

HISTORY AND TRADITION IN VIRTUE ETHICS

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Ethical theory is the one area of philosophy that possesses immediate importance because we can apply its conclusions to actual living, in contrast, for example, to metaphysics. How we determine what acts are moral and what morally objectionable obviously influences how we live our lives, if we are at all conscientious or self-aware (or possess a conscience). Personal morality is not necessarily a matter where theory precedes action, yet it is human after all to try to understand our own behavior, and in that manner to develop explicit standards for ourselves, and then on further consideration to try to understand how we came to believe and act on them, and then finally why others have a different understanding of what constitutes ethical behavior.

Ethical theory has applications on a social level as well, since it most often describes standards to judge how we relate to one another in a family or in society at large. Such questions as what parents owe to children or what the individual owes to the state, and

vice versa, are all matters that are dealt with under the broad rubric of ethical theory. In contemporary political terms, it seems evident that the Liberal state currently under construction in the United States presumes that individuals owe quite a great deal to the state in terms of taxes and obedience to regulations, while at the same time deserving the state's financial support and official recognition of their particular social group and style of living. Thus we may ask, What broad ethical principles influence or direct the policies of the current Obama administration? And if we oppose the ministrations of this new state—increasingly intrusive, ominously secular, and presumptively omniscient—what set of ethical principles are available to oppose it?

The answer to the first question is that the administration's statist policies are seemingly directed by a utilitarian theory of ethics supplemented by a doctrine of individual expressiveness; the answer to the second is that the most direct opposition is from conservative

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motives and organizations. The conservative opposition in turn is largely if somewhat vaguely influenced by the idea of personal liberty and responsibility, an attitude that has been associated with natural law ethics but that increasingly finds its philosophical expression in the newly developing theory of virtue ethics.

Virtue ethics is an expanding school of philosophy as indicated by the recent appearance of scholarly books and articles; it is noteworthy that the recent turn to virtue ethics is not an explicitly conservative response in the political or ideological sense but arises mostly because of the perceived inadequacies of those ethical theories that have appeared since Enlightenment times. Advocates of teaching virtue, such as William Bennett and Leon Kass, as well as many others these days, present moral education in terms of historical and fictional examples—more can be learned about true leadership from Washington’s return to Mount Vernon after the War of Independence than from Aristotle’s *Politics*, more about courage from Sam and Frodo’s quest than from Aristotle’s *Ethics*, it might be said. But this refers to the inculcation of virtue and is not really a theory of ethics.

But as a theory or comprehensive account, virtue ethics constitutes a repudiation of the possibility of developing theories of ethics as has been attempted since the seventeenth century, that is, since Hobbes. The historical nature of the case for virtue ethics was originated by two formidable advocates, the English philosopher G. E. M. Anscombe and the American philosopher (transplanted from England and Scotland) Alasdair MacIntyre. The thinking of both figures will provide the background for this essay.

Virtue ethics has as its theoretical basis a view of the history of ethical thought, a view expressed prior to MacIntyre’s writings, by

G.E.M. Anscombe in her article “Modern Moral Philosophy,” written in 1958. Anscombe argued in favor of three propositions; first, “it is not profitable for us at present to do moral philosophy,” and such efforts should be laid aside until at least a better understanding of human psychology is at hand; second, the concepts of *moral duty* and *moral obligation* and of “the moral sense of ‘ought’” should be jettisoned because they are no better than survivals from an earlier conception of ethics that no longer survives (Anscombe here means, as she states later on, the Christian faith formerly dominant in Europe); third, the differences between well-known English writers on moral philosophy “are of little importance.”¹

Anscombe’s presentation is accessible only by intense study and the unpacking of her article. She not only presumes a detailed knowledge of the history of ethical thought but also presents her arguments and analyses in an extremely condensed manner that gives an impression of, if not intellectual clarity, of formidable and profound thinking. (Anscombe was Wittgenstein’s philosophical heir, translator of his *Philosophical Investigations*, and his personal friend.) The article is an implicitly historical account supplemented by complex arguments that assume the reader’s ability to understand complex philosophical arguments in the mode of analytic philosophy. Nonetheless, the essence of her article is clear—that ethical philosophy since the end of the “dominance” of the Christian religion in Europe has been and will continue to be a failure.

