Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry

Alasdair MacIntyre

New paperback edition July 2006

"... Highly recommended." — Library Journal

"This book deepens and defends MacIntyre's claim that genuinely rational enquiry requires membership in a particular type of moral community. He offers the most persuasive recent restatement of the Thomist position on the relation of metaphysics to morality." — Richard Rorty

"... MacIntyre's project, here as elsewhere, is to put up a fight against philosophical relativism. ... The current form is the 'incommensurability,' so-called, of differing standpoints or conceptual schemes. Mr. MacIntyre claims that different schools of philosophy must differ fundamentally about what counts as a rational way to settle intellectual differences. Reading between the lines, one can see that he has in mind nationalities as well as thinkers, and literary criticism as well as academic philosophy. More explicitly, he labels and discusses three significantly different standpoints: the encyclopedic, the genealogical and the traditional. ... [T]he chapters on the development of Christian philosophy between Augustine and Duns Scotus are very interesting indeed. ... [MacIntyre] must be the past, present, future, and all-time philosophical historians' historian of philosophy." — The New York Times Book Review

Alasdair MacIntyre is research professor of philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. He is the author of numerous books, including After Virtue, A Short History of Ethics, and Whose Justice? Which Rationality?, all published by the University of Notre Dame Press.

Also by Alasdair MacIntyre:

After Virtue.

"A stunning new study of ethics by one of the foremost moral philosophers in the English-speaking world." — Newsweek

Whose Justice? Which Rationality?.

"MacIntyre has eminently succeeded in doing what it all too rare in our time' he compels us to rethink the most fundamental moral issues that we face as human beings." — Commonweal
**Alasdair MacIntyre**

**An Intellectual Biography**
Émile Perreau-Saussine, Nathan J. Pinkoski

**Summary**

This award-winning biography, now available for the first time in English, presents an illuminating introduction to Alasdair MacIntyre and locates his thinking in the intellectual milieu of twentieth-century philosophy.

Winner of the prestigious 2005 Philippe Habert Prize, the late Émile Perreau-Saussine’s *Alasdair MacIntyre: Une biographie intellectuelle* stands as a definitive introduction to the life and work of one of today’s leading moral philosophers. With Nathan J. Pinkoski’s translation, this long-awaited, critical examination of MacIntyre’s thought is now available to English readers for the first time, including a foreword by renowned philosopher Pierre Manent.

Amid the confusions and contradictions of our present philosophical landscape, few have provided the clarity of thought and shrewdness of diagnosis like Alasdair MacIntyre. In this study, Perreau-Saussine guides his readers through MacIntyre’s lifelong project by tracking his responses to liberalism’s limitations in light of the human search for what is good and true in politics, philosophy, and theology. The portrait that emerges is one of an intellectual giant who comes to oppose modern liberal individualism’s arguably singular focus on averting evil at the expense of a concerted pursuit of human goods founded upon moral and practical reasoning. Although throughout his career MacIntyre would engage with a number of theoretical and practical standpoints in service of his critique of liberalism, not the least of which was his early and later abandoned dalliance with Marxism, Perreau-Saussine convincingly shows how the Scottish philosopher came to hold that Aristotelian Thomism provides the best resources to counter what he perceives as the failure of the liberal project.

**Contributor Bio**

Émile Perreau-Saussine (1972–2010) was a lecturer in the Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Cambridge.

Nathan J. Pinkoski is a research fellow and director of academic programs at the Zephyr Institute.

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**A Short History of Ethics**

**A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to the Twentieth Century, Second Edition**
Alasdair MacIntyre

**Summary**

*A Short History of Ethics* is a significant contribution written by one of the most important living philosophers. For the second edition Alasdair MacIntyre has included a new preface in which he examines his book “thirty years on” and considers its impact. It remains an important work, ideal for all students interested in ethics and morality.

