CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Bridging the philosophical perspectives of Alasdair MacIntyre[1] and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas[2] presents a significant intellectual challenge. Both thinkers offer a critical response to modern Western ethics MacIntyre through his critique of the Enlightenment's failure to provide a rational foundation for morality[3] and Al-Attas through his concept of the *Loss of Adab*, [4] which highlights the erosion of ethical and intellectual discipline in contemporary society. Despite their distinct frameworks, both scholars converge in their opposition to the secular moral paradigms that have dominated Western thought, arguing that the neglect of religious and metaphysical dimensions has led to an ethical crisis that undermines the pursuit of a truly good life.

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[1]MacIntyre was a 20th-century Scottish philosopher born on January 12, 1929. He focused on moral philosophy, with his famous work After Virtue. Next, see É. Perreau-Saussine, N.J. Pinkoski, and P. Manent, *Alasdair MacIntyre: An Intellectual Biography* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2022), 6–14.

[2] Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas was a 20th-century Muslim philosopher born on September 5, 1931. He is known as an expert in education, history, philosophy, science, metaphysics, civilization, Sufism, psychology, Qur'anic exegesis, and comparative religion Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *Terjemahan FIlsafat Pendidikan Dan Praktik Pendidikan Islam Syed M.Naquib Al-Attas* (Mizan, 1998), 30.

[3] Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory, Third Edition (University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 36–62.

[4] As to the internal causes of the dilemma in which we find ourselves, the basic problems can - it seems to me - be reduced to a single evident crisis which I would simply call the loss of adab. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, Islam and Secularism (Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia, 1978), 106.

The failure of modern Western ethics is rooted in the dominance of positivism, liberalism, and individualism, which have given rise to various contemporary intellectual trends such as in pragmatism, hedonism, and consumerism. This ethical crisis extends beyond philosophy, affecting the psychological and social dimensions of modern life. The rapid advancement of technology and digital media has intensified social pressures, disrupting both mental and physical well-being. Modern hedonism, unlike its classical counterpart that emphasized simplicity and self-restraint, has become deeply intertwined with excessive consumption and the pursuit of instant gratification.. This shift aligns with the broader culture of global consumerism, where happiness is no longer sought through self-control but through continuous material satisfaction. As a result, this crisis is not merely a moral issue but also reflects the inability of modern civilization to maintain harmony between human beings, technology, and the social environment.

Al-Attas' approach to virtue ethics represents a continuation of the intellectual tradition of scholars such as Al-Ghazali and Al-Raghib al-Isfahani.[5] This framework, known as *Akhlaq Fadhilah*, aligns with the classical Islamic concept of moral excellence, where the *cardinal virtues* are referred to as *Umm al-Fadhail* (the mother of virtues). As Al-Attas explains in *On Justice and the Nature of Man*:

> "Good character is a stable state of the soul achieved by means of deliberate, purposeful, and disciplined interaction by and within the soul of the principal

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[5] A.Q.Ḥ.M.R. al-Iṣfahānī and Y. Mohamed, The Path to Virtue: The Ethical Philosophy of al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī: An Annotated Translation, with Critical Introduction, of Kitāb al-Dharīah Ilā Makārim al-Sharīah (International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), 2006), 244.

virtues of wisdom, courage (*shaja'ah*), temperance (*'iffah*), and justice... Ethics is based on the foundation of the four principal virtues..." [6]

Thus, Al-Attas' virtue ethics (*Akhlaq Fadhilah*)[7] aligns with the ethical discourse of classical Muslim scholars, emphasizing the integration of moral, intellectual, and spiritual refinement.

However, Taha Abderrahmane[8] critiques this framework, arguing that the four *cardinal virtues* justice (*al-'adl*), wisdom (*al-ḥikmah*), courage (*as-shajā'ah*), and temperance (*al-'iffah*)—as proposed by Al-Attas are insufficient to fully capture the boundless nature of human virtue. [9] He also contends that this virtue ethics framework is heavily influenced by Greek philosophical concepts and should not be adopted uncritically without deeper analysis and revision. [10]

As a contemporary Western philosopher, Alasdair MacIntyre diverges from conventional virtue ethics through his historical-tradition-based approach. His development of virtue as a concept laid the foundation

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[6] MacIntyre, After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory, Third Edition, 11.

[7] Dinar Dewi Kania, "Konsep Virtue Ethics dalam Pemikiran Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas dan Tantangan Postmodernisme," *Tasfiyah* 1, no. 2 (August 1, 2017): 157, https://ejournal.unida.gontor.ac.id/index.php/tasfiyah/article/view/1850.

[8] Taha Abderrahman (born in 1944, Morocco) is a contemporary Muslim philosopher specializing in logic and language philosophy at Sorbonne University. He taught at Mohammed V University, Rabat, until his retirement in 2005, and is known as a thinker affiliated with the Budshishiyya Sufi order. With over 20 books on Islamic philosophy and ethics, he developed the Iʾtimāniyya Paradigm (Trusteeship Paradigm), which emphasizes ethics based on amanah (trusteeship) rather than secular rationalism. This concept connects morality with spiritual responsibility and revelation, offering an alternative to the separation of religion and ethics in modernity. Farid Suleiman, "The Philosophy of Taha Abderrahman: A Critical Study," *Die Welt Des Islams* 61, no. 1 (March 16, 2020): 39–71, https://doi.org/10.1163/15700607-00600A10.

[9] Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas and W.M.N.W. Daud, The ICLIF Leadership Competency Model (LCM): An Islamic Alternative (International Centre for Leadership in Finance (ICLIF), 2014), 34–36.

[10] Aulia Rakhmat, "Religion and Reason in Contemporary Islamic Ethics: A Comparative Study of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and Taha Abderrahmane Thought," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 13, no. 2 (December 6, 2023): 134–51, https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.132.09.

for *After Virtue*, where he critically examines the shortcomings of modern ethical theories, particularly Kantian deontology with its *categorical imperative*. Kant argues that a maxim is moral if it can be consistently universalized. However, MacIntyre contends that this approach is overly formal and abstract, detaching moral values from the historical context, traditions, and social practices that give them meaning.

