing that:

there is considerable power to the model of the self as deriving its identity and nature from its social relationships, from the way it is subjectively apprehended, from the norms of the community in which it is embedded (Friedman Feminism, 276),

argues nonetheless that "communitarian philosophy as a whole is a perilous ally for feminist theory". (Friedman Feminism, 277) She uncovers a "troubling complacency" about the moral authority of certain communities on the part of Sandel and MacIntyre. (Friedman Feminism 277)

Along with Iris Young, she argues that these writers emphasize what some sociologists have called communities of 'place', particularly those potentially and historically oppressive situations such as family, neighbourhood, school and church. (Friedman Feminism, 281)

Gathering Sandel's and MacIntyre's specific references of community into only two groups, governmental and local communities, she finds it remarkable that neither writer mentions sex or gender (Friedman Feminism, 270), or any institution that may be considered emancipatory for women.

She finds these omissions especially troubling given the uncritical assumption that moral claims of community are morally binding. (Friedman Feminism, 281) While acknowledging the psychological matter of fact invoked here, Friedman points out that this does not entail an endorsement of those moral claims. (Friedman Feminism, 287) As I've tried to show, such an endorsement is present in MacIntyre's text.

The ideal of community is an impossible ideal in Iris Young's view²⁰, one that denies differences within and between subjects. That this is so is ironic given that the unsituated antecedently individuated self, without differentiating identity has been the object of communitarian criticism.

Moreover, Young detects undesirable political implications in the ideal of shared subjectivity amongst community members, in that it makes it difficult to respect those with whom members of a community do not identify. She suggests that "racism, ethnic chauvinism, and class devaluation...grow partly from a desire for community". (Young Ideal, 311)

MacIntyre's historical analysis attempts to expose a prevalent sense of moral incommensurability in contemporary moral life. His response is to develop a notion of virtue along the lines of (although distinct from) Aristotle's view. Virtue emerges as a certain capacity

²⁰ See Young Ideal.

for judgement rather than an adherence to rules. Whereas "our modern predicament", in MacIntyre's view, leaves moral agents to choose between incommensurable premises, MacIntyre's account considers moral life to consist in following the good in terms of a unity of the agent's life. (MacIntyre, 209) What is good for x depends on the character of the narrative of x 's life.

I have argued in this chapter that the notion of a narrative is problematic, not only because it assumes a unity which seems forced, or misses the complexity of a situation, but also because it is connected to one's community of origin. More useful, in my view, is MacIntyre's notion of goods embedded in practices, which in turn determine the nature of virtues. Yet this notion too will be shown to be inadequate, although not for the reasons that MacIntyre has suggested.

In the final section, I will maintain some of MacIntyre's insights into practices as they relate to virtue and the good. In developing a quite different approach to moral life, however, I will also show how thinking of values as internal to sensibilities can avoid some of the problems that have emerged in MacIntyre's account. Before doing so, I will consider Charles Taylor's response to the modern predicament as he has described it.

CHAPTER 6. TAYLOR: MORAL HORIZONS

Taylor's historical survey is an exercise in retrieval and, in his words, a work of liberation as well. (Taylor 1989, 520) In Sources of the Self, Taylor explores the modern identity by tracing the modern notion of "what it is to be a human agent, a person, or a self". (Taylor 1989, 3) Moral questioning about what makes life worth living involves strong evaluations: discriminations which stand independently of desires and choices and offer standards by which these may be judged. In some ways, moral reactions involve assent to and affirmation of a given ontology of the human, despite modern neglect of ontological accounts. From a modern moral stance, as Taylor has laboriously shown, facts are typically described independently of reactions or intuitions connected to an ontology. (Taylor 1989, 8, 20)

Moral intuitions, on Taylor's account, universally include a sense of respect and obligation, an understanding of what makes a life fulfilling or a notion of what is involved in human dignity. (Taylor 1989, 15) What counts toward a full life is always articulated within a framework, such that of a Platonic or religious order, neither of which, he says, currently form the horizon of an entire society. (Taylor 1989, 17)

Taylor sees the fact that no framework is today shared by all people in our society refracted in a variety of contemporary stances. Some people hold traditional views, conscious that they are opposed by many others in society, while others take a pluralistic stance, recognizing that their views may not be appropriate for all. Still others hold their views in a tentative, uncertain manner. Taylor compares the search for a believable framework that permits one to make sense of one's life to that which MacIntyre calls a quest. People who quest after

an unchallengeable framework are, Taylor thinks, under pressure to escape the culturally rife sense of a "loss of horizon".²¹

In the face of reductive theses, Taylor addresses this despair by maintaining that it is impossible to do without frameworks:

...the horizons within which we live our lives and which make sense of them have to include these strong qualitative discriminations. Moreover, this is not meant just as a contingently true psychological fact about human beings....Rather the claim is that living within such strongly qualified horizons is constitutive of human agency, that stepping outside these limits would be tantamount to stepping outside what we would recognize as integral, that is, undamaged human personhood. (Taylor 1989, 27)

People who define their identity in terms of moral or spiritual commitments determine what is good or worthwhile, admirable or of value based on this frame. This is a position close to that of MacIntyre, who argued that

the individual's search for his or her good is generally and characteristically conducted within a context defined by those traditions of which the individual's life is a part....(MacIntyre, 207)

For Taylor, we orient ourselves in accordance with our identity and our ability to speak from it. (Taylor 1989, 29) However, he emphasizes that our identity is deeper and more complex than any possible articulated frameworks, though we are usually able to find our bearings. But to do so - to orient ourselves in moral space - requires the strong evaluations possible only within frameworks. (Taylor 1989, 30) In Taylor's view, we consider those who lack a framework to be pathological. (Taylor 1989, 31)

²¹ Taylor 1989, 19. I will argue, however that what some perceive as a loss, others may perceive as a liberation.

In the previous section, we saw the modern tendency to objectify the self, to construe it as describable without reference to interpretations, meanings or surroundings. Against this, Taylor is presenting, as do Sandel and MacIntyre, a constitutive account of the self. In Taylor's terms, the self is constituted by self-interpretations, although never completely: "full articulacy is an impossibility". (Taylor 1989, 34)

The way that interpretation involves articulation is a recurrent subject in Taylor's work.²² According to his view, "webs of interlocution" serve a purpose similar to that which "traditions" do for MacIntyre: "...identity thus usually involves not only his stand on moral and spiritual matters but also some reference to a defining community". (Taylor 1989, 36) Like MacIntyre, Taylor argues that the dependence on webs of interlocution can be altered but never severed:

Each young person may take up a stance which is authentically his or her own; but the very possibility of this is enframed in a social understanding of great temporal depth, in fact, in a "tradition".²³

This is Taylor's response to the the ubiquitous individualism of modernity that was noted in Chapter Three.

Taylor is also interested in reclaiming the notion of the 'good'. For Taylor, to speak of the self as requiring frameworks is also to say that "we cannot do without some orientation to the good". (Taylor 1989, 33) Frameworks are the context in which we can ask "the relative question about how near or far we are from the good". (Taylor 1989, 45)

²² See especially, "What is Human Agency?" and "Self-Interpreting Animals", in Human Agency and Language, op. cit..

²³ Taylor 1989,39. Compare this to MacIntyre: "A tradition is sustained and advanced by its own internal arguments and conflicts". (MacIntyre, 242)

Because our proximity to the good is challenged by the new events of our lives, and always potentially revisable, we must think of our lives in terms of directedness. Hence Taylor also construes our lives as requiring a coherent narrative in the form of a quest. (Taylor 1989, 47-8)

And because the self cannot be defined, as could Locke's 'punctual self', without certain constitutive concerns, Taylor agrees with MacIntyre's stipulation that the self is essentially a unity. He supports this by first assuming that we all seek meaningful, substantial lives that grow toward fullness (constitutive concerns), then by stating that this necessarily means our *whole* lives. (Taylor 1989, 50) Further, he argues that looking at the past as not constituting a whole is to accept a certain 'mutilation' as a person, a failure to make sense of one's past. He is claiming that we all are faced with this challenge, and that we cannot make sense of our lives without living up to it. I see no reason, however, why this should be so.

I argued in Chapter Five that often upon reflection the most sense we can make of our lives may involve incoherencies and contradictions, and that to unify these may require, on some level, a simplification or falsification. I think that we must be willing to accept the lack of unity in our lives as a mirror of the complexity of social/moral life if we are to avoid self-deception. I'm not, of course, saying that threads may not run through our entire lives ("I was always trying to live up to some fantastic image", "I never let myself feel", "I always put God/my family/others first"), or that a quest may not continue until death ("I never gave up on you", "I always knew I would come to understand why x had to be", "I just wanted people to be able to say after I was gone that I had some integrity"), but merely that we cannot always expect to understand our lives this way in every respect.

