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"Economic justice" through the eyes of an ethics of virtue

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Fordham University, 1994

"ECONOMIC JUSTICE" THROUGH THE EYES
OF AN ETHICS OF VIRTUE

BY

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DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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This dissertation prepared under my direction by

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in the Department of.....Theology...

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(Rev. Richard Viladesau) (Reader)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to the three communities of justice to which I belong. Each continues to guide my steps by their fidelity.

- To my parents, Jack, Patte and Betty, whose love embodies the belief that ours is a graced reality . . .

- To the Catholic Community, whose communal faith mediates God's way to us and our way to God . . .

- To the Academic Community, whose courageous and studied lives model the struggle to understand the convergence of faith and justice . . .

To all I express my thanksgiving. I hope my efforts will join theirs in continued service.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is an exploration in Catholic social ethics, examining the resources of an ethics of virtue for use in discussions of contemporary questions about justice. The thesis of this study is twofold. First, it argues that virtue theory has reached a level of academic acceptance so that its initial findings now merit further examination. Second, it demonstrates that the resources of virtue theory for Catholic social ethics are stronger than current deontological approaches.

A corollary of the thesis proposes that traditional Catholic statements about justice have relied upon what is termed principle- based ethics. This study suggests that justice conceived as a virtue offers a greater opportunity for examining the origination and sustenance of just actions than justice described as a principle. An underlying theme in the study suggests that for a postmodern society an ethics of virtue better integrates the demands of moral theology rooted in the Catholic tradition.

The central point of reference for this discussion is the Pastoral Letter, <u>Economic Justice For All:</u> <u>Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy</u>, issued in

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1986 by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.[1]

Like its immediate predecessor, The Challenge of Peace:

God's Promise and Our Response, the Pastoral Letter is an

attempt on the part of the bishops of the Catholic Church

in America to take part in a public conversation about

America's "theology".[2] It stands in the tradition of

papal statements on social justice that began with Rerum

Novarum in 1893 and episcopal statements that followed

the Bishops' Program for Social Reconstruction in 1920.[3]

Economic Justice is also the first statement to be issued

in two generations by the American Catholic Community in

the field of economic life.[4]

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[1]National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Economic
Justice For All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social
Teaching and the U.S. Economy (Washington, D.C.: United
States Catholic Conference, 1986). Henceforth known as
Economic Justice.

[2]I am indebted to Mark Massa for this point.

[3]This statement was actually published by the
National Catholic Welfare Conference, the predecessor of
the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. For a
thorough study of this text See Joseph P. McShane,
Sufficiently Radical: Catholicism, Progressivism, and the
Bishops' Program of 1919 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic
University Press, 1986).

[4]The focus on economics in American Catholic social
thought from the turn of the century to the New Deal is
well documented in the work of John A. Ryan and William
J. Engelen. (See Charles Curran, American Catholic
Social Ethics: Twentieth Century Approaches (Notre Dame:
University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), 1-92 for a study
of these thinkers.) The scope of this theological
reflection was increasingly expanded in successive
decades to include many other important issues. Less and
less direct attention was given to economic matters until
Economic Justice.

By focusing on economics, the authors of <u>Economic Justice</u> faced a more theoretically complex task than did the authors of the <u>Challenge of Peace</u>. Though there is a rich body of Catholic social teaching to draw from, much of it originates in attempts to address specific problems of particularly European societies, while other parts of this corpus are generally applicable to many different contexts. The authors of the Pastoral Letter, however, realized the need to restate themes from the social teaching to inform reflection on the social and economic questions facing American society.[5] Further, these authors recognize that discussions about economic justice are complex in ways different from the ethics of war and peace. The questions of economics run across all parts of American and world society. These questions involve a diversity of actors and needs not found in discussions about defense.[6] As James Sterba observes, "While everyone agrees that justice, almost by definition, is giving people what they deserve, there appears to be little agreement concerning what it is that they deserve."[7] Finally, the authors addressed a particular

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[5]John Langan, "The Bishops and the Bottom Line," <u>Commonweal</u> (November 2-16, 1984): 587.

[6]Ibid., 587.

[7]James Sterba, "Recent Work On Alternative Conceptions of Justice" <u>American Philosophical Quarterly</u> 23 (January 1986): 1. In this article Sterba surveys

relationship between the topic and the audience. General

discussion acknowledges the moral dimensions of armed

struggle, yet this perspective is largely absent in the

field of economic questions. American attitudes about

economics continue to be formed by other considerations,

extrinsic to normal moral investigation. Many would

argue that economics is an autonomous realm, better left

to professionals. If the economy is allowed to function

in this way, they say, the results will be reasonably

compatible with the ends religious people profess to

seek.[8]

Despite this difficult context, Economic Justice did

nonetheless contribute to the discussion of justice in

Catholic social ethics. Its contributions can be

measured in several areas. For example, the Letter

integrates the use of Scripture in its message. It

builds upon the theological foundations established in

the Vatican documents Octagesimo Adveniens[9] and Iustitia

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contemporary proponents of libertarian, welfare liberal,
socialist and perfectionist conceptions of justice.

[8]Douglass, R. Bruce and Gould, William J. "After the
Pastoral," Commonweal (December 5, 1986): 651-52.

[9]In Octagesimo Adveniens, Paul VI had stated that in
view of widely varying situations it was difficult to
offer a unified message and to put forward solutions that
had universal validity. Octagesimo Adveniens n. 4.
Proclaiming Justice and Peace: Documents From John XXIII-
John Paul II (Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications,
1984), 168. See Marie-Dominique Chenu, The Church's
"Social Doctrine", Concilium 140 (New York: Seabury

Mundo[10]. Following The Challenge of Peace, the Letter
also advances a style of teaching that differs from
former church statements. The writing process of
Economic Justice included extensive consultation and the
publication of successive drafts for discussion and
revision. The pedagogical distinction of moral
principles and prudential judgments in Economic Justice
candidly acknowledges, moreover, different levels of
moral authority. In its advocacy of "justice as
participation," the Letter even makes what could be
considered an original contribution to the discussion of
social justice.[11] Economic Justice also contributes
toward the further development of an American public
theology.[12] Following in the footsteps of John Courtney

Press, 1980): 71-75 for a discussion of the significance
of this statement for Catholic Social Ethics.

[10]The 1971 Synod of Bishops declared in its final
document Iustitia Mundo, "Action on behalf of justice and
participation in the transformation of the world fully
appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching
of the gospel." "Justice in the World," n. 6. Proclaiming
Peace and Justice, 190. For an analysis of this
statement, see Charles Murphy, "Action For Justice As
Constitutive Of The Preaching of the Gospel: What Did The
1971 Synod Mean?" Theological Studies 44 (June 1983):
298-311.

[11]Charles Curran, "Ethical Principles of Catholic
Social Teaching in the United States Bishops' Letter on
the Economy," Tensions in Moral Theology (Notre Dame:
University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 115.

[12]John Wilson states that "public theology" is a
term that comes from Ben Franklin. See his Public
Religion in American Culture (Philadelphia: Temple
University Press, 1979). Most references to the

Murray, the Pastoral Letter recognizes the dual roles of disciples and citizens of Catholics in America. It also evaluates several national policy issues in order to illustrate the interaction of moral values and economic issues.

These efforts suggest that the authors of Economic Justice had great hopes in starting a national discussion about economic life in the Catholic community and in American society. This discussion began, but it has not continued. Following the publication of the Pastoral Letter, theologians and economists published several commentaries,[13] critics debated papers at several academic seminars,[14] and local dioceses established implementation committees.[15] The discussion, however, did not

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contemporary use of this term refer to the work of Martin Marty. He argued that the church is not only self-concerned with growth, resources and the interior life. It also had an openness to the world in which these ties were mediated, focused and disciplined. See his The Public Church (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 4.

[13]See R. Bruce Douglass, ed. The Deeper Meaning of Economic Life: Critical Essays on the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter on the Economy (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1986) and Thomas M. Gannon, ed. The Catholic Challenge to the American Economy: Reflections on the U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987).

[14]Particular mention should be made of Toward the Future: Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy and Liberty and Justice For All, two independent initiatives made by a commission of Catholic laity in response to Economic Justice.

continue past a relatively short period of activity.
Current articles in theological journals make only
retrospective reference to the existence of the Pastoral
Letter. Surveys indicate that only twenty-five per cent
of American Catholics have heard of Economic Justice.[16]

In light of this outcome, commentators raise several
theological questions about Economic Justice. While
acknowledging the Letter's achievements, these critics
focus on the ethical method adopted by its authors. They
question the effectiveness of the Letter's approach as an
appropriate method to express the Catholic tradition,
both in dealing with economic life and in communicating
with the intended audiences. Four questions summarize
these objections.

First, the emphasis in the moral evaluation proposed
by Economic Justice is on the reformation of economic
structures, which classical accounts of moral philosophy
describe as a consideration, specifically, of
distributive justice. Though this type of justice
concerns the effect of economic decisions upon
individuals or smaller groups, distributive justice is

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[15]See National Conference of Catholic Bishops,
Building Economic Justice: The Bishops' Pastoral Letter
and Tools for Action (Washington, D.C.: United States
Catholic Conference, 1987). This resource was published
for local diocesan implementation of Economic Justice.

[16]William D'Atonio, James Davidson, Dean Hoge, and
Ruth Wallace, eds. American Catholic Laity in a Changing
Church (Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1989), 166.

directed toward society as a whole. As Charles Curran observes, the Letter offers minimal treatment of the day-to-day life of those who work in the economic institutions and structures. This limited attention is also true of businesses and corporations.[17] J. Brian Benestad suggests that the focus of efforts in justice should be directed toward the inculcation of virtue in individuals. Personal conversion rather than structural reform, he argues, offers the better path to social change. In Benestad's opinion, The Bishop's Program for Social Reconstruction better illustrated this approach.[18]

Second, Economic Justice attempts to concretize ethical principles by offering economic policy recommendations. This approach raises questions about the competency of the bishops to make such specific statements of policy and about the appropriate roles of

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[17]Charles Curran, "An Analysis of the United States Bishops' Pastoral Letter on the Economy," Toward an American Catholic Moral Theology (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), 185.

[18]J. Brian Benestad, "Virtue in Catholic Social Teaching," Private Virtue and Public Policy: Catholic Thought and Public Life ed. James Finn (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 29-48. Benestad sees a greater emphasis on personal conversion in the 1919 statement of the Bishops then the 1986 Pastoral Letter. In an earlier critique of episcopal statements, he criticizes the separation of evangelization from the pursuit of justice. See his The Pursuit of a Just Social Order: Policy Statements of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1966-80 (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1982), 93.

clergy and laity in public moral discussion. Richard
Bayer states that despite the distinctions made in the
Pastoral Letter about the categories of ethical teaching
and prudential judgments, the policy recommendations
amount to the adoption of a Keynesian economic view.[19]
Bayer suggests another relationship between moral
statements of the church and the plurality of
macroeconomic schools of thought. Church leaders should
not publish complex recommendations, since such
statements misrepresent the appropriate role of the
bishops in the process of discussion. Rather, he argues
that a pastoral letter should serve as an impetus for
public discussion and scholarship by others through
offering principles and denouncing injustice.[20]

Third, the concentration on policy proposals in
the Pastoral Letter compromises its religious identity
and limits the role of religion in public discussion of
moral issues. Several years before the publication of
Economic Justice, David Hollenbach remarked that
discussions of Catholic social ethics had focused too
exclusively on the Church's ability to translate ethical

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[19]The economic school of thought founded on the work
of the early twentieth century economist John Maynard
Keynes. This view generally favors a more activist role
for government in economic matters.

[20]Richard Bayer, "Do We Want A Christian Economics?
The U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter," Theological Studies
51 (1990): 648-649.

principles into concrete political imperatives. These

efforts, he stated, gave insufficient attention to the

social resources of shared religious experience.[21] In

his subsequent reviews of both Pastoral Letters, Avery

Dulles echoes these sentiments. Dulles calls for a

clearer exposition of the religious identity of these

church statements. He urges caution when the Catholic

Church makes specific concrete applications of moral

principles.[22]

Fourth, while faithful to a religious tradition, the

language of public theology used in Economic Justice can

diminish the ability to converse with the wider society.

In the years since John Courtney Murray's advocacy of

natural law terminology for public discussion, Catholic

social ethics has made strides to integrate this language

with the use of religious symbols from the Scripture and

the Catholic Tradition. Theologians like J. Bryan Hehir,

however, express concern over the limitations of public

theology for the larger discussion. For example, Hehir

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[21]David Hollenbach, "A Prophetic Church and the
Catholic Sacramental Imagination," The Faith That Does
Justice, ed. John C. Haughey (New York: Paulist Press,
1979), 235.

[22]Avery Dulles, "The Gospel, The Church and
Politics," Origins 16 (February 19, 1987): 637-646. See
also his "Religion and the Transformation of Politics,"
America 167 (October 24, 1992): 296-301. For an opposing
view, see J. Bryan Hehir, "Principles and Politics"
Commonweal (March 27, 1987): 169-170.

urges the continued development of a public philosophy

along the lines begun by Murray. In his opinion, public

theology is useful for discussions within the church

community; public philosophy is useful for conversations

outside that community.[23] The discussion regarding a

balance between religious principles and public

conversation continues among Catholic social ethicians.[24]

Both theological reflection and empirical research

suggest an agenda for examining Economic Justice.

Questions arise, for example, about the "reception" of

the Letter.[25] Does the approach of principles and policy

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[23]J. Bryan Hehir, "The Perennial Need For
Philosophical Discourse" in "Theology and Philosophy In
Public: A Symposium On John Courtney Murray's Unfinished
Agenda," ed. David Hollenbach, Theological Studies 40
(December 1979): 710-713.

[24]Hollenbach speaks of a fundamental political
theology that incorporates public philosophy and public
theology. "Theology and Philosophy In Public," 713-715.
More recently, Michael J. Himes and Kenneth R. Himes
state the need to make the central symbols of the
Catholic tradition accessible to society. Those outside
a religious tradition must be able to ascertain the
elements of a believer's vision of society. See their
Fullness of Faith: The Public Significance of Theology
(New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 182.

[25]In Catholic theology "reception" is a theological
term that refers to the acceptance or rejection of church
teaching by members of the church community. In recent
theology, this process has been understood in a more
comprehensive manner. Since Vatican II there has been an
attentiveness to the social location of Christianity as a
factor in reception. See Louis de Vaucelles, "The
Changing Social Contexts of Postconciliar Christianity,"
The Reception of Vatican II, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo,
trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Washington, D.C.: The
Catholic University Press, 1987), 46. The active

applications hamper the desired goals? Could an alternate approach - for example an ethics of virtue -   achieve a greater degree of involvement in a discussion about the questions of justice? Could virtue theory facilitate wider participation in the building of a just society? This dissertation explores these questions in two ways. A virtue ethics has certain presuppositions that address the questions of justice in a fashion different from that of the Pastoral Letter. The first part of this study attempts to describe this difference, constructing an alternative model of moral reflection for social ethics. The second part examines the adequacy of virtue theory for offering a better account of the ethical dimensions of economic life in a way that is both cognizant with Catholic theology and conversant with pluralistic America.

The application of an ethics of virtue to <u>Economic Justice</u>, however, requires first an introduction to virtue theory. Even though moral theorists in recent years have begun to express interest in a revival of some aspects of virtue thought, it is still not well known. Moral philosophers, moreover, continue to debate the

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participation of church members as actors in the continuing development of church teaching has also been emphasized. See Kenneth Himes, "Mixed Reactions: The Reception of <u>Gaudium et Spes</u>," <u>New Theology Review</u> 3 (February 1990): 8. This study explores these factors in the reception of <u>Economic Justice</u>.

validity of the historical judgment that an ethics of

virtue is unable to address changing religious, social

and economic conditions. There is also considerable

discussion about what form a contemporary ethics of

virtue should take. Before evaluating the capacities of

virtue thought for Catholic social ethics, it is

necessary to understand the context of these questions.

A short history of moral reasoning will assist this

effort.

For the past three hundred years two schools of

thought have exercised predominant influence in moral

discourse. They are deontology (derived from the Greek

for "ought") and teleology (derived from the Greek for

"goal").[26] According to C.B. Broad, deontological

theories hold "such and such a kind of action would

always be right (or wrong) in such and such

circumstances, no matter what its consequences might be."

He contrasts deontological theories with teleological

theories, which hold "that rightness or wrongness of an

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[26]"Historical exceptions are to be recognized: there
are 'character' ethicists in modernity (notably among
them Nietzsche, Emerson, Henry Thoreau, and the Scotish
'moral sense' school - e.g. Hutcheson, Hume, Adam Smith -
and including brilliant flashes from John Stuart Mill),
but they are a distinct minority and relatively lacking
in influence." David L. Norton, "Moral Minimalism and
the Development of Moral Character," Midwest Studies in
Philosophy, Volume XIII Ethical Theory: Character and
Virtue (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press,
1988), 181.

action is always determined by its tendency to produce certain consequences which are intrinsically good or bad."[27]

Since the Enlightenment, Immanuel Kant has been the dominant voice in deontological moral philosophy. His statement of the "categorical imperative" epitomizes the focus of an ethics of duty - a search for moral principles to guide moral actions. The significance of Kant's theory remains considerable, affecting not only all subsequent ethical thought, but also daily moral utterance in Western society.[28] Currently, the accepted designation of the Kantian approach is "duty ethics".

Teleological moral philosophy has its foundation in "utilitarian" thought. This family of moral theories originates in the work of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. In distinction from deontological theory, utilitarianism holds that human conduct promotes the interests or welfare of those affected.[29] Utilitarianism

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[27]C.B. Broad, <u>Five Types of Ethical Theory</u>, 3d ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1956), 206-207.

[28]For example, Alasdair MacIntyre writes, "'You ought to do it. Why? There's no reason. You just ought.' The force of 'There's no reason' is to draw a contrast with the cases where you ought to do something because it will be to your pleasure or advantage or will bring about some result you want. Thus the distinction between categorical and hypothetical imperatives is at this level a familiar one." See his <u>A Short History of Ethics</u> (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1966), 194.

forms several branches of a larger teleological approach that is known today as "consequentialism".[30] Consequentialism evaluates moral acts based on their consequences. Actions are right or wrong according to the consequences they produce rather than according to any intrinsic features they have, as in deontology.[31]

Twentieth century critics question the adequacy of both approaches to the tasks of moral description and evaluation. Elizabeth Anscombe's "Modern Moral Philosophy," for example, is a pivotal moment in the critical examination of the moral method of both Kant and Bentham/Mill.[32] Anscombe states that the terms "right," "wrong" and "obligation," as used by modern moral philosophers, lack content. These are legal terms without a legal authority. The search by philosophers for a source of moral legislation (conscience, nature, or contract) has been unsuccessful.[33] All that remains in

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[29]David Lyons, "Utilitarianism," Encyclopedia of Ethics, ed. Lawrence C. Becker and Charlotte B. Becker (New York: Garland Publishing Company, 1992), 1261.