**Contributor Bio**

Alasdair MacIntyre is Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Contemporary Aristotelian Studies in Ethics and Politics at London Metropolitan University and Rev John A. O’Brien Senior Research Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. He is the author of numerous books, including *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory, A Short History of Ethics, and Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition*, all published by the University of Notre Dame Press.
Against the Self-Images of the Age
Essays on Ideology and Philosophy
Alasdair MacIntyre

Summary
Alasdair MacIntyre is one of the few professional philosophers whose writings span both technical analytical philosophy and those general moral or intellectual questions that laymen often suppose to be the province of philosophy but that are seldom discussed within its bounds. The unity of this book—made up both of original and previously published pieces—lies in its attempt to expose this dichotomy and to link beliefs and moral theories with philosophical criticism. The author successively criticizes Christianity, Marxism, and psychoanalysis for their failure to express the forms of thought and action that constitute our contemporary social life, and argues that a greater understanding of our complex world will require a more thorough inquiry into the philosophy of the social sciences.

Contributor Bio
Alasdair MacIntyre is Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Contemporary Aristotelian Studies in Ethics and Politics at London Metropolitan University and Rev John A. O’Brien Senior Research Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. He is the author of numerous books, including After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory, A Short History of Ethics, and Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition, all published by the University of Notre Dame Press.

Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor, and the Demise of Naturalism
Reunifying Political Theory and Social Science
Jason Blakely

Summary
Today the ethical and normative concerns of everyday citizens are all too often sidelined from the study of political and social issues, driven out by an effort to create a more “scientific” study. This book offers a way for social scientists and political theorists to reintegrate the empirical and the normative, proposing a way out of the scientism that clouds our age. In Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor, and the Demise of Naturalism, Jason Blakely argues that the resources for overcoming this divide are found in the respective intellectual developments of Charles Taylor and Alasdair MacIntyre. Blakely examines their often parallel intellectual journeys, which led them to critically engage the British New Left, analytic philosophy, phenomenology, continental hermeneutics, and modern social science. Although MacIntyre and Taylor are not sui generis, Blakely claims they each present a new, revived humanism, one that insists on the creative agency of the human person against reductive, instrumental, technocratic, and scientistic ways of thinking. The recovery of certain key themes in these philosophers’ works generates a new political philosophy with which to face certain unprecedented problems of our age. Taylor’s and MacIntyre’s philosophies give social scientists working in all disciplines (from economics and sociology to political science and psychology) an alternative theoretical framework for conducting research.

Contributor Bio
Jason Blakely is assistant professor of political science at Pepperdine University.
**After Virtue**

**A Study in Moral Theory, Third Edition**

Alasdair MacIntyre

**Summary**

When *After Virtue* first appeared in 1981, it was recognized as a significant and potentially controversial critique of contemporary moral philosophy. *Newsweek* called it “a stunning new study of ethics by one of the foremost moral philosophers in the English-speaking world.” Since that time, the book has been translated into more than fifteen foreign languages and has sold over one hundred thousand copies. Now, twenty-five years later, the University of Notre Dame Press is pleased to release the third edition of *After Virtue*, which includes a new prologue “After Virtue after a Quarter of a Century.”

In this classic work, Alasdair MacIntyre examines the historical and conceptual roots of the idea of virtue, diagnoses the reasons for its absence in personal and public life, and offers a tentative proposal for its recovery. While the individual chapters are wide-ranging, once pieced together they comprise a penetrating and focused argument about the price of modernity. In the Third Edition prologue, MacIntyre revisits the central theses of the book and concludes that although he has learned a great deal and has supplemented and refined his theses and arguments in other works, he has “as yet found no reason for abandoning the major contentions” of this book. While he recognizes that his conception of human beings as virtuous or vicious needed not only a metaphysical but also a biological grounding, ultimately he remains “committed to the thesis that it is only from the standpoint of a very different tradition, one whose beliefs and presuppositions were articulated in their classical form by Aristotle, that we can understand both the genesis and the predicament of moral modernity.”

**Contributor Bio**

Alasdair MacIntyre is Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Contemporary Aristotelian Studies in Ethics and Politics at London Metropolitan University and Rev John A. O’Brien Senior Research Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. He is the author of numerous books, including *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, *A Short History of Ethics*, and *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition*, all published by the University of Notre Dame Press.

