The Invisible Hand of Rationality: On the Intersection of Adam Smith and Alasdair MacIntyre

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The connection between Adam Smith and Alasdair MacIntyre is not evident at first glance. In fact, those who know MacIntyre's work might bristle at the association. MacIntyre is inherently anti-capitalist. He believes that moral people ought to reject the modern state and large-scale corporations.[1] He also rejects what he terms the enlightenment project, claiming not only that it failed but that it was doomed to do so.[2] Furthermore, MacIntyre's perspectivalism seems to run counter to any "impartial spectator" theory such as Smith's; tradition-bound rationality necessarily assumes partiality.[3] In short, MacIntyre regards himself as an opponent of the liberal tradition, that intellectual lineage which is most closely associated with Smith, and, although he rejects association with communitarianism, he holds a similar place in contemporary philosophy. He is liberalism's critic, not its reformer.

But ethics makes strange bedfellows. MacIntyre's theory of rationality, I contend, provides a useful and important complement to Smith's moral psychology. It allows for the intermingling of emotion and reason that is so important for Smith's work.[4] It creates a structure for bridging Smith's individuals and the communities of which they are a part. In essence, I argue, MacIntyre's work allows us to better understand Smith's jump from deliberation on the individual level to the development of cultural standards and norms. I conclude that Smith's emphasis on the individual results in an incomplete theory of communal rationality, and that MacIntyre's emphasis on tradition leaves out a foundation of individual agency. The two theories, however complement each other well.

As a bit of preparation, it is worth mentioning that both thinkers, and Smith, in particular, are often portrayed inaccurately. Smith is not the self-interest focused libertarian that he is made out to be. He is, instead a sophisticated moral theorist whose first book, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* was celebrated and influential in its time. My focus on Smith will emphasize his moral theory instead of his economic work, but, because the two are inseparable, I will refer to the latter as well.

In this discussion of MacIntyre, my concern is with his theory of tradition-bound rationality: my moniker for his influential diagram of reasoning as expressed in his four most recent books: *After Virtue*, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, and *Dependent Rational Animals*. MacIntyre argues that traditions provide all the structures required for moral adjudication. According to this theory, traditions inform how we identify, investigate, and present problems and their solutions. In fact, what may be recognized as a problem in one tradition may not be seen as such in another. Traditions construct how we frame "the relevant examples."[5] Only the person who can identify intimately with numerous traditions – MacIntyre uses the analogy of multiple first languages – can evaluate and compare them fairly. Rationality is the product of practices and texts that frame how we tell the stories of our lives individually and collectively. Without these stories, and without these practices, practical rationality would be impossible.

For MacIntyre, cultural or communal reasoning is necessary because human beings are, in some important sense, dependant upon one another. There is a spectrum of independence: a free thinking capacity that is itself social. In other words, MacIntyre does not see independence as running counter to community. Rather, he sees the capacity for choice and individuation as an evolving characteristic that develops as one becomes practiced in the virtues necessary for "independent practical reasoning." This is a paradox only for those who are wedded to the notion that independence means radical autonomy, or the ability to exist without the assistance of others. Independence is a human good. On this point, MacIntyre is adamant. Nevertheless, he is equally adamant that we can achieve our goods only if others make our goods into theirs.[6] Independence is always understood from within a tradition, and the virtues necessary to cultivate practical reason are related to another set of virtues:

the virtues of "acknowledged dependence." Finally, MacIntyre understands that those traditions and communities of which we are a part, fluctuate. He argues that, "we are often members of more than one community and we may find a place within more than one network of giving and receiving. Moreover we move in and out of communities." (*DRA*, 122)

MacIntyre refers to Adam Smith 21 times in 1083 pages.[7] Of those references, only five might be considered substantive,[8] and only three are more than one sentence long.[9] While his account is substantive, it is, unfortunately, inaccurate. MacIntyre equates Smith with Hume, yet the two are not identical. He also puts forth Smith as a representative of the enlightenment search for an Archimedean point of view, a perspective Smith does not endorse. Finally, Smith is described, as he often is, as the proponent of a divided motivation: purely selfish intentions in the capitalist realm run counter to altruistic motivations in the moral realm.

