

An Ethics of Recognition

Redressing the Good and the Right

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The Good by Way of The Right?

Normative ethics is defined by two basic sets of questions: those concerning the good, and those concerning the right.¹ In the former case, one seeks to know: How should one live? What life is best to lead? In the latter, one wants to know: How does one determine whether an action is right or wrong? What obligations do we have? Complementary, pre-modern philosophers (including Plato and Aristotle, the Confucian tradition, and the pre-Columbian Aztecs) held that questions concerning the good were antecedent to questions concerning right action.² This is to say, they held that in order to determine whether a course of action was right, one had first to know what the good was. Some modern philosophers, especially Immanuel Kant, held that one cannot determine specifically what is good, without first assessing whether an action is permissible. The difference between these basic sets of questions, then, has given rise to an equally basic problem in modern moral philosophy: which of these notions is prior in the order of justification?

Some, perhaps encouraged by the complementary character of these questions, have hoped to provide ethical theories which would integrate these two sides without subordinating one to the other—to integrate, for example, Aristotle and Kant.³ Paul Ricoeur's argument in *Oneself as Another* attempts just this. He writes:

I propose to establish, without concerning myself about Aristotelian or Kantian orthodoxy . . . (1) the primacy of ethics over morality, (2) the necessity for the ethical aim to pass through the sieve of the norm, and (3) the legitimacy of recourse by the norm to the aim whenever the norm leads to impasse in practice.⁴

Though this statement initially looks to subordinate the right (morality) to the good (ethics), his second point makes the case that the conception of the

ethical aim (the good) must pass the morally normative test that follows in the Kantian tradition. As a result, it looks as though he hopes for an integration of these approaches, and this suspicion is underscored by his third point, wherein moral norms must return to conceptions of the good in cases of impasse, such as those in tragic situations.

Yet a new sort of argument in the anglophone tradition of ethics, the opposed kinds of ethical justification thesis, forwards the view that the integration of these two approaches is impossible on logical grounds.⁵ Unlike previous formulations of the opposition of the good and the right, the sort that perhaps Ricoeur had in mind, the present challenge is considerably more difficult to address.⁶

To explain, suppose that one is aiming to determine whether romantic infidelity to one's partner is morally wrong. For present purposes, let us assume that it is. If one takes the Kantian approach, so that the right is taken to be prior to the good, one is arguing that among the premises in one's argument, one must include the moral wrongness of one's action. That it is morally wrong is known by an independent test, such as the categorical imperative procedure (hereafter, CI procedure), which purports to show the universal and necessary reasons why it is wrong. Schematically, one's argument looks as follows:

Premise 1: The partners agreed to fidelity.

Premise 2: There was no coercion in the agreement.

Premise 3: The unfaithful action is morally wrong (by the CI procedure).

Conclusion: The action is impermissible, not good.

On this approach, then, a statement about the good is found in the conclusion, not the premises. On the approach that Aristotle favors, the approach which holds that the good is prior to the right, one must instead list the good among the premises, and then conclude to the action's rightness or wrongness. Schematically, one's argument looks as follows:

Premise 1: The partners agreed to fidelity.

Premise 2: There was no coercion in the agreement.

Premise 3: Infidelity would harm the other person (i.e., it is not good).

Conclusion: The unfaithful action is ethically wrong.

In claiming priority in the order of justification, then, one is claiming simply that a set of considerations, goodness or rightness, are part of the premises in one's argument. Since something cannot be both a premise and a conclusion to the same argument without begging the question, it would appear to be logically impossible to combine the two positions.

Two consequences appear to follow immediately. The first is general in character: all ethical theories which attempt to integrate a Kantian and Aristotelian position without subordinating one to the other are incoherent.⁷ The second is specific in character: Ricoeur's ethical project in *Oneself as Another* is incoherent. Whatever its merits as a theory of personal identity, then, it would appear to offer little for those interested in ethics.⁸

To avoid these conclusions, which are serious for Ricoeur, two paths look to be available. A first would be to reconsider Ricoeur's claims so that it turns out that he *does* subordinate one approach to the other. If that were right, then his position would turn out to be coherent after all, though, and for the same reasons, unremarkable. For on this line of reasoning, Ricoeur's is but another kind of Kantianism, and not an original formulation for right action at that.⁹ The other avenue available is to show that somehow, despite the logical problems, Ricoeur *does* manage to integrate an Aristotelian approach to the good with a Kantian account of right action. If this were possible, which it does not look to be, then Ricoeur's "little ethics" would turn out to be quite an accomplishment.¹⁰ It might, in fact, turn out to be the first and only adequate integration of the two approaches, and it would, *a fortiori*, prove to be a novel and interesting ethical theory—one which is neither strictly virtue ethical nor deontological. Is the latter path open?

The present essay argues that it is. Despite its apparent impossibility, Ricoeur succeeds in integrating the good and the right, in producing an account of the good by way of the right.¹¹ The result is not only that his ethical project in *Oneself as Another* is coherent, but that it is novel and ethically interesting. To distinguish his position from rival views, one might, for reasons that will become apparent in the conclusion of this essay, call it an ethics of recognition. Because the argument to follow is complex, the argument begins with broader conceptual backdrop to *Oneself as Another*.

Norms from Narratives

The primary argumentative task of *Oneself as Another* may be characterized as one of satisfaction: Ricoeur argues that human action can be understood to satisfy the intelligibility that we recognize as a narrative.¹² It is in making this argument that norms enter as the final step, or final characteristic of what is meant by a "narrative." It is worth pausing, then, to recall just what structure a narrative has in a textual sense, before turning to Ricoeur's argument that human actions through life can also be understood as a narrative.¹³

In the first volume of *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur sets out to understand the relation of cosmic time to personal, lived time, and he argues that "time becomes human time to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative; narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal existence."¹⁴ It is narrative, in short, that mediates between the impersonal sort of cosmic time that is intersubjectively verified,

for example in historical reconstructions of events, and the personal sort that we each experience. To make this argument, he must set out the formal features of a narrative, and then show how the concept so understood can play the mediating role he suggests. Because it is these formal features of narrative that are at work in *Oneself as Another*, the analysis will be helped by developing them in some depth.

Broadly, Ricoeur argues that a narrative is an intelligibility that represents the way in which events, experienced both in the first and third person, are coordinated. It has, he contends, three central representative moments, which Ricoeur calls types of *mimēsis*.¹⁵ He uses this term because, in his *Poetics*, Aristotle writes of the way in which a plot represents events and actions by *mimēsis*.¹⁶ Developing Aristotle, Ricoeur identifies three moments of a narrative intelligibility: *mimēsis*₁, *mimēsis*₂, and *mimēsis*₃.

