

## *Yves R. Simon on the Nature and Role of Moral Philosophy*

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In the latter stage of modern philosophy in the nineteenth century, leading thinkers stated their intention to overcome an objectionable antinomy by somehow combining theory and practice. Hegel remained a notable exception to this trend when he insisted that the philosophic science of right, and the state, was theoretical. Once those who argued, in opposition, that the task of philosophers was to change, not merely interpret the world, it was the theory of practice that was paramount. Of course, there were those who simply would do away with theory altogether and adopt a kind of practicalism, but usually, as with the utilitarians and positivists, some kind of theory was still required even if the main direction was practical.

More recently, John Dewey, set out to overcome any dichotomy between theory and practice, knowing and doing, having discarded the idea of a purely theoretical philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Richard Rorty's version of pragmatism, free of Dewey's scientism, simply embraces localized practice.<sup>2</sup> At least one well-known proponent of the Analytic school has accepted the division of theoretical and practical knowledge, but then proceeds to deal with ethical concepts in a completely theoretical fashion.<sup>3</sup> Parallel in many respects to Dewey, Habermas—searching for the tasks remaining to philosophical thought “after the breakdown of metaphysics”—maintained, “The future of philosophical thought is a matter of political practice.”<sup>4</sup> So the tendency apparent in a num-

<sup>1</sup> The best source for Dewey's views on this topic is *The Quest for Certainty: A Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Action* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1960).

<sup>2</sup> Richard Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth; Philosophical Papers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), vol. I, pp. 29-30.

<sup>3</sup> P. H. Nowell-Smith, *Ethics* (London: Penguin Books, 1954).

<sup>4</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *Philosophical-Political Profiles*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1985) pp. 12, 17. Cf. what Habermas says about “a theoretically guided praxis of life” in *Theory and Practice* trans. John Vietrel (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973) p. 253.

ber of philosophers, and John Rawls could be added to the list, has been to reject theoretical philosophy, while retaining an interest in theory as implicated in practice.

The aim of this essay is to examine Yves R. Simon's reflections on the nature and role of moral philosophy beginning with *Critique de la connaissance morale* (1934), hereafter referred to as *A Critique of Moral Knowledge*,<sup>5</sup> or simply *Critique*, and extending right to the end of his days. The primary problem in moral philosophy, as he saw it, concerned the identification of moral philosophy as practical knowledge. Any reader of Simon is aware that he situated himself within the lineage of Aristotle, Aquinas, John Poinsett (John of St. Thomas), and Jacques Maritain. Indeed his first study of moral knowledge may be fittingly described as an elaboration of the germinal appendix in the *Degrees of Knowledge*.<sup>6</sup> But as a student of French sociology, he was influenced as well by the writings of Emile Durkheim and Lucien Lévy-Bruhl and their project of a science of morals, a social theory whose counterpart would be a moral art (applied morality)<sup>7</sup> Even if he rejected their solution, he recognized that there was a real problem and much was to be learned from them.

On the other hand, John Poinsett in his *Ars Logica*<sup>8</sup> had taken moral philosophy to be a purely theoretical inquiry, not basically different from the philosophy of nature or that part of it that dealt with human psychology. Simon's dissent from this position is probably his most notable criticism of Poinsett, who had such an impact on him.

The upshot of both the sociological school and the Thomistic commentator is either that moral philosophy disappears as moral science achieves maturity, or that moral philosophy is not practical knowledge. In the former case, Simon concedes that moral philosophy needs knowledge of social facts. But the central question is whether sociology "is capable of being consti-

<sup>5</sup> Yves R. Simon, *Critique de la connaissance morale* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1934). See the forthcoming English translation entitled *A Critique of Moral Knowledge*, trans. Ralph McInerny (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002).

<sup>6</sup> Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. Gerald B. Phelan (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), Appendix vii, pp. 481-89.