The thought of Alasdair MacIntyre on fundamental ethical issues has been expressed over several decades in a series of essays and richly layered books that provide a record of the ethical, cultural, and political controversies of the modern age. As

expressed in his later writings, MacIntyre's fully developed theory of ethics is based on the idea of *traditions*, which are the bearers or manifestations of the different, and as MacIntyre explains, competing ethical ideas current in Western culture. His account of ethical traditions is expressed in his three best-known books, *After Virtue*, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Inquiry*, and *Whose Justice, Which Rationality?*

But prior to their publication, MacIntyre had already decided on a historical approach to the understanding of ethical theory that appears in his *A Short History of Ethics*, which employs a combination of historical and sociological approaches to describe the course of ethical theory in the West, proceeding from the ancient Greeks to the medievals, to the Scottish Enlightenment, Kant, utilitarianism, and twentieth-century ethicists including G. E. Moore. In every case, MacIntyre is concerned with the social and cultural contexts; thus, after a preparatory chapter, "The Philosophical Point of the History of Ethics," the volume proceeds with a chapter on the "prephilosophical history of the 'Good'" concentrating on the Homeric context of Greek thought and culture, and then to an account of Athenian culture as the context of the thought of the Sophists and Socrates; only then does MacIntyre write about Plato's ethical theory in an examination of the *Gorgias*.²

Besides his *Short History*, his historical *cum* sociological approach is evident in the passages and chapters devoted to the history of ethical thought in his later books. MacIntyre's detailed accounts of various ethical theories are not intended, however, to provide a "neutral" account, but rather an interpretation to support the entirety of MacIntyre's thesis about the nature of ethical traditions.

It may seem incongruous but it was developments in recent philosophy of science that

had a direct impact on MacIntyre's idea of traditions as bearers of ethical thought. Kuhn's theory of paradigms and Lakatos's account of research programs provided MacIntyre with a means to express clearly his basic idea that a particular ethical theory could not be properly understood without an intimate knowledge of the immediate social and historical contexts in which it was produced. Proceeding from a historical account of the development of ethical theory to a theory of ethics based on a historicist point of view was a definite point of transition; MacIntyre's theory of ethical traditions in broad form translates paradigms and research programs from the history of science, and as a means of understanding science itself, into the field of ethics. Not coincidentally, it was after writing the *Short History* and becoming acquainted with paradigm theory that MacIntyre wrote *After Virtue*, in which he first puts forth his theory of traditions. His traditional approach is further developed and defended in *WJWR*, which contains whole chapters on the history of ancient Greek culture, medieval theological ethics, the Scottish Enlightenment, etc. *Three Rival Versions* considers the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* as a unified expression, the development of modern neo-Thomism, and Nietzsche's provocatively destructive analyses. Of particular note is the idea of "untranslatability" in his later volume *Whose Justice, Which Rationality?*, which MacIntyre uses to describe the current situation in the West, where advocates of differing ethical and political traditions cannot find common ground for their debates. MacIntyre's thought here directly reflects Kuhn's well-known presentation of the "incommensurability" of scientific paradigms, a term MacIntyre also uses.³

Since MacIntyre's account of the history of ethical thought is detailed to the point where a reader must himself be a historian of

philosophic ethics to appreciate it fully, and because Anscombe in her essay devotes herself exclusively to English writers (especially pouring scorn on the Utilitarian philosopher Sidgwick), some of whom are no longer referred to in contemporary debates, a summary view of the history of ethical thought since the Enlightenment will be useful. In rough historical sequence, here are five versions of major ethical theories that are widely referred to in contemporary discussions and debates: contract theory (Hobbes, Locke), deontology (Kant), utilitarianism (Bentham, Mill), relativism (Benedict, Mead), egoism (Nietzsche, Rand). On a theoretical as well as a practical level, these are the competing traditions the presence of which MacIntyre assails as being so disparate and conflicting that they provide only moral confusion in the contemporary social context.⁴

But then, does virtue ethics itself rest on any intellectual basis other than historical criticism of ethical theory since the Enlightenment? What Anscombe does implicitly, MacIntyre makes explicit, rejecting the universal ideal of reason as exemplified in Enlightenment thinkers, for example, Kant and Bacon. As described by contemporary defenders of that ideal, “the Enlightenment ideal of a unified epistemology . . . discovers the foundational truths of physical and biological phenomena and unites them with an accurate understanding of humanity in its psychological, social, political, and aesthetic aspects.”⁵

