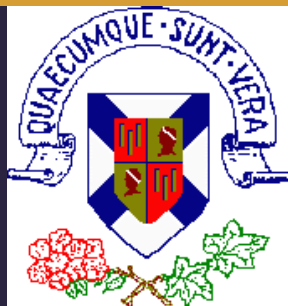


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Unity and Division in Virtue: MacIntyre's Response to Augustine and Kant¹

by Kayla Weibe²

The notion of virtue and the question of what exactly constitutes moral goodness have followed history through its continuous shifts and changes to bring us to where we are today. The present moral situation, as the Scottish philosopher Alisdair MacIntyre explains it, is a situation analogous to an imaginary world in the wake of a catastrophic disaster, wherein all previous knowledge of natural science is all but lost, and fragmented at best.³ According to MacIntyre, the “the language of morality” in the world we live in “is in the same state of grave disorder” as the fragmented knowledge of the imaginary world MacIntyre constructed wherein truth is in a state of chaos and confusion.⁴ In order to even begin to search for something to remedy this disaster, it is necessary to understand the present situation properly. In order to do *this*, MacIntyre asserts, it is necessary to look at the history of morality, which he divides into three stages. In the first stage, he presents a period where ethics flourished, in the second, its gradual degeneration, and in the third, what we have today: an attempt at regeneration, but an attempt that is based on piecing together the bits of moral language from its destruction, and thus it is an attempt that is just as disordered.

This paper seeks to present each of these stages as represented by three major philosophers and their moral theories – specifically – the thought of Augustine of Hippo, Immanuel Kant, and finally, Alisdair MacIntyre. Through the brief account of the journey morality has taken over the course of these three stages, I hope to illustrate the importance of conceiving of the moral life *as* a journey, both an individual journey and collective journey within the context of a community and greater tradition, and how this understanding will bring us back to a comprehensive understanding of the virtues and morality as a whole.

Standing as a representative of the time period in which morality flourished, we find Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD). Now renowned as one of the great Fathers of the Church, he was a philosopher and theologian whose doctrines were dominant in Christian circles until Aristotelianism made its return in the thirteenth century. Even then his ideas were deeply influential on the Christian Aristotelians and remained prevalent throughout the middle ages.⁵ Like many of his predecessors, Augustine held to a version of the doctrine of the unity and interconnection of the virtues.⁶ In Augustine's version of this doctrine, it is love – *caritas* – that is the foundation, the source, and the underlying essence of all the virtues.⁷ It is this thesis that helps to elucidate much of Augustine's thought socially, politically, and ethically.

Augustine first encountered the problem that gave way to his formulation of the thesis of the interconnectivity of the virtues in a verse in the Epistle of St. James, which states “whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.”⁸ In order to better understand how this verse plays out in our lives, Augustine inverted it to apply to the virtues: If the

¹ This paper was written for Religious Studies 200, Introduction to Religious Ethics.

² At the time of writing, Kayla was a second year honours student in Philosophy.

³ Alisdair C. MacIntyre *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press: 2007), 1.

⁴ *ibid.*, 2.

⁵ “Augustine of Hippo,” in *Philosophy in the Middle Ages: The Christian, Islamic, and Jewish Traditions*, 3rd ed. Arthur Hyman, James J. Walsh, Thomas Williams (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2010).

⁶ Langan, John P. “Augustine on the Unity and the Interconnection of the Virtues,” *The Harvard Theological Review*, 72,1/2(Jan.- Apr. 1979), 81.

⁷ *ibid.*, 91.

⁸ James 2:10 (English Standard Version).

possession of one vice that leads to committing a sin actually entails the possession of *all* vices, thus the perpetrating of *all* sins, does the possession of one virtue, likewise, imply the possession of all of them?

Unfortunately, what logically follows from this line of thinking is a principle Augustine wished to avoid: the perfectionist attitude of the Stoics associated with the conclusions of the doctrine of the interconnection of the virtues.⁹ If possessing one virtue entails the possession of all of them, then lacking one virtue would likewise entail the lack of all. On this view, it looks as though no one is able to possess virtue, because none of us is perfect – we all lack some virtue, and we all possess some sin. On such a view, all of us then lack *all* the virtues, and we then possess *all* sin. Augustine saw the difficulty that this poses to us as moral agents, and he went on to resolve it, all the while maintaining the conception of one unified virtue. He does this by rejecting a single premise in the argument: that possessing a vice necessarily entails that we lack some virtue, choosing instead to allow for the possession of both a vice and its opposing virtue.¹⁰ This relieves us as moral agents of the burden of the Stoic perfectionism, the illustration of which is given by a picture of a man rising from the sea of vice into the air of virtue. On this view, the transition from vice to virtue is sudden and abrupt, we either possess vice or virtue but we cannot at the same time possess both. There is no room for a gradual transition from vice to virtue by degrees, which Augustine proposes with his picture of a person “advancing from darkness into light and being gradually illumined as he progresses.”¹¹ As Augustine has rescued this argument from the perfectionism that would otherwise be associated with it, he must now present a way in which the virtues are unified in order for his theory to be a modification of the doctrine of the interconnectivity of the virtues and not a complete deviation from it.

As previously stated, Augustine holds virtue “to be nothing else than perfect love for God.”¹² All of the subsequent virtues – temperance, prudence, fortitude and justice – are given meaning and understood in this context. In addition to this conception of love as the central virtue, Augustine distinguishes between virtue and vice to identify the defining feature of what is properly called virtue. Love is the underlying essence of all virtue, and what makes an action virtuous is the *object* of our love for which we act, which is identified by Augustine as none other than God. The end that makes an action virtuous is an action that finds its goal and purpose in serving God.¹³

Just as his analogy of a man gradually moving out of the darkness into the light illustrates, Augustine’s conception of virtuous life is a journey. In more technical terms, Augustine favors a narrative scheme of morality rather than an empirical, explanatory one.¹⁴ On Augustine’s account, the notion of a narrative allows for the elements of human freedom and a sense of a lasting identity, while an empirical explanatory model excludes them. The virtues are constituted by love for God, and the moral life is best captured and understood by the picture of a narrative story within the context of God’s providential plan.¹⁵ However, for Augustine, the picture of morality extends much farther than the life of one individual.

⁹ Langan, *Augustine*, 85.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, 90.

¹¹ Augustine, *Letters*, (trans. Sister Wilfrid Parsons; New York: Fathers of the Church, 1955) quoted by Langan, *Augustine*, 90.

¹² Augustine, *On the Morals of the Catholic Church* (trans. R. Stothert, in *Basic Writings of St. Augustine*, ed. Whitney J. Oates; New York: Random House, 1948) 1.331-332) quoted in Langan, *Augustine*, 91.

¹³ Augustine *Contra Julianum Eclanum* 4.21 (PL 44. 749), quoted in Langan, *Augustine*, 94.

¹⁴ Thompson, Christopher James, *Christian Doctrine, Christian Identity: Augustine and the Narratives of Character* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1999), 44.