[30]The use of this term is attributed to Elizabeth Anscombe. See her "Modern Moral Philosophy," Philosophy 33 (1958).

[31]James Childress, "Consequentialism," in The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics, ed. James F. Childress and John Macquarrie (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), 122.

[32]Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," 1-19.

[33]Robert B. Kruschwitz and Robert C. Roberts, eds., "Introduction," The Virtues: Contemporary Essays on Moral

contemporary moral philosophy are the unacceptable

remnants of divine command theory[34] and an eviscerated

form of consequentialism. The result, she states, is a

huge "gap" in contemporary moral philosophy that can be

filled only by a return to the concept of "human

flourishing."

Critics trace reactions to the critique of Anscombe

and others in two ways. A first reaction offers a

revision and development of the Kantian tradition of

ethics.[35] Indeed, these revisions do pay greater

attention to anthropology,[36] and they also suggest that

Kantian autonomy does not preclude the ability to sustain

a common moral world.[37] Two examples of writers who use

Character (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing
Company, 1987), 3-4.

[34]A system of ethics where the elements and
structure are related to the commands of a god.

[35]See Gene Outka and John P. Reeder, Prospects for a
Common Morality (Princeton: Princeton University Press,
1993) for a recent series of essays that address the
question of a revision in Kantian ethics.

[36]For example see Bernard William's discussion of
care and compassion for others in his Morality: An
Introduction to Ethics (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 2,
8-9. See also his discussion of character development
and Kantian ethics in "Persons, Character and Morality,"
The Identities of Persons ed. Amelie Oksenberg Rorty
(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

[37]Philip Rossi, "The Foundation of the Philosophical
Concept of Autonomy by Kant and its Historical
Consequences," The Ethics of Liberation - The Liberation
Of Ethics, Concilium 172 ed. Dietmar Mieth and Jacques
Pohier (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark LTD, 1984).

this approach in social ethics are William Frankena and John Rawls. Frankena acknowledges Kant but builds upon the foundation of W.D. Ross; Rawls supplements his Kantian foundation with social contract theory from Locke and Rousseau.

These revisions of moral philosophy, however, have failed to satisfy all objections. They have, moreover, sparked a second response in the form of a renewed interest in the teleological approach to ethics. This discussion has not focused on a return to consequentialism, but on a revival of an ethics of virtue. Discussion began with the publication of the revised edition of Frankena's Ethics in 1973. This event occasioned a debate in the Journal of Religious Ethics on the efficacy of virtue theory for moral philosophy.[38] Shortly afterwards, Alasdair MacIntyre published After Virtue, his proposal for the establishment of a contemporary ethics of virtue. With his emphasis on moral character, MacIntyre has now become the dominant voice in current teleological theory.

A discussion of the relative merits of a duty and a virtue ethics continues in moral philosophy. For the purposes of clarity, however, it is important to note that the distinctions in each approach are not so sharp

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[38]Journal of Religious Ethics (1973-1976).

as first imagined. According to C.B. Broad, purely deontological and purely teleological theories are more ideal limits rather than real existents. Most actual theories are mixed, predominantly one or the other.[39] Hence, the distinction between deontology and teleology is not **hard** but **soft**. As David Norton notes:

> The modern and classical modes do not stand with respect to each other as mutually exclu-sive, but rather as a transformative difference in emphasis. Thus modern "rules morality" is not devoid of concern for the development of moral character but gives remarkably less attention to it, and attends to it in the light in which it appears when rules are the paramount concern. Conversely, "character morality" does not altogether neglect rules, but subordinates them to the development of moral character and views them instrumentally with reference to that end.[40]

The revisions discussed in moral philosophy also have some significant effects on the future directions of Catholic moral theology. Dissatisfaction with theological moral rationalism and its dependence on natural law categories also grew among theologians.[41] As part of its general review of Catholicism the Second Vatican Council encouraged the renewal of moral theol-

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[39]Broad, Five Types of Ethical Theory, 207-208.

[40]Norton, "Moral Minimalism and the Development of Moral Character," 180-181.

[41]See John Langan, "Catholic Moral Rationalism And The Philosophical Bases of Moral Theology," Theological Studies 50 (March 1989): 25-43 for a summary of this discussion.

ogy.[42]   European theologians Bernard Haring[43] and Josef

Fuchs[44] in particular, had earlier begun this revision

with a return to biblical roots and an understanding of

moral theology's historical development.   As in moral

philosophy, there was more discussion of anthropology.   A

shift began away from individual action and toward the

moral subject as the locus of reflection.   Bruno Schuller

had also begun to apply the categories of Anglo-American

moral philosophy (specifically the definitions of

deontological terms and teleological terms and the

categories of goodness and rightness) to Catholic moral

theology.[45]   In the United States, moral theologians like

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[42]"Special attention needs to be given to the
development of moral theology. Its scientific exposition
should be more thoroughly nourished by scriptural
teaching. It should show the nobility of the Christian
vocation of the faithful, and their obligation to bring
forth fruit in charity for the life of the world."
"Decree Optatam Totius", n. 16, ed. Walter M. Abbott, The
Documents of Vatican II (New York: Guild Press, 1962),
452.

[43]Bernard Haring. The Law of Christ (Westminster:
Newman Press, 1961) and Free and Faithful in Christ, (New
York: Seabury Press, 1974).

[44]Josef Fuchs, Human Values and Christian
Responsibility (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1970),
Christian Ethics in the Secular Arena, (Washington, D.C.:
Georgetown University Press, 1984) and Personal
Responsibility and Christian Morality, (Washington,D.C.:
Georgetown University Press, 1983).

[45]Bruno Schuller, "Various Types of Grounding for
Ethical Norms," Readings in Moral Theology No. 1: Moral
Norms and Catholic Tradition, eds. Charles E. Curran and
Richard A. McCormick (New York: Paulist Press, 1979),
184-198.

Richard McCormick and Charles Curran continued and

expanded these trends.

The use of terminology from moral philosophy brings

with it an understanding of the developments in moral

theology since Vatican II and a greater clarity in

Catholic moral thinking.[46] Prior to the Council, the

moral theology of the Manualist tradition[47] was

deontological. In this tradition the major emphasis was

the judgment of the sinfulness of actions according to

moral principles.[48] Since the Council, the revisions of

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[46]See Lisa Sowle Cahill, "Teleology, Utilitarianism, And Christian Ethics," Theological Studies 42 (December 1981): 601-629 for a helpful overview of this discussion.

[47]The Manualist Tradition of Catholic moral theology began in the Counter-Reformation Period and lasted until the Second Vatican Council. Moral theology in this context became separated from Scripture, Systematic theology and Ascetical theology. This discipline was not interested in speculative or systematic concerns but rather in the practical concern of judging sinfulness in connection with the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Moral theology during this period was often published in a series of manuals, such as Institutiones Theologiae Moralis. See Charles Curran, "Counter-Reformation Moral Theology," in The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics.

[48]The designation of the Manualist tradition as a deontological approach illustrates the difficulty of applying the terms acquired from moral philosophy. Traditional Catholic moral theology saw the foundations of ethical principles and rules as located in the ends of nature. This teleological aspect was prominent in natural law argumentation. See James Gustafson, Protestant and Roman Catholic Ethics: Prospects for Rapprochement (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 49-50. See also James Childress, "Teleological Ethics," in Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics, 617.

moral theology have been teleological. This revisionist
theology has two forms. The first is proportionalism
which roughly parallels consequentialism.[49]
Proportionalism argues that acts should promote value.
Its method is to weight competing values within given
circumstances. The other form of teleology is virtue
ethics. An ethics of virtue focuses the "ends" of ethics
on character development rather than on the effects of an
action.

The application of a virtue theory approach to the
areas of Catholic social ethics addressed by Economic
Justice present some formidable challenges. First, an
established form of virtue ethics available for
contemporary application does not exist. Any retrieval of
virtue theory has to include the following: an
investigation of its Aristotelian and Thomistic sources,
an understanding of the Enlightenment judgment of its
inadequacy, and an evaluation of its contemporary
reincarnations.

Second, criticism of contemporary forms of justice
does not mean automatic acceptance of the classical
approach to justice invoked in an ethics of virtue.
Catholic social ethics has traditionally criticized many

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[49]See Bernard Hoose, Proportionalism: The American
Debate and Its European Roots (Washington, D.C.:
Georgetown University Press, 1987) for an account of this
discussion.

aspects of economic liberalism.[50] These criticisms have

not resulted in a call to return to the classical

approach to justice. In fact, some contemporary Catholic

moral theologians label the Aristotelian form of justice

"managerial."[51] In addition to answering the

Enlightenment criticism, an ethics of virtue has to

address these theological reservations.

Third, the discussions of justice found in Economic

Justice come at a time when churches in America have less

influence among their congregants in relating belief to

practice. The Roman Catholic community is increasingly

critical of church teaching. Its membership, in addition,

comes from diverse economic, ethnic and educational

backgrounds. An ethics of virtue has to demonstrate the

methodological flexibility to address and engage this

complex constituency.

Fourth, this study stands in contrast to the efforts

of two prominent virtue theorists. Both Alasdair

MacIntyre and Stanley Hauerwas have written persuasively

about the relationship of virtue theory to social ethics.

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[50]John Langan, "Catholicism and Liberalism - 200
Years of Contest and Consensus" Liberalism and the Good
ed. R. Bruce Douglass (New York: Routledge, 1990), 116.

[51]Enda McDonagh, "Moral Theology and Transformative
Justice," History and Conscience: Studies in Honor of
Sean O'Riordan, CSSR (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1989),
82-83. He is joined in this view by John Mahoney. See
his "The Challenge of Moral Distinctions," Theological
Studies 53 (December 1992): 665.

The limitations they cite about virtue's capacity to engage in pluralistic conversations and the activity of communities using virtue are, however, too restrictive. Their ultimate positions lack the balance and flexibility they initially advocate so well.[52] As a result, they inhibit both the proper understanding of virtue and its full exercise by individuals and communities. Although this dissertation gratefully acknowledges its dependence upon their efforts, it draws significantly different conclusions for the utilization of virtue theory.

With these and other concerns in mind, this study progresses as follows:

The first part of this study is a comparison between a duty and a virtue approach to the question of justice. Since the distinction between these approaches is found in moral philosophy, Chapter One begins a review of the social ethics of two contemporary philosophers, William Frankena and John Rawls. Several important reasons commend the selection of Frankena and Rawls. Frankena's Ethics argues for the superiority of a deontological approach moral reasoning.[53] He advocates a revised Kantian foundation and keeps the **soft** distinction between

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[52]Mahoney, "The Challenge of Moral Distinctions," 669-672.

[53]William Frankena, Ethics Revised Edition (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1973).

the approaches of an ethics of duty and an ethics of
virtue. His theory includes a position for virtue in
moral evaluation. The principle of justice is also
central to the argument of his work. In addition,
Frankena is the American moral philosopher most
frequently referred to by moral theologians concerned
with moral method.[54]

Rawls's A Theory of Justice complements Frankena's
efforts.[55] Like Frankena, he adapts the Kantian
foundation and includes a consideration of virtue. He
too makes the **soft** distinction between an ethics of duty
and an ethics of virtue. Catholic social ethicists,
moreover, use Rawls's Theory as a standard reference in
the discussion of justice.[56]

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[54]See William Frankena, "McCormick and the
Traditional Distinction," (Doing Evil to Achieve Good:
Moral Choice in Conflict Situations, ed. Richard
McCormick and Paul Ramsey (Chicago: Loyola University
Press, 1978), John Connery, "Morality of Consequences: A
Critical Appraisal," Readings in Moral Theology No. 1:
Moral Norms and Catholic Tradition and Cahill,
"Teleology, Utilitarianism and Christian Ethics" for
examples of the influence of Frankena's work in moral
theology.

[55]John Rawls, A Theory of Justice (Cambridge:
Belknap Press, 1971). Hereafter referred to as Theory.

[56]For example, see David Hollenbach, "Modern
Catholic Teachings Concerning Justice," The Faith That
Does Justice ed. John C. Haughey (New York: Paulist
Press, 1977) and his "Religion and Public Life,"
Theological Studies 52 (March 1991): 87-106.

After outlining Frankena and Rawls, Chapter One lays the foundation for a comparison between the salient strengths and weaknesses of an ethics of duty and an ethics of virtue. This study has already suggested that the distinction between these two approaches is a **soft** one, that is, they differ in orientation, conceptual starting points, and secondary derivative concepts which are defined in terms of their relations to the beginning element.[57] In deontological theory, which focuses on moral action, the starting point is duty, and virtues are derived to support the carrying out of duty. In virtue theory, which emphasizes moral character, the starting point is virtue, and rules are secondary derivatives.

In order to assess the capacities of each approach in a discussion of justice, this comparison will have to probe further. The distinction in conceptual starting points (moral action versus moral character), also results in several other basic differences as well.[58] Chapter One selects three additional systematic features to examine the distinctions between duty ethics and virtue ethics. The first feature is an account of human nature. Here two factors are explored: the role of the

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[57]Robert B. Louden, "On Some Vices of Virtue Ethics," <u>American Philosophical Quarterly</u> 21 (July 1984): 227-228.

[58]Ibid., 69.

emotions in the moral life, and the relationship of an individual to society. Second, is the model of practical reasoning employed. This feature examines what procedures and perspectives are emphasized in the decision-making process of each approach. The final feature is the role of teleology in each ethical approach. This feature asks: how are human nature and decision-making constituted by a goal orientation?

Chapter Two is the second part of the initial unit of this work. It begins with a brief introduction to the contemporary revival of interest in virtue theory. It then focuses on the classical sources of an ethics of virtue, the works of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, and its chief contemporary proponent, Alasdair MacIntyre. The chapter again employs the four philosophical features to create a virtue model and to contrast it with a model of an ethics of duty. In light of the historical and contemporary challenges that accompany a restatement of virtue ethics, chapter two also tests the model with the objections against its establishment. This analysis contains another important element: up to this point the discussion has taken place only within the discipline of moral philosophy. As a Catholic teaching document, however, <u>Economic Justice</u> has its foundation both in moral philosophy and in moral theology. Because moral theology makes specific requirements of an ethical

method, Chapter Two concludes with a discussion of the suitability of an ethics of virtue for Catholic social ethics.

Chapter Three focuses on <u>Economic Justice</u> itself, with particular attention paid to the initial drafts, interim discussions, and the final text. This review also surveys the arguments of the major theological critics which point out the strengths and weaknesses of the Pastoral Letter. The chapter then employs the same features of character, anthropology, teleology and practical reason to analyze the Letter's approach. This analysis takes note of the difficulties of applying philosophical analysis to theology, and the unique place of Catholic moral theology in the deontological - teleological debates. The chapter concludes with a demonstration of the advantages of an ethics of virtue for achieving the goals of the Pastoral Letter.

Chapter Four broadens this inquiry. <u>Economic Justice</u> addresses itself not only to the Catholic community, but also to the American public. For acceptance, an ethics of virtue has to demonstrate a capacity for supporting both discussions: Catholic and American. Both the complexities of public theology and the charges of sectarianism attributed to virtue theory complicate this task. This chapter reviews the efforts of the Pastoral Letter to construct a public theology.

It then suggests that, despite the arguments of virtue theorists like Alasdair MacIntyre and Stanley Hauerwas, an ethics of virtue can engage Catholic social ethics in ecumenical conversations and joint efforts with the wider society.

Economic Justice is a teaching document addressed primarily to individual and group education and professional reflection. Its application, however, implicitly recognizes another distinctly Catholic forum: the Sunday homily offered within the weekly celebration of the Eucharist. For many Catholics, preaching is the most prominent opportunity for learning about the relationship between faith and justice. Preaching also creates an area for continuing discussion between liturgists and social justice activists. Chapter Five, therefore, explores this relationship in the context of the eucharistic liturgy and suggests that an ethics of virtue strengthens the theology of preaching and its connection with economic justice.

There are two final notes. After outlining the scope of this dissertation, it is also important to state what this study is not. This dissertation is not an attempt to rewrite Economic Justice using the approach of virtue ethics. This study also does not concentrate on economic analysis or application of virtue theory to economic policies. Either proposal lies beyond the scope

of the study envisioned here. This dissertation deals specifically with ethical method. It seeks to understand the method used in <u>Economic Justice</u>, and to examine what the structure and scope of the Pastoral Letter would be if the authors had used virtue theory as their ethical approach.

Second, this dissertation makes efforts to explain the technical terms found in the ethical discussion. Like any academic discipline, ethics has developed a vocabulary that is either particular to this field of study or novel in its use of commonly accepted words. This is also true of sources. Owing to the wide acceptance of an ethic of duty, readers may be unfamiliar with the two classical foundational works of an ethics of virtue. These are the <u>Nichomachean Ethics</u> of Aristotle and the <u>Summa Theologiae</u> of Thomas Aquinas.

CHAPTER ONE

AN ETHICS OF DUTY APPROACH TO JUSTICE

Overview

In order to demonstrate the advantages of virtue
theory for use in Catholic social ethics, it is necessary
to begin this study with a review of some of the
constitutive elements of the treatment of justice in
moral philosophy. This procedure is important for two
reasons. First, since the Second Vatican Council moral
theologians have begun to use distinctions from Anglo-
American philosophy in moral theology.[1] These
theologians have found the distinctions in moral
philosophy helpful in the expansion of theological
thought. This process of appropriation began with the
German moral theologian Bruno Schuller[2] and continues in
the writings of American moral theologians. The borrowed
terminology includes the categories of deontology and
teleology and the distinctions between moral
goodness/rightness and moral badness/wrongness. Using
similar terminology, moreover, has increased the

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[1]For an account of the use of philosophical
distinctions in moral theology see Hoose,
Proportionalism, 41-67.

[2]Schuller, "Various Types of Grounding for Ethical
Norms," Readings in Moral Theology No. 1: Moral Norms and
Catholic Tradition, 184-198.

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conversation between philosophers and theologians.[3] The second reason for beginning this study in philosophy is to illustrate the ethical methods discussed. The distinction between an ethics of duty and an ethics in virtue is found in moral philosophy. Before virtue theory can be applied to moral theology, it is important to understand the origins of this approach in moral philosophy.

In Chapter One there are two tasks. The first is to present the foundational elements of moral philosophy which are present in the deontological approach to justice. This review begins with the works of William Frankena and John Rawls, both of whom have a Kantian deontological foundation which they adapt to meet contemporary requirements. Significantly, they also supplement their approaches with a subsidiary role for virtue. A review of these theories is also necessary to this study because each philosopher enters into the discussion of justice from a different perspective. Frankena focuses on individuals, while Rawls concentrates on social constructs. Moral theologians have used these foundational elements as points of reference in Catholic social ethics and in the pastoral letter, Economic Justice. The second task in Chapter One is to present the four central

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[3]See Frankena, "McCormick and the Traditional Distinction," 145-164.

features that emerge as measures of a contemporary social ethic - character, human nature, practical reason and teleology. Each feature is important to the understanding of how an ethics of duty describes the pursuit of justice.

