



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on June 21, 2025

To MAGA, We Don't Need "Virtue-signaling," but Pure Virtue Itself

It's a shame, and a sign of the times, that we mostly hear the term "virtue" via that misbegotten newer term "virtue-signaling." Oh, the critique the latter denotes is absolutely valid, but packaging matters. (Thus do I use "value-signaling" instead.) Illustrating why was a reader reaction to one of my articles years ago, in which I mentioned virtue.

"No, no," the man essentially said (I'm paraphrasing), "talking about that is how you end up with virtue-signaling!"

Clearly and sadly, the fellow's only acquaintance with "virtue" was through that guilt-by-association pejorative. He apparently had no idea that it references, to define it properly, that "set of objectively good moral habits." He'd perhaps no inkling that the virtues began being discovered millennia ago and that Greek philosopher Aristotle started systematizing them. He'd perhaps no clue that the Founding Fathers emphasized virtue, warning that it was a prerequisite for liberty. And he certainly hadn't the foggiest notion that no nation can truly be civilized without virtue imbuing its people.

Bringing this all-important issue to the fore is the recent death of philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre, author of 1981's [After Virtue](#). Most people haven't heard of him, and that's a shame. Because, as one writer put it a week ago, MacIntyre "has died, but his philosophy of virtue should be resurrected."

What Really Ails the West

I must confess that I, too (much to my chagrin), was not acquainted with MacIntyre. After learning about him, though, it's apparent he was, as they say, "a brother from another mother." As to what he propounded, the aforementioned writer, American Thinker's Chris Boland, [wrote](#) last Saturday:

In laying the foundation for his thesis, MacIntyre asks the reader to imagine a post-apocalyptic world where society attempts to rebuild, but the building blocks of their technological society have been obliterated. All that remains are [discrete] fragments of information without context or an overarching theory of how things work (e.g.,



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understanding electricity without the benefit of Watt, Ohm, Edison, or Tesla).

In terms of moral philosophy, MacIntyre convincingly argues that contemporary Western society exists in a post-apocalyptic world. He asserts that the Western tradition of critical evaluation and a foundational orientation toward virtue have been eroded and ultimately abandoned. From Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, and others, the West lost faith in critical reasoning and the belief that transcendent truths were discoverable.

Actually, the problem goes beyond that. As I've [often emphasized](#), even [citing relevant studies](#), most Americans today *do not even believe in Truth*, properly understood. (Note: "Truth" is transcendent, existing apart from man, by its very nature. Thus is "objective truth" a redundancy and "relative truth" an oxymoron. Remember, controlling the language of the debates is *imperative*.)

Of course, it follows that if there were no Truth, there could be no "morality," also objective by definition. And if there were no morality, there could be no "objectively good moral habits" — aka virtues. This is why we today instead hear much talk about "values."

Why Virtue Matters Like Life Itself

The term "values" is, as G.K. Chesterton would put it, part of the "atheistic literary style." Saying "I have values" is as meaningful as saying "I have thoughts." Mother Teresa had values, but so did Adolf Hitler and Attila the Hun. Values are not good by definition; they're just things we happen to value by definition. A saint treasuring holiness and a sociopath treasuring hatefulness both have values — but only one exhibits virtue.

To further illustrate the distinction here, we might call someone virtuous but not "valuable," not any more than we'd label a chair or anything else that occupies space and has mass "matterous." There's nothing notable about embodying something everyone/thing has and which is present by default.

So why is virtue the key to preserving civilization? To analogize it, imagine a land's cars, and other machinery, were fast becoming inoperable because we'd entered a dark age. The principles of mechanics were largely forgotten. The obvious solution would be to rediscover them or recruit the few still expert in them to administer training.

Now, is it any different when civilization experiences not mechanical-ability decay but moral decay? The solution to demoralization, as in the process of the corruption of morals, is *moralization*. As with mechanics, too, the key is to discover the principles of morality and cultivate them.

And if morality came in a jar, those principles — the virtues — would be on the ingredients label. As to specificity, they include: faith, hope, honesty, charity, generosity, fortitude (courage), justice, temperance, prudence, chastity, diligence, patience, kindness, forgiveness, humility, and love.

The Consequences of an "After Virtue" Society

So the formula is as simple to understand as it is difficult to effect. As ancient Greek philosopher Plato noted, children should ideally be raised in an atmosphere of nobility and grace. For this can develop in them an *emotional* attachment to virtue. Once accomplished, too, they'll be more likely to accept the dictates of reason upon reaching the age of reason.

Tragically, though, far easier is "developing" in children an emotional attachment to vice. (Then coming with the "age of reason" will be a very unreasonable person. As to this, just think of those ideologists



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among us who react to facts with emotion.) Regarding how this is done, just take a gander at modern popular culture.

As to specificity, consider one symptom of virtue's lack: the relatively wide embrace of socialism. British leader Winston Churchill called this ideology the "philosophy of failure, the creed of ignorance, and the gospel of envy." This tells the tale, too. The socialist spirit preys on man's sin, on envy in particular. Envy, however, is negated by the virtues of charity, generosity, prudence, kindness, and love. A people characterized by these qualities cannot be seduced by socialism. This is just one example, of course.

In fact, virtue isn't just a solution — it's the *only* solution. As famed late architect Buckminster Fuller counseled, "You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete." If we want to fight "social justice," and socialism and all the other destructive isms, don't *just* fight them. Replace them with the superior virtue model and render them irrelevant.

And the good news is that we don't even have to build a new model, but just embrace an eternal one that was discovered for us long, long ago.



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