MacIntyre contends that this approach is overly formal and abstract, detaching moral values from the historical context, traditions, and social practices that give them meaning. [11] However, defenders of Kantian ethics, such as Onora O'Neill, argue that the categorical imperative provides an objective moral structure that prevents ethical relativism.[12] By formulating moral duties based on reason rather than contingent social traditions, Kantian ethics ensures that moral principles remain universal and impartial.

In a similar vein, Al-Attas critiques Kant's influence in *Risalah untuk Kaum Muslimin*, particularly in its role in stripping religious dimensions

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[11] MacIntyre argues that Kant's categorical imperative and his claims of transcendent moral values, while appearing elegant and logically compelling, ultimately fail to capture the true substance of morality. In other words, although this imperative seems "good" in a logical sense by presenting a universal and seemingly objective standard, MacIntyre critiques it for several reasons. First, it neglects the crucial role of teleological context—that is, the ultimate purpose or common good that evolves through moral practices within a community. Second, it separates morality from the narratives and traditions of human life, reducing it to mere formal rules devoid of deep practical content. Third, Kant's claim that moral values can be grasped purely through reason without reference to concrete lived experience fails to explain how such values emerge and are understood within social and historical practices. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory, Third Edition*.

[12] O. O'Neill, *Constructing Authorities: Reason, Politics and Interpretation in Kant's Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), https://books.google.co.id/books?id=BYDZsgEACAAJ.

from the understanding of reality. He highlights how Kantian thought contributed to the rejection of metaphysics and spirituality in modern philosophy. As Al-Attas states:

> "..Pada abad kedelapanbelas, sesudah tersebarnya pengaruh pemikiran Kant, maka ilmu metafizika itu dianggap sebagai tiada lagi perlu, bahkan sebagai pandu yang memperdayakan hakikat dan kebenaran, dan yang harus ditinggalkan oleh semua orang yang berakal dan berwaras fikiran, kerana telah dipertunjukkan dengan tegasnya oleh falsafah bahawa sebarang hakikat serta kebenaran ruhaniah itu tiada dapat diketahui dan diperbuktikan, dan bahawa tiada seorangpun yang dapat meyakini wujudnya..." [13]

Kant's influence on modern Western ethics is profound. He not only sought to bridge the divide between rationalism, which prioritizes reason as the primary source of knowledge (as upheld by Descartes and Leibniz), and empiricism, which bases knowledge on sensory experience (as argued by Locke and Hume), [14] but also formulated the *categorical imperative*. This principle asserts that an action is moral if it can be universally applied as a general law for all. Amin Abdullah, in his dissertation *The Idea of Universality of Ethical Norms in Ghazali and Immanuel Kant*, [15] compares this concept with Al-Ghazali's ethical thought. Nevertheless, the debate over the universality of ethical theories remains ongoing.

The rejection of Kant is also rooted in his critique of speculative metaphysics in the scholastic tradition, which seeks to understand transcendent reality through pure reason. [16] Kant confines metaphysics to

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[13] Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, Risalah Untuk Kaum Muslimin (Institut Antarabangsa Pemikiran dan Tamadun Islam, 2001), 204.

[14] Timoteus Ata Leuehaq, "Basic Ideas of Rationalism and Empiricism and Some Epistemological Implications" 2, no. 2 (2021): 145–58, https://doi.org/10.53396/media.v3i2.35.

[15] M.A. Abdullah, Kant and Ghazali: The Idea of Universality of Ethical Norms (Landeck, 2000).

[16] Scholasticism is a medieval philosophical tradition that combines Aristotelian logic with Christian theology. Its goal is to bridge faith and reason through the dialectical

the phenomenal realm, asserting that concepts such as God, freedom, and the soul cannot be rationally proven. However, scholars like Henry Allison (2004) argue that Kant does not entirely reject metaphysics; rather, he redefines its role within the limits of reason. While Kant denies speculative metaphysics, he still considers moral concepts like freedom and duty essential for ethical reasoning.[17]

However, he still considers these concepts essential within the moral domain. This perspective significantly influenced modern philosophy of religion and contributed to the development of epistemological agnosticism—the belief that humans cannot attain knowledge beyond empirical experience. Consequently, metaphysics underwent a major shift, no longer seen as a pathway to absolute truth but rather as a speculative domain subject to the limits of human rationality.

Returning to virtue ethics within the frameworks proposed by MacIntyre and Al-Attas, despite some shared foundational concerns, their philosophical backgrounds inevitably lead to different fundamental premises. MacIntyre, as a Western philosopher, and Al-Attas, as a Muslim philosopher, operate within distinct epistemological and ontological paradigms.

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method. According to M. De Wulf, Scholasticism represents a synthesis of the ideas of great philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus, emphasizing the integration of reason and faith in the pursuit of truth. William Turner, M. De Wulf, and P. Coffey, "Scholasticism Old and New: An Introduction to Scholastic Philosophy, Medieval and Modern.," *The Philosophical Review* 17, no. 4 (July 1908): 427, https://doi.org/10.2307/2177914.

[17] H.E. Allison, *Kant's Theory of Freedom* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), https://books.google.co.id/books?id=pGo315n38nMC.

This research seeks to further explore virtue ethics (*al-akhlāq al-fāḍilah*), particularly in MacIntyre's thought. Can his historical-traditionalist perspective be understood as part of the intellectual tradition that, as Al-Attas argues, must be preserved and transmitted? Is the notion of local wisdom, often discussed in various cultural contexts, aligned with MacIntyre's concept of historical tradition?

Furthermore, how can MacIntyre's historical-traditionalist ethics be contextualized within Al-Attas's ethical framework? The concept of *tamadun* (civilization), as formulated by Al-Attas, possesses both a vertical dimension (relationship with God) and a horizontal dimension (social relationships), as exemplified in the history of Madinah, particularly in the *Constitution of Madinah* established by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as a model of ethical and societal integration. Additionally, how do the *Four Cardinal Virtues*—justice, wisdom, courage, and temperance—regulate rationality and metaphysics in the context of MacIntyre's and Al-Attas's critique of modern Western ethics, which they both regard as failing to provide a solid moral foundation?

Thus, this study aims to explore the intersections and divergences between these two thinkers in their critique of contemporary ethical challenges while also assessing their respective contributions to addressing the moral crises of the modern world.

B. Problem of Study

From the discussion above, it becomes clear that this study needs a sharper focus. To achieve a more structured and in-depth analysis, the researcher proposes the following three key research questions:

1. How did Alasdair MacIntyre and Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas develop their Virtue Ethics theories based on their respective backgrounds?

