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## Toward a Radical Integral Humanism: MacIntyre's Continuing Marxism<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

I argue that we must read Alasdair MacIntyre's mature work through a Marxist lens. I begin by discussing his argument that we must choose which God to worship on principles of justice, which, it turns out, are ones given to us by God. I contend that this argument entails that we must see MacIntyre's early Marxist commitments as given to him by God, and, therefore, that he has never abandoned them in his turn to Thomistic-Aristotelianism. I examine his reading of Marx, with its emphasis on the concept of alienation as a Christian concept, and explain how this reading differs from the dominant scientific-determinist reading of Marx. This examination then leads to a discussion of why MacIntyre abandoned both Marxism and Christianity in 1968. Finally, I turn to his more recent writing on Marx. I contend that if we view them through his argument about the principles of justice and which God to worship, we see MacIntyre's mature philosophy as more Marxist than most people, perhaps even MacIntyre himself, would allow.

MacIntyre should, therefore, still be read along with Thompson and Marx, not with either conservatives or conventionally academic philosophers. The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in rival ways; the point is to *change* it.<sup>2</sup>

We have four reasons for reconsidering MacIntyre's relationship to Marxism. First, Paul Blackledge and Neil Davidson note that, despite the importance of MacIntyre's work on Marxism, few books dedicated to his ideas address that work; further, those works that address MacIntyre's engagement with Marxism have failed to fully explore the relationship between MacIntyre's theoretical essays and

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<sup>1</sup> This essay is a revision of a lecture delivered at Universidad Sergio Arboleda. I thank Liliana Irizar, Rodrigo Pumbo, Fr. Mauricio, the professors and students of Sergio Arboleda for comments on that lecture.

<sup>2</sup> K. Knight, *Revolutionary Aristotelianism*, [in:] I. Hampsher-Monk, J. Stanyer (eds.) *Contemporary Political Studies*, vol. 2, 1996, p. 896.

his political essays on Marxism.<sup>3</sup> Kelvin Knight contends that MacIntyre “never abandoned Marx’s idea of revolutionary practice”.<sup>4</sup> So, despite MacIntyre’s claim in *After Virtue* “that Marxism is exhausted as a political tradition,”<sup>5</sup> Marxists ideas, such as revolutionary practice and the link between theory and practice, prove important for understanding MacIntyre’s mature theory. Further, MacIntyre insists that his critique of liberalism has always been Marx’s critique of liberalism.<sup>6</sup>

Yet, the most important reason for discussing MacIntyre’s early work on Marx, I shall argue, is that one cannot separate MacIntyre’s Christianity – Thomist though it may be – from MacIntyre’s political, Marxist commitments. Peter McMyler<sup>7</sup> has thoroughly explored MacIntyre’s understanding of Marxism as the inheritor of Christianity in the West. McMyler writes that “the theological nature of MacIntyre’s stance is an essential conditioning factor in understanding his initial relationship to Marxism.” He cautions, however, that “it would, of course, be foolish to deny development and discontinuity in MacIntyre’s thought”.<sup>8</sup> Though I agree with McMyler’s overall point, I contend that for too long, those engaged with MacIntyre’s work have over-drawn the discontinuity between MacIntyre’s early Marxist stage and his mature work, perhaps because MacIntyre himself over-drew that discontinuity and emphasized his break with Marxism too forcefully. In fact, unlike others who have criticized liberal capitalism, including the former Marxist Jürgen Habermas and the philosopher-pope John Paul II, MacIntyre has never conceded to capitalism as an acceptable form of economic organization.

I argue that we must read MacIntyre’s mature theory – his “Revolutionary Aristotelianism” or Thomistic-Aristotelianism – through Marxist eyes. Even if we appreciate his Marxist past and recognize that he has never rejected Marx fully, we often do not see his current trajectory as Marxist in any sense. In fact, perhaps even MacIntyre himself does not recognize the extent of his Marxist leanings. Yet, if we put MacIntyre’s Marx in context, we can come to see a different MacIntyre. Further, we can come to see the need for greater dialogue between Christians and Marxists or, if you will, Thomists and Marxists. Most importantly, we must come to understand our practice and theory, not simply as influenced by Marx, but as inherently Marxist.

I divide my argument into five parts. First, I examine MacIntyre’s 1986 essay on how to choose which god to worship. In this article, MacIntyre contends that our initial judgments of justice are ones by which we must choose which god to worship. In turn, however, we later discover that those same judgments were ones inspired by God. MacIntyre’s essay sets up my reading of his work in the rest of this essay. Second, I explore the theological nature of MacIntyre’s Marxist beliefs.

<sup>3</sup> P. Blackledge, N. Davidson, *Introduction*, [in:] P. Blackledge, N. Davidson (eds.), *Alasdair MacIntyre’s Engagement with Marxism*, Chicago 2009, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> K. Knight, *Aristotelian Philosophy: Ethics and Politics from Aristotle to MacIntyre*, Cambridge 2007, p. 122.

<sup>5</sup> A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue. A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame 1984, p. 262.

<sup>6</sup> A. MacIntyre, ‘An Interview with Giovanna Borradori’, [in:] K. Knight (ed.), *The MacIntyre Reader*, Notre Dame 1998, p. 258.

<sup>7</sup> P. McMyler, *Alasdair MacIntyre: Critic of Modernity*, London 1993.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 4.

The concept of alienation proves central to understanding Marx as a Christian heresy. Third, I examine how MacIntyre's reading differed from other Marxisms and why those led to Stalinism. MacIntyre eventually abandons Marxism because it resulted in disunity and inequality. Fourth, I uncover four reasons for why MacIntyre also abandon Christianity. Like the dominant forms of Marxism, the dominant forms of Christianity led to disunity and inequality. In short, MacIntyre abandons Marxism and Christianity for Marxist and Christian reasons. Fifth, I look at MacIntyre's more recent engagement with Marx. I find in this engagement reasons for attending more closely to Marx, which MacIntyre especially articulates in the 1990s. I conclude with some reflections on philosophical practice. Always at the center of my analysis is the concept of alienation and the rejection of disunity and inequality.