A lot of work has been written to dispel this so-called "Adam Smith Problem", the perspective that Smith is inconsistent in his picture of motivations. There are tensions between self-interested behavior and altruism in Smith's work, but they are pervasive and not limited to the tension between his two books. It is also true that Smith seeks an "impartial" position, but this is far from Archimedean. Impartiality is bound by human capacity: by the limits of the imagination.

Smith's theory suggests that spectators deliberate morally by entering into the sentiments of others and by adopting or rejecting these same sentiments. Adoption indicates moral approval while rejection is a declaration of impropriety. According to Smith, an individual is born into a system of pre-existing norms, habits, and conventions. Without society, and without this context, no individual could develop the ability to make moral judgments. Individuals are, in some sense, fundamentally separate – they are, physically, different. Yet, people are united by the process of sympathy: the natural "fellow-feeling" by which we observe others, attempt to enter into their sentiments, and then judge them. This is also the mechanism by which we create an "imagined impartial spectator," Smith's metaphor for our own conscience and judge. The impartial spectator provides normative standards when a moral actor is without a community, and may also override social judgments when they go awry.

The Theory of Moral Sentiments is primarily a book about the construction of identity. It is, among other things, an exercise in understanding the nature of a relational self. In many ways, therefore, it is communitarian, not liberal, where communitarian is understood as acknowledging some priority of the community, and liberal is understood as commitment to the priority of the individual.[10]

Smith argues that moral judgment is impossible in a pre-social scenario.[11] No judgment regarding either moral approval or aesthetic beauty is possible without the social structures that evolve around sympathy. Sympathy forms the foundation of moral judgment by devising criteria of acceptable action after repeated observations of both the actor and the community judgment of that actor.

MacIntyre argues that Smith represents the enlightenment promise of "a conception of rationality independent of historical and social context, and independent of any specific understanding of man's nature or purpose."[12] Smith's moral psychology does not fit this description. Neither does his account of social progress in *The Wealth of Nations*.

First, for Smith, general moral rules are developed based upon the reaction of individuals who are educated to act in certain ways and believe certain things. In a homogeneous orthodox religious community, for example, the general rules might differ greatly from those in a pluralistic secular community. Smith's moral theory is based explicitly on social context.

Second, Smith's notion of sympathy demands that detailed information about the specific situation must be taken into account; judgment is not without context. To cite Smith's own example, if one were to judge the propriety of the pitch of the grief a father shows for the loss of his son, the spectator must not judge as if he or she had lost his or her own son, but rather if he or she were this particular father and lost this particular son. This ensures that the spectator takes into account the history of the relationship and the interdependence of the two, and that the spectator does not judge propriety based solely on an abstract ideal of father/son relationships.

Third, the impartial spectator is the product of the imagination and is limited by the capacities of that imagination. For Smith, it is impossible for us to *actually* enter into the position of another person; our analogous imagined emotions are always lesser in degree than those sentiments that we observe. Neither is it possible to completely leave our own perspective. Our impartial spectator is the product of our own imagination and experiences. Even if it were possible to do so, if we were to remove ourselves from these frameworks, the general rules that we construct for moral judgment would cease to have normative power.

Fourth, political structures and moral norms are inherently historical. The dominant method of *The Wealth of Nations* is the articulation of the relationship between historical and economic forces, and social hierarchy and norms. Smith is clear that

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the status of women, for example, is derived from historical processes, just as slavery is a system dependant on psychological distance.

Fifth, and unlike many liberals, Smith does not recognize the priority of the right over the good.[13] The priority of the right lies in its finality, it is to be recognized as a "final court of appeal," which cannot change. For Smith, the rules of justice are not final. They are identifiable only after the fact and are context-dependent. Consequently, just actions are not judged based upon a universal *a priori* principle. The rules of justice are subject to modification and interpretation based upon community standards, the interpretation of the impartial spectator, and the context in which they are to be applied. For Smith, the right and the good are not hierarchically ordered: they are intertwined and inseparable.

Given this description, Smith certainly seems a lot more like MacIntyre than MacIntyre would have us believe. Both have developed moral theories based on the adoption of perspective and the construction of moral standards based upon evolving standards of rationality. Both thinkers rely on socially constructed selves; both understand moral rules as derived from practices; both understand social and political norms and structures as historical; both see perspective as inescapable; and both see moral judgment and self-identity as founded upon cultural patterns.

