strict sense he had defined. The broader use allowed him to affirm that the factor of holism is "responsible for the total course of evolution, inorganic as well as organic. All the great main types of existence are due to it." Long before organisms or minds arose, the holistic factor was producing elementary wholes of a purely physical kind. Later, through a series of "creative leaps," it became more fully embodied in biological structures, minds, and persons. Indeed, "it is in the sphere of spiritual values that Holism finds its clearest embodiment," for in this sphere love, beauty, goodness, and truth have their source.

Smuts nowhere attributed to the holistic factor any teleological orientation. Nor did he apply to it any personal or spiritual categories. It was represented as an ultimate principle, metaphysical rather than religious, at work and still working in the cosmos.

There is a considerable resemblance between Smuts's philosophical views and those of Henri Bergson and C. Lloyd Morgan. All three philosophers stressed the creativity of evolution, its engendering of novelties whose presence invalidates mechanistic materialism. All were critical of Darwinism and opposed it with arguments and assertions couched in highly general terms. Smuts differed from the other two philosophers in refusing to state explicitly that the holistic factor is spiritual or akin to mind. But at bottom it remains as inscrutable as Bergson's *élan vital* or Morgan's directing Activity.

See also African Philosophy; Bergson, Henri; Darwinism; Holism and Individualism in History and Social Science; Morgan, C. Lloyd.

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SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

It is generally agreed that the central task of social and political philosophy is to provide a justification for coercive institutions. Coercive institutions range in size from the family to the nation-state and world organizations, like the United Nations, with their narrower and broader agendas for action. Yet essentially, they are institutions that at least sometimes employ force or the threat of force to control the behavior of their members to achieve either minimal or wide-ranging goals. To justify such coercive institutions, we need to show that the authorities within these institutions have a right to be obeyed and that their members have a corresponding duty to obey them. In other words, we need to show that these institutions have legitimate authority over their members.

In philosophical debate at the beginning of the twenty-first century, a number of competing justifications for coercive institutions have been defended: (1) a libertarian justification, which appeals to an ideal of liberty; (2) a socialist justification, which appeals to an ideal of equality; (3) a welfare liberal justification, which appeals to an ideal of contractual fairness; (4) a communitarian justification, which appeals to an ideal of the common good; and (5) a feminist justification, which appeals to an ideal of a gender-free society. Each of these justifications needs to be examined in order to determine which, if any, are morally defensible.

LIBERTARIANISM

Libertarians frequently cite the work of F. A. Hayek, particularly his *Constitution of Liberty* (1960), as an intellectual source of their view. Hayek argues that the libertarian ideal of liberty requires "equality before the law" and "reward according to market value" but not " substantial equality" or "reward according to merit." Hayek further argues that the inequalities due to upbringing, inheritance, and education that are permitted by an ideal of liberty actually tend to benefit society as a whole.

In basic accord with Hayek, contemporary libertarians, like John Hospers (1971), Robert Nozick (1974), Tibor Machan (2004), and Jan Narveson (1998), define liberty negatively as "the state of being unconstrained by other persons from doing what one wants" rather than positively as "the state of being assisted by other persons in doing what one wants." Libertarians go on to characterize their social and political ideal as requiring that each person should have the greatest amount of liberty commensurate with the same liberty for all. From this ideal, libertarians claim that a number of more specific requirements, in particular a right to life, a right to freedom of speech, press, and assembly, and a right to property, can be derived.

The libertarian's right to life is not a right to receive from others the goods and resources necessary for preserving one's life; it is simply a right not to be killed. So understood, the right to life is not a right to receive welfare. In fact, there are no welfare rights according to the libertarian view. Correspondingly, the libertarian's

understanding of the right to property is not a right to receive from others the goods and resources necessary for one's welfare, but rather a right to acquire goods and resources either by initial acquisition or by voluntary agreement. By defending rights such as these, libertarians support only a limited role for coercive institutions. That role is simply to prevent and punish initial acts of coercion—the only wrongful actions for libertarians. Thus, libertarians are opposed to all forms of censorship and paternalism, unless they can be supported by their ideal of liberty.

Libertarians do not deny that it is a good thing for people to have sufficient goods and resources to meet their basic nutritional needs, but libertarians do deny that coercive institutions should be used to provide for such needs. Some good things, such as the provision of welfare to the needy, are requirements of charity rather than justice, libertarians claim. Accordingly, failure to make such provisions is neither blameworthy nor punishable.

