

THE PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN MACMURRAY

The Moral, Social, and Political Philosophy of the British idealists.

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John Macmurray (1891-1976) was described recently as the best kept secret of twentieth-century British philosophy (Macmurray 1992: vii). There are, however, signs that he will not long remain so. Among scholars, his work has received growing attention as positivism has lost its dominant position and idealism has begun to receive its historical due. At least three of Macmurray's books have been reissued with new scholarly introductions in the 1990s.¹ In addition, Macmurray has come to public attention as a major philosophical influence on Tony Blair, the Prime Minister of Britain. Blair became a socialist while studying at St John's College, Oxford, after being introduced to Macmurray's work by Peter Thompson, an Australian priest, with whom he went on a pilgrimage to meet the philosopher. Our aim is to introduce Macmurray's political philosophy and to locate it within a tradition of progressive social idealism. This tradition passes from earlier idealists such as T. H. Green through Macmurray and on to contemporary ethical socialists like Blair and communitarians like Michael Walzer, Charles Taylor and Michael Sandel.

AN IDEALIST INHERITANCE

Macmurray was born in Kirkcudbrightshire, Scotland, and brought up in Aberdeen by his middle-class, Calvinist parents. He entered Glasgow University in 1909 to study classics. While there, he became active in the Student Christian Movement: he was a delegate at a

conference in Edinburgh on Mission alongside Charles Gore and William Temple, two leading Christian socialists who had been influenced by Green and other idealists, such as Edward Caird, while studying at Balliol College, Oxford. Balliol was, of course, the birthplace and stronghold of British idealism: Green was a Fellow of the College, Caird became its master, and numerous other idealists, including Henry Scott Holland and Gore, the founders of the Christian Social Union, studied and taught there. In 1913, Macmurray himself went on to Balliol to study philosophy.

Macmurray's studies were interrupted by World War One, during which he served in the Medical Corps and later the Cameron Highlanders: he fought at the Somme, was wounded at Arras, and received the Military Cross for Valour. The experience of war marked a watershed, setting him apart in some respects from earlier idealists. Most of the idealists had been optimists who believed in the rational progressive evolution of contemporary society. Macmurray, in contrast, seems to have become radically disillusioned with the status quo and so to have looked for a more decisive break with the past. "We went into war in a blaze of idealism," he said, but "by the end of the war we soldiers had largely lost faith in the society we had been fighting for" (Macmurray 1965: 18-19). This loss of faith surely helps to explain the appeal of communism to him.

When the war ended, Macmurray went back to Balliol to finish his studies. He completed an M.A. in Greats, during which he would read the work of idealists and realists on alternate days in order to identify points of convergence. Macmurray then began teaching at Manchester University, and spent two years at Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg, South Africa, before returning to Balliol as Fellow and Tutor in Philosophy. He was appointed to the Grote Chair in the Philosophy of Mind and Logic at London University in 1928, before becoming

Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh in 1944, a post he held until he retired in 1958. Thereafter he lived in a Quaker community at Jordans in Buckinghamshire.

THE SELF AND FREEDOM

As a philosopher, Macmurray sought to defend a vision of freedom in community. He did so on the basis of the idealism that had captivated him at Balliol, an idealism that for him, as for so many of his predecessors, coalesced with a range of religious concerns. This idealism entailed, for Macmurray, a critique of an individualism that he believed dominated modern western philosophy. Descartes' cogito - "I think therefore I am" - is too egocentric and too theoretical. Macmurray denounces Descartes for depicting the Subject as an egocentric self isolated from the Object understood as a world composed of others and nature. In modern philosophy, the self appears first of all in a private realm, set apart from its dynamic relations with others in the world. Interpersonal relations thus arise out of the activity of already formed individuals. In modern philosophy, "there are many 'I's; but there is no 'You'" (Macmurray 1995b: 23). Macmurray, in contrast, defends a thick concept of the self as embedded in interpersonal relations: "the Self is constituted by its relation to the Other" - "it has its being in its relationship" (Macmurray 1995b: 17). This dependence upon others appears most forcefully in the relationship of the child to the mother. The child cannot provide for itself, but rather depends upon the mother. Such dependence, "the mother-child relation", represents "the basic form of human existence," that is, "a 'You and I' with a common life" (Macmurray 1995b: 60). Idealism thus breaks down the dichotomy between subject and object found in Descartes. It replaces the atomistic "I" with the relational "You and I". It is inherently communal.