MacIntyre, however, argues that any concept of universal reason in the Enlightenment sense is instantiated in a particular tradition or paradigm, since universal reason, if it exists, is not otherwise available to human beings and the human mind, aside, that is, from a particular ethical tradition. MacIntyre argues that Enlightenment liberalism does not provide access to a universal

reason by which to understand ethics and politics, for the ideal of universal reason is itself a tradition. In chapter 7 of *Whose Justice*, MacIntyre, after a long preparatory discussion, (finally) makes the point: “liberalism, which began as an appeal to alleged principles of shared rationality against what was felt to be the tyranny of traditions, has itself been transformed into a tradition whose continuities are partly defined by the interminability of the debate over such principles.”⁶

MacIntyre’s thesis in *After Virtue* is an extension of Anscombe’s argument, but places it in historical circumstances that extend from the pre-Socratics to modern times.⁷ *After Virtue* is MacIntyre’s signal work; all his prior writings lead up to it, and his subsequent writings are developments of points made in it. The book has attracted wide attention and influence (one liberal professor of the author’s acquaintance stated that he could not understand why that was). Its main intellectual contribution is to render the contemporary moral situation in the West comprehensible, for as MacIntyre continually points out, citizens of the West today face an incoherent mix of ethical traditions that conflict and contend with one another, a situation that leads to profound moral confusion. That this situation exists is well known; in her iconic *Coming of Age in Samoa* Margaret Mead pointed out that young women are faced with a conflict between religious requirements of chastity and the ideal of the sexual attractiveness promoted by advertising, and this in 1928.⁸

But other traditions contend as well, for example, those of “Kierkegaard, Kant, Diderot, Hume, [Adam] Smith.”⁹ As a resolution to this moral confusion that exists both on a theoretical and a practical level, MacIntyre proposes that we go back to the ancient and precisely Aristotelian mode of

doing ethical philosophy and concentrate on the concept of *virtue*. Anscombe had also made this point, that rather than trying in effect to distill the essence of “justice” and render an exact definition that can be applied generally, it is more useful to look at examples of what are without cavil seen as just actions by men universally acknowledged to be, because of a personal history of performing just acts, just men. In this view, more can be learned about justice by examining the careers of Lincoln and Washington than by a detailed comparison of Plato’s *Republic* to Rawls’s *Theory of Justice*.

How deep MacIntyre considers the moral confusion of our times to be is made evident by his initial presentation of the problem in *After Virtue*, in which he states, “My thesis entails that the language and appearances of morality persist even though the integral substance has to a large degree been fragmented and then in part destroyed.”¹⁰ His argument therefore must be based not only on a series of historical examples but also on an interpretation of how theories of ethics develop in particular historical, social, political, and cultural and religious circumstances. In *After Virtue* MacIntyre extends the method of historical analysis to develop the idea of ethical *traditions*, thereby describing each of the various theories of ethics in terms of their social and historical settings. MacIntyre’s analysis concludes with a treatment of virtue as it is exemplified in each of these traditions, and then of both virtue and ethical traditions in themselves.¹¹ It is here that the complications in his theory of ethics arrive.

Since in MacIntyre’s view an ethical tradition defines what virtue is according to circumstances of a particular historical time and place, historical relativism becomes a major problem, for how does one decide

which of the various contending traditions is the correct one? Having dismissed Enlightenment rationalism as one of a variety of different traditions, he has no overall conception of ethical reality obviously available to apply as a universal standard. MacIntyre, however, is not a relativist, and, lacking a universally applicable criterion, he must find a means of judging comparative validity by looking within the traditions themselves. His solution is twofold. First, to declare that, even though commitment to a tradition while living within it in effect forecloses a commitment to other, rival traditions, advocates of a tradition, nevertheless, can be self-critical, acknowledging certain difficulties or contradictions within the tradition and recognizing the necessity that it has to undergo further development if it is to succeed in the future.¹² This self-critical aspect (which is not apparent in Kuhn’s theory of paradigms) also makes it possible to acknowledge other traditions and make comparisons among traditions.

The second part of his solution is to take his stance on the tradition that is Aristotelian, Thomistic, and Augustinian as the means of making a final choice among competing ethical traditions. MacIntyre is a Catholic convert and has ended his career—which has shown a degree of restlessness as he gone from one academic post to another over time—to be finally settled as emeritus professor at the University of Notre Dame. He justifies his choice by what could be called a criterion of *competitive inclusion*. He puts the question directly in *Three Rival Versions*, where he compares in great detail what he terms the “encyclopaedic,” “genealogical,” and “traditional” (i.e., Aristotelian, Augustinian, Thomistic) forms of moral inquiry. “Is there any way in which one of these rivals might prevail over the others? One possible answer was supplied by Dante: that narrative prevails

over its rivals which is able to include its rivals within it, not only to retell their stories as episodes within its story, but to tell the story of the telling of their stories as such episodes.”¹³

