Masterthesis Philosophy

Education as telos?

'A thesis on the propensity of external goods to corrupt the internal goods of education'

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'Fortunately I do not need to establish as part of the present argument precisely what it is that is being disguised in order to show that the concept of managerial effectiveness functions as a *moral fiction*; all that I need to show is that its use presupposes knowledge claims which cannot be made good, and further that the difference between the use to which it is put and the meaning of the assertions which embody it is precisely similar to that identified by the emotive theory in the case of other modern moral concepts'

Alasdair MacIntyre (After Virtue, 1981 p.76)

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Summary

In 2002 five Higher Professional Education Organization's (HBO's) decided to merge. Later, even more schools joined the merger and the organization grew to one of the biggest HBO's in the Netherlands. Eight years later in 2010 Inholland hit the media because they had committed diploma fraud. Easier alternative graduation routes, which became known in the media as 'The Theo Route', existed at different educations and locations. Many students needed to return their diploma's. Moreover, it was found that the board of Inholland had made inappropriate declarations and other expenses of approximately €900.000,-.

Triggered by these disturbing events this thesis morally investigates them using MacIntyre's (1981) moral framework as developed in his book 'After Virtue'. Accordingly, the research question of this thesis is: To what extent did external goods corrupt the internal goods of education?

First, a position is taken within the academic discourse, initiated by an interview with MacIntyre in 2002, that debates whether or not education still has the possibility of being a practice. Doings so a collection of papers called: Education and practice: upholding the integrity of teaching and learning (Dunne & Hogan, 2004) is studied. The overall conclusion of the author's is that education still is a practice and that it is within the relational sphere its virtues and internal goods can be found. In addition, two extra arguments overlooked by the authors are added to their conclusion.

Following, MacIntyre's famous 1981 book 'After Virtue' is thoroughly displayed. Having done so, his moral framework is applied to the events that occurred at Inholland extensively. Studies of the Ministry of OCW and later personal experiences working as a teacher and graduation coordinator at Inholland are used. This results in the conclusion that the internal goods of education, that is for instance that the accompaniment of the student by the teacher during a thesis is to be valued for the pursuit to achieve excellence in the accompaniment itself, is highly corrupted by external goods such as perverse incentives, a focus on financial gain, status and influence initiated by the institution, hence the government, hence the emotivist culture we inhabit.

Consequently, this latter enquiry results in a third argument showing that education still has the possibility of being a practice. 'Friendship' as the fundamental virtue of educational practice is postulated in line with Aristotle's and MacIntyre's moral philosophy.

Finally, three discussion points are unfolded. The first concerns the strength of MacIntyre's argumentation showing that *The Therapist* and *The Expert* are moral masks. The second concerns the dialectical nature of the emotivist culture and a practice. And the third concerns the essentialistic nature of a *telos* in general and the *telos* of education specifically.

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Introduction

Driven by the prospects of scale and synergy benefits, the urge to maintain organizational legitimacy and in hope of better education, five Higher Professional Education Organizations (HBO's) decided to merge in 2002. They branded themselves 'Inholland'. Later even more schools joined the merger and the organization grew to be one of the biggest HBO's in the Netherlands. Large ICT- projects, management layers, management education programs and expensive accommodational renovations were implemented accordingly. Disturbingly however, complaints started to emerge quickly. Students complained about the lack of personal attention and a decline in the amount and quality of the lessons. Teachers complained about bad management, a negative change in the organizational culture, a very high work pressure and a decline in the quality of the facilitation of the primary process (Ministry of OCW, 2005). Strikingly, Inholland hit the media in the summer of 2010. It was found that students were able to finish their thesis easier and graduate using an 'alternative graduation route' initiated by a teacher named Theo. The route became known in the media as 'The Theo route'. Accordingly, the government initiated studies to investigate the diploma fraud. It was found that other educations also had comparable alternative routes and, even more, many educations lacked significantly the application of the WHW (Higher Education Law) and apply appropriate measures to ensure the final bachelor level of their graduates. Many students needed to return their diploma's (Ministry of OCW, 2011). Moreover, it was found that the board of Inholland had made inappropriate declarations and other expenses accumulating to a total of €900.000,- (Ministry of OCW, 2011). All gained significant attention in the media and in the aftermath Inholland needed to restructure their organization significantly due to a decline in student enrollments.

Consequently, the idea for this philosophical thesis emerged from disturbing personal experiences working as a teacher and graduation coordinator at Inholland myself. On several occasions I experienced the propensity, among colleagues and within myself, to agree on a lower level of the students results, in order to get them to the next phase of the education or even end the education. Moreover, I was unable to appropriately relate to my students in order to be didactically and pedagogically effective. Accordingly, this study will involve a moral reflection considering an institution at drift in which it became inevitable to escape specific situations that, to some extent, forced immoral behaviour by its employees. How is this possible? What happened? And can we interpret these events from an ethical perspective?

Within the philosophical literature many moral reflections on the current state of education can be found. First, Barber (2007), considering schools in the United States, points out that: 'When you transform a public organization into a brand it inevitably becomes privatized (Barber 2007 p.252)'. This transition, according to Barber (2007), results in the loss of the idea of a common good. He states: 'Stimulating the market to do the work of democracy will pervert our culture and undermine the essence of our community (Barber, 2007 p.160)'. Secondly, in a collection of papers of the Nexus Institute on the current state of education, Fresco (2007) writes: '(…) the lifelong joy of knowledge, reading and exploring as an everyday ingredient of a full-grown live has vanished as end of education and dimension of society (Fresco, 2007 p.34)'. Thirdly, Nussbaum (2010) stresses that we treat education as if its primary goal is to teach students to become economically useful instead of making them critical citizens. She advocates a reconnection with the humanities in order to give students the capacity to be true democratic citizens (Nussbaum, 2010). Interestingly and finally, Sandel (2012) argues that market incentives change norms and have a corrupting power. Moral and

social involvement are significantly undermined as depicted in the example he gives concerning some United States school districts who pay their students if they obtain higher grades.

In general, the author's mentioned above, all refer, to my opinion, to the end, that is the *telos* of education. More specifically, the loss of its telos. Accordingly, most suitable in order to philosophically investigate the events that occurred at Inholland mentioned earlier, is the moral framework of Alasdair MacIntyre. In his famous book After Virtue (1981) he strives for a revival of Aristotelian virtue ethics based on a thorough historical analyses of our current emotivist culture. Also he argues that 'the manager' and his Weberian thinking based on expertise is nothing but a moral mask of the current emotivist culture we inhabit. Moreover, he postulates the concept of 'practice'. Every practice has its *telos* and within the practice internal goods can be achieved by virtues. Paradoxically, the internal goods of a practice can be corrupted by external goods. The latter is caused by the institution which is needed to facilitate the practice in the first place.

Did education indeed lose its telos? Is education a practice? Does it have its internal goods? And most importantly: are the events that occurred at Inholland an example of external goods corrupting internal goods? To investigate this, the following research question and sub-questions will be studied:

To what extent are external goods corrupting the internal goods of educational practice?

- Is education a practice?
- What are its internal goods?
- What are its external goods?
- To what extent are its internal goods corrupted?

Chapter 1. Is education a practice?

The interview

'Practice' is at the core of MacIntyre's moral philosophy. Although he states that not all are located within the practice, it is here where he tries to pinpoint the virtues. However, according to MacIntyre (1981) a practice (which is to be found in the moral horizon of a tradition and the individuals live narrative within that tradition) involves: '(…) any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to the 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 to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended (MacIntyre, 1981 p.187)'. Every practice has an end (telos) and contains internal goods. Internal goods can be achieved by conforming to the standards of excellence within the practice. Hence, virtues are character traits that dispose a person to act in accordance with the telos of the practice. A practice is always accompanied by external goods. External goods are goods such as status or financial reward. They are external because they can be achieved in many other ways opposed to the goods that are internal to the practice. According to MacIntyre, a practice always needs to be accommodated by an institution. Paradoxically, institutions are inclined to corrupt the internal goods of a practice in order to enlarge the external goods (Beauchamp, 2001). Ever since the publication of After Virtue (1981) many (moral) philosophers and specifically philosophers of education assumed that education, and thus teaching itself, was a practice. In 2002 however, in an interview with Joseph Dunne published in the Journal of Philosophy of Education, MacIntyre argued that teaching is not a practice, that the life of a teacher is not a specific kind of live, that teaching is never more than a means and that the philosophy of education is not a distinct area of philosophical inquiry. His argumentation in the interview is the following.