2. How do the Virtue Ethics concepts of Alasdair MacIntyre and Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas compare?

C. Objective of Study

From this discussion, the researcher aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore in greater depth the backgrounds of Alasdair MacIntyre and Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas in developing their Virtue Ethics theory.

2. To identify the similarities and differences in their views on Virtue Ethics.

D. Importance of Study

Every academic research endeavor seeks to deepen understanding, refine existing theories, and ofer solutions to pressing issues. This study goes beyond theoretical exploration by connecting key philosophical concepts to real-world ethical challenges. Its significance can be assessed from two main perspectives: theoretical and practical.

From a theoretical perspective, this research contributes to the discourse in Islamic theology and philosophy, particularly in the study of

Islamic thought. By employing the framework of Virtue Ethics, it offers a fresh perspective on how the concept of virtue serves as a foundational element in shaping moral character. This stands in contrast to modern Western ethical approaches such as deontology and utilitarianism, which often separate moral reasoning from historical and spiritual traditions. Additionally, this study highlights how the Islamic intellectual tradition provides a meaningful response to contemporary ethical dilemmas, particularly in addressing the moral and ethical decline associated with modernity.

Practically, this research serves as a valuable reference for students at Universitas Darussalam Gontor, particularly in the Aqidah and Islamic Philosophy programs within the Faculty of Usuluddin. Beyond enriching academic discourse, it offers a structured approach to navigating ethical challenges presented by modern Western thought. By providing a deeper understanding of Virtue Ethics within an Islamic framework, this study equips readers with a more comprehensive perspective on morality and character formation. Ultimately, it aims to serve as a foundational reference for future studies, fostering a more critical and constructive engagement with ethical issues in contemporary society.

E. Literature Review

As previously discussed, the researcher acknowledges that this study does not stand alone but builds upon a foundation of existing scholarship. This research is an effort to further develop and refine previous studies on Virtue Ethics. Both MacIntyre and Al-Attas offer virtue-based ethical frameworks with significant conceptual similarities. However, a

comprehensive elaboration that systematically connects and compares their thoughts in depth has yet to be undertaken.

Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by providing a comparative analysis that highlights both the intersections and distinctions between the two thinkers. Several previous studies serve as essential references in laying the groundwork for this research, as outlined below:

1. The research titled *"Etika Keutamaan menurut Alasdair MacIntyre dalam Buku After Virtue"* by Vincentius Agusko Wiguna (2020)[18]

    This study focuses on examining Alasdair MacIntyre's concept of Virtue Ethics as outlined in *After Virtue*. Using a descriptive analytical method, it explores MacIntyre's critique of Enlightenment-era ethics, which he argues has collapsed into emotivism. As an alternative, MacIntyre proposes a virtue-based framework built upon three key elements: meaningful practices, the narrative unity of life, and moral traditions. While this research provides an in-depth analysis of MacIntyre's thought, it seeks to enhance the discussion by drawing comparisons with Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas' Virtue Ethics framework. This comparative approach aims to offer a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of Virtue Ethics within both Western and Islamic intellectual traditions.

2. The research titled *Alasdair MacIntyre's Analysis of Tradition* by Tom Angier 2014. [19]

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[18] Vincentius Agsuko Wiguna, "Etika Keutamaan Menurut Mlasdair Macintyre Dalam Buku after Virtue" (Surabaya, universitas Katolik Widya Mandala, 2020).

[19] Tom Angier, "Alasdair MacIntyre's Analysis of Tradition," *European Journal of Philosophy* 22, no. 4 (December 2014): 540–72, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0378.2011.00505.x.

This research focuses on Alasdair MacIntyre's analysis of moral tradition. Building on Thomas Kuhn's concept of scientific tradition, MacIntyre formulates a framework for understanding how moral traditions evolve. He asserts that a strong moral tradition must remain open to critique and new insights that enhance its coherence. Additionally, this study examines critiques of MacIntyre's model, particularly the fundamental differences between scientific and moral traditions.

This research will assist the researcher in examining MacIntyre's theoretical framework on ethics, particularly in understanding the structure of tradition within his virtue ethics. This serves to facilitate a comparative analysis between MacIntyre's virtue ethics and the theologically grounded virtue ethics proposed by Al-Attas.

3. Research titled "Alasdair MacIntyre and Martha Nussbaum on Virtue Ethics" written by Joas Adiprasetya in 2016.[20]

This article explores virtue ethics from the perspectives of Alasdair MacIntyre and Martha Nussbaum, focusing on their differences. MacIntyre sees virtues as shaped by tradition and social practices, while Nussbaum believes in a universal approach based on her capabilities theory. MacIntyre's view is tied to specific cultural and historical contexts, whereas Nussbaum argues for a more general framework that applies to all societies. The study examines how their ideas fit into pluralistic societies like Indonesia and lays the groundwork for comparing them with Syed Naquib al-Attas' perspective on virtue ethics.

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[20] Joas Adiprasetya, "Alasdair MacIntyre and Martha Nussbaum on Virtue Ethics," *DISKURSUS - JURNAL FILSAFAT DAN TEOLOGI STF DRIYARKARA* 15, no. 1 (April 1, 2016): 1, https://doi.org/10.26551/diskursus.v15i1.16.

4. Research titled *Virtue or Autonomy: Alasdair MacIntyre's Critique of Liberal Individualism* written by Lewis P. Hinchman from Clarkson University.[21]

This article focuses on Alasdair MacIntyre's critique of moral language disruption as a reflection of deeper social issues, including political and human disintegration, which he sees in the rise of the modern autonomous individual. It concludes with three arguments challenging MacIntyre: first, Enlightenment individualism is not merely a contingent mistake as MacIntyre suggests; second, some of his arguments align with the Enlightenment thought he critiques; and third, MacIntyre may implicitly accept certain aspects of the Enlightenment more than he explicitly acknowledges. While this study provides valuable insights into MacIntyre's critique, it serves as a secondary source with a different approach from the comparative analysis undertaken in this research.