To this I would add the stronger claim, 'nor should we'. But should one concur even with the weaker claim, then I think Taylor's adherence to this point of MacIntyre's is not consistent with a principle of his own. According to Taylor's 'Best Account' (BA) principle, the best account we can give of our lives should not be set aside by any more general epistemological or metaphysical principle. Terms of explanation, that is, should not be permitted to trump or exclude the terms which people cannot avoid using to make sense of their lives. (Taylor 1989, 58)

It seems to me that the notion of the narrative unity of a whole life from birth to death is one such 'more general epistemological or metaphysical principle'. As such, it should not be permitted to supplement or override the best account we can give of our lives. If it is accepted that at times, certain aspects of our life histories elude or do not best lend themselves to narrative characterization and cannot be made to 'fit' with other aspects, then I would argue that it is not in keeping with the spirit of the BA principle to impose such a unity. I use the expression 'the spirit of' because the principle is developed and utilized in a slightly different context in Taylor's text.

Specifically, Taylor is directing his strictures at those who attempt to explain life by means of theories which disregard altogether the terms that figure in the non-explanatory contexts of our lives. He argues that we use certain terms in explaining and understanding ourselves and others. Further, he thinks (given the BA principle) that our metaphysical understanding of values and reality should be based on that to which we cannot help having recourse in life. In other words, moral experience must support beliefs about what is real. (Taylor 1989, 59-60)

One part of moral experience that Taylor wants to retrieve is our experience of hypergoods. Recall that hypergoods play a major role in valuations not only because they are the most important goods, but also because they provide standards by which we can evaluate and order other goods.

Taylor's sophisticated naturalism proposes that valuations and hence, hypergoods are among our perceptions of the world, and not separable from a way of life. Thus, for Taylor, understanding the distinctions marked by one's value words represents an increase in knowledge. (Taylor 1989, 67) In this, the similarities between his naturalism and Sandel's account of self-knowledge are evident.

The important question that must follow becomes the status of the knowledge Taylor is referring to here. He asks if moral knowledge is relative to a given way of life. In other words, given the range of different hypergoods in the valuations of different people, how can we show a claim related to a hypergood (and hence a way of life) to be valid?

His answer is a Wittgensteinian one. He views our language to be such that we must construe virtue terms (for example, courage) as objective in the way we consider judgements such as "red" or "square". (Taylor 1989, 68) What these virtue terms pick out is real to us:

If we cannot deliberate effectively, or understand and explain people's action illuminatingly, without such terms as 'courage' or 'generosity', then these are real features of our world. (Taylor 1989, 69)

As such, questions of relativism are not possible, as we all speak from a way of life which we take to involve a moral orientation which is right. (Taylor 1989, 99) Thus, there is no purchase from which the goods enshrined in a given way of life can be shown as wrong or inadequate. Cultural relativity is, on his account, "a fatality, an in-principle limit."

I think this point relies on the assumption that we cannot both (a) recognize that our orientation to a hypergood is one among others which are equally valid given its location in a way of life and (b) take seriously our own orientation. One reason Taylor may find this unlikely is that he equates taking an orientation to a hypergood seriously with enjoying certainty in regards to the hypergood.

Without wanting to enter into debates around standpoint epistemologies, I want to suggest that certainty around a hypergood (that faith in Christ will save my soul, that everybody has equal rights) can only be obtained within the world view connected to that moral orientation. Hence just as Taylor argues that there is no purchase from which we can view our hypergood as one among others, I wish to argue that there is no purchase external to our way of life to justify that good. Given that moral justification is internal to a sensibility in this way, we can enjoy a level of certainty without requiring universalizability. Hence we do not require certainty of the external sort to take seriously our moral orientations. Nor is our hypergood (necessarily) threatened by the acknowledgement of other equally worthy ways of life.

However this does not entail that we are unlikely to privilege our own hypergoods and urge others to orientate their lives similarly around them. Much of moral life involves this kind of activity. Nonetheless, as Taylor observes, convincing another of the value of a way of life does not take the form of practical reason. This is because moral reasoning is not like reasoning in the natural sciences. By abstracting from the moral intuitions one has, one becomes incapable of understanding moral argument at all. According to Taylor's view, I enjoy a purchase on reality because I am moved by a hypergood.²⁴

²⁴ See Taylor 1989, 73 and 75.

Thus convincing another may involve describing the good in such a way that the other may be similarly moved and want to make that description her own. (Taylor 1989, 77) That practical reason is sometimes inappropriate here is a good reason to reject the paradigm of natural sciences in moral thinking. The influence of this paradigm has led to the marginalization or rejection of such things as "higher goods". (Taylor 1989, 79) At other times, qualitative distinctions are considered irrelevant, unreal or as illusory projections when considered in light of this paradigm. (Taylor 1989, 80) The paradoxical effect of modern moral philosophy, then, has been to make us "inarticulate on some of the most important issues of morality". (Taylor 1989, 89)

And, as we have seen, modern notions of the self, its individuality and priority to interpretation, fail to acknowledge the extent to which our understanding of the self is intertwined with our visions of the good. Taylor seems to hold that this acknowledgement entails that there is simply no point of view from which we could be moral relativists. Just as Sandel argued that as constitutive selves, we cannot accept the presumptions of liberalism, Taylor maintains that because we are imbedded in a moral orientation that we take to be right, we cannot hold that all moral views are equally arbitrary. (Taylor 1989, 99)

Taylor thinks that deviant forms of an ethic of authenticity have resulted from such assumptions: that an atomistic focus on our individual goals dissolves community and divides us from each other. (Taylor 1989, 501)

By retrieving the moral sources behind what we take to be goods, Taylor attempts to connect us to each other. While acknowledging the variety of different cultural forms and value systems, he doubts that they are "really incommensurable". He thinks that there is a way of

presenting the transition from one culture to another as a gain or loss. (Taylor 1989, 61) Here the broader structure of Taylor's argument becomes clearer.

Although Taylor has ruled out the possibility of a relativism about culture, he doesn't think this is a problem. For, as we shall see, Taylor holds the unsettling position that society has not been confronted with a culture which has forced us to recognize moral incommensurability! (Taylor 1989, 62)

I think there is a problematic assumption behind this claim. A distressing feature that pervades Taylor's discussion of culture is the assumption that he can unproblematically speak of modernity as a common background, and "us" as heirs to that common heritage.

In Sources of The Self, for example, his historical account of philosophical changes reveals that they "are carried by and articulate a large-scale transformation in common assumptions and sensibility". (Taylor 1989, 305) He takes himself to be describing a new moral culture which "radiates outward and downward" and, in the end, engenders "a family of resembling moral cultures, or certain civilization-wide traits". In spite of variations among nations and class, he purports to detect common themes. (Taylor 1989, 305) Hence, he suggests that some articulations can be spoken of as fitting or as capturing the spirit of an unreflecting practice.

Modern moral culture, as Taylor sees it, is one of multiple moral sources, yet throughout Taylor's analysis he seems to be following a policy of 'the fewer the better'. For example, in his discussion of secularization in the West, Taylor observes that rather than education or advances in science it was the availability of new senses of moral sources that made a Deist notion of order optional. (Taylor 1989, 310, 313) Even though he limits the movements of these

sources to two general directions, that they are plural at all seems to pose problems. One begins to wonder if it is truly *pluralism* that Taylor is critical of or *plurality*. He tells us, for example that "the fact that the directions are multiple contributes to our sense of uncertainty". Further, he suggests that "all positions are problematized by the fact that they exist in a field of alternatives". (Taylor 1989, 317)

We may recall that MacIntyre, faced with the incommensurability of modern moral intuitions which cannot be rationally arbitrated, chose to restore moral certainty by locating the subject in a narrative, itself imbedded in a tradition. Taylor, in tracing the historical sources of fractured horizons, attempts to emphasize what is common over what is contradictory, incommensurable, or existing in a field of apparent alternatives. Hence, rather than as rival cultures, he casts the new secular moral sources as complementary, and in fact argues that a secular humanism *continuously* depends on Judaeo-Christian faith. (Taylor 1989, 318-9) By smoothing over discontinuities and incompatible alternative frameworks, Taylor is able to illuminate "*the* modern identity as *we* live it today". (Taylor 1989, 319, emphasis added)

I think that Taylor's key observation coming out of this analysis is in regard to shifts in moral orientations. Rather than making choices based on basic reasons, we come to be moved by and subsequently acquire different articulations of the good. While I don't propose to have an alternative account of Western secularization, I suspect that had it been a more contemporary occurrence, it might have escaped characterization into merely two general sorts of secular sensibility. Indeed our age is marked by a vast range of alternative sensibilities that elude simple generalization. The variety of value systems confronting, for example, late twentieth-century urban dwellers is increasingly remote from modern origins and likely to be resistant to

connections with a common moral source (or range of sources). In other words, that one can credibly speak of an Enlightenment sensibility or a Romantic view of nature may have to do with the temporal remoteness of these histories, or with an actual paucity of secular ways of life. To extend these inheritances to a persisting public domain of references (Taylor 1989, 492) or to "the moral and spiritual intuitions of our contemporaries" (Taylor 1989, 4) is to emphasize the continuities of contemporary sensibilities over the multiplicity of communities with which they are associated.

Because Taylor thinks he has retrieved our common moral sources, he thinks he has reestablished connections between people and seems comfortable speaking of "our culture". One result of imputing common moral sources to "us", is that even while dissolving boundaries amongst us, it creates artificial boundaries between 'us' and 'other cultures'.²⁵ The possibility of facing incommensurability can thus emerge on these boundaries, rather than within. In asking how a cross-cultural critical claim can be valid, he is assuming that there are hypergoods of 'our society', despite admitting that societal boundaries are "hard to draw in any case".