### I. Reconsidering MacIntyre's Marxism

My argument begins with trying to understand the personal as well as theoretical meaning of a passage that McMylor cites from MacIntyre's 1986 essay "Which God Ought We To Obey and Why?" We have several gods from which to choose. To make that choice, MacIntyre contends that we can use only two criteria: the identity of the god and the nature of the god. The identity of god, however, is revealed only within the sacred texts of this or that religious tradition. So our choosing must begin with the nature of god; that is, we begin with an understanding of God as just. "[U]nless that god is just and is justly owed obedience by us, such obedience cannot be justly required of us".<sup>9</sup>

McMylor points out, correctly, that in making this argument, MacIntyre demonstrates that reason and faith are not two distinct realms or separate aspects of our lives, but unified. "From the fact that we can at one stage in our progress towards God evaluate the divine claims, using standards of justice acquired and elaborated independently of the knowledge of God, it does not follow that in so doing we are judging the Word of God by something external to it".<sup>10</sup> We are able, according to MacIntyre, to reasonably progress in our moral life in relationship to God. Such progress is reasonable because our initial assent to the divine commands followed from our judgment that these divine commands were just. Later, we come to see "that the standards by which we judged God is itself a work of God, and that the judgments that we made earlier were made in obedience to the divine commands. . . God, it turns out, cannot be truly judged of by something external to his Word, but that is because natural justice recognized by natural reason is in itself divinely uttered and authorized".<sup>11</sup> Reason and faith are unified because both are gifts from God.

I propose that, without over-emphasizing or psychologizing them, we understand these words and this argument on a personal level. As MacIntyre recognizes,

<sup>9</sup> A. MacIntyre, 'Which God Ought We To Obey and Why?', *Faith and Philosophy* 3 [4] (1986), p. 359.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 370.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*.

his philosophical journey has always been a personal one,<sup>12</sup> and readers of MacIntyre must keep this personal aspect in the forefront of their thinking about MacIntyre, not to dismiss his philosophy, but rather to understand it and to recognize the essential link between theory and practice which lies at the heart of this philosophical work. MacIntyre's essay, "Which God Ought We To Obey and Why?," is written shortly after his conversion to Thomism. I contend that we should read his larger philosophical development in the light of this essay. That reading allows us to recognize, perhaps in a way that at the time he did not, that MacIntyre never abandoned his initial judgments about the divine commands. Rather, he has come to see his earlier beliefs about justice – essentially Marxist beliefs – as, instead, divinely authorized.

He is proposing a unity between his early judgments determined by "natural reason" with his later judgments that the divine commands and the early ethical judgments are both expressions of God's Word. In short, his early Marxist beliefs – the ones he held on to and for which he rejected the IS and Marxism itself – are expressions of God's Word, are, in fact, divine commands.

From the perspective of a new convert to Catholicism, this judgment about the unity of faith and reason points to the convert's initial judgments about both the divine commands and his perception of justice. That is, as I read this essay, it entails that MacIntyre's more mature philosophical position constitutes a progress in moral judgment that is reasonable because his earlier Marxist judgments are now seen as inspired by God and as leading him to the position he now occupies. As shall be evident in my discussion later, MacIntyre's early Marxist writings comprised a very personal attempt to understand how to live both as a Christian and a Marxist. McMylor writes, "It seems clear that what impels MacIntyre towards Marxism, as it is to do a later generation of so-called Liberation Theologians, is in the Christian commitment to practice and to encounter God in the world, amongst, the poor".<sup>13</sup>

## II. Alienation From Hegel to Marx

At the age of 24 in 1953, Alasdair MacIntyre published *Marxism: A Critique*. This particular book is next to impossible to acquire, though Blackledge and Davidson have published excerpts in their very important *MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*. MacIntyre, however, published a revised and much rewritten version titled *Marxism and Christianity* in 1968. Despite the difference in title, MacIntyre is just as much concerned with Christianity in 1953 as he was in 1968. By 1968, however, he decided he must abandon both Marxism and Christianity: "[in 1953] I aspired to be both a Christian and Marxist, or at least as much of each as was compatible with allegiance to the other and with a doubting turn of mind; now I am skeptical of both, although also believing that one cannot entirely discard either without discarding truths not otherwise available."<sup>14</sup> Notice that even

<sup>12</sup> A. MacIntyre, 'An Interview with Giovanna Borradori', [in:] *The MacIntyre Reader*, pp. 255–266; 'An Interview for *Cogito*', [in:] *The MacIntyre Reader*, pp. 267–275.

<sup>13</sup> P. McMylor, *Alasdair MacIntyre...*, p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> A. MacIntyre, *Marxism and Christianity*, Notre Dame 1968, p. vii.

in 1968, when MacIntyre claims he is skeptical of both Marxism and Christianity, he still holds that each has truths one should not discard. This line of thought supports my contention that MacIntyre's Thomism is Marxist.

In both *Marxism: A Critique* and *Marxism and Christianity*, MacIntyre argues that, with the "division of human life into the sacred and the secular," Marxism is the inheritor of Christianity in the West. "When the sacred and the secular are divided, then religion becomes one more department of human life".<sup>15</sup> The attempt by rationalists in modernity to replace Christian theology with a secular doctrine failed in all but one case: "Only one secular doctrine retains the scope of traditional religion in offering an interpretation of human existence by means of which men may situate themselves in the world and direct their actions to ends that transcend those offered by their immediate situation: Marxism".<sup>16</sup> Marxism offers an undivided understanding of human life. In making this claim, MacIntyre offers the reader a particular understanding both of the function of religion and of Marxism – to provide an interpretation of human existence. "Every individual finds himself with a given social identity, a role or set of roles which defines his phase within a set of social relationships, and these in turn constitute the immediate horizon of his life."<sup>17</sup> An interpretation of human existence allows one to understand and orient herself within her social existence and, thus, provides opportunities for her to seek meaning. Once Christianity has been displaced, only Marxism can provide the individual a social identity, a social identity that defines the horizon of one's life.

MacIntyre sees Marxism and Christianity not as strictly antagonistic to each other. Rather, Marxism is a "transformation of Hegel's secularized version of Christian theology, [and thus] has many of the characteristics of a Christian heresy rather than a non-Christian belief".<sup>18</sup> This transformation is necessary for a secular age.

Following Emile Durkheim, MacIntyre contends that in primitive religions, the concept of the divinity represents the "structure of social life." This representation, then, makes "religious consciousness [...] profoundly conservative." Yet, continues MacIntyre, religion also can be an instrument of change. The great historical religions "have been rich enough *both* to express and to sanction the existing social structure *and* to provide a vision of an alternative."<sup>19</sup> The critical function of religion is possible only "because and insofar as [religion] enables individuals to identify and to understand themselves independently of their position in the existing social structure." MacIntyre contends that religion and society each tell the individual what he is. This disjunction between the voice of society and the voice of religion provides "grounds both for criticizing the *status quo* and for believing that it is possible for him to act with others to change it."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in P. McMyler, *Alasdair MacIntyre...*, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> A. MacIntyre, *Marxism and Christianity*, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 2–3.