SOCIALISM

In contrast with libertarians, socialists take equality to be the ultimate social and political ideal. In the *Communist Manifesto* (1848), Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels maintain that the abolition of bourgeois property and bourgeois family structure is a necessary first requirement for building a society that accords with the political ideal of equality. In *Critique of the Gotha Program*, Marx provides a much more positive account of what is required to build a society based upon the political ideal of equality. In such a society, Marx claims that the distribution of social goods must conform, at least initially, to the principle "from each according to his ability, to each according to his contribution." But when the highest stage of communist society has been reached, Marx adds, distribution will conform to the principle "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need." Contemporary socialists like Kai Nielson and Carol Gould continue to endorse these tenets of Marxism.

At first hearing, these tenets of Marxism might sound ridiculous to someone brought up in a capitalist society. The obvious objection is, how can you get persons to contribute according to their ability if income is distributed on the basis of their needs and not on the basis of their contributions? The answer, according to socialists, is to make the work that must be done in a society as much as possible enjoyable in itself. As a result, people will want to do the work they are capable of doing because they find it intrinsically rewarding. For a start, socialists might try to get people to accept presently existing, intrinsically rewarding jobs at lower salaries—top executives, for example, to work for $300,000, rather than $900,000 or more, a year. Yet ultimately, socialists hope to make all jobs as intrinsically rewarding as possible, so that after people are no longer working primarily for external rewards, while making their best contributions to society, distribution can proceed on the basis of need.

Socialists propose to implement their egalitarian ideal by giving workers democratic control over the workplace. They believe that if workers have more to say about how they do their work, they will find their work intrinsically more rewarding. As a consequence, they will be more motivated to work, because their work itself will be meeting their needs. Socialists believe that extending democracy to the workplace will necessarily lead to socialization of the means of production and the end of private property. By making jobs intrinsically as rewarding as possible, in part through democratic control of the workplace and an equitable assignment of unrewarding tasks, socialists believe people will contribute according to their ability even when distribution proceeds according to need. Liberation theology has also provided an interpretation of Christianity that is sympathetic to this socialist ideal.

Nor are contemporary socialists disillusioned by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the transformation of the countries in Eastern Europe. Judging the acceptability of the socialist ideal of equality by what took place in these countries would be as unfair as judging the acceptability of the libertarian ideal of liberty by what takes place in countries like Guatemala or Singapore, where there is a free market but very little political liberty. By analogy, it would be like judging the merits of college football by the way Vanderbilt's or Columbia s team play rather than by the way Florida's or USC's team play. Actually, a fairer comparison would be to judge the socialist ideal of equality by what takes place in countries like Sweden and to judge the libertarian ideal of liberty by what takes place in the United States. Even these comparisons, however, are not wholly appropriate because none of these countries fully conforms to those ideals.

WELFARE LIBERALISM

Finding merit in both the libertarian's ideal of liberty and the socialist's ideal of equality, welfare liberals attempt to combine both liberty and equality into one political ideal that can be characterized by contractual fairness. A classical example of this contractual approach is found in the political works of Immanuel Kant. Kant claims that a civil state ought to be founded on an original contract satisfy-

ing the requirements of freedom, equality, and independence. According to Kant, it suffices that the laws of a civil state are such that people would agree to them under conditions in which the requirements of freedom, equality, and independence obtain.

The Kantian ideal of a hypothetical contract as the moral foundation for coercive institutions has been further developed by John Rawls in *A Theory of Justice* (1971). Rawls, like Kant, argues that principles of justice are those principles that free and rational persons who are concerned to advance their own interests would accept in an initial position of equality. Yet Rawls goes beyond Kant by interpreting the conditions of his "original position" to explicitly require a "veil of ignorance." This veil of ignorance, Rawls claims, has the effect of depriving persons in the original position of the knowledge they would need to advance their own interests in ways that are morally arbitrary.

According to Rawls, the principles of justice that would be derived in the original position are the following: (1) a principle of equal political liberty; (2) a principle of equal opportunity; (3) a principle requiring that the distribution of economic goods work to the greatest advantage of the least advantaged. Rawls holds that these principles would be chosen in the original position because persons so situated would find it reasonable to follow the conservative dictates of the "maximin" strategy and maximize the minimum), thereby securing for themselves the highest minimum payoff. In his *Political Liberalism* (1993), Rawls explains how these principles could be supported by an overlapping consensus, and thus would be compatible with a pluralistic society whose members endorse diverse comprehensive conceptions of the good, and in his *The Law of Peoples* (1999), Rawls attempts to extend his theory of justice to the international realm.