¹⁵ *ibid.*

Not only is love the unifying principle of virtue, it is the unifying principle of community. Just as is the case for the individual, the only fitting and proper object of love to hold people together in a community is in fact love for God¹⁶— which Augustine understands to be the church. Because this is a community both individually and collectively oriented to the proper object, it will be a community wherein the virtues will flourish. Augustine’s moral scheme is thus classified as teleological, as it is the end that puts the moral life in context and gives an act its moral value. The moral journey towards this end is a journey towards union with God, and this journey is aided by the members in a community, who “help us pursue that desire and seek that peace together.”¹⁷

A significant problem on this view of the virtues is that it is highly exclusive, limiting it only to the realm of the religious who have God (or the church) as the object of their love, and excluding everybody else. “Only Christians can really possess”¹⁸ virtue on Augustine’s model of morality, and while he does succeed in lessening the burden and guilt for Christians in allowing the existence of both virtue and vice, he also succeeds in increasing the burden for all those outside the realm of Christianity. It is problems such as these within traditional accounts of the virtues that gave rise to the theories of the Enlightenment philosophers, to whom we will now turn.

At the risk of making a very abrupt and large jump across history, we now turn to the second stage of morality: the eighteenth century Enlightenment. For the purposes of this essay, the representative put forth will be Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher who lived from 1724 until 1804.¹⁹ In Kant we find a foil for Augustine’s theory of morality such that in many areas it looks as though their positions are entirely opposed to one another. While Augustine’s ethical theory reaches outwards and upwards to God as the standard of morality, Kant remains secular, content to turn inwards to locate the standard of morality within the will of the rational being. As the formulation of Kant’s ethical outlook is in large part a reaction both to what he saw as the deficiency in traditional ethics, as well as a reaction against the rising skepticism of his immediate predecessors as well as his contemporary peers, it is worth delving briefly into the implications of each.

In response to traditional ethics, it seems as though Kant deemed it a weak system that succeeded only in highlighting the fact that people do not do what they ought to do, instead of actually making people more virtuous. In response, Kant focused on finding a more powerful and effective ethical system that carried with it absolute necessity, thus his constant need for universality. In response to the failure of his fellow Enlightenment theorists, primarily David Hume, we get Kant’s equally constant need to emphasize reason.²⁰ Hume held that “reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions,”²¹ and Kant made it his project to invert this troublesome moral system to place reason again at the center.²² Kant’s project can thus be seen as a twofold enterprise of inserting strength into a deficient traditional ethic, and of saving reason from the Humean prison of the passions.

In order to establish that there *is* a rational reality in morality and that it *isn’t* reducible to the passions, Kant needed to find a new foundation for ethics, and he refused to turn to the Christian God or any other deity to do so. This foundation is identified as a good will, because insofar as reason can tell us, it is the only thing that is incorruptible. Everything else – understanding, wit, good judgement, courage, perseverance – are things that can be used wrongly, thus they are not good in

¹⁶ Doody, John, Kevin L. Hughes, Kim Pattenroth, *Augustine and Politics* (Lexington Books: 2005), 7.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, 57.

¹⁸ Langan. *Augustine*, 95.

¹⁹ Christine M. Korsgaard, *Introduction to Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (ed. Mary Gregor; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2010), vii.

²⁰ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 47.

²¹ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, (ed. Ernest. C. Mossner; Penguin Classics:1969), 462.

²² MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 49.

and of themselves.²³ Kant then sets out to identify what it is that gives an act its moral value. Contrary to Augustine’s view that it is the end that constitutes moral goodness, Kant arrived at the conclusion that it is the motivation. Furthermore, the only motivation that can constitute moral goodness is to be motivated by duty.²⁴ He stated that every time we act we are acting from some motivation, the source of which is a *maxim* to which we conform our will.²⁵ When we conform our wills to a maxim we in effect give it the status of a law, which we do every single time we act. The basis of a good will and moral worth, then, is the maxim upon which we are acting, which must be a maxim formed from a supreme and pure sense of duty if it is to be judged supremely and purely morally good.

As Kant was searching for an ethical system significantly more powerful than the traditional system, he rejected two things upon which traditional ethics had depended: happiness and God. He instead put these things forth as “postulates” – although we cannot know for certain that they are true, we can postulate them because they give our lives meaning. Happiness is too broad and loose to generate a stable moral guide, and so Kant sought to devise an ethical system into which it fit, not a system that depended on it.²⁶ With regards to God, Kant did not see that it followed that we ought to abide by principles simply because God commands them.²⁷ Moreover, the rejection of both happiness and God as constituting a basis for morality highlights a key concept of Kant’s ethics: that any and all expressions of a true moral law *must* be unconditional and carry with them absolute necessity. He here distinguishes between hypothetical and categorical imperatives, dismissing the former because it is conditional and lacks the necessity he is looking for. Both happiness and God are hypothetical imperatives and therefore cannot serve as any kind of a basis for morality. This is a point where Kant is in direct contrast with Augustine, who clearly maintained that hypothetical imperatives were legitimate enough to build an entire ethical system upon them. After examining the nature of a categorical imperative, Kant arrived at the conclusion that there is only a single true categorical imperative: to “act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law.”²⁸

It is upon this imperative that Kant generated his system of morality, which fit perfectly into his deontological schema because abiding by such an imperative helps us to identify our duties. The way to implement the categorical imperative is to perform a thought experiment.²⁹ When deliberating an action, consider the maxim of the action and ask yourself if you could wish it to be universally binding for all time and on all people, including yourself. If the maxim under consideration fails the test, the act that would result is forbidden and the maxim is faulty; if it passes, the act is permissible and the maxim is sound.³⁰

However, there must be a reason for which the maxim is formulated in the first place – there must be an end in sight when we act. Although he wasn’t prepared to adhere to the purely teleological outlook of the ancients, Kant did recognize that morality would simply fall apart if it were completely separated from a teleological framework.³¹ Ever consistent throughout his theory in emphasizing universality, Kant held that this end must be unconditional, something that “serves the

²³ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (ed. and trans. Mary Gregor; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 4:393.

²⁴ *ibid.*, 4:397.

²⁵ *ibid.*, 4:399.

²⁶ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 44.

²⁷ *ibid.*, 45.

²⁸ Kant, *Groundwork*, 4:421.

²⁹ Korsgaard, *Introduction to Groundwork*, xxi.

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 54.

will as the *objective* ground of its self-determination.”³² However, unlike Augustine, Kant did not locate this end in anything external to us, choosing instead to locate it internally. Human beings, insofar as we are rational, are the objective ends.³³ His categorical imperative is thus reformulated, resulting in what is now known as the dignity principle. This is the principle that requires us to “act that [we] use humanity, whether in [our] own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means.”³⁴

Like Augustine, Kant’s conception of morality led to a complimentary conception of community, a community that serves being the most conducive to living a morally good life. Kant referred to the ideal community as the “Kingdom of Ends,”³⁵ a place wherein all peoples exercise their reason freely and above all, treat all other rational beings as ends and not as means.³⁶ Just as the categorical imperative ideally excludes any and all immoral acts, this conception of the dignity of every rational human ideally excludes any conformity to a maxim that would jeopardize this dignity. Kant’s emphasis on the dignity of each rational being and the necessity of treating them accordingly was a safeguard to prevent his system from falling into a reckless form of subjective selfish individualism, because it requires us at all times to simultaneously consider those around us as we make our own individual decisions.