Macmurray also denounces Descartes for an excessive focus on thinking. In modern philosophy, the self appears first of all in a contemplative realm, withdrawing from action to attain certain knowledge of itself and thus the world. Macmurray, in contrast, privileges action over thought. Action is the fullest expression of our human nature because it involves both mind and body whereas thought involves mind alone. Thought is "less complete" in that it "is constituted by the exclusion of some of our powers" (Macmurray 1995a: 86). The conceptual priority of action over thought appears in the fact that the verb "I think" presupposes the more general one "I do" - thinking is a subset of acting. Thus, the question "what are you doing?" might be answered by a description of various modes of action including not only "I am thinking" but also "I am writing" and "I am playing" (Macmurray 1995a: 89). Our capacity for thought is secondary to our capacity for agency. Idealism thus overturns the intellectualism found in Descartes.

All the definitions of freedom found in Macmurray's writings reflect his concern with community and action. Freedom appears as spontaneous action in the absence of constraint. People are free to do something: "freedom is simply our capacity to act . . . to form an intention and seek to realise it"; "freedom is the ability to carry out chosen purposes, to do what we please"; "to be free . . . is to express one's own nature in action" (Macmurray 1949: 16, 20; 1944: 170). For Macmurray, our capacity for agency means that our choices, intentions, and actions, are undetermined in a way that is not true of other objects and beings. The behaviour of any inanimate object is always determined by something other than itself: a chair moves across a room because a person pushes it. Similarly, the behaviour of animals is always determined by their needs and external stimuli. Although the role of needs here allows us to describe animal behaviour as purposive, animals still do not consciously form the relevant purposes for themselves. Only humans can act in an entirely undetermined manner,

that is, in the light of goals and intentions which they decide upon for themselves. The defining characteristic of human beings is, therefore, an "absolute freedom" (Macmurray 1949: 16). The human capacity for absolute freedom is, however, necessarily expressed in the context of community, so our absolute freedom is also inherently relative. Our freedom depends on the current condition of humanity as a whole.

The extent of freedom consists, for Macmurray, in the number of actions people want to perform that they are able to perform. It depends, therefore, upon the existence of appropriate social conditions. The extent of freedom is relative, in particular, to material resources, the control of desire, and our relations with others. For a start, a scarcity of material resources leads to antagonistic relations with others and so conflict, dominion, and inequality.

Conditions of scarcity can encourage the individual to attempt to maximise his own resources at the expense of others. In doing so, the individual limits the resources available to the others to secure their survival and freedom. Yet because the individual necessarily exists in relation to these others, limitations upon their freedom are also restrictions upon him or her.

Conditions of plenty, in contrast, encourage individuals to look beyond themselves to the care of the other-than-self. By thus foregoing the illusion of selfishness for the reality of selflessness, the individual helps to establish the fellowship that is the principle condition of absolute freedom. In addition, freedom depends upon one having the capacity to fulfil one's desires. Conditions of plenty obviously increase human capacity and thereby enlarge the field of possible actions. Yet Macmurray points to a tendency for "desires" to "grow faster than the power to satisfy them" (Macmurray 1949: 22). Increased plenty can lead merely to a proliferation of desires. The selfless control of desire thus represents a further condition of freedom. When individuals let go of a desire, such as that to climb Mount Everest, they thereby prevent their individual or social inability to perform the corresponding action from

constituting a restriction on their freedom. For Macmurray, "humility is the hand-maid of freedom": "self-control" is essential "if freedom is to be increased or even maintained" (Macmurray 1949: 23, 24). Finally, the importance of humility and the care of the other-than-self point to the central role of fellowship. Because human existence consists fundamentally of a 'You and I', we can attain true freedom only in a fellowship based on moral equality. "Human freedom can be realised only as the freedom of individuals in relation; and the freedom of each of us is relative to that of the others" (Macmurray 1949: 24).

The realisation of absolute freedom, or perhaps we should say the fuller realisation of absolute freedom, depends on our exercising our capacity for agency so as to establish the relevant conditions for such freedom. The relevant conditions consist in particular of material plenty, self-control, and fellowship, all of which reflect the importance of entering into certain types of relations with others. Macmurray argues that fellowship can exist only when our relations with others are personal. In an impersonal relationship, the dichotomy between subject and object reappears with the 'I' approaching the 'You' as an entirely separate being. Impersonal relations have an egocentric quality in that the self is the centre of reference. Personal relations, in contrast, are heterocentric in nature with the other being the centre of reference. They are selfless rather than selfish. Although Macmurray remains somewhat vague about the precise nature of personal relations, Louis Roy usefully highlights what seem to be their four main characteristics. In personal relations, the individual: first, is directly acquainted with the other; second, does not see the other as an object; third, respects the other as free and equal; and fourth, does not treat the other as an object (Roy 1989: 352).