COMMUNITARIANISM

Another prominent social and political ideal defended by contemporary philosophers is the communitarian ideal of the common good. As one might expect, many contemporary defenders of a communitarian social and political ideal regard their conception as rooted in Aristotelian moral theory. Alasdair MacIntyre in *After Virtue* (1981) sees his social and political theory as rooted in Aristotelian moral theory, but it is an Aristotelian moral theory that has been refurbished in certain respects. Specifically, MacIntyre claims that Aristotelian moral theory must, first of all, reject any reliance on a metaphysical biology. Instead of appealing to a metaphysical biology, MacIntyre proposes to ground Aristotelian moral theory on a conception of a practice. A practice, for MacIntyre, is "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" (1981, p.175). As examples of practices, MacIntyre cites arts, sciences, games, and the making and sustaining of family life.

MacIntyre then partially defines the virtues in terms of practices. A virtue, such as courage, justice or honesty, is "an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which prevents us from achieving any such goods" (1981, p.178). However, MacIntyre admits that the virtues which sustain practices can conflict (e.g., courage can conflict with justice) and that practices so defined are not themselves above moral criticism.

Accordingly, to further ground his account, MacIntyre introduces the conception of a telos, or good of a whole human life conceived as a unity. It is by means of this conception that MacIntyre proposes to morally evaluate practices and resolve conflicts between virtues. For MacIntyre, the telos of a whole human life is a life spent in seeking that telos; it is a quest for the good human life and it proceeds with only partial knowledge of what is sought. Nevertheless, this quest is never undertaken in isolation but always within some shared tradition. Moreover, such a tradition provides additional resources for evaluating practices and for resolving conflicts while remaining open to moral criticism itself.

MacIntyre's characterization of the human telos in terms of a quest undertaken within a tradition marks a second respect in which he wants to depart from Aristotle's view. This historical dimension to the human telos that MacIntyre contends is essential for a rationally acceptable communitarian account is absent from Aristotle' s view. A third respect in which MacIntyre's account departs from that of Aristotle concerns the possibility of tragic moral conflicts. As MacIntyre points out, Aristotle only recognized moral conflicts that are the outcome of wrongful or mistaken action. Yet MacIntyre, following Sophocles, wants to recognize the possibility of additional conflicts between rival moral goods that are rooted in the very nature of things.

Initially, rather than draw out the particular requirements of his own social and political theory, MacIntyre defended his theory by attacking rival theories, and, by and large, he focused his attacks on liberal social and political theories; in this respect he shares common ground with contemporary deconstructionists. Thus, MacIntyre argues in his "Privatization of the Good" that virtually all forms of liberalism attempt to separate rules defining right action from conceptions of the human good. MacIntyre contends that these forms of liberalism not only fail but have to fail because the rules defining right action cannot be adequately grounded apart from a conception of the good. For this reason, MacIntyre claims, only some refurbished Aristotelian theory that grounds rules supporting right action in a complete conception of the good can ever hope to be adequate.

In his most recent book, *Rational Dependent Animals* (1999), however, MacIntyre's defense of the communitarian ideal of the common good has now moved in a socialist or Marxist direction. In this book, Macintyre argues that for independent practical reasoners, Marx's principle for a socialist society—to each according to his or her contribution—is appropriate, but between those capable of giving and those most dependent, it is Marx's principle for a communist society—from each according to his or her ability, to each according to his or her need—that is appropriate.

FEMINISM

Defenders of a feminist social and political ideal present a distinctive challenging critique to defenders of other social and political ideals. In *The Subjection of Women* (1869), John Stuart Mill, one of the earliest male defenders of women's liberation, argues that the subjection of women was never justified but was imposed upon women because they were physically weaker than men; later this subjection was confirmed by law. Mill argues that society must remove the legal restrictions that deny women the same opportunities enjoyed by men. However, Mill does not consider whether, because of past discrimination against women, it may be necessary to do more than simply remove legal restrictions: he does not consider whether positive assistance may also be required.