5. The research written by Dinar Dewi Kania, titled "Konsep Virtue Ethics dalam Pemikiran Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas dan Tantangan Postmodernisme."2018.[22]

The focus of this article is the concept of virtue ethics in the thought of Syed Naquib al-Attas, which is rooted in the Islamic tradition and serves as an alternative to modern secular ethics. It examines how morality in modern Western thought has shifted due to the removal of metaphysical elements, leading to the loss of religion's moral authority in ethical philosophy.

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[21] Lewis P. Hinchman, "Virtue or Autonomy: Alasdair MacIntyre's Critique of Liberal Individualism," *Polity* 21, no. 4 (June 1989): 635–54, https://doi.org/10.2307/3234717.

[22] Kania, "Konsep Virtue Ethics dalam Pemikiran Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas dan Tantangan Postmodernisme."

Kania analyzes how Al-Attas places justice (*'adl*) and wisdom (*hikmah*) as the foundation of virtue ethics, in contrast to the Aristotelian model that emphasizes the four cardinal virtues. Al-Attas argues that ethics cannot be based solely on rationality but must be grounded in divine revelation. Therefore, his perspective challenges secular views that prioritize moral relativism and exclude religion from the formation of virtues.

The article also explores how Al-Attas' ideas respond to postmodernism, which blurs the distinction between right and wrong and undermines religious moral authority. Kania highlights the *loss of adab* as the root of the moral crisis in the Muslim world, influenced by Western thought.

This study serves as a secondary source for researchers and provides a framework for analyzing virtue ethics in Al-Attas' thought, facilitating a comparison with Alasdair MacIntyre's virtue ethics framework.

6. The study titled *"Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas's Exposition on the Concepts of Ethics"* by Elit Ave Hidayatullah and Syamsuddin Arif, published in *Afkar* Vol. 24, Issue 1 (2022).[23]

This article focuses on the ethical thought of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, particularly the concept of adab as the core of his intellectual framework. It explores how Al-Attas develops the idea of the Islamization of ethics by integrating the Islamic worldview into universal ethical concepts.

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[23] Elit Ave Hidayatullah and Syamsuddin Arif, "Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas' Exposition on the Concept of Ethics," *Jurnal Akidah & Pemikiran Islam* 24, no. 1 (June 30, 2022): 409–46, https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.vol24no1.12.

The authors highlight that Al-Attas views ethics as fundamentally rooted in religion (dīn), rather than merely a product of speculative philosophy or pure rationality. He proposes an approach that integrates knowledge, free will, and faith as the foundation of ethics. By applying the theory of the Islamization of knowledge, the article analyzes the processes of isolation and infusion within Al-Attas's ethical framework. The findings indicate that his ethical system is not only universal but also emphasizes the spiritual relationship between humans and themselves, God, society, and the state.

This journal provides an in-depth analysis of ethical norms in Al-Attas's thought and their relevance in addressing modern dilemmas. Therefore, it serves as a crucial secondary source for understanding the Islamization of ethics, distinct from the comparative approach that will be employed in this research.

7. Research titled *"Religion and Reason in Contemporary Islamic Ethics: A Comparative Study of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and Taha Abderrahmane's Thought"* by Aulia Rakhmat in *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization*, Vol. 13, Issue 2 (2023).[24]

This article compares the views of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and Taha Abderrahmane on the role of reason and religion in Islamic ethics. Using textual and comparative analysis, it examines their key ideas through primary and secondary sources.

The study finds that their differences are more significant than their similarities. Al-Attas sees ethics as shaping and perfecting character through key virtues like *hikmah* (wisdom), *syaja'ah* (courage), *'iffah*

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[24] Rakhmat, "Religion and Reason in Contemporary Islamic Ethics."

(temperance), and *'adl* (justice), guided by reason influenced by faith. On the other hand, Taha rejects virtue ethics, arguing that limiting ethics to specific virtues is not enough. Instead, he introduces *supported reason*, combining theory, practice, and personal experience within a Sufi ethical framework.

Despite their differences, both thinkers agree that reason must rely on religion in ethical decision-making. This research will further explore these ideas by comparing them with Western thinkers, offering a broader understanding of Al-Attas's virtue ethics.

8. The research titled *"Alasdair MacIntyre: An Intellectual Biography"* written by Émile Perreau-Saussine (2000).[25]

This study focuses on the intellectual development of Alasdair MacIntyre in constructing the framework of virtue ethics as a response to the crisis of modern morality. It examines MacIntyre's critique of utilitarianism, reformed capitalism, and the welfare politics that dominated post-war political thought. These criticisms led MacIntyre to emphasize the importance of tradition and community in shaping virtues and practical wisdom.

The study also explores how the concepts of practice and natural law within a community become essential elements of MacIntyre's virtue ethics. A comparison between MacIntyre's thought and that of other thinkers, such as Charles Taylor, highlights MacIntyre's focus on virtues rooted in tradition, in contrast to Taylor's emphasis on modern cultural values. Furthermore, MacIntyre's pessimism toward liberal politics drives him to

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[25] Perreau-Saussine, Pinkoski, and Manent, *Alasdair MacIntyre: An Intellectual Biography*.

propose a community-based alternative that reinforces individuals' connection to a specific moral tradition.

Through this analysis, the research provides deep insights into MacIntyre's contributions to moral philosophy and their relevance in addressing contemporary moral challenges, particularly in developing a virtue ethics framework grounded in tradition and community.

F.   Theoritical Framework

This research requires a theoretical framework to explain the issues under study in more detail. The theoretical framework is essential as it serves as the foundation for analyzing concepts related to the research. These concepts include theories, definitions, statements, and expert opinions on a particular phenomenon. The conceptualization process is based on well-established theories, making a deep understanding of these theories crucial. Additionally, the use of a theoretical framework not only helps identify potential challenges in research but also plays a role in determining the criteria for analysis and validation of research findings.

In scientific research, two main concepts help analyze the research object: the theoretical framework and the conceptual framework. The difference between these two is crucial, yet they complement each other in building a systematic and in-depth study. The theoretical framework refers to a conceptual foundation built upon established and scientifically tested theories. It explains why and how a phenomenon occurs by referring to existing principles and models in the literature. In other words, the theoretical framework provides a strong argumentative structure through

key theories developed previously, allowing relationships between variables to be interpreted more systematically.

