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Macmurray on Relationality: A Tool for Systems Theory?

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Abstract

This article seeks to draw out the links between systems thinking and the philosophy of John Macmurray. In fact, while systems theory is a growing trend in a number of disciplines, including counselling and psychotherapy, the narrative describes its ancient roots. Macmurray's insistence that humans exist as interdependent rather than independent beings is supported by systems theory. Moreover, Macmurray's critique of institutionalized religion and his favouring of inclusive religious community is akin to a model of spirituality that, in positive psychology, is conceived of as an open system.

Introduction

The interest and application of systems thinking to various academic disciplines is growing; it is a western scientific worldview that emphasizes interconnections among all phenomena, and it has become the conceptual underpinning in such fields as the life sciences and physics (Bertalanffy 1968; Magnavita 2012). Systems thinking has been embraced by other disciplines as well (e.g., business management, developmental psychology, education and counselling/psychotherapy). Recently, a seminal text was published addressing the possible synergy between philosophy and systems thinking (Mingers 2013). In particular, borrowing heavily from epistemology, Mingers shows that systems thinking is compatible with critical scientific realism (Niiniluoto 2002; Patomäki and Wight 2000). Scientific realism maintains that knowledge of external objects is bound up with our sensory data (Putnam 1975; Smart 1963). Similarly, human agency is bound up with the experiential data of interacting with other human beings, in a network of social structures. Such a view of human agency can be found in Macmurray (1957), who argues that our primary experience is of thinking and acting simultaneously. In other words, we experience ourselves as mind and body at the same time: we are embodied agents. Nevertheless, we can only exercise our agency successfully if we have the appropriate means to achieve our ends, and the freedom to use those means. As Macmurray explains (McIntosh 2011), that freedom, however, can be restrained by other human beings, if their ends are not compatible with ours. When we are thwarted in our action, either because we do not have the means to achieve our ends, or because our actions are incompatible with those of others, we are able to reflect on and change our action. In this respect, although Macmurray precedes contemporary scientific realism, his account

of the experience of embodiment is compatible with it and, therefore, this is also one strand of compatibility with systems theory.

At the time that he was writing his theory of agency, Macmurray (1957) was critiquing the dominant substance dualism found in Cartesianism. Hence, he can be characterized as a dauntless challenger of mainstream western philosophy. Along with Emmanuel Levinas (1969), Macmurray asserts that western philosophy began with incorrect premises and worked to some incomplete and erroneous conclusions. Thus, it may still turn out that both philosophers will be regarded eventually as prophets whose conceptual frameworks were underappreciated by many contemporaries.

One strand of evidence that Macmurray and Levinas are philosophers for the future emerges from their connections to systems thinking. Neither appears acquainted with systems concepts yet their writings clearly demonstrate such conceptualization. As systems thinking informs scientific and general cultural views, the philosophical perspectives of Macmurray and Levinas may help to inform the conceptual base of systems, thus linking philosophy with science. While Macmurray and Levinas are both important in the science-philosophy link, Macmurray's perspective is focus here, since his philosophy touches upon a number of areas of life that illustrate a science-philosophy linkage. His philosophy can be characterized as a form of personalism that is consistent with and useful to systems thinking (Burrow 1999). That is, Macmurray's focus is on the crucial importance of relations for the development of persons, underpinned by a basic belief in human free will and the intrinsic value of human beings. He states: "I" exist only as one element in the complex "You and I" (1961, 24).

John Macmurray (1891-1976) was born in Kirkcudbrightshire and educated in Aberdeen and Glasgow, Scotland. He held academic positions in philosophy at the universities of Oxford, Manchester, Witwatersrand, London and Edinburgh. His philosophical writings were clearly affected by his Calvinist childhood and his experience of the First World War. Macmurray is most well known for the prestigious Gifford lectures, which he delivered in 1953 and 1954. These lectures were subsequently published in two volumes as *The Self as Agent* and *Persons in Relation*. Although Macmurray's style was at odds with the rising linguistic philosophy of the time, his insistence that philosophers should use the vernacular and should speak to common human experience ensured his widespread popularity with students and, through a series of popular BBC radio broadcasts, the general public.