<sup>7</sup> For a valuable collection of Durkheim's writings on morals, accompanied by an introductory essay and useful notes, see W.S.F. Pickering (ed.), *Durkheim: Essays on Morals and Education* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979). Since Durkheim never completed his projected *La Morale*, his follower's treatise remains the most systematic account of a Durkheimian moral theory. Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, *La Morale et la science des moeurs*, 15<sup>th</sup> ed. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1953).

<sup>8</sup> John of Saint Thomas [John Poinsett], *Ars Logica, Cursus Philosophicus*, vol. I, ed. Beatus Reiser (Turin: Marietti, 1933).

tuted without the illumination of principles formulated by the practical science of human action,” that is, moral philosophy.<sup>9</sup> He concludes that the project is impossible because of the very nature of its object. To abstract from what are moral matters would involve falsification of that object, for “in moral matters there are no judgments of reality without value judgments.”<sup>10</sup> The presumed independence of sociology is denied; its attachment to moral philosophy affirmed.

No doubt Simon, when he examined what John Poinset had to say about moral science in his “incomparable” *Ars Logica* was surprised to find that the commentator, “celebrated for his customary fidelity to the teachings of Aristotle and Saint Thomas”,<sup>11</sup> had, in fact, set out a position that seems not to square with the indications of his predecessors. For Poinset, discussing the *Summa theologiae*, maintained that in the *Prima Secundae*, one finds an exposition of moral science alone, and in the *Secunda Secundae*, one finds moral science combined with prudence. However, it then becomes clear that this moral science is purely theoretical, concerned with the nature of the virtues. The conclusion was that there was no practical science properly speaking, hence no bridge between the theoretical sciences and prudential determination.

Now Simon was convinced that there is a kind of continuity beginning with purely theoretical philosophy and descending to prudential determination. He adopts Maritain’s distinction between theoretically practical and practically practical in order to provide the intermediary sciences in this descent to action. So in the *Critique* he employs the distinction between the analytic and the synthetic method in philosophy. “Science proceeds by analyses and definitions, the practical by motions and syntheses.”<sup>12</sup> To analyze in this context means to resolve effects into causes, or consequences into antecedents, not dissolving a whole into its constituent parts.<sup>13</sup> Theoretical inquiry provides an explanation. Simon wants to argue that moral philosophy, or moral science, uses a synthetic method, though it is theoretical in mode, for it

<sup>9</sup> *Critique de la connaissance morale*, p. 129.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68n2. The *modo resolutorio* (analysis) and *modo compositivo* (synthesis) distinction was taken up by Thomas Hobbes. “There is therefore no method, by which we find out the causes of things, but is either *compositivo* or *resolutive*, or partly *compositivo*, and partly *resolutive*. And the resolutive is commonly called *analytical* method, as the compositivo is called *synthetical*.” *Elements of Philosophy, The English Works of Thomas Hobbes* (London: Scientia Aalen, 1962), vol. I, p. 66. The method employed in his political theory is resolutive-compositivo, proceeding from parts to the whole, from matter to the generation of form.

aims at directing action, albeit from afar.<sup>14</sup> If there is a feature that marks practical knowledge from theoretical knowledge, it would be whether or not movement is occurring, a knowledge that moves, instigates, influences, opposed to a knowledge that does not. Of course, Hume is always there to tell us that reason is wholly inactive.<sup>15</sup> Simon's position rests on the assumption that reason moves; it is a moving cause. But it moves according to formal, not efficient, causality. If reason cannot move in any sense, then the position is undermined. If reason moves us it is in a certain direction, so a brief way of describing moral philosophy is to say it involves directive knowledge.