A third principle upon which the dignity principle rests is the autonomy principle. As previously mentioned, whenever we formulate maxims and conform our actions to one, we are in effect giving that maxim the status of a law. This casts us as the lawgivers. Kant held that “nothing can have a worth other than that which the *law* determines for it,”³⁷ and when we take into account that *we* are the lawgivers, we see Kant’s emphasis on self-determination and autonomy snap into full view. The general consensus before Kant was an acknowledgement of a kind of natural law imposing morality onto us, to which we in turn conformed ourselves. However, Kant inverted this, asserting that we impose the moral law within us onto the world around us. On Kant’s view, the moral law *must* be exclusively internal, because if it comes from anything outside of us it carries with it the deficiency of being conditional.

Thus, with his three tiered moral structure of universality, dignity, and autonomy, it seems as though Kant has achieved his twofold goal: first by firmly reinserting reason back into morality, and secondly, by developing a system of morality that bore with it necessity, thereby making it significantly stronger than all previous systems. Kant believed that he had discovered something that was lacking from all previous moral systems: where his predecessors “looked outside of the human will for the source of obligation,” Kant found that this “obligation [arose] from, and so [could] only be traced to, the human capacity for self-government.”³⁸

However, according to philosophers such as Alisdair MacIntyre, Kant did not in fact achieve his goal. To elucidate exactly what the implications of the Enlightenment and Kant’s theories were, we now turn to Alisdair MacIntyre. In his renown book *After Virtue*, MacIntyre’s fundamental thesis is that the project of the Enlightenment to provide a rational justification for ethics failed, carrying with it catastrophic consequences to morality comparable to that of a world in the wake of a nuclear disaster. We see these repercussions expressed in the subtle but severe moral disorder in our present-day situation.³⁹

³² Kant, *Groundwork*, 4:427.

³³ *ibid.*, 4:429.

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ *ibid.*, 4:433.

³⁶ Korsgaard, *Introduction to Groundwork*, xxiii.

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ *ibid.*, xxiv.

³⁹ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 39.

The present-day situation is an on-going dilemma, the problem being that there is no longer any rational procedure to decide between rival and contradictory conclusions in the debate over contemporary moral issues. It was the failure of the Enlightenment that led us to this dilemma. By way of a brief preliminary, it is necessary to understand how ethics up until the Enlightenment worked. It consisted of three elements: one, human nature as it is; second, the role of reason in ethics; third, human nature as it *could* be if it realized its *telos*⁴⁰ – a Greek term meaning *purpose*. This mirrors Augustine’s picture of the man progressing by degrees from darkness into light, becoming more and more illumined as he moves closer to his *telos*. Without all three elements securely in place, ethics would fail to be intelligible,⁴¹ which is exactly what happened with Kant’s attempted reform and improvement of what he saw to be a deficient system.

The aforementioned failure of the Enlightenment was a failure of separation: Kant observed that neither an essential human nature nor a teleological feature in the world *could* be rationally observed in the world, and thus eliminated both such notions from the structure of ethics.⁴² The remaining elements of morality – ethical directives stripped of a teleological context, and a notion of human nature *only* as it is – are all that are left, and the relationship between them “becomes quite unclear.”⁴³ Previously, ethical directives were in place to cultivate the virtues necessary to facilitate the transition from human nature as it is to human nature as it could be, the impetus for such a transition being an understanding of one’s *telos*. However, with the degeneration of this system, all these ethical directives succeed in doing is to highlight the tendency that moral agents have to disobey them.⁴⁴

The Enlightenment disconnect from this traditional structure led to the disjuncture between empirical facts and any moral evaluation that can be made about those facts – which is more properly known as the “no *is* from an *ought*” – or vice versa – principle.⁴⁵ Because there is no longer any room for inferences about the way things *ought* to be, given the way things *are*, reason takes its stance as the sole arbiter of right and wrong. Giving reason this status brings us to the quandaries with which we are faced today. MacIntyre demonstrates this by laying out three problems with strong ethical and social implications, and presenting both sides of each issue. Each of the six arguments presented are sound, and each of the conclusions follows logically from their premises.⁴⁶ However, the conclusions reached by each opposing side are incompatible with each other, which presents a very serious *rational* problem. Thus, by reason alone, we *still* haven’t solved the problem of determining what is moral, we have only succeeded in highlighting it. This is not to say that these ethical problems are not rationally solvable; MacIntyre is simply showing the deficiency of the current ethical resources to do so, thereby paving the way for his own solution.

MacIntyre proposes that there *is* a way of reconciling these seemingly arbitrary and irresolvable conclusions, and that it *is* possible to arrive at a true concept of virtue. Just like the system deconstructed by Kant and fellow Enlightenment theorists, MacIntyre proposes a tripartite structure of ethics wherein the virtues are developed progressively as each stage moves to the next. The first stage is what he terms as a *practice*, which he defines as “any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity.”⁴⁷ It includes established standards of excellence,

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 53.

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² *ibid.*, 54.

⁴³ *ibid.*, 55.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 58.

⁴⁶ Alisdair MacIntyre, “How Virtue Become Vices: Values, Medicine, and Social Context” in H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., Stuart F. Spicker, *Evaluation and Explanation in the Biomedical Sciences* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1975), 99.

⁴⁷ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 187.

necessary submission to the rules governing that practice, and the achievement of goods *internal* to that practice.⁴⁸ Practices can range from “arts, sciences, games, politics” to the “the making and sustaining of family life.”⁴⁹ All practices have a history and a tradition that is the established authority of how to properly operate within that practice so as to achieve excellence in skill and the internal goods of that practice. An important thing to note is that the rules and authority within a practice are not infallible. They are open to challenge, but *only* to those participants who have progressed far enough in the practice that they are in a place of understanding and therefore in an appropriate place to make judgments about those rules. This primary stage gives us a partial definition of virtue: a quality which, when exercised properly enables its possessor to obtain goods internal to a practice.⁵⁰ The key virtues implicit in participating in a practice are virtues that extend throughout each of the three stages MacIntyre puts forth, and they are justice, courage, and honesty.⁵¹ And while there are many variations of these virtues valued in different cultures, a practice will flourish nonetheless – so long as these virtues are present in some way. “Where a practice *cannot* flourish,” however, is in a culture “that doesn’t value these virtues at all.”⁵²

The members within a practice share a relationship with one another, relationships defined by and held together by the virtues of justice, honesty, and courage.⁵³ This conception of community is just as crucial to MacIntyre’s notion of virtue as it was for Kant’s and Augustine’s, and it gives way to MacIntyre’s second stage in the development of virtue: the narrative nature of this community and our lives within it. MacIntyre holds to the same notion as Augustine that our lives are not made intelligible by an explanatory model of individual actions, but as a unified narrative. When actions are completely separated from any kind of context we associate them with psychotic and confusing random behaviour – where they find their meaning is in a narrative with a historical character. Just as actions are understood properly in this context, virtues, also, must be understood in the context of a narrative. If any virtue is to be truly present, it will extend beyond fragmented actions and compartmentalized instances, and that virtue will be generally expressed in all actions and instances in the life of whoever possesses it. Because actions and virtue are properly understood in the context of a narrative, the life in which they inhere must also be understood as a unified narrative, one that “can be conceived and evaluated as a whole.”⁵⁴ To truly understand life as a narrative with a beginning, middle, and end, the notion of a *telos* must also be in place – something *towards* which our lives are all journeying. Without this, the notion of a narrative falls apart, as does the proper context for understanding the virtues, which eventually results in the erroneous conclusion that all the moral life can claim is absolute arbitrariness.⁵⁵

The third and final stage in the development of this virtue is to conceive of the narrative of our individual lives as participating in the larger narrative of a tradition. Along with a personal identity, we also bear a social identity, and that social identity is based on the tradition in which we find ourselves.⁵⁶ We are all *something* to *someone* – a mother, daughter, father, son, peer, mentor – and we have a responsibility to the people with whom we are in relationship. This relationship extends into the past as well, because unlike Kant, MacIntyre asserts that when we enter into relationship with members of a practice and community, we are also entering into relationship with all those who

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, 190.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 188.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 190.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, 191.