Concerning the telos of education, MacIntyre states that: 'What education has to aim at for each and every child (…) is both the development of those powers that enable children to become reflective and independent members of their families and political communities and the inculcation of those virtues that are needed to direct us towards the achievement of our common and individual goals (MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002 p.1)'. Following, he states that education nowadays has two major threats. The first is that schools are not provided with the recourses they really need and the second is that schools have become input-output machines in which there is only one measure, which is productivity. MacIntyre argues: 'The input consists of the raw material, the entering students. The output is in test scores and examination results (MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002 p.3)'. And later he argues: 'What is wrong with this model is that it loses sight of the end of education, the development of its students powers and substitutes for this end that of success by the standard of some test or examination (MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002 p.5)'. MacIntyre opposes the input-output model with examination in the Prussian era. Prussian teachers were told to give their students any time needed to develop their powers and character to the fullness before being examined. Because education has lost sight on its telos it can't be a practice, so he continues: 'What I have said implies that teaching itself is not a practice, but a set of skills and habits put to the service of a variety of practices (MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002 p.5)'. Teaching is always for the sake of something else and does not have its own goods according to MacIntyre. He emphasises that it is impossible to move back towards a system in which there is a student-teacher ratio which is low enough in order to accomplish the development of the students powers and character to the fullest. It would involve a massive reallocation of recourses.

Finally, he argues that since education is not a practice, the life of a teacher is not a specific kind of live (in which virtues can be developed and internal goods can be accomplished) and thus the philosophy of education (as a distinct area of philosophy) is also a mistake. Soon, after the publication of this interview, a discussion emerged within the academic literature. What follows now is a review of this 'practice discussion'.

The 'practice discussion'

A collection of papers called: 'Education and practice: upholding the integrity of teaching and learning', edited by Joseph Dunne and Pádraig Hogan in 2004, combines, next to a reprint of the interview from 2002, the most important reactions towards MacIntyre's somewhat provocative statements. Some authors focus on rejecting the statement made by MacIntyre concerning the Philosophy of education (Carr, 2004). Some focus on an agenda for radical school reform (Vokey, 2004) arguing that teaching is some sort of master practice. Some authors focus on problematizing the definition of 'practice' (McLaughin, 2004) and (Smith, 2004) showing that there might be several rival conceptions of a 'practice'. However, most focus specifically on argumentations proving that education is itself a practice.

First, Hogan (2004), shares the concerns MacIntyre's expresses in the first pages of the interview, but rejects MacIntyre respond to this concerns. He points at a specific difference when opposing political, economically or religiously driven educational systems with 'Socratic Pedagogy'. Within the first systems mentioned, the teacher is an authority and, for the students, learning is a matter of adopt and execute. In the latter the teacher is not solely an authority but is inclined to learn from his students as well. Hogan (2004) argues: 'Socrates discovered the real significance of learning, as it became his distinctive way of live. Among the most important lessons he learnt was that limitation, partiality, lack of finality and not least fallibility are probably inescapable features of all human efforts to understand and to know (Hogan, 2004 p.22'. Hence, Hogan (2004) rejects all four claims, made by MacIntyre in the interview, showing that 'Socratic Pedagogy' is a distinct way of human being in which teacher and learner are in a constant discourse of truth and (virtue) disposition finding and thus education has a telos and thus education is a practice.

Secondly, Higgins (2004) main argumentation against MacIntyre's statement that education is not a practice involves a carful reconstruction of MacIntyre's original conception of 'practice' followed by a thorough analysis of 'goods internal to a practice'. Then he delineates the goods internal to the practice of education and concludes that: 'Investigation of the goods internal to the practice of teaching may lead us to understand how teaching is not merely a form of service but a pursuit of the teacher's own flourishing (Higgins, 2004 p.46)'. According to Higgins (2004), in order to understand the internal goods of education, one needs to combine the question 'Why teach?' with 'How should I live?'. Following, he states that the teacher operates in a tradition with a moral horizon, has his own individual live narrative within that tradition and thus the teacher is active within a practice.

Thirdly, Noddings (2004), as Higgins (2004), zooms in on the internal goods of education. She agrees with MacIntyre that teaching mathematics is something different than being a professional mathematician. Interestingly, she argues that it is exactly within this difference where we can find the internal goods of education. Noddings (2004) writes: 'Teaching is thoroughly relational, and many of its goods are relational: the feeling of safety in a thoughtful teacher's classroom, a growing intellectual enthusiasm in both teacher and student, the challenge and satisfaction shared by both in engaging new materials, the awakening sense (for both) that teaching and life are never-ending moral quests. Most of the goods internal to teaching derive from or serve the first great good, the development of whole

persons (Noddings, 2004 p.167)'. Essential within the argumentation of Noddings (2004) is that relations of care and trust are ends in themselves and not solely means. Ergo, education has an end and thus is a practice.

Finally, Dunne (2004), ends the collection of papers. Interestingly, Dunne (2004) points at the Aristotelian distinction between *poieseis* and *praxis* and shows that a practice is comparable with *poieseis.* In both '*poieseis'* and 'practice' the end is separable from the activity and Dunne refers to Aristotle's example of the tanner maker in the first chapter of the Ethics. According to Dunne (2004) MacIntyre contradicts himself, stating that education is just for the sake of something else, showing that architecture, which is a much used example of a practice in After Virtue, complies to the definition of '*poieseis'.* Moreover, in his contribution, he specifically focuses on showing that Macintyre's characterization of the teacher in the interview doesn't do any right to what a teacher accomplishes. Dunne (2004) shows that MacIntyre himself, within the interview at stake and in other writings, has a much richer view of education than he suggest when stating that education is just an 'ingredient in any practice'. He points at an argumentation MacIntyre displays in the book 'Dependent Rational Animals' published in 1999. MacIntyre argues that, using Winnicot's intermediate space between a child and a parent in which the child develops independency, within this intermediate space virtues are developed first by the parents and later by educators. This intersubjective nature of teaching, of which MacIntyre is otherwise so aware of, is not in line with his argumentation in the 2002 interview. In sum, Dunne (2004) tries not to challenge the original concept of 'practice' as given by MacIntyre but showing that MacIntyre's own overall view on education is itself a reason for arguing that education is a practice.

There is one notable publication that can be found in the aftermath of the 'practice discussion'. Interestingly, in 2006 MacIntyre wrote a paper titled 'The End of Education: the fragmentation of the American University'. In this paper MacIntyre problematizes the ongoing diversification and specialization within Universities. Teachers, the curriculum and, by result, the students evermore experience a fragmentation in which no one really knows anymore what actually binds all. This is troubling, according to MacIntyre, because students are left with a fragmented view on the human condition by the time they graduate. He then argues for a tripartite curriculum, containing many nowadays specializations, in which cooperation between the specializations is based on answering questions that can only be answered due to the emergent power of their cooperation. MacIntyre (2006) however does not proceed with, or replies to, the discussion that emerged after the interview held in 2002. Again, he expresses mayor concerns towards the current state of education.

The following section will unfold my position in the 'practice discussion'. First I will take position within the argumentations depicted above. Ending this chapter I will unfold two arguments myself to defend that education itself is a practice.

The central point of the authors above is that the internal goods of education exists and therefore prove that education has an end and thus is itself a practice. It is within *the relational sphere* in which internal goods are achieved either by the student or the teacher. I agree on this fundamental statement and will elaborate on this matter later. For now, take for instance Macintyre's denial of education being a practice. Due to his denial many professional philosophers and one student (who happens to be a teacher also) got into discourse with him. This relational exercise resulted in a deeper understanding of the possibility of education being a practice and some well-developed attempts to delineate its internal goods. Now whether or not one agrees with the argumentations developed, the 'practice discussion' itself shows that this relational sphere might very well be at the core of the internal goods of education.

Finally, I agree to some extent with Macintyre's (2006) critic on the diversification and specialization. However, if we really are going to put specific specialist together in three different faculties, answering questions that can only be answered by the power of their emergent knowledge, then how are they to maintain their specialisms? Hence, over time they will lose their specialisms and therefore the emergent power of their collaboration will slowly evaporate. I think it might be better to have them work on their specialisms and occasionally come together to work on scientific meta subjects. The same applies for the students.

To my opinion, there are three possible arguments, showing that education still has the possibility of being a practice, overlooked by the authors that contributed to the collection of papers published by Dunne and Hogan (2004). The first two are unfolded below. The third will be depicted extensively in chapter four as it is a result of the research question that is at stake in this thesis.

1. *The Macintyre paradox?*

Rereading the specific part of the interview thoroughly, in which MacIntyre argues against education being a practice, a peculiar phrase slowly emerges from the text. It is the following phrase: 'What is wrong with this model is that it loses sight of the end of education (MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002 p.4)'. With 'this model' MacIntyre refers to the input-output model with its focus on productivity and by 'end' McIntyre refers to the telos of education, that is the development of the students powers and character to the fullest. This is clear within the context of his argumentation at this point in the interview. However, if education at some point in time indeed lost sight on its telos than there must have been a time in which it hadn't lost it yet. MacIntyre says so himself by pointing at the Prussian era. Ergo, once in time education did have sight on its telos, thus was a practice and thus still might have the potential to be a practice nowadays. Hence, I believe that MacIntyre is too rigged when he argues that education is not a practice at all, that it is just for the sake of something else, that it changed into an input-output model and so does not have its own goods. To the contrary, I would like to argue that the input-output model that focuses on productivity is something that cannot be opposed with the telos of education, as MacIntyre does, but is an inextricable part of it. I believe that MacIntyre creates a paradox by opposing the input-output model with the (Prussian) 'development of powers and the inculcation of virtues'. My argumentation is as follows.