Of course, with such similarities, MacIntyre and Smith face similar difficulties. Both flirt with relativism, for example. The normative core of each of their systems appears to be variable in such a way that those who seek a universal and eternal moral law are bound to be unsatisfied. Both also have to contend with the consequences of a divided self. For MacIntyre, true interaction between two incommensurable traditions can only be undertaken by those authentically immersed in both traditions. This person – "The Post Enlightenment Person"[14] – must be able to move in and out of traditions while still retaining the rational structure that allows for deliberation. For Smith, the moral actor must somehow enter into the perspective of another while still preserving his or her own moral standards. Furthermore, and perhaps more difficult, the impartial spectator must balance the moral commitments of the socially constructed individual with the capacity to counter the prevailing social opinion. The problem of the divided self is inherently intertwined with the problem of free will. Thus, a person can be divided in at least three ways: along the fault line of competing or incommensurable traditions, along the tension between community identity and the need for individuation, and along the conflicting claims of reason and emotion.

Additionally, both Smith and MacIntyre must deal with the problem of managing pluralism. For Smith, of course, this problem fits into the discourse of liberalism. But MacIntyre claims to reject this project. It is odd, then, that the further MacIntyre takes his work, the more "liberal" his approach seems to be. MacIntyre's theory is a theory of interaction. It creates a method by which adherents of a tradition can compare their tradition with competitors and, in many, but not all, cases, determine if one is superior to another. In *TRV*, for example, MacIntyre's traditions are primarily academic narratives centered on professional intellectuals. He closes the book by suggesting that society should maximize conflict between universities.

Skeptical of the contemporary universities, MacIntyre's suggests a return to the pre-liberal university: one of "enforced and constrained disagreements." (*TRV*, 230) He envisions a group of rival institutions adhering to their own traditions, indoctrinating students into their worldviews. This plurality would push forth "genuine" debate resulting in genuine progress, because committed parties could openly adhere to their own beliefs without subordinating them to an unattainable neutrality. MacIntyre believes that honest, genuinely sought answers can be found when the wider society is "confronted with the claims of . . . rival universities, each advancing its own enquiries." (*TRV*, 234)

MacIntyre's solution is surprising. His central project has been to criticize modern liberalism, but his solution, a plurality of rival tradition-bound universities competing for recruits, is almost indistinguishable from the liberal pluralism he attacks. True, there may be no commitment to neutrality in any one particular university, but there must be an overarching tolerance in the society that allows a plurality of universities each with a different moral or political stance.[15]

MacIntyre's prescriptions simply push the problem of tolerance one level higher, calling not for a liberal university, but for a liberal society; a society which can incorporate into it many different opinions that can interact with one another according to their own conceptions of the good.

Clearly, the two theories are more similar than originally thought, and MacIntyre's challenge of neutrality and Archimedean approaches to moral adjudication never applied to Smith. Furthermore, MacIntyre's critique has been well received. Liberal thinkers now speak of "liberal virtues" and of the "liberal good".[16] Liberalism focuses more on dependency, care, and community in general.[17]

My goal now is to open up the possibility that MacIntyre fills in holes in Smith's system. In furthering this argument, I will focus on the nature of

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rational deliberation as expressed through Smith's impartial spectator. There are many complications with this aspect of Smith's work, but the two that I shall emphasize are Smith's challenge of the traditional distinction between emotion and reason, and the role of unintended consequences in individual or group action. I argue that MacIntyre's use of practices and texts as the foundation for rationality helps to mitigate Smith's difficulties in working with sentiment. In addition, MacIntyre's notion of tradition is helpful in understanding Smith's most famous metaphor, the invisible hand.

The traditional division between emotion and reason seems hard to defend. Contemporary discussions, sometimes rooted in classical texts, have argued a return to complementary roles of reason and emotions. For example, Martha Nussbaum, in *Upheavals of Thought*, makes a compelling argument that emotions are rational.[18] For Nussbaum, as for Smith, emotions are not unintelligent arrows aimed unthinkingly or spontaneously at some object. They are complex, value-laden consequences requiring interpretation and reconstruction. They are representatives of a process of reason, and components of larger arguments and deliberations that lie at the core of the human *intellectual* experience.