On the other hand, the conceptual framework is a visual or narrative representation of the key concepts that will be the focus of the study and the relationships between them. It is developed through the synthesis of various ideas, both from existing theories and from the researcher's practical knowledge and experience. The conceptual framework allows researchers to systematically illustrate how concepts interact and influence each other while structuring hypotheses and research questions in a more holistic manner. This approach is more flexible than the theoretical framework because it is not limited to a single theory but can accommodate multiple perspectives for a broader and deeper understanding.

Overall, the theoretical framework provides a strong scientific foundation based on established theories, while the conceptual framework creatively and integratively organizes relationships between concepts. The main difference between the two lies in their sources, flexibility, and functions. The theoretical framework is more rigid as it relies on existing and tested theories, whereas the conceptual framework is more flexible as it can draw from various references, including the researcher's experiences and insights. Therefore, a deep understanding of both frameworks is crucial in designing a systematic, comprehensive, and relevant research methodology. Based on these considerations, this study will primarily use a conceptual framework to design and develop the research analysis. To facilitate the explanation of the related theory, the following sub-topics need to be elaborated:

1. Philosophical Approach in Ethics Research

This study employs a philosophical approach to examine ethics. [26] The philosophical study of ethics differs from studies on morality or akhlaq. Moral and akhlaq studies focus on imperative values that dictate how humans should behave according to prevailing teachings. In contrast, ethics is concerned with how humans act based on awareness and understanding. [27]

Ethics derives from the Greek word ethos, which in its singular form refers to habits. Ethics encompasses philosophy, values, and morality, dealing with abstract concepts of good and bad. [28] It is a theory of human actions judged based on good and bad criteria, reflecting the fundamental nature of human behavior. In its plural form (ta etha), it means customs, which became the basis for the term "ethics." This term was used by the prominent Greek philosopher Aristotle (384–322 BCE) to refer to moral philosophy. Limiting the discussion to the etymology, ethics can be defined as the study of commonly practiced actions or customs. [29]

Historically, ethics as a branch of philosophy emerged in response to the moral decline within Greek culture around 2500 years ago. As traditional concepts of good and bad lost their credibility, philosophers began re-evaluating the fundamental norms that governed human behavior. [30]

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[26] Mohammad Muslih, "Perspektif Etika dalam Studi Filsafat"in Sujiat Zubaidi and Mohammad Muslih, *Kritik Epistemologi dan model pembacaan kontemporer*, vol. 1 (yogyakarta: LESFI, 2013), 286.

[27] Musa 'Asy'ari, Filsafat, Sunnah Nabi Dalam Berfikir, (Yogyakarta: LESFI, 2000), 91.

[28] Haryo Kunto Wibisono, Linda Novi Trianita, and Sri Widagdo, ", 'Dimension of Pancasila Ethics in Bureaucracy: Discourse Of Governance,'" Jurnal Fokus 122, no. 7 (2015).

[29] Mokh. Sya'roni, "Etika Keilmuan: Sebuah Kajian Filsafat Ilmu," Jurnal Teologia 25, no. 1 (2014).

[30] Mokh. Sya'roni.

In relation to ethics, the Sanskrit term susila emphasizes foundational principles and rules for living a better life (sila). It is important to distinguish between three closely related terms: ethics, morality, and akhlaq. Etymologically, ethics is equivalent to morality, but morality is more concerned with human feelings and intentions in life. In other words, morality highlights the motivation to adhere to ethical principles. Ethics critically observes moral realities, not only teaching but also examining habits, values, norms, and moral perspectives. Simply put, morality focuses on how one behaves, while ethics is concerned with why one behaves in a certain way. [31]

2. Two Main Approaches in Ethics

There are two primary approaches in ethics: descriptive ethics and normative ethics.[32] Descriptive ethics focuses on understanding ideal attitudes and behaviors that humans should exhibit and explores the necessary steps to achieve valuable life goals. These approaches show that ethical research is always involved in analyzing actions considered "good" by akhlaq standards, even in the pursuit of the true meaning of akhlaq. The term akhlaq is often synonymous with adab, meaning that a person with good akhlaq is also described as having adab. Akhlaq can also mean politeness, which contributes to social harmony and diligence in ethical conduct, leading to the concept of a well-mannered or civilized society.

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[31] Maidiantius Tanyid, "Etika Dalam Pendidikan: Kajian Etis Tentang Krisis Moral Berdampak Pada Pendidikan," JURNAL JAFFRAY 12, no. 2 (2014).

[32] Mudhar, Makinuddin, and Nensy Megawati Simanjuntak, "Normative Ethics and Descriptive Ethics Concerning the Context of Politeness in the Ondhagga Tradition in Madura," *Journal of Language and Literature Studies* 4, no. 3 (September 11, 2024): 680–89, https://doi.org/10.36312/jolls.v4i3.1992.

Beyond methodological approaches, ethics is also divided into two perspectives: teleological ethics and deontological ethics. Teleological ethics evaluates human actions based on their outcomes or purposes. The term teleology comes from the Greek word telos, meaning "goal" or "end," emphasizing that the moral value of an action lies in its intended outcome. In contrast, deontological ethics focuses on the processes used to determine moral behavior. The term deontology comes from deon, meaning "duty" or "process," emphasizing that ethical correctness depends on the method rather than the result.

3. Schools of Thought in Teleological Ethics

Teleological ethics includes various schools of thought that have developed over time. Aristotle introduced the concept of eudaimonia[33] (flourishing or well-being), which later evolved into different ethical theories, such as:

Hedonism, A philosophy that views pleasure as the ultimate goal of life and human action. [34] Hedonism has three main branches: Cyrenaics,

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[33] Eudaimonia is an ethical concept in Aristotle's philosophy, often translated as "happiness" or "well-being," but it goes beyond mere happiness in the general sense. Aristotle considers eudaimonia the ultimate goal of human life, achievable only through a meaningful existence that fulfills human potential. It is not attained instantly or temporarily but is the result of consistent habits and actions in daily life. Moreover, eudaimonia is not solely about personal happiness but also concerns the well-being of society, requiring ethical practice that is good and responsible toward others and the environment. Closely tied to virtue, Aristotle argues that eudaimonia depends on good habits, distinguishing between moral virtues—actions that uphold responsibility toward others—and intellectual virtues, which involve deep thinking and understanding of the world. Ultimately, eudaimonia represents human flourishing achieved through ethical living, responsibility, and the cultivation of virtues. S.H.M.H. Dr. Farid Wajdi and S.H.S.N.M.H. Dr. Suhrawardi K. Lubis, *Etika Profesi Hukum: Edisi Revisi* (Sinar Grafika (Bumi Aksara), 2021), 161.