The first *mimēsis* concerns the conditions that must already be in place for one to understand the coordination of events in an intelligible way. If the way in which events hang together may be expressed metaphorically (and more aptly in French) as giving them a “figure,” then *mimēsis*₁ concerns what must be prefigured for their coordinated intelligibility to emerge. If one prefers Martin Heidegger’s terminology, Ricoeur designates the precomprehensive (*Vorbegriff*) backdrop needed to render the events of a story intelligible. One might make the point in the following way. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, there are a series of attempted seduction scenes that serve as trials for Gawain. In the first, Gawain is asleep in bed and Lady Bertalick enters his room quietly in the morning. The text reads: “Then abashed was the knight, and lay down swiftly to look as if he slept; and she stepped silently and stole to his bed, cast back the curtain [i.e., bed sheet], and crept then within.”¹⁷ In order to understand why Gawain might be embarrassed, and the Lady’s actions quite forward, one must know that in the period of the story, people often slept in the nude. This historical detail forms part of the prefiguration needed for full comprehension of the narrative, and so illustrates to some degree what Ricoeur has in mind. Ricoeur’s purpose in this portion of *Time and Narrative*, however, is rather more abstract, since he is interested in features that *must* be present for the prefiguration of any story (the practice of sleeping in the nude is, rather obviously, not one of those). These more abstract features, he argues, are its structural, symbolic, and temporal elements, and together they make up the moments of prefiguration.¹⁸

*Mimēsis*₂ concerns primarily the way in which otherwise discordant events come together concordantly as a plot. Quentin Tarantino’s *Pulp Fiction*, for example, rearranges the chronological sequence of events to such an extent that it is difficult to understand just what happened and to whom. One reason for this rearranging is that the narrative that emerges on account of the temporal reorganization is one of moral, rather than chronological, progress. The story, so understood, follows Jules (Samuel L. Jackson) in his conversion away from a life of crime to one where he sets out on a life in search of a

higher understanding.¹⁹ Vincent Vega (John Travolta) simply cannot understand Jules's choice and tells him that such a life is that of a vagrant, of a bum. Their disagreement over this matter, moreover, stems from their previous disagreement about the significance of having been shot at point blank range and, against all odds, emerging unharmed. Jules sees the event as one of divine intervention, and Vincent sees only dumb luck. In order for otherwise unconnected events to emerge as meaningfully related, then, they must meet some conditions for intelligibility, and these are the facets of *mimēsis*₂ that Ricoeur calls a plot. He argues that any plot, so understood, connects (he prefers the term "mediates") in three ways: among individual events and the story; among heterogenous factors, such as goals, means, interactions, circumstances, and unexpected results; and, finally, among the temporal dimensions of the story.²⁰

The final representative dimension, *mimēsis*₃, concerns the way in which the text refigures, or changes, the world of the reader or hearer. In Ricoeur's own words:

I say that *mimesis*₃ marks the intersection of the world of the text and the world of the hearer or reader; the intersection, therefore, of the world configured by the poem and the world wherein real action occurs and unfolds in its specific temporality.²¹

In affecting the reader or hearer of the text, the meanings which previously were only grafted onto the existentially relevant meaning the recipient had in mind, come into being in our historical, public world through the agent's action. In short, narratives can change not only how we think and feel, but also how we act; even how we act habitually. This is the most complex of the mimetic facets because it does more than represent a text, but rather pivots from text to action. Ricoeur argues that refiguration first emerges as a process of circularity in reflection that leads to progress in inquiry. It follows through an activity of "reading" or actively receiving the narrative. Third, this reflection leads onto a refiguration of the field of reference, which finally makes for a refiguration of the time of action in one's own life.²²

The project in *Oneself as Another* makes use of the same intelligibility, a narrative, but this time for the purpose of making sense of one's personal identity. In *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur hoped to cure the rift between the cosmic sense of time, investigated and verified intersubjectively, and the lived sense of time that we experience existentially. Similarly, in *Oneself as Another* Ricoeur aims to unite the sense of identity that we recognize as sameness over time, *idem* identity, and the identity of avowal and confession, *ipse* identity.²³ At stake in the first sort of identity is the sense of sameness that we recognize when, after not having seen a friend for a while, we reunite and remark "Gosh, you haven't changed a bit!" At stake in the second sort of identity is the sense of sameness that emerges from saying, at a wedding, that "I do" agree to wed

and remain faithful to this other person until death do us part. Narrative is the intelligibility that bridges these two senses of remaining the same.²⁴

Of course, to make that argument, Ricoeur must show that our human actions can be thought to satisfy the three sorts of *mimēsis* at work in a narrative: *mimēsis*₁ (prefiguration), *mimēsis*₂ (configuration), and *mimēsis*₃ (refiguration). The trajectory of his studies follows exactly this path.

The first three studies aim to take the reader from an analysis of acts and the ways that meaning can be ascribed to them, to actions. The first study, following the path of linguistic reference, is able to discern how something is identified, but not how someone is identified.²⁵ In the second study, Ricoeur turns to an analysis of speech acts, which identify the speaker reflexively.²⁶ To integrate these partial results, though within a larger theory framework for the theory of action, the third study moves from the analysis of an act to an action.²⁷ Briefly, he argues that if an act is to be understood in a way that is meaningful to human purposes, it must include within its description the intention of the agent. While “brushing one’s teeth” is an act, then, an action might be “brushing one’s teeth in order to avoid cavities” or “in order to annoy my sister.” Taken together, then, these three studies identify the prefigurative (= *mimēsis*₁), conceptual background that must be in place to make sense of acts and action.²⁸ What they do not show, however, is how actions, which self-reflexively imply an agent, can be coordinated to identify a self.

The task of showing how otherwise discordant acts might become an intelligible concordance of events is the purpose of the second *mimēsis*, configuration, and it makes up the subject matter of the following three studies. In the fourth study Ricoeur identifies three *aporiai*, or puzzles, each of which “points toward a specific supersession of the strictly linguistic point of view” that he has thus far been employing.²⁹ The first of these is the most pertinent for present purposes, since it turns on the need to distinguish ascription from the simple attribution of a predicate to a logical subject. P. F. Strawson, who championed the ascriptive approach Ricoeur employs, does not provide the resources for this task, and so studies five and six aim to develop beyond these resources. In the fifth study, Ricoeur introduces what has been missing from any discussion of personal identity so far, namely time, both as it relates to *idem* and *ipse*.³⁰ Finally, in the sixth study, he shows how narrative emplotment can forge a concordance among the discordant elements analyzed in studies four and five: time, agency, acts, intentions, and related notions.³¹

This context shows that the “little ethics,” chapters seven through nine of *Oneself as Another*, completes the argument for narrative identity developed in the previous studies by finding a reasonable way in which *mimēsis*₃, refiguration, can be satisfied by an individual’s life. One should recall that refiguration is the mimetic moment in which the text changes the world of the reader or hearer, where it intersects with the world of action. Given these

criteria, the ethical place these chapters occupy in the argumentative trajectory is in many ways expected. The resulting sense of narrative identity is one in which the coordination of ipse and idem is taken to be a rational selection of sequences of actions involved in practices, which are larger units of philosophical analysis than mere actions, since they include their own histories and standards of excellence, i.e., norms. The practice of basketball playing, for example, includes not only a set of rules about the game, but a sense of what counts as better play and what is worse. An ethical life forged from practices such as these, then, becomes a necessary condition for personal identity in Ricoeur's scheme and, at the same time, completes the argumentative arc from the philosophical discussion of narratives to their normative implications for our lives—in other words, completes the argument about norms from narratives.³²

Mimēsis: Action and Praxis

To understand better how the normative features of narratives affect our lives, the analysis needs to follow Ricoeur in his development of practices, since it is these that serve a critical role in guiding our actions. It is this interest, moreover, which informs Ricoeur's engagement with Aristotle, from whom he develops the sense of practice (in Greek: *praxis*).