<sup>18</sup> A. MacIntyre, '1953, 1968, 1995: Three Perspectives On Marxism', [in:] P. Blackledge, N. Davidson (eds.), *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*, Chicago 2009, p. 412.

<sup>19</sup> A. MacIntyre, *Marxism and Christianity*, p. 3, original emphasis.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 4.

Marxism arises as an interpretation of human existence, on this MacIntyrean account, when traditional religion, co-opted by a capitalistic market, can no longer satisfy the longings of the poor, oppressed, and disenfranchised – that is, during the industrial revolution when children are forced to work fourteen hour days and men and women have no time for religious communion on Sundays because they are too tired from work. Marxism is a “social doctrine of man and society that would have the scope and functions of religion” and yet be rational, or “open to amendment by critical reflection at every point, and that would enable men to self-consciously and purposefully achieve such transformation of social life as they wished to see it.”<sup>21</sup>

This claim proves all the more important if my thesis is correct that MacIntyre’s Thomist-Catholicism cannot be divorced from his Marxism. This Catholicism, like the great religions of the past (of which it is one) that empowered people with a critical insight, must open individuals up to critical reflection “at every turn” and, further, give them the ability to consciously transform social life “as they wished to see it.”

In making his argument that Marxism is the inheritor of Christianity, MacIntyre wishes to avoid the weak claim that Marxism simply inherited the function of religion without inheriting any of its content. In particular, MacIntyre contends that the concept of alienation remains central to Marx’s thought throughout its development and was abandoned or lost by poor interpreters of Marx, beginning with Engels. To defend this stronger version of his thesis, MacIntyre traces the concept of alienation from Hegel, through Feuerbach, to Marx.

Hegel borrows the concept of alienation from religion. For him, alienation is the condition of human life in a fallen state. Human agents are divided in themselves and from each other. This division is a division, primarily in consciousness. For instance, human agents see morality arising, not from within, but without and opposed to the agent. One fails to obey the moral law and, thus, develops a bad conscience. Likewise, the human agent sees society as something external to his or her participation in it. Thus, the individual agent tries to resist the bonds of society as much as possible, developing bad conscience.

Marx takes this concept from Hegel and combines it with Feuerbach’s materialism. Feuerbach’s materialism focuses on how human beings reproduce material culture. “Man as a being sprung from nature is a creature of nature, not a man. Man is the product of man, of culture, of history.”<sup>22</sup> Marx takes Feuerbach’s materialism and focuses on the means of the production of subsistence. For Marx, the concept of alienation describes the situation of the human agent working to satisfy his or her needs. Human agents encounter nature and must work on nature to produce their means of subsistence. This means of subsistence satisfies the needs of human agents, but, in so doing, produces other needs of a material and social kind. The division of labor cleaves society “making of each individual a hunter, a fisherman, a shepherd, and so on” who must now fulfill the demands, not of his

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted *ibidem*, p. 25.

nature, but of society.<sup>23</sup> The interest of the society, then, takes political form in the state. Though the agent acts in ways that produce the state, the state itself is not a voluntary association, and the human agent sees it as alien.

In Marx's and our day, society is organized according to capitalist markets. "The essential antagonism of society is that between the worker and capitalist".<sup>24</sup> In this society, human agents are alienated from their products, from their work, from their species-being, from community. A worker makes objects that are, not hers, but a commodity she must buy. Work becomes, not a meaningful occupation, but drudgery. The agent seeks to satisfy, not her real needs, but the needs created by the capitalist system. Agents relate to each other, not as comrades or members of a community, but as competitors whose interactions are based on the model of economic-exchange. The religious conception of alienation, which Hegel used to describe abstract human consciousness, Marx uses to describe concrete social relations. "The achievement of Hegel in Marx's eyes was to 'see history as a process in which man is estranged from himself, exteriorizes himself and his work, and then finally comes to his own once more.' The error of Hegel is to see this as a history, not of men, but of abstractions. . . The achievement of Marx here is to have given historical form to a concrete view of what man in society ought to be, of what he is, and of how his estrangement from his own true being comes about."<sup>25</sup>

The MacIntyre of 1968 reads Marx as formulating a Christian heresy. Marx takes an originally religious concept – alienation – from Hegel and transforms it into a materialist concept. In doing so, Marx is able to provide both an analysis of the human condition and a vision of un-alienated life. The articulation of a materialist conception of alienation as a centerpiece to an interpretation of human existence makes Marxism a secular version of Christianity. It fulfills a role that no other modern philosophy has been able to do. Disagreement over the role of alienation in Marx, however, separates MacIntyre from other Marxists of his time.

### III. MacIntyre against the Marxists

MacIntyre believed that his reading of Marx differed significantly from the more dominant reading. The dominant reading provided by Engels and Lenin understood Marx to be giving a scientific-determinist reading of history, one in which the concept of alienation has little place. This reading allowed for the violent Russian Revolution of 1917 and eventually led to Stalin's rise to power. Stalinism is, on MacIntyre's reading, the anti-thesis of Marxism. In 1968, frustrated with the scientific-determinist interpretation of Marx and the atrocities of Stalin and, later, Khrushchev, in the name of history, MacIntyre abandons Marxism and Christianity. In this section, I examine his differences with the scientific-determinist reading of Marx. In the next, I will examine MacIntyre's reasons for leaving Christianity. In the final section, I will contend that his return to Christianity must be understood in light of his earlier Marxist commitments.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 62.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 50.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 57.

If we understand, as Marx did, that human beings are alienated from product, work, species being, and society under capitalism, then we must ask, how do we achieve the communist state. The depression of 1928 did not lead to capitalism's failure, nor did the economic crisis of 2007. Today, capitalists – major stockowners – make more profits than they ever have before. Nor has the increase of industry led to a revolutionary consciousness in the proletariat. Today, just the opposite appears true. In the United States, worker productivity is higher than it ever has been; yet wages remain stagnant and have remained stagnant for close to thirty years.<sup>26</sup> Why has the revolution not come?

