

The Origins Of Virtue By Matt Ridley

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Moral Origins University of Chicago Press

The relation between virtue and knowledge is at the heart of the Socratic view of human excellence, but it also points to a central puzzle of the Platonic dialogues: Can Socrates be serious in his claims that human excellence is constituted by one virtue, that vice is merely the result of ignorance, and that the correct response to crime is therefore not punishment but education? Or are these assertions mere rhetorical ploys by a notoriously complex thinker? Lorraine Smith Pangle traces the argument for the primacy of virtue and the power of knowledge throughout the five dialogues that feature them most prominently—the Apology, Gorgias, Protagoras, Meno, and Laws—and reveals the truth at the core of these seemingly strange claims. She argues that Socrates was more aware of the complex causes of human action and of the power of irrational passions than a cursory reading might suggest. Pangle's perceptive analyses reveal that many of Socrates's teachings in fact explore the factors that make it difficult for humans to be the rational creatures that he at first seems to claim. Also critical to Pangle's reading is her emphasis on the political dimensions of the dialogues. Underlying many of the paradoxes, she shows, is a distinction between philosophic and civic virtue that is critical to understanding them. Ultimately, Pangle offers a radically unconventional way of reading Socrates's views of human excellence: Virtue is not knowledge in any ordinary sense, but true virtue is nothing other than wisdom.

Understanding Virtue Ethics Harper Collins

A famed political scientist's classic argument for a more cooperative world We assume that, in a world ruled by natural selection, selfishness pays. So why cooperate? In *The Evolution of Cooperation*, political scientist Robert Axelrod seeks to answer this question. In 1980, he organized the famed Computer Prisoners Dilemma Tournament, which sought to find the optimal strategy for survival in a particular game. Over and over, the simplest strategy, a cooperative program called Tit for Tat, shut out the competition. In other words, cooperation, not unfettered competition, turns out to be our best chance for survival. A vital book for leaders and decision makers, *The Evolution of Cooperation* reveals how cooperative principles help us think better about everything from military strategy, to political elections, to family dynamics.

The Bourgeois Virtues UNC Press Books

The late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have seen a renaissance in the study of virtue -- a topic that has prevailed in philosophical work since the time of Aristotle. Several major developments have conspired to mark this new age. Foremost among them, some argue, is the birth of virtue ethics, an approach to ethics that focuses on virtue in place of consequentialism (the view that normative properties depend only on consequences) or deontology (the study of what we have a moral duty to do). The emergence of new virtue theories also marks this new wave of work on virtue. Put simply, these are theories about what virtue is, and they include Kantian and utilitarian virtue theories. Concurrently, virtue ethics is being applied to other fields where it hasn't been used before, including bioethics and education. In addition to these developments, the study of virtue in epistemological theories has become increasingly widespread to the point that it has spawned a subfield known as 'virtue epistemology.' This volume therefore provides a representative overview of philosophical work on virtue. It is divided into seven parts: conceptualizations of virtue, historical and religious accounts, contemporary virtue ethics and theories of virtue, central concepts and issues, critical examinations, applied virtue ethics, and virtue epistemology. Forty-two chapters by distinguished scholars offer insights and directions for further research. In addition to philosophy, authors also deal with virtues in non-western philosophical traditions, religion, and psychological perspectives on virtue.

The Practice of Virtue Basic Books

". . . the great Catholic philosopher Yves Simon explains with admirable clarity just in what the Aristotelian conception of virtue consists." -Crisis

Virtue Reborn Harvard University Press

What am I here for? How should I behave? Most Christians, faced with those questions, think in terms either of 'rules' or of 'living authentically'. Both lead to problems. In this book, full of fresh biblical exploration, Bishop Tom Wright proposes instead that we inhabit the ancient tradition of virtue once again -- but from a thoroughly Christian, not just a philosophical, perspective. The virtues are the strengths we need to get to our goal. Following on from his popular best-selling books *Simply Christian* and *Surprised by Hope*, he sees the goal in terms of the whole new creation, with humans renewed to look after it.

Virtue Ethics, Old and New Oxford University Press

More and more philosophers have advocated varieties of virtue-based ethics that challenge moral theory traditionally founded on moral obligation and the delineation of what is right or wrong in given situations. Virtue ethics, which focuses upon the character of moral agents more than on the moral status of their actions or the consequences of those actions, has become one of the most important and stimulating areas of contemporary ethical theory. "Understanding Virtue Ethics" is an accessible and lively introduction to the subject. It provides a broad overview of the history of virtue ethics from Aristotle to Nietzsche as well as examining the ideas of such contemporary writers as Ricoeur and Levinas. Major themes dealt with by moral theory are examined and how a virtue ethics approach to them differs from those of other traditions is explored. Practical problems of moral complexity such as abortion, euthanasia, and integrity in politics, and how they might be approached from a virtue perspective are considered. The charges of relativism and egoism that are often mounted against virtue ethics are rebutted and virtues that are especially relevant to contemporary life, namely, courage, taking responsibility, and reverence are examined in depth. Finally, the author argues that virtue ethics is highly relevant to our understanding of the moral dimensions of professional roles.