In a departure from the approach taken in his *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle begins the *Nicomachean Ethics* with a discussion of the good.³³ He writes:

Every craft [*technē*] and every line of inquiry [*methodos*], and likewise every action [*praxis*] and decision [*proairesis*], seems to seek some good [*agathou tinos*]; that is why some people were right to describe the good as what everything seeks.³⁴

Aristotle continues to develop a conception of the good so understood as that which all things seek, i.e., as the principle objective for the hierarchy of all our other ends.³⁵ There are two points about this hierarchy of ends that prove crucial to Ricoeur's use of Aristotle. The first turns on a subtlety that is difficult to render in English. In the very next line Aristotle distinguishes between two types of actions: *ta erga* (productions) and *hai energeiai* (which may be translated as "performances" or "activities").³⁶ Productive actions are of the sort that yield a product apart from the action, such as a potter's production of a vase. Stated differently, the end goal is external to the action. Performance actions are those that are actions (*erga*) in (*en*) themselves; the doing constitutes what they are, so that their end goal is internal to the action. This distinction is important for several reasons, and one is that it separates Aristotle's virtue ethics from utilitarianism. John Stuart Mill, for example, in the opening lines of *Utilitarianism*, writes: "All action is for the sake of some end, and rules of action, it seems natural to suppose, must take their whole character and color from the end to which they are subservient."³⁷ Happiness for Mill, then, is the product of acting in such a way as to promote the happiness of the greatest number. It is extrinsic to the acts themselves. For

Aristotle, by contrast, *eudaimonia* is conceived of as the performance of living one's own life well, as internal to one's actions. As a result, it would be incoherent on Aristotle's view to speak of maximizing this sort of happiness, apart from living it better, i.e., with more virtue.

A second point is that an action as praxis may be distinguished from an act because, as is noted in the immediate context of the term, it is the result of a deliberative decision, *proairesis*, which includes its end, *telos*, within its arc. Like Kant, then, Aristotle distinguishes acts from actions insofar as these latter include the agent's intention in their description. Unlike Kant, he takes (some) actions to be exercised as parts of broader practices, a notion that is not present in Kant's analysis. It is this difference that proves crucial for Ricoeur, who writes:

The first great lesson we receive from Aristotle is to seek the fundamental basis for the aim of the "good life" in praxis. The second is to attempt to set up the teleology internal to praxis as the structuring principle for the aim of the "good life."³⁸

In taking praxis as the basic unit of analysis for ethical life, Ricoeur is forced to move to a larger unit of analysis than actions, which have so far been the basis for his account of personal identity. He also notes that praxis has a teleology internal to it, such that in order to carry out one activity, one is required first to perform another, and so on. To be a good basketball player, one must be able to shoot free throws reasonably well, and to shoot free throws well, one must practice, and so on. This internal teleology thus structures one's sense of how to carry out the good life.

What is not developed in Aristotle's discussion of praxis, however, is the way in which this internal teleology on its own may introduce norms as standards of excellence. Instead, Aristotle turns to a discussion of the human function to introduce ethical norms. To be clear, Aristotle's method of ethical justification is one of informed common sense, one which turns on assessing reputable opinions (*endoxa*) and weighing them against the available evidence of life itself and the strength of better reasons.³⁹ In book I.7 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle introduces an *endoxon* (singular of *endoxa*) of his own to partially resolve the controversy surrounding just in what the good life consists, namely that the human function is to make use of reason.⁴⁰ It is this argument which provides Aristotle with a basis for discriminating among different ways of life. Yet, the argument has struck many as flawed, either on account of its logical structure, or on account of its use of what appears to be a prescientific bit of metaphysical biology. Ricoeur, not taking a position in this debate, circumvents it by looking elsewhere. Specifically, he looks to Alasdair MacIntyre's argument in *After Virtue*, which uses the internal teleology of praxis itself to introduce ethical norms.

The central arguments of MacIntyre's which interest Ricoeur are those that appear in chapters fourteen and fifteen of *After Virtue*. Having reviewed

some of the challenges that modern moral theories face, and a tradition of discussion of virtuous activity in the West, beginning with the Homeric epics, MacIntyre opens chapter fourteen with the need to address two related conceptual difficulties. A first is that the list of virtues among the five traditions surveyed is so vast that it is unclear whether there is any “shared conception” in *content* among the notions.⁴¹ A second is that *structure* of the virtues conceived in these sources looks to be so different “that we should treat them as embodying quite different concepts” of virtue masked by the use of a single term.⁴²

To respond to these concerns, MacIntyre develops an argument in three stages that spans the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters of *After Virtue*. In the first stage, he develops a background concept to which any of the virtues may be virtues of, namely a practice. In the second, he argues how practices so conceived make up part of the order of a single human life. In the third, finally, he argues that their normative source may be found in historical traditions.

It is the first stage that matters to Ricoeur’s argument. As the virtues for Homer were excellences in support of a social role, and for Aristotle they were excellences in support of eudaimonia, so MacIntyre argues that virtues are best thought to be excellences in support of practices. This approach, he ventures, is broad enough to encompass the differences in content among the traditions, and specific enough to unify their apparent structural differences. By a practice, MacIntyre intends:

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 achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.⁴³

Briefly, practices are complex socially cooperative activities, such as basketball playing or medical care, and not simple actions, such as shooting hoops for fun or taking cough syrup to feel well. Because they are complex and coordinated in this way, they have standards of excellence internal to them which do the work of defining what success in the practice means.