First, concerning the telos of education, MacIntyre argues that: 'What education has to aim at for each and every child (…) is both the *development of those powers* that enable children to become reflective and independent members of their families and political communities and *the inculcation of those virtues* that are needed to direct us toward the achievement of our common and individual goods (MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002 p.1)'. Secondly, MacIntyre proceeds stating that every good teacher (including the Prussians) already knows that there is no way to neutrally quantify the development of the students powers to the fullest. He writes that: 'What the Prussian educators took to be important is exactly what disappears from view in the input-output system (MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002 p.4)'. I believe this is a mistake. There must be some kind of input-output difference that is to be known by the Prussian teacher in order to know that the student has reached this fullness. Whatever the Prussian teacher did to know if the student (input) reached its fullness, it was some kind of measure (output) in order to know. The point here is that in in order to accomplish the first one inescapably needs the second.

Concluding, one cannot develop the students powers and virtues without an input (the student) and know that the powers and virtues of the student are developed to its full strength by measuring (output). Off course, measuring educational output is different now from the Prussia era as MacIntyre correctly points at, but still it is measuring. Thus, an input-output system is a presupposition *within* the telos of education and *cannot be opposed* with the development of the students powers to the fullest. MacIntyre argues that education has become an input-output system, thus has lost sight of its telos and thus education is not a practice. But opposing the input-output model with the development of powers and inculcation of virtues as done by MacIntyre, creates a paradox. They are not mutually exclusive, they are inevitable mutually inclusive!

In addition to this conclusion I believe that the telos of education has, to a significant extent, been corrupted. First, what differs nowadays, is the way in which emphases is put on the input-output aspect of the telos of education. In Prussian times the student teacher ratio might have been 1 on 2, today this is 1 on 26,4 (the latter is the case in my current job). And a second major distinction is the emphasis on what is thought to be important to develop. In Prussian times the pupil was expected to 'reach the fullness of its powers and character', nowadays the students need to be able to contribute to the economy.

In sum, the input-output model has always been a presupposition within the telos of education however it slowly developed, to some extent, into a mechanism with a focus on productivity in order to serve the economy. Its aim 'reach the fullness of the students powers and character' developed, to some extent, into a curriculum with a focus on economic usefulness.

2. *The objectification of the student and the teacher.*

The second argument is in line with Hogan's (2004) contribution on teaching and learning as a way of live. I believe that nowadays we as teachers cannot escape from the economies occupational role in society, that we are part of this system and thus are to some extent confronted with the input-output model MacIntyre points at. Moreover, students do need to be ready to be economically useful. But this is not the whole case as MacIntyre (2002) suggests.

On the one hand, this strong emphasis on the input-output model turns the student into an object. From this view the student becomes a will-less slave that, as if it were some kind of semi-finished product, needs to be specialised within the education machine in order to serve as an objectified functionality in the economy. I believe that this is an exaggerated view. Almost all students I have met are to some extent intrinsically motived to learn, to develop their powers to the fullness and are receptive for the inculcation of virtues. Their characters are mostly in line with the education that they follow. Besides becoming, say for instance, a good salesman in order to be useful to the economy, many students studying sales also feel an intrinsic motivation that is embedded in their character to follow the sales education and become a good salesmen. Hence, becoming a salesmen is part of their characters development, in which they will develop specific virtue's and have a meaningful life.

On the other, the input-output model also turns the teacher into an object. The teacher has become a will-less instrument of the economy. Its purpose is to specialise the semi-finished products as efficient as they can, thus maximum production for the lowest costs, using teaching skills and techniques. I think this is also an exaggerated view. Teachers are indeed preparing students for the economy, using the student as the input and examinations as the output but they are also learning themselves, within the relational sphere, with students

and other practitioners. Or as Hogan (2004, p.20) strikingly states: “What is involved is not merely a fluency in skills and strategies of communication but also something qualitatively different: a commitment to teaching and learning as a distinctive way of human being (…)’. Put differently, being a teacher and conducting education is a way to fulfil a live and to develop a virtues character hence its own telos.

With the latter argumentations in mind I defend that education still has the potential to be a practice. Nonetheless, I agree with MacIntyre that education nowadays puts too much emphasis on productivity and too less on the development of the students powers, character and the inculcation of virtues. I think this is due to what MacIntyre (1981) calls the propensity of external goods to corrupt the internal goods of a practice. So, the question is to what extent did education lose sight on its telos, and is this due to the corrupting effects of external goods over internal goods? The following chapters of this thesis are directed to this question, starting with a close look on MacIntyre’s 1981 famous book: After Virtue.

Chapter 2. After Virtue

Symptoms of moral disorder

Contemporary moral philosophical discourse is like looking at the ruins of a castle and suggesting what it might have looked like. This metaphor adequately describes Macintyre's central hypothesis which he wishes to investigate in his book. He starts his book with a thought experiment. He asks to think of a world in which a devastating war against natural scientist has erased almost all empirical data and methods used. Later, new enlightened people try to restore the lost methods and knowledge using shreds of information and thereby creating a distorted language and practice of natural science, a simulacra. According to MacIntyre (1981) the same holds for contemporary moral language and practice. Hence, his central hypotheses is: '(…) that in the actual world which we inhabit the language of morality is in the same grave disorder as the language of the natural science in the imaginary world which I described. What we possess, if this view is true, are the fragments of a conceptual scheme, parts which now lack those contexts from which their significance derived. We possess indeed simulacra of morality, we continue to use many of the key expressions. But we have – very largely, if not entirely – lost our comprehension, both theoretical and practical, of morality(MacIntyre, 1981 p.2)'. Moreover, he argues, that his hypothesis is to be taken even more serious when one realises that in the imaginary world the people are aware of the catastrophe that took place while in the real world the catastrophe was a very slow and hard to identify process that has not been recognized as a catastrophe. In sum, this is what MacIntyre refers to as *a disquieting suggestion*. A suggestion that needs to be investigated (MacIntyre, 1981).

He proceeds with analysing *the nature of moral disagreement* by giving three examples of contemporary moral debates. In each example he contrasts divers historical moral positions. Following, he states that there are three salient characteristics that these moral debates share. The first is the problem of incommensurability between the core argumentations. This incommensurability causes problems when trying to decide between for instance freedom of speech and the freedom of religion. The second characteristic, present in the mentioned moral debates, is that arguments purport to be impersonal rational arguments. The latter characteristic contradicts the first characteristic since the first emphasises fundamental conceptual differences between moral positions and the latter appeals to a singular objectified moral position. The third characteristic, according to MacIntyre (1981), is intimately related to the first two. The first two characteristics share presupposed profound historical origins and this is exactly were the problem lies. MacIntyre argues: 'We all too often still treat the moral philosophers of the past as contributors to a single debate with a relatively unvarying subject matter, treating Plato, Hume and Mill as contemporaries. (…) Kant ceases to be part of the history of Prussia, Hume is no longer a Scotsman. For from the standpoint of moral philosophy as *we* conceive it these characteristics have become irrelevant (Macintyre, 1981 p.11)'. To MacIntyre (1981) the combination of these three characteristics, found in contemporary moral debate, are disquieting landmarks on which he founds his hypothesis that contemporary moral language and practice slowly passed from a state of order to disorder.

Emotivism: its claims, social content and context

MacIntyre (1981) proceeds with a historical analysis of the developments in *the core claims of emotivism* during the twentieth century using Moore's (1902) Principia Ethica as an example. Accordingly, he accurately unfolds that Moore's core premise ('good' is an indefinable property) eventually undermines the work of his followers. This is possible, according to MacIntyre (1981), because the publications of his followers show that they naively felt the need for an impersonal and objectified justification for rejecting all moral claims. They found this objectified justification in Moore's book. Ergo, MacIntyre (1981) shows, in this short historical analysis, that during the course of the twentieth century emotivism changed to eventually contradict itself. That is, claiming that 'the good' is indefinable as Moore (1902) does, and thereby arguing that there are no rational arguments for moral decision making is itself a rational argument. Hence, Moore's followers misconstrued their own theory as a theory of meaning (MacIntyre, 1981). Following, MacIntyre (1981) nonetheless argues that emotivism is not dead. To the contrary, it has an almost unrecognisable cultural power which is highly presupposed and can even be found in philosophical writings of those who do not consider themselves emotivists, such as Sartre and Nietzsche. Therefore, in order to defend the central hypothesis of his book, he proceeds by investigating *the social content and context of emotivism*. Accordingly, MacIntyre (1981) commits himself to two distinct tasks. He states: 'The first is that of identifying and describing the lost morality of the past and evaluating its claims to objectivity and authority (…). The second is that of making good my claim about the specific character of modern age. For I have suggested that we live in a specifically emotivist culture, and if this is so we ought presumably to discover that a wide variety of our concepts and modes of behaviour – and not only our explicit moral debates and judgements – that presuppose the truth of emotivism (…) (MacIntyre, 1981 p.22)'. To the latter task he turns directly.