MacIntyre believes that Marx offers two reasons for believing in the inevitability of the communist society, one that is optimistic about the proletariat and one that, pessimistically, relies on an elite vanguard to lead the way. MacIntyre will favor the optimistic interpretation, while Engels and Lenin will rely on a scientific-determinist interpretation. In his mature work, Marx defends a theory according to which capitalism is inherently self-destructive and also defends a philosophy of history “according to which all forms of social order are in the end likely to be self-destructive and at the same time creative of new social orders”.<sup>27</sup> The theory about capitalism's self-destructiveness is scientific, whereas the second is not. If we treat Marx's claims about capitalism as part of a larger scientific philosophy of history, however, MacIntyre argues that it fails.

According to Marx's theory of capitalism, capitalism must either expand or perish. In a competitive, unplanned economy, the capitalist desires to purchase labor as cheaply as possible – which limits the ability of the proletariat to purchase goods thus diminishing profits – but also desires to sell commodities at a profit – which means that demands for commodities must exceed purchasing power. (The reality of this situation can be seen in Wal-Mart's current dilemma in which they must provide collection baskets for their own employees who do not earn enough to feed themselves and their families.<sup>28</sup>) Thus, in the long run, both profits and standards of living fall. From this analysis, Marx draws two predictions: first, that capitalism chronically cannot distribute goods – that is, make a profit – and that the “large-scale growth of industry will produce an organized and self-conscious working class which realizes that it has no interest in the continuance of this form of social and economic system.”<sup>29</sup>

One condition of Marx's theory, according to MacIntyre, is that neither proletariat nor capitalist can exercise agency. Marx's theory relies on the contention that individuals are assigned roles in capitalism, which roles replace “their individual wills,” and that these roles are fixed and immutable.<sup>30</sup> Importantly, MacIntyre

<sup>26</sup> L. Mishel, ‘The Wedges between Productivity and Mean Compensation Growth’, Economic Policy Institute [2012 August 26.]; <http://www.epi.org/publication/ib330-productivity-vs-compensation/>.

<sup>27</sup> A. MacIntyre, *Marxism and Christianity*, p. 81.

<sup>28</sup> L. Halloran, ‘Wal-Mart Food Drive Unwittingly Fuels Talk of Minimum Wage Hike’, NPR, [2013 November 22.]; <http://www.npr.org/blogs/itsallpolitics/2013/11/22/246558453/wal-mart-food-drive-unwittingly-fuels-talk-of-minimum-wage-hike>.

<sup>29</sup> A. MacIntyre, *Marxism and Christianity*, p. 83.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*.



asks, why cannot the individual capitalist become aware of his role and why can he not, therefore, alter his (or her) behavior.

Let me provide an analogy to make this point. Consider Newton's theory of gravity. According to this theory, material objects are attracted to each other, and this attraction means that objects fall to the ground. If you jump off of a building, you do so knowing that you will hit the ground and die. If, however, I am there to catch you, you would not hit the ground. We do not consider that scenario – the one in which I catch you when falling – as a reason to reject Newton's theory. Rather, we see it as an example of outside interference. In acting as an agent, I prevent you from falling to the ground.

Likewise, if the capitalist acts as an agent, then his action can be seen as outside interference. That is, a capitalist's or proletariat's agency, from the perspective of Marx's theory, appears, not as a contradiction to the theory, but as outside interference, for which we should not discount the overall theory. Capitalism has survived, not because Marx's theory is inherently wrong, but because capitalists have exercised agency to prevent the collapse of capitalism.

One problem with MacIntyre's interpretation, is that at times Marx writes as though, not only his theory of capitalism, but his philosophy of history is scientific and that the theory of capitalism is one parcel of the philosophy of history. Karl Popper believes that this confusion in Marx's writing resulted from Marx's confusing a law and a trend. In contrast, MacIntyre reports that Marx, in a letter to a Russian journal, makes just this distinction between law and trend. Instead of confusion in concepts, MacIntyre believes that the problem in Marx results from Engel's interpretation of Marx that emphasizes scientific-determinism and ignores the role of the concept of alienation in the mature Marx.

Engels, according to MacIntyre, conceives of Marxism "as a systematic philosophy of nature as well as of society." On this conception, certain highest-order laws govern all natural and social processes, and the "evolutionary order of nature is matched by that of social progress."<sup>31</sup> Engels, in fact, believed that Marx was similar to Darwin. Where Darwin discovered the science of evolution and its basic laws, Marx discovers the science and laws of history. Engels, in fact, assimilates social science to natural science. In doing so, however, he opens up Marx to the charge of bad science, of confusing a law with a trend.

In contrast, MacIntyre contends that we should read Marx such that the concept of alienation is, not singular to Marx's early writings, but central to his mature work. Alienation essentially names the inability of the proletariat to recognize that the frustrations she feels in the economic system arise from her own agency – her "patterns of behavior."<sup>32</sup> In the communist society, these frustrations are destroyed because human behavior no longer creates contradictions between its needs and its activity. The concept of alienation, as a Hegelian concept borrowed from religion, for MacIntyre, "rests upon a hope... on a confidence in what human

<sup>31</sup> A. MacIntyre, *Marxism and Christianity*, p. 88; see also A. MacIntyre, 'Notes from the Moral Wilderness', [in:] *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagement with Marxism*, pp. 53–53.

<sup>32</sup> A. MacIntyre, *Marxism and Christianity*, p. 89.

beings will be able to make of their lives when certain barriers and frustrations are removed.”<sup>33</sup> This Marxist hope, however, is neither religious nor scientific.

On the one hand, Marx’s prediction cannot be the same as a scientific prediction. The scientist predicts exactly, and if his prediction either does not come through or the reality differs from his prediction in some way, he must go back to theory and assess what went wrong. Marx, however, denies that we can know what the future communist society will be like. Living as alienated beings, we cannot imagine what the concrete world of the un-alienated – the reconciled – will be like. (Similarly, as Christians, we only know that in heaven we will live without sin, but what such a life will be like, we cannot predict.) Agents consciously create a socialist-communist society and design institutions that serve human purposes (and not institutional ones). This point proves pivotal – because self-conscious agents construct the society, they must be the ones who drive emancipation. No one can bring about emancipation for them (for us).