Usually it is not enough simply to remove unequal restrictions to make a competition fair among those who have been participating. Positive assistance to those who have been disadvantaged in the past may also be required, as would be the case in a race in which some were unfairly impeded by having to carry ten-pound weights for part of the race. To render the outcome of such a race fair, we might want to transfer the ten-pound weights to the other runners in the race, and thereby advantage the previously disadvantaged runners for an equal period of time. Similarly, positive assistance, such as affirmative action or preferential treatment programs, may be necessary if women who have been disadvantaged in the past by sexism are now going to be able to compete fairly with men. According to feminists, the argument for using affirmative action or preferential treatment to overcome sexism in society is perfectly analogous to the argument for using affirmative action or preferential treatment to overcome racism in society.

In *Justice, Gender and the Family* (1989), Susan Okin argues for the feminist ideal of a gender-free society. A gender-free society is a society in which basic rights and duties are not assigned on the basis of a person's biological sex. Being male or female is not the grounds for determining what basic rights and duties a person has in a gender-free society. Since a conception of justice is usually thought to provide the ultimate grounds for the assignment of rights and duties, we can refer to this ideal of a gender-free society as "feminist justice."

Okin goes on to consider whether John Rawls's welfare liberal conception of justice can support the ideal of a gender-free society Noting Rawls's initial failure to apply his "original position" concept to family structures, Okin is skeptical about the possibility of using a welfare liberal ideal to support feminist justice. She contends that in a gender-structured society like our own, male philosophers cannot achieve the sympathetic imagination required to see things from the standpoint of women. In a gender-structured society, Okin claims, male philosophers cannot do the "original position-type thinking required by the welfare liberal ideal because they lack the ability to put themselves in the position of women. According to Okin, the "original position" can only really be achieved in a gender-free society.

Yet at the same time that Okin despairs of doing "original position-type thinking in a gender-structured society, like our own, she herself purportedly does a considerable amount of just that type of thinking. For example, she claims that Rawls's principles of justice "would seem to require a radical rethinking not only of the division of labor within families but also of all the nonfamily institutions that assume it." She also claims that "the abolition of gender seems essential for the fulfillment of Rawls's criterion of political justice" (1989, p. 104).

PRACTICAL REQUIREMENTS

Unfortunately, unless we can show that either libertarianism, socialism, welfare liberalism, communitarianism, or feminism, or some combination of these ideals is most morally defensible, it will be difficult to know which practical requirements one should endorse. However, assuming we have obligations to distant peoples and future generations, it may be possible to show that the libertarian's own ideal of liberty leads to a right to welfare that is acceptable to welfare liberals, and that when this right is extended to distant peoples and future generations, it requires something like the equality that socialists endorse. This would effect a practical reconciliation of sorts among seemingly opposing social and political ideals.

There is also the question of whether we have obligations to animals and other nonhuman living beings. Until recently, there was very little discussion of whether humans have such obligations. It was widely assumed, without much argument, that we have obligations only to humans. However, this lack of argument has recently been challenged by defenders of animal rights on grounds of speciesism. Speciesism, they claim, is the prejudicial favoring of the interests of members of one' s own species over the interests of other species. Obviously, determining whether this charge of speciesism can be sustained is vital to providing a justification of coercive institutions, particularly the coercive institutions of animal experimentation and factory farming, and thus it is vital to fulfilling the central task of social and political philosophy as well.

See also Aristotle; Civil Disobedience; Communitarianism; Cosmopolitanism; Democracy; Engels, Friedrich; Feminist Social and Political Philosophy; Kant, Immanuel; Liberation Theology; Libertarianism; Liberty; MacIntyre, Alasdair; Marx, Karl; Mill, John Stuart; Multiculturalism; Nationalism; Nozick, Robert; Pluralism; Postcolonialism; Rawls, John; Republicanism; Socialism; Speciesism.

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SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

Social constructionism (sometimes "constructivism") is a version of constructivism. The idea that human beings in some measure construct the reality they perceive can be found in many philosophical traditions. The pre-Socratic philosopher Xenophones, for instance, argued that humans construct gods in their own image (Fragment 16), a possibility that is also criticized in the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic religious traditions (among others). But the idea that human beings epistemologically construct the reality they perceive is first given extended philosophical articulation in the work of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). In the nineteenth century a constructivism of sorts emerged as political theory in the work of Karl Marx (1818–1883) and others. Then, in the twentieth century, constructivism took new forms in psychology, in sociology, and in science, technology, and society (STS) studies.