Moreover, in recent decades Macmurray's contribution to philosophical thought has found sympathizers in theology, education and psychotherapy (MacDonald and Sink 2013). Contrary to traditional dualist Cartesian conceptions of the human being - that separate mind and body, self and other - Macmurray's definition of the person shifts the focus from that of isolated thought to that of the embodied and relational person. While Descartes emphasizes the intellectual capacity of human beings, Macmurray starts with our two most elementary experiences, namely the interaction of mind and body and our interaction with other human beings. Ahead of his time, the dual claims that human nature is essentially relational and that the self only exists as a mind in a body are key tenets of systems theory and the later feminist theory. For the purpose of this article, we will concentrate on the importance of relationships in Macmurray's philosophy and in systems thinking.

Systems Worldview

As mentioned above, systemic thinking is a worldview. The formation of cognitions known as worldviews is an inevitable aspect of being human. People consciously and unconsciously seek to make sense and meaning of themselves, life, their environments, and their relation to other life-forms and environments (Searle 2009; Smith 2006). Human beings learn worldviews through daily life experiences, especially relationships with others, which occur within particular cultures and subcultures. Multiple informal conscious and unconscious worldviews gradually develop into more specialized ways of thinking, including daily thoughts, beliefs, theologies, philosophies, theories and values (DeWitt 2004; Sue and Sue 2013).

A systemic worldview differs from the dominant Cartesian one in significant ways. A systems worldview rejects some of the key assumptions about a mechanical, intellectually dominated cosmos that Cartesian thinking holds. Systemic thinking is similar to the thought of Macmurray (1961). In other words, the most strident systemic thinkers eschew such Cartesian constructs as reductionism, radical empiricism, linear causality and the primary focus on a single part of the whole. Instead, systems thinkers hold that a system consists of dynamic, ever-shifting relationships between members who are reciprocally linked with each other and, as such, mutually and continually affect each other. These reciprocal relationships function in such a manner as to tend towards relational homeostasis of the entire collective or whole. A system, in turn, reciprocally interacts with other larger and smaller systems, often in predictable patterns, albeit occasionally in unpredictable forms. Thus, systems and subsystems provide the essential

contexts for human development and the understanding of individuals as affected by their current lives and significant influences (such as traditions) from the past. While the primary contexts for humans are their relations with other people, humans are linked with other life forms (for example, owners and their pets) and other natural events (such as climate and cosmic radiation), wherein everything affects everything else (Capra 1996; Carter and McGoldrick 1999; Magnavita 2012).

A natural systems view, which is more of the perspective applied here, emerges from life sciences, especially biology, and seeks to describe relationships between organisms and between organisms and their environments (Magnavita 2012). In addition, holism in natural systems includes all organic experiences, including intangibles such as emotions, perceptions and meaningfulness, all of which are also foci for philosophy. Due to its close link to living organisms, natural systems is the view adopted for this paper, particularly as discussed by biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1968) and family therapy pioneer Murray Bowen (Kerr and Bowen 1988), even though versions of natural systems exist for other areas of study such as anthropology (Bateson 1972).

Systemic style thinking in sacred writ has existed since the ancient Jews operated out of a worldview akin to systems (Levinas 1990). Indeed many, if not most, of the tribes that inhabited lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea functioned more systemically than not (Boivin 1991; Starr 1991; Stone 2008). Dominant 'classical' worldviews and philosophies of ancient Greece, however, were less systemic among the educated and politically powerful. Conquering Romans adopted elite Greek worldviews, along with many other aspects of Greek civilization. Subsequent Roman conquests of proto-Europeans and other ancient peoples resulted in their importing these non-systemic

Greek worldviews to the occupied lands (MacDonald 1997; Stark 1996). Greek worldviews also greatly affected early western Christian theology (Smith 2006; Tarnas 1991). Hence, systemic thinking is nothing new. Historically recent framing of systems as a worldview, including its terminology, is actually a rediscovery of what had been jettisoned in order to conform philosophy, culture and theology to ‘orthodox’ individualistic Greco-Roman views, especially views represented by such giants as Plato and Aristotle. Rather than introducing a new way of regarding theological-philosophical-scientific relationships, then, the task here is to demonstrate how a resurrected systems theory relates to sciences and to philosophy. More directly, this heritage has implications for the work of Macmurray, inasmuch as he was raised in and familiar with Judeo-Christian thinking, which may well have informed his implicit systemic thinking.

Relationality as Primary

According to Macmurray ‘[w]e know existence by participating in existence’ (1961, 17). However, it is not simply a fact that we exist in relation with other persons, it is a fundamental necessity for the development of the person, and this necessity is exhibited from (and even before) the moment at which the human infant is born. Hence, Macmurray states that ‘the Self exists only in dynamic relation with the Other’ (1961, 17).