[34] Dr. Farid Wajdi and Dr. Suhrawardi K. Lubis, 161.

Epicureanism, UtilitarianismHowever, over time, hedonism's essence has shifted toward material indulgence and extravagance. [35]

Utilitarianism, Popularized by Jeremy Bentham and later expanded by John Stuart Mill, utilitarianism classifies human principles into three categories: asceticism, sympathy, and antipathy. [36] Bentham believed that the state's responsibility is to guide its citizens toward pleasure, using rewards and punishments as regulatory mechanisms.

Stoicism, An ancient Greek school of thought that emphasizes self-control, acceptance of fate, and the development of moral virtues to achieve happiness. Stoicism promotes emotional regulation, acceptance of unchangeable situations, and the cultivation of virtues like wisdom and courage. [37]

4. Deontological Ethics and Religious Metaphysical Ethics

Deontological ethics focuses on moral rules derived from reason. Philosopher Christian Wolff argued that moral laws are based on rational necessity. However, if moral rules originate from divine laws, this is referred to as metaphysical-theological ethics or religious ethics. [38] In this

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[35] Tri Padila Rahmasari, "Pergeseran Makna Hedonisme Epicurus Di Kalangan Generasi Millenial," *Journal Yaqhzon: Analisis Filsafat, Agama dan Kemanusiaan* 8, no. 1 (June 1, 2022): 51, https://www.syekhnurjati.ac.id/jurnal/index.php/yaqhzan/article/view/9341.

[36] A. Kenny, A New History of Western Philosophy, New History of Western Philosophy (OUP Oxford, 2012), 925.

[37] Yacintha Pertiwi and Nelly Marhayati, "Stoikisme Era Modern Dan Relevansinya Dengan Ajaran Islam," n.d.

[38] Mohammad Muslih, "Perspektif Etika dalam Studi Filsafat"in Sujiat Zubaidi and Mohammad Muslih, *Kritik Epistemologi dan model pembacaan kontemporer*, 1:291.

tradition, Ibn Miskawayh represents the ethical thought of Muslim philosophers. [39]

Ibn Miskawayh, an influential figure in Islamic virtue ethics, adapted ideas from Aristotle and Plato while incorporating an Islamic perspective. He argued that rationality is the key to attaining happiness. It is a misconception to think that happiness can be achieved without considering cognitive faculties and rationality. However, at the same time, true happiness requires divine guidance through revelation. This fusion of reason and religious principles places Miskawayh's thought within metaphysical-theological ethics. [40]

5. Virtue Ethics and Nicomachean Ethics

Many ethical traditions, particularly teleological ones, are inspired by Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics. [41] This work emphasizes character-centered ethics, arguing that moral actions must be performed consistently to cultivate virtue. Virtue becomes a stable trait, not merely a response to circumstances. Aristotle describes virtue in relation to the soul's activity:

"If we state that the function of man is a certain kind of life, and this life is an activity of the soul involving rational principle, and if the function of a good man is to perform this activity well and rightly, and if an act is

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[39] In his book, Majid Fakhry classifies Ibn Miskawaih as "The Mother of Muslim Ethical Philosophy." Majid Fahri, *Ethical Theories in Islam*, Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science (E.J. Brill, 1991).

[40] Mohammad Muslih, "Perspektif Etika dalam Studi Filsafat"in Sujiat Zubaidi and Mohammad Muslih, *Kritik Epistemologi dan model pembacaan kontemporer*, 1:292.

[41] The Nicomachean theory includes Nicomachean Ethics, Magna Moralia, and Eudemian Ethics. In Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle explains how a person should be wise, as wisdom is the most perfect form of knowledge. A person should not only know what will happen based on preceding principles but must also have truth regarding the first principles. Aristotle, W. D. Ross, and Lesley Brown, *The Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

well performed when it is done in accordance with its appropriate excellence—then the good for man is an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue, or if there are several virtues, in accordance with the best and most complete."

Based on these ethical theories, this study explores the perspectives of Alasdair MacIntyre and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas on virtue ethics.
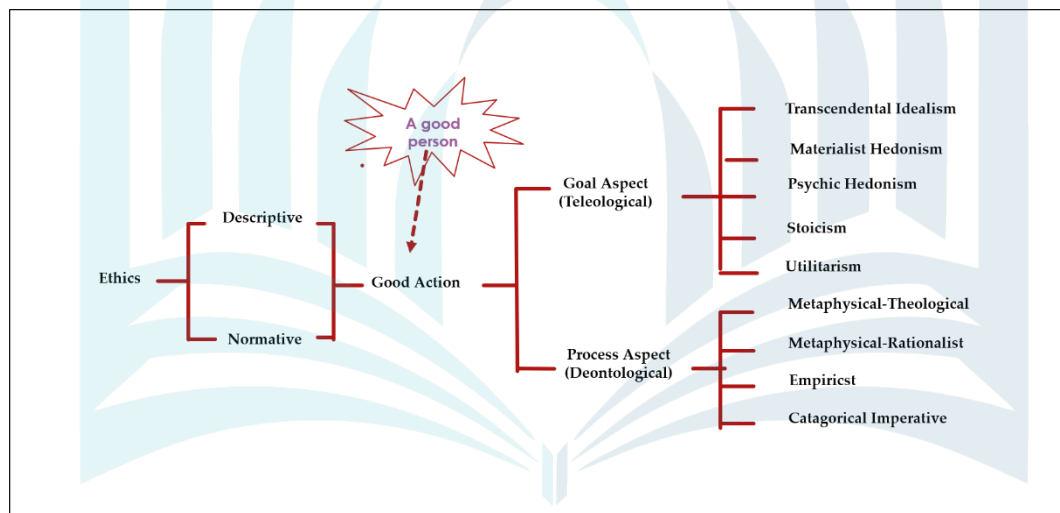

Figure .1.1 The Path of Ethical Studies in Philosophical Inquiry

Source :M. Muslih (2013) and develop by Author

Comparative research has at least two main objectives. First, comparing two relevant schools of thought helps identify their similarities and differences. Second, an in-depth analysis of these theories allows for a clearer abstraction of their conceptual frameworks.