Chapter One concludes with a brief survey of some theorists who disagree with Frankena and Rawls. Though these authors are mainly deontologists themselves, their criticisms are important to this study, because they assist in the identification of the questions that await the description of justice in an ethics of virtue.

William Frankena's Ethics

William Frankena is a contemporary moral philosopher who builds on a number of Kantian deontological insights and also examines the role of justice in moral life.[4] In

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[4]The following list of Frankena's writings are significant for this discussion: "Obligation and Motivation in Recent Moral Philosophy," Essays in Moral Philosophy, ed. A.I. Melden (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1958), 48-79; "Recent Conceptions of Morality," Morality and the Language of Conduct, ed. H.N. Castaneda and G. Nakhnikan (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 1963), 1-24; Ethics, Second Edition (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1973); "The Ethics of Love Conceived As An Ethics of Virtue," Journal of Religious Ethics 1 (1973): 21-31; "'Ought' and 'Is' Once More," Perpectives on Morality: Essays of William Frankena, ed. K.E. Goodpaster (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976), 133-147; "Pritchard and the Ethics of Virtue," Perspectives on Morality: Essays of William Frankena ed. K.E. Goodpaster (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press,

concise form, his Ethics presents a broad and well

constructed argument for the superiority of an ethics of

duty over an ethics of virtue.

Frankena's objective is to establish a normative

theory of obligation that offers guidance in moral

decisions.[5] He states that the cornerstones of

obligation are conceptual clarity and factual knowledge.

The process of decision-making requires a competent grasp

of data and a clarity of the mental processes.[6] Like

Kant's approach, Frankena's approach is non-teleological[7]

and independent of a foundation in human nature or

external associations.[8] The independence from these

1976), 148-160; Thinking About Morality (Michigan: The
University of Michigan Press, 1980) and "Is Morality
Logically Dependent On Religion?", Divine Commands and
Morality, ed. P. Helm (Oxford: Oxford University Press,
1981), 14-34.

[5]"Our primary question is this: how may or should we
decide or determine what is morally right for a certain
agent (oneself or another, possibly a group or a whole
society) to do, or what he morally ought to do, in a
certain situation?" Frankena, Ethics, 12.

[6]Frankena, Ethics, 13.

[7]For Frankena's account of the distinction between
teleological and deontological theories, See his Ethics,
14-17.

[8]For Kant the basis of obligation is in the concept
of practical reason. Frederick Copleston notes that Kant
refers to Montaigne as founding morality on education, to
Epicurus as founding it on humanity's physical feeling,
to Mandeville as founding it on political constitution,
and to Hutcheson as founding it on humanity's moral
feelings. See his A History of Philosophy Vol. VI Wolff
to Kant (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 313.

foundations applies especially to religion.[9] Frankena
and other duty ethicians hold the view that the
dependence of morality on religious and ethical thought
is responsible for the violence and warfare that shapes
continental history. To undo this historical burden
contemporary ethical reflection has to establish a ratio-
nal rather than a religious base for the questions of
morality.[10] This rational basis not only is offered as a
response to the complexities and pluralism of contempo-
rary society, it also lessens the possibility of the
religious disagreements and conflicts that have led to
violence in the past.

Once Frankena acknowledges the need for a rational
basis for morality, he continues to construct his duty
ethic by searching for foundational principles which

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[9]"If morality is dependent on religion, then we
cannot hope to solve our problems, or resolve our
differences of opinion about them, unless and in so far
as we can achieve agreement and certainty in religion
(not a lively hope); but, if it is not entirely dependent
on religion, then we can expect to solve at least some of
them by the use of empirical and historical inquiries of
a publicly available and testable kind (inquiries that
are improving in quality and scope.)" Frankena, "Is
Morality Logically Dependent On Religion?," 14.

[10]"Frankena would like to sever morality logically
from all traditions and particularities, and justify its
demands in the universal light of reason." For him
"great confidence has been placed in the universality and
objectivity of rationality, which is in turn to deliver
us from relativities and subjectivisms of religious and
other particularized backgrounds." David Schenck,
"Recasting the 'Ethics of Virtue/Ethics of Duty' Debate,"
Journal of Religious Ethics 4 (1976): 270.

follow from universal rationality. Surveying the various historical deontological and teleological theories of morality, he rejects the possibility of a "Divine Command Theory." Instead, Frankena explores the rule deontology of his predecessor, Immanuel Kant.[11] But, Kant, he suggests, cannot prove much of what he asserts. As a result, Frankena concludes that the Kantian test cannot establish all necessary duties for a moral life.[12] He makes the same negative judgment about Utilitarianism.

For Frankena, Kant's principle of universality cannot meet the requirement of specificity for ethics.[13]

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[11]Kant's rule deontology is monistic and non-teleological. All judgments about right or wrong are determined from a single rule and the choice of action is not determined by an end or goal. He writes, "Thus the moral worth of an action does not lie in the effect expected from it, nor in any principle of action which requires to borrow its motive from this expected effect." Immanuel Kant, Kant's Critique of Practical Reason and Others Works on the Theory of Ethics, trans. Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, Fourth Edition, Revised (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1889), 17. Henceforth all quotations will be taken from the Abbott translation.

[12]"In any event, it seems to me that in order for one's maxims to be considered moral duties, it is not enough that one be able consistently to will one's maxims to be universally acted upon. Much depends on the point of view from which one wills such rules to be universally followed...There is more to the moral point of view than being willing to universalize one's rules; Kant and his followers fail to see this fact, although they are right in thinking such a willingness is part of it." Frankena, Ethics, 33.

[13]According to Frankena, rule deontology fails in this regard because it is a non-teleological standard that consists of one or more rules which state that one

This limitation, however, does not restrict his use of rule deontology as a basis for ethics, as long as the important objections to its use can be answered. He states that "no rule can be framed which does not admit of exceptions (and excuses) and no set of rules can be framed which does not admit of conflicts between rules."[14] Consequently, Frankena must adapt the Kantian foundation he has inherited; which he does by expanding his review of deontology to include rule theorists other than Kant.

One such theorist is W.D. Ross. Frankena finds that Ross's theory of **prima facie** duty answers the above objection.[15] Unlike Kant's criterion of right action, which is monistic,[16]Ross's theory is pluralistic. He offers seven characteristics which can make an action right.[17] These characteristics function as categories

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always ought to act in a certain way in a certain kind of situation. Ethics, 25.

[14]Frankena, Ethics, 25.

[15]William David Ross, The Right and the Good (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), 19-20.

[16]A monistic theory holds that there is a single principle or rule that from which all other rules or judgments about right and wrong can be derived. Pluralistic theories affirm more than one basic rule or principle. See Tom L. Beauchamp and James F. Childress, Principles of Biomedical Ethics 3d. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 37-39.

[17]These are: fidelity, reparation, gratitude, justice, beneficence, self-improvement and non-maleficence. Ibid., Chapter Two.

that represent **prima facie** duties. Unless other moral
considerations intervene, each is an actual duty. One
right-making feature, however, could outweigh another.[18]
In other words, Ross's theory provides rules that are
overriding but not absolute. Ross speaks of one's duty
as having "the greatest balance of **prima facie**
rightness."[19]

Although Frankena accepts the concept of **prima facie**
duty, he does not think it provides a complete answer to
resolve cases of conflicts of duties. It lacks, he
thinks, a criterion to identify these duties and to tell
which considerations are always to be taken into account
in determining right and wrong actions.[20] Initially,
Frankena looks for a single basic non-teleological
principle that can serve as a moral standard. But it soon
becomes evident to him that the acceptance of one
requires the presence of another. Frankena settles on
two principles, beneficence[21] and justice, to form the

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[18]C. Stephen Layman, The Shape of the Good (Notre
Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 111.

[19]Ibid, 41.

[20]Frankena, Ethics, 27.

[21]Frankena rejects the principle of utility as a
basic premise. This does not deny the importance of
utility, but he claims there is a more fundamental
understanding - that of doing good and preventing harm.
He calls it beneficence and not benevolence to underscore
its nature as an activity and not a desire. Ethics, 45.

basis for his mixed theory of obligation. These principles are complete and require no additions. He derives all other duties from these two, either directly or indirectly.[22]

Although Frankena calls his work a mixed deontological theory of obligation, he does not conclude that it is a complete normative ethic. He sees the further need for a theory of moral value to supplement the normative theory of moral obligation. Such a complete normative theory requires, significantly, the presence of virtue. He writes, "I am inclined to think that principles without traits are impotent and traits without principles are blind."[23] Consequently, Frankena adds the cardinal virtues of benevolence and justice to his principles of beneficence and justice.[24] He considers these virtues cardinal, in the sense that one can derive all the other usual virtues from them.

The complementary although limited role that Frankena sets out for the virtues is important. Virtues provide the basic motivation for a morality of

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[22]Frankena, Ethics, 52.

[23]Frankena, Ethics, 65.

[24]He notes that he speaks of the principle of beneficence and the virtue of benevolence. In the case of justice, he uses the same word to mark the difference between the principle of equal treatment and the disposition to treat people equally. Frankena, Ethics, 64.

principles.[25] He states that certain virtues are developed to act in accordance with their principles. But in Frankena's schema, the traits to be developed are dependent upon the principles chosen.[26] These virtues add a human dimension by presenting the spirit of the law. They also have a sustaining function. Frankena recognizes, as does Ross, that only **prima facie** and not actual principles of duty are available in a moral system. Dispositions sustain an individual when conflicting principles or working revisions delay the process of decision.[27] They ensure that whatever a moral agent decides is done willingly, no matter what the situation.[28]

The limited role Frankena assigns to an ethics of virtue suggests that for him, virtue ethics is incapable of giving guidance about what to do.[29] Virtue can assist only in making removed, not direct, moral judgments,[30]

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[25]This is similar to Kant, who writes, "Virtue is the strength of the man's maxim in his obedience to duty." Critique of Practical Reason and Other Works on the Theory of Ethics, 305.

[26]Frankena, Ethics, 65.

[27]Frankena, Ethics, 66.

[28]Frankena, Ethics, 67.

[29]Frankena, Ethics, 66.

[30]Frankena borrows this distinction from Maurice Mandelbaum. "**Direct** moral judgments are those in which a person as agent judges what actions or kinds of actions

and in helping provide retrospective judgments about ourselves as persons.[31] Because a duty ethic has predominance in prospective judgments, however, direct moral judgments about current actual actions must remain within its province. This dependence on duty counters the tendency in modern popular moral thinking to emphasize the motive or intention as the decisive factor in evaluation.[32]

Frankena's resulting schema of morality relegates the virtues to a subsidiary position. The central focus

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it is right, good, or virtuous for him to do in situations that face him. **Removed** moral judgments are those in which a person is judging as a spectator, judging the actions done by others, the character of others, his own past actions, or his own character." See his "Pritchard and the Ethics of Virtue," 152-153.

[31]"It seems clear, then, that a pure ethics of virtue would not propound, as our basic guides to life, any judgments or principles about what is morally right or obligatory to do, since it would then be an ethics of duty or principle. It might try to derive some judgments or rules about what is right, wrong or obligatory from its basic ideals of virtue, but these basic ideals must themselves not be judgments or principles about what is right, wrong or obligatory. They must be ideals about what is virtuous." Ibid., 153,155.

[32]"The point is that when a moral agent is faced with the question of what he should do in a certain situation, he must ask what is the right thing to do, not what action would be morally good, because what action would be morally good depends on what motives he has and will act with, and this is irrelevant to the question of what is right. It is irrelevant both because in asking what he should do, he is supposed to be proceeding from the moral point of view and from the right or best motives, and because what one ought to do depends on more objective factors about him and the situation he is in, e.g., on whether or not he will be deceiving or injuring someone." Frankena, Thinking About Morality, 53.

of moral evaluation revolves then around the
establishment and application of principles. Unwilling
to reject the category of virtue outright, however,
Frankena elects to combine duty and virtue into one
system of thought. While duty remains primary, he
rejects the understanding that the actions of either
moral system determine the species of moral action. He
states:

> I propose therefore that we regard the morality
> of duty and principles and the morality of
> virtues or traits of character not as rival
> kinds of morality between which we must choose,
> but as two complementary aspects of the same
> morality. Then, for every principle there will
> be a morally good trait, often going by the
> same name, consisting of a disposition or
> tendency to act according to it; and for every
> morally good trait there will be a principle
> defining the kind of action in which it is to
> express itself.[33]

Even though Frankena's _Ethics_ selects justice as the
companion principle to beneficence, by his own account he
is able to offer only a limited presentation of social
justice.[34] He describes the distributive form of
justice, a form which comprises the comparative treatment
of individuals. To discover which rules of distribution

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[33]Frankena, _Ethics_, 65.

[34]Frankena, _Ethics_, 48-52. See his earlier "The
Concept of Social Justice" _Social Justice_, ed. Richard
Brandt (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), 1-
29.

or comparative treatment to act upon, he rejects the classical Aristotelian merit approach[35] and modern Marxist criteria.[36] Consequently, he settles on an egalitarian form of distributive justice.

Although this egalitarian form of justice presents a **prima facie** obligation of treating people equally, Frankena comments that treating people equally does not mean treating them identically. He states, "It means making the same relative contribution to the goodness (this is equal help or helping according to need) or asking the same sacrifice (this is asking in accord with ability).[37] Because justice is a **prima facie** obligation, the principle of beneficence can overrule it. Promotion of future grounds of equality can make present inequality acceptable. The adoption of the principle of justice can resolve potential conflicts with the addition of good will, clarity of thought, and knowledge of the relevant facts.[38]

The work of William Frankena is one perspective in contemporary deontology. From his approach, one can see

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[35]This criteria is based on desert or merit. Frankena, Ethics, 49.

[36]He identifies the origin in the Marxist dictum, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." Frankena, Ethics, 49.

[37]Frankena, Ethics, 51.

[38]Frankena, Ethics, 52.

the elements of moral evaluation in an ethic of duty.
These are: 1) the adoption of the moral point of view,
which emphasizes rational reflection; 2) the rejection of
the possibility of a single teleological focus; 3) the
dominance of the category of choice and a minimal
attention to character and; 4) the establishment of
principles (beneficence and justice) over virtues as the
poles of moral interaction. To these he adds good will,
clarity of thought, and knowledge of factual data as the
bases for fulfilling one's moral responsibility
personally and socially.

Frankena's presentation also offers the broad
outlines of an understanding of justice in deontological
theory. Justice as a principle is a **prima facie**
obligation to treat others equally. The virtue of justice
exists to offer support and encouragement in the
application of the rules of distribution. Although
Frankena offers a solid basis to understand deontological
theory, his presentation of justice is not sufficient
from the perspective of this study. A comparison with
the description of justice in an ethics of virtue
necessitates a fuller treatment. John Rawls's <u>A Theory
of Justice</u> meets this requirement.

John Rawls's A Theory of Justice

The context for Rawls's work is the twentieth century impasse in ethical theory between utilitarianism and intuitionism.[39] Like Frankena, he lays the groundwork for his efforts within Kant's thought.[40] Two shared Kantian themes illustrate this connection. First, the operative principles in Rawls's Theory are similar to Kant's principle of autonomy. According to both Kant and Rawls, moral agents are required to act in accord with principles selected rationally and impartially.[41] Second, Rawls's position is also similar to Kant's "kingdom of ends."[42] Both express the ideal of living together in a community as free, equal and autonomous persons.[43]

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[39]Rawls, A Theory of Justice, 52.

[40]Rawls suggests that his interpretation "remain(s) fairly close to Kant's doctrine." A Theory of Justice, 252. In a later presentation he returns to this connection "to set out more clearly the Kantian roots of that conception." See his "Kantian Constructivism In Moral Theory," The Journal of Philosophy LXXVII (September 1980): 515.

[41]Fred Feldman, Introductory Ethics (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1978), 144.

[42]Kant writes, "So act as if you were always through your maxims a law-making member in a universal kingdom of ends." Groundwork of a Metaphysics of Morals, trans. H. J. Paton (New York; Harper and Row, 1964), 74-77.

[43]John Marshall, "Kantian Ethics," in Encyclopedia of Ethics, 676.

Like Frankena, Rawls also sees the need to adapt the
Kantian foundation. He does this by integrating the
elements he draws from Kant with social contract theory.
He states that integration of Kant and social contract
theory is the most philosophically favored interpreta-
tion for generating a theory of justice because such a
construction reflects commonly shared assumptions.
Contract theory is valuable because it provides a process
that starts out from weak, but widely accepted, premises
and proceeds toward more specific conclusions. The
integration of these approaches allows Rawls to draw from
the democratic tradition and to locate his theory of
justice within the institutions and governance of this
tradition.[44] He seeks to establish principles of justice
that recognize liberal premises and ensure that the needs
of the poor are effectively met.[45]

The social contract theory from which Rawls draws
originated in post-Reformation Europe. During that era,
the conception of the moral life was shifting from one
imposed by God, hereditary rank or nature, to one chosen
by the individual. In this view, individuals could
create and incur morally binding obligations through

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[44]Marshall, "Kantian Ethics," 675-676.

[45]Gerald Mara, "Poverty and Justice: The Bishops and
Contemporary Liberalism," The Deeper Meaning of Economic
Life (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press,
1986), 165.

consent or agreement. These obligations could also be nullified in the exercise of autonomy.[46] Contract theorists, like John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, searched for something to supplant long-lost religious hegemony. They sought to create a philosophical approach that would include different forms of intellectual and social life and would also encourage the emerging trends of progress. The resulting social contract theory provided a system of ethical rules based on reason and subject to informed general agreement. This theory was an attempt to secure rational agreement in a non-coercive way that did not require appeal to competing conceptions of the good.[47]

Rawls's joining of Kantian thought to social contract theory is an effort to renew contemporary social ethics and to place justice at its center. He wants to establish a moral theorem that coheres with settled moral convictions, and has the characteristics of constructivity and rationality. This theorem keeps an independent place for the notion of the right, while acknowledging the dignity and worth of moral personali-

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[46]Lawrence C. Becker, "Social Contract," Encyclopedia of Ethics, 1171.

[47]L. Gregory Jones, "Should Christians Affirm Rawls's Justice As Fairness? A Response to Professor Beckley," Journal of Religious Ethics 16 (Fall 1988): 257.

ty.[48]   It also leads to the development of principles of justice that have **a priori** status. The genesis of these principles follows the plan of a hypothetical social interaction.

Rawls labels the initial construct of his proposed social interaction as the "original position." The original position functions as the starting point of a process that will lead to the selection of two basic principles of justice. Rawls states that his position does not reflect an actual state of affairs or a primitive condition of a culture, but rather a purely hypothetical situation that roughly corresponds to the "state of nature"[49] described in the theories of social contract. Rawls also includes David Hume's description of the "circumstances of justice" in his own description.[50]

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[48]Rawls, A Theory of Justice, 252. See also Robert Paul Wolff. Understanding Rawls: A Reconstruction and Critique of *A Theory of Justice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 16-17.

[49]This is the level of human existence prior to the formation of a society where conflicts rather than cooperation are the normal experience. The classic description of this state is found in Thomas Hobbes's Leviathan, who described it as "a war of every man against every man." See E.A. Burtt, ed. English Philosophers from Bacon to Mill (New York: Modern Library, 1939), 161.