Ricoeur develops MacIntyre in the following way. He argues that one ought to understand Aristotle’s argument for the human function (*ergon*) on an analogy with practices. As practices have standards of excellence internal to them, so a human life has a standard of excellent activity internal to it that Aristotle identifies as the human function (*ergon*), namely the use of reason (*logos*) in its practical capacity to organize our ends. It does not matter to Ricoeur’s argument, then, whether humans have a (metaphysically) peculiar function. One need only grant that humans have the ability to use reason, and

that its function, its standard of excellence, is set by historical practices of human practical reasoning. The excellence of this practice is called prudence (*phronēsis*), and Ricoeur argues that the capacity goes beyond the selection of means to ends to include ends in themselves. As a result, there emerges an interpretive and self-reflexive relation between the virtuous practical reasoner (*ho phronimos*) and her virtuous practical reasoning (*phronēsis*) mediated by a tradition. Finally, it is this circular relation, between individual and tradition, which constitutes how the narrative unity of an individual life is achieved, how *mimēsis*³ is satisfied for humans.⁴⁴ It is this activity, then, that completes the satisfaction argument of *Oneself as Another* because it describes the way in which a person is transformed in maintaining an ethical aim.

The CI Procedure

Yet a difficulty remains: how does one know whether the practices which introduce standards of excellence into ethical analysis are any good? MacIntyre argues that the goodness of the tradition of which one is a part ensures its goodness. In a later work, he goes on to argue that one can assess the goodness of traditions by way of a sort of inter-tradition dialogue.⁴⁵ Ricoeur is, for reasons that are not stated, unconvinced. This has implications for personal identity. For if it is not clear whether the standards of excellence of one's community are good or even coherent, it is possible that in living by those practices one might yet lead an incoherent life. It is to address this defect that Ricoeur turns to the Kantian moment of his ethics.

To prepare the way to a discussion of Ricoeur's modification of Kantian ethics, it proves helpful to pause, briefly, to spell out just why he thinks that MacIntyre's approach to ethical objectivity, that is by way of the dialogue of traditions, is unconvincing.⁴⁶ In his discussion of Hegelian *Sittlichkeit*, which for present purposes functions as a tradition does for MacIntyre, or as strong values do for Charles Taylor,⁴⁷ Ricoeur argues as follows:

For us, who have crossed through the monstrous events of the twentieth century tied to the phenomenon of totalitarianism, we have reasons to listen to the opposite verdict [of Hegel's], devastating in another way, pronounced by history itself through the mouths of its victims. When the spirit of a people is perverted to the point of feeding a deadly *Sittlichkeit*, it is finally in the moral consciousness of a small number of individuals, inaccessible to fear and to corruption, that the spirit takes refuge, once it has fled the now-criminal institutions. Who would dare to chide the beautiful soul, when it alone remains to bear witness against the hero of action? To be sure, the painful conflict between moral consciousness and the spirit of a people is not always so disastrous, but it always stands as a reminder and a warning.⁴⁸

Ricoeur is here concerned with the point, one supported by the testimony of history, that the spirit of a people, or their traditions, or the strong values of a social imaginary, *are* not self-critical enough.⁴⁹ Ricoeur's ethics aims at optimality, not ideality. In an ideal case, perhaps, dialogues among different traditions, or among people who live with different strongly valued goods, might be sufficient. But an ethics that is suitable to humans looks to what is historically supported in the best cases, and so is optimal rather than ideal. This history, Ricoeur argues, shows that another tool is needed so that the individual might take a stand against the common practices of one's culture. This tool is that which Kant's ethics provides.

In turning to Kant, one finds that while interpreting Aristotle's ethics presents a wealth of interpretive difficulties, Kant's writings present at least an equal number. In his existing body of work, he expresses more than twenty not obviously equivalent statements of the three formulations of the categorical imperative, which are themselves supposed to be only one in number.⁵⁰ The present analysis, then, will center on only one point: how the categorical imperative is supposed to guide right action assessment.⁵¹

To begin, it is helpful to distinguish the moral law, the categorical imperative, and the CI procedure. For Kant, the moral law is an idea of reason, and so it specifies a principle that constitutes action for all rational and reasonable beings, whether those beings are finite beings with needs like us, or not so constrained, as presumably God is and angels might be. Yet for beings who have needs, i.e., finite ones, they experience the moral law as a constraint. The categorical imperative is needed, then, to specify how the moral law applies to us.⁵² Finally, for the categorical imperative to be action guiding for us, it must be adapted to whatever our circumstances are in the order of nature. This adaptation happens by way of a procedure, the CI procedure, which takes the normal conditions of human life into account and finds its clearest expression in the law of nature formulation, which reads "act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature."⁵³

One might understand Kant in the following way, making use of the law of nature formulation as central for understanding the procedure for applying the categorical imperative to actions for their evaluation. First, one is to begin by describing one's maxim, where this is understood as an act (e.g., "brushing one's teeth") including its intention (e.g., "in order to avoid cavities"). Second, one is to imagine a socially adjusted world wherein each individual is to act according to that maxim as if by a law of nature. For the sake of completeness, one may presume that Kant would have intended all agents to know that other agents were so compelled, and that the world had existed in that way for a considerable period. To follow the proposed example, all people brush their teeth in order to avoid cavities as if by a (psychological) law of nature, all people know that others do the same, and that society has existed in that form for quite some time.⁵⁴ Finally, one is to assess that world for a contradiction—

Kant specifically has in mind logical contradictions and contradictions of the will. What Kant intends by a logical contradiction is relatively clear, though he might add that one's actions ought to be rational. It is of course impossible that I will to be in two places at once and in the same respect, but it is also irrational (and so a logical contradiction) to will an end but not the only means available for that end.⁵⁵ By a contradiction of the will, Kant has in mind something along the following lines: Suppose my maxim were "to abandon my child to the wolves as soon as he acted in an irritating way in order to avoid that irritation." In this case, I come to recognize, when reflecting on the imagined socially adjusted world, that I myself would have long ago been abandoned by my parents and would not be alive to will the maxim. My will is then in contradiction.⁵⁶ To return to the brushing one's teeth case, one recognizes that neither sort of contradiction arises, so that brushing one's teeth is morally permissible.

An important observation about the relationship of the formulations is that on Ricoeur's interpretation, the second and third formulations only articulate implications that are already present in the first.⁵⁷ Thus, the formulations concerning human dignity, i.e., those which command that we are to treat each person as an end and never as a means, are *modeled* in the procedure. The reason for this is that, in taking up the point of view of the imagined socially adjusted world, I must treat each person of that world impartially. I must abandon my maxim as my own and assess how it functions in relation to all persons with equal consideration. It is only from that point of view that I can assess whether my maxim produces a contradiction of the will. Of course, were every person to act this way, then all actions would be consistent, and each would treat the other as an end in herself. The realm would, as a result, be a veritable kingdom of ends.

Despite his admiration for Kant's strengths, Ricoeur finds it necessary to modify the categorical imperative procedure, writing:

One has to admit that, characterized in this way, the notion of a maxim is unprecedented in the teleological tradition, despite the traces of universalism noted above. It is not actually the claim to universality but internal teleology which, in Aristotle, first characterized the notion of "rational desire," and then, in our own analyses of praxis, the notions of practices, of life plans, and of the narrative unity of life.⁵⁸

In short, unlike the standard Kantian procedure, Ricoeur argues that it is not actions themselves which are put to the test, but practices.