Macmurray also remains somewhat vague about whether such characteristics are necessary, sufficient, or merely typical of personal relations. Roy rightly observes, for example, that we

can treat others as free and equal agents, and as part of our own being, even if we are not directly acquainted with them (Roy 1989: 353). We also might ask whether all of these characteristics are of equal significance. Passages in Macmurray's writings certainly suggest that it is more important to overcome the dichotomy between subject and object than to be directly acquainted with the other. He argues, for example, that personal relations can be established in the absence of direct contact if people are treated as free and equal before the law.

Macmurray fills out the distinction between personal and impersonal relations using the example of a psychology teacher and a student who also are friends. The two meet and begin to talk as friends in a way which makes the relationship a personal one. Later the teacher comes to regard the student as psychologically abnormal, and so, without outwardly altering his manner, he begins to analyse the student from the perspective of a professional psychologist. Once the teacher thus approaches the student as an object of study, he no longer regards the student as being in equal co-relations with him so the relationship becomes an impersonal one. This example suggests that personal and impersonal relations are not mutually exclusive, but rather form a bipolar unity. Perhaps there is no time at which the relationship is either wholly personal or wholly impersonal. Rather, the teacher is always both a personal friend and an impersonal psychologist. What happens is that at different times one or other role comes to the fore.

The distinction between personal and impersonal relations corresponds closely in Macmurray's work to that between love and fear. In positive personal relations, the dominant motive is love. In negative impersonal relations, the dominant motive is fear. According to Macmurray, fear undermines freedom by inhibiting action: "so long as there is fear, we cannot act freely"

(Macmurray 1949: 173). Fear undermines relations and so isolates the 'I' from the 'You'; thus, because the 'I' needs the 'You' to affirm its existence and make freedom possible, fear precludes true freedom. The motive of fear can be either aggressive or appeasive. When it is aggressive, individuals oppose, and sometimes even dominate, the object of the fear. They attempt to subordinate the object thereby creating a master-slave relationship that is incompatible with freedom. An example of a society based on an aggressive form of fear would be that described by Hobbes: he depicts individuals setting up a sovereign power the fear of which secures social order. When the fear motive is appeasive, individuals withdraw into themselves thereby becoming isolated from the dynamic relations within the world through which alone they can attain freedom. An example of a society based on an appeasive form of fear would be that described by Rousseau: he depicts individuals identifying their private interests with a general interest the voluntary observance of which secures social order (Macmurray 1995: 136-46).

The motive of love arises out of the human capacity for self-transcendence and leads to a fellowship based on care of the other-than-self. When we love, we live in the world, not for ourselves; we locate the reference of our activity beyond the self in others. Whereas fear is of the other for oneself, love is for the other. To let love dominate is, therefore, to give expression to the inherently social nature of our being. Nonetheless, Macmurray allows that while love should dominate, it should not totally displace fear. Once again, we have a bipolar unity, not mutually exclusive terms. A limited and responsible fear helps to sustain a suitable self-control and sense of caution in life. It encourages individuals to reflect on the likely consequences of their actions rather than rushing into things.

Macmurray's bipolar unities set up a context within which individuals choose how to act. Either they can let the motive of love dominate and relate to the other personally or they can let the motive of fear dominate and relate to the other impersonally. Every time people act, they make such a choice and so at least implicitly a further choice between right and wrong. Macmurray thus identifies three types of morality corresponding to the nature of the motive informing one's actions. Where aggressive fear is the dominant motive, we get a pragmatic morality. Pragmatism is a negative mode of morality in that the self constitutes the centre of reference for the good act. Moral actions subordinate others to the will of the self: individuals realise themselves through dominating others. When appeasive fear is the dominant motive, we get a contemplative morality. Contemplation too is a negative mode of morality in that the self is its centre of reference. Moral actions entail a withdrawal from personal relations: individuals realise themselves in an isolated realm of thought rather than through fellowship. When love is the dominant motive, we get a communal morality. Communitarianism is the positive mode of morality in that the other constitutes the centre of reference for the good act. It is heterocentric, not egocentric. Moral actions are those done for the sake of the other: individuals realise themselves through a fellowship based on personal relations with others.