Through this comparative approach, understanding one theory can be enhanced by insights from the other. In other words, if a concept is difficult to grasp within one perspective, the other perspective may provide a more comprehensive explanation. Although this stage is still preliminary

to a broader conceptual integration, it remains crucial in developing a more holistic understanding. [42]

Based on these considerations, the researcher seeks to clarify the framework as illustrated below.
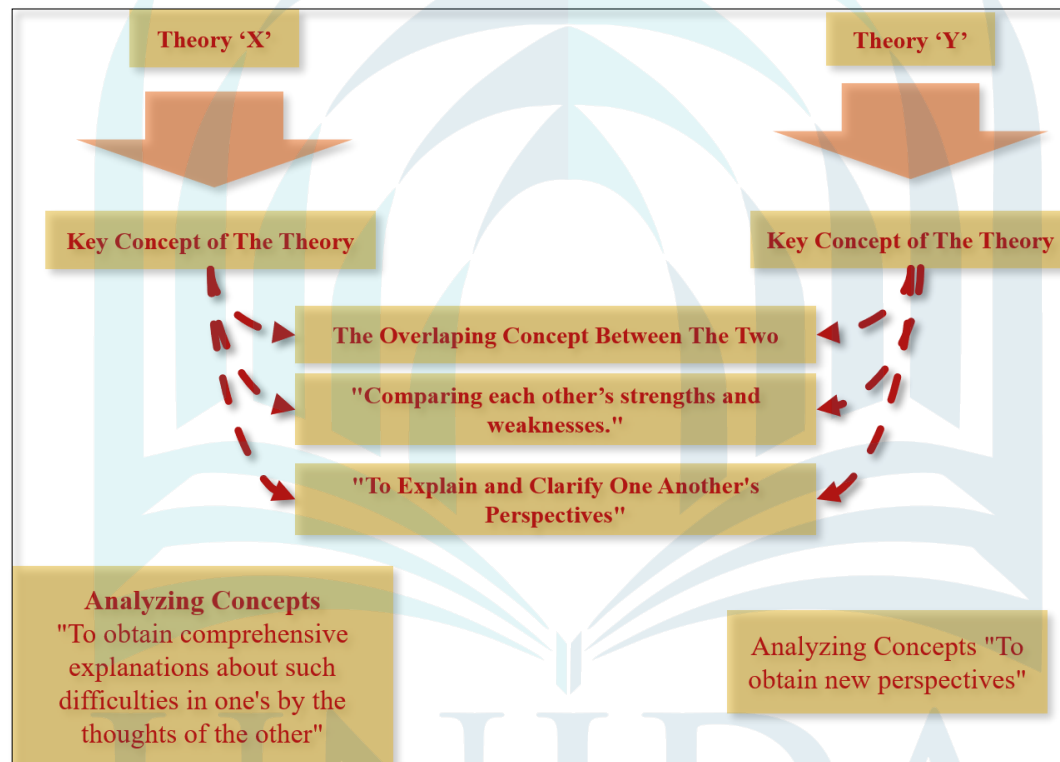

Figure 1.2 The Path of Ethical Studies in Philosophical Inquiry
Source :M. Muslih (2010) and develop by Author

G. Research Methods

To ensure that this research achieves its intended objectives, the researcher employs methods deemed most relevant for an in-depth exploration of the subject matter. The selection of these methods is intended

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[42] Mohammad Muslih, *Pengetahuan Intuitif Model Husserl & Suhrawardi*, 1st ed. (Ponorogo: Centre for Islamic and Occidental Studies (CIOS), 2010).p. 1

to facilitate the analysis process and generate a deeper understanding. The following are some of the methods that will be used in this study.

1. Types of Research

This research can be categorized as pure research because its primary objective is the advancement of knowledge, with a focus on the continuity and integrity of science and philosophy. [43] Meanwhile, in terms of data processing, this study falls under the category of qualitative research. [44] In qualitative research, content analysis closely resembles discourse analysis, serving primarily as a method of data analysis and often leaning towards sociological and anthropological methodologies.[45] This means that in data analysis, the researcher interprets key ideas and juxtaposes them with other primary ideas or secondary concepts.

This research uses the library research method because it focuses on the concept of virtue ethics in the thoughts of Alasdair MacIntyre and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas as expressed in their works. [46] This method relies on textual sources such as books, papers, journals, notes, and previous research reports.

According to M. Atho Mudzar, based on its subject matter, this study can be categorized as cultural research. Cultural research focuses on thoughts, values, and cultural ideas as intellectual products of human reasoning. Additionally, based on the research questions, this study takes

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[43] Moh Nazir, Metode Penelitian (Bogor: Ghalia Indonesia, 2014), 17.

[44] *Metode Penelitian Untuk Penulisan Skripsi dan Tesis* (Jakarta: Buana Printing, 2007).

[45] Mudjia Rahardjo, Analisis Muatan Sebagai Metode Pengukuran Kata Pengantar Dalam Nanang Martono, "Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Analisis Isi Dan Analisis Data Sekunder" (Jakarta: Pt Raja gravindo persada, 2014).

[46] Kaelan, Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif Interdisioliner Bidang Sosial, Filsafat, Seni, Agama Dan Humaniora (yogyakarta: pustaka pelajar, 1992), 63.

an interdisciplinary approach, connecting social, cultural, artistic, and philosophical perspectives.

2.   Data Collection Technique

In this research, data will be collected from the works of Alasdair MacIntyre and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas as primary sources. These primary sources serve as the main references for directly exploring the thoughts of both scholars. Additionally, secondary sources such as academic research, journal articles, and online studies discussing their ideas will support the analysis, enriching the study and providing a more comprehensive perspective. [47]

Primary Works of Alasdair MacIntyre and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas

One of MacIntyre's most influential works is *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (2007, 2013), where he critiques the moral crisis in the modern world and argues for a return to virtue-based ethics. In *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (1988), he examines the conflict between Aristotelian and Christian ethical traditions concerning justice and rationality. His *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (1994) compares three major approaches to moral inquiry, highlighting their fundamental differences. Another significant work, *Dependent Rational Animals* (1999), explores the role of virtues in human life and how they contribute to achieving human ends.[48]

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[47] Masri singarimbun, Metodelogi Penulisan Survey (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1989), 45.