⁵² *ibid.*, 193.

⁵³ *ibid.*, 192.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, 205.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, 203.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, 220.

have preceded us in that practice and community.⁵⁷ Thus, we also have a responsibility to the forerunners of our respective traditions and we inherit from them “debts, inheritances, rightful expectations, and obligations.” Hence, our personal identities, social identities, and historical identities coincide, and it is within the conglomeration of these identities that we find our *moral* identities.⁵⁸ As it is tradition that holds both the conception of our lives as narratives and the maintenance of practices together, something must be in place to maintain the tradition if the whole system is going to hold together. This, MacIntyre states, is virtue itself. Traditions either decay or flourish correlatively to the lack or exercise “of the relevant virtues.”⁵⁹ Virtue is then that which sustains the tradition that holds the entire system in place. These are the ‘relevant virtues’ that *must* be in place in a tradition if its members are going to function correctly, and they are also the virtues that hold both a practice and a narrative together: justice, honesty, and courage.⁶⁰ Justice enables us to properly relate to and respect the people within the community of our tradition: identifying what is due to those in the past, present, and future. Honesty is both the humility to be truthful with ourselves about our own insufficiency to live the moral life alone, and to be honest with those around us when we see a problem within the practice or tradition that needs to be fixed. Courage is the power to be prepared to take the long and difficult road of fixing those problems within the tradition, instead of running away from the notion of a tradition altogether, as Kant did.

Thus we have MacIntyre’s concept of virtue fully developed as that which sustains a tradition, and the unified narrative of the lives within that tradition, as well as the practices that make up a tradition. He has eliminated the problem of Augustine’s exclusive account of virtue by allowing for the virtues to be universally available, as he does not limit it to Christians or any other religion. Although he may hold that the tradition that constitutes and cultivates the virtues best may in fact be the long lasting tradition of the Church, it is very clear that the practices, communities, the narratives of our individual lives, and the greater tradition we live them in are all productive of and sustained by the virtues, thus enabling the members to live a genuinely good moral life. This is not to say that MacIntyre is a relativist. There are traditions that are better than others; the only way to judge such a thing, however, is to enter into a tradition and expose its problems from the inside, once it is properly understood. This notion of moral judgment calls us as moral agents to be honest, accepting, constructively critical, to take responsibility for our moral life, and to be active in our evaluation of both ourselves and others; he has also taken a step towards remedying the contextless individualism of the Enlightenment by reinserting the notion of a *telos* and placing our individual lives back within the context of a larger community.

However, it does seem as though his theory of the virtues begs the question. He starts by proposing that there is a lack of proper understanding of the virtues, and then proceeds to lay out a system that is expressive of these still ‘unknown virtues.’ He concludes by asserting that the virtues are simply those things that hold up the system that expresses them. As this system is fundamentally the system of a tradition, perhaps the proper thing to inquire about is whether or not a tradition is necessary in the first place. Because if it *is* necessary to living a morally good life, then it will naturally follow that the virtues MacIntyre identifies as upholding this system are in fact legitimate.

The idea of identifying with past methodology and ideology has become archaic and foreign – the word ‘traditional’ is now a derogatory term used to typify a closed minded church-goer who is unable to conform to the rapidly changing conventions of modern day society because his or her head is stuck in the allegedly irrelevant values of a dying past. This break with the past and inability

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, 194.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 221.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, 222.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, 223.

to associate with it began with Kant. He rightly identified the ‘moral particularities’⁶¹ – the moral mistakes and downfalls of the past tradition – but instead of trying to work out a solution *within* the tradition of which he was part, he completely left it behind to start a history of people who do exactly as he did. The point MacIntyre is making is that we *can’t* operate as completely autonomous individuals in the secluded individualistic sense that we as a society have embraced, and at the same time maintain a moral life. It is an idealistic dream of the Enlightenment to escape from the apparent problem-ridden confines of a tradition into a world of morality defined *only* by the rational individual’s conformity to universal maxims. This Kantian dream has resulted in the consequences we see in our world today: rationally irresolvable moral conflicts and the consequent contemporary skepticism as to the purport of ethics as they pertain to the individual life *at all*. The problem with this world is that it is a world in which we as individuals lack the proper context to understand ourselves, which leads to a world wherein a proper understanding of our essential human nature is lost. When this is lost, morality is lost with it, for what else is morality than the proper understanding of human nature and the right actions that follow from such an understanding?

MacIntyre’s proposed solution for ethics and a revival of virtue by means of a rediscovery of tradition is legitimate and necessary because it is from within the context of a tradition that we are granted the most abundant and complete picture of what it means to be human. The virtues in such a tradition are both what teach us to be human, as well as cultivate that humanity *as it should be* in us. What better step in the right direction is there to salvaging ethics than to start with the rediscovery of a proper understanding of what it means to be human?

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Raëlism: Publicity as a Recruitment Technique⁶²

by Kate Whitters⁶³

Raëlism is a worldwide UFO (Unidentified Flying Object) religion.⁶⁴ Since its creation in 1973 by former race-car driver and journalist Claude Vorhilon, it has commanded significant media attention. Its unusual beliefs, views on cloning, sociopolitical activism, and embracing of sexuality and sensual meditation make it an interesting emergent religion for study. Especially noteworthy is its transparency and embracing of the media. The following paper will discuss the main tenets and activities of Raëlism and will consider the use of such deliberate publicity as a recruitment strategy.

Raëlism is built on a series of interactions that Claude Vorhilon, now known as Raël, claims to have had with an extraterrestrial race called the Elohim. According to Vorhilon, he was visited by a member of the Elohim on December 13th, 1973, while visiting a volcanic tourist site in central France. The alien, Yahweh, claimed to have been watching him for a very long time, and informed him that he was the ideal candidate to deliver ‘the truth’ to his fellow humans.⁶⁵

In spite of these clearly deistic names, Raëlism is an atheistic religion – it does not subscribe to a belief in God. Its doctrine and practices are described in impressive detail in several books written by Raël, which are freely available in full online. Through an imaginative reinterpretation of Genesis, Raélians are convinced that the world was created by the Elohim race as a scientific experiment.⁶⁶ The Elohim will return to earth when there is peace, and when humans are able to “love them as their parents.”⁶⁷

Throughout history, the Elohim have sent prophets to guide the human race in the attainment of a society ready for their return. Such prophets include Buddha, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad.⁶⁸ In this view, many world religions originated from the Elohim. When the Elohim decide the human race is sufficiently peaceful and educated for them to return to earth, there will be a final “judgment.” Using human DNA and memory stored in advanced computers on their home planet, the Elohim will “resurrect” the chosen using cloning technology. Geniuses and those who have supported their genius will receive eternal life. Those who died before receiving justice for evil deeds performed during their lifetime, for example Hitler, will be reincarnated so they can be appropriately punished.⁶⁹

These fantastical beliefs in themselves would appear to be enough to draw interest to the group. However, the media attention Raëlism has generated since its beginnings has been overwhelming and is largely unrelated to the group’s most important beliefs. Some would argue that it is this media attention that draws membership, making Raëlism one of the largest UFO religions in the world, with members in 182 countries and some 2300 members in 2007.⁷⁰ Probably the most controversial aspect of Raëlism is the belief in the possibility of human cloning and their active research in that field. Members claim to be developing a technology in Japan which will allow a download of the human mind into a computer. The personality and mind of the donor can be

⁶² This paper was written for Religious Studies 225, Cults and New Religious Movements, December 2011.

