

Reply to Mr MacIntyre

Ernest Gellner

TO begin with, there is one point on which I wholeheartedly agree with Mr. MacIntyre: it *is*, as he says, wrong to suppose that there are only two alternatives, either "ivory towers" or partisanship "which does not care about truth." Both are bad, they do reinforce each other, and they are both avoidable. But what is as bad, and as avoidable, is something that combines the

defects of both these extremes, namely an ivory tower which also does not care about truth either. Some strange failure of vision has prevented the otherwise so perceptive Mr. MacIntyre from seeing this, despite the fact that evidence for it is contained in his own article.

For the slogan which he quotes, that "philosophy leaves everything as it is," in

effect means that the philosopher's job is to explicate our concepts but never to revise them: there is either no call ever to revise them, or if there is, it is something quite outside philosophy . . .! Moreover, this passive, subservient exegesis of concepts, which at the very most "straightens them out" a little at the very end, is, according to linguistic philosophers, to be