Contemporary critical thinking theory makes similar claims. Looking at accounts of reasoning by such thinkers as Stephen Toulmin, Matthew Lipman and Christopher Tindale, we see a very different picture of reasoning than the mathematical model that dominated analytic circles in the Twentieth century.[19] We see a lived-argumentation that takes history, perspective, audience, and emotion into account. It regards action as valuable, and emphasizes communicative intent. It acknowledges the powerful influence of community, and locates reasoning within human relationships. For Smith, argumentation is tied to the growth in social awareness. To mature is to absorb and modify socially constructed identity and argument procedures. It is also to gather vast amounts of data, and to systematize them in such a way that one becomes aware of objective standards of propriety. This may take, for example, the form of an account of the standards of beauty, or proper moral action, or of the appropriate cost for a product.

Sympathy is clearly a form of rational deliberation, but it is constituted by more than *just* rational elements. It is, itself, a non-rational, but not irrational, process. According to Smith, the desire for sympathy is hard-wired into the human experience: we are born with the capacity and desire to sympathize, and the need for spectator approval. We incorporate into our understanding all elements which may affect our judgment, including the care we feel for other people, the pleasure and pain of experiences, the subconscious motivations and biases which direct us, the emotions we feel, the arbitrariness of custom, the randomness of luck, and the lack of control we have over the events we experience. Purely "rational" argumentation cannot account for all of these influences. Human beings are illogical in many ways. The discipline that helps us make sense of the world must have room for all of these influences, not just the rational ones. Thus we have the relevance of Smith's most famous phrase "the invisible hand": a phrase meant to be a description of the combination of the rational decision-making procedure that is overseen by the impartial spectator, and the non-rational/emotive procedure which is captured by the natural urge and capacity to sympathize with others. I will return to this point in a moment.

These forces are all found at the base of MacIntyre's system of rationality, a theory that has founded reason on emotional, intuitive, and active elements. His theory is built upon practices, texts, and interpretations, none of which are wholly rational.[20] Practices may develop out of arbitrary elements, or they may be responses to environment or to historical accident. They are not rational from the external point of view, only from within. There is nothing rational about the formality of wearing a tie. There is nothing inevitable about the existence of the game of chess.

Practices are then justified within traditions by being placed in locations of importance in central texts. But the creation of texts – the creation of any work of art – is not purely rational either. Choices within artistic creation mirror the political choices people make throughout their lives, and thus reflect the irrational elements of human behavior and experience. Again, there is nothing rational about the dominance of the harpsichord over the piano or vice versa. There is nothing inevitable about Billie Holiday.

Let me be careful here. I am not suggesting that there are no reasons or causes for ties, chess, the dominance of the harpsichord, or the music of Billie Holiday. Their existence is neither random nor arbitrary. The point is that they cannot be predicted in advance with any certainty. They make sense, in retrospect, but so would, presumably, a piano with one more or less octave on its keyboard. All acts have reasons; all events have causes. These causes and reasons become clear only when we can map the chain of events retrospectively.

It is a common objection against MacIntyre that his conception of tradition is too ambiguous. This is an important observation, but it is no criticism. The concept *must* be ambiguous because traditions are

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neither planned nor inevitable.[21] In *WJ*, MacIntyre comments that when a tradition survives an epistemological crisis it can "re-write history in a more insightful way."[22] But this comment is a bit misleading. One does not rewrite history. One rewrites the interpretation of how its progression should be understood. A tradition is an intentional reorganization of a narrative history; it is by nature artificial. It superimposes meaning on a series of events by linking them according to the presumptions of the person identifying the links. If a person cannot escape the perspective of a tradition for the purpose of rational inquiry, then the history of a tradition depends on the picture of the tradition already existent in the rationality that guides the person drawing the picture. In other words, a tradition can only be defined in the terms that the tradition itself acknowledges.

Consider the debate over the use of Jesus in Hebrew Scripture exegesis. The Christian will see the *particular* messiah in all old testament prophesy because that story – and the acceptance of Jesus as the messiah – has already been accepted. The Jew will see the prophecy only in its most general terms because Jesus' special status is rejected. The concept of Jesus unifies the Christian tradition. The concept of the not-yet-fulfilled covenant unifies the Jewish tradition.

Traditions unfold surprisingly as they evolve, but they are entirely predictable when we examine them after the fact. This makes them seem as if they are guided by the rationality of history, but this is an illusion of perspective. Traditions appear directed, as if by an invisible hand, to inevitable conclusions that provide meaning and justification to contemporary events.