Thus, concludes MacIntyre, Marx’s “prediction” of a communist society rests, not on a scientific law, but on a humanistic hope.<sup>34</sup> Marx’s theory that capitalism will eventually self-destruct is different from his theory that human history aims at an emancipated state. For MacIntyre, this point entails that Marxism “is a secularized version of a Christian virtue.” Both Marxism and Christianity, however, prove more capable of describing the alienated or fallen state of humanity than of “describing the future nature of unalienated” humanity.<sup>35</sup> Yet, the concept of unalienated humanity is not empty. The end of transformation entails the transformation of “work into a creative activity to be judged by aesthetic standards.”<sup>36</sup>

Needless to say, MacIntyre’s interpretation of Marx differed not only from Engel’s but from a number of more prominent and active interpreters, specifically Lenin<sup>37</sup>, Stalin, and Lukacs. The reason for this difference is two-fold: first, Engels’ interpretation guided many early Marxists because, second, Marx’s economic and philosophic manuscripts, which spell-out the concept of alienation, were not published until 1930. Lenin would only have access to Marx’s post-1848 writings. Similarly, Lukacs, writing *History and Class Consciousness* in 1918–1922, would have been limited in his understanding of the importance of the concept of

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>34</sup> P. McMyler (*Alasdair MacIntyre*, p. 14) notes that MacIntyre’s account in 1968 differs from that of 1953 on this point.

<sup>35</sup> A. MacIntyre, *Marxism and Christianity*, p. 92.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 93.

<sup>37</sup> Paul Blackledge (‘Alasdair MacIntyre’s Contribution to Marxism: A Road Not Taken’, *Analyse & Kritik* 30 (2008), pp. 215–227) makes a strong argument that MacIntyre simply mis-interprets Lenin in this regard. Specifically, Blackledge argues in contrast to MacIntyre that Lenin did not believe that a vanguard had to lead the people in revolution. Blackledge also contends that Lenin did not necessarily accept a scientific-determinism. While I think Blackledge’s argument is fairly strong on this point, its importance for this work is minimal because I am concerned with what MacIntyre perceived to be a weakness. Given Blackledge’s attempt to make Lenin not hold the positions MacIntyre claims he held, I take it that Blackledge would consider these positions weak, if not wrong, as well. See É. Perreault-Saussine’s (‘The Moral Critique of Stalinism’, [in:] P. Blackledge, K. Knight (eds.), *Virtue and Politics*, Notre Dame 2011, 134–152) discussion of this issue.

alienation in Marx. Lukacs, then, defines Marxism as a “consciousness which is constitutive of contemporary social reality.”<sup>38</sup> He placed that consciousness, not in the proletariat, but in the communist party. Because of that move, the Communist International denounced Lukacs’ writings as voluntarist. Instead, they adopted a scientific-determinist understanding of history, in which history is seen as marching inevitably forward toward the communist state. This thesis becomes paramount for Stalin. “History, according to Stalin, moves forward whether we will it or not; we can assist it or try to retard it, but we cannot change its direction or its goal.”<sup>39</sup> MacIntyre concludes that, given the choice between Lukacs’ voluntarism and Stalin’s scientific-determinism, one is left either deifying the Party or deifying history. It becomes Stalinism. Stalinists [...] made the working class serve the needs of the party and the bureaucracy rather than vice versa [...] [and] believed that the end of achieving communism justified unlimited terror and unlimited deceit as a means.<sup>40</sup>

In “Notes from the Moral Wilderness,” an essential essay for understanding MacIntyre’s early Marxism and the path that eventually lead to *After Virtue* and a philosophy of the rationality of traditions, MacIntyre contrasts the Stalinist from the moral critic, particularly the ex-Stalinist moral critic. The Stalinist judges his morality according to what he believes is the determined outcome of history – the communist state. The moral critic, on the other hand, judges morality according to a standpoint outside of history. This autonomous standpoint “is the essence of the liberal tradition of morality.”<sup>41</sup> The problem lies deeper, however. The moral critic takes from Stalin his understanding of theory. Popper, for instance, attacks historicism, by which he means Stalin’s notion of a determinist history governed by laws through which the future is predictable. Popper, nor Stalin nor the moral critic, sees outside the confines of the definition. He identifies theory with Stalinism, and, having rejected Stalinism, can only choose liberalism. MacIntyre seeks something outside the straightjacket of Stalinist dialogue; he seeks, not a scientific-determinist reading of history, but a humanist hope.

MacIntyre proposes a “theory which treat[s] what emerges in history as providing us with a basis for our standards, without making the historical process morally sovereign or its progress automatic.” This position entails that certain moral questions need to be re-examined: “What is the relation between what I am, what I can be, what I want to be, and what I ought to be.”<sup>42</sup> The key question of *After Virtue* that forces MacIntyre to turn to Aristotle is clearly articulated here. Yet, if MacIntyre’s rejection of Stalinism, liberalism, and the ex-Stalinist critic force him to turn to Aristotle, it does so because of his commitment to a different reading of Marx, a reading which, I insist, informs his mature theory. The next section explores the reasons why MacIntyre abandoned Christianity at the

<sup>38</sup> A. MacIntyre, *Marxism and Christianity*, p. 98.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, 100.

<sup>40</sup> Ch. Lutz, *Reading Alasdair MacIntyre’s “After Virtue”*, New York 2012, p. 20.

<sup>41</sup> A. MacIntyre, ‘Notes from the Moral Wilderness’, [in:] *Alasdair MacIntyre’s Engagement with Marxism*, p. 47.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 57.

same time that he abandoned Marxism. The reason for discussing that rejection of Christianity here is that it helps us to understand how MacIntyre came back to Christianity. This return to Christianity parallels, I believe, a more silent return to Marxism, one that I will explore in the final section.

#### IV. MacIntyre Against the Christians

The difficulty is that all the formulations of the Christian religion are politically double-edged. 'All men are equal before God and God wills them to be at one' can either be interpreted to mean that inequality and disunity are a scandal that Christians ought to strive to abolish, or they can be interpreted to mean that it is only before God that men are equal, and only God that can make them at one, so that a merely human equality and unity are neither desirable nor possible. I do not doubt that the original Gospel commands imply the former interpretation; but any Christian who wants to can always rely on the second. As most do.<sup>43</sup>

If the dominant interpretations of Marx put Marxism into question for MacIntyre, then the dominant interpretations of Christianity put it in question. The two opposing and competing functions of religion are, one, to sanction the established modes of social relations and, two, to place those social relations in question by reference to a more perfect state. MacIntyre believes that Jesus meant for Christianity to put into question the social relations of the day, especially those that support disunity and inequality; yet, he believes that many Christians have interpreted Jesus to mean that only God can abolish such disunity and inequality. For the young MacIntyre, Christianity too easily gave in to dogmatism and subverted the Gospel message to politics. Based on this initial juxtaposition, MacIntyre comes to reject Christianity in 1968 on four grounds.