It seems to me that Taylor continually fails to recognize the diversity of value systems amongst those he considers heirs to modernity. Despite a conscious effort to do justice to differences, he falls "into too seamless a picture of the continuities". (Taylor 1989, 95) How else could he conclude that we have not met the limit of the universalizability of the goods he is defining and criticising. (Taylor 1989, 62) In short, this is because in his view our *culture* is our *society*, commensurability seems to have been attained.

Recall Sandel's conflation of community and society. Sandel's text is an alternative to

²⁵ See Taylor 1989, 61-2.

liberalist assumptions which begin with the diversity of ends. Taylor's methodology, by contrast, proposes not to start with a preshrunken moral universe where goods are *a priori* incommensurable. MacIntyre, in this regard, faults liberalism for its failure to presume a concept of community which is a basis for shared judgements about virtue and injustice.²⁶ With Young and Friedman, I think a theory of community should begin rather with the pervasive fact of difference. Just as unifying a single life into a historical narrative unity can simplify and falsify, seeking a common moral background shared by our contemporaries can render important differences invisible.

We noted in Chapter Three that Taylor is concerned that people are less rooted in their communities of origin as a result of corrupted notions of authenticity. Before moving on to a more adequate theory of community, I want to isolate another reason that Taylor offers for wanting to retrieve common moral sources.

Taylor is strongly opposed to the fragmentation that results from acknowledging the incommensurability of differences in values within a society. One consequence Taylor observes of fragmentation is that society has been organized in the defence of rights. (Taylor 1991, 114) This development has brought about an atrophy of majority democratic support of meaningful programs, and an unbalanced system (Taylor 1991, 117) in which it is difficult to enact common projects. What counts as meaningful programs here is not clear, though one can assume that meaningful programs resulting from a common identity are going to marginalize and exclude those who don't share in that identity.

Rather than the liberation of silenced, marginalized voices, Taylor takes "special interest

²⁶ See MacIntyre, 233-6.

politics" (Taylor 1991, 115) to be the engendering of adversarial fragmentation in which single-issue campaigns blind society to its common background. In doing so, he seems to speak from a voice which has historically been privileged in that it has been a voice with relatively little adversity, thus the presumed voice of a common identity. From this perspective, the emergence of empowered, formerly oppressed voices will of course appear as the fragmentation of "society". I think there is good reason to presume that the malaise of moderns is probably the malaise of the formerly powerful being forced to recognize the very real diversity within and between communities that constitute contemporary society.

This new empowerment is an acknowledgement that not all value systems reflect a common moral horizon or background. Not surprisingly, it is this phenomenon that Taylor casts as a degenerate form of the ethic of authenticity. He argues that although authenticity is self-referential, one's orientation can be toward something beyond oneself. (Taylor 1991, 82) He compares this to artistic language. The contemporary poet, no longer able to draw on a publicly understood range of subjects, invokes a language of articulated sensibility. (Taylor 1991, 84) This sensibility, is a "world of references" or "context of images" which individual images are related to. Those whose sensibility resonates like the poets are able to understand a poet's images because they are versed in the language of articulation in which the images are at home. (Taylor 1991, 87)

Thus Taylor argues that artistic imagery or poetry is not mere self-expression. Any language employed, verbal or otherwise, consists of individual intuitions which map the publicly available background. Poetic language is inescapably linked with personal sensibility. (Taylor 1991, 89) Against subjectivism, Taylor holds that we need the languages of personal resonance

in order to explore moral intuitions as well. He thus connects the command of authenticity to be "true to ourselves" with a wider whole. (Taylor 1991, 91)

I have been tracing throughout the last three chapters, the communitarian project of connecting persons to a wider whole. Sandel, MacIntyre and Taylor emphasize a 'thick' (situated, constituted) notion of persons against modern atomistic conceptions. I have also been attempting to mitigate the dichotomy between atomism, radical choice, and instrumental reason, on one hand, and a recognition of a common purpose and identification with the political community of a society, on the other. In other words, I think it is possible to address inadequacies in modern conceptions of the self without jeopardizing the autonomy of the person. By considering the claims of Young and Friedman, I hoped to show that communitarians are often considered to be doing just this. I have not been defending by any means an atomistic conception of radically choosing, antecedently individuated selves, but I do not think this conception is the only alternative to the accounts of self and community that communitarians suggest. Hence, I have been critical of the notion of selves seen as embedded in communities of shared understandings and common moral sources, and as bearers of uncorruptible tradition.

Consequently, while self understanding and 'being true to oneself' do not occur without reference to a wider whole, I disagree with Taylor over that in which that wider whole consists. He seems to think that this wider whole consists of one's fellow citizens in a political community. Thus he seems to address his reader as an heir to the same or same set of moral sources.

I have tried to show that communitarians in general take this wider whole, the "community", to be society as a whole. And, if there is discussion of smaller communities, these

seem to be in turn connected to a wider tradition with a common purpose. On such a view, pluralism can only be regarded as a degenerate and destructive fragmentation.

What we need in a theory of community is a treatment of sensibility which pays more than lip service to the very real, often divisive, sometimes incommensurably diverse natures of value systems, rather than attempting to connect them to some common moral source. The fact is that moral sources are "multiple, crosscutting fluid and shifting", to borrow a phrase of Young's. (Young Ideal, 48) Not only are they not the common sources of a society, but it is difficult to predicate them of any social group, although there is a connection between sensibility and community. It is with this connection, and not that between community and society that a theory of community must begin. The community, in other words, needs to be "dislocated". (Friedman, Feminism) In the final part, I will first point out five things that a theory of community should show. Then in Chapters eight and nine, I will suggest a theory of community as sensibility. By way of conclusion, I will return to the five requirements of a theory of community and summarize the features of community as sensibility that meet these conditions.

PART THREE: TOWARDS A THEORY OF COMMUNITY

CHAPTER 7. WHAT SHOULD WE EXPECT FROM A THEORY OF COMMUNITY?

In the previous section, I tried to show how a communitarian position often invokes a false dichotomy. In most cases, these dichotomies function as rhetorical devices to sway the liberal theorist and the emotivist toward a dramatically different view of the self. In others, the actual cogency of the argument rests on agreeing that a particular state of affairs is the only alternative to some unacceptable postulation of modernity.

Taylor was thus seen as arguing that the alternative to conceding common moral horizons was to agree that we are doomed to make radical choices in a world devoid of meaning and within a culture which advocates alienated, hollow authenticity. Similarly, MacIntyre tells us that unless we acknowledge the narrative unity of our lives and the importance of tradition, moral life will be riddled with a certain "subversive arbitrariness". (MacIntyre, 189)

The result of these dichotomies has been to present a notion of community as indispensable to an adequate understanding of the self. But while such theories utilize a notion of constitute communities, it is never really clear how communities in fact constitute persons. This is especially the case when community, as I pointed out in reference to Sandel, is conflated with groups of people or even "society". To what degree are we constituted by communities according to these theories? And does autonomy play any role at all in our actions? If so, how can this be the case? Perhaps most importantly, is a constitutive view of the self necessarily at odds with a liberalism?

Friedman argues that simple formulas about the value of community provide no guidance

in sorting out our many attachments, or evaluating conflicting claims or perspectives of various communities. Communitarians seem to assume that somehow it will all make coherent sense to us, whether by reflection or resonance. Such a view underestimates the diversity of communal affinities to the point that it is not useful at all. As Friedman puts it:

The problem is not simply to appreciate community *per se* but, rather, to reconcile the conflicting claims, demands, and identity-defining influences of the variety of communities of which one is a part. (Friedman Feminism, 282)

Taking a side in the distinction between antecedently individuated atomic selves and persons whose ends involve shared or common goods does little to address the complexity of moral life.

I think that part of the reason it is difficult to defend a communitarian view from criticism is that what 'community' implies is so rarely spelled out. And, aside from being urged not to think of the self merely individualistically, or atomistically, it is not clear how these writers would rather we think. With Friedman, I think that what is needed is an explicit theory of community.

As I have indicated, in this section I wish to show the direction such a theory should take. Given what has preceded, I think we can specify five criteria for a theory of community:

1. It should explain how it is that persons are 'constituted' by community, yet in a way that is not wholly definitive. It must, that is, explain how members of the same community can be similarly constituted and yet different.
2. It must further indicate how people can have shifting affinities, multiple group attachments, and a multitude of identifications with various communities, and yet not be an "individual" in the modern sense. In other words, given the diversity which results from the fact that no two people are entirely constituted in exactly the same way, why do we even need to reject the atomistic notion of autonomous individuals?

3. It must account for some sort of human freedom and responsibility without resorting to a notion of radical choice.
4. It must provide a critical mechanism, or an account of how one can identify and escape an oppressive or undesirable state of affairs within a community, without positing an objective 'view from nowhere', or archimedean point from which to evaluate community structures.
5. Finally, it should be able to describe the institutional or political arrangements required to encourage community to flourish as constituent of identity, while avoiding an oppressive or antiquated conservatism. It should answer the question: what kind of society will be responsive to group identities and yet permit some degree of autonomy?