Although Ricoeur does not spell out what the new, reformulated CI procedure would consist of, it is not difficult to identify three capital alterations. To begin, the analysis would look not to assess a maxim, where this is understood as an act with its intention, but rather to assess a practice, where this might be understood as a collection of actions with their standards

of excellence. Second, one would be required to imagine a socially adjusted world in which all agents must participate in this practice as if by a law of nature. In this world, additionally, all agents know that all other agents must so participate, and the practice itself has existed for a significant period. Finally, one would put the practice to the test by asking: does such a world succeed in avoiding contradiction, where a contradiction is understood either logically or as a contradiction of the will?

Dualisms

The analysis has now set out all the separate pieces needed to understand how Ricoeur integrates Aristotle and Kant while accepting the opposed kinds thesis—an integration which, at first blush, looks to be logically impossible. He does this by introducing different orders of justification. To state the solution schematically, Ricoeur initially argues that the standards of excellence internal to practices are what shoulder the burden for virtue ethical evaluation. In short, Ricoeur can support the standard virtue ethical claim that “an action is right if it is what a virtuous agent would characteristically perform in those circumstances.”⁵⁹

This schema may be taken as appropriate for assessing right action if the assessment is restricted to the ordinary sorts of appeals that make up our quotidian lives. Yet Ricoeur also thinks that practices are themselves in need of evaluation, and that this cannot be done on the basis of the practices themselves, both on pain of circularity and on pain of depriving ethical evaluation of the ability to transcend its own circumstances and effect critical reflection. At a second-order, then, Ricoeur argues that one should submit the practices, which guide ordinary reflection by way of virtues, to the test of the CI procedure. And it is this procedure which will provide the universality needed to secure the consistency of our actions, which are given normative force by the practices to which they belong.⁶⁰

A relevant objection at this point is that Ricoeur’s account, having distinguished between first-order and second-order normative evaluations, looks to have bought consistency at the price of reintroducing a subordination argument, albeit a sophisticated subordination argument. Since Aristotelian assessments are relegated to assessments for ordinary activity, it is the CI procedure which shoulders the real normative burden. Ricoeur’s account may be somewhat novel, then, but it is best understood in the family of deontological ethical theories.

Although this worry seems plausible, it misunderstands the argument on two different counts. First, Ricoeur’s ethics advances a dualism with regard to right action assessment. The (modified) CI procedure cannot be substituted for the evaluation of actions related to social practices. Neither can the virtue ethical formula, for obvious reasons, be substituted for the work of cultural assessment that the (modified) CI procedure performs. Additionally, it is largely because Kant attempts to apply his procedure to specific actions, such

as lying in any circumstance, that he supports evaluations that appear problematic to many (Ricoeur included). Ricoeur's approach avoids such apparent problems because he changes the scope of analysis. Put differently, Ricoeur does not advance a subordinated approach because his answers to specific ethical questions will differ materially from either Kant or Aristotle.⁶¹

The second way the objection misunderstands Ricoeur's argument is that it does not recognize that Ricoeur also forwards a dualism with regard to the sources of normativity (hence the dualisms in this title of this subsection). The Kantian deontological tradition is normatively monist, admitting only formal considerations as normative sources. Ricoeur does carry this much forward. But he also acknowledges that practices emerge historically in communities, and that their standards of excellence come into being from those communities. They thus carry their own independent values, and they are justified in light of the community of practitioners by the exercise of their practical intelligence by *phronēsis*. It is only because practices have an independent, normative source that Ricoeur needs a modified form of the CI procedure to address them in the first place. On both counts, then, Ricoeur's work forwards a new ethical theory that cannot be identified with any proposal for ethical normative subordination.

Toward an Ethics of Recognition—By Way of Conclusion

The present essay opened with the worry that Ricoeur's ethical work may be logically incoherent, or, at best, derivative and uninteresting for contemporary ethical reflection. This worry stemmed from arguments which have shown that ethical justifications that turn on conceptions of the good are different from those that turn on conceptions of the right. The reason for this difference is that arguments of the former sort appeal to a conception of the good as a premise in the argument for one's assessment of right action, and conclude with a proposition about the right, while in the latter sort of appeal, the matters are exactly the opposite. Since a premise cannot also serve as a conclusion to an argument, any proposed integration of the two approaches to ethical justification are impossible on logical grounds. Such is the opposed kinds thesis of ethical justification, and Ricoeur's "little ethics" looks to fall short of meeting its challenge.

What the analysis indicates is that Ricoeur does manage to avoid incoherence and irrelevance while accepting the opposed kinds thesis, because he develops an ethical theory that operates at two orders. The first order is virtue ethical, so that actions are evaluated in the ways that have become familiar in the contemporary ethical landscape, and these norms are introduced in the way that MacIntyre has pioneered, i.e., through standards of excellence inherent to practices that emerge historically in communities. In the second order, Ricoeur's ethics are deontological, using a modified form of the CI procedure to assess the adequacy of historically formed social practices. Norms in this case emerge as basic conditions necessary to maintain a

coherent self. In this way, the CI procedure Ricoeur uses ensures that the dialectic of *ipse* and *idem*, the narrative unity of a life, retains whatever unity is possible for human lives.

The apparent logical impossibility of Ricoeur's project is thus only apparent, even though (or especially because) his project accepts the opposed kinds thesis. Critics of possible integrations, whether persuaded of the new formulation of the thesis, or the more traditional formulation, are thus confronted with the stark possibility that their ethical imagination has thus far been too dim; that other avenues for ethical reflection remain open. Ricoeur's work is thus both ethically defensible and ethically interesting.

The results entail some further clarification too. Even as a sympathetic reader of Ricoeur, James Marsh still thought Ricoeur's "little ethics" was problematic on two counts. "First," Marsh writes, "it may be that morality is present much earlier on the lived ethical level itself and not merely on a reflective, discursive level that emerges from the ethical level."⁶² He explains that our outrage at harm done to others, cases of rape and sexual assault for example, are better understood by way of deontic principles than by ethical principles that turn on the agent's own conception of the good. Even if a failure to exhibit moral outrage in response to such harms done to others corrupts my own character, the ethical onus of explanation for the wrong done ought to turn on the harm rendered to the victim first (and not on me!). Second, and relatedly, Ricoeur's "recourse to the prudential and to convection as a compliment to universality [is laudable], but he may do that too quickly."⁶³ Prudence would at least need preparatory guidance by universal principles in tragic cases, otherwise it might seem that murder and theft would be thought equally wrong when tragic circumstances prevail.