Despite its notoriety, Smith uses the phrase "the invisible hand" only twice in his published writings. It serves as a link between Smith's moral psychology and his social and economic work (*TMS* IV.i.10 and *WN* IV.ii.9). The phrase "invisible hand" is a metaphor meant to illustrate that despite the human desire to see reason and rationality as a motivational force, the movement and fluctuation of organizational structures are imposed on a person without his or her intending it or knowing it. In both cases, Smith uses the phrase to describe economic events, but in an unpublished essay on the history of astronomy, Smith uses it a third time to describe early humans' reactions to unexplained natural events.[23] In each case, the phrase is used to describe the process of uncertainty.

The invisible hand is typically understood to be an immutable natural law guiding the market based upon the interaction of countless self-interested agents. This is certainly an element of Smith's understanding. But the existence of natural laws does not necessarily result in predictability. The cross section of individual needs, with the brute facts of the world, multiplied by the sheer number of factors, make market fluctuations unreliable at best. Thus, any attempts to manipulate the system to achieve a specific goal are either doomed to fail, or are doomed to result in unintended and unavoidable consequences paired with the achieved goal. In short, Smith's invisible hand metaphor is meant to illustrate that the rules governing individual human interaction do not govern the fluctuations of the system as a whole.

Smith is skeptical in both his moral and his political theory about those who try to depict social and political life as a coherent and predictable system According to Smith, a natural love of system inspires individuals to postulate imaginary machinery that explains the fluctuations of the market and the progress of the human species. In reality, these things cannot be predictably manipulated since, if there is a guiding principle, we can never know what it is, and even if we could identify the principle we could not possibly know all data relevant for prediction. The movement of the whole is not guided except *as if* by an invisible hand that its members can only reconstruct after the fact.

Again, I do not mean to suggest that the movement of the system is irrational, random or arbitrary. There are certain principles that may help prediction in some instances, such as supply and demand. However, the cumulative effect is non-rational. This doesn't preclude all prediction or understanding, it just precludes absolute and certain prediction and understanding in every case. Explanation is always more effective after the fact.

Smith's famous objection to interventionist government comes from his skepticism that social engineering can ever work. This skepticism is epistemological. He denies the possibility that a legislator can manage the necessary information or predict the outcome of any act. Smith explains that the legislator who wishes to manipulate people like pieces on a chess board forgets that each piece has its own rules. There is no common pattern of movement.[24]

Smith uses the example of chess to elaborate on the invisible hand. In the chess example, the hand is one of arrogance, not one of progress. This is why the hand must be invisible. It may be God's hand, it may be the hand of progress, it may, in fact be the hand of accident – although Smith is more optimistic than that, and certainly more optimistic than MacIntyre – but many of MacIntyre's traditions share this tension between the unseen hand and the arrogant one.

The invisible hand may be understood as a metaphor for Smith's theory of reasoning as well as

for his economic and moral doctrines. For Smith, argumentation is influenced by many different pieces of information. Thus, logic alone cannot account for the chain of premises, how they hang together, what they conclude, the moral component implicit in the conclusions, and the action inspired by the argument, to name a few. All of this is packaged in human deliberation, and all of this can only be described with a larger more inclusive theory. In this case, I propose MacIntyre's tradition-bound rationality.

At this point, than, MacIntyre's theory becomes, in some sense, a more modern articulation of Smith's. Smith is concerned with the individual life and its relationship with society as a whole, and MacIntyre is concerned with an analogous relationship. He emphasizes the narrative of an individual human life and the progression of a tradition – a larger narrative that incorporates within it commonly recognized moral rules.

In modern terms, how might the concept of a tradition be reconciled with that of the impartial spectator? Consider that person who struggles to be the authentic "Jew", or true to his or her black roots by striving to be a real "African-American." Consider the patriot who tries to act truly "American." These are all ways in which traditions become embodied in the idea of an ideal individual, albeit one with faults and imperfection, but one who offers direction to those who seek it.

I do not intend to postulate some form of essentialism here. Nor am I claiming that each Jew, African American, or Patriot ought to be identical. I am suggesting only that we embody traditions through anthropomorphizing our values and histories quite often and we use these images to guide our actions. This is not far from Aristotle's virtuous role models, nor is it inconsistent with the method implicit in parables that use characters for moral education within many religious traditions. Neither "The Jew", "The African American", or the "Patriot" are Real; they are constructs designed to allow us rational consideration of our actions and our values.