⁶³ Kate Whitters graduated in 2012 with an Advanced Major in Biology.

⁶⁴ Susan J. Palmer, *Aliens adored: Raël's UFO Religion* (Picataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 4.

⁶⁵ Raël, *Intelligent Design: Message from the Designers* (No place of publishing: Nova Distribution, 2005. PDF file.), 8.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 10-24.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Book 1.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁷⁰ Transcribed speech by Rael, part of Contact 331 newsletter. Web. 3 Aug. 2012.

<<http://raelianews.org/download.php?view.202>>.

inputted into a genetic copy of a human produced through an “accelerated growth process.”⁷¹ Clonaid, a Raelian company dedicated to researching human cloning, was created in 1997 and claims to be the first company dedicated to human cloning.⁷² In 2000, it was handed over to Dr. Brigitte Boisselier, a Bishop of the Raëlian Church and former marketing director of a large French chemical company. On December 26th, 2002, the world’s first ever cloned baby, Eve, is said to have been created by the scientists at Clonaid.⁷³ A very public press conference hosted by Brigitte Boisselier revealing the supposed birth of Eve received a huge amount of media coverage.⁷⁴ However, no proof has since been shown that Eve is indeed a clone of her 31-year-old mother. Some controversy exists as to whether or not this was an elaborate hoax plotted by Raël to increase media awareness of the group.⁷⁵

More recently, media claims that Michael Jackson had arranged to be cloned preceding his death in June, 2009, have received some attention.⁷⁶ Cloning is illegal in many nations, and following the alleged cloning of Eve, the South Korean government barred Raël’s entry into the country. This forced Raël to cancel an upcoming seminar that was predicted to attract hundreds, sparking a protest by Korean Raëlians.⁷⁷

This is not the only protest by Raëlians who are notorious for their activism. In accordance with their avid support of cloning, Raëlians believe genetically modified foods are “the solution to world hunger.” In response to negative attitudes toward GM foods, Raëlians maintain that “the fear that these new species created by man will escape and fertilize or pollinate ‘natural’ species is unfounded and based on ignorance.”⁷⁸ They are full supporters of the Monsanto company, and in 2003 about 300 members of the Raëlian Church spelled “I love GMO (Genetically Modified Organisms)” using their naked bodies in a field in Quebec.⁷⁹

However, this is not the most dramatic act of protest put on by this group. They avidly protest against the Vatican and the Catholic Church, citing rampant pedophilia among the clergy as the main fuel for their campaign against the Church. Although they condemn pedophilia, they do embrace sexual choice. In the early 2000s, Raëlian supporters handed out pamphlets in the streets of several European cities protesting the growing incidence of child molestation within the Catholic Church. In 2002, Raëlians launched “Operation Condom,” a campaign of condom distribution in Catholic high schools across Quebec that had earlier removed condom machines from the schools. Twenty-two newspapers, many of them supportive of the Raelians’ cause, covered the event.⁸⁰ The condom distribution took place in the flashiness typical of Raëlism; members drove brightly coloured vans painted with UFOs. In another campaign aimed at high school students, they distributed crosses and invited students of the nearby Catholic high school to burn them on

⁷¹ Raël, *Yes to human cloning: Eternal life thanks to science* (n.p.: The Raëlian Foundation, 2001. PDF file), 36.

⁷² *Clonaid*, 2006 <<http://www.clonaid.com/page.php?18>>.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Betty Ann Bowser, “The Cloning Debate.” *PBS*. 27 Dec. 2002 <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/science/july-dec02/cloning_12-27.html>.

⁷⁵ Susan J. Palmer, “The Rael Deal,” *Religion in the News*. n.p., 2001 <<http://www.trincoll.edu/depts/csrpl/RINVol4No2/Raël.htm>>.

⁷⁶ *Clonaid*, 2006 <<http://www.clonaid.com/page.php?18>>.

⁷⁷ Ji-Young Soh, “Raelian Cult Leader Threatens to Sue Korea Over Denied Entry,” *Worldwide Religious News*. n.p., 3 Aug. 2003 <<http://wwrn.org/articles/12250/?&place=north-south-korea§ion=Raëlians>>.

⁷⁸ Raël, *Yes to human cloning: Eternal life thanks to science* (n.p.: The Raëlian Foundation, 2001. PDF file), 57.

⁷⁹ *USA Today*, “With friends like these, Monsanto needs no enemies,” *USA Today*, 6 Aug. 2003. <http://www.usatoday.com/tech/news/techpolicy/2003-08-06-Raëlians-biotech_x.htm>.

⁸⁰ Susan J. Palmer, “The Rael Deal,” *Religion in the News*. n.p., 2001. <<http://www.trincoll.edu/depts/csrpl/RINVol4No2/Raël.htm>>.

bonfires, and encouraged proclamations of apostasy. This also received some media attention, although it was markedly more negative.⁸¹

Evidently, Raélians are highly involved in current social controversies. Raël even has a public website, translated into 7 different languages, on which he releases his opinion on current events.⁸² Recently, he has expressed his support for the Occupy Wall Street movement, though he cautions against the possibility of a third world war. He has also commented on the recent trend away from male suits being dress code in the workplace. Raël discusses a wide variety of subjects, from socioeconomic to more trivial fashion issues. He even debates celebrity gossip.⁸³ This encourages the interest of members from a variety of demographics, spreading messages many can relate to in hopes of guiding them to the beliefs of the Raelian movement.

Aside from interest in social controversies, another media focus on Raëlism is their liberalized view of sexuality. Raélians are advocates of sensual meditation, which they claim is “the simplest and most efficient set of techniques for human awakening and fulfillment, for the plain and simple reason that it is given to us by those who designed us as we are.”⁸⁴ They believe the Elohim gave us sex to curb our more violent primal tendencies.⁸⁵ Sensual meditation is practiced through a series of six activities, the first three of which revolve around awareness of the self and the body. These are routinely practiced at Raëlian seminars. The last three involve the sensual exploration of a partner, through sensual massage and mutual stimulation. Although there have been rumors of large organized Raëlian orgies, press releases by Raël have countered these allegations.⁸⁶

There is no doubt that Raélians have highly publicized their sexual views. Raël has encouraged his followers to take part in ‘Orgasm for Peace’ demonstrations, and routinely promotes seminars preaching the benefits of sexual activity and self-stimulation.⁸⁷ One of two all-female groups within the Raëlian organization, called ‘Raël’s Girls’, are all members of the sex industry. They discourage feelings of shame amongst women working as prostitutes, dancers, or strippers and advocate freedom of sexuality for women, saying “we need to dispel these notions of the human body as being a dirty secret, and embrace sensuality and sexuality as a healthy function of humanity.”⁸⁸ They even posed for a spread in Playboy magazine in 1994, reaching a wide audience with their pro-sex message.⁸⁹

To further promote their message of freedom of sexual expression, Raelians have organized annual protests against nudity and indecent exposure laws. “GoTopless Day” increases awareness of the double standard with regards to torso nudity between males and females. They argue that females should have equal rights to go topless in public as men. GoTopless rallies were held in 15 cities in the US, Canada and Europe last year.⁹⁰ Women are invited to parade topless or with their breasts covered, whichever they are most comfortable with. Men were offered bikini tops to highlight the alleged double standard. Each year the events receive high-level media coverage, including airtime on CTV, ABC, and FOX.⁹¹ This past march was held on Women’s Equality Day in

⁸¹ Susan J. Palmer, *Aliens adored: Raël’s UFO Religion* (Picataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 92.