A theory of community as sensibility can answer all these questions and meet all these expectations satisfactorily. A notion of persons being constituted by sensibilities which in turn are associated with various communities will provide a third term to the dichotomies isolated above. I will argue that we can maintain a thick notion of persons without implying a static morally normative legitimacy to oppressive community values. In other words, I think that as persons who make sense of their lives through sensibilities, we can be *autonomous* without being *atoms*.

CHAPTER 8. SENSIBILITY IS A WAY OF BEING *IN* AND *TOWARDS* THE WORLD.

In literary criticism, the term 'voice' points beyond the utterances of fictional characters or narration to the sense of a pervasive presence, a determinate intelligence and moral sensibility, which has selected, ordered, rendered, and expressed literary materials in just this particular way. This authorial presence imbues the text with controlling forces coloured by values, beliefs and moral vision throughout.

In our lives, these controlling forces and pervasive presences are what I will call sensibility. As in the Kantian sense, sensibility (*Sinnlichkeit*) is receptive (passive), and determines or forms experience but is not antecedent to all experience, as it develops and manifests itself in the course of our lives. However, in this work the term will take on a sense quite distinct from its applications in Kant's work. As I want to use the term, sensibility shapes our perception, but is also itself shaped. We are affected by phenomena in accord with our sensibilities, but our sensibilities are themselves affected.

I want to be able to use the terms "way of being-in-the-world" and "form of life" interchangeably with sensibility to bring to the fore the Heideggerian and Wittgensteinian dimensions of this notion. In particular, to stress that sensibilities are not an optional extra, but rather constituent of our identity, in that we cannot be in the world except through sensibility. Also, that sensibilities have a status independent of persons.

The communitarians we have been considering and Heidegger seem to concur in their criticism of atomistic, individualistic conceptions of the self in which the self is given prior to experience. Sandel, for example, problematizes Rawls' notion of a "veil of ignorance" by

emphasizing the situated subject, who is only in the world as an embodied identity.

For Heidegger, one is not able to perceive the world with the neutrality of a camera lens, registering fact from some objective perspective:

We must keep in mind that knowing is grounded beforehand in a Being-already-alongside-the-world, which is essentially constitutive for Dasein's being. Proximally, this Being-already-alongside is not just a fixed staring at something that is purely present-at-hand. Being-in-the-world, as concern, is fascinated by the world with which it is concerned. (Being and Time, Chapter 13)

For Heidegger, we are both *in* and *towards* the world. Far from the agent of objective, instrumental reason, humans (*Dasein*) behave with a certain concern, an attitude or mood, towards the world. It is the value-ladenness of our sensibilities that I hope to emphasize by (loosely) using this notion of Heidegger.

Simultaneously, a sensibility is a 'form of life' in the Wittgensteinian sense. To bring out this dimension, and to illustrate the role of language in a way of life, consider sensibility as reflected in the idiosyncratic language of friends.

The term 'friendship' describes a relation between people, but we use the term as a noun - as if to pick out something concrete itself. I think one reason that we do this is that friendship is a way of being with another which is generated by the creative and constitutive process of talk. It is through talk that we not only come to know another by exchanging information but also create something. The creative process of friendship is facilitated by talk. Shared symbols, methods of articulation, the mediums of interaction that make meaningful inter-relatedness possible are developed in talking. Indeed, quality time with those whose company we seek consists at times of mere talk: private jokes, imagined situations, metaphoric language, new ways of thinking come about.

This social product defines us, is constitutive of our identity and maintains the connectedness between ourselves and others. By connecting, it is created, and it also connects us. It is a form of life, a sensibility.

Rather than universal, it is often particular to a small group, much like a code, yet more spontaneous and natural, and less rigorous and defined. As Lorraine Code points out, it is not possible to substitute one friend for another. (Code, 96) A sensibility is in constant flux. It is like a persona, available to us most readily during interaction with those with whom it was/is developed. It is a '*micro* symbolic system'.

In his essay "Language and Human Nature"²⁷, Charles Taylor traces the impact of construing language 'expressively' in this manner:

...we can see that the expressive conception gives a view of language as a range of activities in which we express/realize a certain way of being in the world. And this way of being has many facets. It is...that by which we have come to have the properly human emotions, and constitute our human relations, including those of the language community within which language grows.

An example from my own experience may help illustrate the way that, through language, we are in the world in a certain way, and the way that language can constitute our relations with others by shaping our sensibilities. I have a friend whose father is a large, boisterous, strongly opinionated entrepreneur. Through the course of many years of friendship, I came to understand much of what her father represented to her. This was transmitted through personal anecdote, humour, and exaggerated or imagined scenarios.

Eventually, the expression 'dad' came to symbolize a rich, complex network of

²⁷ In Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers 1, op. cit., page 234.

meanings. The symbol was further shaped as the 'dad' figure was reinterpreted, re-positioned, and otherwise shaped by its use in our interaction. My own values and interpretive faculties altered the symbol. Hence, by injecting "my dad" into a joke, or anecdote, something was communicated that could not be reduced to the mere historical figure of who my friend's father was. Although the concept was generalized, it seems to me insufficient to view it as a 'type', because much of what the symbol grew to become was dependent on its use and development through the interaction of my friend with me. Hence, my friend could say in jest that "my 'dad' was on the plane next to me for hours" and only I would understand the mix of anxiety and irony that would have accompanied the occurrence. Here, language is used expressively and without strict designation, connected to a form of life.

Another example that may be useful is a ritual that was enacted by two close friends. When confronted with an embarrassing or awkward fact about their lives (usually social), they would recall a common acquaintance in similar but more embarrassing or awkward conditions, and gleefully chant, "*there's someone worse than us! There's someone worse than us!*". This ritual was a source of humour which drew on their mutual understanding of what it means to be embarrassed or rejected, and probably on their mutual awareness of how they both tend towards reassuring themselves in this way (though perhaps less overtly). Although I was amused by this, I knew that I could only partially understand what was involved in the ritual - its history, and so on. After spending some time with them, I was able to initiate the chanting myself, which seemed to indicate an increased awareness, an understanding of their shared values. Only in use could I come to understand its role. Only by playing the language game could I know the aspect of these other people which consisted in this expression. I was able to

enact their sensibility.

In both these cases, a shared way of relating to the world is embodied in a mutually understood language. If this is Wittgensteinian, it is so insofar as language constituted for him, a shared way of life (to imagine a language is to imagine a form of life). I think this process is a familiar one and that the above description is one likely to resonate with anyone who can describe themselves as having been 'close' with another.

It is precisely because our ways of relating to others and the world are shared that friendship entails a certain responsibility. Our way of relating to others is often particular to specific relationships in which we have developed such mechanisms - language, customs, etc.. We can relate to certain people only through such shared sensibilities. In the case of close friends with whom we spend a lot of time, idiosyncratic language and the sensibility engendered by it become a large and significant part of the way we interpret and respond to the world. Given this, we come to trust that when we use these symbols and understandings in communicating with a close friend with whom they are common, we will be understood on those terms. It would be absurd to hold a friend accountable for dictionary definitions of the creative language drawn upon. My friend trusts that when she says, "my dad", I will understand the term in a certain way.²⁸ It becomes a responsibility to maintain the symbolic system, and allow it to flourish by responding to it. In so doing, one permits the expression of what becomes a crucial part of another, insofar as we are in the world through these sensibilities. In other words,

²⁸ This is a Wittgensteinian point that Richard Rorty makes quite well: "The decision about whether to have higher than usual standards for the application of words...is, as far as I can see, not a debateable issue." See his Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature. Princeton University Press, 1979, 311.

in failing to respond to another by enacting a shared sensibility, one neglects their constituent nature.

In a sense, we develop a persona that is a crucial part of our person, and that depends on the receptiveness of the appropriate other for its employment in expression. It is as if it is unavailable to us without the other. In this way, such sensibilities are related to community. The unique, multifarious persons we are with those we relate to are like masks that we cannot wear alone. Because we know people by knowing the way that they use language and that language is used in ways specific to various sensibilities, to know another is to participate in the sensibilities and linguistic practices which constitute her. To be part of a community (in the sense of 'the gay community' or 'the academic community') is to be readily able to participate in the sensibilities developed and maintained by a cultural or social group. Yet this is no easy task. Consider the times when you find yourself a stranger amongst a group of intimate friends whose way of relating, whose expressive language, leaves you hearing their words but not entirely understanding their utterances. Consider also the way that entire cultural communities will share sensibilities that you are at a loss to understand, even when they are 'explained' to you. Given this, Taylor's observation that commensurability seems to have been attained seems to me absurd.

This is not to suggest that we are unable to interpret the world without the immediate availability of a particular other. Often a way of seeing something makes us miss someone, or anticipate eagerly the opportunity to share it with her. In addition, a disciplined moral imagination and intelligence can remain alive to the possibilities present in the endless variations of interpretations. (Kekes, 3) But it seems to me that we need other people to exemplify these

moral possibilities. And sometimes it is only in the company of another that we can fully *be* in a particular way, to engage a particular sensibility. This is what Taylor means by describing people as internal to our identity. (Taylor 1991, 34)

When this engagement is no longer possible for whatever reason, we can lose touch with a part of ourselves - become disconnected. A way of being-in-the-world is henceforth inaccessible, or at least, deprived of expression. This is a large part of what is considered 'missing' another. It also partially explains why confining someone to isolation is such a drastic punitive measure.