Any moral philosophy presupposes sociology (MacIntyre, 1981). Hence, according to MacIntyre (1981), we can only understand a moral claim if we understand the sociological context in which it developed. He proceeds by arguing that: '(…) emotivism entails the obliteration of any genuine distinction between manipulative and non-manipulative social relations (MacIntyre, 1981 p.23). This is because emotivism holds that all moral judgements are *nothing but* expressions of preferences, expressions of attitude or feelings. According to MacIntyre (1981) this is impossible. Moral discourse is always depending on attempts to align one's own will of preferences with preferences of another's will. Hence, emotivism holds, contrary to Kant, that others are always means and not ends. Following, MacIntyre (1981) shows that the obliteration of the distinction between manipulative and non-manipulative social relations is highly reflected in the work of Max Weber on bureaucratic organizations (that managers nowadays embody in their manipulative behaviour the truth of emotivism), is reflected in rich aesthete and is reflected in characters that also inhabit the emotivist culture such as the therapist. What is wrong with this culture, according to MacIntyre (1981), is that it denies the philosophical idea that: 'Anyone and everyone can be a moral agent, since it is in the self and not in social roles or practices that moral agency has to be located. The contrast between this democratization of moral agency and the elitist monopolies of managerial and therapeutic expertise could not be sharper. Any minimally rational agent is to be accounted a moral agent; but managers and therapist enjoy their status in virtue of their membership within hierarchies of imputed skills and knowledge (MacIntyre, 1981 p.32)'.

Interestingly, MacIntyre (1981) unfolds that within the emotivist view the *self* however has become criterionless and lost its telos. Therefore, within society and politics, the idea arose that the *self* needed to be controlled in order to limit the arbitrary choice of the individual and prohibit a state of anarchy based on self-interest. With the latter in mind

MacIntyre (1981) emphasises that we are inheritors of a process of historical transformation that eventually evolved in the emotivist culture we now inhabit. Following, he proceeds with his first task. That is, investigating attempts to close moral debates, using ultimate principles, in *the predecessor culture* of emotivism.

Justifying morality

While analysing philosophical projects of the Enlightenment, that sought to base moral agency on ultimate premises, MacIntyre (1981) wishes to show how the emotivist *self* was able to emerge in our current culture. First, MacIntye focusses on the history of the word 'moral' and emphasises that, due to the growing focus on rationality during the Enlightenment, the word 'moral' etymologically moved from 'pertaining to character' to 'classifying judgements' and, moreover, that we nowadays are not aware that this latter conception of 'morality' is actually quit new. Secondly, MacIntyre (1981) shows that Kierkegaard's response to Kant (founding moral agency on criterionless fundamental choice), Kant's response to Hume (founding moral agency on reason) and Hume's vision on moral agency (that morality is the work of the passions) are closely related failures. Failures that are *either* based on the idea that morality is the work of reason *or* is the work of the passions as in the works of Kant and Hume. And failure within the work of Kierkegaard because he excludes both reason and passion. Hence, he writes: 'Thus the vindication of each position was made to rest in crucial part upon the failure of the other two, and the sum total of the effective criticism of each position by the others turned out to be the failure of all. The project of providing a rational vindication of morality had decisively failed; and from henceforward the morality of our predecessor culture – and subsequently of our own – lacked any public, shared rationale or justification (MacIntyre, 1981 p.50)'. Finally, MacIntyre (1981) points out that due to the loss of religion as a foundation for moral discourse philosophers of the Enlightenment failed to fill the gap and thereby moral philosophy became a marginal academic discipline. Accordingly, he wonders *why the enlightenment project of morality had to fail.*

His answer is surprising and strikingly simple and derives again from historical analysis. The failure lies in a discrepancy between two core premises concerning human nature which are: *a view on man-as-he-happens-to-be* and *a view on man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-essential-nature*. The latter is Aristotelian and to him ethics is an ongoing process (in which a telos in human live is presupposed) while making errors in dispositions reaching that telos. Moreover: '(…) reason instructs us *both* as to what our true end is and how to reach it (MacIntyre, 1981 p.53)'. This can, to some extent, also be found within the framework of Christianity, Aquinas, Jews and the Islam. However, now the telos is given by God (the Aristotelian errors are replaced by sins) and is to be found partially in another live. However, in this framework, it is already visible that not reason itself but God provides the end of human live.

The first view on human nature, on the other hand, is a premise that evolved during the enlightenment and eventually resulted in the idea '(…) that reason can assert no genuine comprehension of men's true end (MacIntyre, 1981 p.53)' and, due to secularism, the end of human live is also not provided by a God. Interestingly, he writes: 'Hence, the eighteenth-century moral philosophers engaged in what was an inevitable unsuccessful project; for they did indeed attempt to find a rational basis for their moral beliefs in a particular understanding of human nature, while inheriting a set of moral injunctions on the one hand and a conception of human nature on the other which had been expressly designed to be discrepant with each other. This discrepancy was not removed by their revised beliefs about human nature. They inherited incoherent fragments of a once coherent scheme of thought and action and, since

they did not recognize their own peculiar historical and cultural situation, they could not recognize the impossible and quixotic character of their self-appointed task (MacIntyre, 1981 p.55)'.

Concluding, if one assumes that one cannot acquire by reason ones telos in live by himself, and in accordance tries to base moral agency with a primacy on passions, reason or radical choice, one will inevitably fail because it is exactly ones telos that drives moral choice and gives it direction. Put differently, what use are moral maxims if ones live has no end? It is only within the telos of a human live the precepts of rational ethics become meaningful.

In addition, MacIntyre (1981) shows that defining what is 'good' is logically inseparable from any comprehension of what its 'function' is. Moreover, he emphasises that the use of 'man' as a *functional* concept is far older than Aristotle and that due to the loss of this logic in the Enlightenment the conduct of moral languages became flaw and accordingly had its social and political consequences in which the emotivist *self* was able to emerge.

Some consequences of the failure of the enlightenment project.

Utilitarianism is present in many social roles and institutions nowadays. However utilitarianism too did not see that they were deprived of any sound basis for claims to objectivity, according to MacIntyre (1981), and so they linked historically the Enlightenment project to twentieth century emotivism. Different pleasures and different happinesses are incommensurable and therefore pseudo-concepts or *moral fictions*. Hence, the greatest happiness for the greatest number is a moral notion with no content (MacIntyre, 1981).

Accordingly, MacIntyre (1981) argues, we inherited an incoherent conceptual scheme that is based on a paradox. On the one hand we are thought to be autonomous moral agents but on the other we engage in practices, aesthetic or bureaucratic, in which we encounter in manipulative relationships with others. This is paradoxical because: 'Seeking to protect the autonomy that we have learned to prize, we aspire ourselves *not* to be manipulated by others; seeking to incarnate our own principles and stand-points in the world of practice, we find no way open to us to do so except by directing towards others those very manipulative modes of relationship which each of us aspire to resist in our own case (MacIntyre 1981, p.68)'. This paradox is reflected in three modern moral concepts according to MacIntyre (1981) which are *rights*, *protest* and *unmasking*. *Rights* are always in conflict with utilitarian preferences because there is no way to rationally decide between both. Thus, rights and utility are *moral fictions* as is *protest* because protest concerns a reaction to someone's rights in the name of someone else's utility. *Unmasking* (as Freud showed) utters arbitrary will and desire in others while simultaneously functioning as a defence to uncover it in ourselves.

Interestingly, within this paradox, MacIntyre (1981) now elaborates on the specific characters of the modern emotivist culture which are, as he mentioned earlier, the aesthete, the therapist and the manager (or expert). Concerning the manager, he argues that: 'Mangers themselves and most writers about management conceive of themselves as morally neutral characters whose skills enable them to devise the most efficient means of achieving whatever end is proposed. Whether a given manager is effective or not is on the dominant view a quit different question from that of the morality of the ends which his effectiveness serves or fails to serve. Nonetheless there are strong grounds for rejecting the claim that effectiveness is, as I noticed earlier, inseparable from a mode of human existence in which the contrivance of means is in central part the manipulation of human beings into compliant patterns of behaviour; and it is by appeal to his own effectiveness in this respect that the manager claims authority within the manipulative mode (MacIntyre, 1981 p.74)'. Managerial effectiveness, according to MacIntyre (1981), is part of a masquerade of social control. It claims justified authority by moral neutrality and the managers expertise concerning law-like generalization