Concerning the issue of fidelity to Aristotle and Aquinas one might rest with the conclusion that Simon's position is more faithful to Aquinas regarding moral philosophy but that is hardly sufficient. He has to convince us that such a practical knowledge exists. The treatment here attempts to avoid those disputes as to whether or not a particular doctrine is that of the master rather than whether or not it is truly tenable. This is especially difficult because one easily enters into that briar patch where controversies go on about the extent to which Aquinas's own position is or is not found in his commentaries on the works of Aristotle and Boethius. Clearly this is an important issue in the search for an authentic Thomism.<sup>16</sup> While in principle most accept the view that the commentaries are just commentaries, Aquinas does not speak in his own name, in practice recourse is made in particular cases to the commentaries for Thomas's own doctrine. This seems to be the case with the use of the *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*. It is often asserted that moral philosophy is to some degree in the business of giving advice. Moreover, recently we have seen the emergence of philosophical therapists. In order to deal with the competence of moral philosophers to give advice, Simon makes a distinction between the moral philosopher and the moralist. To understand the terminology Simon employs, it might be useful to recall a common distinction used in the French language in defining *un moraliste*. Although the main distinction is found in *Le Grand Robert*, the explanation in *Grand Larousse* is more to the point. While a moralist, and the prototype is always

<sup>14</sup> *Critique de la connaissance morale*, p. 87, "de loin sans doute, mais efficacement tout de même."

<sup>15</sup> "Since morals, therefore, have an influence on the actions and affections, it follows that they cannot be derived from reason; and that because reason alone as we have already proven, can never have any such influence." David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1888, 1962), Book III, Part I, Section I, p. 457.

<sup>16</sup> Ralph McInerny deals extensively with the use of commentaries in *Boethius and Aquinas* (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1990) and *Aquinas on Human Action: A Theory of Practice* (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1992).

Montaigne, describes, analyses, and criticizes mores, the moral philosopher purveys a moral theory. The distinction then seems to be between a moral observer and a systematic moral theorist. A third meaning refers to a person who loves to give moral advice, or what is frequently referred to today as a moral scold. Now Simon wants to compare the first two meanings, but he wants to do it very precisely in view of capacities (and, let us say, competence). Sometimes when he uses the term *un moraliste*, he simply means a moral philosopher. However, in one key passage he speaks of a philosopher-moralist and indicates that such a personage “would be extremely rare.”<sup>17</sup> Why? He would have to combine the abstractive intellect of the scientist and the concreative intellect “which finds itself perfectly at ease only in the contingent singular.”<sup>18</sup> Here we have a new and quite precise notion of a moralist. Aside from the fact that a moral philosopher may be immoral, it is unlikely that most moral philosophers would be the ones to seek out for advice in particular cases. The advice they can offer, if they are competent, remains at a rather general level. The conjunction of these two capabilities is consequently unlikely, but not impossible.<sup>19</sup>

After about twenty years Simon once again discussed Poinsoot’s views on moral philosophy in an important note to the translation, *The Material Logic of John of St. Thomas*.<sup>20</sup> There is an extended examination of the difference between what is now called ethical science and prudence.

In principle the line between ethical science and prudence can always be drawn by the operation of the following criteria: A given proposition is a scientific conclusion if and only if it is deductively connected with the self-evident principles of morality. But a proposition that admits of no deductive connection with ethical axioms derives whatever certainty it enjoys from its agreement with the inclinations of the virtuous will.<sup>21</sup>

He reiterates his judgment that Poinsoot’s characterization of ethical science “is thoroughly un-Aristotelian and constitutes a paradox never satisfactorily explained.”<sup>22</sup> In fact Simon never ceased to wonder and conjecture why Poinsoot

<sup>17</sup> *Critique de la connaissance morale*, p. 76.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* Simon believes great minds like Aristotle, Aquinas, and Cajetan possess both talents.

<sup>20</sup> John of St. Thomas, *The Material Logic of John of St. Thomas*, trans. Yves R. Simon, John J. Glanville, and G. Donald Hollenurst (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965) p. 592n34. The translation was seven years in the making. A section had already been published in 1949.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

had taken the view that he did.<sup>23</sup> The basic distinction between the two methods, analytical and synthetic, the former appropriate for theory, the latter for practice, is again articulated, but with important additions and clarifications. Now he refers to combinations of the two methods in practical thought. The practical sciences “use methods in which analysis and synthesis combine in diverse proportions.”<sup>24</sup> This is clearly an addition to his elaboration in *Critique*. Secondly, he now distinguishes between two kinds of explanation: “unqualified explanation, explanation in terms of essential necessity,” and practical “explanation in terms of human action” and in response to such questions as what ought to be done.<sup>25</sup> On one hand, in moral philosophy, which is a theoretically practical science, “conceptualization and explanation are governed by a law of exact analysis.”<sup>26</sup> On the other, practical knowledge involves “a synthesis totally foreign to the mores of theoretical thought.”<sup>27</sup>