Taylor argues that the availability of our linguistic community as a viable pole of identification is indispensable to our being full human subjects. (Taylor 1991, 53) This point becomes overextended however when Taylor concludes that developing and nursing the commonalities of value between us become important, insofar as 'commonalities' is intended to capture a whole society or political community. For Taylor, difference is somehow grounded in common standards of value which compose a shared horizon of significance. This is quite a different account than my own, according to which the standards of value themselves are grounded in a sensibility which may ultimately be inaccessible to us.²⁹

Now I do not want necessarily to expand the notion of "community" to include individual friendships. However, I would suggest that friends tend to be those who share sensibilities, and that we have an affinity toward those with similar sensibilities. We are 'at home' in communities. Further, thinking of sensibilities as developed, shaped and maintained within friendships does effectively emphasize the idiosyncratic nature of sensibilities. And this is the

²⁹ See Taylor 1991, 51-2.

point that I am making against many communitarians. As Murdoch claims, our language is more idiosyncratic than is traditionally recognized by philosophers.³⁰

Insofar as Sandel develops a constituent account of the self - a "community describing the subject" - I want to argue that it is sensibility that constitutes persons. The morally relevant connection between persons and social groups or communities of location is sensibility. 'Communities', as groups of persons, are those who share sensibilities. 'Communities' as that which constitute our identity are however, sensibilities. Recall the distinction I made in Chapter Four between the two uses of 'community' in Sandel's book. I am suggesting that community as that which makes "claims on our allegiance" and that "whose purposes should govern the disposition of any particular set of our attributes and endowments" (Sandel, 146) is sensibility.

Sensibilities represent a "common vocabulary of discourse and a background of implicit practices and understandings", yet can in no way be predicated of a whole society (at least not of any society remotely like our own). Hence, as the "wider subject" of reflection, sensibilities constitute persons but upon reflection, different persons will find themselves discerning vastly different set. of values and imperatives. One's "ideals and moral vision" are aligned by reflection (Kekes, 17), and that which is meaningful is only seen to be through interpretation in accord with my sensibility. In Kekes' words, a "person's sensitivity to a moral situation depends,

³⁰ Lorraine Code reminds us that all speech acts are attended by problems of interpretation, understanding and evaluation. Translation thus has to take place not just across gender lines, but those of race, class, sexual preference, age, etc.. She argues that we cannot assume a common language, although extreme relativism is implausible because translation and communication succeed enough in practice. (Code, 58-9. See also Code, 163, where she discusses the possibilities of insight and understanding opened up by interpersonally constructed knowledge. She compares knowing others to hermeneutics, arguing that the skills are "not so different". (Code, 114)).

in the first instance, on the moral idioms available to him". (Kekes, 7)

By 'moral idioms', Kekes means the "approving and disapproving descriptions" available to a person. (Kekes, 7) The significance that moral idioms have for us is enhanced by, on one hand, "the understanding that conventional morality is only the form of morality one happens to be born into", and, on the other, "the inwardly directed understanding of the significance of moral idioms". These he calls the *breadth* and *depth* of our understanding of moral idioms. It is the latter which protects us from a facile relativism. (Kekes, 8)

Using an example from literature, Kekes shows that the recognition of moral breadth is only one aspect of moral sensitivity. That the morality of Paris differs from that of a smaller town is a simpler recognition than one requiring depth as well as breadth. Even deeper moral sensitivity is indicated by the recognition of real possibilities of preferring one over the other.

I have shown that meanings can predominate within a sensibility which may be elusive to an outsider. These meanings are part of the 'logic' of a sensibility, itself a distinct value system. Although persons have sensibilities in common, it is because we are capable of depth (that our values as reflected in our understandings of moral idioms are always potentially revisable), and because of the sheer number of diverse sensibilities shared by groups, that one will never share identical (moral) perceptions with another. Hence although two persons may share community affinities, they will always remain distinct.

Failure to recognize the diversity amongst community members results in stereotypical responses to persons. Failure to acknowledge that one's form of life, nonetheless, is generated by and connects one to others results in a blindness to the role of community in identity. In this way, a notion of community as sensibility fulfills the first requirement of a theory of community.

9. SENSIBILITIES ARE VALUE SYSTEMS

For Sandel, we saw that the relevant moral question is not "what should I do?" but rather "who am I". MacIntyre tries to show that "our culture" lacks any public, shared rationale or justification of morality, and that attempts at putting reason into the equation as arbitrator have failed.³¹ Yet he detects a myriad of manipulative modes of practice occurring alongside an incommensurable notion of autonomy.³² Taylor uncovers a prominent but deviant ethic of authenticity according to which we are compelled to be unique, individuals true to ourselves, yet we have inherited convictions and moral sources from modernity.

All these views point to some sort of foundation for moral evaluation which must be found through self-understanding. In Sandel's case, this involves inquiring into our constituent nature, for MacIntyre, it means attending to some sort of narrative quest in our lives rooted in tradition. For Taylor, it seems to recommend a retrieval of our shared moral horizons.

I have been developing a notion of sensibility as constitutive of our identity according to which we are in the world through sensibilities, symbolic systems that are public and related to language and social group. In this Chapter, I want to show that our intuitions, moral compulsions and attitudes come about as a result of being in the world with a certain sensibility. I want to suggest that sensibilities are themselves a value system with a sort of internal logic,

³¹ See MacIntyre, 48.

³² See MacIntyre, 66.

in accord with which we are compelled to identify and evaluate ethically meaningful activity.³³

SENSIBILITY AND "THE GOOD"

MacIntyre's account of virtues was developed in three stages. First, he considered virtues as qualities which help us to achieve the goods internal to practices. (MacIntyre, 178) Arguing, as we saw in Chapter two that the notion of practices is an insufficient background for all virtues, he then brought in the notion of the narrative unity of a whole life. Finally, he provided the concept of a tradition as defining the sort of quest that characterizes this narrative. I have argued first that the notion of narrative unity and traditions are unacceptable supplements to the notion of practices, and should not be taken to provide the context for virtues.

While I do wish to maintain that sensibilities are "distinct systems of desires" (Sandel, 178) providing the context of virtues, I first want to show why sensibilities are not "practices" as MacIntyre conceives them.

A practice, as a background, involves standards of excellence in the achievement of goods. (MacIntyre, 177) In practices the point and function of the virtues are located. (MacIntyre, 187) MacIntyre distinguishes internal goods as those that can only be recognized by participating in a practice. (MacIntyre, 176) A virtue then is that which helps us to achieve internal goods. (MacIntyre, 320) He adds that we need justice, courage and honesty to participate in practices and that this is because practices require relationships between

³³ Annette Baier has characterized morality as "the culturally acquired art of selecting which harms to notice and worry about, where the worry takes the form of bad conscience or resentment". See her essay, "Poisoning the Wells", in which she also claims that the "doctrine of the complex unity of the human good may seem unfounded optimism". (286, 263)

participants. It is with reference to virtues that we define our relationships to "those other people with whom we share the kind of purposes and standards which inform practices."³⁴

By contrast, the pursuit of external goods may be hindered by the possession of the virtues. External goods include such things as prestige, status and money. (MacIntyre, 176) Whereas achieving internal goods is good for the entire community which participates in the practice, it is characteristic of external goods that the competition for them produces losers as well as winners. (MacIntyre, 178) Hence, "the pleasures are categorised neatly and appropriately by the classification into internal and external goods". (MacIntyre, 184)

I am not convinced by this distinction between internal and external goods for a number of reasons. I do not, for example, understand why football and baseball are considered practices by MacIntyre when clearly they produce losers as well as winners. Further, I would be hesitant to impute ends and motivations to individual team members at all, yet MacIntyre seems to think that they are something other than prestige, status, power or money.

Indeed, engaging in any game or practice can have a variety of meanings for different practitioners. Perhaps Jones finds playing team sports ridiculous and is mocking the intensity of other players' performance by playing football in a silly, aggressive manner. Perhaps Smith has lost his joy in the game but needs to pay off his mortgage. Would MacIntyre argue that professional sports in the late twentieth century fail to constitute practices? While many may agree that fame and money are bigger factors in professional sports now than before, I find it hard to see what kind of qualitative change could have deprived it of the status of a practice for this reason. Why does a practice become 'corrupted', rather than simply 'changed', when the

³⁴ See MacIntyre 178-9.

ends become different?

I further disagree that, say, power or fame as an end necessarily produces losers and results in an individual's sole gain.³⁵ I think further analysis of the systemic and cultural nature of such structures as power and economics would make it difficult to pronounce such goods as simply external to practices. It seems to me that according to many contemporary sensibilities, the quest for fame is arguably a practice itself, regardless of how unworthy an end MacIntyre may judge it to be. After all, we live in an age in which people are famous solely for being famous. Further, the image of the small-town glory-seeker whose life's ambition is to be a star or to be rich has acquired archetypal status. MacIntyre would disqualify cultural manifestations of the "glamorous life" from constituting practices at all. This, I think is symptomatic of MacIntyre's narrow cultural focus and preconceived notion of the good life.