derived from the study of his domain. In fact, managerial effectiveness based on this authority is another *moral fiction* and what we are oppressed by is not power but impotence. This impotence is displayed by MacIntyre (1981) by analysing *facts, explanation and expertise* in our modern culture as used by experts. Again, etymologically, MacIntyre (1981) shows that, during the Enlightenment, the vocabulary concerning experience, experiment and fact changed into a comprehension of these concepts in which we understand these words now as neutral and stripped away from interpretation. Moreover, due to seventeenth and eighteenth century discoveries in the natural sciences Aristotle's teleological account of nature was repudiated. 'Fact' transformed from an Aristotelian view to a mechanistic one and so did human action. That is, in the latter human action is to be understood as value free (since man has no telos) while in the former human action is to be characterized with reference to the hierarchy of goods provided by a telos. According to MacIntyre (1981) it was Weber who first applied this new mechanistic framework by advocating managerial effectiveness through bureaucratic management based on rationally adjusting means to ends in the most economic an efficient way. Other and later organizational theorists differ from weber but still assume the moral neutrality and expertise of the manager, while in fact the managers expertise is based on facts that are empty because they lack a telos. MacIntyre (1981) proceeds by stressing flaws in *the character of generalizations in social sciences and their lack of predictive power.* According to MacIntyre (1981) there are three important differences between generalizations in the social sciences and the natural sciences. Firstly, the social sciences lack, contrary to the natural sciences, recognized counter examples. Secondly, they lack scope modifiers and finally they lack any well-defined set of counterfactual conditionals. MacIntyre (1981) grounds his statements by showing (using Machiavelli's concept of Fortuna as an example) that predictability and unpredictability are inelimenable features of social live. He elaborates on 4 types of unpredictability and predictability in human affairs. Concerning unpredictability he mentions flaws in the current social sciences that derive from; the nature of radical conceptual innovation, the way in which the unpredictability of certain of the future actions by each agent individually generates another element of unpredictability as such in the social world, the game-theoretic character of social life and finally pure contingency (MacIntyre, 1981). Following, he asserts four systematic sources of predictability which are; the necessity to coordinate and schedule social live, statistical regularities, knowledge of causal regularities of nature, and finally genuine (not statistical) causal regularities of social live. In accordance he argues: 'We need to remain to some degree *opaque and unpredictable*, particularly when threatened by the predictive powers of others. (…) It is necessary, if life is to be meaningful, for us to be able to engage in long-term projects, and this requires predictability; it is necessary, if live is to be meaningful, for us to be in possession of ourselves and not merely to be the creation of others people's projects, intentions and desires, and this requires unpredictability (MacIntyre, 1981 p.104)'. MacIntyre (1981) concludes his elaboration arguing that the thinkers of the Enlightenment developed philosophies of science that assumed they could overcome unpredictability. Consequently they influenced Marxism and Weberianism. What's more, the only way to overcome this unpredictability is to assume that the social sciences have: recognized counter examples, have scope modifiers and have a set of well-defined counterfactual conditionals, which they, as MacIntyre (1981) holds, do not. And so MacIntyre (1981) argues that the notion of social control which is embodied in the expertise of the manager is in fact a masquerade. He stresses, in order to emphasise that we live in an emotivist culture, that: 'For it follows from my whole argument that the realm of managerial expertise is one in which what purports to be objectively-grounded claims function in fact as expressions of arbitrary, but disguised, will and preference (MacIntyre, 1981 p.107)'. And later: 'The effect of eighteenth-century prophecy have been to produce *not* scientifically managed social control but a skilful dramatic imitation of such control, it is

histrionic success which gives power and authority in our culture. The most effective bureaucrat is the best actor (MacIntyre, 1981 p.107)'.

Nietzsche or Aristotle?

MacIntyre (1981) agrees with Nietzsche on his idea that what were purported by philosophers of the Enlightenment to be objective moral appeals are in fact subjective expressions of will. Also, he states that it was Nietzsche who was the first to pinpoint the failure of the Enlightenment philosophers as Nietzsche explicitly argues that there is no place for such fictions as utility, passions or natural rights. However, MacIntyre (1981) disagrees with Nietzsche on how he resolves the problem. He writes: '(…) Nietzsche resolves: let will replace reason and let us make ourselves into autonomous moral subjects by some gigantic and heroic act of the will (…). The problem then is how to construct in an entirely original way, how to invent a new table of what is good and a law, a problem which arises for each individual (MacIntyre, 1981 p.114)'. Consequently, MacIntyre concludes that Nietzsche, just as Weber did, provided us with the key theoretical concepts that display the contemporary moral and social disorder, the current simulacra based on its emotivist and extentialist predecessors. In addition, he stresses that it is not the question whether Nietzsche's moral philosophy is false and Aristotle's is true or vice versa. He emphasises that we need to question ourselves whether it was right to reject Aristotle in the first place, and whether or not Aristotle's ethics can, to some extent, be vindicated. With the latter question in mind MacIntyre (1981) proceeds accordingly.

The history of the virtues

What follows in this section of his book is a thorough historical analysis of the evolutionary developments within the concept of 'virtue'. He starts with analysing *the virtues in heroic societies*. Displaying changes in the linguistic understanding of virtues, showing that a virtue is always part of a character living a certain kind of enacted live and that morality and social structure are in fact the same in heroic society, MacIntyre (1981) argues that there are distinct differences between *the self* in the heroic age and the emotivist culture. He states: 'The self of the heroic age lacks precisely that characteristic which we have already seen that some modern philosophers take to be an essential characteristic of human selfhood: the capacity to detach oneself from any particular standpoint or point of view, to step backwards, as it were, and view and judge that standpoint or point of view from the outside. In heroic society there is no 'outside' except that of the stranger (MacIntyre, 1981 p.126)'. Consequently, MacIntyre (1981) emphasises that we can learn from the latter that morality is always to some degree tied to the socially local and particular hence, that there is no way we can possess the virtues except as part of a tradition. In addition, he notes that Nietzsche was wrong in his analysis of the heroic age. He writes: 'Nietzsche had to mythologize the distant past in order to sustain his vision. What Nietzsche portrays is aristocratic *self*-assertion; what Homer and the sagas show are forms of assertion proper to and required by a certain *role* (MacIntyre, 1981 p.129)'.

Next, MacIntyre (1981) zooms in on *the virtues in Athens*. The main difference between virtues in the heroic age and in Ancient Greek is that there evolved a difference within the understanding of *being a good man* to *being a good citizen.* Moreover, he emphasises that authors nowadays present largely coherent representations of the Greek moral outlook and the Greek comprehension of virtue while in fact there are great differences. Following, he extensively elaborates on these differences mainly between Greek, Athenian, Sophistic and Plato's understanding of the virtues. Eventually, this elaboration sums up to the

question whether one virtue could be, at least temporarily, in war with another. MacIntyre (1981) urges that historically we inherited two answers to this question. The first answer is the answer of Plato, that: '(…) the virtues are not merely compatible with each other, but the presence of each requires the presence of all. This strong thesis concerning the unity of the virtues is reiterated by Aristotle and Aquinas (…) the presupposition that all three share is that there exists a cosmic order which dictates the place of each virtue in a total harmonious scheme of human live. Truth in the moral sphere consists in conformity of moral judgement to the order of this scheme (MacIntyre, 1981 p.142)'. The second answer lies in the works of Isaiah Berlin and Max Weber. The latter view entails that: '(…) the variety and heterogeneity of human goods is such that their pursuit cannot be reconciled in any single moral order and that consequently any social order which either attempts such reconciliation or which enforces the hegemony of one set of goods over all other is bound to turn into a straitjacket and very probably a totalitarian straitjacket for the human condition (MacIntyre, 1981 p.142)'. Following the first answer discussed above, the question remains whether there really is a cosmic order, as the proponents of this answer presuppose. Accordingly, MacIntyre now turns to *Aristotle's account of the virtues.* Key within Aristotle's ethics is that this cosmic order is to be found in the telos of human live. It lies not in the individuals live but in the relationship with others. It lies in friendship. It lies in the polis. Hence, a human being is a *politikon zôon*. Within this relationship common project or goals are set and virtues can be developed by *ho orthos logos* as one tries to reach excellence of character in order to contribute. Interestingly, MacIntyre (1981) writes: 'As modern example of such a project we might consider the founding and carrying forward of a school (…) Those who participated in such a project would need to develop two quit different types of evaluative practice. (…) That is they would need to recognize a set of qualities as virtues and the corresponding set of defects as vices. On the other hand, they would need however to identify certain types of action as doing or the production of harm of such an order that they destroy bonds of community in such a way as to render the doing or achieving of good impossible in some respect at least for some time (MacIntyre, 1981 p.151)'. MacIntyre (1981) argues that the Aristotelian conception of friendship, the Aristotelian moral unity, however is lost. We no longer feel that we contribute by virtue development to a polis based on friendship. Therefore, we are nowadays bound up with a self-avowed moral pluralism. In sum, whereas emotivism holds that the telos of live is found in the individuals preferences, and by consequence we are forced in the earlier mentioned paradoxical state of manipulating one another, Aristotle stresses that there is no such thing since individual preferences are always related to the polis, to a common good, pursued through friendship.