Simon now introduces the distinction between nature and use that he will fully exploit in what may be called the third, which turned out to be the final, stage in the development of his conception of moral philosophy. “Theoretical science abstracts from problems of human use.”<sup>28</sup> Practical science cannot do this, but recognizes the degrees of practicality implicated in the descent from theoretically practical science, through practically practical science to prudential determination. The notion of a practically practical science is not yet problematic for him.

A remark in the dense note provides a linkage to the third phase found in the compilation, *Practical Knowledge*. “A practical science is necessarily an ambiguous entity, less scientific than a prudential habitus and bearing the mark of a sort of compromise.”<sup>29</sup> The comparable passage, in *Practical Knowledge*, reads as follows:

There is such a significant contrast between thought and action that the notion of practical thought may seem to bear the character of a compromise...Indeed, at a distance from the concrete, as in the case of a universal rule considered as universal, thought falls short of total practicality.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Yves R. Simon, *Practical Knowledge*, ed. Robert J. Mulvaney (New York: Fordham University Press, 1991), p. 101.

<sup>24</sup> *The Material Logic of John of St. Thomas*, p. 592n34.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. Yves R. Simon, *Foresight and Knowledge*, eds. Ralph Nelson and Anthony O. Simon (New York: Fordham University Press, 1995), pp. 14-15.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Practical Knowledge*, p. 4.

In a series of oppositions, some already utilized, at least one quite new, Simon once more explores the contrast between the theoretical and the practical. But here the opposition between analysis and synthesis is treated in greater depth so as to remove certain possible objections, for instance, the idea that synthesis is not completely foreign to theory. Let us keep in mind Maritain's formulation, distinguish in order to unite. In order to clarify the extent to which synthesis might be relevant to theory, it is noted that analysis has two meanings: (1) a process of decomposition, best illustrated by the way in which a whole is broken down into its constituent parts. While this is a popular understanding of the term taken over from certain scientific procedures, many contemporary thinkers, notably the Gestalt psychologists, have opposed the misuse of it. It is, according to Simon, at most a preparatory phase of philosophical inquiry, not its main method. (2) For the proper sense of philosophical analysis is the resolution "of effects and consequences into causes and principles."<sup>31</sup> Perhaps Descartes's use of the clear and distinct criterion to sharply distinguish a thinking substance from an extended one, only to be faced subsequently, in *The Passions of the Soul*, with the apparently intractable problem of accounting for their intercommunication, is one of the best known instances of an analytic-synthetic method in philosophy. In any case, whatever auxiliary role whole-part analysis may play in philosophy, and it is certainly important, Simon argues that it is analysis in the second sense that is characteristic of theoretical method.

The synthesis involved in practical thought is not to be confused with synthesis as employed in theory. To be precise in this regard, Simon now refers to "the *synthesis of realization*" in which "the ultimate practical judgment involves a unique synthesis, namely, the putting together of a certain 'that' and the act of existing."<sup>32</sup>

The second opposition brought forward for the purpose of setting down the specificity of practical as opposed to theoretical thought articulates in a novel way some themes implicit in earlier discussions of explanation. I mean the opposition between explanation and fulfillment, so important for the third phase. This opposition or disjunction becomes particularly relevant in dealing with the so-called practically practical sciences. Let it be remembered that both in the *Critique* and in the long note to *The Material Logic* Simon did not raise any objection to calling this kind of information scientific. Now he does. The problem, as he now sees it, is whether or not this segment of the movement to practical determination really comprised

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 5. See also pp. 52, 58.

