politans regarding the role of loyalty in morality, and comes down on the side of the cosmopolitans.

Overall, Jollimore’s book is an excellent introduction to the philosophy of loyalty, bringing some clarity to the vexing virtue. Opposing himself to thinkers like John Kleinig, who take the high ground that motives of loyalty dispose us to act in morally good ways or else are not loyal motives, Jollimore’s book aims to show what makes loyalty both valuable and a moral hazard. On the one hand, it represents unchosen obligations that can ruin one’s moral life with its demands, and it can make immoral actions (like war crimes) “appear to wear the mantle of virtue” (100). On the other hand, as he argues while thinking about differences between sheriff Ed Tom Bell and psychopath Anton Chigurh in the Coen brothers’ film No Country for Old Men, “If my loyalties are among the things that make me the individual I am, then it seems at least possible that a person who had no loyalties would be, quite literally, no one at all” (101).

Joshua W. Schulz
DeSales University


Two books interacting with the philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre have been recently published. MacIntyre has praised each of them, describing one as “first-rate” and the other as “a book of the highest interest.”

Christopher Lutz’s Reading Alasdair MacIntyre’s After Virtue is a commentary and guide to MacIntyre’s most famous book. Lutz is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology. His recent book is composed of seven chapters. The first chapter is a very helpful and accessible summary of the background to After Virtue (AV) in MacIntyre’s early years as a Marxist wrestling with the basis for his moral objections to Stalinist atrocities and the failure and manipulation of deterministic social science. This chapter would be an ideal heuristic preparation for students approaching AV for the first time. Lutz’s second chapter explains very clearly the meaning of the famous “disquieting suggestion” in the opening chapter of AV, and applies it to its historical con-
text in the rise of modern moral philosophy. Chapters 3–6 are the heart of Lutz’s book, and divide *AV* into two parts: the critical argument, and the constructive argument. Chapter 3 is a summary of the critical argument in the first half of *AV*, and includes a chapter-by-chapter summary of the first nine chapters of *AV*. In Chapter 4, Lutz provides a commentary explaining the critical argument. Similarly, Chapter 5 is a summary of the constructive argument of *AV*, and again provides a chapter-by-chapter summary of the last nine chapters of *AV*, along with a summary of the postscript to the Second Edition. Chapter 6 is a commentary on those last nine chapters and on the postscript. Chapter 7 provides a brief summary of MacIntyre’s major publications since *AV*, as well as some of the more significant publications explaining or engaging MacIntyre’s work since *AV*.

Lutz’s book possesses a number of excellent features. To an even greater extent than in his previous book (*Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre*, Lexington, 2004), Lutz translates and condenses the heavier style and content of MacIntyre’s prose into material easily accessible to plain (undergraduate and graduate) persons. This is the clearest, most concise and accurate summary of *AV* I have seen. Second, Lutz helpfully summarizes the essential positions and arguments in MacIntyre’s earlier period, drawing extensively from MacIntyre’s prior publications to provide an intellectual history that accurately frames the context in which *AV* was written. Third, evident throughout the book is the *telos* of making *AV* accessible to persons who come to it without a background knowledge of its terms and ideas. The clarity and accessibility of the book are the obvious fruit of Lutz’s pedagogical experience using *AV* in the classroom, and honing his lecture notes. Even after I had read only the first chapter, I had already concluded that this would be a required text whenever I assign *AV* in the classroom. That conclusion was only further solidified by the time I reached the conclusion.

Jeffrey Nicholas’s *Reason, Tradition, and the Good* addresses the failure of reason in modernity to bring about a just society. Nicholas (Department of Philosophy, Providence College) has written a book engaging Jürgen Habermas’s notion of communicative rationality in response to the early Frankfurt School’s conception of rationality, and applying and developing Alasdair MacIntyre’s notion of tradition-constituted rationality to the question of rationality and the human capacity to evaluate ends. In this book Nicholas aims to take on the prevalent attitude in modernity called “subjective rationality,” characterized by its implicit skepticism concerning the ability of reason to evaluate ends, and holds forth as an alternative the substantive reason situated within traditions and capable of evaluating ends, with the ultimate goal of setting out a conception of reason capable of grounding a critical theory of society.
Reason, Tradition, and the Good consists of five chapters. In the first chapter Nicholas shows the need for substantive reason. He does this by presenting a summary of Max Horkheimer’s argument that the Enlightenment has failed because of its conception of reason as subjective rationality. Nicholas analyzes subjective rationality into formal rationality and instrumental rationality, and argues that under such rationality persons are reified, dehumanized, and deprived of the very emancipation that the Enlightenment project held forth.

In the second chapter Nicholas examines Habermas’s theory of communicative rationality as a response to Horkheimer’s philosophy of consciousness. What subjective rationality and objective rationality fail to include, argues Nicholas, is intersubjectivity—a fact remedied by Habermas’s conception of rationality situated in the procedures by which speakers reach mutual understanding and agreement. But Nicholas, following the work of Charles Taylor, shows why Habermas’s theory of communicative rationality is nevertheless still deficient, because it remains neutral “over competing conceptions of the good,” making it incapable of adjudicating questions regarding the good, including the evaluation of subordinate ends in relation to the good. According to Nicholas, Habermas’s theory fails to include the fundamental historicity of reason, that is, its necessary embeddedness in a tradition shared and maintained within a community.