[50]Rawls, A Theory of Justice, 126-130. In A Treatise of Human Nature and An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals, Hume stated that people usually find themselves in circumstances that manifest four

The original position operates under what Rawls describes as the "veil of ignorance".[51] The veil of ignorance that surrounds the participants both limits knowledge and insures fairness. Knowledge of contingencies and resulting prejudices are thereby excluded.[52] These restrictive conditions are meant to insure equality and limit any knowledge that would compromise a fair decision. In addition, Rawls limits the consideration of desert[53] in his theory.[54] Desert

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characteristics that limit the possibility of justice: dependence, moderate scarcity, restrained benevolence, and individual vulnerability. See Thomas Donaldson, "Justice: Circumstances of," Encyclopedia of Ethics, 653-654.

[51]Rawls writes, "No one knows his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does any one know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence, strength, and the like. I shall even assume the parties do not know their conceptions of the good or their special psychological propensities." Rawls, A Theory of Justice, 12.

[52]"This ensures that no one is advantaged or disadvantaged in the choice of principle by the outcome of natural chance or the contingency of social circumstances. Since all are similarly situated and no one is able to design principles to favor his particular condition, the principles of justice are the result of a fair agreement or bargain." Rawls, A Theory of Justice, 12,19.

[53]Desert flows from the type of merit attributed to persons. It can be consequent of their natural abilities or derived from social organization. George Sher, "Merit and Desert," Encyclopedia of Ethics, 786-787.

[54]"There is a tendency for common sense to suppose that income and wealth, and the good things of life generally, should be distributed according to moral desert. Justice is happiness according to virtue....Now justice as fairness rejects this conception. Such a

claims do not have an independent basis in the original
position. Judgments of what is deserved derive from
decisions flowing from the original position.[55] Desert
claims do not belong to the individual. Rawls states
that natural or social assets are common to, and for the
benefit of, all.[56]

Rawls describes the two principles selected in the
original position as follows: the liberty principle
requires equality in the assignment of basic rights and
duties; the difference principle holds that social and
economic inequalities of wealth and authority are just
only if they result in compensating benefits for
everyone, and in particular, for the least advantaged
members of society.[57] In addition, these principles have

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principle would not be chosen in the original position.
There seems to be no way of defining the requisite
criterion in that situation. Moreover, the notion of
distribution according to virtue fails to distinguish
between moral desert and legitimate expectations."
Rawls, A Theory of Justice, 310-311. See also 100ff.

[55]Rawls writes, "It seems to be one of the fixed
points of our considered judgments that no one deserves
his place in the distribution of native endowments, any
more than one deserves one's initial starting place in
society. The assertion that a man deserves the superior
character that enables him to cultivate his abilities is
equally problematic; for his character depends in large
part upon fortunate family and social circumstances for
which he can claim no credit. The notion of desert seems
not to apply to these cases." A Theory of Justice, 104.

[56]Charles Larmore, Patterns of Moral Complexity (New
York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 127.

[57]Rawls, A Theory of Justice, 15.

a definitive quality. Rawls notes that the "group of persons must decide once and for all what is to count among them as just and unjust."[58] These principles will "regulate all subsequent criticism and reform of institutions."[59] Succeeding evaluations of justice will always make reference to the principles emanating from the original position.

The original position also contains a constraint to demonstrate the fairness of the principles chosen. Rawls labels the working out of this process as the "reflective equilibrium." He describes it as working from the two poles of initial conditions and procedural choices. Initial conditions are tested to see if they will yield competent principles. Choices are to be made about modifications to the initial situation or existing judgements. This flexible process assures the possibility of responding to new conditions and at the same time assures a stable basis for judgment.[60]

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[58]Rawls, A Theory of Justice, 12.

[59]Rawls, A Theory of Justice, 13.

[60]"By going back and forth, sometimes altering the conditions of the contractual circumstances, at others withdrawing our judgments and conforming them to principle, I assume that eventually we shall find a description of the initial situation that both expresses reasonable conditions and yields principles which match our considered judgments duly pruned and adjusted." Rawls, A Theory of Justice, 20.

Like Frankena's Ethics, Rawls includes the virtues in A Theory of Justice. His theory is another example of a duty ethic that uses a complementary exposition of moral value and of moral obligation. His description, though, is not so detailed as Frankena's. Distinguishing between natural assets and virtues, Rawls sees assets as natural powers developed by education and training, whereas virtues are sentiments and habitual attitudes. Virtues have an ancillary, and primarily motivational, function in his schema. The chief function of virtue is to assist in acting on right principles already decided.[61]

Since the publication of A Theory of Justice, Rawls has "clarified/developed" his presentation of the original position in a number of ways.[62] In a series of lectures and in a new book, he illustrates his growing concern with the pursuit of justice in an increasingly pluralistic society. The Dewey Lectures, for example, suggest that the justification for a conception of justice is a practical social task, rather than an epistemological or metaphysical one.[63] In the same

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[61]Rawls, A Theory of Justice, 436-439.

[62]"Certainly on a number of points I have changed my views, and there are no doubt others on which my views have changed in ways that I am unaware of." Rawls, "Philosophy and Public Affairs", 223-224.

series, he also distinguishes a citizen as a "free
person" or one engaged in "personal affairs."[64] The
citizen as free person is the subject and participant in
the social questions of justice, while the attachments,
understandings, and beliefs connected with personal
affairs do not directly enter into the deliberations of
justice.[65] The Tanner Lectures take the conception of
the citizen as a free person a step further. Rawls
states that the concept of the citizen as a free person

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[63]"The search for reasonable grounds for reaching
agreement rooted in our conception of ourselves and in
our relation to society replaces the search for moral
truth fixed by a prior and independent order of objects
and relations, whether natural or divine, an order apart
and distinct from how we conceive of ourselves....What
justifies a conception of justice is not its being true
to an order antecedent to and given to us, but its
congruence with our deeper understanding of ourselves and
our aspirations, and our realization that, given our
history and traditions embedded in our public life, it is
the most reasonable doctrine for us." Rawls, "Kantian
Constructivism in Moral Theory," 518-519.

[64]"Citizens as free persons have the right to view
their persons as independent and not identified with any
particular system of ends. Given their moral power to
form, to revise, and rationally pursue a conception of
the good, their public identity as a moral person and a
self-originating source of claims is not affected by
changes over time in their conception of the good....By
contrast, citizens in their personal affairs, or within
the internal life of associations, may regard their ends
and aspirations differently. They may have attachments
and loves they believe they would not, or could not,
stand apart from; and they might regard it as unthinkable
for them to view themselves without certain religious and
philosophical convictions and commitments." Rawls,
"Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory," 544-545.

[65]Rawls, "Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory,"
545.

is not required as a moral ideal in a well ordered
society. It is a political conception that facilitates
the undertaking of the principles of justice.[66] He later
declares that he has no intention of speaking of justice
as being metaphysical. He writes that, "one thing I
failed to say in A Theory of Justice, or failed to stress
sufficiently, is that justice as fairness is intended as
a political conception of justice."[67]

Three points flow from this final contention.
First, The Theory of Justice works out the political
conception for specific topics: political, social and
economic institutions. Second, Rawls does not intend to
apply his work as a general moral conception of the basic
structure of society. Because A Theory of Justice
recognizes a diversity of doctrines and incommensurable
conceptions of the good, it has a limited scope. Third,
Rawls's approach draws solely upon the basic intuitive
ideas embedded in constitutional political institutions
and public traditions for interpretation.[68]

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[66]John Rawls, "The Basic Liberties and Their
Priorities," Liberty, Equality, and Law: Selected Tanner
Lectures on Moral Philosophy ed. Sterling M. McMurrin
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 83.

[67]John Rawls, "Justice as Fairness: Political not
Metaphysical," Philosophy and Public Affairs 14 (Summer
1985): 224.

[68]Rawls, "Justice as Fairness: Political not
Metaphysical", 24-25.

Rawls's later elaboration in the Dewey Lectures begins to speak of an "overlapping consensus" which builds upon his understanding of justice as political.[69] This societal consensus is not so comprehensive as most philosophical and religious approaches tend to be. It fails, he states, to embrace "conceptions of what is of value in human life, ideals of personal virtue and character, and the like, that are to inform much of our conduct."[70] Rather, it applies to the "basic structure" of constitutional democracy, which includes political, social and economic institutions engaged in societal cooperation. This more limited form of consensus, he states, is reasonable for a pluralistic society. It does not accentuate the historical differences of philosophical and religious outlook inherited from Western European history. An overlapping consensus, in this view, also better suits the task of generating principles of justice.

Rawls's most recent development of <u>A Theory of Justice</u> is his book <u>Political Liberalism</u>.[71] In revised form, he repeats aspects of his Dewey and Tanner Lectures

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[69]John Rawls, "The Idea Of An Overlapping Consensus," <u>Oxford Journal of Legal Studies</u> 7 (1987): 1-25.

[70]Rawls, "The Idea Of An Overlapping Consensus," 3.

[71]John Rawls, <u>Political Liberalism</u> (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

to clarify and complete A Theory of Justice. Rawls then
recognizes that not all citizens endorse his
comprehensive philosophical doctrine (a well-ordered
society associated with justice as fairness.) This
pluralism compounds the existing pluralism of religious,
philosophical, and moral doctrines. Rawls understands
that this plurality of doctrines is the normal result of
reasonable exercise of human reason in a democratic
regime. Pluralism, however, presents complex questions
for a system of justice. He asks, "How is it possible
that deeply opposed though reasonable comprehensive
doctrines may live together and all affirm the political
conception of a constitutional regime?"[72]

An Outline of an Ethics of Duty

Frankena's Ethics and Rawls's A Theory of Justice
both present a deontological approach to justice based
upon an adapted Kantian foundation. Frankena
appropriates Ross's concept of **prima facie** duty for use
in his Ethics. Rawls integrates social contract theory
in his Theory. Both theorists construct their ethical
systems in light of the complexities of achieving justice
in a pluralistic society. With the summaries of their

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[72]Ibid., xviii.

respective efforts completed, this study will construct

an outline of a deontological approach to justice drawing

from the work of both philosophers. Of necessity, this

outline will be general in nature and cannot include all

the distinctions in either system. Despite these

limitations, it will be of sufficient accuracy to offer

an understanding of a deontological approach to justice.

This model uses the same four features of analysis drawn

from moral philosophy: character, human nature, practical

reason and teleology.

Character

An ethic of duty maintains that its value in moral

reflection results from its emphasis on right action.

This approach, consequently, contains only a limited

description of moral character. For many deontologists,

discussions of character pertain to the individual and

therefore have the danger of becoming private. Ethics,

they maintain, is always public and social. To guard

against the dangers of subjectivity, deontology primarily

focuses on the correct implementation of rationally

determined principles.[73] Frankena illustrates this

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[73]However, duty ethics does take into account a
moral agent's state of life. Judgment for right action
differs according to the duties that flow from various

emphasis when he assigns a discussion of moral character and virtue to only a subsidiary position. Virtue's role is motivational - to support and maintain right action. It cannot, however, supply the content necessary for moral decision and activity.

Similarly, Rawls stresses moral action over moral character. From the outset, he asserts the independence of the self. He states that, "the self is prior to the ends which are affirmed by it."[74] The persons engaged in the original position have two powers.[75] One is the capacity for a sense of justice which is the power to understand and apply the principles of justice in social cooperation. The other is a capacity for a sense of the good, which is the ability to form, revise, and pursue such a conception. His use of the term **practice** describes this capacity. For Rawls, a practice means any form of activity that a system of rules specifies.[76]

Rawls's description of both the self and a practice provide a deontological foundation for moral action. The

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states of life. James Keenan, "Virtue Ethics: Making A Case As It Comes of Age," Thought 67 (June 1992): 116.

[74]Rawls, A Theory of Justice, 560.

[75]Douglas Rasmussen and James Sterba, The Catholic Bishops and the Economy: A Debate (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1987), 19.

[76]Vincent Barry, Applying Ethics: A Text With Readings (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1982), 51.

principles implied in a practice are binding and mutually acknowledged by all who fall under them.[77] These principles are not subject to change or variation.[78] As a result, moral agents accept and implement the principles that result from the original position because they are rational.[79]

Human Nature

Frankena and Rawls share the deontological concern about the freedom of moral agents. Their descriptions of human nature emphasize the rational structures of moral reflection and evaluation. In this understanding of human nature, as in the traditional Kantian perspective, the emotions do not directly enter into the process of moral judgment. For Kant, the emotions are too unreliable to be unbiased guides to moral activity, and

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[77]Ibid., 53.

[78]Rawls writes, "No commitment could grip me so deeply that I could not understand myself without it. No transformation of life purposes and plans could be so unsettling as to disrupt the contours of my identity. No project could be so essential that turning away from it would call into question the person I am. Given my independence from the values I have, I can always stand apart from them; my public identity as a moral person is not affected by changes over time in my conception of the good." Rawls, A Theory of Justice, 554-555.

[79]Wolff, Understanding Rawls, 20-21.

their function is better understood as supplying the motivation for following the moral law.[80]

Rawls's description of human nature draws, of course, not only from Kant but also from the "state of nature" of Thomas Hobbes[81] and John Locke.[82] These descriptions, particularly that of Hobbes, posit the lack of a conception of the highest good, give a description of the greatest evil (death) and the desire to delay its onslaught. For Hobbes, human beings are utility maximizers whose reason serves efficient allocation of scarce resources. Hence, cooperation becomes a fundamental value. The state of nature becomes the state of society in which members incur obligations to one another and to society.[83] Rawls's adaptation of the state of nature theory is his original position. The original position is his attempt to add definition to the vague description of the choice situation that occurs in social contract theory.[84]

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[80]Kant, _The Doctrine of Virtue_, trans. Mary Gregor (University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964): 14, 126.

[81]Thomas Hobbes, _Leviathan_ (New York: Dutton Press, 1950).

[82]John Locke, _Two Treatises of Government_, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960).

[83]Wolff, _Understanding Rawls_, 208-209.

[84]Feldman, _Introductory Ethics_, 138-139.

His construction of the original position also demonstrates the Kantian concern about the freedom of moral agents. The participants deliberate according to their primary goods. These goods are of five types: 1) basic freedoms of thought, conscience and association; 2) freedom of movement and choice of occupation; 3) powers of positions of responsibility; 4) income and wealth; and 5) social bases of self-respect.[85] But the participants remain distanced from their own desires and particular goods.

Rawls also includes in his account of human nature the social relationships of the intermediary associations of familial and social life. His Theory envisions three stages of moral development in the just society. These stages are represented by parents, family and society.[86] Rawls assumes the existence of these associations and their performance in the development of the self in a society generated by the two principles of justice.

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[85]Sterba, The Catholic Bishops and the Economy, 20.

[86]Respectively, the morality of "authority," "association," and "principles." See Rawls, A Theory of Justice, 462-479.

Practical Reason

Following Kant, deontological theories ground ethics in the exercise of the practical reason. The foundational stance for this ethics of duty is the assumption of the moral point of view. In his description, Frankena goes beyond the traditional Kantian position by incorporating Hume's vision of sympathy and Baier's consideration of the good of everyone alike. He writes:

> My own position, then, is that one is taking the moral point of view if and only if (a) one is making normative judgments about actions, desires, dispositions, intentions, motives, persons, or traits of character; (b) one is willing to universalize one's judgments; (c) one's reasons for one's judgments consist of facts about what the things judged do to the lives of sentient beings in terms of promoting or distributing nonmoral good and evil; and (d) when the judgment is about oneself or one's own actions, one's reasons included such facts about what one's own actions and dispositions do to the lives of other sentient beings as such, if others are affected.[87]

He offers a description of a decision-maker who is clearheaded, logical, impartial and completely disinterested. Frankena contrasts the moral point of view with prudence,[88] which he and other Anglo-American

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[87]Frankena, _Ethics_, 113-114.

moral philosophers tend to view as a rational guide to self-interested action.[89]

Similarly, Rawls also refers to the moral point of view.[90] He views the impartiality provided by the veil of ignorance as the platform of practical reasoning. The restrictions he places on the principles chosen in the original position are essentially those of the moral point of view.[91] He states that, "the practical aim is to reach a reasonably reliable agreement in judgment in order to provide a common conception of justice."[92] Like Frankena, Rawls makes use of prudence, but he gives it an interesting twist. The original position substitutes a judgment of rational prudence for an ethical judgment.[93] He rules out consideration and promotion of particular interests that normally make prudence objectionable. The participants in the original position employ rational prudence from the point of view of those who stand to

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[88]"[M]orality must be contrasted with prudence....[I]t is not characteristic of the moral point of view to determine what is right or virtuous wholly in terms of what the individual desires or of what is to his interest." Frankena, Ethics, 7.

[89]John Langan, "Prudence," The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics, 514.

[90]Rawls, A Theory of Justice, 130 n. 5.

[91]John Langan, "Rawls, Nozick and the Search for Social Justice," Theological Studies 38 (June 1977): 350.

[92]Rawls, A Theory of Justice, 44-45.

[93]Rawls, A Theory of Justice, 44.

gain least from the decisions made. This frees the parties from the moral limitations of self-love which is the normal understanding of prudence.[94]

As inheritors of an Enlightenment reading of Western European history, Frankena and Rawls recognize the potential conflicts of principles and duties in their ethical systems. These conflicts have their root in an anthropological view which accepts the fact that the foundational impulse of human beings is, as Hobbes describes it, egoism. Frankena and Rawls stand in the line of Enlightenment philosophers whose social theory must rely on the dictates of enlightened egoism for a society to maintain itself.[95]

This description of human nature is the legacy of modern pluralism. Frankena makes a distinction between an **actual** and an **ideal** consensus.[96] Beyond either consensus Frankena simply states that disagreements should be faced through discussion and reconsideration of the conditions of understanding. Conceptually, he recognizes that two contrary positions cannot be correct at the same time. But, in the face of inevitable

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[94]Langan, "Rawls, Nozick and the Search for Social Justice", 350.

[95]Frederick Copleston, "St. Thomas: Political Theory," A History of Philosophy Vol. II Medieval Philosophy Part II (New York: Doubleday, 1962), 135.

[96]Frankena, Ethics, 112-113.

prolonged disagreement, toleration and open-mindedness
are his key to progressing beyond the difficulties.[97]
This distinction in the types of consensus also
conditions his understanding of the virtues. These
dispositions sustain an individual when conflicting
principles or working revisions delay the process of
decision.

Rawls is also mindful of the moral conflicts of
contemporary society. One can measure his increasing
concern about the consequences of these conflicts in his
publications after <u>A Theory of Justice.</u> Like Frankena,
he recognizes the limitations of pluralist deontological
theory in determining the relative weight of moral
claims. His attempt to overcome this limitation takes
the form of the creation of serial or lexical order of
the general principles of justice. This ordering reduces
the need to appeal to intuition or to balance principle
against principle.[98]

He, too, appeals to the virtues of reasonableness,
tolerance and fairness in the discussion and resolution
of conflicts. He realizes that without such support the
construct of the <u>Theory</u> and its framework in the economic
community could not succeed or perdure. His view of the

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[97]Frankena, <u>Ethics</u>, 112-113.