science if the segment is not explanatory, as are theoretical philosophy and the theoretically practical knowledge of moral philosophy. If it is assumed that a form of knowledge ceased to be explanatory in some sense, by the same token, however significant it might be, it was erroneously named a science, always understanding science in the philosophical sense. But since explanation itself may be theoretical or practical,<sup>33</sup> an additional qualification is that without theoretical explanation, the knowledge at hand is not scientific. There is no doubt that the practically practical knowledge furnished by the writers on morality—Montaigne and Pascal are mentioned—involves practical explanations. Yet, unless the distinction between theoretical and practical explanation is tendentious, indeed superfluous, the knowledge acquired qualifies this sort of discourse as constituting a discipline not a science.<sup>34</sup> It is in this way that Simon parts company with Maritain's contention, reiterated in their correspondence, that these are sciences, and no doubt it is one of the few disagreements he had with his teacher and friend. So the general principle is established that where theoretical explanation is absent, so also is scientific status. Once prudence comes into play we are in the sphere of fulfillment itself. And fulfillment can occur even if explanation cannot be supplied.

In the third opposition used to spell out the specificity of moral philosophy, that between nature and use, there is a more thorough inspection of a distinction mentioned earlier. Practical knowledge "considers not only natures, as theoretical sciences do, but also the human *use* of things placed within the control of man."<sup>35</sup> It is what differentiates ethics from psychology. As a distinct way of differentiating practical knowledge from theoretical, this opposition has the singular advantage of opening up a new approach to the status of the social sciences in relation to ethics, one of Simon's early themes and main preoccupations. Although he now insists that "the primary purpose of moral philosophy is to understand moral essences,"<sup>36</sup> this is balanced when he accentuates the concern of moral philosophy "with problems of right and wrong use."<sup>37</sup> Since moral philosophy is concerned with use, it is, by that fact, concerned with what he has called the synthesis of practical thought. As always the distance between "the last word of philosophy and the work of prudence,"<sup>38</sup> is emphasized. For virtue alone can affect that ulti-

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>35</sup> *The Material Logic of John of St. Thomas*, p. 592n34.

<sup>36</sup> *Practical Knowledge*, p. 54.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

mate synthesis; virtue, that in the words of St. Augustine, is “a quality...of which no one makes a wrong use.”<sup>39</sup> Virtue implies a good use.

The distinction between nature and use is relevant in dealing with the current issue of gun control in which both the principal and instrumental causes are at stake, those who have access to firearms and the use that is made of them along with the nature of these instruments and the likelihood of their being used for legitimate or illegitimate purposes. Leaving aside the sophistries that becloud the issue, one must say, on one hand, that legitimate arms, those with legitimate purposes, such as self-defence and protection against animal predators, or for sport and hunting, must be kept out of the hands of the criminally inclined and the mentally deranged, and the immature, and, on the other hand, that there are certain kinds of weapons that fulfill no legitimate internal purpose; these are weapons designed for use in military action. As a society we have accepted the notion that a person deemed legally intoxicated cannot make a good use of a motor vehicle. The same logic would lead us to attempt to remove firearms from the hands of those who, it is presumed, cannot or will not make a good use of them. The opposition of nature and use, then, is not meant to be an antinomy, for the moral issue requires both factors to be taken into consideration. Pure theory alone does not deal with use.

Secondly, the nature-use opposition proves to aid in the sorting out of the relation between ethics and the social sciences, an old concern of Simon's. Where formerly he addressed the French or Durkheimian sociologists, he now reacts to Weberian sociology, principally because of its importance in the United States. Very briefly, in place of Max Weber's notion of ethical neutrality (and its accompanying antinomies), Simon states that “facts pertaining to the life of human society seem to be of such a character that a philosophy of man is necessarily at work in the reading of their intelligibility.”<sup>40</sup> This entails the rejection of an independent social science, presumably a theoretical discipline. To leave aside the moral perspective would falsify the very object under investigation. On this count Simon quotes with approval the famous essay by Leo Strauss on Max Weber's sociology. The conclusion is that both social philosophy and the social sciences fall under the heading of practical philosophy.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 132. I have discussed the relation of the social sciences and moral philosophy in “Yves R. Simon's Philosophy of Science,” in Anthony O. Simon, ed. *Acquaintance with the Absolute: The Philosophy of Yves R. Simon* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998), pp. 64-65, 79-81.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., pp. 131-32.