The foregoing account of Ricoeur's ethical dualisms clarifies the basic confusion at the heart of both these worries. One does not, on Ricoeur's account, make exclusive use of *either* ethical principles *or* moral ones. Rather it is the universalizing constraint on practices that is always at once operative. We adopt practices of interpersonal sexual conduct, for example, by way of universalizing principles, and these make clear that cases of rape and sexual assault are morally outrageous. As a virtuous agent who has habituated the exercise of these practices, I cannot but express outrage at the harm rendered to the victims, but it is that harm to the victim that carries the explanatory burden of ethical assessment. Likewise, in tragic cases, prudence guides the search for new practices that would have to be tested by the CI procedure. The ethical is always guided by the moral, though at different orders, so there is no fear that prudence will operate unguided in these instances.

I would like to close the essay with one final reflection, one which suggests some grounds for titling the ethical theory presently defended, the "little ethics," an ethics of recognition.⁶⁴ Recall the character of the CI procedure in Ricoeur's modified form. It remains the case that, even for

Ricoeur, in imagining the socially adjusted world, it is /who assesses whether the world fails to be consistent, whether logically or in contradicting my will. The worry which troubles the present analysis can be expressed in terms that Emmanuel Levinas develops: in the CI procedure, the same substitutes for the Other, but the relationship to the Other, the face-to-face relationship, is irreducible.⁶⁵ In other terms, the point of view which Kant employs looks to be not only formal (an old complaint), but also (this is the new complaint) problematically ideal, made from an imagined, utopian view that is never fully realized on earth, and for which I alone take responsibility in judging. It does one no good to reconstruct Kant's view so that the right action is whatever the ideal agent (or, following Habermas: ideal community of agents dialoguing in an indefinite period)⁶⁶ would discern, because we humans do not *ever* have access to that point of view. As a result, the procedure, however modified, cannot be action guiding without risking a silencing of the Other. I shall always have to assume that I have spoken well for Them. It thus needs to be supplemented by a non-ideal view that emerges from the face of the Other before me.

Ricoeur was, of course, sympathetic to the basic Levinasian insight.⁶⁷ His primary objection to Levinas, if one may put it this way, was methodological. Just as Heidegger sought to argue regressively (*Rückfrage*) to a sense of the meaning of Being (*Sein*) more primordial than the phenomena that Husserl's phenomenological analysis uncovered,⁶⁸ so Levinas argues regressively behind an embodied world to the face of the Other.⁶⁹ Ricoeur thought any "short road," whether Heidegger's or Levinas', would prove troubled.⁷⁰ This explains why, in *The Course of Recognition*, Ricoeur writes that "Both approaches [i.e., beginning from the Husserlian ego or the Levinasian Other] have their legitimacy, and my argument here does not require us to decide in favor of one or the other of them."⁷¹

Given this methodological difference, Ricoeur thought of his task as one of recovering Levinas' insight within the long road of hermeneutic traversal. He always sought to maintain the relationship (and tension) between the two points of view, between the ego-oriented and Other-centered views. He aimed for this because he thought they were complementary, rather than exclusionary if understood as part of a larger hermeneutic, reflective arc. Yet what is not clearly expressed in *Oneself as Another* is how that tension is sustained in ethical evaluation itself. While Ricoeur does write extensively on recognition and the relation of utopia and ideology elsewhere, he never brings those insights to bear on the little ethics itself.

With this background in mind, my proposal, which awaits full articulation in further research, is this: if one were to bring those Levinasian insights to bear on the little ethics, one might better understand Ricoeur's ethics as normatively trilateral, rather than dualist. These three sources are: (1) the historical practices that emerge from communities with their standards; (2) the CI procedure, which spells out the constraints needed for human actions to be

coordinated in a coherent way; and (3) the face of the Other who demands that I recognize the incompleteness of my categorical speculation. Navigating the relationship among these is not simple, and to those who wish for ethical theories to resemble desert landscapes, it looks disagreeably complex. Yet our ethical lives are perhaps more complex than we imagine, and a penchant for theoretical simplicity should not be grounds for suspending our practical reasoning. The final test for an ethical theory, after all, turns on more than parsimony, it must prove suitable to human life. Navigating the relationship among these sources is thus a task. Perhaps better stated, it is *the* task for an ethics which seeks to recognize all persons not only in the ideal case, but especially in our always troubled non-ideal world. Such an aim, then, would be suitable to an ethics of recognition.

1 By “normative ethics” I mean ethical philosophy in distinction from the concerns of metaethics, on the one hand, and practical ethics, on the other.

2 This point is amply supported for eudaemonists such as Plato and Aristotle, though one could see Richard Kraut’s defense of the priority of the good vis-à-vis contemporary challenges in *What is Good and Why: The Ethics of Well-Being* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 21-26 and 250-257. For the Confucian tradition’s approach to the good and its priority to the right, see *The Ethics of Confucius: Mirrors of Virtue* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 25-35. For the Aztec tradition of the good, see Sebastian Purcell, “*Eudaimonia* and *Neltiliztli*: Aristotle and the Aztecs on the Good Life,” *American Philosophical Association Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues* (2017): 10-21.

3 For an example of another such attempt by one of Paul Ricoeur’s former students, yet in the tradition of Latin American liberation philosophy, see Enrique Dussel’s extended ethical argument, especially as it appears in *Ética de la liberación en la edad de la globalización y da la exclusión* (Madrid: Trotta Press, 1998), *Política de la liberación, volume II: Arquitectónica* (Madrid: Trotta Press, 2009), and *16 Tesis de economía Política: Interpretación Filosófica* (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Press, 2014). For a case in English, see James L. Marsh’s *Critique, Action, and Liberation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), especially chapters 7-9. Notably, neither account addresses the opposed kinds thesis that motivates the present essay.

4 Paul Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1990), available in English translation by Kathleen Blamey as *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), hereafter abbreviated in the text as SMA with page numbers

first in the French original, followed by the English translation. Present quote SMA, 200-201/170.

⁵ It is Richard Kraut in *What is Good and Why*, who forwards the newer and more challenging version of the opposed kinds thesis that this essay uses. In that work, he uses it to motivate his defense for the Aristotelian option over the Kantian. This concern is rather different from, but not altogether related to, the difficulties of synthesis in Laurent Jaffro, “La conception ricœurienne de la raison pratique: Dialectique ou éclectique?,” *Études Ricoeuriennes (Ricoeur Studies)* 3 (2012): 156-171.