[98]Beauchamp and Childress, <u>Principles of Biomedical
Ethics</u>, 39.

pluralistic conflicts that are part of contemporary culture leads him to restrict further the scope of his theory. After his Dewey Lectures, he begins to speak of an "overlapping consensus." In this understanding justice is primarily political rather than metaphysical or epistemological. This view is not so comprehensive as the other approaches, but it is, he states, more reasonable for a pluralistic society. Yet, his original doubts expressed in the Theory still seem to prevail. As he surveys the present state of social relationships, he realizes that the achievement of such virtues as reasonableness, tolerance, and fairness still face challenge. He himself questions whether his approach can stand on present foundations.[99]

Teleology

Contemporary deontology does not have a single teleological focus because duty ethicians recognize a plurality of goods in society. The legacy of social and political pluralism resulting in multiple of notions of the good make a single teleological focus for ethics a

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[99]He writes, "The way in which we think about fairness in everyday life ill prepares us for the great shift in perspective required for considering the justice of the basic structure itself." Rawls, A Theory of Justice, 551.

modern impossibility. Continuing competition between these teleologies hinders the progress toward a just society so that the threat of renewed conflict persists.

Frankena and Rawls inherit this pluralistic perspective, and it forms the foundational assumption of their ethical systems.[100] Rawls, for example, states that deontology is opposed to teleology: "it describes a form of justification in which first principles are derived in a way that does not presuppose any final human purposes or ends, nor any determinate conception of the human good."[101] Rawls justifies these principles by claiming that they conform to the concept of right - a moral category given prior to the good and therefore independent of it.[102] In this Rawls is consistent with the contours of traditional deontological theory and other contemporary deontological theorists.[103]

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[100]Rawls even goes so far as to question whether it is possible for an individual to focus on one goal for the duration of life. "Surely, it is contrary to our considered judgments of value and indeed inhuman, to be so taken with but one of these ends (that persons may seek) that we do not moderate the pursuit of it for the sake of anything else." Rawls, A Theory of Justice, 553.

[101]Michael Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 3.

[102]Ibid., 1.

[103]In addition, see Bruce Ackerman, Social Justice in the Liberal State (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980); Ronald Dworkin, Taking Rights Seriously (Cambridge: Harvard University Press ,1977); C. Fried,

Moreover, Rawls's construction of the original position illustrates this understanding.[104] He sets the process of determining the principles of justice apart from the goals of the participants. While he permits the entry of limited knowledge to the original position, this construct maintains a procedural constraint that fails to specify a common end for the participants.[105] This failure contributes to a rational and free process according to "modes of reasoning commonly recognized."

Since the publication of A Theory of Justice, Rawls has strengthened his perspective on the achievement of justice in a pluralistic society. The clarity of Rawls's division of the self into its public and private components recognizes profound disagreements about the meaning and direction of life. It also requires a retreat to common ground for the resolution or generation of neutral principles.[106]

Right and Wrong (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

[104]Charles Larmore writes, "Since modern, pluralistic societies cannot expect general agreement about the nature of the good life, the veil of ignorance will serve not as a basis for arriving at the truth about the good, but rather as a means for devising principles of political cooperation that are neutral with respect to the conflicting conceptions of the good." Charles Larmore, Patterns of Moral Complexity, 121.

[105]Wolff, Understanding Rawls, 20-21.

[106]Larmore, Patterns of Moral Complexity, 123-124.

Contemporary Criticisms of Frankena and Rawls

The deontological approach to moral theory continues
to serve ethical reflection impressively. In recent
years, however, questions about duty ethics have
increased in response to Frankena's and Rawls's efforts.
Their extensive work has invited ever more questions
about the complexities of moral reflection as well as the
changing context of moral existence. A portion of this
criticism arises within the parameters of deontological
theory itself. These critics argue for the expansion of
the categories that deontologists propose, and the
content of this criticism is not entirely alien to the
scope of this study. In fact, it provides a setting for
the initial questions that virtue theory attempts to
answer. This final section surveys some of these
theorists and their comments. These criticisms generally
follow the same four features used to outline Frankena
and Rawls.

Bernard Williams poses the general question asked of
all duty ethicists. He states that the starting point
for moral reflection is not the question, "what is our
duty?" or "how may we be good?" or "how can we be
happy?", but is rather Socrates's question, "How should
one live?"[107] Williams argues that modern duty moralists

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mistakenly try to make everything into obligations. His solution calls for an account of obligation that details exactly what obligations are. He understands obligations as merely one kind of ethical consideration among many others.[108] Like Socrates, Williams seeks a moral philosophy that looks not only to the future, but to the entire manner of life.[109]

Williams's general question leads to some specific questions about understanding deontological categories. The first is the deontological understanding of the self. In his contribution to the Journal of Religious Ethics, debate David Schenck argues for a description of the self more comprehensive than Frankena offers. He states:

> Yet a moral stand in a social context is taken
> by a more complex person - a person with
> decided interests and "moral passions" - than
> can be accommodated by the implicit
> anthropology concealed within the rationalistic
> structure of most outlines of the moral point
> of view.[110]

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[107]Bernard Williams, Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 4.

[108]Ibid., 182.

[109]"Obligation and duty look backwards, or at least sideways. The acts they require, supposing that one is deliberating about what to do, lie in the future, but the reasons for those acts lie in the fact that I have already promised." Ibid., 8.

[110]Schenck, "Recasting the 'Ethics of Virtue/Ethics of Duty' Debate," 269.

Rawls's view of the self also sustains similar criticism. Michael Sandel, a colleague of Rawls at Harvard University, argues that Rawls's description does not have the depth to support the requirements of agency and reflection.[111] Sandel states that a moral agent so constituted is not an authentic subject, but an instrument of the purposes pursued.[112] As a consequence, Sandel concludes that the Rawlsian self does not serve the larger project because it cannot allow justice the primacy it itself advocates.[113]

While Sandel is concerned with the depth of Rawls's description of the self, Michael Perry criticizes the inclusiveness of his description.[114] Perry questions whether Rawls's portrait of the self is implicit in the prevailing culture or at least congenial to its deepest tendencies. Perry suggests rather that another description is present in American culture. In this description moral convictions and commitments partly constitute the person.[115] In other words, Perry finds

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[111]Sandel, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice.

[112]Ibid., 10-11.

[113]Ibid., 14.

[114]Michael J. Perry, Morality, Politics and Law (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[115]Ibid., 60.

integral to the definition of the self those very parts
of the description that Rawls seeks to exclude.

Other criticisms also extend to Rawls's limited use
of history in the description of the self. Jeffrey
Stout, for example, declares that the Rawlsian self is
ahistorical and forgetful.[116] Stout states that modern
liberal moral philosophy tends to escalate its claims
about starting points precisely because it is almost
oblivious to its historical origins. George Parkin Grant
also discovers a conspicuous blind spot displayed in such
selective memory. By hardly mentioning war and
imperialism, Rawls typifies the irony of countries who
were once great empires of colonization now discussing
freedom.[117]

The criticism of limited historical consciousness
also includes fundamental human relationships and their
role in moral development. David Wong suggests that
deontology loosens the bonds between the modern self and
the intermediary association of familial and social life.
He argues that these groups, such as families, schools,
churches and voluntary organizations nurture and sustain

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[116]Jeffrey Stout, The Flight From Authority:
Religion, Morality and the Quest for Autonomy (Notre
Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 241.

[117]George Parkin Grant, English Speaking Justice
(Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), 42.

effective moral agency in individuals.[118] Rawls assumes, Wong charges, that these associations will continue to exist and perform their functions in a society generated by the two principles of justice. According to Wong, however, the evidence is contrary to this idealized assumption. Armed with the idea of equality, liberal democracies are undermining the autonomy and vitality of these associations. Because democracy tends to see all social relationships as contractual, contractual notions vanquish the commitment and trust needed by families and other voluntary associations to exist.[119]

Critics also wonder about the level of motivation present in deontological understanding of human nature. In referring to Frankena, Schenck fears that a low level of motivation could lead to a loss of interest in morality itself.[120] Williams, for one, rejects the description of impartial motivation he finds in duty

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[118]David B. Wong, "On Flourishing and Finding One's Identity in Community," _Midwest Studies in Philosophy, Volume XIII, Ethical Theory: Character and Virtue_, eds. Peter A. French, Theodore E. Uehling, Jr., and Howard K. Wettstein (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 338.

[119]Ibid., 337.

[120]"Seeing all the facts of a situation clearly and impartially would demand such a feeling-neutral state, such a thoroughly uncommitted stance, that if ever attained, would leave one without any preference that could possibly lead to choosing (or even the denying) of the moral life." Schenck, "Recasting the 'Ethics of Virtue/Ethics of Duty' Debate," 272.

theory. He argues for the necessity of a better justification for morality, and he suggests the experience of compassion for others and care for created things as alternatives.[121]

Some critics also suspect the motivation of the participants in Rawls's original position. Rawls's assumption of mutual disinterest does not involve a theory of human motivation.[122] His participants are rational and not altruistic. Each of them wishes to further his or her own conception of the good, though he does not - under the limitations of knowledge - know what content this conception will have.[123] William Sullivan finds that Rawls's process does not completely avoid the traditional contractarian problem. He asks how do the contractors make the conceptual leap from the practical psychology of self-interest to the moral ecology of cooperation? Sullivan thinks that Rawls's appeal to the capacity for practical reasoning begs the question.[124]

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[121]Williams, Morality: An Introduction to Ethics, 2, 8-9.

[122]Rawls, A Theory of Justice, 130, 189.

[123]Brian Barry, The Liberal Theory of Justice (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 10-11.

[124]William Sullivan, Reconstructing Public Philosophy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 109.

According to critics, a straight line links this anthropological description to the psychological presuppositions of the egoistic hedonism of Jeremy Bentham.[125] They show that Rawls's understanding of human nature is quite different from that of contract theory, where the fear of death is the reason for positing and joining a civil society.[126] Rawls's description also raises doubts as to whether the commitment to the principles of justice can be maintained when the veil of ignorance is lifted.[127]

A corollary criticism of Rawls's understanding of human nature is the criticism of the idea of membership in the original position. Rawls's description of membership possibilities is intentionally wide. He writes that, "the capacity for moral personality is a sufficient condition for being entitled to equal justice."[128] But this description is not without limits. Susan Moller Okin, for example, charges that political theorists like Rawls ignore the family, its division of

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[125]Wolff, Understanding Rawls, 208-209.

[126]Alan Bloom, Giants and Dwarfs: Essays 1960-1990 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 323.

[127]Barber, "Justifying Justice: Problems of Psychology, Measurement and Politics in Rawls," in Reading Rawls: Critical Studies on Rawls' A Theory of Justice, ed. Norman Daniels (New York: Basic Books, 1980), 293-295.

[128]Rawls, A Theory Of Justice, 504-512, esp. 505.

labor and the related economic dependency and restricted opportunities of most women. She states that, for Rawls, family life is assumed to be just with no mention of gendered division of labor. The same is true of the gender distribution associated with the distribution of power, responsibility, and privilege.[129] Peter Singer raises the question of animal rights.[130] Also, importantly, the question of those with mental illnesses arises.[131]

Rawls's view of history and on the absence of a teleological structure for the original position has occasioned some other questions. Many are willing to acknowledge a certain historical logic to his attempt to maintain neutrality in the face of the original context of deontological theory. But, as Stout wonders, have there not been advances in political, social and religious thought that have mitigated such a strict interpretation? He asks what would happen if we grant that what can and cannot be thus "established" changes as

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[129]Susan Moller Okin, Justice, Gender and the Family (New York: Basic Books, 1989), 9, and especially Chapter five.

[130]Peter Singer, Practical Ethics (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 48-71.

[131]C. Stephen Layman, The Shape of the Good, 101. To be fair, Rawls has acknowledged this point, but sees its application as ancillary to his Theory.

the "modes of reasoning commonly recognized" change.[132]
Others have even asked whether the entire construct of
the original position is a necessity in the contemporary
situation. Does impartiality among competing notions of
the good require ignorance of them? Could fairness be
served, and historical conflicts be avoided, by a
knowledge that does not offer a privileged position for
one or another notions?[133]

Rawls's critics do not share his high expectations
for practical reason. Wolff, for one, sees the reasoning
process as static and lacking in any creative
qualities.[134] Barber, too, confesses confusion about
Rawls's separation of particular interests from general
interest that necessarily characterize the participants.
Might they be reduced to disinterest of, and even to
subversion of, the process?[135] Stout, moreover, wonders
whether too high a price has been paid for the goal of
moral autonomy. Is the general knowledge offered, and

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[132]Stout, The Flight From Authority, 240.

[133]Jones, "Should Christians Affirm Rawls's Justice
as Fairness?," 257.

[134]Wolff captures the static nature of this position
when he imagines Rawls to say to the participants, "If
you are a rationally self-interested agent, and if you
are to have a morality at all, then you must acknowledge
as binding upon you the moral principle I shall
enunciate." See his Reading Rawls, 16.

[135]Benjamin Barber, "Justifying Justice: Problems of
Psychology, Politics and Measurement in Rawls," 294-295.

the beliefs about primary goods maintained, adequate to the task proposed, namely the rendering of impartial judgments? Although some think Rawls clearer than Kant about the moral point of view, they also question whether he is more successful.[136] Langan, for example, questions the realistic viability of the Rawls's project. Is there enough to initiate and sustain the process amid the conflicts of contemporary life? Does A Theory of Justice require a deeper theorem than is accorded by the principle of benevolence?[137]

Grant has raised questions about the accuracy of Rawls's depiction of social reality. His survey of the social scene shows these principles existing "in a society largely shaped politically by the cooperation between massive private corporations and the public corporation which coordinates their welfare."[138] The balance of the three fingered hand, envisioned by Adam

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[136]Stout, The Flight From Authority, 232-234.

[137]He writes, "This involves a dualism between the noumenal selves who choose in the original position and the phenomenal selves who suffer not merely from the biases of interest but also from the urgings of need. Adopting the standpoint of the noumenal selves of the original position and maintaining it in such a way that the principles of justice can be applied in our present sublunary world of conflicting interests may well be a more difficult task and may require a more fundamental conversion than trying to instill and maintain an attitude of benevolence." John Langan, "Rawls, Nozick and the Search for Social Justice," 350.

[138]Grant, English Speaking Justice, 41.

Smith, has largely disappeared.[139] Grant questions

whether the bearers of the principles of justice can

withstand the pressure of possible conflicting interests.

Conclusion

The ethical systems of William Frankena's <u>Ethics</u> and

John Rawls's <u>A Theory of Justice</u> are two important

examples of contemporary deontological theory.

Deontology, as exemplified by Frankena and Rawls, offers

several important advantages in ethical reflection. An

ethics of duty has strong capacities for outlining and

executing correct moral action. Duty ethics is singular

in its dedication to pursuing right action and honest in

stating its limitations. Frankena's and Rawls's

exploration of ethics is done in a decidedly American

context. Though they rely upon the European liberal

tradition, their focus is the American experience of

moral reasoning. Both theorists are acutely aware of the

complexities that modern pluralism brings to the moral

life. Rawls, for example, attempts to detach the defi-

nition of social justice from the diverse moral

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[139]Robert Bellah, one of the authors of <u>Habits of
the Heart</u>, takes the position that the entire balance
spoken of by Smith (political and socio-cultural) has
been subverted and controlled by the economic sphere.
Robert Bellah, "Resurrecting the Common Good,"
<u>Commonweal</u>, (December 18, 1987): 737-738.

aspirations and goals of individuals within the society.[140] Finally, Frankena and Rawls also display considerable attention to the burdensome consequences of political and economic interaction. Rawls, especially, views his work as an attempt to modify and humanize the consequences of modern social and economic theory on the disadvantaged and the poor.[141] A Theory of Justice stands in the tradition of moral reflection about economic activity that begins with Adam Smith's An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations.[142]

Despite these advantages, two questions arise about the deontological approach to social ethics. The first pertains to the four features of philosophical analysis (character, human nature practical reason and teleology) of social ethics. Is it possible to outline a wider account of rationality than deontological thought offers?

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[140]Stuart Hampshire, "Liberalism: The New Twist," The New York Review of Books (August 12, 1993): 43.

[141]Philip Land "Justice," in New Dictionary of Theology eds. Joseph Komonchak, Mary Collins, and Dermot Lane (Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1987): 552.

[142]Daniel Rush Finn notes that Smith has suffered from selective interpretation by his successors. Smith's thought extended beyond the congruence of individual interests in the tendency of self-interested behavior to conduce to the common good. This is especially true of the much neglected moral psychology he presents in his Theory of Moral Sentiments. See his "Self-Interest, Markets, and the Four Problems of Economic Life," Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1989): 30-31.

Could this account describe rationality as more complex, historical, community-centered and infused with human needs and yearnings than found in Frankena and Rawls?[143] Could this account, while "thicker" in its description of the moral life, also avoid the entanglements of modern pluralism that frustrate moral reasoning?

The second question pertains to the conception of justice. Deontological thought tends to view justice within the advent of modern capitalism, and often ties this view to the role of the state. One focus is on the negotiation of individual contracts, monitored by a state whose concern is fair play, but who evinces neutrality as to the contents of the agreements.[144] The other concentration is on the just distribution of societal resources. Given the importance of these kinds of procedural justice, could a different conception be offered? Is it possible to conceive of justice in ways that involve the individual more widely and describe economic activity in wider terms than those of contractual agreements? Is a different conception of justice possible in a society of multiple goods?

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[143]These descriptions are suggested by Kruschwitz and Roberts. See their "Introduction," The Virtues, 17.

[144]Jose Maria Diez-Alegria, "Justice: Moral Theology," Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise Sacramentum Mundi ed. Karl Rahner (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975): 793.

These questions set the agenda for the examination in Chapter Two of the capacities of an ethics of virtue to inform social ethics.

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT IS AN ETHICS OF VIRTUE?

Overview

Even while drawing support from the critics of
Frankena and Rawls, virtue theory faces substantial ques-
tions about its abilities to describe ethical judgment.
An alternative system of ethics cannot be built on the
criticism of the former approach alone. The new system
has to demonstrate the capacity to exceed the former ap-
proach in analysis and response to the same challenges.
The use of virtue theory in Catholic social ethics, advo-
cated in this study, entails an examination of a variety
of these issues. The first question is methodological,
assessing the similarities and differences in the ap-
proaches of deontological and virtue theory to the ethi-
cal discussion of justice.