Every action embodies a motive and thus a moral choice. "Since action is choice, the distinction between 'right' and 'wrong' is inherent in the nature of action"; indeed, for Macmurray, "to act is to be active in terms of a distinction between right and wrong" (Macmurray 1995b: 112-13). Morality consists here in our ideas about the nature of good and evil actions, that is, about which actions will realise our human nature. According to Macmurray, of course, our human nature is one of absolute freedom. It is for this reason that he argues that we should judge moralities by how they impinge upon freedom, rather than judge freedom in the context of a broader moral framework. He believes that we can speak of

a false morality but not of a false freedom. According to Macmurray, moreover, fellowship is the primary condition of freedom. He tells us that because fellowship is the condition of freedom, fellowship is the essence of morality, and so the condition of freedom is also the essence of morality. The "absolute . . . criterion of morality" is found in the fact that "my freedom depends upon how you behave" (Macmurray 1995b: 119). Once again we might treat Macmurray's pragmatic, contemplative, and communal moralities less as mutually exclusive ones than as different points along a spectrum. Just as fear has a role to play in underpinning a suitable caution, so pragmatic and contemplative moralities are not to be totally shunned. Nonetheless, we should adopt a predominately communal morality because it alone recognises that our human nature is one of freedom in fellowship.

JUSTICE AND LOVE

Freedom consists in realising an intention. Freedom also presupposes fellowship with others. What happens, then, when the self has intentions that conflict with those of others? Clearly absolute freedom for all requires that all intentions should be compatible with one another. Yet no matter how much we increase our collective resources and capacities, there would remain the possibility of a conflict of intentions. Macmurray identifies two possible outcomes when intentions conflict. In the first, an individual yields to another thereby failing to realise his or her intention and so freedom. In the second, both individuals prevent the other from acting to realise their intentions and so freedom. The only way to attain freedom for all, therefore, is to prevent intentions conflicting by adopting a suitable form of association. Each individual must act to avoid infringing another's freedom. Such an association might consist of both a just arrangement to secure the freedom of others and a religious concern to limit that for which one strives. Justice places the individual under impersonal, external rules. Religion

provides individuals with a personal, internal conviction that fellowship with others is the way to secure their own freedom.

Justice is the lower limit or negative aspect of our moral relations with others. It establishes the extent to which each individual can realise what initially are incompatible intentions.

Justice moderates the individual's intentions and freedom by reference to an external idea of what is fair to all parties. As Macmurray explains, "to intend justice is to intend that my own claim shall not take precedence over the claims of others" (Macmurray 1995b: 201). When a community is characterised by direct and co-operative relations, the individuals involved agree readily about what is fair and so consent readily to principles of justice. Complications arise, however, if people do not trust one another to honour these principles. In the absence of such trust, social order requires an authority that possesses the power to impose sanctions upon anyone who breaks the consensual agreement. The state, conceived as this authority, thus represents the institutional expression of a politics designed to secure freedom through justice. In large associations, the relations between individuals are typically indirect, so the state has to maintain justice through the law. The law seeks to adjust relations between individuals so that their actions do not unfairly infringe each other's freedom. The law aims at "the minimum interference with the practical freedom of the individual which is necessary to keep the peace" (Macmurray 1995b: 194). In doing so, moreover, the law helps to bring a personal dimension to otherwise impersonal relations. Under the law, individuals treat one another as free and equal in the way that is characteristic of personal relations.

Macmurray argues that religion provides a more positive way of promoting moral relations with others than does justice. Although religion and justice are in no way mutually exclusive, our emphasis should fall on the former because the inner control of desire enables us to

promote fellowship to a greater extent than does politics. What matters here is religious faith, not religious belief. Macmurray defines religious belief in terms of a "credal affirmation" of theological doctrines that he associates with organised religions. The emphasis that organised religions place on adherence to particular doctrines typically makes them authoritarian, moralising, and self-protective in a way which has little to do with freedom in fellowship. Religious faith, in contrast, denotes a psychological attitude of confidence and trust in our relations with others. Macmurray identifies this concept of religious faith with Jesus' teachings. Jesus drew a strong contrast between faith and fear, suggesting that "to have faith means not be frightened," which, Macmurray adds, implies that "faith must mean something like courage or confidence or trust" (cited in Duncan 1990: 125). Faith should not be attached to a particular object, creed, or dogma. Rather, it should be understood as a positive stance towards others. To live in fear is to mistrust others and so to withdraw from the world of dynamic relations. Fear inhibits action and so freedom. To live in faith, in contrast, is to trust others and so embrace the world and freedom.