Following his elaboration of the three oppositions—analytic/synthetic, explanation/fulfillment, and nature/use—Simon proposes a new definition of moral philosophy. “At the present time, my tendency is rather to view moral philosophy as a system of explanation, which though practical in a proper sense by reason of its consideration of human use, exists primarily for the sake of explaining the things of morality.”<sup>42</sup> He recognizes that this involves a shift from *A Critique of Moral Knowledge*, for in the earlier work, he says, “I laid strong emphasis on the function of moral philosophy as science to *direct human action*.”<sup>43</sup>

On a number of occasions in his last work on moral philosophy, Simon speaks of moralists. No longer does he propose the earlier, rather eccentric, distinction between the moral philosopher and the moralist in terms of the kind of intellect one might expect from one or the other of these characters. What he now accepts is the rather conventional distinction between the moral philosopher a systematic thinker, as he understands the role, and that group of thinkers known in France as *les moralistes*, a category that would probably include such twentieth century writers as Denis de Rougemont and Albert Camus, who are not systematic. For the most part, Simon has in mind this latter group when he refers to moralists, although there is at least one context in which no distinction is made between a moral philosopher and a moralist.<sup>44</sup> There is no attempt to denigrate the contribution of people like the French *moralistes*. Quite the contrary, for he singles out “the kind of knowledge that we find in this extremely important work of human thought, the work of the moralists.”<sup>45</sup> We must not lose sight of the fact that Simon expends considerable effort to define exactly what a moral philosopher is and does. Further, this definition must account for the limitations of the moral philosopher as a scientist. When human action is in question, it would be foolish to ignore the probability that practitioners may be more helpful in confronting particular moral quandaries than philosophers.

In conclusion, I offer the following overview. From his earliest reflections in the 1930s to his final remarks shortly before his death, Yves Simon never ceased to reconsider the situation of practical philosophy. If in the first exposition, Simon was intent on showing that moral philosophy is directive

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 106.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Moral philosopher and moralist are identified in *Practical Knowledge*, p. 129, but elsewhere are contrasted (pp. 30-31, 87, 103). The earlier distinction between abstractive and concretive is still considered valid, even if it is not now used to set out the difference between a moral philosopher and a moralist. See *ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

<sup>45</sup> *Practical Knowledge*, p. 87.

knowledge, his final statements greatly stressed the need to present moral philosophy as involving explanation and understanding. The breakdown of tradition as a moral guide combined with the contemporary demand for a rational account of human affairs convinced him that this explanatory task was actually paramount. Had he basically altered his stance on that status of moral philosophy, for instance, did he revert to a position similar to that of John Poinsett? That he expressly denied. Or was it a matter of emphasis, now on one side of theoretically practical knowledge as formerly on another, direction from afar? That there was a change in emphasis is undeniable. However, Jacques Maritain in response to some of Simon's late reflections argued that no dilemma existed concerning the two tasks, that, in fact, they were complementary, not incompatible. Thus moral philosophy is recognized as having two roles: that of moral explanation and that of moral direction. The former consists in working on the theoretical foundations of practical knowledge. In that respect one might see a resemblance with a recent attempt to construct a firm foundation for contractualist ethics.<sup>46</sup> Though it is a far way from a moral philosophy geared to what we can agree upon to one that concerns what human nature requires.

<sup>46</sup> T. M. Scanlon, *What We Owe To Each Other* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999). In his review of the treatise, Colin McFinn states that Scanlon is "trying to find a philosophical foundation for the traditional absoluteness of moral values." *The New Republic*, 24 May 1999, p. 35.