The Goodness Paradox A&C Black

Uniting thirty years of authoritative scholarship by a master of textual detail, Machiavelli's *Virtue* is a comprehensive statement on the founder of modern politics. Harvey Mansfield reveals the role of sects in Machiavelli's politics, his advice on how to rule indirectly, and the ultimately partisan character of his project, and shows him to be the founder of such modern and diverse institutions as the impersonal state and the energetic executive. Accessible and elegant, this groundbreaking interpretation explains the puzzles and reveals the ambition of Machiavelli's thought. "The book brings together essays that have mapped [Mansfield's] paths of reflection over the past thirty years. . . . The ground, one would think, is ancient and familiar, but Mansfield manages to draw out some understandings, or recognitions, jarringly new."—Hadley Arkes, *New Criterion* "Mansfield's book more than rewards the close reading it demands."—Colin Walters, *Washington Times* "[A] masterly new book on the Renaissance courtier, statesman and political philosopher. . . . Mansfield seeks to rescue Machiavelli from liberalism's anodyne rehabilitation."—Roger Kimball, *The Wall Street Journal*

An Enquiry into An Origin of Honour; And the Usefulness of Christianity in War Penguin UK

Augustine famously claimed that the virtues of pagan Rome were nothing more than splendid vices. This critique reinvented itself as a suspicion of acquired virtue as such, and true Christian virtue has, ever since, been set against a false, hypocritical virtue alleged merely to conceal pride. *Putting On Virtue* reveals how a distrust of learned and habituated virtue shaped both early modern Christian moral reflection and secular forms of ethical thought. Jennifer Herdt develops her claims through an argument of broad historical sweep, which brings together the Aristotelian tradition as taken up by Thomas Aquinas with the early modern thinkers who shaped modern liberalism. In chapters on

Luther, Bunyan, the Jansenists, Mandeville, Hume, Rousseau, and Kant, she argues that efforts to make a radical distinction between true Christian virtue and its tainted imitations actually created an autonomous natural ethics separate from Christianity. This secular value system valorized pride and authenticity, while rendering graced human agency less meaningful. Ultimately, *Putting On Virtue* traces a path from suspicion of virtue to its secular inversion, from confession of dependence to assertion of independence.

[Virtue Is Knowledge](#) Penguin

Why are people nice to each other? What are the reasons for altruism? Matt Ridley explains how the human mind has evolved a special instinct for social exchange, offering a lucid and persuasive argument about the paradox of human benevolence.

[Masculine Virtue in Early Modern Spain](#) Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.

The best-selling author of *Creating Love* sets out to redefine what it means to live a moral life in today's world by helping readers reclaim and cultivate their inborn moral intelligence by developing one's instincts for goodness in childhood and nurturing them through one's adult life to promote good character and moral responsibility.

[Thieves of Virtue](#) Cambridge University Press

When *In Search of the Republic* was originally published in 1987, scholarly interpretations of the concept of virtue in the American founding were considered peripheral to mainstream political theory. Since then, the authors' arguments that public virtue, civic responsibility, and private morality were at the heart of the Founding Fathers' political thought is now accepted by a growing number of contemporary political theorists. This revised edition includes a new preface that places *In Search of the Republic* within the context of contemporary debates over the role of virtue and religion in early American political discourse. This is a superb introduction for students and scholars interested in learning about the moral, political, and constitutional theories of the Founding Fathers.

[Francis Crick](#) Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

If, as Darwin suggests, evolution relentlessly encourages the survival of the fittest, why are humans compelled to live in cooperative, complex societies? In this fascinating examination of the roots of human trust and virtue, a zoologist and former American editor of the *Economist* reveals the results of recent studies that suggest that self-interest and mutual aid are not at all incompatible. In fact, he points out, our cooperative instincts may have evolved as part of mankind's natural selfish behavior—by exchanging favors we can benefit ourselves as well as others. Brilliantly orchestrating the newest findings of geneticists, psychologists, and anthropologists, *The Origins of Virtue* re-examines the everyday assumptions upon which we base our actions towards others, whether in our roles as parents, siblings, or trade partners. With the wit and brilliance of *The Red Queen*, his acclaimed study of human and animal sexuality, Matt Ridley shows us how breakthroughs in computer programming, microbiology, and economics have given us a new perspective on how and why we relate to each other.