Smith did not have the tools to articulate a theory of rationality like that of MacIntyre's. He had no vocabulary to discuss therapy or the sub-conscious. He did not anticipate modern multiculturalism. He could not see the changes that modern democracy and individualism would bring about, for better or for worse. The relevant events and debates had simply not yet occurred. As a result, his work is incomplete. It does not offer a clear enough picture of how the sentiments, or how sympathy, can develop rational structures that have normative power. If we wish to build on Smith's work – and I most certainly do – we must find structures that fill in the gaps and modernize his language to allow for contemporary debates within social, political, and ethical deliberation. MacIntyre's work provides that structure.

MacIntyre, on the other hand, offers a coherent conception of rationality on the cultural level, but his account of individual action is awkward and incomplete. His latest work struggles with the notion of free will and individual virtues, but even so, one reads MacIntyre and may very well wonder: Where is my place? Am I simply an unrecognized cog in a wheel? For a theorist who is opposed to the modern corporation, this is an odd ambiguity even if intellectual tradition and cultural bureaucracy have replaced the economic monolith. Smith can provide the groundwork for a necessary account of the individual – one that fits in nicely with MacIntyre's more expansive theories, one that allows for the emotional as well as the rational components of the human character, and one that does not suggest the unreasonable notion that the liberal individual ought to be completely autonomous.

In conclusion, I suggest that MacIntyre's theory of tradition-bound rationality is more liberal than MacIntyre suggests, and that Smith's moral psychology is more communitarian. The two, while certainly not perfect, share truths that are worth pursuing. I do not argue that the combination will solve all problems in moral and political theory. I do suggest, however, that combining them helps unify a debate that has been viewed as fragmented and disparate for far too long.

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1 Elie, Paul. "A Rebel in Defense of Tradition," *Lingua Franca* (November/December 1995, pp. 55 - 64).
2 After Virtue
3 Tradition Bound rationality is my own term. See *On MacIntyre* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 2003).
4 See my: "Emotion, Context and Rhetoric: Adam Smith's Informal Argumentation", Proceedings of the Fifth Conference of the International Society for the Study of Argumentation, University of Amsterdam: Amsterdam, *forthcoming.*
[5] MacIntyre
[6] "each of us achieves our good only if and insofar as others make our good their good by helping us through periods of disability to become ourselves the kind of human being . . . who makes the goods of others her or his good." (*DRA*, 109)
7 MacIntyre's citations are as follows: DRA pp. 2, 7, 119; TRV pp. 32, 223; WJ pp. 252, 259, 280, 283, 296, 331, 372; AV pp. 10, 23 (the index indicates 22), 37, 51, 54, 61, 234-235, 236, 239. The first two references in DRA are the most substantive, it is indicative of the Adam Smith revival that only in this latest book does he seem to take Smith seriously. The

references in TRV are purely ornamental; they make no substantive point. In WJ,: page 252 pokes fun at Smith's picture of the progression of history; page 259 contrasts the urgency of economics for Smith as opposed to Hutcheson; page 280 contains two references, both of which seem to equate Hume and Smith and are meant to foreshadow the following chapter which focuses on Hume; page 283 refers to a letter Hume writes Smith about Lord Kames; page 296 states that Hume, as an assimilationist, was second only in influence to Adam Smith; page 331 refers to Stewart's using infanticide, an example as put forth originally by Smith; page 372 refers to English language use by Hume and Smith. In AV: page 10 is a reference to Smith being the grandfather of a particular tradition of a concept of justice; page 23 pairs together Hume and Smith to indicate that they, among others, saw sociology as part of philosophy, page 37 lists the most prominent members of the Scottish Enlightenment, page 51 contains a list of those philosophers who might have failed because they were subject to a "highly specific shared historical background"; page 54 pairs Smith and Hume together as the "least self-questioning" members of the Scottish Enlightenment, "presumably because they are already comfortable and complacent within the epistemological scheme of British empiricism" -- MacIntyre does not defend this claim further; page 61 lists Hume, Smith and Kant as philosophers whose conceptual changes motivated political change; page 234-235 contains a catalogue of Smithean virtues. The paragraph which follows immediately after this citation begins with the observation that "Smith's catalogue of the virtues is then not the same as Hume's."; page 236 refers to Smith's stoicism and Republicanism and his stand against casuistry; page 239 explains that when Cobbett speaks of philosophers he is, among others, referring to WN.