It is the extent of a newborn baby’s helplessness and the lengthy period of total dependence on another human being that marks a distinction between humans and other animals. Nevertheless, we have to recognize, Macmurray insists, that even a very young infant has the capacity to express ‘feelings of comfort or discomfort; of satisfaction and

dissatisfaction' (1961, 48). On the one hand, this is an important matter of survival for the human baby; yet, on the other hand, it reveals something significant about human nature. That is, while a cry of distress serves the obvious function of alerting the caregiver to the child's biological needs, a smile and giggle seem unnecessary. As Macmurray explains, however, these happy noises reveal the fact that the child enjoys the physical closeness of the parent-figure. In other words, Macmurray claims: 'This is evidence that the infant has a need which is not simply biological but personal, a need to be in touch with the mother, and in conscious perceptual relation with her' (1961, 49). Moreover, family research concurs with Macmurray and identifies the relational bonding qualities of infant happy noises and eye contact that likely enhance infant survival by fostering greater adult attention on the infant's care (Berger 2011).

For infants to survive to adulthood and to acquire greater independence, they must learn from and with their caregivers (which will often but need not include the biological parents) in a process that systemic family research calls 'intergenerational transmission' (Kerr and Bowen 1988). Further, it is not just basic survival skills that the child learns; rather, the child learns how to exist and operate as a member of a wider society. Hence, unlike other animals, whose survival depends upon their innate ability to adapt to their environment, the human infant's 'essential natural endowment is the impulse to communicate with another human being' (Macmurray, 1961, 51).

Through play, the use of the imagination and the desire to cooperate, the human infant and the primary caregivers share a common life that will equip and enable the child to grow and develop as a person. In addition, the persistence and growth of the early impulse to communicate confirms that human nature is essentially relational.

¹ Both child and caregiver experience ‘a mutual delight in the relation which unites them in a common life’ (Macmurray 1961, 63), and this continues beyond the early dependence stage and the need to learn survival techniques. In other words, the relation of human beings to one another is not simply factual, it is intentional: we seek out and maintain relationships with other human beings because we need, desire and enjoy the sharing of experience.

Relational Motivation in Childhood

For the child and the caregiver, their action in the relationship incorporates both positive and negative motivational poles. As Macmurray explains, ‘the positive motive of the mother’s caring is her love for the child; it contains, however, and subordinates a negative component of fear’ (1961, 62). We should not, however, take ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ to imply ‘good’ and ‘bad’. On the contrary, the negative aspect of care is necessary for the proper care of the child. It is the caregivers’ fear that pushes their love into action. Similarly, the early cries and smiles of very young infants are signs of the developing motives of love and fear in children, not just for their own survival, but for a continuing relationship with their caregivers.

In order that the child becomes less dependent on the caregiver, however, it is imperative that the caregiver does not fulfil all the child’s needs all of the time, but, rather, that the caregiver encourages the child to develop the skills to satisfy some needs independently. Hence, the caregiver sets up a ‘rhythm of withdrawal and return’ (Macmurray 1961, 76). When the caregiver is in the withdrawal phase, the child has the opportunity to experiment with new skills. It is vital for the development of the child as a

person, however, that the caregiver returns and does not abandon the child. In other words, successful temporary withdrawal is for the purpose of returning to a more mutual relationship. In this way, the child learns to cooperate with the caregiver. Thus, Macmurray states: 'If the *terminus a quo* of the personal life is a helpless total dependence on the Other, [a situation in family studies called 'enmeshment' or 'fusion' (Kerr and Bowen 1988)], the *terminus ad quem* is not independence, but a mutual interdependence of equals' (1961, 66).

During the withdrawal phase, the child's fear comes to the fore, but once the caregiver returns, the fear passes and love dominates. When love dominates, action has an outward direction, focused on the intrinsic worth and happiness of the other person in the relationship. Macmurray calls this 'heterocentric' action (1961, 71). If, however, the caregiver does not return, the child's fear will become the dominant motive (eventually leading to hatred) and action will have an inward direction, focused on self-protection but exhibited as aggression and/or submission; which Macmurray refers to as 'egocentric' action (1961, 71).