⁶ Less challenging versions of the thesis are accepted quite widely. Jürgen Habermas, for example, accepts a version of the opposed kinds thesis, and develops an extended argument against the eudaemonist position that Alasdair MacIntyre, in *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1981) and *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1990), Bernard Williams in *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), and (among others) Charles Taylor in *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989) defend in his essay “Lawrence Kohlberg and Neo-Aristotelianism,” *Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics*, trans. Ciaran P. Cronin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 113-132. John Rawls develops and defends the opposed kinds thesis on the orders of justification for the good and the right in *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971 [2nd. ed. 1999]) in sections 6, 18, and 52. From a historical vantage, one notes that the opposition of the right and the good is present in some form for the Anglophone tradition from David Hume forward. Likely, however, it is W. D. Ross’s account of the right and the good in chapters 1 and 3 of *The Right and The Good* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1930) that is the most relevant source of the specific form of the more challenging form of the opposed kinds thesis this essay addresses. Finally, it is notable that even authors sympathetic to Paul Ricoeur thought his response wanting, even when considering less challenging forms of the thesis, those which merely distinguish arguments from the good from arguments from the right without noting the logical role they play in justifying ethical assessments of right action. See, for example, James Marsh’s essay “The Right and the Good,” in *Ricoeur as Another: The Ethics of Subjectivity*, eds. Richard A. Cohen and James L. Marsh (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), 223-234. On this last point, not even a defense of Ricoeur’s position from the

weaker challenge has been developed in the existing scholarly literature. These points should suffice, then, to underscore the scholarly motivation for the present essay.

7 I am here using “incoherent” in a broad way so as to include any sort of logical fallacy, formal or informal. I do not mean to indicate that arguments of this sort are self-contradictory, which is what is sometimes intended by “incoherent.”

8 This is to say, it would offer little as a stand-alone ethical theory. Ricoeur’s ethical thought could itself remain fruitful on several other fronts. For example, Elizabeth Purcell’s proposal in “Narrative Ethics and Vulnerability: Kristeva and Ricoeur on Interdependence,” *The Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy* 21 (2013): 43-59, argues that Ricoeur’s narrative ethics opens the way to an interdependent sense of moral personhood would remain sound.

9 As an example of an original formulation, I have in mind Stephen Darwall’s *The Second Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect, and Accountability* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

10 SMA, 337/290.

11 This appears to be one of the significant developments in Ricoeur’s ethical thought over his previous articulations in his work on philosophical anthropology. For an account of the relationship between the stages of his ethical development, see Beatriz Contreras Tasso and Patricio Mena Malet’s “Le risque d’être soi-même Le consentement et l’affectivité comme fondements de l’éthique ricœurienne,” *Études Ricoeuriennes / Ricoeur Studies* 9 (2018): 11-28.

12 The explanation that follows differs in kind from the overview of his argument that Ricoeur provides in the preface to *Soi-même comme un autre*, section 3, entitled “Vers une herméneutique du soi.” His aim there is to provide an outline of the chapters that follow in response to four questions about the self: Who speaks? Who acts? Who narrates? Who is the subject of moral imputation? What follows is an account of the logical structure of the work in relation to the criteria for a narrative that Ricoeur lays out in chapter 3 of volume 1 of *Time and Narrative*. Ricoeur’s, then, is a plan in light of the grammatical features of subjectivity, and what is presented in the present section is a plan in light of the logical features of the argument needed to satisfy an account of narrativity. They are thus complementary rather than competing explanations of the purpose of the work.

13 In a conference talk, originally delivered on November 3rd, 1986, subsequently published as a chapter entitled “L’identité Narrative,” in *Anthropologie philosophique: Écrites et conférences* 3 (Paris: Seuil Press, 2013), Ricoeur begins by stating plainly the close connection between his project in *Time and Narrative* and

his conception of narrative identity, writing, “La présente étude reprend, au point où je l’ai laissé dans les dernières pages de *Temps et récit* 3, la question de l’identité narrative,” 355.

14 Paul Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1, L'intrigue et le récit historique* (Paris: Seuil Press, 1983), available in English translation as *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 18/3.

15 By a “moment” I mean a non-separable, but conceptually distinguishable part.

16 At the beginning of the *Poetics*, for example, when Aristotle is distinguishing the different species of poetry he writes that “*epei de mimountai hoi mimoumenoi prattontas / The objects the imitator represents are actions*” *Poetics*, trans. I. Bywater, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, vol. 2, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1448a1.

17 *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl and Sir Orfeo*, ed. Christopher Tolkien, trans. J. R. R. Tolkien (New York: Harper Collins, 2006), stanza 48, page 52.

18 *Time and Narrative*, 108-109/54.

19 A similar point could be made, of course, about Butch Coolidge and Marcellus Wallace’s relationship, though the matter is more complicated and so the present analysis prescind from addressing it.

20 *Time and Narrative*, 127-128/65-66.

21 *Time and Narrative*, 136/71.

22 *Time and Narrative*, 136-137/71.

23 SMA, 138/114.

24 SMA, 140/116.

25 SMA, 39/27.

26 SMA, 55-56/40.

27 SMA, 73-74/56-57.

28 While it is reasonably clear that Ricoeur’s argument satisfies the general idea contained in the three *mimēses*, in prefiguration, configuration, and refiguration, it is not clear that his arguments are even intended to satisfy the specific properties of each that he identifies in *Time and Narrative*. I do not see, for example, any attempt on Ricoeur’s part to show that the first three studies on act and action satisfy the individual moments of prefiguration, namely the structural, symbolic, and temporal moments, but I do not think that his argument turns on this level of granularity. In the earlier work, Ricoeur is specifically focused on narrative texts, while in the latter, he is looking only at acts, actions, practices, and persons. The categories developed for literal texts are not going to be appropriate for this latter domain. It is enough, I

think, that Ricoeur's argument shows that human actions have the central features of prefiguration, configuration, and refiguration, and it is a mistake to think that it should somehow satisfy more than these central notions.

29 SMA, 135/111.

30 SMA, 140-150/115-125,

31 SMA, 167-180/140-151.

32 SMA, 193-198/164-168.

33 Aristotle begins the eudemian ethics by disagreeing with the inscription on the Temple of Leto in Delos, which separated what is fine, what is best, and what is most pleasant. See Aristotle, *Ethica Eudemia*, eds. R. R. Walzer and J. M. Mignay (Oxford: Oxford Classical Texts, 1991), I.1,1214a1-1214a8.

34 Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachae*, ed. I. Bywater (Oxford: Oxford Classical Texts, 1894). I have used the *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Terence Irwin (Indianapolis: Hackett Press, 1999) for the English translations unless otherwise noted and in text citation will follow the established abbreviation: NE. Present quote NE I.1,1094a1-1094a3.

35 Aristotle does not appear in these opening lines, however, to complete the argument. For a line-by-line analysis, see C. D. C. Reeve, *Action, Contemplation, and Happiness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 227-234. For an account of the difference between Aristotle's performative conception of the highest good, and a modern conception of the highest good that John Stuart Mill defends, see Sebastian Purcell "Natural Goodness and the Normativity Challenge: Happiness Across Cultures," in the *American Philosophical Association Quarterly*, 87 (2013): 183-194.