Despite the complexity of his presentation, MacIntyre is pointing out simply that his tradition is the truest one because it can explain, and in comparative terms overcome, any of the rival traditions by explaining them in their own terms as well as in the terms of his chosen tradition. To use a biblical analogy, MacIntyre’s argument resembles the account in Exodus when Aaron drops his staff on the floor in front of Pharaoh and turns it into a live snake. But Pharaoh’s priests do the same with their staffs, turning them into snakes as well; the contest ends, however, when Aaron’s snake devours the Pharoanic snakes (Exodus 7:8–12). But is this solution sufficient to resolve the issue? His critics point out that MacIntyre’s commitment to Thomism is indirect, and much discussion among Catholic philosophers has taken place over the matter.¹⁴

But if the dangers of postmodernist relativism lurk, as is sometimes asserted, in MacIntyre’s comparative approach, to what extent is MacIntyre aware of it? Historicist accounts invite the inevitable question of what the nature of reality must be like in order to support such an account, for if reality itself is defined in terms of narrative or history, then it may appear that the human mind creates its own reality, without reference to any external, or “real,” reality. Like many critics of Kuhn’s theory of paradigms, MacIntyre lights on the issue of incommensurability, arguing that Kuhn goes too far in emphasizing this admittedly important phenomenon, since it renders Kuhn’s theory in effect an argument for irrationalism: “It is not just that the adherents of rival paradigms disagree [for Kuhn], but that *every* relevant area of rationality is invaded by that

disagreement.” MacIntyre expands on the point at length, citing in conclusion “Kuhn’s disregard for ontological truth.”¹⁵

Aware of the dilemma, how then does MacIntyre, within the terms and concepts of his own historicist theory of ethics, overcome it? In approaching the issue of an ontological basis for his ethical theory, MacIntyre refers to Aristotle’s “metaphysical biology” and attempts his own version in a short but resonant book, *Dependent Rational Animals*. In MacIntyre’s treatment of the issue, however, he does not in fact attempt a precisely “metaphysical” biology of his own, a la Aristotle. His approach in *Dependent Rational Animals* is to note two aspects of human nature: First, the close relationship between the human and animal species—a point well noted by Aristotle and Darwin; MacIntyre dotes on dolphins, the sleek aquatic mammal with advanced cognitive abilities. Second, MacIntyre, in an implicitly Christian vein, brings attention to the physical and emotional vulnerabilities of people and their interdependence—the adults guiding the young, the able-bodied assisting the disabled, the well-to-do helping the poor, the clear-headed instructing the confused—in effect, a discourse on human dependency and weakness,¹⁶ rather than a description of metaphysical architecture.

MacIntyre’s attempt at a biological basis of ethics seems to miss the point by not burrowing deeply enough into the question so as to be able to erect a metaphysical substructure that can support his historicist ethics. One reason for this, it is possible to infer, is that MacIntyre accepts the premise of modern biology that excludes teleological explanation as an essential part of Darwinian biology. In this respect, it is notable that he approvingly cites Larry Arnhart, who wrote a philosophical attempt at a naturalistic basis for “natural right” based on Darwinian evolution,

explicitly at one point comparing Darwin to Aquinas.¹⁷ Given this limitation, MacIntyre, primarily an ethicist, derives characteristics in *Dependent Rational Animals*—the animal ancestry and inherent weakness of human beings—that are of intrinsic interest to an ethicist’s understanding of human nature but that do not provide an ontology.

The lack of an ontological view can hardly be due to MacIntyre’s insufficient knowledge of Aristotle’s doctrine or the history of scientific ideas but is related to what was adverted to above, namely the resistance to or lack of necessity to provide an ontology when doing philosophy from a historicist perspective. For in a completely historicist perspective on philosophy, it is generally argued that a transhistorical view of things such as presented in a metaphysical ontology is inherently presumptuous, probably false, and certainly unverifiable, for no such general idea or Platonic form can be provided in a manner that transcends historical conditions. MacIntyre explicitly makes just this criticism of Enlightenment conceptions of rationality. Generally, historicists refuse to develop a general metaphysics or an ontology, which is as true of Vico and Collingwood as it is of Kuhn and MacIntyre. But what then does or can MacIntyre provide in lieu of an ontology or metaphysical structure? In fact, he provides two accesses to an objective, that is, nonrelativistic, theory of ethics.