Practice and virtue

MacIntyre (1981) proceeds his extensive analysis of the virtues contemplating *medieval aspect and occasions* and *the nature of the virtues*. In the latter analysis he eventually unfolds his concept of 'practice'. Since there is, as he has shown throughout the history of virtue conceptualization, no single core concept of virtue, he wonders if there is some similarity to be found in these different concepts. He asserts: 'Every one of these accounts claims not only theoretical, but also an institutional hegemony. For Odysseus the Cyclopes stand condemned because they lack agriculture, an *agora* and *themis.* For Aristotle the barbarians stand condemned because they lack the *polis* and are therefore incapable of politics. For the New Testament Christian there is no salvation outside the apostolic church. And we know that Benjamin Franklin found the virtues more at home in Philadelphia than in Paris and that for Jane Austin the touchstone of virtues is a certain kind of marriage and indeed a certain kind of officer (…) (MacIntyre, 1981 p.186).' Accordingly, MacIntyre (1981)

beliefs it is possible to define a concept that will enable us to distinguish between beliefs about the virtues that are historically wrong and those that are right. Moreover, this concept will provide the arena in which the virtues are exhibited. This concept, he argues, is a 'practice'. Consequently, he defines a 'practice' as: '(…) 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 to excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved are systematically extended (MacIntyre, 1981 p.187)'. And so he comes to eventually give his definition of a virtue: 'A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevent us from achieving any goods (MacIntyre, 1981 p.191)'. In addition, MacIntyre (1981) thus states that every practice has goods that are internal to that practice. They are internal for two reasons. The first is that the internal good of a practice can only be expressed in terms of that specific practice. The second is that the internal good of a practice can only be experienced by participating in, and achieving excellence in, this specific practice which always stands in a specific tradition and moral horizon. Hence, the reason to become good in medicine or *teaching* for instance is because of the enjoyment that lies in the endeavor to excel in medicine or teaching itself, not in benefits such as status, fame, wealth or power and influence. Influence, power, wealth, fame and status are goods that are external to a practice. The latter goods can be obtained in many ways other than the goods that are internal to a practice. Within a practice, MacIntyre (1981) argues there is no room for individual preferences. Hence, a practice stands in a historical tradition, although dynamic due to internal discourse over time, participating in the practice involves obedience to the rules as well as the necessary achievement of the goods internal to the practice. MacIntyre writes: 'In the realm of practices the authority of both goods and standards operates in such a way as to rule out all subjective and emotivist analyses of judgment. De gustibus *est* disputandum (MacIntyre 1981 p.190)'. Interestingly, two forms of competition to excel exist accordingly within a paradox. External goods are objects of competition however the more one has of them the lesser there is for others. Internal goods are also objects of competition however their achievement is a good for the whole community who participate in the practice. The paradox here is that internal goods need external goods to survive and vice-versa. This paradox occurs within what MacIntyre refers to as institutions. Institutions, such as the University, facilitate the practice and its internal goods however they are solely interested in external goods. Therefore institutions have the propensity to corrupt the internal goods of a practice. MacIntyre stresses: 'In this context the essential function of the virtues is clear. Without them, without justice, courage and truthfulness, practices could not resist the corrupting power of institutions (MacIntyre, 1981 p.194)'. Consequently, he states that: 'If my account of the complex relationship of virtues to practices and to institutions is correct, it follows that we shall be unable to write a true history of practices and institutions unless that history is also one of the virtues and their vices. For the ability of a practice to retain its integrity will depend on the way in which the virtues can be and are exercised in sustaining the institutional forms which are the social bearers of practice. The integrity of a practice causally requires the exercise of the virtues by at least some of the individuals who embody their activities; and conversely the corruption of institutions is always in part at least an effect of the vices (MacIntyre, 1981 p.195)'.

Following, MacIntyre (1981) elaborates extensively on argumentations that show we must leave the idea of compartmentalism in order to understand the idea of a practice. That is, *the virtues, the unity of a human live and the concept of a tradition* are essentially to be understood as one holistic framework in order to get away from our contemporary emotivist

compartmentalized culture. Important here is that MacIntyre (1981) specifically stresses that institutions not only have the propensity to corrupt the internal goods of a practice but can indeed corrupt a whole tradition in which the practice is embodied. He thus concludes that the virtues not only need to aim at excel in the achievements of the internal goods but also in the prolongation of the tradition in which it stands. To strengthen his concept of 'practice' he reflects his concept in the light of historic moral developments in what he calls *from virtues to virtue and after virtue* and zooms in on *justice as a virtue*.

Nietzsche or Aristotle?

Ending his book, MacIntyre (1981) returns to his earlier comments on *Nietzsche or Aristotle*. Interestingly, he clearly distantiate from Nietzsche. His argumentation is the following. Both Nietzsche and Aristotle would highly reject the modern characteristics of moral live. However, MacIntyre (1981) thinks he has shown clearly that we do not need to reject Aristotle. Nietzsche, to the contrary, thinks that all morality ever since the archaic age was just a disguise for the will to power. But Nietzsche is wrong according to MacIntyre (1981). Even more, he is the ultimate antagonist of the Aristotelian tradition and: '(…) represents individualism's final attempt to escape from its own consequences (MacIntyre, 1981 p.259)'. That is the *Übermensch*, the man who transcends, finds his goods solely in himself and: '(…) he who transcends is wanting of both relationship and activities (MacIntyre, 1981 p.257)'.

Finally, he ends his book with the following conclusion: 'My own conclusion is very clear. It is on the one hand that we still in spite of the efforts of three centuries of moral philosophy and one in spite of sociology, lack any coherent rationally defensible statement of a liberal individualist point of view; and that, on the other hand, Aristotelian tradition can be restated in a way that restores intelligibility and rationality to our moral and social attitudes and commitments (MacIntyre, 1981 p.259)'.

Chapter 3. External goods versus the internal goods of education

Having positioned myself within the 'practice discussion' and displayed Macintyre's 1981 famous 'After Virtue' I will shortly repeat MacIntyre's (1981) conception of goods that are internal to a practice and in addition delineate, more in detail than before, the work of Higgins (2004), in order to pinpoint the goods that are internal to educational practice. Having done so I now have a thorough basis to conduct the core enquiry of this thesis. That is, investigating to what extent the internal goods of education are corrupted by external goods.

The internal goods of education

MacIntyre (1981) states that goods that are internal to a practice are internal for two reasons. Firstly, they can only be expressed in terms of that specific practice. And secondly, they can only be experienced by participating in, and achieving excellence in, this specific practice which always stands in a specific tradition and moral horizon. MacIntyre (1981) elaborates extensively on this matter using chess as an example. He argues that the internal good of chess is trying to achieve excellence in chess because of the game of chess itself. One might for instance try to achieve excellence in mastering a diverse set of strategies. If one places education in an analogy then, for instance, accompaniment of the student by the teacher during a thesis is to be valued for the pursuit to achieve excellence in the accompaniment. Hence, achieving excellence in the accompaniment of students is an internal good of education. Notice that this internal good presupposes the *relational sphere* mentioned earlier by authors in Dunn & Hogan (2004).

Specifically, Higgins (2004) main argumentation, as mentioned earlier, involves the idea that education is a practice because teaching also involves the teachers own pursuit to flourish in live. This is due to the relational character of teaching. Also, Higgins (2004) argues that there are actually three kinds of internal goods within educational practice. The first is located in the practitioner of the practice and involves the realization of some amount of excellence definitive of the practice. The second is the internal good of a specific kind of live, hence a telos, envisioned by the practitioner. And the third is what Higgins refers to as a moral phenomenology. The latter involves the idea that: 'Each practice structures the experiences of the practitioner in distinctive ways. Practices afford their practitioners distinctive modes of being, in which practitioners deem it good to participate. Moral phenomenology, then, concerns what it is like to be engaged in the practice (Hogan, 2004 p. 43)'. If external goods indeed corrupt the internal goods of education we must see some sort of decline in the realization and achievements of the latter internal goods.

External goods predominate

In the 80's there were about 350 HBO's in the Netherlands. Currently there are only about 50 left. Some of them have grown to enormous proportions. The reason for these mergers lies in the managerial believe that synergy and scale benefits were necessary to remain organizational legitimacy and enhance the quality of education. In 2002 the Ichtus Hogeschool Rotterdam, the Hogeschool Delft, the Hogeschool Diemen, the Hogeschool Alkmaar and the Hogeschool Haarlem decided to merge into Inholland. Later, even more locations were added namely Dordrecht, Den Haag and Amstelveen. Inholland grew to an organization with 39.000 students, 3000 employees, 200 educations and a turnover of 260 million euro in 2005. Inholland started to invest in large marketing campaigns. Also, large

ICT-projects were integrated. New management structures, management development programs and management layers were implemented in order to handle the new span of control. At many locations the buildings were renovated, or completely new departments were added to existing buildings. All within the prospect of harvesting from the synergy an scale effects (Ministry of OCW, 2005).

Disturbingly however, it took only three years for the first negative signals to arise. In 2005 students and teachers started complaining and the Ministry of OCW (Education Culture and Science) conducted a study. In sum, the complains concerned on the one hand a decline in the personal attention teachers had for theirs students. That is, the accompaniment of students concerning their study progress, their internships and thesis was minimalized and lowered in quality. Also there were complaints about the decreasing amount of lectures, the quality of the tests and (in time) information supply. Although students experienced teachers as willing to solve the problems they admitted teachers were busy and not able to change anything. On the other hand teachers complained about an increasing work pressure, bad (top-down) organization with no room for personal ideas, a lack of information supply by middle management and a negative change in the organizational culture. Moreover, both the students and the teachers experienced a decline in the quality of secondary processes responsible for the facilitation of the primary process, such as correct scheduling and ICT problems. The Ministry of OCW concluded that there was a misfit between the organizations ambitions and its real time capabilities (Ministry of OCW, 2005). Although the Ministry of OCW (2006) claimed that Inholland is showing signs of progress Inholland hit the media in the summer of 2010 with striking news.