[48] MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory, Third Edition*; Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Duckworth, 1988); Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1994); Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues*, Paul Carus Lectures (Open Court, 1999).

MacIntyre's *A Short History of Ethics* (1998) provides a historical overview of moral philosophy from the Homeric age to the 20th century. *Against the Self-Images of the Age* (1984) is a collection of essays discussing ideology and philosophy in a modern context, while *Marxism and Christianity* (1988) examines the relationship between Marxist and Christian moral thought. In *God, Philosophy, Universities* (2011), he presents the history of Catholic philosophical traditions and their role in academic institutions. He also discusses the philosophical background of Edith Stein in *Edith Stein: The Philosophical Background* (2007). Finally, his *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity* (2016) explores ethical conflicts in modernity.[49]

A central work in al-Attas' thought is *On Justice and the Nature of Man* (2015), where he elaborates on the concept of justice and the nature of man within the Islamic intellectual tradition. Another foundational work, *Islam and Secularism* (1978), critiques the challenges Islamic thought faces in confronting modern secularism, arguing that Islam is the ontological foundation of civilization and that secularism contradicts its principles. In *The Concept of Education in Islam* (1980), he explores the Islamic perspective on education, emphasizing the integration of knowledge and moral values within the Islamic educational framework.[50]

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[49] Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to the Twentieth Century*, Fields of Philosophy (Routledge, 1998); Alasdair MacIntyre, *Against the Self-Images of the Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy* (Duckworth, 1971); Alasdair MacIntyre, *Marxism and Christianity* (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988); Alasdair MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities: A Selective History of the Catholic Philosophical Tradition*, G - Reference,Information and Interdisciplinary Subjects Series (Sheed and Ward Book/Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011); Alasdair MacIntyre, *Edith Stein: The Philosophical Background* (Continuum, 2007); Alasdair MacIntyre, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity: An Essay on Desire, Practical Reasoning, and Narrative* (Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[50] Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *On Justice and the Nature of Man* (Kuala Lumpur malaysia: percetakan misbah sdm bhd, 2015); Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*; Syed

Al-Attas also addresses science and epistemology in *Islam and the Philosophy of Science* (1989), where he critiques modern scientific approaches that conflict with the Islamic worldview and offers an alternative understanding of the relationship between Islam and science. His *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam* (1995) is a monumental work that delves into metaphysics in the context of Islamic thought, defining the fundamental elements of the Islamic worldview. Meanwhile, *Manusia dan Cita Keadilan* (1990) focuses on justice in Islamic thought and its relationship with human existence.[51]

Additionally, *Risalah Untuk Kaum Muslimin* (2001) provides guidance on Islamic thought for contemporary Muslims. Lastly, *The ICLIF Leadership Competency Model (LCM)* (2014) presents an Islamic-based leadership competency model within the context of organizational management.[52]

3.   Discussion Approach Technique

The method used by the author in searching for data that will be used to arrive at the purpose of the discussion, makes it easier for the author to write, and deepen the discussion, as well as to fulfill the understanding of the moral value system in the context of virtue ethics in the views of Alasdair MacIntyre and Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, with several methods as follows below:

Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education* (International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1991).

[51] Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam an Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islām* (Kuala Lumpur: Kuala Lumpur (ISTAC), 1995); Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Manusia Dan Cita Keadilan* (Bestari, 1990).

[52] Al-Attas, *Risalah Untuk Kaum Muslimin*; Al-Attas and Daud, *The ICLIF Leadership Competency Model (LCM): An Islamic Alternative*.

a. Descriptive Method. The descriptive method is a method of researching the status of a group of people, an object, a set of conditions, a system of thought or a class of events. The aim of this descriptive research is to create a systematic, factual and accurate description or picture of the facts, characteristics, and relationships between the phenomena and/or objects being studied. With this method, the researcher intends to describe MacIntyre and Al-Attas's thoughts on virtue ethics, particularly regarding their perspectives on moral traditions, rationality, and metaphysical foundations.

b. Analytical Methods. The analytical method is a research activity that consists of a series of activities to analyze, differentiate, and sort research objects to be regrouped according to certain criteria, then look for relationships and then interpret their meaning. In a series of activities to describe, differentiate, and sort research objects, the researcher will observe the thoughts of MacIntyre and Al-Attas in detail by describing their philosophical components, such as the role of traditions, the nature of human beings, and the significance of virtues. The components are then assembled to further study their similarities and differences.

c. Critical Method. The critical method is that in conducting research, the researcher must first question what is obtained from the research source. Researchers must question, compare, and suspend conclusions before obtaining strong evidence. After strong evidence is obtained, the researcher can determine a general hypothesis and/or conclusion. In this research, the questions, distinctions, and suspension of conclusions are primarily aimed at the paradigms, theories, and methodologies used by MacIntyre and Al-Attas in understanding virtue ethics, especially in

addressing contemporary moral challenges and the role of religion in shaping human character.

d. Compare & Contrast. In this case, the comparative method is a research approach used to integrate two or more concepts, theories, phenomena, or other entities to identify similarities and differences. This integrative analysis is used to compare MacIntyre's virtue ethics, which is rooted in the Aristotelian and Thomistic traditions, with Al-Attas's virtue ethics, which is grounded in the Islamic metaphysical worldview. By highlighting the convergence and divergence between these two thinkers, the research aims to provide a broader understanding of virtue ethics in both Western and Islamic intellectual traditions.

H. Structure of Writing

To ensure a systematic discussion, this study is structured as a thesis divided into five chapters. Chapter One introduces the study by outlining the background, problem formulation, research objectives, significance, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology, expected findings, and the overall structure of the research. Chapter Two explores virtue ethics within the Islamic tradition and philosophical discourse, providing an analysis of its conceptual foundations. Chapter Three delves into the intellectual backgrounds of both scholars, examining how they developed their virtue ethics framework. This chapter also includes a brief review of their key works that are directly related to virtue ethics.

Chapter Four presents a comparative study by juxtaposing the thoughts of Alasdair MacIntyre and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. It also introduces a second-level analysis, which is elaborated across four sub-sections to provide deeper insights. Finally, Chapter Five serves as the

conclusion, summarizing the key findings and offering recommendations for further research in Islamic ethics and moral philosophy.