⁸² *RaelPress*. Raelian Press, 2006 <<http://www.raelpress.org/news.php?item.135.1>>.

⁸³ *Ibid*.

⁸⁴ Rael, *Sensual Meditation: Awakening the mind by awakening the body* (No place of publishing: Nova Diffusion, 2002. PDF file), 31.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*.

⁸⁶ *RaelPress*, Raelian Press, 2006 <<http://www.raelpress.org/news.php?item.135.1>>.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*.

⁸⁸ *Rael’s Girls*, International Raelian Movement, 2006 <<http://www.Raelsgirls.com/>>.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*.

⁹⁰ *GoTopless.org*. GoTopless, 2010 <<http://gotopless.org/>>.

⁹¹ *Ibid*.

the US, and the Washington, DC march culminated in a hand delivery of a signed petition and an audience request to President Obama.⁹² This highly public event could only serve to increase awareness of the Raëlian movement.

In conclusion, Raël has been highly successful in gaining media attention for his movement. The creation of Clonaid and avid interest in human cloning research has arguably brought the most media coverage to the group, especially directly following the supposed cloning of baby Eve in 2002. Raëlians' political activism, including support for GMOs and vehement protest against the Catholic Church coincided with worldwide attention to these causes and sparked interest in Raelian ideals. Highly publicized displays of their liberal sexual views such as "Operation Condom," the creation of "Raels's Girls," the practice of sensual meditation at large Raelian gatherings, and the organization of "GoTopless Day" have fostered additional public interest in the cult. A diverse network of websites, offering something of interest to a diverse clientele, creates a net for potential members. Finally, the free offering of Rael's publications outlining the details and beliefs of Raelism encourages membership by those who find their fantastical contents compelling.

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⁹² Ibid.

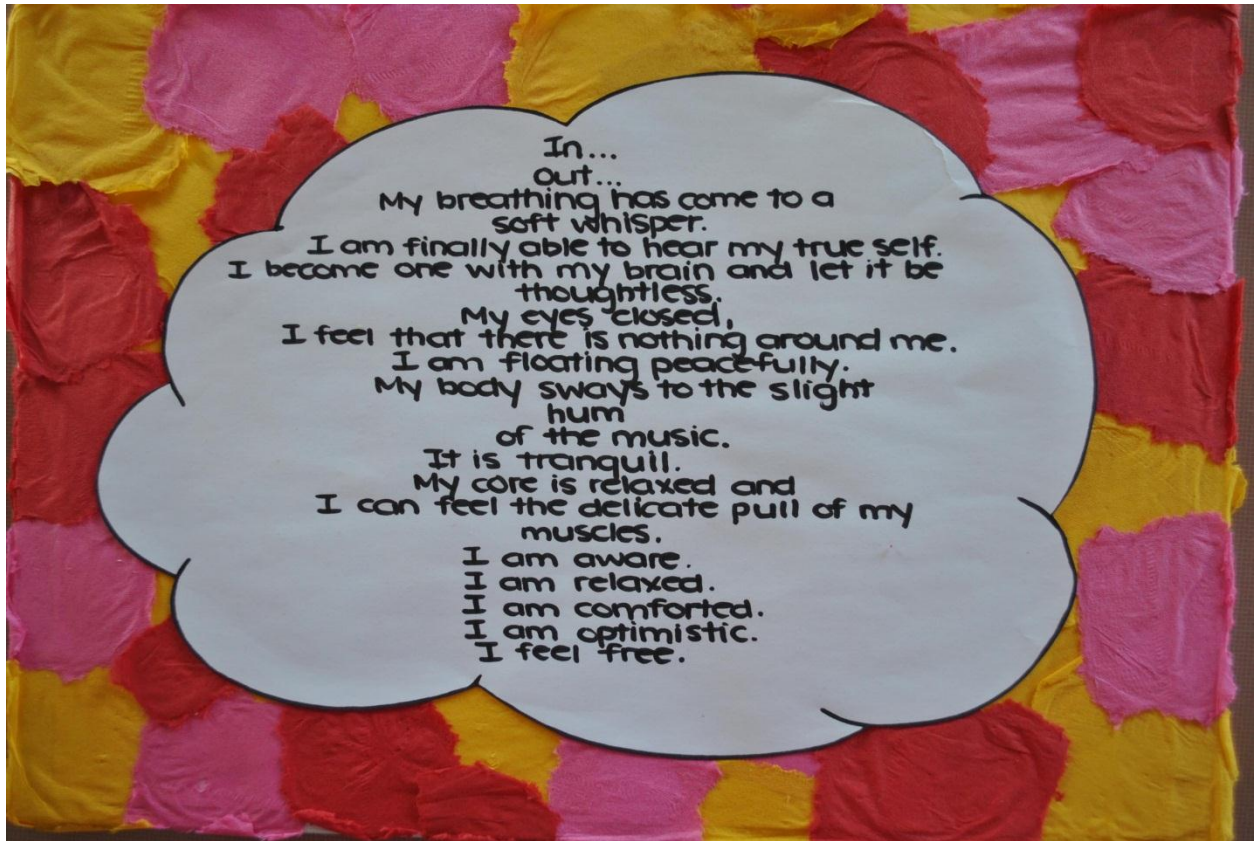
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Practicing (*hatha*) Yoga⁹³

by Janelle Boudreau⁹⁴

As seen in my art piece, there is a cloud surrounded by colors of pink, yellow and red. For me, these colors represent the bright, flourishing clothes commonly worn by Hindus. The colours could also represent one of the many uses of the “sacred element” of fire, such as cremation ceremonies. The cloud in the centre represents the exhilaration yoga gives me. It is there to portray that yoga can, in fact, be an uplifting and peaceful escape from inter-personal difficulties, societal issues, or environmental problems that religion cannot always mend or correct. Although yoga can be a form of connection between the religious culture and meditation, it can also have a significant effect on one’s personal development or fulfillment.

As a centerpiece in Hindu culture, yoga is something that I, although rooted in Catholicism, also enjoy. During yoga class, I feel alone but at peace. I am “in the moment” and I am aware of my body’s slightest movements. I feel as though I am sitting on top of the world, looking down at all my positive capabilities and opportunities. I am concentrating on my breathing, the pulling of my muscles and the selflessness of my brain. When I leave, I feel as though my body has been “stretched” and is ready to take on new endeavors. Yoga allows me to generate optimism.

I believe that yoga has had a great influence on the world. For those who have experienced the practice, I am certain that many have become “one with themselves.” I am hopeful that, like me, they have found the “positive power within” and have learned how to use it in their daily lives. In my opinion, if everyone practiced yoga, our world would be more a patient, compassionate and understanding place.