Clearly Macmurray's distinction between religious faith and religious belief parallels his elevation of action over thought. Religious belief is a theoretical or theological matter that can entail a withdrawal from action into a private realm of contemplation. Religious faith, in contrast, is an active or interpersonal matter that promotes trust, love, and fellowship. Faith promotes a community in which people moderate their own desires so as to live in relation to others.

For Macmurray, "the relation of religion to the sense of community is the most important characteristic of religion" (Macmurray 1935b: 36). Religion is an activity that celebrates and sustains fellowship. Just as astronomy is not celestial motion but an expression of an

understanding of such motion, so religion is not personal relations but an expression of an understanding of personal relations. As Macmurray explains, "a religious group is a communion, and its ritual and doctrine express the community of its members" (Macmurray 1935b: 32). Religious practices, such as shared meals, dancing and singing together, or playing games, express the unity of the people who perform them. Communion symbolises the presence of a shared form of life. It celebrates the inherently social nature of our being. Religious activity thus promotes the common understanding, values, and activities that are central to any fellowship. Yet Macmurray's communitarianism is a cosmopolitan one. Thus, he argues that only a universal belief in one God can sustain an appropriately universal fellowship. Religious practices in primitive tribes express a shared life, but because each tribe has its own religion, the result is a plethora of practices, each of which demarcates a limit to commonality. The religious practice of each tribe celebrates an exclusive membership rather than an inclusive fellowship covering the whole of humanity. A universal fellowship would require a universal religion celebrating what all people have in common: "the assertion that there is only one God is the assertion that there is only one community of mankind" (Macmurray 1935b: 34). Only a universal religion could express our intention to maintain a cosmopolitan fellowship.

Justice and religion provide respectively external and internal bases of fellowship. They prompt individuals to moderate their desires and intentions so as to make them compatible with those of others. Macmurray remains somewhat vague, however, about the exact nature of such fellowship. Sometimes he describes a mature friendship between two people as the fullest expression of fellowship. Just as he sees personal relations primarily in terms of a 'You and I' rather than a more plural 'we', so he equates the purest form of fellowship with just two people. Yet he also identifies the family as an exemplary, if slightly weaker, expression of

fellowship since family relations are usually characterised by the dominance of mutual affection over egocentricism. At other times Macmurray defines fellowship more abstractly in terms of freedom and moral equality. His invocation of freedom can appear to be rather circular, with fellowship existing as freedom and freedom existing in fellowship. Clearly, however, the appeal to freedom demands that fellowship should be voluntary and consist in the realisation of our human nature. The appeal to moral equality requires not only a formal equality but also that individuals transcend themselves and live for others. Perhaps we should conceive of Macmurray's concept of fellowship as a regulative ideal based on an analysis of the nature of the self. After all, as Roy argues, even the most mature couple would scarcely claim to share or express the whole of themselves through each other (Roy 1989: 353). Fellowship might constitute an absolute freedom in which all fully realised themselves, but in practice such freedom always would be relative to things such as material resources, our ability to control our desires, and the extent of trust among us.

Macmurray's purpose is to promote a community based on fellowship in place of current societies based on individualism. Whereas community provides a setting for freedom, to live in society is to have no real freedom. Almost every aspect of Macmurray's thought serves to sharpen this distinction between community and society. Consider first his repudiation of modern philosophy. Society is egocentric and theoretical. It consists of isolated and withdrawn individuals who see themselves as existing prior to interpersonal interactions. Community, in contrast, is heterocentric and active. It consists of interdependent individuals existing in and through dynamic interactions with others. Consider next his distinction between personal and impersonal relations. Society is characterised by impersonal relations in which individuals regard one another as objects. People seek to dominate one another so as to attain their own selfish ends. Community, in contrast, is characterised by personal relations in

which individuals act with the other as their centre of reference. People respect each other as free and equal friends. Consider now Macmurray's categorisation of motives. Society is driven by aggressive and appeasive fear. The dominant moralities within it are pragmatic and contemplative ones. Community, in contrast, is driven by love, and so instantiates a positive, communal morality. Consider finally his account of the role of justice and religion. Because society is an association based on an external unity, it has to depend primarily, perhaps even exclusively, on justice to deal with incompatible intentions. A misguided focus on the isolated individual entails a reliance upon political arrangements capable of imposing a unity or common purpose on people. At best society can consist of people accepting just laws, and moderating their behaviour accordingly, in order to live peacefully together. In contrast, because community is an association based on an internal unity, it can rely heavily on religion to deal with incompatible intentions. A recognition of our independence leads to our living for one another and so exercising a voluntary self-control in order to enhance our common life. Community consists of people united by dynamic personal relations based on love and trust.