Over two decades of research in positive psychology and related fields have demonstrated that humans require nurturing and supportive relationships in order to grow as persons, develop resilience, and eventually flourish as adults (Heider 2013; Schotanus-Dijkstra, Marijke, Pieterse, Drossaert, Westerhof, de Graaf, ten Have, Walburg, and Bohlmeijer 2015; Sheldon and Hoon 2013; Shiner and Masten 2012). Persistent rejection, Macmurray asserts, hinders the children's development and, if fear remains the dominant motive, has a detrimental effect on their wider relationships (Thoits 2013).² On the one hand, a lack of adequate maternal care and/or rejection by caregivers may cause children

to doubt their own worth and has the potential to lead to future mental health problems. On the other hand, the dominance of fear that may cause children to act in either an aggressive or submissive manner towards others hinders the formation of mutually rewarding person-to-person relationships.

Relating to Multiple Others

From the experience of infants, then, we can see that there is no need to confirm the existence of other selves. As Bolby's (1998) attachment theory suggests, the child's first knowledge is of the primary caregiver and is crucial for long-term healthy development. During the early phase of attachment, research indicates that there is growing awareness of self-developing through the child's tactual relationship with the caregiver (Meadows 2013). In other words, the notion of 'I' or self or identify comes into being as one part of 'you-and-I'. In a healthy caregiver-infant relationship, the child's self-knowledge is discovered through the dual experience of belonging with the other, and yet also being able to exist in opposition to that same other.³ Moreover, it is from this early discrimination of the self, establishment of boundaries around a personal self, and discrimination of the other that children learn to empathize – 'to feel and think and act ... for the other' (Macmurray 1961, 91; Kerr and Bowen 1988) - and thus has the potential to strengthen their future relationships. When the caregiver does not help the child to create personal boundaries, the child's relations with others, even into adulthood, remain truncated, as the child remains too close or enmeshed with the caregiver (Carter and McGoldrick 1999).

In addition, it is more than likely that the child will encounter several others, either as co-caregivers or as other persons with whom the primary caregiver has relationships (grandparents, for example). Just as children learn to deeply connect as well as distinguish the self and the other through the relationship with primary caregivers (Bolby 1998), children also learn to discriminate between the different caregivers and/or others with whom they come into contact (Howes, Rodning, Galluzzo, and Myers 1988). In this way, Macmurray maintains: 'The Other acquires the character of a community of which I am a member' (1961, 77). From the initial relationship with the primary caregiver, children's relationships with others will optimally expand throughout their lifetimes, incorporating an extended network of family and friends that expands into the wider interconnected systemic networks of society (Kerr and Bowen 1988). Far from growing up to be an autonomous individual then, infants grow into an increasingly related persons.⁴

Relational Motivation in Adulthood

As the primary other becomes a collection of others in widening circles of relation, the early motivation of the child-caregiver relationship may remain a determining factor in the child's interactions. Moreover, it is Macmurray's contention that whole societies may become negatively motivated towards other societies and thus engage in aggressive and submissive actions. Bowen (Kerr and Bowen 1988) refers to this phenomenon as societal regression: a whole society condition that makes it more difficult for groups and individuals to mature, since efforts to grow are continually subverted by immature social contexts.

There is a moral issue at stake here, which ‘has its ground in the relation of persons’ (Macmurray 1961, 116). As we have seen, on the one hand, when fear dominates over love, action serves to benefit the self rather than the other, and ultimately thwarts the relationship; on the other hand, positive relationships motivated by love are required for persons to flourish. Thus, ‘a morally right action is an action which intends ... the harmonious interrelation of agents’ (Macmurray 1961, 119). Stated differently, Macmurray is describing homeostasis in a system context (Magnavita 2012).

To further clarify what is entailed in the moral and ‘harmonious interrelation’ of persons, Macmurray makes a useful distinction between ‘societies’ and ‘communities’. The key factor in distinguishing between these two categories is the nature of the relations therein. In a society, the relations need not be personal nor fully positive, but for genuine community they must be so. In Macmurray’s words, in societies we find ‘people co-operating for certain specific purposes’, whereas in communities persons ‘are bound together by something deeper than any purpose’ (Macmurray 1941a, 22).

Bowen (Kerr and Bowen 1988) discusses this scale of relationality by referring to inherent forces for ‘togetherness’ and ‘individuality’ that operate on a fluctuating continuum. That is, humans constantly seek to balance how to affiliate with other people and simultaneously operate as a separate self. Optimally, a balance occurs, although extremes of togetherness and individuality are possible. In Macmurray’s schema, a community represents a balance of the two forces, whereas a society emphasizes individuality in service of productivity or functions.