⁹³ This poem/art piece/commentary was written for Religious Studies 120, Religion, Spirituality, and Health.

⁹⁴ At the time of writing, Janelle Boudreau was a first year B.Sc. Nursing student.

The Motif of Disguise in Iranian Cinema⁹⁵

by Sam Harrison⁹⁶

The Iranian film industry is a prolific and long-standing institution, producing its inaugural documentary in 1900 and its first feature film in 1930 (Naficy 548). Creative output has been almost continuous, offering reflections of the Pahlavi era, the subsequent revolution in 1979, the ensuing eight year Iran-Iraq war, the reconstruction of the 1990s based on a strict interpretation of Shi'ite Islam, and the uncertainty of Iran today. According to Naficy, there are two distinct streams of contemporary Iranian cinema: one category attempts to reiterate post-revolutionary values as defined by the clerical leadership, or so-called pro-regime propaganda films; the other is typified by quality films that reflect social concerns and regularly chafe against the authoritarian government's strict control over the Iranian populace (Naficy 549). The latter group is often banned because they are perceived by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance to be immoral or anti-state, and are not granted exhibition permits. Film industry professionals must comply with a lengthy list of rules if they want their film to be shown legally in Iran, or even made at all. Among the many stipulations are several that are aimed at women. Women must be covered at all times with the exception of the face and hands, they must refrain from wearing tight clothing, and there can be no physical contact between a woman and a man (Whatley 30). Despite this prohibitive environment, Iranian social critiques offering an alternative face to the enigmatic country are released regularly and achieve critical acclaim all over the world. When they do not receive an exhibition permit from the Iranian government, pirated versions make the films accessible to the Iranian people even inside Iran.

Critical Iranian movies often focus on the "Woman Question," as Farhi describes it, noting that women suffer from an inequality of rights and opportunities, demanding transformation of the society that forces them to comply with stringent laws curtailing their freedoms (Farhi 320). In this way, Iranian films provide a voice for a demographic that is usually silenced. In fact, many movies are driven by female leads, and there are many female directors including Tahmineh Milani and Maryam Shahriar. Films that challenge the traditional expectations of the religious conservatism of the regime often do so by portraying women in transgressive roles or by depicting women doing what, according to a strict historical interpretation of Islamic law, is prohibited to them but allowed to men, thereby highlighting gender inequality. In some cases, women can only play such roles if they are disguised as men, rendering disguise a common motif in Iranian cinema. Three films that typify this distinct form of social critique are *Offside* (2006) by Jafar Panahi, *Baran* (2001) by Majid Majidi and *Daughters of the Sun* (2000) by Maryam Shahriar.

Offside follows the story of five young women attempting to gain access to the 2005 world cup qualifying match between Iran and Bahrain, and includes footage of the game as well as the aftermath that ensued. The tagline of the movie is: "In Iran, all women are banned from men's sporting events" (IMDB). The justification for this mandate, at least in the film, is that the dignity of women would be affected by the swearing and shouting that abounds in the crowds at such events. Yet, for the girl trying to get in to Azadi stadium in the first scene of the movie, hearing offensive language seems to be the least of her concerns. Instead, she is preoccupied trying to keep her head down so as not to attract any attention from the soldiers who act as security at the event. After having to pay a higher price to a scalper because he fears punitive repercussions for selling to a woman, she gets in line for the gate. She is noticeably scared but exhibits a great deal of bravery. However, she is soon found out and arrested, to be kept in a mock prison guarded by young soldiers

⁹⁵ This Paper was prepared for Religious Studies 370, Islam in the Modern World.

⁹⁶ Sam Harrison graduated in May 2012 with a B.A. Joint Major in Music and Religious Studies.

just outside of the stadium. There are already a few girls being held and soon more are thrown in for the same offence, showing that women who disguise themselves as men to enjoy the same privileges as the latter is not an unknown practice. The girls' rebellion in the face of institutionalized sexism is understandable, for both women and men are soccer fans, and thus would aspire to the same opportunity to watch a live game. A few of the girls even profess to play soccer themselves (in a league which requires the male coach to advise his team from outside the all-girls facility.)

The young soldiers, as well as the scalper, play an important role in the film, demonstrating that both men and women disagree with the restrictive policies of the government. The men in the film only comply with and enforce the segregation of women because they fear the government, knowing that those higher in command will mete out severe punishment to those that offend the regime's rule. In fact, the soldiers seem compassionate towards the girls and their cause and sometimes seem likely to give in to the girls' constant appeals to watch the game, something the soldiers wish they could do as well but cannot because they have their hands full. It is symbolic that both groups divided by gender are unified by national pride in the soccer team. Panahi seems to be forwarding the idea that men and women should come together in Iran to achieve an equitable society not subject to hypocritical laws. However, the soldiers fear reprisal too much to let the girls have their way. The young man in charge says: "Please understand, I have responsibilities. If I let you go I will be assessed extra service-time." The girls understand this too. In fact, when one girl is successful in her attempt at escape, she returns because she feels empathy for the soldier that had earlier escorted her, knowing he will be harmed in some way. The soldiers do everything they can to accommodate the girls, and are only upset with them because they too cannot watch the game on account of the girls' transgressive behavior, and not because of any ideological conflicts. One soldier even gives a running commentary of the game for the 'prisoners' until close to the end of the game when a bus comes to take them to jail.

In an optimistic twist, the bus never makes it to the facility it is heading towards. The soldiers, who are still accompanying the girls, fix the antenna on the bus so the passengers can listen to the end of the game. Again, both parties are united by their common pride for their country's team, and when Iran wins, all of the passengers celebrate together. In fact, the entire city is aflame with celebration and the bus becomes mired in a throng of cars and people rallying around the victory, as the soldiers and the girls are dragged off the bus to dance in the streets and the drama of the last hour is forgotten in celebration.

It is amazing how Panahi can present a critique of the Iranian regime's fickle policies towards women in a feature that leaves the viewer with a good feeling; the mood of the film is one of reconciliation and progress, for in the end the laws that prohibit these women from enjoying the live game and the men from letting them do so are entirely unsuccessful. Neither party is seriously punished for their actions. Panahi is optimistic that change in favour of women's rights specifically and the rights of all Iranians as a whole will be implemented and the regime will loosen its stranglehold on the way people live their lives. Yet, it must be added that the optimism that Panahi displays in this film may have changed to bitterness. In 2010 Jafar Panahi was sentenced to six years in jail and a twenty year ban on his creative output; he has not yet been taken to prison but he can no longer pursue his career in the Iranian film industry (Amnesty International).

In comparison to *Offside*, which includes a lot of dialogue and a straightforward narrative that takes place within an hour and half, *Baran* is a much more subtle film. Director Majid Majidi is successful in addressing the same concerns as Panahi by telling the story of a young Afghan woman who disguises herself as a boy so she can get a job at a construction site, an opportunity that is not given to females. She is forced to do so when her father breaks his leg on the same site. Unlike *Offside*, poverty drives the action of the plot, an allusion to the urgency with which the woman question must be satisfactorily answered, lest Iranian society is left to languish in disparity forever.

Rahmat, as the young girl calls herself, gets the job but it is obvious she is not strong enough to fulfill the duties of a man, so the foreman sends her to the kitchen, forcing the current kitchen boy to do her heavy lifting. He is not pleased. However, Rahmat excels at her new position, forwarding the idea that men and women excel equally in different spheres when given the opportunity to do so. The men on site love the tea and food; it is only Lateef, the boy she replaced, who is unhappy.