If we should conceive of fellowship as a regulative ideal, perhaps we should treat community and society not as mutually exclusive ideals but as the two poles of a continuous spectrum. In practice all human associations have aspects of both within them. What concerns Macmurray is that contemporary associations are far too like a pure society and insufficiently close to his ideal of a community. We need not necessarily abandon all features of society - thought, indirect relations, caution, and political institutions designed to secure justice. But we do badly need to promote much greater levels of community; we badly need more co-operative activity, personal contact, friendship, and a civic ethos or religion that celebrates and promotes our shared humanity.

Macmurray goes some way towards equating his vision of community with communism. In brief, he extols communism as a form of fellowship whilst trying to spiritualise it. Macmurray identifies communism with Jesus's idea of a universal community based on our shared humanity rather than the specific ties of nationality or an organised religion. Both communism and the kingdom of heaven embody "the universal community of mankind based on the sense of unity between man and man, and expressing itself in the sharing of the means of life to meet human needs" (Macmurray 1935b: 67). In addition, Macmurray suggests that communism expresses a psychological attitude akin to his idea of living by faith. The communist faith consists of a belief in a historical process whose purpose is to establish a universal fellowship based on freedom and equality. This faith need not be a mere affirmation of a creed; it can be an ideal illuminating every aspect of the individual's life. Finally, Macmurray praises the communist focus on action rather than thought. Communism is a realistic faith that addresses actual human relations as they currently are. Nonetheless, because communism remains tied to atheism, it cannot promote that universal belief in one God which alone can sustain a cosmopolitan fellowship. The absence of such a spiritual element within communism appears in its excessive emphasis on the economic. Communism seeks to establish fellowship almost solely through a reorganisation of the economy. But suitable economic relations can exist, Macmurray argues, only where there is love. Whereas communism "rests upon the [fear]-motives to the exclusion of the love-motives," (Macmurray 1935b: 117) fellowship can arise only when love leads people to control their desires. Perhaps we might even say that whereas communism seeks to establish an external unity through a just state, the kingdom of heaven would constitute an internal unity based on religion.

CONCLUSION

We have attempted to introduce Macmurray's philosophy as a strand of progressive social idealism. Macmurray developed his idealism to defend the ideal of a community of fellows. He used idealism to defend themes that already were well developed by idealists such as Green, including a thick view of the self, a concern with personal relations, and a positive concept of freedom defined in relation to others. Other themes are more particular to Macmurray, including the appeal to friendship and love, the stark contrast between society and community, and the explicit demand for a religious or civic ethos to transcend the limits of justice.

Macmurray occupies a central place in the tradition of political theory we have described as progressive social idealism. Whilst Hegel has acted as a consistent point of reference for this tradition, more historical research needs to be done to uncover the personal and intellectual connections that have sustained it through the twentieth century. Like all traditions, moreover, progressive social idealism has undergone continuous historical development. Today its leading exponents are communitarian philosophers and ethical socialists. The ideal of a community of fellows provides a motif running through both of these strands of thought. Communitarians, like Walzer, Taylor, and Sandel, grapple with the implications of living in secular, multicultural societies for the ideal of a community of fellows. Ethical socialists like Blair, for whom the move towards a community of fellows has been associated with the development of social democracy and the welfare state, grapple with problems posed to these by things such as inflation and a perceived underclass. These two sets of theorists are attempting to apply and to develop the tradition of social idealism in the context of contemporary social problems. The extent to which they succeed in doing so will do much to determine the future viability of the tradition.

NOTES

1. Reason and Emotion, (1935; reissue with an introduction by John E. Costello, New Jersey and London: Humanities Press International, 1992), The Self as Agent, Vol. 1 of The Form of the Personal, (1957; reissue with an introduction by Stanley M. Harrison, London: Faber, 1995), Persons in Relation, Vol. 2 of The Form of the Personal, (1961; reissue with an introduction by Frank G. Kirkpatrick, London: Faber, 1995).

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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