To illustrate these points, Macmurray (1941a, 22) suggests that trade unions and sports clubs fit his definition of society, whereas a healthy family suits his definition of a

community. This is not to say, however, that a society may not also be a community nor that a community may not become a society. While we may join a trade union for protection in the workplace and a sports club for health benefits, it is possible and even likely that we will develop deeper and more mutual relations with some of the members. Likewise, while we may love our family members and intend to maintain positive relationships with them, this may not always be possible. Thus, while societies may serve to provide for a range of conditional needs, it is only in communities that the human need for reciprocal relations can be satisfied. In short, a society is joined as a means to an end, whereas a community is enjoyed as an end-in-itself.

Nevertheless, just as the caregiver's actions require both the positive element of love and the negative element of fear in order to be effective, communities and societies have an essential connection with each other. For example, all citizens are bound up with national and international societies for the purpose of trade and economic exchange. In these societal relations, often with people we do not know and may never meet, we are concerned with the roles and functions of other people as opposed to being focused on their intrinsic worth as persons. These relations are, then, a means to an end. They provide us the means to enjoy our person-to-person relations and it is our person-to-person relations that are the goal.⁵ In colloquial terms, Macmurray is advocating the now popular phrase 'work to live, don't live to work'. We cannot exist in communities without the economic networks of societies, but society without community would be lonely and unfulfilling. In Macmurray's words, 'The functional life is *for* the personal life; the personal life is *through* the functional life' (1941c, 822 emphasis in the original).

Religion and Human Flourishing

Despite recognizing the importance of community for human flourishing, however, we cannot force it into being, nor can we enter into it by proxy (Myers 2008). Community requires face-to-face relations in which we give ourselves to others. As Macmurray notes, while the State can and should seek justice in the economic and indirect relations of its citizens, it cannot and should not be expected to create community. In a community, as we have seen, persons relate to one another in order to have fellowship, because they care for one another, whereas the State uses fear to enforce the law. Thus, he claims, ‘the State is *for* the community; the community is *through* the State’ (1941b, 856 emphasis in the original). In contrast with the State then, Macmurray suggests that religion can be the source of fellowship or community. We should note, however, that Macmurray’s vision is of a religion accessible to all people and undogmatic in its approach. He envisages a religion that does not require ‘special’ experiences and that remains open to criticism, development and the acceptance of diverse beliefs. Interestingly, Macmurray’s perspective elucidated many decades ago is largely consonant with contemporary approaches to spirituality in the positive psychology literature, where spirituality is viewed as a universal human phenomenon that transcends formalized and institutionalized boundaries. Rather than focusing on differences in religious traditions, positive psychologists tend to examine the key dimensions (namely hope, gratitude, forgiveness and self-compassion) that are commonalities found among faith traditions that promote human flourishing (Fave, Brdar, Vella-Brodrick, and Wissing 2013; Miller-Perrin and Mancuso, 2015; Rye, Wade, Fleri, and Kidwell 2013).

According to Macmurray (1961), the traditional emphasis on the intellect and the individual, in the global west, has distorted the perception and practice of religion, turning it into something exclusive, private and otherworldly. On the contrary, Macmurray contends, 'religion is the celebration of communion' (1961, 162) and is, therefore, an inclusive, practical and this-worldly activity. Thus, the healthy family, as a community that extends unconditional love and acceptance to its members, is, in fact, an appropriate as opposed to an infantile model for religion.

Systems thinking, while secular, endorses Macmurray's notion of a community extending unconditional love and acceptance to its members. Further, an inclusive religion, or other social group, seeks relations with others who are not part of the religious community. Such a position is called an 'open system' in systems theory: people and information from outside the group are welcomed, or at least tolerated, as the group endeavours to grow and remain flexible. Exclusive religious groups, however, restrict interaction with those outside the group. Systems theory refers to this exclusive stance as a 'closed system', one that is mostly internally focused and censoring of outside people and information (Guttman 1991). Macmurray (1961) is critical of closed systems and his concept of community indicates an open system.