First, as mentioned above, MacIntyre goes beyond Kuhn by providing within his view of traditions what Kuhn does not in his view of paradigms, namely a recognition that adherents of a tradition have of the critical nature of their own commitments and of their ability to compare their tradition with others. It is the knowledge of the possibility of internal contradiction that forces reliance on dialectic and criticism, which is as it were the method MacIntyre

utilizes, so that unlike paradigms, adherents to traditions may self-criticize, anticipate contradictions to their own tradition, cross-talk with adherents to competing traditions, and finally make a definitive comparison. MacIntyre carries out this approach fully in *Three Rival Versions*, where he compares the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition to two others in a detailed fashion.¹⁸

Second, in his overall treatment of ethical theories, including Enlightenment rationalism as a tradition, MacIntyre’s final conclusions about ethical reality are not based on a generalization from human nature (as is the case for natural law theory) but on a discernment that a certain set of virtues is necessary for living within any tradition at all.¹⁹ In this manner, MacIntyre may be said to be doing not ethics but “meta-ethics” in the postmodern vein. For MacIntyre, in agreement with postmodernist strictures, relies not on an ontology as such but rather on an analysis of the competing traditions—which of them is the most comprehensive and what virtues are commonly necessary for their maintenance—to find an objective basis for ethical theory.

If virtue ethics is to provide anything more than a means of illustrating and perhaps inculcating virtues, it must have a basis, again to use MacIntyre’s term, an “ontology.” “Ontology” in this context is not very specific and seems mainly intended to lead to further analysis of the very basis of virtue, ethics, and ethical reasoning. The most obvious and available such basis is natural law, the idea that nature itself, and human nature especially, indicates that moral and intellectual order permeates the universe.²⁰ Natural law has a long history in western thought, from Cicero to Aquinas to contemporary writers like John Finnis and others. The link is that if one has a conviction that natural law is real, then definition of individual

virtues becomes possible because they reflect the place, capacities, and responsibilities of human beings in the social order. Courage or chastity can be seen these days as merely reflections of the evolutionary history of mankind, but in a teleological conception of nature, these virtues become reflections of an individual's pursuit of the human good.

The question arises for MacIntyre, does his rejection of the Enlightenment ideal of universal reason also imply a rejection of natural law doctrine as exemplified, *inter alia*, by Aquinas? In response to a request made of the University of Notre Dame from no less than Pope Benedict XVI to examine the issue of natural law, MacIntyre did attempt to deal with the issue; his essay is, in this writer's opinion, not very useful, however. MacIntyre's contribution in the volume was to set up a position that was commented on by other scholars, but it is a reprise of his earlier writings and does not significantly develop his thought in this direction.²¹ The issue seems unresolvable, for while he adopts the tradition that includes natural law as a fundamental element, he, much as Kuhn, does not explicitly offer an ontological basis for his theory. Indeed, he seems precluded from doing so given his comparative methodology. The main issue here, however, is what do MacIntyre's issues with natural law mean for virtue ethics in general?

In her earlier article, Anscombe asserts that a full theory of virtue must rest on an account of human flourishing, and she explicitly looks to future developments in psychology to provide such an account. But what developments in psychology, in fact what *kind* of psychology, can Anscombe be thinking of? Certainly not the behavioral psychology of Watson and Skinner; and surely not the psychoanalytic theory of Freud, which is a combination of ancient myth and nineteenth-century determinism. What then—the fatu-

ous self-actuation psychology of Carl Rogers? The fact is that Anscombe cannot have been referring to any prominent school of modern psychology, scientific or otherwise, in her reference to human flourishing as the basis for a comprehensive theory of ethics. MacIntyre, in his search for an ontological basis of virtue ethics, as I have argued, loses an opportunity to describe a consonant theory of human psychology because he apparently accepts antiteleological Darwinian biology as settled science.

In both cases, the two leading theorists of virtue ethics have left the case for virtue ethics incomplete because there is no obvious basis in modern empirical science for a view of human nature, and nature in general, that supports such an account, which is teleological in the sense that nature at large has an intentionality that transcends the material (chemical, biological) bases of life. Here we must face the fact that, as Leo Strauss pointed out in *Natural Right and History*,²² modern science is in effect antiteleological, and that without a teleological conception of human nature and nature itself, natural right (or natural law) cannot find an intellectually coherent undergirding. If virtue ethics depends on a concept of natural law, then it too is precluded from intellectual coherence by the antiteleological conception of modern science. If this is so, then as some of MacIntyre's critics, including Martha Nussbaum, have claimed, his historicist account of ethics really depends in the last analysis on religious faith.²³