36 "ta men gar eisin energiai, ta de par' autas erga tina," NE, I.1, 1094a2-1094a3.

37 John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ed. George Sher (Indianapolis: Hackett Press 2001), 2.

38 SMA, 203/172-173.

39 For a fuller account of Aristotle's method see Johnathan Barnes "Aristotle and the Methods of Ethics," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 37 (1980): 490-511, and Richard Kraut "How to Justify Ethical Propositions: Aristotle's Method" in *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. Richard Kraut (New York: Blackwell Press, 2006), 76-95. Present quote NE, VII.1,1145b2-1145b7.

40 Aristotle does not appear to offer, in short, a foundationalist account of ethics that rests on the purportedly natural properties of human beings in the way that Phillipa Foot defends in *Natural Goodness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). His approach is rather closer to the best account argument that Charles Taylor develops in *Sources of the Self*, chapter 4. Present quote NE, I.7.

41 *After Virtue*, 183.

42 *After Virtue*, 185.

43 *After Virtue*, 187.

44 SMA, 209.

45 See especially chapters 6 and 7 of his *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*.

46 What follows to some degree diverges from some more Aristotelian appropriations of Ricoeur's ethical philosophy. For example, I have in mind George H. Taylor's analysis in "Ricoeur versus Ricoeur? Between the Universal and the Contextual," in *From Ricoeur to Action: The Socio-Political Significance of Ricoeur's Thinking*, eds. Todd S. Mei and David Lewin (New York: Continuum Press, 2012), 136-154. It may be possible to develop Ricoeur's thought in the more Aristotelian direction, but the comments which follow, Ricoeur's own, set up at least one significant obstacle for that direction of thought.

47 I have in mind Charles Taylor's arguments in the first part, and especially chapter four concerning strongly valued goods, of *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

48 SMA 298/256.

49 I am expanding the argument to include MacIntyre's and Taylor's various different elaborations, since, for the present argument, it is their commonalities that are the critical point of contention.

50 On this point see Kant's statement in the *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. James W. Ellington (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1993), II: 421/30. Hereafter abbreviated Gr followed by section number, pages numbers from the *Königlich Preßische Akademie de Wissenschaften* edition of Kant's work, then those of the English translation. See John Rawls' review of the relation of the three formulations and their many statements in *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 181-199.

51 The presentation of Kant's categorical imperative procedure that follows is most directly informed by Rawls' account in *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*, 164-170. Given the purpose of the present essay, it simplifies the process a little for the sake of clarity. The account is additionally informed by Onora O'Neill's account in *Acting on Principle* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), Paul Deitrichson, "When is a Maxim Universalizable?" *Kantstudien* (1964), and Thomas Pogge, "The Categorical Imperative," in *Grundlegung zur Metaphysick der Sitten: Ein Kooperativer Kommentar*, ed. Ofried Höffe (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klosterman, 1989).

52 Gr, II: 412-414/23-25.

53 Gr, II: 421/30.

54 Gr, II: 422-423/30-32.

55 Kant's preferred example, of course, is breaking a promise (Gr, II: 422/31).

56 This is why Kant states that we cannot will the adjusted world with a maxim of indifference (Gr, II: 423/32).

57 SMA, 245-46/210.

58 SMA, 242/208.

59 Ricoeur does not in fact use this formula, but his argument is consistent with it. I am here nearly quoting Rosalind Hursthouse's formulation in *On Virtue Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 30. Notably her work was written after Ricoeur's *Oneself as Another*, and so would not have been available for him to consult. The formulation is, however, standard for the field of virtue ethics and so a reformulation of Ricoeur's point in terms of the present field's discussion looks to be necessary if his work is to remain current, and not merely of historical interest. I can also find no reason why he would oppose this reformulation.

60 This is how the analysis understands Ricoeur's capital statement about the relation of the Aristotelian and Kantian ethical theories: "I propose to establish, without concerning myself about Aristotelian or Kantian orthodoxy . . . (1) the primacy of ethics over morality, (2) the necessity for the ethical aim to pass through the sieve of the norm, and (3) the legitimacy of recourse by the norm to the aim whenever the norm leads to impasse in practice," SMA 200-1/170.

61 The dedication to his son Olivier, for example, makes clear that Ricoeur does not think suicide to be morally problematic in the way that Kant does.

62 James Marsh, "The Right and the Good," 232.

63 James Marsh, "The Right and the Good," 232.

64 An ethics of recognition may have several different senses, even as developed from Ricoeur's work. For a different approach to the topic, see Michael Sohn's *The Good of Recognition: Phenomenology, Ethics and Religion in the Thought of Lévinas and Ricoeur* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014).

65 Cf. Emmanuel Lévinas, "Le Même et l'Autre ne sauraient entrer dans une connaissance qui les embrasserait," *Totalité et infini: Essai sur l'extériorité* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 79.

66 See Jürgen Habermas' essay "Discourse Ethics: Notes on a Program of Philosophical Justification," in *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholsen (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 43-115.

67 In one of Ricoeur's earliest essays that became source material for *Soi-même comme un autre*, delivered in October of 1985 and titled "Individu et identité personnelle" (now included in the collection *Anthropologie Philosophique*), one reads the following: "Je voudrais souligner, dans les minutes qui me restent, les aspects éthiques du soi. Je serai bref, dans la mesure où mon analyse conduit au seuil des travaux d'Emmanuel Levinas," 350. Patrick Bourgeois, more recently, outlines at least one way that Ricoeur improves on Lévinas' work in "Ricoeur Between Levinas and Heidegger: Another's Further Alterity," *The Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy* 11 (1999): 32-51.

68 On this point especially, see Martin Heidegger's argument in §§10-13 of *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*, trans. Theodore Kisiel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

69 This is of course a simplification, but it indicates the trajectory of argument of sections I-III of Levinas's *Totalité et infini*.

70 This is especially Ricoeur's point in essays one and ten of *Le conflit des interprétations: Essais d'hérméneutique* (Paris: Seuil Press, 1969) available in English translation as *The Conflict of Interpretations*, ed. Don Ihde (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974). For a scholarly review of the criticism, see Sebastian Purcell's "Hermeneutics and Truth: From *Alēthia* to Attestation," *Études Ricoeuriennes/Ricoeur Studies* 4 (2013): 140-158. Ricoeur continued to hold this position, and I think he was right to do so, until the very end. In *Parcours de la reconnaissance: Trois études* (Paris: Gallimard, 2004) available in English translation as *The Course of Recognition*, trans. David Pellauer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), Ricoeur makes the following point: "Mais ce ne sera pas au prix d'un court-circuit entre le plan lexical et celui du discours philosophique. . . . Il m'a paru que le changement du statut langier du lexique à la critique exigeait le détour par quelques concepts fondateurs susceptibles d'instruer la rupture entre niveaux de discours," 48/24.

71 *The Course of Recognition*, 246/154.