As with other genuine communities then, if religion is to operate as a community, it must subordinate fear to love. Using the reported life and teachings of Jesus as found in the New Testament Gospels, Macmurray argues that Jesus' primary concern was the flourishing of humanity, and, consequently, that his focus was on person-to-person relations. In promoting positive relationships for human well-being, therefore, Jesus prefers the term 'friends' to the language of master and servants (John 15:15)⁶, as well as

promoting love and forgiveness rather than fear.⁷ In fact, Macmurray speaks to this issue in at least two essays, citing Jesus' (see Matthew 8:26) contention that faith and fear are opposite human attributes (Macmurray 1979, 'To Save From Fear', 6 and 1973, 'The Philosophy of Jesus', 8). Furthermore, Jesus' life and words clearly indicate that he operated as an open system by mingling with people outside of the religious hierarchy, including societal outcasts, such as tax collectors, Romans and lepers (see Matthew 8:2-10 and 11:19).

Hence, Macmurray's account of religion, which differs from his inherited Calvinism, emphasizes the importance of faith rather than belief: religious faith is indicative of a positive attitude of mind and does not require belief in particular doctrinal statements (Duncan 1990, 123-7). In addition, Macmurray, as we have already seen, insists that fear is overcome by love. Again, he draws support for this from the biblical material, where Jesus is reported to have said 'Love your enemies' (see Matthew 5:44 and Luke 6:27). Moreover, Macmurray (1964) explains, damage to relationships caused by guilt and shame can be restored with forgiveness; hence Jesus statement that we should forgive 'seventy times seven' (Matthew 18:22).

Nevertheless, Macmurray is well aware that institutionalized religion falls short of the communities he describes. In particular, institutionalized Christianity has a history of schisms drawn on doctrinal lines, the promotion of subservience rather than equality and a focus on life after death rather than life in the present. Consequently, in spite of his use of the biblical material, Macmurray does not shy away from critiquing Christianity. He states: 'Until ... religion becomes a force for the creation of community, of the conscious community of men and women who know and appreciate and love one another, not

merely religion, but the life of mankind is immature and sub-rational' (1935, 155). In systems terms, these constricted religious institutions are closed systems engaged in societal regression (Kerr and Bowen 1988).

Conclusion

We have shown that Macmurray and Bowen use systems theory to explain the development of human beings in relationality. From the perspective of psychotherapy, the application of systems thinking to human relationality clearly implies the need to see persons within the context of their social networks, and, where possible, to meet key persons as well as the individuals. In family therapy, for example this would mean counselling the immediate family, not just one member of the family. Similarly, holistic treatment would mean taking moral and spiritual aspects of relationality seriously. Contemporary society is religiously plural and diverse, but this does not prevent the meeting for fellowship on the basis of our common humanity. Furthermore, in keeping with systems theory, Macmurray holds, as do other philosophers (Annis 1987), that humans need friendship in order to develop and flourish.⁸ As persons we are shaped by a network of relationships, and we are deeply involved in shaping the identity of others; this recognition is not just a matter of fact, it carries with it a profound ethical responsibility. We have the ability to humanize or to dehumanize other persons; we can act toward others with hostility or we can extend the opportunity for positive personal relationships. We can adopt an open or a closed system.

Notes

¹ While language and speech normally form a key aspect of the ability to engage in 'reciprocal communication' (Macmurray 1961, 60), this does not rule out the possibility of finding alternative forms of communication, especially for the severely learning disabled. Indeed, chimpanzees have learned sign language even though their intellectual capabilities are thought to be lower than many cognitively challenged humans (Fouts and Mills 1998).

² This aspect of Macmurray's theory is supported by developmental child psychology. Klein, for example, confirms that a child's demonstrations of love or hate are conditioned by specific individuals and their behaviour towards that child (Klein and Riviere 1937, 57).

³ According to Davis and Wallbridge, D. W. Winnicott agrees with Macmurray that self-identity is formed through person-to-person relationships (Davis and Wallbridge 1981, 33). Family research supports this view as well (Carter and McGoldrick 1999; Kerr and Bowen 1988).

⁴ Referred to in feminist theology and systemic psychotherapy as the 'web of relationships' (Jantzen 1998, 149; Walters, Carter, Papp, and Silverstein 1991).

⁵ This is reminiscent of Kantian ethics where others should be ends and not means to our ends.

⁶ All biblical references are taken from the KJV, since this is the version Macmurray would have used.

⁷ It is significant for feminist theology that Macmurray does not promote servanthood.

⁸ Macmurray's description of friendship is similar to Aristotle's 'perfect' or 'primary' friendship.

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