Here, however, MacIntyre's philosophical strategy of comparative traditions is useful, for his claim of virtue as the basis for ethical analysis does not rest on the Enlightenment view of rationalistic philosophy, which automatically precludes religious influence even at points where it would be most helpful, as in the recent debates about embryonic stem cell

research. Rather, it seems that MacIntyre, in effect, accepts the claim of his rationalistic critics that the Aristotelian-Thomistic-Augustinian tradition rests in part on religious faith, but then challenges the critics of virtue ethics by asking, to speak colloquially, “What have you got?” The alternative offered amounts to a dispiriting history of ineffective and unconvincing ethical traditions that do not speak to any large segment of the educated public, except for government policymakers who find in the utilitarian criterion of greatest happiness or in deontology the belief that they are doing what is universally right, and thus a motive for their ukases, regulations, and social prescriptions.

Ultimately, the final issue is that a concept of nature that is convincing must be found as an

alternative to antiteleological modern science. That the “scientific” conception of nature, based on Darwinian evolution, is insufficient for explaining the human mind, values, and the process of cognition has recently been made by Thomas Nagle in his controversial *Mind and Cosmos*.²⁴ Controversial because, as a member of the East Coast intellectual elite, Nagle’s presentation caused him to be considered a turncoat, provoking consternation in his peer group. But acknowledgement of the insufficiencies of the prevailing naturalistic mind-set is not sufficient. Rather, a positive concept of nature, what MacIntyre referred to as an ontology, that is teleological and to that extent rebuts scientific naturalism is ultimately required to support both virtue ethics and natural law.²⁵ †

1. G. E. M. Anscombe, “Modern Moral Philosophy”; www.philosophy.uncc.edu/mieldrid/cmt/mmp.htm; originally in *Philosophy*, 33, no. 124 (January, 1958).
2. Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998). It was its emphasis on the historical contexts of the development of ethical theories that enabled *A Short History of Ethics* to have significant influence; it has been translated into several languages and has gone through three editions and might be, on an international level, MacIntyre’s most influential work.
3. Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice, Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).
4. See James Rachels and Stuart Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (6th ed.), where these five positions are presented in a popular current textbook.
5. Paul R. Gross and Norman Levitt, *Higher Superstition* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 72.
6. Alasdair MacIntyre, *WJWR*, 335. The point is also made in *Three Rival Versions*, in the criticism of encyclopedic rationality by the traditional view.
7. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984).
8. Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928; New York: Harper, 2001), 138, 139. Mead’s point of view, however, was a form of cultural relativism, whereas MacIntyre’s is a defense of moral tradition.
9. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 51.
10. *Ibid.*, 5.
11. *Ibid.*, chaps. 15 and 16, 226–55.
12. MacIntyre, *WJWR*, 349–69.
13. Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 80, 81.
14. Christopher Lutz, *Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004). See the final chapters, four and five: “Is MacIntyre’s Philosophy Thomism?” and “Is MacIntyre’s Thomism Philosophy?”
15. “Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and Philosophy of Science,” in *The Tasks of Philosophy*, vol. 1 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 17.
16. Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1999).
17. *Ibid.*, 12, 125. Larry Arnhart, *Darwinian Natural Right: The Biological Ethics of Human Nature* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1998), 260–62.
18. *Three Rival Versions*; see also chapter 18 in *WJWR*, “The Rationality of Traditions,” 349–69.
19. No list of virtues, a la Aristotle is available in MacIntyre to this writer’s knowledge, but see, chapters 14 and 15 of *After Virtue*. MacIntyre’s treatment of the virtues he deems necessary for the practice of a tradition, as for other topics he treats, is consistently historical and available in the aforementioned chapters. Among the virtues that Aristotle specifically discusses in the *Nicomachean Ethics* are courage, temperance, truthfulness, justice, continence, and friendliness.
20. C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), 28–30, 95–120.
21. See *Intractable Disputes about the Natural Law* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 1–52. Lutz, writing from a Thomistic perspective, provides a detailed analysis; *Tradition*, 141–52.
22. Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1953), 8, 9.
23. Martha Nussbaum, cited in Lutz, *Tradition*, 168, 169.
24. Thomas Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature Is Almost Certainly False* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). See critical responses in *The Nation*, the *New York Review of Books*, etc.
25. For such attempts, see the three following: R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature*; Murphy and Ellis, *On the Moral Nature of the Universe: Theology, Cosmology, and Ethics*; Caiazza, *The Ethics of Cosmology*.