In the third chapter Nicholas shows how MacIntyre’s critique of modernity is in agreement with Horkheimer’s in various respects, and presents as an alternative MacIntyre’s notion of tradition-constituted rationality, which provides precisely the historicity of reason. Here Nicholas develops MacIntyre’s position by making explicit within MacIntyre’s project the interrelation of tradition and substantive reason. Tradition-constituted rationality includes a conception of the good, and thus allows the evaluation of ends through a reason informed by this conception. Here also, Nicholas analyzes certain failures of the Frankfurt School tradition to show why MacIntyre’s account is a superior alternative. He also examines whether within MacIntyre’s account, tradition-constituted rationality is capable of grounding a critical theory of society within every tradition, by which existing forms of power and abuse of power can be critically evaluated.

The fourth chapter shows how reason under MacIntyre’s account of tradition-constituted rationality is capable of evaluating ends in relation to the conception of the good provided by the tradition in which that rationality is embedded. Here Nicholas examines three particular cultural traditions (Roman Catholicism, Zande magic, and Lakota), and shows how within each the concepts of tradition, the good, and reason are interrelated, especially in the way in which shared conceptions of goods and the
good are held within each tradition, its cosmology, and its understanding of what a good life is. In this way each tradition’s conception of the good shapes and determines its standards concerning what are good reasons for kinds of action.

In his fifth and final chapter, Nicholas first considers and responds to two objections: Donald Davidson’s charge of incoherence, and the relativism objection. Nicholas summarizes and explains MacIntyre’s responses to these objections. Nicholas then examines MacIntyre’s account of the way traditions advance through stages, showing how a community can come to perceive the inadequacies of its own tradition especially in its encounters with other traditions, and the epistemic crises such encounters may provoke. Here Nicholas utilizes Charles Taylor’s *ad hominem* arguments that do not appeal to logically established ahistorical criteria, but rather to standards shared between members of the respective traditions in dialogue, such that through a limited “fusion of horizons” what is mutually recognized as true and good in each of two traditions is brought together into a ‘third’ language. This general account, Nicholas claims, can explain how progress within traditions can be reasonable, and how it can be reasonable to abandon one tradition in order to embrace another. Nicholas concludes this book by showing how his theory of substantive reason, developed from within the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition through an engagement with the Marxist tradition and particularly the Frankfurt School, lays the necessary groundwork for a critical theory of society aimed at social justice and freedom, and points to the need for further development of a philosophical anthropology with a corresponding natural law and philosophy of education in which persons learn their own tradition in order to make use of the substantive reason whereby this critical theory is realized.

I have only a few minor criticisms of this book, and some of these are due to the limited nature of the project Nicholas takes on here, which he intends to address in a succeeding volume. I found his criticisms of neo-Thomism to be somewhat less than fair, but admittedly it was difficult to determine whether these criticisms were merely Horkheimer’s or also Nicholas’s. I also would like to have seen Nicholas relate the Frankfurt School’s goal of emancipation to the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition’s concept of the common good. Nicholas in this work seems to be taking emancipation as the given end of a critical theory which he seeks to aid by way of resources drawn from the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition. But that raises the question whether the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition also has something important to say about the goal of emancipation in relation to the common good, and whether taking emancipation as an end abstracted from the common good does justice to the Aristotelian-Thomistic
tradition. Overall however, in this work Nicholas has brought the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition into dialogue and engagement with the Frankfurt School tradition. Nicholas develops MacIntyre’s theory and extends its application to the work on a critical theory of society, showing where Habermas’s theory is inadequate, and how MacIntyre’s tradition-constituted reason addresses that inadequacy with an historical conception of reason that makes possible the evaluation of ends. Nicholas also develops MacIntyre’s theory by elucidating the relation of tradition and substantive reason, especially through his examination of its role in the case of particular traditions. In these ways, among others described above, Nicholas has given us a work that helpfully advances the practice of philosophy by bringing these two traditions, and thus their respective communities, into a potentially fruitful engagement.

Bryan Cross

Mt. Mercy University


Andrew Yuengert’s *Approximating Prudence* is an important argument comparing practical wisdom (as understood in the Aristotelian/Thomistic tradition) with economic models of choice. Scholars concerned with the social teaching of the Church who want to think through the place of economics and economic models will find Yuengert’s argument informative, engaging, and provocative. This is a serious piece of work advancing a line of reasoning that deserves attention.

In the tradition of the virtues that shapes the social teaching of the Church, prudence or practical wisdom is a key virtue—perhaps in some ways the most important of the cardinal virtues. As the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* puts it, prudence is “the virtue that makes it possible to discern the true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means for achieving it.” The *Compendium*, after distinguishing between prudence and simulacra such as shrewdness or utilitarian calculation, states that prudence “requires the mature exercise of thought and responsibility in an objective understanding of a specific situation and in making decisions according to a correct will.” This gives rise to several questions. Should utilitarian calculation simply be dismissed? Aren’t