First, historically speaking, Roman Catholicism and Protestant Christianity were both corrupted and justified their corruption through reference to God's word. Too easily, then, Christians have used the Gospel to either ignore injustice in this world or to justify that injustice. Historically, the role of indulgences is only the most egregious example of *pleonexia* in the Church. Further, MacIntyre is all too familiar with Weber's analysis of Protestantism as the root of capitalism. According to Weber, Protestantism places an emphasis on the accumulation of wealth as a sign of God's favor. This accumulation, then, supports a capitalistic approach to the market, accepting with it injustice. In using God's Word to justify *pleonexia*, Christians commit blasphemy.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, the corruption of God's word leads to greater inequality and to a division between those who have and those who have not.

Second, Christianity played reductionism with salvation. "For communism inherits from Christianity the notion of a redemption, a reconciliation of all mankind.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 64.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. P. McMyllor, *Alasdair MacIntyre...*, p. 14.

Then, just as Christianity turned salvation for man into salvation for Christians, so communism turned reconciliation for man into reconciliation for the proletarians.”<sup>45</sup> In Marxism, this reduction of reconciliation plays out in the Leninist notion of a vanguard to lead the masses to the fully communist society. In Christianity, however, we see different pronouncements of who is and who is not worthy of salvation – Jews, non-Christians, Muslims, Christians of a different sect, Marxists, modernists, etc. This reductionism takes its worst form as orthodoxy: “the corruption of the gospel is the kind of preaching that restricts the new creation to those who are doctrinally orthodox”.<sup>46</sup> Obviously, denying salvation to some people creates disunity and enforces present inequality.

Third, Christianity has remained a stranger in a strange world. Of course, MacIntyre writes these words in 1953, but we should not dismiss them too easily. In 1953, the Church had not yet accepted Darwinian evolution and had not yet made an apology to Galileo. It rejected science, despite the work of Gregor Mendel, which is the foundation of modern genetics. As such, Christians educated their children in the classics and in theology. Their education was separate and distinct from non-Christians, which is a cause of concern itself. Because that education was in the classics, moreover, it too easily associated Catholics with “liberal humanism” and the leisure classes of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century who had time to devote to the study of the classics and the Bible. Thus, we see in practice a division that supports an inequality in the world.

Fourth, MacIntyre, mistakenly he says in 1995, equated Christian theology with the theology of Karl Barth.<sup>47</sup> Barth’s theology, however, could not provide an adequate account of moral life. While this point concerns theory, MacIntyre claims that his conclusion was supported by what he saw in the world: “platitudinous emptiness of liberal Christian moralizing... in which the positions of secular liberalism reappeared in various religious guises.”<sup>48</sup> MacIntyre has always rejected this liberalism. If such “liberal Christian moralizing” is empty, it will have nothing to say about living morally, which means it cannot address inequality and disunity. In 1968, MacIntyre seems to be associating such liberalism with the attempt by people in the Church to make Christianity as relevant to the secular world. Of central concern is the demythologizing of the Gospel. Yet, for MacIntyre, this move merely acquiesces to the status quo. In contrast, “Hegel, Feuerbach, and Marx humanized certain central Christian beliefs in such a way as to present a secularized version of the Christian judgment upon” the secular world – i.e. a judgment about its injustices<sup>49</sup>.

While MacIntyre rejected Christianity as a way of life, he believed a core of Christianity still served subversive purposes: The religion that is untouched by the

<sup>45</sup> A. MacIntyre, ‘Extracts from *Marxism: An Interpretation*’, [in:] *Alasdair MacIntyre’s Engagement with Marxism*, p. 9.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in Lutz (*Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre: Relativism, Thomism, and Philosophy* New York 2004, p. 16). See Lutz’s discussion of MacIntyre’s critique of Christianity (*ibidem*, 15–21), which provides a biographical context to MacIntyre’s religious struggles.

<sup>47</sup> A. MacIntyre, ‘1953, 1968, 1995...’, p. 419; Cf. ‘An Interview with Giovanna Borradori’, *passim*; ‘An Interview for *Cogito*’, *passim*.

<sup>48</sup> A. MacIntyre, ‘1953, 1968, 1995...’, p. 419.

<sup>49</sup> A. MacIntyre, *Marxism and Christianity*, p. 143.

Marxist critique is that which proclaims not the justification of every social order, but the inadequacy of every social order. The grounds of this inadequacy spring from the radical nature of human sin and from the fact that no human order can ever be adequate to the perfection, which God ordains and which is displayed in Jesus Christ. "Such a religion is one that will also be at odds with Marxism in that it will see the corruptibility of communist society as clearly as that of any other society".<sup>50</sup>

In 1953, MacIntyre believed he could live a Christian-Marxist life. In 1968, he abandoned, not just the Christian-Marxist life, but also the Christian life and the Marxist life. If he saw that no human order could be adequate to the Gospel vision in 1953, in 1968 he believed that neither could any Christian order. MacIntyre, through Aristotle, recovered his Christianity – a Thomistic Catholicism. If my argument is right, however, he also recovered a form of Marxism, one which kept alienation at the center of a critique of the world and which was initially inspired by God.

### V. MacIntyre's Marxist Thomism

I have been arguing that MacIntyre has a particular reading of Marx that sees Marxism as a Christian heresy because the religious concept of alienation is central to Marx's analysis of the world. The young MacIntyre attempted to live life as a Christian and a Marxist, based on his judgments about inequality and disunity and how both Marxism and Christianity resisted and attempted to overcome such inequality and disunity. He left Marxism because the dominant interpretation instantiated in the acts of Stalin increased disunity and inequality. He also left Christianity because the dominant form of Christianity spread disunity and inequality. In short, his initial judgments about justice, which were inspired by the Gospel and by Marx's *1844 Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, drove him to abandon Christianity and Marxism without abandoning those judgments of justice. If we read his 1986 essay "Which God Ought We To Obey and Why?" as a personal statement, however, we must conclude that he believes (or at least ought to believe) that those initial judgments were and continue to be inspired by God. Thus, I contend that MacIntyre's mature work must be read through Marxist eyes.

I wish to contrast the rejection of Marxism as articulated in 1982 in AV with the new engagement with Marxism from 1994 to 1997. In particular, by 1997 in "Politics, Philosophy, and the Common Good" MacIntyre endorses Kelvin Knight's understanding of his politics as "Revolutionary Aristotelianism." Key to Knight's analysis is the idea that MacIntyre has never fully abandoned Marxism. We see in the writings of 1994 and 1997 a way of thinking about MacIntyre's work as a continuation of a Marxist project abandoned by Marx after 1948.