[The Evolution of Cooperation](#) Oxford University Press

Develops further John Rawls' intuition that our sense of justice is rooted in our evolutionary past and presents a new theory of morality based on evolutionary biology.

[After Virtue](#) University of Chicago Press

Laboratories of Virtue investigates the complex and contested relationship between penal reform and liberalism in early America. Using Philadelphia as a case study, Michael Meranze interprets the evolving system of criminal punishment as a microcosm of social tensions that characterized the early American republic. *Laboratories of Virtue* demonstrates the ramifications of the history of punishment for the struggles to define a new revolution order. By focusing attention on the system of public penal labor that developed in the 1780s, Meranze effectively links penal reform to the development of republican principles in the Revolutionary era. In addition, Meranze argues, the emergence of reformatory incarceration was a crucial symptom of the crises of the Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary public spheres.

[Machiavelli's Virtue](#) Oxford University Press

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- [Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? By Bill Martin Jr.](#)

Explores the extent to which Aristotle's ethical treatises employ the concepts, methods, and practices developed in his 'scientific' works.

[The Cautious Jealous Virtue](#) Georgetown University Press

Jonathan Sanford finds that despite the common origins of contemporary virtue ethics in Anscombe, the literature varies widely not just in its scope but in its basic commitments. What exactly is contemporary virtue ethics? In *Before Virtue*, Sanford develops strategies for describing contemporary virtue ethics accurately. He then assesses contemporary virtue approaches by the Anscombean dual standard which inspired them: the degree to which they avoid the pitfalls of modern moral philosophy and the extent to which they exemplify a successful recovery of an Aristotelian approach to ethics.

[Genome](#) Bantam

Tracing the Constitution's separation of church and state to the need for French assistance in the fight against the British during the Revolutionary War, the author examines the significant break with the traditional, virulent anti-Catholicism of colonial New England Protestants. While some saw the break as a necessary result of shedding the colonial past, the author argues that many saw it as a temporary expedient to be dispensed with as soon as possible. The alliances with France and French Canadians, he says, had the effect of redrawing religious boundaries and disabusing some Americans of their habitual intolerance. Annotation copyrighted by Book News, Inc., Portland, OR

[The Good Life in the Scientific Revolution](#) Penguin

"There are grounds for saying that contemporary work in virtue ethics is, if not quite in its theoretical infancy, at least not far out of diapers. And this suggests that we should be gentle and nurturing, allowing it time to flourish before coming to any definitive verdict on its merits. . . . However, it is hard to deny that modern-day virtue ethics is part of a long, sophisticated and fairly continuous tradition. Not only does the approach have origins almost as ancient as philosophy itself, but its history also includes extensive work by such philosophical luminaries as (at least) Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Aquinas, and (perhaps) Hume and Nietzsche. And this suggests that we should already be in a good position to assess its appeal."--from the Introduction
In *Virtue Ethics, Old and New*, ten philosophers seek to enrich the contemporary understanding and development of virtue ethics through a detailed examination of some key contributions from its past. Their essays demonstrate the continuing relevance of the history of moral philosophy to contemporary debates.

[The Origins of Virtue](#) Harper Collins

Following his highly praised and bestselling book *Genome: The Autobiography of a Species in 23 Chapters*, Matt Ridley has written a brilliant and profound book about the roots of human behavior. *Nature via Nurture* explores the complex and endlessly intriguing question of what makes us who we are. In February 2001 it was announced that the human genome contains not 100,000 genes, as originally postulated, but only 30,000. This startling revision led some scientists to conclude that there are simply not enough human genes to account for all the different ways people behave: we must be made by nurture, not nature. Yet again biology was to be stretched on the Procrustean bed of the nature-nurture debate. Matt Ridley argues that the emerging truth is far more interesting than this myth. Nurture depends on genes, too, and genes need nurture. Genes not only predetermine the broad structure of the brain, they also absorb formative experiences, react to social cues, and even run memory. They are consequences as well as causes of the will. Published fifty years after the discovery of the double helix of DNA, *Nature via Nurture* chronicles a revolution in our understanding of genes. Ridley recounts the hundred years' war between the partisans of nature and nurture to explain how this paradoxical creature, the human being, can be simultaneously free-willed and motivated by instinct and culture. *Nature via Nurture* is an enthralling, up-to-the-minute account of how genes build brains to absorb experience.

[Ambition, A History](#) University of Chicago Press

Matt Ridley explores such perplexing conundrums as why, if humans are such egoistical beings, don't they behave as rational fools and forego the benefits of cooperation. He uses the findings of new research to look afresh at "Mankind".