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**The MacIntyre Reader**

Kelvin Knight

**Summary**

Alasdair MacIntyre is one of the most controversial philosophers and social theorists of our time. He opposes liberalism and postmodernism with the teleological arguments of an updated Thomistic Aristotelianism. It is this tradition, he claims, which presents the best theory so far about the nature of rationality, morality, and politics. This is the first reader of MacIntyre’s groundbreaking work. It includes extracts from and his own synopses of two famous books from the 1980s, *After Virtue* and *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* as well as the whole of several shorter works and two interviews. Together, these pieces constitute not only a representative collection of his work but also the most powerful and accessible presentation of his arguments yet available. *The MacIntyre Reader* concludes with Kelvin Knight’s clear and insightful overview of MacIntyre’s central ideas and their development in his writings. Students will find this book an excellent introduction to one of the great thinkers of our time.

**Contributor Bio**

Kelvin Knight is Senior Lecturer in Politics at the University of North London.
Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry
Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition
Alasdair MacIntyre

Summary
Alasdair MacIntyre—whom Newsweek has called "one of the foremost moral philosophers in the English-speaking world"—here presents his 1988 Gifford Lectures as an expansion of his earlier work Whose Justice? Which Rationality? He begins by considering the cultural and philosophical distance dividing Lord Gifford's late nineteenth-century world from our own. The outlook of that earlier world, MacIntyre claims, was definitively articulated in the Ninth Edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, which conceived of moral enquiry as both providing insight into and continuing the rational progress of mankind into ever greater enlightenment. MacIntyre compares that conception of moral enquiry to two rival conceptions also formulated in the late nineteenth century: that of Nietzsche's Zur Genealogie der Moral and that expressed in the encyclical letter of Pope Leo XIII Aeterni Patris.

The lectures focus on Aquinas's integration of Augustinian and Aristotelian modes of enquiry, the inability of the encyclopaedists' standpoint to withstand Thomistic or genealogical criticism, and the problems confronting the contemporary post-Nietzschean genealogist. MacIntyre concludes by considering the implications for education in universities and colleges.

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Alasdair MacIntyre is Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Contemporary Aristotelian Studies in Ethics and Politics at London Metropolitan University and Rev John A. O'Brien Senior Research Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. He is the author of numerous books, including After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory, A Short History of Ethics, and Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition, all published by the University of Notre Dame Press.

Hume's Ethical Writings
Selections from David Hume
Alasdair MacIntyre

Summary
Writing in an age that exalted reason, the Scottish-born skeptic David Hume was the first modern philosopher to emphasize the role of psychology, or "passion," in the formulation of moral judgments and ethical systems. Included in this edition of his writings is the entire text of An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals and selections from other works such as A Treatise on Human Nature and Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion.

Alasdair MacIntyre clarifies the relationship of Hume's intellect to his Calvinist background and cogently summarizes his importance to the development of moral philosophy.

Contributor Bio
Alasdair MacIntyre is Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Contemporary Aristotelian Studies in Ethics and Politics at London Metropolitan University and Rev John A. O'Brien Senior Research Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. He is the author of numerous books, including After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory, A Short History of Ethics, and Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition, all published by the University of Notre Dame Press.
Whose Justice? Which Rationality?
Alasdair MacIntyre

Summary
*Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, the sequel to *After Virtue*, is a persuasive argument of there not being rationality that is not the rationality of some tradition. MacIntyre examines the problems presented by the existence of rival traditions of inquiry in the cases of four major philosophers: Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, and Hume.

Contributor Bio
Alasdair MacIntyre is Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Contemporary Aristotelian Studies in Ethics and Politics at London Metropolitan University and Rev John A. O'Brien Senior Research Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. He is the author of numerous books, including *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory, A Short History of Ethics*, and *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition*, all published by the University of Notre Dame Press.

Marxism and Christianity
Theology
Alasdair MacIntyre

Summary
Contending that Marxism achieved its unique position in part by adopting the content and functions of Christianity, MacIntyre details the religious attitudes and modes of belief that appear in Marxist doctrine as it developed historically from the philosophies of Hegel and Feuerbach, and as it has been carried on by latter-day interpreters from Rosa Luxemburg and Trotsky to Kautsky and Lukacs. The result is a lucid exposition of Marxism and an incisive account of its persistence and continuing importance.

Contributor Bio
Alasdair MacIntyre is Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Contemporary Aristotelian Studies in Ethics and Politics at London Metropolitan University and Rev John A. O'Brien Senior Research Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. He is the author of numerous books, including *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory, A Short History of Ethics*, and *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition*, all published by the University of Notre Dame Press.
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