At first this seems to corroborate the clerical leadership's position on the rights of men and women, that is, that the sexes should be given equitable but *not* identical rights. They argue their case by citing the different abilities of women and men. The well known clerical leader who died at the height of the revolution, Murtaza Mutahhari (d. 1979), extrapolates: "Equality is different from identicalness. Equality means parity and equitableness, and identicalness means that they are exactly the same" (Mutahhari 256). This idea about gender is prevalent in conservative Islamic thought. Mutahhari goes on to give the example of three sons inheriting equal but different shares in their father's wealth based on their dissimilar aptitudes. Though they are bequeathed different allotments, there is parity in the comparative value of their shares. However, the very premise of Mutahhari's argument is unsound. Performatively, Iranian women are the inheritors of very little in comparison to men; this must mean that women are deemed on the basis of gender alone to possess lesser aptitudes. Women and men are *not* equal but inherently different, as Mutahhari argues.

When Lateef discovers that Rahmat is actually a girl the movie takes a turn. His attitude completely changes and he defends her fiercely in the face of labour inspectors and other malefactors. This of course brings up another rights issue, for Rahmat is also an Afghan refugee, cheap but illegal labour that the foreman is forced to lay off because he fears reprisals—just like the soldiers and the scalper in *Offside*. Rahmat is forced to leave the construction site to perform heavy labour, carrying heavy stones from the river, an opportunity in drudgery that *is* open to women. When Lateef (who is now obviously in love with the transgressive woman) sees this he is moved to at first giving a year's wages to her destitute family, and then selling his identification card (of utmost importance in these circumstances) to support them. In the end all is for naught as the family decides to move back to Afghanistan with the new found money in order to help their remaining family.

The plot culminates in a scene where Lateef picks up Rahmat's belongings (no longer disguised as a boy after she is laid off) that she accidentally drops before hopping in the back of the rickety truck that will transport her across the border. This scene is a great example of how Iranian filmmakers are able to make powerful movies while at the same time complying with the guidelines that are set by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. The camera shows only the pair's hands picking up several items from the mud in a complex dance choreographed so their hands come within centimetres of each other but their fingers never make contact. Then love-struck Lateef digs Rahmat's sandal out of the mud, gives it to her and watches her leave. It begins to rain (*baran* in Persian), revealing the namesake of the film and Rahmat's true name. A smile flashes across Lateef's face; perhaps the truck will get stuck and be unable to leave.

It is interesting to note that Rahmat/Baran never utters a single word in the film. It is both conducive to the subtlety of the film and the meaning. The girl who disguises herself to gain access to the world of men is completely silent save for some faint humming as she combs her long hair, just as the women of Iran are almost completely silenced by the patriarchal government. The absence of any real dialogue between Lateef and Rahmat/Baran is indicative of the lack of dialogue about women's issues in the public sphere between the sexes; controversial subjects might land a person in trouble with the legal system which is for the most part controlled by conservative clerics.

Ziba Mir-Hosseini refers to films such as *Baran* that deal simultaneously with love and social issues as a third wave of reformism in Iran, and notes that the first film in the sub-genre was Makhmalbaf's *A Time to Love* (1991). She posits that the reason for the success and importance of

films such as *Baran* is because love and women were largely taboo topics from 1979 to the early 1990s and the fact that they are now being addressed brings them much attention (Mir-Hosseini 29). Also, romance between men and women rather than a relationship that is dominated by either denotes equality between the sexes.

Daughters of the Sun or *Dokhtaran-e-Khorshid* in Persian also fits into the sub-genre that Mir-Hosseini describes as third wave, but with a decisively darker tone. Just as in *Baran*, the main character, a girl by the name of Amangol, is forced to disguise herself as a man because of poverty; men can make more money than women and this can be the difference between life and death in such destitution. The movie opens with a family member shaving Amangol's head, effectively rendering her a male in the eyes of those around her. She then acquires the name Aman (security)—to suit her transformation. Starting work for a small-time rug-maker, she is put into service with three other women, but due to her male guise and proficiency at the loom she is put in charge of the others and given a higher wage. However, this does not seem to give her any real advantage as the owner of the rug-making operation turns out to be more of a slave driver than an employer in the usual sense of the word; the girls are physically abused when they make mistakes and one has even become blind in her indentured servitude. The girls are locked in their quarters or else kept a close eye on.

Misogyny is a major thematic element in the film; the only man to show any compassion for the girls is Issah, who dies early in the film, lying prostrate in a standing body of water (in a similar pose to his namesake, Jesus.) The other semi-significant male character is a roving musician who sometimes plays outside, and once breaks into the workshop in what seems like an attempt to get Aman to leave with him.

Daughters of the Sun is an extraordinarily bleak depiction of the lives of women under a repressive regime. The urgency of the situation of women in Iran becomes very clear at the end of the film, when one of the girls pleads with Aman to ask her hand in marriage so that she is not forced into a marriage contract with a man more than twice her age. This, of course, is impossible and when Aman declines, the young woman takes her own life. As a symbol of freedom, the man who abuses the women loses his prize possession, a race horse he is unwilling to sell. Aman once again becomes Amangol as she burns down the workshop and is reborn out of the ashes to once again don her chador (all consuming black robe) and resume her life as a woman. The government worker arrives too late to do anything about the deplorable conditions the women live in, highlighting the inefficiency and callous disregard for peoples' welfare of the current administration and the disconnect that exists between the people and the government.

The stark realism found in Maryam Shahriar's film is because, unlike the other two filmmakers discussed, Shayriar is a woman and is subject to the hypocritical laws and entrenched inequalities that define current Iranian policy on women and gender. Though Panahi and Majidi voice women's issues in their films, and no doubt see the degrading status of Iranian women on a daily basis, they do not live as women. *Daughters of the Sun* is a harsh critique filled with controversial elements. Amangol's uncovered and shaved head as well as the possibility of a homosexual attraction between her and the weaver she befriends attracted a lot of attention in Iran (Whatley 32).

The depiction of female characters disguised as men in Iranian cinema is an effective social critique because it directly challenges the clear separation of males from females. Iran divides its populace clearly into two halves in almost every sphere of public life; examples can be seen in separate entrances to buildings and all-male or all-female buildings. The confusion between women and men portrayed in *Offside*, *Baran* and *Daughters of the Sun* shows that this separation is not necessary when all it takes for a woman to gain access to men's opportunities is a change of appearance. It becomes clear there are no fundamental or inherent differences that should prohibit women from having access to these opportunities.

In *Offside* the strict *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) based policies that are oppressive to women are not only challenged by the girls who disguise themselves to gain access to the sporting event, but also by the young guards that keep them contained outside of Azadi stadium and attempt to escort them to a jail. It is clear that the only reason they abide by these degrading procedures is fear of their superior officers. This would suggest that Panahi wishes to demonstrate a more generalized climate of fear vis-à-vis the government amongst the Iranian populace. Fear and despondency before the government is addressed more urgently in the films *Baran* and *Daughters of the Sun*, where the abject poverty that the rural, rather than urban, characters live in threatens their lives and institutionalized racism complicates existing policies. *Daughters of the Sun* especially gives a dire depiction of women's issues in Iran, whereas Panahi and Majidi focus on the hope for change in the system; the possibility of a better existence for women in Iran.

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