Many label MacIntyre the ex-Marxist, not only because of his public break with Marxism in 1968, but also because of his work in 1982's *After Virtue*. Here, MacIntyre claims that as a political tradition, Marxism is dead. Towards the end

<sup>50</sup> Quoted in Lutz, *Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre*, p. 16.

of AV, MacIntyre attempts to respond to possible objections to this thesis, the main ones coming from some form of Marxism. He contends in his response to the supposed objections that “[s]ecreted within Marxism from the outset is a radical individualism.”<sup>51</sup> In *Capital* volume 1, Marx imagines the individuals of the communist society to be like Robinson Crusoes who enter civil society through free contracts. According to MacIntyre, no Marxist has been able to explain why such individuals would enter into the communist society and, historically speaking, Marxists have always in the end resorted to some form of Kantian or utilitarian individualism, “the kind of moral attitude which they condemn in others as ideological.”<sup>52</sup>

Second, in practice, Marxism has failed on its own grounds. MacIntyre, rightly, notes that the failures of the Soviet Union do not speak against Marxism because they are not honest attempts at Marxism. The attempts of Marxists at their best in Yugoslavia and Italy, however, show that even the best attempts at practice become Weberian. At the core of AV, however, is exactly a critique of this Weberian approach to politics. Thus, Lutz writes “MacIntyre’s critique of the social political, pseudoscientific abuse of the social sciences in AV does not mention Marxism or the politics of the Left explicitly, but MacIntyre’s Marxist and post-Marxist friends had no question about its intended object.”<sup>53</sup>

However, I want to examine what else MacIntyre says here. MacIntyre asserts once more, as he did in 1968, that Marxism is a philosophy of optimism. Yet, the Marxist of the 1980s would “be forced into a pessimism quite alien to the Marxist tradition, and in becoming pessimist he would in an important way have ceased being a Marxist.”<sup>54</sup> MacIntyre admits that he shares such pessimistic views because, not only Marxism, but “every other political tradition within our culture” is exhausted “as a political tradition.” AV is, from beginning to end, a pessimistic book that contends that the barbarians have been ruling us for some time. As such, we should not expect it to be very Marxist, but for that reason we cannot expect it to be very Thomist (or Christian) either.

Turning to 1995, MacIntyre reflects on his early Marxism. He contends that the original *Marxism* sought to reaffirm central elements of Christianity that many Christians ignored. These elements “are most aptly and relevantly identified by asking what attitude Christians ought to take to capitalism and then noting how that attitude relates to Marxist analysis of capitalism.”<sup>55</sup> God calls us to relationships of love; relationships that, through charity, expand upon and still rest on justice. Justice itself requires that we resist and, where possible, abolish “institutions that systematically generate injustice.”<sup>56</sup> Referring back to my opening thesis, we can see that, indeed, early MacIntyre judged justice according to God’s justice. Those judgments, moreover, are essentially Marxist judgments about alienation

<sup>51</sup> A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 261.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>53</sup> Ch. Lutz, *Reading Alasdair...*, p. 35.

<sup>54</sup> A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 262.

<sup>55</sup> A. MacIntyre, ‘1953, 1968, 1995...’, p. 412.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibidem*.

and the incompatibility of capitalism with human flourishing. “There is on the one hand the large range of particular injustices perpetrated against individuals and groups on this or that particular occasion, where those other individuals who committed the injustices could have done otherwise consistently with conformity to the standards of profit and loss, of commercial and industrial success and failure, enforced by and in a capitalist economic and social order. The immediate cause of such injustice lies in the character of those individuals who commit them. But there is on the other hand a type of injustice which is not the work of a particular person on a particular occasion, but is instead perpetuated institutionally.”<sup>57</sup>

While the first type of evil is individual, it is still systematic, conditioned by the parameters of capitalism. Individuals under capitalism develop as particular types with particular vices that, even without the pressures of the market or the corporation, still result in the oppression and domination of others. The second, however, results from the institutions that agents establish in a capitalist mode of production. This second kind may be more dangerous because often agents alienate themselves from the institutions that their actions produce when they interact with each other. Both of these evils produce a variety of injustices: the original injustice of individuals entering the market on unequal terms which gives power to those who have more over those who have less so that contracts are not free; the absence of any justice of desert, which is found in a just wage and a just market price; the (mis)educational system that trains individuals, not to express their needs and agency, but to serve as cogs in a pre-made machine aimed at capital accumulation; finally, the injustice of the accumulation of money, which makes riches, not an affliction as in the Bible, but an end.<sup>58</sup>

This Christian analysis of the injustices of capitalism “relies in key part, even if only in part, upon concepts and theses drawn from Marxist theory.”<sup>59</sup> Thus, “Christianity in turn needed and needs to learn certain truths from Marxism.” Again, we see evidence that supports my reading of MacIntyre’s 1986 essay. This evidence, moreover, means that we have to understand MacIntyre’s mature work, especially its emphasis on practices and traditions, as inherently Marxist.

Continuing in this essay, MacIntyre writes that he rejected more than he should have of Marxism. Moreover, he writes that, free of problematic philosophical assumptions, his return to biblical Christianity and the Catholic Church helped him to come to a new understanding of Marxism – “not only what had been right in official Catholic condemnations of Marxism, but also how much had been mistaken and rooted in obfuscating and reactionary social attitudes. Part of what Catholic theologians – and more generally Christian theologians – had failed to focus upon sufficiently was the insistence by both Marx and Marxists on the close relationships of theory to practice, on how all theory, including all theology, is the theory of some mode or modes of practice.”<sup>60</sup> Theology is expressed in historical times. When in good order, the Church makes “intelligible in a variety of contexts

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 413.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 413–416.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 416.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 424.



and practices. . . the Word of God revealed to it and the world.”<sup>61</sup> When theology claims, not subordination, but independence of the Word of God, it reduces to simply another set of competing opinions. MacIntyre concludes by emphasizing the need to learn from Marx’s writings of the 1840s.

This conclusion points to the essay “*The Theses on Feuerbach: A Road Not Taken*.” Published in 1994, it brings us once more to Marx’s writings of the 1840s. MacIntyre’s thesis is that, in the third thesis on Feuerbach, Marx laid out a plan for philosophical analysis that he soon abandoned. The third thesis insists that human beings change their historical circumstances and their consciousness through revolutionary practice. This changing of historical circumstances and consciousness rejects the perspective of civil society for something more. Yet, Marx did not have the philosophical tools to say what more that was.