What this points to, in my view, is that MacIntyre's distinction between internal and external goods more accurately reflects his own evaluations of virtuous/deviant or meaningful/worthless or good/bad than any significant neutral distinction. The ends involved in certain activities which do not meet MacIntyre's approval, those that are not "good", become cast as external, and thus not indicative of any practice. Such a transparently arbitrary approach to contextualizing virtues is question begging. Because that which merits the title 'practice' is limited by predetermined considerations of what MacIntyre views as noble, worthwhile or meaningful pursuits, then the virtues internal to them will inevitably turn out to be of a certain sort.

³⁵ (MacIntyre 178) As an aside, I wonder if the game of Monopoly would be a practice on MacIntyre's account, with its ends of personal wealth and property acquisition and its requirement that one wins by causing others to lose.

This becomes especially clear when MacIntyre explicitly doubts that there are evil practices. How could there be given his narrow definition?! MacIntyre pronounces: "for I do not in fact believe that either torture or sado-masochistic sexuality answer to the description of a practice which my account of the virtues employs." Notice how sado-masochistic sexuality is not only denied the status of a practice but is pre-determined to be an evil on MacIntyre's account.

It must be pointed out that MacIntyre does allow that some practices may on a particular occasion be productive of evil.³⁶ What I find puzzling is whence comes this determination that any practice is evil given that virtues are defined in terms of the ends internal to a practice. MacIntyre tells us that we can appeal to the requirements of a virtue to criticise a practice. But this seems like using the scientific method to criticise the Enlightenment project! Or proving the certainty of deductive logic by appealing to the law of non-contradiction!

MacIntyre avoids such circularity, of course, by not restricting the definitive characterization of virtues to practices. I have already expressed dissatisfaction with MacIntyre's specific arguments for this claim in Chapter Five. Here, I wish to object to opposing "goods", as in "hypergoods", "goods internal to a practice" and "shared goods", to "evil".

We have noted that James D. Chansky is critical of MacIntyre's reluctance to address the place of what one may consider evil within a scheme of moral ideas. He argues that "to render Nazism intelligible as an ethic is exactly what we must do". In his view, it is

dangerously naive to view, as does MacIntyre, the centrality of opposition and conflict in human life as exclusively an opposition and conflict over rival conceptions of the good when the 'good' is understood in traditional terms as

³⁶ See MacIntyre, 186.

having no part in what is called evil. (Chansky, 253)

MacIntyre wants us to understand the good through certain kinds of practices and narrative tradition. Chansky however tries to show that we simply cannot define away evil, as Nazism too "has a narrative unity, a history in which it places itself, a set of virtues, practices, institutions and a telos...". (Chansky 253) He asks, "Can it really be maintained that 'most modern totalitarianism and terror has nothing to do with any commitment to virtue', that the 'ideal of public virtue' does not also 'breed totalitarianism?'" (Chansky, 252)

I think a theory of community should not, as in the case of practices, determine any kind of values which *a priori* are virtues of community, such as justice, courage, honesty. A theory of community which begins with diversity will consider criticisms of ways of life to be possible only with reference to the values of a constituent community. Only from a situated identity can any practice or end appear as evil or degenerate. There is no theoretical mechanism to weed out certain ways of life from equal consideration.³⁷

Given the overall goal of maintaining diversity and dislocating community, we can only formulate this notion in terms of sensibility, as a way of life that is its own justification. While sensibilities are moral orientations, I would be reluctant to term them 'orientations toward the good', since in so doing, we presuppose notions of what is good and as Chansky has argued, exclude articulation of what we may want to call evil as itself situated within a moral framework. It seems to me that only from a perspective within a certain sensibility can something strike one as appropriate, valuable or good, or, alternatively, evil. No such claim can

³⁷ This is what MacIntyre does by defining practices as being of a certain sort, requiring *a priori* certain virtues, aimed at certain ends.

be cast as objective without risking prejudice or marginalization of other potentially vibrant, perhaps meaningful, ways of life. MacIntyre's comments about sado-masochistic sexual activity is an instance of this.

The final indication I want to give of the direction a theory of community should take involves this difficult terrain. I now want to indicate how community conceived as sensibility could permit the revision and critique of a way of life without disqualifying or otherwise oppressing ways of life that may not fall within "shared horizons".

PERSONS ARE "AFFECTED" BY SENSIBILITIES

Although communitarian writers urge us to think of the self as constituted by community, tradition and moral orientations, it is unsettling to imagine that they would have us take the givens of our lives as irrevocably definitive. However, it is difficult to conceive how anything else could be possible at all on a communitarian account.

Sandel does, however, suggest that introspection involves surveying our various attachments. Taylor and MacIntyre both articulate a notion of continuing debate, although within traditions. Taylor in particular has painted a picture of moral life which involves learning and sharing articulations of the good. I think we can build on these insights in a way that could save communitarianism from some of the serious charges we have considered. When we revise our perspective, we often describe ourselves as "seeing things differently". Iris Murdoch relates a useful example of this in her book, The Sovereignty of Good.

Murdoch is interested in showing that thinking of morality in terms of action neglects our inner lives. She points to Wittgenstein's metaphor of the 'wheel which turns alone' as supporting

a popular image of the personality which is without a private inner life. Hence, "as the 'inner life' is hazy, largely absent, and any way 'not part of the mechanism', it turns out to be *logically* impossible to take up an idle contemplative attitude to the good", and morality thus comes to be associated with an agent's actions. (Murdoch, 15) Her example is intended to show how this is not necessarily the case.

A mother, M, feels hostile toward her daughter-in-law, D, feeling that her son has married beneath him. Over time, M comes to discover that D is "not vulgar but refreshingly simple, not undignified but spontaneous, not noisy but gay, not tiresomely juvenile but delightfully youthful, and so on". All of this, Murdoch stresses, has occurred in the absence of D, "entirely in M's mind". (Murdoch, 17)

Murdoch frames the activity in which M is engaged in coming to grips with her attitude towards D as an "inner struggle". (Murdoch, 21) Using the metaphor of vision, which is "almost irresistibly suggested", Murdoch describes the process as one in which "M looks at D, she attends to D, she focuses her attention". In the process, M is described as engaged in an activity which is "peculiarly her own. Its details are the details of this personality; and partly for this reason it may well be an activity which can only be performed privately." (Murdoch, 23)

Murdoch's description of the activity is compelling, not only because she deploys "the natural metaphor" but also because "M's activity here, so far from being something very odd and hazy, is something which, in a way, we find exceedingly familiar". (Murdoch, 22)

Marilyn Friedman is similarly interested in this dynamic aspect of reevaluation and revision of perspective yet, as I will show, her appeal to the role of relationships with other

people in moral growth makes her account even more compelling.

On Murdoch's account, the struggle of re-interpretation in which M is engaged is "in the direction of increasing privacy" because it involves details which are part of *this* personality. Hence she suggests that "M could not do this in conversation with another person". (Murdoch, 23) Despite this, Murdoch tells us that one very natural way of describing the activity is by the use of "specialized normative words": "M stops seeing D as 'bumptious' and sees her as 'gay', etc.". (Murdoch, 23) Such words are part of a moral vocabulary, itself part of a shared social universe.³⁸

It seems to me that this is indeed a very natural way of describing the activity but, further, that such an activity *is* a public one that *can* be performed in conversation with another (I think we can easily imagine a situation in which it is).

M has come to take on an alternative interpretive moral stance or viewpoint toward D. Marilyn Friedman in her essay "Friendship and Moral Growth" calls attention to moral growth as a certain particular good made possible by friendship. Similar to the activity Murdoch describes, Friedman focuses on the sort of moral growth "which occurs when we learn to grasp our experiences in a new light, or in different terms", when "abstract moral guidelines are 'tested' by concrete human lives". (Friedman Friendship, 6)

For Friedman, "our commitments to our friends, as such, afford us access to whole ranges of experience beyond our own". (Friedman Friendship, 7) This range of experience comes about through narrative and can "reveal a moral perspective unlike one's own". (Friedman Friendship, 8) Thus Friedman locates in friendship "the possibility of change in our

³⁸ See Taylor on this point (1989, 69).

moral values, rules, and principles, and not simply their fuller articulation". (Friedman Friendship, 9)

Where Murdoch emphasizes the study of literature as "an education in how to picture and understand human situations" (Murdoch, 34), Friedman exposes the limitations of literary work: "I can talk to my friend and she can answer me in her own terms, directly responsive to what I say and what I ask her, whereas I may have to tease 'responses' out of the fixed number of sentences in a literary work". (Friedman Friendship, 9) The "authenticity" of another's unfolding life is not as readily available in novels.