The second question facing a revival of virtue eth-
ics is historical context. The immense changes occurring
in post-Reformation Europe brought about a rejection of
virtue-based ethical theories and the gradual acceptance
of deontological moral theory based on Enlightenment
thought. Deontology recognized the presence of not one,
but many teleologies. Since that time critics have ques-
tioned whether an ethics of virtue is able to function in
a society of competing theories of the good. Many theo-

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rists reason that duty ethics, with a focus on right ac-
tion rather than character traits, is better suited to
the context of pluralism. This criticism of virtue
theory has heightened as modernity evolves into post-
modernity.[1]

The third question for Chapter Two is the suitabil-
ity of virtue theory for service in Catholic social eth-
ics. In the _Summa_, Thomas proposes a complex relation-
ship between a natural and supernatural teleology. An
inquirer can utilize virtue's natural teleological focus
without reference to its determination of the ultimate
theological end of moral living. Since the ultimate pur-
pose of this study, however, is to demonstrate the suit-
ability of virtue theory for Catholic social ethics, a
contemporary statement of an ethics of virtue requires
exploration of both dimensions of the Thomistic moral
economy. The question for the last section of this chap-
ter is how the natural specific perfection of the human
person is not contradicted or rendered irrelevant by the
theology of a life of grace toward a supernatural end.[2]

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[1]See Stephen Toulmin, _Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity_ (New York: The Free Press, 1990) for an outline of modern and post-modern thought. The question of the applicability of justice as a virtue to a post-modern society will be taken up in chapter four of this study.

[2]Jean Porter, _The Recovery of Virtue: The Relevance of Aquinas for Christian Ethics_, (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 66-67.

The outline of this chapter is similar to that of
the first. Chapter Two begins with a survey of theorists
who have participated in the contemporary revival of vir-
tue thought. The survey touches on the beginning of this
revived interest in the work of Elizabeth Anscombe and
ends with MacIntyre's <u>After Virtue</u>. Like Frankena and
Rawls, these thinkers not only appropriate their sources,
but adapt them.

After this survey, Chapter Two proceeds to construct
an outline of virtue thought using the same aspects of
analysis (character, human nature, practical reason and
teleology) present in the model of deontological ethics.
This outline incorporates the foundations of virtue the-
ory in the classical thought of Aristotle and Thomas
Aquinas. It also notes the differences between the clas-
sical foundations of virtue theory and contemporary re-
constructions. The chapter then draws a comparison be-
tween deontological and virtue thought as an example of a
"soft" distinction in ethical method. This comparison
evaluates the capacities of both approaches to ethics.
It also notes the specific differences between each ap-
proach to the description of justice.

Finally, Chapter Two assesses the suitability of
virtue ethics to Catholic moral theology. This chapter
suggests that virtue theory can overcome some of the
limitations of the principle-based approach in moral the-

ology. An ethics of virtue can address the questions raised in the development of contemporary moral theology and aid a focus on justice.

Contemporary Reflections on the Virtues

The contemporary renewal of interest in virtue theory begins with the work of Elizabeth Anscombe. Anscombe charged that deontological thought had minimized the presence of virtue in ethical theory because duty ethics concentrated on the issues of right, good, and ought, to the exclusion of descriptions of courage and compassion found in virtue ethics. In her essay, "Modern Moral Philosophy," written in 1958, she states there is a gap in twentieth-century ethics because moral philosophy can neither continue with the approaches of Kant or Mill nor return to a Divine Command Theory. Since only an account of human nature and human flourishing[3] can fill this space, she calls for a new construction of virtue theory with a basis in Aristotelian ethics.[4]

In the 1960's and 1970's the philosopher and novelist Iris Murdoch also began to seek a different foundation for ethics. Her essays argue for the place of the

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[3]Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy", 41.

[4]Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy", 26-27.

"inner life" in moral evaluation, which does not limit
ethics to "the choice and argument model."[5] Her point of
departure for a new foundation is that ethics is related
to one's vision. Murdoch adds, however, that opening
one's eyes does not automatically lead to the truth, be-
cause "we are anxiety-ridden animals," our minds are
"continually active, fabricating an anxious, usually
self-preoccupied, often false veil which partially con-
ceals the world."[6]

To remedy this limitation she advocates the neces-
sity of applying imagination to an understanding of human
reality. In Murdoch's description of human nature, hu-
mans need to develop disciplinary practices that meet the
obstacles to moral goodness in the self, and that redi-
rect energies away from feeding "the fat, relentless
ego."[7] Murdoch adopts the language of virtue to describe
the reorientation of the self that occurs in moral pro-
gress.[8] With an emphasis on individual moral responsi-

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[5]Iris Murdoch, "Vision and Choice in Morality: R.W.
Hepburn," Christian Ethics and Contemporary Philosophy
(London: SCM Press, 1966), 202.

[6]Iris Murdoch, "The Sovereignty of Good Over Other
Concepts," The Sovereignty of Good (London: Routledge,
and Kegan Paul, 1970), 84.

[7]Murdoch, "On 'God' and 'Good'," The Sovereignty of
God, 52.

[8]See Pamela Hall, "The Mysteriousness of the Good:
Iris Murdoch and Virtue-Ethics," American Catholic
Philosophical Quarterly 64 (1990): 317-318.

bility, Murdoch rejects an external telos and states that virtue has no reward outside of itself.

Another contemporary philosopher who calls for the revival of virtue and the notion of human flourishing is Philippa Foot.[9] Like Murdoch, Foot speaks of the necessity of correcting one's human nature to achieve flourishing. The virtues supply the self-control necessary in light of the inherited human condition, and they strengthen individuals to resist temptation and correct deficient motivation with a wider vision of life.[10]

The renewed interest in virtue theory on the part of Anscombe, Murdoch and Foot was also shared by several other theorists during this time period.[11] These explorations remained, however, isolated attempts. Systematic discussion of the dimensions of virtue theory begins with an exchange of views in The Journal of Religious Ethics[12]

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[9]Philippa Foot, "Goodness and Choice," Virtues and Vices (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 134-135.

[10]Foot, "Virtues and Vices", Virtues and Vices, 8-9.

[11]Among these were: George Henrik Von Wright, The Varieties of Goodness (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963); George P. Klubertanz, Habits and Virtues: A Philosophical Analysis (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965); Josef Pieper, The Four Cardinal Virtues (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966); and James Wallace, Virtues and Vices (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978).

[12]The participants were: Frederick S. Carney, "The Virtue-Obligation Controversy," Journal of Religious Ethics 1 (1973): 5-19; Arthur J. Dyck, "A Unified Theory

which centers around the publication of Frankena's re-
vised edition of Ethics and Stanley Hauerwas's advocacy
of virtue theory.[13] These discussions in virtue theory
culminate in the publication of After Virtue[14] by
Alasdair MacIntyre. MacIntyre's proposal for a virtue-
based ethics has become the benchmark for all subsequent
discussions of virtue theory.

MacIntyre agrees with the description of twentieth-
century moral philosophy that Anscombe and Murdoch pre-
sent.[15] Modern philosophers do not replace the authority
and power of a divine lawgiver. The wide measure of dis-
agreement over whether it is possible to speak of the
good removes the substance of morality and generates ri-
val and incompatible answers. With the loss of an ac-
count of the virtues, which up to the eighteenth century

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of Virtue and Obligation," Journal of Religious Ethics 1
(1973): 37-52; Stanley Hauerwas, "Obligation and Virtue
Once More," Journal of Religious Ethics 3 (1975): 27-44;
William Frankena, "Conversations With Carney and
Hauerwas," Journal of Religious Ethics 3 (1975): 45-62;
J. Wesley Robbins, "Professor Frankena On Distinguishing
An Ethic of Virtue From An Ethic of Duty," Journal of
Religious Ethics 4 (1976): 57-62; and David Schenck,
"Recasting The 'Ethics of Virtue/Ethics of Duty' Debate,"
Journal of Religious Ethics 4 (1976): 269-286.

[13]Stanley Hauerwas, Vision and Virtue (Notre Dame:
University Of Notre Dame Press, 1974).

[14]Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue (Notre Dame:
University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).

[15]Alasdair MacIntyre, "Moral Philosophy: What
Next?," Revisions: The Challenge of Moral Philosophy
(Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 7-10.

had stood in relationship to the passions and the reason, morality has consequently become a matter of choices. The objectivity of law replaces philosophical anthropology. This new direction also reduces the emphasis on character and agency.

As the corrective to this situation, MacIntyre sees a return to the spirit and form of the classical account of the virtues. There are three stages in the development of his account.[16] The first is an understanding of the term **practice.** A virtue is an acquired quality that leads to the achievement of the goods which are internal to a practice. The second stage in MacIntyre's account is the **unity of human life.**[17] Virtues, in conjunction with a personal narrative, aid in the reuniting of the disparate elements of the modern self. The third stage is that of a **moral tradition.**[18] Individuals do not seek the good simply as individuals. One's identity is not simply chosen or constituted by individual hard effort. It is realized by membership in larger familial, ethnic, religious, and social communities.

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[16]MacIntyre, <u>After Virtue</u>, 175-209.

[17]MacIntyre, <u>After Virtue</u>, 191.

[18]MacIntyre, <u>After Virtue</u>, 204-207.

An Outline of an Ethics of Virtue

The foundation of contemporary explorations of virtue theory in Anscombe, Murdoch, Foot and MacIntyre lies in two classical sources. The first antecedent is the work of Aristotle; particularly his ethical reflections found in the Nicomachean Ethics[19] and the Politics[20]. The second classic foundation for an ethics of virtue is the work of Thomas Aquinas, particularly The Summa Theologiae[21]. Aristotle and Thomas are similar in outlining virtue thought.

Aristotle's account of the virtues has three parts. The first is a description of a virtue (**arete**) as an excellence which assists in fulfillment of a proper task or purpose. Virtues also have their content derived from the society and tradition in which they are found.[22] Aristotle divides his account into the intellectual vir-

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[19]Aristotle, The Ethics of Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics, trans. J.A.K. Thomson (London: Penguin Books, 1953). Aristotle named this work after his son, the editor of the work. Henceforth all quotations will be from the Thomson translation.

[20]Aristotle, The Politics trans. Trevor J. Sanders (London: Penguin Books, 1981). Henceforth, all quotations will be taken from the Sanders translation.

[21]Thomas Aquinas, The Summa Theologicae trans. The Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 3 Volumes, (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1947-1948). Henceforth all quotations will be taken from this translation.

[22]Ethics, 1094a1-22.

tues (theoretical or scientific reason) and moral virtues (deliberative reason in control of desires). Although Thomas invokes the Aristotelian definition of virtue, his enumeration of the virtues returns to Plato's account in the Republic. In this account the cardinal[23] virtues are four: prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice.[24]

The second part of Aristotle's account deals with the exercise of the virtues.[25] He states that one be-comes virtuous by doing virtuous things, and that virtues are not innate in humans but must be acquired and then perfected by constantly exercising them through habit (ethos). In addition, he holds that this process includes not only the accomplishment, but also the mode of accomplishment.

The third part of this account of the virtues has to do with the idea of proportion.[26] Aristotle recognizes that responses to desire could either be excessive or de-ficient. The virtuous person follows a mean between

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[23]"By a set of cardinal virtues is meant a set of virtues such that: 1) they canot be derived from one another and 2) all other moral virtues can be derived from or shown to be forms of them." Frankena, Ethics, 64.

[24]The present study follows the Thomistic account.

[25]James F. Childress and James B. Tubbs, "Aristotelian Ethics," The Westminster Dictionary of Ethics, 40-41.

[26]T.E. Jessop. "The Doctrine of the Mean," The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics, 373.

these two extremes. The <u>Ethics</u> speaks of "the mean rela-
tive to us," that is, to our individual status, our given
particular situation and our strong points and weak ones.
It makes the observation that if we have a proneness to
one of the extremes, we should lean toward the opposite
extreme. With respect to emotions, pleasure and pain,
the mean is the feeling that is not only of the right
quantity but "at the right time, toward the right object,
toward the right people, for the right reason and in the
right manner." Aristotle states that in moral matters
prescriptions should be applied "on the whole" because of
the contingency and individuality of the human situa-
tion.[27]

Anscombe, Murdoch, Foot, and MacIntyre are all aware
that since the worlds of ancient Greece and medieval
scholasticism no longer exist, a retrieval of virtue the-
ory for contemporary use entails more than a excavation
of Aristotelian and Thomistic categories. The applica-
tion of an ethics of virtue to contemporary questions,
moreover, reveals multiple understandings of virtue the-
ory so that recent interest in the study of the virtues
has produced several different approaches.[28] Yet, most

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[27]<u>Ethics</u>, 1106b9-26.

[28]For example: Marcia Baron, "Varieties of Ethics of
Virtue," <u>American Philosophical Quarterly</u> 22 (January
1985): 47-53; Gregory Pence, "Recent Work On Virtues,"
<u>American Philosophical Quarterly</u> 21 (October 1984): 281-

theorists who would like to incorporate virtue theory into moral philosophy do agree that deontological thought alone does not adequately describe the moral person and his or her moral activity. Aristotle and Thomas, they believe, continue to offer insights that have perduring validity even in the face of a highly different cultural context.

With the recognition that the exploration of the virtues for moral reflection is ongoing, this present study offers its own outline of virtue theory for use in social ethics. This study draws upon both the classical sources and their appropriation by contemporary theo-rists. It also contrasts its differences from deon-tological theories of Frankena and Rawls, and notes the criticisms of initial attempts of virtue theorists. Through the four features of philosophical analysis used in Chapter One, it lays out a contemporary outline of virtue ethics. Its particular focus is a description of justice as a virtue.

295; William Spohn, "The Return of Virtue Ethics," Theological Studies 53 (March 1992): 60-75; and Gregory Trianosky, "What Is Virtue Ethics All About?," American Philosophical Quarterly 27 (October 1990): 335-344.

Character

Although deontological theories do have a description of moral character, it is often too limited in scope. In Frankena's description, for example, the moral agent has a knowledge of the relevant facts and seeks a correct implementation of principles rationally decided upon. For Frankena, the questions of moral character have to do with the moral goodness of the agent. These questions focus on the support and maintenance of right action but facts about character Moral goodness cannot supply the content necessary for moral judgments.

In contrast, virtue theory has a stronger emphasis on character in its approach. Based on a relationship to the telos, character development in virtue theory occurs in three ways.[29] First, not only does the telos set the course for the moral life, but also the identity of the moral agent develops as one draws closer to it. Second, the journey toward the telos contains the constitution of the self. This constitution is constantly being realized in both relationship to the end as well as in daily living. The virtues are integral to this process. Third, the telos contains a relationship to a group or community

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[29]Joseph Kotva. "An Appeal For A Christian Virtue Ethic," Thought 67 (June 1992): 159-160.

which supports, encourages and nourishes this growing
sense of the self.

In contrast to the deontological view concerning the
relevancy of character to moral judgments, the questions
of character in an ethics of virtue are directly involved
with the determination of right action. Virtue ethics
heightens the relationship between the subject and its
activity, so that the actions taken directly effect the
transformation of the moral agent. In effect, moral
agents grow in character as they perform right actions.
This process further enables moral decision-making in the
future.

The background of moral agents thus becomes impor-
tant for their activity. Deontologists generally regard
personal and societal history as a burdensome to moral
decision-making. In this view, historical connections
carry with them the possibility for conflicts and can po-
tentially limit personal freedom. As a result, duty
ethicians like Frankena and Rawls tend to minimize a
moral agent's historical attachments. For example, not
only do Rawls's participants in the original position
have limited knowledge of themselves, he also divides in-
dividuals into their public identity and private dimen-
sion.

In an ethics of virtue, the role of history is
viewed differently. MacIntyre states that a moral view

is not so much chosen as it is inherited from the communities in which one participates. History does not, of necessity, detract from freedom. The personal history and moral tradition into which one is born and by which one is formed has, as its effect, the development of a certain kind of character.[30] The intermediary associations of the family, religion, school, and other voluntary groups have an important part in this process. Because of this inheritance and the importance of the social histories which inform persons and communities, virtue ethics places an important emphasis upon narrative. The narrative of a moral subject's life contributes to his or her self-understanding and direction.

According to MacIntyre, a narrative has two other important characteristics for the moral subject. First, an individual is not simply a recipient of a narrative tradition; he or she also participates in the creation of new stories.[31] Second, narrative presents the possibility of emerging from the contemporary moral confusion by offering a way to translate what appears to be the moral fragments of interminable debates into historical developments which can form the basis of a conversation about moral pluralism. The use of history and narrative pre-

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[30]Edmund Pincoffs, Quandries and Virtues (Kansas: Kansas University Press, 1986), 28.

[31]MacIntyre, After Virtue, 190-209.

sents a challenge to the more static views of the human person and moral community found in duty ethics.[32]

This enlarged view of moral character expands the range of ethical reflection. Like many duty ethicists, Frankena makes a separation between moral and non-moral goods. For him, ethical reflection belongs to the domain of the moral, and moral judgments about non-moral goods are made because of intrinsic, instrumental or aesthetic value.[33] Virtue theory, however, questions the width of this distinction and the separation of the public and private dimensions of a person's life. Rather, it views even the most trivial parts of life as having effect on the process of the person's becoming. With a separation between the moral and non-moral spheres of life, the private sector often becomes the arena for the gratification of desires which are relieved of the requirement to answer for moral worth.[34]

Virtue theory also criticizes the species of actions considered for moral evaluation in this division. If, as Edmund Pincoffs' view of "quandry ethics"[35] suggests, the

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[32]James Donahue, "Virtue and Character in Applied Ethics," _Horizons_ 17 (1990): 233.

[33]Frankena, _Ethics_, 62.

[34]Norton, "Moral Minimalism and the Development of Moral Character," 184-186.

[35]Pincoffs, _Quandry Ethics_, 14.

modern view is that ethics deals solely with problematic situations, the ethical person seeks rational ground for the decision to be made. Ethics functions only to find such grounds, often conceived as moral rules and the principles from which they are derived. Virtue ethics avoids this reductionistic stance by offering a fuller description of the moral life.

The final area of distinction between duty ethics and virtue ethics in the treatment of character is in the category of saints and heroes. Every culture or system recognizes those persons or activities that go beyond ex-pected understandings or usual levels of activities. This activity which includes risk-taking and self-sacrifice is labeled as "supererogation." "Supererogation "is understood as the class of acts that are good to do but not wrong not to do."[36] Renewed con-temporary interest in this category of activities arose with the publication of Saints and Heroes by J. Urmson in 1958. That essay disputes the normal classification of actions found in most ethics of duty.[37] Urmson considers supererogation problematic for most contempo-

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[36]Norton, "Moral Minimalism", 190.

[37]J.O. Urmson, "Saints and Heroes," Essays in Moral Philosophy, ed. A.I. Melden (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1958), 215-216.

rary duty ethicians.[38] Frankena himself confesses the
limitations of his own thought in this area.[39]

Virtue ethics addresses this question with a consid-
eration of the virtue of "magnanimity." Since the virtue
schema suggests possession of all the virtues, it does
not restrict magnaminity to a specific class of people or
select circumstances. Nonetheless, virtue ethics distin-
guishes between remote and probable contingencies and re-
flects this distinction in two approaches: the needed
preparation for historically probable contingencies, and
the gradual development of wisdom about circumstances
that challenge even the most expert knowledge.[40]

Virtue ethics also addresses supererogation by its
acknowledgment of the development of moral character.
Moral characters of one level of development have greater
capacities than characters of lesser development.[41] As a

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[38]Marcia Baron suggests that the activity of
supererogation in the Kantian framework is included in
the fulfillment of "imperfect duties." See her "Kantian
Ethics and Supererogation" Journal of Philosophy 84
(1987): 237-62.