Yet, the concept of revolutionary practice underscores Knight’s description of MacIntyre’s philosophy as revolutionary Aristotelianism. For Knight, MacIntyrean practices are revolutionary because they challenge the power structures of institutions. “In going beyond the exposure of rational inconsistency in legitimations of modernity, MacIntyre draws on Marx for a critique of its characteristic institutions. He indicts ‘the institutional injustice of capitalism’ for the alienation and exploitation of labour.”<sup>62</sup> While institutions pursue external goods like money, in practices, agents pursue internal goods and virtues. Both are needed for a good life, as Aristotle recognizes in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, but the heart of the flourishing life consists in the pursuit of internal goods. Such MacIntyrean practices as chess and fly-fishing are Marxist, on the account provided here, in two ways: first, they bring together theory and practice, and, second, they imply a revolutionary critique of capitalism.<sup>63</sup>

Importantly, in the 1997 essay “Politics, Philosophy, and the Common Good,” MacIntyre endorses Knight’s reading of his work, including Knight’s insistence that MacIntyre has never abandoned all of Marx. “For an accurate and perceptive discussion of my political views see Kelvin Knight.”<sup>64</sup> I want to draw attention to what MacIntyre writes about Marx in this essay. While MacIntyre endorses Aristotle, he holds that Aristotle needs to be corrected on a number of issues. “[A]nd a philosopher who can provide much of what we need at this point is Marx [...] The questions that we now need to put to Marx’s texts are [...] questions – about the relationship, for example, of the ineradicable defects of the so-called free market economy to the nature of social activity – answers to which are badly needed by any form of Aristotelianism that aspires to contemporary relevance.”<sup>65</sup>

MacIntyre currently calls himself a Thomistic-Aristotelian. Even though Thomist, then, this Aristotelianism needs Marx. Primarily, it needs Marx to identify what is wrong with a free-market economy. As just seen, however, it also needs

<sup>61</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>62</sup> K. Knight, ‘Revolutionary Aristotelianism’, p. 892.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. K. Knight, ‘Revolutionary Aristotelianism’, *passim*; *Aristotelian Philosophy*. . . , *passim*;

<sup>64</sup> A. MacIntyre, ‘Politics, Philosophy, and the Common Good’, [in:] *The MacIntyre Reader*. . . , p. 235.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibidem*, 251.

Marx to understand social reality, not as civil society, but as the foundation for our identity and consciousness. This rejection of civil society returns us, once more, to the concept of alienation as articulated in the early Marx. Marx brings the I and the we together in class struggle. Only in the concept of human nature alone can “morality and desire . . . come together once more.”<sup>66</sup>

Further, it needs Marx to understand how “revolutionary Aristotelianism” is a theory of some mode of practice, and, further, how Christianity is also a theology of some mode of practice. At the center of MacIntyre’s philosophical program from the very beginning is a rejection of disunity and inequality. He rejected Marxism in the form of Stalinism and Christianity in a liberal form because they rested on and perpetuated disunity and inequality. We must see, however, that MacIntyre’s conception of revolutionary practice, as well as his conceptions of the narrative unity of life and tradition which I have not discussed, are responses to disunity and inequality. In that sense, then, Thomistic-Aristotelianism also needs Marxism to highlight disunity and inequality in practice so that the theory of practices does not itself become another failed Marxism or another failed Christianity.

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I began with a discussion of MacIntyre’s argument that Marxism is the secular inheritor of Christianity, that, in fact, it is a Christian heresy. MacIntyre puts the Hegelian-religious concept of alienation at the center of his reading of Marx. Marx transforms this conception of alienation from an abstract concept to a concrete one that allows us to examine the objective activity of human life. In contrast to other Marxists, who may not have been familiar with Marx’s *1844 Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, MacIntyre displaces a scientific-determinist reading of Marx in favor of a humanist reading. Marx’s prediction for the collapse of communism is, in the end, based on humanistic hope.

MacIntyre came to reject both Marxism and Christianity. Marxism and Christianity seemed always to lead to disunity and inequality. They both seemed to eventually end in a liberal morality that could not critique the worst actions of their adherents. In turning from Marxism and Christianity, MacIntyre found Aristotle. Through Aristotle, he found Thomas; through Thomas, he found Christianity. Yet, his seminal work, *After Virtue*, seemed to emphasize his split with Marxism.

We have seen that this split was never total. In 1968 he insisted that to abandon Marxism would be to abandon important insights. His later work, while still critical of Marxism, shows that his concept of practices is inherently Marxist. That concept proves Marxist and revolutionary because it provides a focal point for agents to criticize the actions of the market. I have furthered suggested that he remains committed to some of Marx’s program – especially the unity of theory and practice and the Marxist critique of a capitalist economy.

My primary aim in this essay has been to show that MacIntyre’s mature work must be read through a Marxist lens. This claim means more than acknowledging the Marxist critique of the market in his conception of practices. For one, MacIntyre’s Marxism also entails a critique of civil society. More importantly, I claim

<sup>66</sup> A. MacIntyre, ‘Notes from the Moral Wilderness’, p. 63.

that we need Marx still; we need to understand where Marx went wrong and what we can learn, both from where he went wrong and from what he got right. Further, and this point is most critical, we must recognize that to be Christian in today's world is also to be Marxist.

The 1986 essay "Which God Ought We To Obey and Why?" is crucial for this argument. Regardless of what MacIntyre himself wished to say or imply in this essay, we cannot help but conclude that our initial judgments of justice, Marxist that they are, are in fact inspired by God. They are also God's judgments, and, in this limited though important sense, God also is a Marxist. This conclusion, of course, has significant implications for both Marxists and Christians. Primarily, it entails that Christians and Marxists should, not condemn each other, but dialogue with each other in solidarity. Sadly, this solidarity does not exist in the United States or Western Europe. One practical task we have, then, is to provide opportunities for such dialogues.

It also means, however, that we can begin to share a particular vision of society, one which MacIntyre proposed in his early work. It must be, not a pessimistic vision of AV, but an optimistic one of 1844. "The true Christian community will be one of poverty and prayer. In one sense it will not be specifically Christian, for it will be concerned above all with the truly human [...] But in another sense this new community will be both human and Christian. For its prayer will be the classical prayer of Christendom."<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> A. MacIntyre, 'Extracts from *Marxism...*', p. 22–23.