The emphasis on dialogue in Friedman's investigation of moral growth lends to her account something that is missing in Murdoch's characterization of growth achieved by "looking". (Murdoch, 31) Friedman's attention to living dialogue adds a richer, and more appropriately dynamic insight to moral growth. That we grow less by *looking* than by *talking* is quite simply a more accurate characterization of "moral transformation". (Friedman Friendship, 10)

One may venture the rhetorical question: 'What better measure of reality do we have in human affairs than those *terms* which make the best sense of our lives?'. This is the question Charles Taylor raises in conjunction with his BA principle. It seems to me that the language with which one evaluates shapes and defines the evaluation itself and, hence, our perceptions. There are some terms that are indispensable to moral deliberation and, indeed, acquiring a new term or a new sense of a term can alter the way we view the world. Consider the sense of 'dad' in one of the above examples. Does the sense of this term in conversation with my friend simply provide a 'shorthand' for communication, or does it actually engender a sensibility? I want to

argue that a micro-symbolic system, say, between two long-time friends is a sensibility itself. The idiosyncratic language created is part of a sensibility.

Suppose that M in Murdoch's example had acquired the term 'gay' (as opposed to 'bumptious') long after the death or emigration of her daughter-in-law. As her moral vocabulary is enriched, her perspective shifts. In reference to the indispensability of some terms to clear, insightful statement, Taylor suggests:

If I were denied this term, I wouldn't be able to deliberate as effectively, to focus the issue properly -as indeed, I may feel (and we frequently do) that I was less capable of doing in the past, before I acquired this term. (Taylor 1989, 57)

Consider also the way that words are manipulated to take on new senses within certain relationships or communities, or the invention of new, idiosyncratic terms altogether. I recall as a teenager having a word that captured the uniquely uncomfortable feeling that ensued when another person uttered or did something so obviously awkward that others would be made to feel embarrassed on their behalf. This term was coined in conversation with a friend, and has a sense which cannot be adequately portrayed with other words. Indeed the addition of this word to my vocabulary was accompanied by a corresponding shift in sensibility.

I also remember knowing someone who would use the word 'outrageous' where I would be more likely to use words like 'odd', 'reckless' or even 'ridiculous'. The term betrayed a sensibility that was strange to me at first, one that extended merit to actions that may have annoyed or offended me in their ostentatious eccentricity. It occurs to me that there were three options open to me upon hearing him utter the term in this way. I could have (a) come to similarly use the term in this new way; (b) recognized that a radically different sensibility was before me that did not resonate with my own; or (c) interpreted my friend to have merely been

describing the scenario as outrageous in a sense that was more consonant with the definition of the term and did not involve the positive evaluative weight my friend had intended. The latter option would have constituted a failure on my part to recognize my friend's idiosyncrasy and, thus, to understand him. It would have represented a low moral sensitivity. (Kekes)

As it turned out, I did come to use the term in this new way. In so doing, my values shifted correspondingly. I found that some people I knew (or have come to know since) are valuable on account of a quality that I would not have previously discerned or would have interpreted negatively, namely, their 'outrageousness'. I had been shaped by the language of a sensibility. This example, it seems to me, sits well with Friedman's account of moral growth, and is comparable to the transformation that M undergoes in Murdoch's account, except that the moral transformation occurs here through talk.

In revising our use of language in accordance with the talk of others, we gain a new outlook that involves more than the mere acquisition of a term or use of a term. When I came to use the word 'outrageous' differently in the above example, and when I learned to participate in the language game of my friends and responded to my friends term 'dad' as I described earlier, I inherited a new moral orientation. This is because language is at home in a system of utterances that is indicative of a sensibility. M experienced a shift of sensibility in coming to describe her daughter-in-law differently. I want to call this being 'affected' by a sensibility.

Because we cannot underestimate the capacity for culture-producing creatures (like all of us) to create and manipulate such a fundamental tool of expression as language, we cannot expect to relate to others with a static, conceptual vocabulary any more than we can expect to relate to members of social groups, without an openness to undergo shifts in our sensibilities.

That there is this openness means that there is always the possibility of revision in my point of view. As my moral orientations, my sensibilities are my identities - the very bounds of my person are not fixed. Given that I will inevitably encounter those with different sensibilities, my relationship to my values is always shifting and, indeed, that which I consider valuable can itself come to be seen as base, artificial or silly. The predominant values of sensibilities are far more contingent and revisable than those of, say, hypergoods. In this way, community as sensibility satisfies the fourth criterion for a theory of community. That we have the potential to be affected by other sensibilities means our affinities and values are always reviseable. Rather than some fictional archimedean point, another sensibility provides the perspective from which we can be critical of oppressive or undesirable views. That Nazism was an ideology, a value system, does not mean that individual Nazis with the appropriate depth may not be affected in ways that could lead to a revision of that ideology (Oskar Schindler may have been an example of this, although it should not be presumed that Nazi party membership was necessarily indicative of any constituent values).

I have claimed that we have an affinity with those with similar sensibilities. In addition, I think there is a range of ways of life that are easily accessible to us. That is, certain sensibilities are more likely to resonate with us. I can more readily enact a sensibility which values creativity, playfulness and laughter, for example, even though the form these values take is likely to vary from one sensibility to another. Some senses of humour will tend towards wit and irony, while others may be more risqué or campy. All of these sensibilities are more accessible to me than, say, one in which humour and laughter are considered evil or simply base.

To borrow a metaphor from fiction, all of us are located on a 'mattering map' in accord with our priorities. Some people are located closer to our own position than others. A sensibility too far removed from one's way of life may be too foreign for us to be able to enact it. Sometimes in these situations we say "I don't know where you're coming from". At other times, the danger is that we will fail to recognize this, and consider the other readily knowable, when, in fact, she may not be. Perhaps this latter failure occurs during some debates around federalism and the 'distinctness' of Quebec in Canada.

Indeed, we may not be able to come to understand the way of life of those within our own 'societies', or our political communities, much less presume to be able to pursue common projects. My neighbour may be an enigma to me. Communities, in as much as the term should be permitted political currency, cannot be thought to designate nations or neighbourhoods.³⁹ Nor can we do identity politics in a correspondingly stifling, stereotypical manner.⁴⁰ Iris Young has called this way of relating "external", in that "they experience each other as other, different, from different groups, histories, professions, cultures, which they do not understand". (Young Ideal ,318)

In dislocating the community in this manner, we can maintain a "thick" notion of persons without, as MacIntyre and Taylor do, considering those whose sensibilities have little to do with

³⁹ At least not in the case of a politic that invokes notions of shared values (e.g. that of the traditional family) or presumes common identities (e.g. that of a consumer, that of a Christian, that of a heterosexual).

⁴⁰ Wherein for example we presume to be able to speak from the collective identity of a social group rather than from our own perspective as a uniquely constituted person, who has come to discern a particular range of sensibilities as constituting her identity, many or most of which may relate to the experience of being oppressed.

their community of origin as mutilators or corruptors of tradition.

The sensibilities available to us - those that have affected us - come from such a wide variety of sources that I don't think that it is very useful at all to speak of our community of origins or of society as constituting our identity. If this is a phenomenon that is due in part to increased urbanization, and the associated voluntary relationships that prevail within it⁴¹, it is one that will only become increasingly the norm with technological advance.

John Perry Barlow, co-founder of the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), has remarked:

Now it's possible to digitize everything. Because of the internet anybody can reproduce anything they can do with their mind and ship it to the rest of humanity at zero cost....Cyberspace is an environment. It's a place where you are and, increasingly, where you will find yourself invisibly to be. You will not be sitting at the end of a long tunnel where stuff is being poured down at you, but you will inhabit a social space where you are horizontally interacting with potentially millions of other people.⁴²

It seems to me that even more than urban friendship, cyberspace will "provide social support for people who are idiosyncratic, whose unconventional life-styles make them victims of intolerance from family members and others who are unwillingly related to them". (Friedman Feminism, 286) If cities have sometimes been blamed for alienation and the fragmentation of "real" communities, increases in technology will only amplify this phenomenon in the minds of those for whom community is a community of location.

In contrast, a theory of community which takes community instead to point to a

⁴¹ On this point, see Friedman Feminism, 286-90.

⁴² Interviewed by Evan Solomon, "Unlikely Messiah". Shift:Media Culture 4 (September/October 1995): 31-4.

sensibility will celebrate such fragmentation as the engendering of new forms of attachments, based on one's own "needs, desires, attractions, and fears rather than, and often in opposition to, the expectations and ascribed roles of their found communities". (Friedman Feminism, 287)

Rather than a loss of community, we will find "an increase in importance of community of a different sort from that of family-neighbourhood-church-school complexes". (Friedman Feminism, 289)

City life and multi media have greatly increased the moral sources available to us. As Young observes:

The city consists in a great diversity of people and groups, with a multitude of subcultures and differentiated activities and functions, whose lives and movements mingle and overlap in public spaces. People belong to distinct groups or cultures and interact in neighbourhoods and work places. They venture out from these locales, however, to public places of entertainment, consumption, and politics. They witness one another's cultures and functions in such public interaction, without adopting them as their own. (Young Ideal, 319)

However, confronted with such a range of ways of life, it remains likely that a sensibility will affect you in the sense I am using this term. That is, that you will learn new ways of being-in-the-world by coming to articulate in new ways. Perhaps witnessing someone laughing at something sacred causes you to suddenly see the sacred as exaggerated, ridiculous or absurd. Perhaps witnessing people toy with gender roles in a campy manner permits you to see sex roles as contingent or oppressive. In such cases, your highest values are cast in the light of a different sensibility.