[39]Frankena, Thinking About Morality, 58-59.

[40]Nancy Sherman, The Fabric of Character:
Aristotle's Theory of Virtue (Oxford: Clarendon Press,
1989), 52-53.

[41]This is in contrast to Urmson who, because of his
fidelity to impartiality and universality, concludes that
whatever is supererogatory, i.e., whatever is in the
least beyond minimum rock-bottom duties, is not morally
obligatory for anyone. See Norton, "Moral Minimalism and
the Development of Moral Character," 191.

person develops, he or she is able to place greater de-
mands upon himself or herself.[42] Virtue ethics use of
narrative demonstrates this moral growth.[43]

Human Nature

The increased emphasis on character in virtue ethics
also affects the description of human nature. In a con-
cern for the autonomy of the moral agent, deontologists
like Frankena stress rational capacities. The moral
agent is "clearheaded, logical and impartial." Rawls's
description of human nature in the original position is
similar. Although his view is not so severe as that of
the state of nature argumentation, he distances the par-
ticipants in the original position from their desires and
from those particular goods which Rawls views as impedi-
ments to the rational choice of the principles of jus-
tice.

The descriptions of human nature in the initial ex-
plorations of virtue theory are also limited. Murdoch,
for example, speaks of the fabrications of reality that

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[42]Lee Yearley, Mencius and Aquinas: Theories of
Virtue and Conceptions of Courage (Albany: State
University of Albany Press, 1990), 22.

[43]Lawrence Blum, "Moral Exemplars: Reflections on
Schindler, the Trocmes, and Others" Midwest Studies in
Philosophy, 196-221. The use of narrative in virtue
ethics will be expanded on in Chapter Four of this study.

humans produce through their vision. Similarly, Foot describes the virtues as correctives for the faults of human nature. MacIntyre too develops a sociological context for the virtues, which includes tradition, history, and rationality, but like the others, his account lacks anthropological roots.[44]

In contrast, virtue theory relying upon the <u>Summa</u> describes a more highly developed and balanced understanding of human nature than existing virtue theorists. Initially, Thomas understands human experience in terms of three appetites. The first is the **desiderative** or **concupiscible** appetite which has to do with human desires. The second is **the aggressive** or **irascible** appetite which has to do with the confrontation and possible elimination of evil. The third appetite is the will, known as the rational appetite.

Moreover, a note of moral realism balances the account of humanity in the <u>Summa</u>. In his description of human nature, Thomas pictures the moral life in tension, speaking not only of a disposition to virtue, but also of a disposition to vice. Vices thwart the progress of

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[44]James Keenan, "Die erworbenen Tugenden als richtige (nicht gute) Lebensfuehrung ein genauerer Ausdruck ethischer Beschreibung," <u>Ethische Theorie praktisch</u>, ed. Franz Furger (Muenster: Aschendorff, 1991), 19-35.

moral growth in the virtues. Even if an individual moves towards virtue, he or she feels the pull of vice.[45]

The description of society in virtue ethics also differs from deontological accounts of Frankena and Rawls by envisioning a wider scope of cooperation in pursuit of the common good. Although cognizant of the egoistic tendency in human nature, Thomas nonetheless follows Aristotle in arguing for the recognition of a societal impulse. This outer direction not only contributes to the endurance of society, but is its very basis. In this view, society is natural to humans and offers the arena of their growth.[46] Human satisfaction and growth can be achieved only within a community. Consequently, in speaking about the mode of participation in this society, the classical authors recommend the metaphor of friendship as a means for understanding citizenship. Such a perspective is absent from Rawls, indeed from nearly all of modern moral philosophical reflection about society.

The description of social relationships in virtue theory allows for an understanding of the common good in a different way from that of deontological thought.

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[45]Wadell, <u>The Primacy of Love: An Introduction to the Ethics of Thomas Aquinas</u> (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 119.

[46]Frederick Copleston, "St. Thomas: Political Theory," <u>A History of Philosophy Vol. II Medieval Philosophy Part II</u> (New York: Doubleday, 1962), 134-135.

Rawls emphasizes cooperation and service, but the vehicle of this process relies upon a partition of private and public life and thus limits the scope of the goods sought. In other words, when society is presented as being extraneous to, or even in tension with the individual considerable effort is required to show that moral responsibility is necessarily linked with being a self. A common life is considered a construct, and the duties and obligations from which flow rules and principles of contractual negotiation must be seen as burdensome. Rawls and other deontologists, reflecting the modern view, tend to see the common good as an alien good. Modern theorists often state this view in terms of the relationship between the person and society.[47]

The _Summa_ describes this polarity as the relationship between the common good and the good of the individual. In the Thomistic understanding, the existence and flourishing of individuals can only occur within a community. The entire matrix of human thought and action (language, culture and histories) transcends the individuals who participate and even contribute to it.[48] The common good, therefore, is not an alien good, but the

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[47]Norman Paulhus, "Uses And Misuses Of The Term 'Social Justice' In The Roman Catholic Tradition," _Journal of Religious Ethics_ 15 (Fall 1987): 263.

[48]Porter, _The Recovery of Justice_, 125-126.

proper good of the individual. The common good and the good of the individual can coexist at the same time.[49] The focal point here is not emotional intimacy, but the common pursual in partnership of an agreed upon common good.[50] This relationship is substantial to the point of stating that "what promotes one promotes the other and what harms one, harms the other as well."[51] This understanding of the common good differs from that of liberal thought. A community, in this view, has a dual function. On the one hand there is the responsibility of security and good working order. On the other hand, this community sees itself as insuring moral virtue and meeting the drive toward wholeness and completeness.[52]

Practical Reason

In their advocacy of the "moral point of view," deontologists like Frankena and Rawls ground ethical theory in practical reason. Virtue ethics also speaks of a "moral point of view" and a reliance upon practical rea-

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[49]S.T. II-II, 58, 7, ad 2 , II-II, 47, 10, ad 2.

[50]O'Connor, "Aristotelian Justice as a Personal Virtue", 423-424.

[51]Porter, The Recovery of Justice, 127.

[52]Richard Regan, The Moral Dimensions of Politics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 37-74.

son. These two accounts of rationality, however, differ in several aspects.

Virtue ethics bases its description of rationality on Aristotle and Thomas. Aristotle divides the fields of knowledge according to subject matter, types of problems raised, and kinds of reasoning appropriate to resolving particular problems.[53] The field of theoretical knowledge that includes the sciences, relies upon analytic arguments which he called **episteme**.[54] The field of practical knowledge has two kinds of knowing: **techne**[55] (the craft, skill or art involved in the process of construction) and **phronesis**[56] (practical reason). Aristotle's division of knowledge has important ramifications for his approach to ethics. He distinguishes practical reason from the deductive methods of **episteme** and the procedural methods of **techne** for use in ethical reasoning.[57] Ethics, Aristotle claims, cannot be a science. Unlike science, which is based upon abstract principles and is universal, invariable and known with certainty, ethics deals with multiple

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[53]Albert Jonsen and Stephen Toulmin's <u>The Abuse of Casuistry: A History of Moral Reasoning</u> (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 64.

[54]<u>Ethics</u>, **207**.

[55]<u>Ethics</u>, **208**.

[56]<u>Ethics</u>, **209-210**.

[57]Sherman, <u>The Fabric of Character</u>, 3, n. 2.

concrete situations which are variable and resists gener-
alization.[58] Ethics, for Aristotle, is found within the
realm of **phronesis** because it requires a personal wisdom
instead of an intellectual grasp of scientific ideas.[59]

Thomas retains Aristotle's understanding of practi-
cal reason where he gives prudence(phronesis) pride of
place.[60] In the Summa, prudence proceeds from a good
will and is directed toward the whole of life. It is
concerned with contingent, rather than necessary, truths,
and it offers a perspective for the good of the individ-
ual as well as for the common good of all. It exists in
interdependence with the other moral virtues of temper-
ance, fortitude, and justice, and it offers the mean be-
tween deficiency and excess.[61]

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[58]Jonsen and Toulmin, The Abuse of Casuistry, 19.

[59]Ethics, 215-216. Martha Nussbaum states that
Aristotelian practical wisdom is: 1) flexible, ready for
surprise, prepared to see, resourceful at improvisation;
and 2) is gained only through a long process of living
and choosing that develops the agent's resourcefulness
and responsiveness. The person of practical wisdom does
not attempt to take up a stand outside of the conditions
of human life, but bases his or her judgment on long and
broad experience of these conditions. See her The
Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy
and Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
1986), 290, 305.

[60]S.T., II-II, q. 61, a. 3.

[61]"The moral virtues do not order us to the good
apart from the activity of prudential reason, and
prudence does not perfect rational deliberation in the
absence of an orientation to particular goods." Daniel
Mark Nelson, The Priority of Prudence (University Park:

Thomas's account of practical reason illustrates his moral method of virtue ethics: the focus is correct action. Thomas states that human activity has two spheres: immanent and transient.[62] Both are in the realm of rightness. Immanent activity is internal and deals with intention. Transient activity is external and deals with choice. As Pickaers states:

> The interior act proceeds directly from the practical reason and the will, the first principle of every properly human action. The exterior act is the direct work of the other faculties, the will making use of them as its instruments...The interior act is the act of measure by the intellect and the act of mastery by the will. The exterior act is the execution of the action by the sense appetites and the powers of the body as commanded by the will.[63]

This outline suggests the necessity of two requirements for acting rightly: a right will consisting of the appetites well-ordered by the moral virtues, and right insight (the mean) supplied by the virtue of prudence. The four cardinal virtues are descriptions of an individual rightly ordered.[64] Repetition of the interior

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Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 76-85, esp. 84-85.

[62]S.T. I.II. 74.1c.

[63]Servais Pinckaers, "Virtue Is Not A Habit," Cross Currents 12 (Winter 1962): 72-73.

[64]James Keenan, Goodness and Rightness in Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1992), 8-15.

acts of intelligent mastery over one's self contribute directly to the formation of virtue.[65]

Teleology

Deontological thought generally opposes the expression of a single teleology. Foundationally, deontology "describes a form of justification in which first principles are derived in a way that does not presuppose any final human purposes or ends, nor any determinate conception of the human good."[66] The justification for these principles is that they conform to the concept of **right**, a moral category given prior to the good and independent of it.[67] Deontologists base their opposition to a single teleology on two counts: first, the decline of theological explanations of human meaning and purpose, and the rise of scientific categories; second; the reading of history since the Enlightenment. Religious, social and political pluralism has bequeathed multiple teleologies on contemporary society which are in conflict with each other. Rawls states that the emphasis on the **right**, instead of the **good**, allows for a rational and free process

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[65]Ibid., 73.

[66]Sandel, <u>Liberalism and the Limits of Justice</u>, 3.

[67]Sandel, <u>Liberalism and the Limits of Justice</u>, 1.

of living and working together according to "modes of reasoning commonly recognized." Thus the original position has a procedural constraint that does not mention or specify an end for the participants to be conscious of or to aim for.[68]

The ethics of both Aristotle and Thomas are teleological. The Nicomachean Ethics begin: "Every art and every investigation, and similarly every action and pursuit is considered to aim at some good."[69] The Prima Secundae of the Summa Theologiae similarly states: "Consequently, all human acts must be for the sake of an end."[70] In this view, all action is performed in pursuance of a good. Both Aristotle and Thomas view a teleology as central to their systems, albeit in distinctive, but related ways. A teleological perspective states that the moral life begins with discovery, not choice. In contrast with the deontological stances of Frankena and Rawls, the Aristotelian position states that there is a teleology that claims an agent before he or she makes reference to it.[71] Aristotle labels the good that is

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[68]Wolff, Understanding Rawls, 20-21.

[69]Ethics, 1094a1.

[70]S.T., I-II, 1,1.

[71]Stanley Hauerwas and Paul Wadell, "Review: After Virtue," The Thomist 46 (April 1982): 316.

aimed at **eudaimonia,** which, roughly translated, means
"happiness." Thomas has the same focus.[72]

The initial criticism of deontological thought by
advocates of virtue theory did not focus on its lack of a
teleology. In fact, even as these theorists called for a
return to an emphasis on character, they recognized the
difficulties of reviving the metaphysical biology of
Aristotelian teleology.[73] The solution to the emptiness
that Anscombe sees in twentieth century moral philosophy
does not encompass an embrace of a classical teleology.
Murdoch even argues against the possibility of one.
MacIntyre, too, recognizes these difficulties. On the
one hand he criticizes modern moral philosophers for re-
jecting a teleology. This rejection limits reason to a
present description of human living. He states that the
classical account also offers a description of humans as
they could become.[74] On the other hand, he adapts the

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[72]"Thomas follows Aristotle in affirming that our
actions and lives are oriented to an end and that there
is a connection between the kind of action characteristic
of a good life and happiness." Nelson, The Priority of
Prudence, 32.

[73]Trianosky writes, "The difficulty of some has been
how to adopt some more or less Aristotelian metaphysical
commitments, but at the same time without abandoning the
search for an alternative to utilitarianism....Others
seem willing simply to endorse Aristotle's claim that our
function is a life of rational activity despite whatever
metaphysical difficulties may attend it." "What Is
Virtue Ethics All About?," American Philosophical
Quarterly 27 (October 1990): 339.

Aristotelian model in an attempt to avoid the pitfalls of this biology and states that, "the good life for man is a life spent in seeking for the good life for man."[75]

Both deontological and virtue theorists state that the attempt by MacIntyre to substitute the idea of a narrative unity for Aristotle's teleology is unsuccessful. Deontologists argue this account is confused.[76] Virtue theorists suggest that he ends up sounding like the individualistic perspective he criticizes. Porter suggest a return to the Thomistic teleology.[77] She states that Thomas offers a teleology that incorporates several determinate goods in an orderly way that bestows a unity on the person and his or her life.[78] This teleology also supports the social unity described by virtue ethics.

This brief survey using the four features of philosophical analysis indicates some of the differences between an ethics of virtue and an ethics of duty. A theoretical construct, however, is only part of an argument. The assertion of the ability to support moral reflection

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[74]MacIntyre, _After Virtue_, 50-51.

[75]MacIntyre, _After Virtue_, 204.

[76]See William Frankena, "MacIntyre and Modern Morality," _Ethics_ 93 (1983): 586.

[77]Porter, _The Recovery of Virtue_, 83.

[78]Porter, _The Recovery of Virtue_, 84.

requires a demonstration of the viability of virtue ethics.

Contemporary Criticism of Virtue Ethics

The objections to an ethics of virtue operating as an independent ethical theory are numerous.[79] These objections can be divided into two categories: internal (those dealing with method) and external (those dealing with a metaphysical and theological underpinning).[80] Chapter two of this study considers the internal objections. Chapter four will examine the external objections.

The first challenge to virtue theory is the "self-centeredness objection." Critics allege that the emphasis placed upon development of character in virtue ethics excludes concern for the needs of others. In this view, the person of character is therefore only an ethical egoist. The virtue of prudence is a guide merely to

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[79]The following is a representational sample of the questions raised about the suitability of virtue ethics for this task: Sarah Conly, "Flourishing and the Failure of the Ethics of Virtue," Midwest Studies, 83-96; Robert Louden, "On Some Vices of Virtue Ethics," The Virtues: Contemporary Essays on Moral Character, 66-79; and David Solomon, "Internal Objections to Virtue Ethics," Midwest Studies in Philosophy, 428-441.

[80]The terms "internal" and "external" are used by David Solomon. See his "Internal Objections to Virtue Ethics" Midwest Studies in Philosophy, 430-431.

self-interested, and not moral, action.[81]   In a conflict of needs between oneself and others, so its critics propose, the individual directed only by virtue will selfishly choose himself or herself.

This objection against virtue ethics reflects a perceived problem in both deontological and utilitarian approaches to ethics. There is an asymmetry between a moral agent's regard for his or her own character and a regard for the character of others.[82] This asymmetry also carries over to the potential for conflict in social relationships.[83]

Part of this difficulty arises in the modern conception of the relationship of the individual and the society. Natural right theories tend to judge persons and societies by what they are and not by the ends they pursue. These theories place an emphasis on either the in-

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[81]Langan, "Prudence," The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics, 514. Langan notes that it is common in contemporary Anglo-American moral philosophy and in social contract theories to describe the problem as a transition from individual prudence to social morality.

[82]Solomon, "Internal Objections to Virtue Ethics," 435.

[83]Ronald Green states: "Indeed, it is precisely in extending itself to social relations that man's nature as a rational and social being reveals itself as the curiosity that it is....To see this we must keep in mind that finite social beings always stand in a tense relationship to their larger social group." See his Religious Reason: The Rational and Moral Basis of Religous Belief (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 49.

dividual or the group. Totalitarians subordinate the individual to society. Liberals support the importance of the individual. Either way, the common good is an alien good.[84]

Virtue ethics describes the terms of the relationship between the common good and the individual good. This view is a consequence of Aristotelian and Thomistic descriptions of human nature. Human beings can only exist and flourish in a community. A community provides the psychological, social, and material support necessary for present and future generations. A community also supplies a language and shared body of knowledge necessary for the exercise of human rational capacities.[85] The implication of this understanding is clear: individual moral subjects are not in immediate or automatic conflict with their cultural world. One cannot exist without the other.

This perspective also explains the Thomistic statement that the common good transcends the good of the individual. As Porter suggests, this means that "the well-being of the individual and the community are inter-

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[84]Paulhus, "Uses and Misuses of the Term 'Social Justice' In The Roman Catholic Tradition," Journal of Religious Ethics, 263.

[85]Porter, The Recovery of Virtue, 126.

related in such a way that what promotes one promotes the other, and what harms one harms the other as well."[86]

In an ethics of virtue the emphasis on character reflects a unified vision of life. One does not select identity or constitute it by individual hard effort. The narrative of one's life reflects a membership in the larger communities of family and other social groupings. The self is the subject of his or her own unique story as well as part of the interlocking stories of others.[87] Education in the virtues means that the pursuit of individual and common goods are not antagonistic but one and the same.[88] Prudence and the moral virtues offer a perspective for the good of the individual as well as the common good.[89] The individual and the society coexist, not as in the modern depiction of an atmosphere charged with competition and conflict, but in a complex relationship that is active, focused, and mutually enhancing.

The second challenge to virtue ethics is the "action-guiding objection." Here, critics charge that an

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[86]Porter, The Recovery of Virtue, 127.

[87]MacIntyre, After Virtue, 202-203.

[88]MacIntyre, After Virtue, 213.

[89]Porter states that justice transforms and completes temperance and fortitude by orienting them toward a good which transcends the good of the individual. This wider good is congruent with the good of the individual. The Recovery of Virtue, 126-127.

ethics of virtue, which emphasizes character, falls short in the ability to provide moral guidance for action. Virtues do not contain the precision or determinacy of principles or rules generated by deontological theories.