8 Alasdair MacIntyre, DRA 7; After Virtue, 23, 51, 234-235, 236.

9 Alasdair MacIntyre, DRA 7, After Virtue, 234-235, 236.

10 There are at least three ways in which to regard the liberal claim that individuals are somehow prior to the community. The first is an understanding at its most literal. Social contract theorists such as Hobbes and Locke saw the role of the state of nature as essential in justifying political normativity and the right of governance through consent. For such theorists, the shift from pre-social to social necessitated a voluntary agreement that granted political authority to others. Smith does not accept this point of view; he is not a social contract theorist. The second way of understanding the priority of individuals is as a priority of right over good, as in the work of John Rawls and Ronald Dworkin. This is more complex. Smith does not accept the possibility of rational adjudication without a context, and, therefore, it would be hard to argue for Smith's acceptance of, for example, a Rawlsian original position. However, Smith's theory of competition of religion does suggest that there is some manner in which right does trump substantive beliefs. This requires much more discussion than space allows. The third way of understanding individual priority is simply to suggest that there do exist certain natural rights that an individual may use to counter the authority of the state. In other words, there are certain inalienable rights that an individual may always hold claim to independent of the needs of the state. This too is complex, but it is certainly reasonable to suggest that Smith's notion of limited government does allow, in some sense, for this claim.

[11] (TMS III.I.3-5)

12 John Horton and Susan Mendus, "Alasdair MacIntyre: After Virtue and After" in *After MacIntyre.* Edited by John Horton and Susan Mendus. (Oxford: Polity Press, 1995), 3.

[13] Rawls defines the right as follows: "a conception of right is a set of principles, general in form and universal in application, that is to be publicly recognized as the final court of appeal for ordering the conflicting claims of moral persons." John Rawls, A Theory of Justice, 135.

[14] Mac

[15] This seems to suggest that liberalism and pluralism are synonyms. This is not my position. The distinction between the two, it seems, rests on the intention of social and political organizational structures. Pluralism as a *de facto* state of affairs is not necessarily liberal, but pluralism *de jure* – pluralism intentionally cultivated and protected by a state or government -- would likely be. Whereas liberalism need not presuppose neutrality on the governmental level, it does presuppose prioritizing the coexistence of multiple competing goods on some level of social or political organization, even if not at the upper most level..

[16] One examples of this include: William Galston, *Liberal Purposes*. , et al.

[17] This critique comes from many sides. MacIntyre is only one of them. Feminism has played a strong role in the evolution of liberalism. Macintyre himself credits Eva Kittay for her work on dependency.

[18] First of all, they are *about* something: They have an object… Second, the object is an *intentional object*: that is, it figures in the emotions as it is seen or interpreted by the person whose emotion it is… Third, these emotions embody not simply ways of

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seeing an object, but beliefs – often very complex – about the object… Finally, we notice something marked in the intentional perceptions and the beliefs characteristic of the emotions: they are concerned with *value*, they see the object as invested with value or importance (Nussbaum 2001, 27-30).

[19] See An eighteenth century informal logic

[20] Practices are, "any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized 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 are to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved are systematically extended." (*AV*, 187)

[21] MacIntyre sees three criteria as establishing a traditions separateness. A tradition is separate and unified when its members or texts have a core set of shared commitments to beliefs, when the tradition is situated in a particular context in a particular set of institutions and practices which require individuals to participate in these institutions, and when the tradition has an identifiable linguistic difference when compared to other traditions. It is thus possible that traditions overlap and divide, and that there be controversy as to whether or not texts should be admitted to the canon. This allows for flexibility and growth, it does not condemn the concept to incoherence.

[22] (*WJ*, 363)

[23] (*Astronomy* III.2).

[24] He seems to imagine that he can arrange the different members of a great society with as much ease as the hand arranges the different pieces upon a chess-board. He does not consider that the pieces upon the chess-board have no other principle of motion besides that which the hand impresses upon them; but that, in the great chess-board of human society, every single piece has a principle of motion of its own, altogether different from that which the legislature might chuse to impress upon it. If those two principles coincide and act in the same direction, the game of human society will go on easily and harmoniously, and is very likely to be happy and successful. If they are opposite or different, the game will go on miserably, and the society must be at all times in the highest degree of disorder.

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