When it takes a student longer than four years to finish the study the education does not receive budget from the government to facilitate the parts of the education the student still needs to accomplish. Hence, every student that is not finished within four years can, from a managerial perspective, be seen as loss. This puts pressure on the organization as a whole and drags it into a downward spiral. Eventually, this might implicitly be very well have been the reason why a graduation coordinator, in order to have students graduate within these four yours, invented an alternative (easier) graduation route. The existence of this route, which became known in the media as ‘The Theo route’ was first noticed by the Volkskrant in the summer of 2010. Accordingly, the Ministry of OCW conducted inspections at the education at stake and five other educations. It was concluded that three other educations had alternative graduation routes and that four of the five educations lacked significantly the application of the WHW and apply appropriate measures to ensure the final bachelor level of their graduates (Ministry of OCW, 2011). Hence, many students that had already graduated lost their diploma’s. They were offered significant education in order to regain their diploma’s in the aftermath. Nonetheless, the whole series of events gained high attention from the media which would enforce Inholland, in the years to come, to restructure their organization significantly in many aspects and dismiss a substantial part of their employees due to the decreasing enrollment of new students.

In addition to the latter events described, it was found that between 2002 and 2007 there were no clear rules concerning the limitations on costs made by the board for declarations. A study of the Ministry of OCW (2011) showed that in total the board had made inappropriate declarations of €360.000,- between 2002 and 2007 using the rules that were initiated in 2008. Also, in this same period, they made inefficient expenses of €521.000,-. Moreover, the CEO of Inholland, who had been in place ever since the mergers in 2002, left Inholland in 2007 to become an adviser of the new board between 2007 and 2010. He was

paid accordingly but he never consulted in any way (Ministry of OCW, 2011). The government investigated several juridical ways to reclaim the lost budgets but concluded in 2012 that only €1819,- of the approximately 1 million euro could be paid back to Inholland (Ministry of OCW, 2012).

Considering the latter described chronological developments at Inholland, based on studies of the Ministry of OCW, it is safe to say that external goods are indeed corrupting the internal goods of education extensively. The mergers created an emphasis on power and influence, an emphasis on status, an emphasis on turn over and financial efficiency and an emphasis on high productivity for the lowest cost to result eventually in immoral behavior. Behavior in which the ability to have appropriate relationships with students decreased to a minimum. Moreover, behavior that minimalized the notion that education, hence the accompaniment of a student or writing a thesis, can be valued for itself. The latter is emphasized even more adding up experiences that come directly from within the organization.

Working as a graduation coordinator and teacher myself I did on several occasion experienced the propensity, among colleagues and within myself, to agree on a lower level of the students results, in order to get them to the next phase of the education or even end the education. Referring to the events concerning 'The Theo route' mentioned earlier one experience is highly exemplar for external goods to corrupt the internal goods of education. Within my function as a graduation coordinator I did not experience this myself but a specific colleague did experienced what I would call a 'perverse incentive'. In his personal development agreements, he made with his direct manager for the coming year, it was settled that he was responsible to have 65% of all fourth year students graduate. This example clearly depicts that external goods are corrupting the internal goods of education, since it is a strong institutional emphasis on financial gain. That is, if students graduate within four years, the education (hence the institution) receives a bonus and by consequence loss due to study delay is obviated. Even more disturbing is that the bonus as well as the budgetary limitations, concerning study delay mentioned earlier, are provided by the government. Why is this the case?

Any practice needs an institution. In the case of education the institution is financially facilitated for the most by the government. Why does the government aim at external goods implicitly? This is because, as Macintyre (1981) showed, we live in an emotivist culture. Hence, there is no *polis* anymore. There is no common telos anymore, as understood in the Aristotelian sense (based on friendship) and we live in a moral milieu in which we conceive *human-nature-as-it-happens-to-be* instead of a *human-nature-as-it-could-be-if-it-realized-its-telos*. Accordingly, the perverse incentive and the budgetary limitations corrupts the internal goods of education because what is lost is the notion that, for instance writing a thesis or coaching a student while doing so, is something that can be desired or valued for its own sake. That it is something in which one can excel, not to gain a well-paid job, not to score a bonus, but for the sake of writing the thesis or coaching the student during the process, itself. And so it is with every part of the curriculum and with every education.

Hence, from a MacIntyrian perspective, this immoral behavior was enforced by the implicit generally accepted emotivist moral premises present in the (Weberian) thinking of the government and society. The latter, resulting eventually in large mergers between HBO's and, at Inholland, in the extreme high work pressure, lack of middle management to organize the primary process and lack of those department that were responsible to facilitate the primary process properly. Consequently, teachers did not have enough time to accompany, and even

know students individually to a desired extent, and give good and in-depth feedback (in order to excel in doing so for the common good) while simultaneously being confronted with ‘perverse incentives’. All were the results of mergers initiated to enhance the quality of education but instead led to an organizational environment highly susceptible for external goods to corrupt the internal goods of education. In sum, an outcome of managerial effectiveness as *moral fiction.*

Chapter 4. Towards the fundamental virtue of education?

Here I will elaborate on my conclusion that education still has the possibility of being a practice, and propose a third argument. The scholars discussed in chapter one came to the overall conclusion that 'the relational sphere' is at the core of the practice. I will now develop an argumentation, that is in line with these scholars and MacIntyre's (1981) After Virtue, which postulates the fundamental virtue of education. This virtue, to my opinion, underpins the internal goods of education. I believe that this fundamental virtue is 'friendship'.

First, 'friendship' as a virtue needs to be understood here, within the Aristotelian conception. Aristotle mentioned 'friendship' to be the fundamental virtue that constitute the polis and thereby presupposed all other central virtues and their interrelatedness. Moreover, MacIntyre (1981) writes: 'The type of friendship which Aristotle has in mind is that which embodies a shared recognition of and a pursuit of good. It is this *sharing* which is essential and primary to the constitution of any form of community (…) (MacIntyre, 1981 p.155)'.

Secondly, this conception of 'friendship' as a virtue is in line with MacIntyre's (1981) definition of a practice since a practice is, '(…) any coherent and complex form of socially established *cooperative human activity* through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized (MacIntyre, 1981 p.187)'. Hence, 'friendship' is needed to achieve the goods internal to a practice.

Thirdly, this conception of 'friendship' as a virtue is in line with MacIntyre (1981) own definition of a virtue since: 'A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevent us from achieving any goods (MacIntyre, 1981 p.191)'.

Fourthly, as Hogan (2004) pointed out, MacIntyre argues in his book 'Dependent Rational Animals' that, using Winnicot's intermediate space between a child and a parent in which the child develops independency, within this intermediate space virtues are developed first by the parents and later by educators. Doing so, the child becomes a virtues citizen of the community. The presence of this intermediate space, first by parents and later by educators, can, to my opinion, be seen as the 'friendship' virtue understood from the Aristotelian perspective in which *sharing* is essential and primary. What's more is that this concept of the intermediate space was later elaborated by Neville Symington (1993) in his classic on narcissism. He states that: '(…) one has to posit the existence of an emotional object that is associated with the breast, associated with the mother, or in later life associated with the other person; it is *in* the other – an object that a person seeks as an alternative to seeking himself. If being emotionally alive means to be the source of creative emotional action, there has to be a turning to this object, and this object has to be taken in. I call this object the 'lifegiver' (Symington, 1993 p. 35). Following, he argues: 'Friendship is a psychological reality that exists in two people, and yet is not entirely contained in them. The 'lifegiver' is an object of this kind. It is a psychic object that cannot exist independently of a breast, a mother, a vagina, a penis, a father. As another analogy, take the word 'shape'. A shape cannot exist except in the material that it fashions it, but is not the material itself. The 'lifegiver' is real and is essential to our mental life, in the same way we might say that friendship is an essential ingredient of human happiness (Symington 1993 p.37)'. According to Symington (1993), the (unconscious) turning away from the 'lifegiver' forms the core of narcissism. Paradoxically, education as a practice is highly susceptible for narcissism to occur as Hess (2003) interestingly points out. Therefore, I believe that opting for the *livegiver*, that is, *the other*, that is, *relationship*, that is, *friendship,* might very well be the fundamental virtue of education. Accordingly, the fundamental virtue, to my opinion, which enables the internal

goods of educational practice to be accomplished, is the incorporation of the 'friendship' relation as in Aristotelian, MacIntyrian and hence Winnicot's and Symington's conceptualization. It is 'friendship' as a virtue that enables those involved in the practice to realize the internal goods, to engage in the moral phenomenology of educational practice. Put differently, 'friendship' as a virtue fundamentally underpins the internal goods of education and finding *Ho orthos logos* within this virtue will protect it from the corrupting powers of external goods.

Finally and moreover, as this study shows, the emotivist culture as depicted by MacIntyre (1981) is reflected in the events that occurred at Inholland. These disturbing events show, to my opinion, the legitimacy of 'friendship' as a fundamental virtue of education. This is because the predomination of external goods, present in the studies of OCW and experiences of employees working within the organization, underscore that the inability to apply 'friendship' as a virtue in order to protect the internal goods of education grew to a disturbingly high level. A level, in which a strong decline in the personal attention teachers needed for theirs students evolved rapidly and although students experienced teachers as willing to solve the problems they admitted teachers were busy and not able to change anything. A level, in which teachers complained about an increasing work pressure, and a negative change in the organizational culture due to mismanagement. And finally, a level in which it eventually became possible to have students graduate using fraud and so completely undermine the internal goods of education.