For this reason, I agree with Young that the unoppressive city as the "openness to unassimilated otherness" is a political ideal. (Young Ideal, 317, 319) In this ideal, however, I

would place also an unregulated cyberspace. For a more diverse repertoire of ways of life available to us can only result in an increased plurality of perspectives, both within a society (virtual or otherwise) and within an individual. This plurality brings with it a concomitant increased freedom, a state of affairs in which attachments are always ultimately revisable, and yet constitute our identity.

CONCLUSION

A theory of community according to which persons are considered to be in the world through sensibilities effectively fulfils the five requirements of such a theory I outlined in Chapter Seven.

1. Persons are 'constituted' by their communities in that certain sensibilities are available for enactment. Yet the perspectives available to a given person are limited to those she has encountered and acquired. The multiplicity of forms of life available even to a single person as well as this limitation will ensure both that persons share sensibilities (hence are constituted by community) and yet remain distinct. Individuals are affected throughout their lives in diverse ways by a wide range of value systems. And everyone is affected to varying degrees by diverse forms of life. No one sensibility definitively constitutes a person.

2. Yet it would be inaccurate to infer from this that persons remain, on this model, the social atoms of individualistic conceptions. The alternative to persons merely internalizing the value scheme of their community of origin is not that persons have no constitutive affinities and attachments which partially define them and provide a foundation for evaluation and action. Ethical life, on the model I am recommending consists not of isolated rational agents making choices, but rather of situated persons acting and living in manners which accord with their sensibilities.

3. Hence also, choice is not always necessarily *radical* on this view. But it is our ability

to make radical choices that constitutes freedom. Taylor and Murdoch especially urge us to think of decisions as the finalizing of a process that is close to complete before the will is even involved. As Murdoch argues, "if I attend properly I will have no choices and this is the ultimate condition to be aimed at". Thus, "the ideal situation...is rather to be represented as a certain 'necessity'". (Murdoch, 40) Similarly, Taylor argues that a choice utterly unrelated to the desirability of the alternatives would not be intelligible as a choice.⁴³ It is a sensibility which confers desirability onto an option because what matters to us always matters by virtue of being conferred value, and values are always systematized within sensibilities. This was what I tried to illustrate in the final chapter. Hence not all alternatives are open to us.

4. However, it remains that some sensibilities are more appropriate to certain situations than others. That we are able to adjust our perspective and thus align our values with a different form of life means that a critical mechanism is always available to us. This is so even when we are deeply shaped by the prevalent values of a single community. Consciousness-raising groups, mass-media, even single conversations can provide us with new ways of articulating, new 'takes' on a situation. That such articulations are always embedded in sensibilities means that the new perspective will not be from an archimedean point or 'view from nowhere'. Not any new way of describing a situation or person resonates with us.

5. I have also, with Young, suggested that it is the unoppressive city which is most conducive to, on one hand, group identification and the flourishing of communities, and on the other hand, to the unassimilated otherness of diverse communities which may be unlike our own. I have indicated that the individual is afforded the most freedom and autonomy when there exists

⁴³ See Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers 1. op. cit., especially page 32.

maximum opportunity to experience difference. Not only does one achieve moral *breadth* in encountering other sensibilities, but also *depth*, in being affected by certain sensibilities and not others.

A theory of community along these lines would be a post-modernist one in the sense that Seyla Benhabib has in mind when she suggests that postmodernists presuppose

a super-liberalism, more pluralistic, more tolerant, more open to the right of difference and otherness than the rather staid and sober versions presented by [liberals]. (Benhabib, 16)

Yet at the same time, I suspect sensibility as community would be less troubling to her than some post-modern visions which light-heartedly rely

on the very norms of the autonomy of subjects and the rationality of democratic procedures which otherwise they seem to so blithely dismiss. What post-modernists have no answer for is what concept of reason, which vision of autonomy allow us to retain such values and institutions. (Benhabib, 16)

One difficulty of emphasizing diversity over any single moral order (whether stemming from God, the cosmos or a tradition) is that one is easily interpreted as claiming that 'all is permitted'. Indeed, the observation that diversity is ubiquitous and that difference is worthy of respect is only the first step in a politics of difference or a theory of community.

What is more difficult and worthwhile is, as Benhabib indicates, spelling out the role of reason and autonomy in a pluralism. Reason, in a theory of community as sensibility, takes the form of aligning one's judgements with one's sensibility. The reasonable course of action or most fitting description in a situation is that which accords with one's way of perceiving the world.

But sensibilities are multiple, so we also need to consider the appropriateness of one

sensibility over another. This is not to suggest that there is some way of arbitrating between competing forms of life but rather that at times, it becomes apparent that a description simply 'doesn't fit'. Hence decisions take the form of both aligning one's actions and evaluations with the 'logic' of a sensibility, as well as moving from one sensibility to another. As we acquire sensibilities by being affected, they then become part of a 'repertoire' of sorts.

Autonomy takes the form, then, not of stepping out of our identity and assuming the neutral perspective of practical reason, but rather of sorting out our various constituent attachments in the form of sensibilities. If this is a more radical kind of decision-making than Taylor or Murdoch want to attribute to the act of choosing, it is nonetheless part of moral life. While from the perspective of the adventurer/traveller, it is clear that I must return to Europe (in the earlier example) and from the perspective of sentimentality and of the entrepreneur it is natural to go out West and go into business, the decision between the two perspectives *does* feel like a choice, and a radical one. The different languages of alternative sensibilities frame decisions in competing ways.

Hence, autonomy on this model consists in our ability to move from one 'take' on a situation to another. These different perspectives in turn provide the grounds for our actions and descriptions. We act with the certainty and assurance that a way of life affords, yet always with an openness to the possibility that another may come to strike us as more appropriate.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abrams, M.H.. A Glossary of Literary Terms, 5th ed., New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1985.
- Alejandro, Roberto. "Rawls' Communitarianism." Canadian Journal of Philosophy 23 (March, 1993): 75-99.
- Baier, Annette C., "The Need for More than Justice" The Canadian Journal of Philosophy, Supplementary Volume 13, 1987.
- Baier, Annette C., "What do Women Want in a Moral Theory?" in Larabee: 19-32.
- Benhabib, Seyla. "Autonomy, Modernity and Community, Communitarianism and Critical Social Theory in Dialogue", in Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Chansky, James D.. "Reflections on After Virtue After Auschwitz." Philosophy Today 37 (Fall 1993): 247-256.
- Code, Lorraine. What Can She Know? Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1991.
- Flanagan, Owen and Jackson, Kathryn, "Justice, Care and Gender: the Kohlberg-Gilligan debate Revisited", in Larabee.
- Flanagan, Owen. Varieties of Moral Personality. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991.
- Friedman, Marilyn. "Beyond Caring: The De-Moralization of Gender", in Larabee: 258-257
- "Feminism and Modern Friendship: Dislocating the Community." Ethics 99 (January, 1989): 275-289.
- "Friendship and Moral Growth." Journal of Value Inquiry 23 (March, 1989): 3-13.
- Heidegger, Martin. Being and Time. Translated by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson. New York: Harper and Row, 1962.
- Held, Virginia. "Non-Contractual Society: A Feminist View." Canadian Journal of Philosophy, Supplementary Volume 13, 1987.
- Kant, Immanuel. Critique of Pure Reason. Translated by F. Max Muller. Anchor Books, 1966.
- Kekes, John. "Moral Sensitivity." Philosophy 59 (1984): 3-19.
- Kymlicka, Will. Liberalism, Community and Culture. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.
- Larabee, Mary Jeanne, ed.. An Ethic of Care: Feminist Interdisciplinary Perspectives. New York: Routledge, 1993.

- MacIntyre, Alasdair. After Virtue: A Study In Moral Theory. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981.
- Murdoch, Iris. The Sovereignty of Good. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Limited, 1970.
- Nicholson, Linda J.. "Women, Morality and History", in Larabee: 87-101.
- Postman, Neil. Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business. New York: Penguin Books, 1985.
- Rawls, John. A Theory of Justice. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 1972.
- Rorty, Richard. Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979.
- Sandel, Michael J.. Liberalism and the Limits of Justice. Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Sherwin, Susan. "Ethics, 'Feminine' Ethics and Feminist Ethics." in Shogan, Debora. A Reader Feminist Ethics. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc., 1993.
- Solomon, Evan. "Unlikely Messiah: Interview with Perry Barlow." Shift: Media Culture 4 (September/October, 1995): 31-34.
- Taylor, Charles. Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers 1. Cambridge, Mass: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- . Sources of The Self. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989.
- . The Malaise of Modernity. Concord, Ontario: Anasi Press Ltd , 1991.
- Thomas, Laurence. "Morality and Human Diversity" (A review essay on Owen Flanagan Varieties of Moral Personality). Ethics 103 (October, 1992): 117-134.
- Tomasi, John. "Individual Rights and Community Virtues," Ethics 101 (April, 1991): 521-536.
- Walzer, Michael. Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality. Basic Books Inc., 1983.
- Young, Iris Marion. "The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference", in Linda Nicholson ed., Feminism/Postmodernism. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- . Justice and the Politics of Difference. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990