In sum, my argumentations in the first chapter concerning MacIntyre's paradox and MacIntyre's objectification of the student and the teacher and finally the application of MacIntyre's (1981) moral philosophy on the disturbing events at Inholland in chapter three and four, resulting in 'friendship' as the fundamental virtue of education, shows a strong vindication that education still has the possibility of being a practice.

Chapter 5. Conclusion and discussion

The research question of this thesis was to investigate to what extent external goods are corrupting the internal goods of educational practice? Sub-questions in order to do so were the following: Is education a practice?; What are its internal goods?; What are its external goods? And; To what extent are its internal goods corrupted? The following conclusions are drawn:

According to many authors (Dunn & Hogan, 2004) education still is a practice. In accordance with these authors I developed two arguments that also show the possibility of education being a practice. Following, I gave an in depth review of MacIntyre's moral philosophy as developed by him in After Virtue (1981). Accordingly, I used his moral framework to interpret the events that occurred at Inholland. From this investigation it is concluded that external goods were to a very high degree corrupting the internal goods of education. Due to an emphasis on power, status and financial reward the internal goods, that is the urge to achieve excellence in accompanying students or writing a thesis for the sake of themselves, diminished to a level in which students graduated using easier alternative routes, hence diploma fraud. As a result of this study, and in line with MacIntyre's moral philosophy, I proposed the fundamental virtue of education that is 'friendship'. Consequently, I enlarged, together with the other two arguments, the possibility for education to be a practice. Having concluded the latter, several points of discussion will now be unfolded.

MacIntyre's moral philosophy, as developed in After Virtue (1981) is famous. MacIntyre elaborated on his moral philosophy in later writings ever since. Moreover, nowadays an international academic institute, namely the International Society for MacIntyrean Enquiry (ISME) is discussing new papers at their conference annually. Accordingly, many has been written, discussed and debated ever since After Virtue. In 1994 a book was published with the title 'After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives on the Work of Alasdair MacIntyre'. The book is a collection of papers with contributions of philosophers such as Charles Taylor. The latter specifically focusses on debating MacIntyre's conception of justice as described in chapter seventeen in After Virtue (Taylor, 1994).

More recent publication can be found and show that After Virtue is still topical in academic discourse. First, Korkut (2011) challenges MacIntyre's portrait of Nietzsche and offers a different reading of Nietzsche in order to show that there are differences in their characterizations of the problem of morality. Second, Kavanagh (2012) argues that MacIntyre's framework is helpful but limited. Rather than asking whether or not management is a practice she incorporates Aristotle's concepts of *poiesis*, *praxis*, *techne* and *phronesis* in order to outline a *phronetic* paradigm for organizational enquiry. And finally, Humbert (2014) argues that MacIntyre makes a mistake in identifying Kierkegaard with the Kantian tradition of moral autonomy and that he overlooked Kierkegaard's debt to the classical conception of virtue.

A deeper analysis of the extending literature on After Virtue is beyond the realm of this thesis. Accordingly, in the following I will focus on the literature used to answer the research question of this thesis. Nonetheless, for now I need to stress that I am aware of the large amount of literature and that there is a possibility that (some of) the following points of discussion might have been developed before.

1. *Comments on the strength of MacIntyre's argumentation concerning the 'The Therapist' and 'The Expert' as moral masks.*

Notice that I have used knowledge from the social sciences, that is a psychoanalytic therapist (Symington, 1994), who introduced the concept of a livegiver, to build up my argumentation suggesting that 'friendship' is the fundamental virtue of education. However for consistency of the argumentation, within the moral philosophy of MacIntyre (1981), I shouldn't have done so. Interestingly though, it seems that MacIntyre (1981) has made the same mistake long before me. MacIntyre (1981) repeatedly purports *The Therapist* to be one of the masks of the emotivist culture, that is a moral fiction. How than can MacIntyre use the work of Winnicot, who is a *Therapist* and uses knowledge from the social sciences, in his 1999 book 'Dependent Rational Animals' as an example to show that virtues are developed in the intermediate space between a child and a parent? One might say MacIntyre changed his standpoint on emotivism and its moral masks to some extent over the course of time. However, he does not say so in the prologue of the 2007 edition of After Virtue. Moreover, it seems he made the same mistake all-ready in After Virtue itself.

As a graduate in Organization Studies I am accustomed with and aware of the literature within this academic field, specifically its classics. I was not surprised meeting one of these classics in After Virtue namely the work of Burns and Stalker from 1968. What did surprised me though was to notice that MacIntyre uses this classic in Organization Studies, which is considered a social science, in his extensive argumentation against the social sciences. On the one hand he (MacIntyre, 1981) states that '*The Expert*', (the bureaucratic manager, the organization theorist) is a moral mask, using knowledge from the social sciences as objectively grounded claims while in fact these claims are arbitrary and disguised will and preferences. On the other hand, disturbingly, he uses knowledge from the social sciences, that is a theory about effective management and the level of uncertainty (and individual initiative) in organizations as developed by Burns and Stalker who are considered *Experts* in Organization Theory, in order to emphasize that unpredictability is something that cannot be erased completely as the social sciences presume.

One might argue that even when a manager knowingly allows a certain degree of uncertainty in his organization it is still a form of control and thus no real uncertainty and thus the social sciences assume to be able to rule out all uncertainty. But MacIntyre does not do so. Hence, he specifically states that the work of Burns and Stalkers shows that human beings need a certain degree of uncertainty as he writes: 'One can safely generalize what Burns and Stalker say about the need to allow for individual initiative, a flexible response to changes in knowledge, the multiplication of centers of problem-solving and decision-making as adding up to the thesis that an effective organization has to be able to tolerate a high degree of unpredictability within itself. Other studies confirm this (MacIntyre, 1981 p.106)'.

Again, MacIntyre (1981) uses knowledge from the social sciences as prove to argue against the legitimacy of the social sciences. Accordingly, a discussion is needed in order to find out to what extent MacIntyre's position concerning the social sciences needs adjustment, specifically on this matter.

2. *The dialectal nature of a Practice and the Emotivist culture*

MacIntyre (1981) argues that within a practice, which strives for a common good, there is no room for individual preferences. One needs to conform to its standards of excellence by virtues. However, later he argues that a practice, which stands in a history and

tradition, over time is able to change. This is unleashed by internal discourse within the practice concerning the standards of excellence. The question than emerges what it is that feeds this internal discourse. Events in the contextual surrounding of the practice might very well be an input for practitioners to develop different ideas on how to achieve excellence. To my opinion this input, which transforms the practice over time, can be interpreted as individual preferences. Even stronger, a practice cannot exist without individual preferences in the first place. The sum of the collective individual preferences is what constitutes the practice and makes is flexible in order to change its standards of excellence if contextual events require this. Vice versa, this argumentation works the same. That is, the emotivist culture can't exists without the idea of a common good central to a practice (and the *Polis*) since it is only in the light of this common good individual preferences become meaningful. Therefore, MacIntyre's rigged opposition between the emotivist culture and the common good pursued through a practice might very well be considered a paradox. They are not mutually exclusive but they are inevitable mutually inclusive! The ability of a practice to transform brings us inescapably to the following and final discussion point.

3. *The essentialistic nature of a telos*

In my first argument, showing that education still has the possibility of being practice, I argued that MacIntyre creates a paradox by opposing the input-output model with the telos of education. Remember that MacIntyre (2002) wrote: 'What is wrong with this model is that it loses sight of the end of education, the development of its students powers and substitutes for this end that of success by the standard of some test or examination (MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002 p.5)'. I argued that if education has lost sight on its telos it might be able to find it back again, and moreover that the input-output model is an inextricable part of the telos of education. However, there is an assumption made by me and MacIntyre (2002) that needs to be discussed here. This is the assumption that a telos has an essentialistic nature. That a telos is a function that is solid and unchangeable. But what if a telos is not essentialistic? What if the telos of education has definitely been transformed over time. If so, it might very well have been changed into the pursuit to contribute to economy as effectively as possible, or gain '(…) success by the standards of some test or examination' as MacIntyre (1981, p.5) points out. And if this new telos is the current telos of educational practice, due to internal discourse within the practice initiated by contextual change over time, than its internal goods and the virtues to accomplish them are transformed too. Moreover, it puts the events that took place at Inholland in a completely different perspective. Based on this new telos we might even argue to privatize education completely and maybe close down the Ministry of OCW as well.

Finally, I challenge anyone to criticize; the three arguments I developed in order to show that education still has the possibility of being a practice, to criticize; the application of MacIntyre's (1981) moral philosophy to the events that occurred at Inholland and to criticize; the latter postulated points of discussion I expressed, because it is only trough 'friendship' and thus in discourse with the other I will be able to know myself and escape relativistic nihilism, hence enjoy the internal goods of education while doing so.

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