As an example of this objection, duty ethics relegates prudence and the moral virtues to an ancillary and supportive role in ethics. Virtues assist in the carrying out of the principles already decided upon. Frankena states, for example, that the virtues are concerned exclusively with the goodness of the moral agent: they are related to the **moral quality** of the agent's character (interests, motivation, and intentionality). But, as he argues, one's intentions are not of assistance in determining what ought to be done. The moral rightness of an action is dependent upon its intrinsic nature or what it **does**. As he suggests, deontic judgments provide a fuller accounting of moral evaluation and action than aretaic ones.[90] Frankena's view is consistent with the redefinition of the virtues that occurred in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when virtues were stripped of the root concepts that serve as background for an ethics of virtue. The treatment of the virtues did survive, but in substantially different form, understanding, and use. Their description corresponded to the new understandings

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[90]William Frankena, "Conversations With Carney and Hauerwas," 50-52.

of human nature and the political community that arose at this time in Western Europe.[91]

Virtue theory retrieves a pre-Enlightenment understanding of the virtues. Their placement in Aristotle's Ethics and Thomas's Summa is within the realm of rightness.[92] The focus of the virtues is not the motivation of the moral agent, which is goodness; the objective of virtue theory is correct action or rightness. The moral experience of a group of people and their repeated exercise enable the moral virtues in conjunction with prudence to seek and direct proper action.[93]

The role of prudence in an ethics of virtue differs from the role it plays in an ethics of duty. In the Summa, the description of prudence undercuts the modern view of it as self-centered.[94] Prudence proceeds from a good will and is directed toward the whole of life. For Thomas prudence is central to the moral life. It enables

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[91]MacIntyre, After Virtue, 212ff.

[92]S.T. I.II. 55-60.

[93]Stanley Hauerwas. "Virtue," The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics, 648-650.

[94]"According to the common modern view, prudence has to do with the self-interested calculation of costs and benefits. We tend to think of prudence as a kind of calculating carefulness, an ability to anticipate consequences. We might even presume a prudent person to be clever in considering possibly illicit means to ends that are not necessarily good." Nelson, The Priority of Prudence, 78.

the search in the concrete for "the good to be done and
evil to be avoided."[95]   It is concerned with contingent,
rather than necessary truths, and it offers a perspective
for the good of the individual as well as the common good
of all.   It exists in interdependence with the moral vir-
tues. Thomas writes: "The moral virtues do not order us
to the good apart from the activity of prudential reason,
and prudence does not perfect rational deliberation in
the absence of an orientation to particular goods."[96]

The use of prudence in practical reason suggests
that there is more to moral obligation than can be ex-
pressed by general rules. Prudential ethics can provide a
fuller account of moral reasoning through three consid-
erations.[97]   First, prudential ethics takes into account
the obligation to be a certain kind of person as well as
the acts appropriate to a certain kind of character.
This focus on character as well as activity provides the

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[95]As William George notes, this first principle of
practical reasoning is a **heuristic** principle without
content until it is coaffirmed in the act of making
prudent and thus, for Aquinas, moral decisions.   "Moral
Statement and Pastoral Adaptation," The Annual of the
Society of Christian Ethics 1992, 152-153.   See Nelson,
The Priority of Prudence, 107 for the same argument.

[96]Nelson, The Priority of Prudence, 76-85, esp.
84-85.

[97]Nelson, The Priority of Prudence, 136-140.   Here I
follow Nelson's account of prudential ethics.

description and guidance necessary for the process of moral development.

Second, prudential ethics demonstrates the flexibility to do justice to the singular reality of concrete situations. In the _Summa_, Thomas states, following Aristotle, that moral reasoning changes as it leaves the general and engages the specific.[98] MacIntyre reminds his readers that at times no formula is available in advance. How the law is to be applied and what justice demands are unclear. Decisions are made according to right reason.[99] The prudent person can discern and weigh the relevant circumstances of a moral question and then act accordingly.

An example of this use of prudence is found in the tradition of moral casuistry.[100] This form of practical moral reasoning adopts a taxonomic method whose argumentation was concrete, temporal and presumptive.[101] Instead of seeking to apply a principle to a concrete case, practical reasoning sets up a moral taxonomy of

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[98]S.T. I-II 94, 5.

[99]MacIntyre, _After Virtue_, 143.

[100]Here I rely on Jonsen and Toulmin, _The Abuse of Casuistry_, 24-36.

[101]Jonsen and Toulmin also speak of the method of geometric moral reason whose argumentation is idealized, atemporal and necessary. In geometric reasoning an axiom supports the conclusion.

cases. Successful cases, called paradigm cases, are used to offer guidance to newer and more complicated cases. Judgments of prudence, not principle, are made in the comparison of similar and dissimilar situations. Practical wisdom is gained through experience. The use of a moral taxonomy offered a certitude that was based on the nature of a case's resolution and its ability to serve as a basis for future reflection in succeeding cases.[102]

In other words, taxonomic moral reasoning makes use of the imagination.[103] As Murdoch states, "Reason must, however, in this region, appear in her other **persona** as imagination."[104] The use of this faculty does not compro-

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[102]James Keenan makes two observations about the taxonomic reasoning present in moral casuistry outlined by Jonsen and Toulmin. First, although the authors propose taxonomic reasoning for contemporary use, they describe taxonomies that belong primarily to act-oriented ethics. Second, moral taxonomies translate well into an ethics of virtue and illustrate how the virtues can offer specific direction. See his "Virtue Ethics: Setting An Agenda," Thought LXVII (June 1992): 119.

[103]"Imagination can be described as the basic process by which we draw together the concrete and the universal elements of our human experience. With imagination we let go of any inadequately pre-conceived notions of how the abstract and the concrete relate to one another. We suspend judgment about how to unite the concrete and the abstract. We let the two sides of our knowing play with one another. By allowing this interplay between the two aspects of our knowing, we get a much deeper chance to look at what we know, to form a vision of it." Philip Keane, Christian Ethics and Imagination (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 81.

mise the rationality of the reasoning process, but en-
hances it. Imaginative understanding does not compete
with scientific understanding. Rather, they are differ-
ent modes of understanding, each with its legitimate
sphere and importance.[105]

The third consideration that prudential ethics of-
fers to an account of moral reasoning is an overall de-
scription of the moral life. Moral living includes dis-
crete actions and even quandry situations, but cannot be
described in these terms alone.[106] In addition to a ca-
pacity to analyzing particular concrete moral situations,
an ethics of virtue using prudence describes moral living
in terms of a settled disposition to pursue right action
over the course of a lifetime.

But the use of prudence in virtue theory does not
obviate the need for rules or their usefulness in virtue
theory. Rules are present, but do not occupy the primary
place detailed by Kant and Frankena. Virtue theory

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[104]See her "Vision and Choice in Morality,"
Christian Ethics and Contemorary Philosophy ed. Ian T.
Ramsey (London: SCM Press, 1966), 212, no. 37.

[105]John Kekes, "Moral Imagination, Freedom and the
Humanities," American Philosophical Quarterly 28 (April
1991): 103. Kekes also speaks of a "corrective" function
for the imagination. In an imaginative recreation of past
situations, the possibilities of narrow-mindedness,
fantasy and self-deception as falsification of reality
are exposed. As this function becomes habitual it guards
against future misunderstandings and mistakes an
individual is prone to make. Ibid., 105-107.

[106]Porter, The Recovery of Virtue, 100.

raises two important questions about the use of rules in moral reasoning. First, is an understanding of the relationship of rules to cases.[107] In many cases principles and rules arose as summaries of established forms of moral reasoning based upon accepted practice. This process occurred in ancient Greece,[108] classical Rome[109] and sixteenth century Europe.[110] Second, is the use of principles. In virtue ethics principles and rules are used taxonomically and not geometrically. Principles and rules are summary expressions which reflect the internal certitude of prudential reasoning and the external certi-

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[107]John Kekes states that the guiding force of principles comes from their ability to reflect conventional conduct in a moral tradition. See his The Examined Life (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1988), 50-51.

[108]Nussbaum offers a good summary of what Aristotelian general rules and accounts are. Two positive functions of rules are; 1) guidelines and rules of thumb: summaries of particular decisions, useful for purposes of economy and aids in identifying the salient features of the particular case.; 2) the ultimate authorities against which the correctness of particular decisions is to be assessed. She cites the general ambivalence of Aristotle about the overall usefulness of rules in moral evaluation. The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 299-300.

[109]Jonsen and Toulmin outline the change from the "discretion" of the pontiffs to the "regulae" of formal rules. The Abuse of Casuistry, 52-55.

[110]James Keenan, "The Function of the Principle of the Double Effect," Theological Studies 54 (June 1993): 299.

tude of recognition by experts in the fields of moral reasoning.[111]

In contemporary virtue ethics, rules can have several important functions. Rules can identify those types of action that harm the bonds of a community and destroy the possibility of doing or achieving right activity.[112] Rules also have an educative function in two ways.[113] They can assist in portraying the telos, and in helping to shape actions consistent with the telos.[114] MacIntyre illustrates the interrelationship of rules and virtues when he states that the disposition needed to be learned is not to act in merely rule-governed ways, but also to do more than the rules require.[115] Prudence makes this realization possible.

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[111]Ibid., 300.

[112]MacIntyre, After Virtue, 141-142.

[113]Mary Ann Glendon speaks of the "educative" function of law. See her Abortion and Divorce in Western Law: American Failures, European Challenges (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987) and Rights Talk: The Impoverishment of Political Discourse (New York: The Free Press, 1990).

[114]Kotva, "An Appeal For A Christian Virtue Ethic," 168.

[115]MacIntyre notes, "Rules, conceived apart from virtues and goods, are not the same as rules conceived in dependence upon virtues and goods; and so it is also with virtues apart from rules and goods and goods apart from rules and virtues." "Plain Persons and Moral Philosophy: Rules, Virtues and Goods," American Catholice Philosophical Quarterly LXVI (1992): 10, 12.

The third challenge to the efficacy of virtue theory is the "contingency objection." This charge follows the Kantian dictum that emotions are neutral in ethical reasoning. Kant states that the biological givens and the social formations of an individual do not have a central place in the moral determination of goodness because they lie outside rational control.[116] Since Kant, moral philosophers have held that dispositions or feelings influence moral decision evaluation and decision-making in a negative way. In an ethics of duty, therefore, the reasoning of a moral agent is necessarily detached and factual. Dispositions supply the motivation to follow the moral law, but not its content.

The description of these feelings is different in virtue theory. An ethics of virtue states that freedom is not gained by restricting access to the affective dimension of human life, but by the education of these appetites.[117] Aristotle includes the emotions in his description of practical reason. **Phronesis** is neither dispassionate nor strictly emotional, but a balance between the two. He argues that the emotions are educable, that affective capacities can be cultivated to yield disposi-

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[116]See Kant, The Doctrine of Virtue, as cited in Sherman, The Fabric of Character, 46, n. 56.

[117]Wadell, The Primacy of Love: An Introduction to the Ethics of Thomas Aquinas, 79.

tions that are enduring and responsive to appropriate ob-

jects and values.[118] Like Aristotle, Thomas acknowledges

the role of the emotions in decision-making.[119] Unlike

Kant, however, he views the emotions as central to the

process of moral reflection. He admits that feelings can

cloud reason and contribute to bad moral choices. He

also asserts that the emotions may affect a good act

positively. Moral reflection in the _Summa_ presents a

balance between reason and sound inclination.[120]

Thomas connects a virtue to each appetite: temper-

ance to the desiderative,[121] fortitude to the aggres-

sive[122] and justice to the will.[123] He recognizes that

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[118]Sherman, _The Fabric of Character_, 47.

[119]S.T. I-II, q.24, a.3.

[120]Charles Bouchard, "Making Moral Decisions,"
Church 7 (Summer 1991): 10 n. 9.

[121]"By its nature it tends toward sensible good, and
as we know from experience there are no built-in limits
to its activity. Unless its nature is modified, it
continually moves towards pleasurable goods. Hence from
the very nature of its movement and its object, it is
evident that the essential order needed is that of
putting a limit to the outgoing movement of sense
desire." Klubertanz, _Habits and Virtues_ ,205.

[122]"Looked at positively, the aggressive appetite
has as its function getting us to tackle a difficult
task, to meet evils head-on in order to obtain a good.
Because of this, the most notable order of reason is
properly to direct the outgoing movement of the appetite
against the evil." Klubertanz, _Habits and Virtues_,
217-218.

[123]"The nature of the will is to tend to whatever is
good in so far as in any way it embodies the

human beings face a plurality of goods[124] and that often

disagreement arises within the individual and with others

about what goods to aim for. Each of the appetites or

passions is therefore in need of development and fo-

cus,[125] and the virtues direct them in a way that an in-

dividual acts in accord with his or her own good and the

wider good he or she seeks.[126]

Justice in an Ethics of Virtue

This examination of the objections to virtue theory now

leads to a comparison of justice described as a principle

and as a virtue. A description of justice as a virtue,

however, faces three difficulties. First, as Daniel Mark

Nelson remarks, in most contemporary discussions "justice

has lost its connection to persons and is regarded almost

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intelligibility of 'good.' The natural structure of the
will is therefore sufficient to account for all willing
of what is simply good (or is directly related to a
simple good, as a means to an end). The movement of the
will toward the good is in general called 'love' and the
movement away from evil is 'hatred'." Klubertanz, Habit
and Virtue, 225.

[124]"We are distinguished from subrational animals by
the fact that we, unlike they, do not automatically seek
out the goods that will promote our growth and
flourishing...Hence ,my will, unlike animal impulses, is
never oriented by natural necessity toward any particular
finite good." Porter, The Recovery of Virtue, 71.

[125]S.T. I-II 56 4,6.

[126]S.T. I-II.56.5; I-II.60.3.

exclusively as an attribute of legal systems and social structures."[127] Second, although many modern theories of justice agree about formal principles (equals are to be treated equally), no such understanding is accepted about material principles (equal distribution).[128] Third, as David K. O'Connor observes, even in the revival of interest in virtue ethics, justice has suffered in comparison with other virtues such as love, compassion, and care.[129]

A comparison between these two descriptions of justice begins with a deontological approach. In the minds of many critics Rawls's outline of justice as a principle leaves unanswered three important points.[130] First, Rawls's _Theory_ is not a general theory of justice, but a theory for a particular society. Second, since his theory accepts as given the core ideals of a particular tradition, it lacks the tools of social criticism. Thirdly, the consensus required for this understanding of justice may not be possible in a culture in which a significant portion of citizens are alienated from the process.

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[127]Nelson, _The Priority of Prudence_, 149.

[128]Allen Buchanan, "Distributive Justice," _Encyclopedia of Ethics_, 655.

[129]David K. O'Connor, "Aristotelian Justice as a Personal Virtue," _Midwest Studies in Philosophy_, 417.

[130]Allen Buchanan, "Justice: Distributive," _Encyclopedia of Ethics_, 658-659.

These three questions offer the vantage points of scope, social criticism and participation from which to compare the duty and virtue accounts of justice.

The scope of justice can be viewed individually and socially. The starting point for Rawls is rational and restrictive, since its individualistic emphasis requires limitations of the original position. The scope of operation, a particular society, also illustrates the restriction of Rawls's Theory. In contrast, virtue theory argues that justice starts from a more fundamental and far-reaching vantage point. It begins with the recognition of the movements of the human will toward the good. This movement is also the basis of a distinction. An individual can love others as extensions of himself or herself. But these others can also be loved as others, not in so far as they are identical, but as distinct. Justice speaks to this relationship, in a related yet distinct way from love.[131]

Such an understanding has significant social ramifications. Initially, justice as a virtue is not limited to any one social setting or society.[132] As a virtue, jus-

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[131]Klubertanz, Habits and Virtues, 225-232. See O'Connor, "Aristotelian Justice as a Personal Virtue," Midwest Studies in Philosophy, 418 for his summary of Aristotle's description of these two virtues in the Ethics (8.1.1155a22-28).

tice is also not limited in its field of operation within a particular society. On the other hand, Rawls's princi- ples of justice focus on the distributive form of jus- tice. His Theory, for example, offers a definition of justice which is a calculation of the distribution of goods agreed upon in the original position.[133] Critics argue that even though the original position is a device to deal fairly with others, the resulting principles are examples of a justice which is primarily procedural.[134] The procedure is the distribution of rights and goods. By limiting the scope of his consideration to the proce- dures, however, Rawls rules out, as Frankena before him, vast areas of human experience for moral evaluation. An ethics of virtue views distributive justice as too re- strictive. The separation of the public and private di- mensions of human life, with justice restricted to the public, is not found in an ethics of virtue. Rather, virtue theory states that one cannot be satisfied (just) simply to say that someone has not been harmed, another's rights have not been violated, or responsibility has been met in areas where there is a juridical claim.[135] In

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[132]For example, Rawls explicitly rules out application to international relationships. A Theory of Justice, 7-8.

[133]Grant, English Speaking Justice, 44-46.

[134]Jones, "Should Christians Affirm Rawls's Justice as Fairness?", 267.

virtue theory justice aims at providing for the good of
others, while at the same time providing for one's own
good.[136] Contrary to many deontological descriptions of
social life, virtue theory does not view these two goods
as automatically in conflict with one another.[137]
Similarly, in an ethics of virtue, external social rela-
tionships reflect an inner harmony achieved through jus-
tice.[138] These relationships also have an expanded his-
torical scope. As a virtue, justice is not only spatial
but temporal; the scope of justice holds that humans are
responsible for the past and future as well as the pre-
sent.[139]

The _Summa_ describes this alternative understanding
of justice. Thomas divides his description of prudence
and justice into two subdivisions. Regnative prudence is

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[135]Thomas Schindler, _Ethics: The Social Dimension_
(Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1989), 103.

[136]Klubertanz, _Habit and Virtue_, 229-231.

[137]MacIntyre writes: "For what education in the
virtues teaches me is that my good as a man is one and
the same as the good of those others with whom I am bound
up in human community. There is no way of my pursuing my
good which is necessarily antagonistic to you pursuing
yours because the good is neither mine peculiarly nor
your peculiarly - goods are not private property."
MacIntyre, _After Virtue_, 213.

[138]Grant, _English Speaking Justice_, 44-46.

[139]Schindler, _Ethics: The Social Dimension_, 108.
See MacIntyre _After Virtue_, 233-234, for a criticism of
the exclusion of reference to the past in the calculation
of justice in Rawls and Robert Nozick (_Anarchy, State and
Utopia_ New York: Basic Books, 1974).

the virtue of those who exercise authority for the pres-
ervation of the common good and the distribution of
goods.[140] Political prudence is the virtue of those
(subjects and citizens, depending upon the construct of
the political and social community) who share in the gov-
ernance and the goods of the society in question.[141]
Interestingly, Thomas's account of distributive justice
is far briefer than his description of commutative jus-
tice, and herein lies the demonstration of the versatil-
ity and wisdom of the Thomistic view. Recognizing that
all the practical questions encompassing distributive
justice could not be settled beforehand, Thomas states
that prudence supplies the continuing ability to offer
content to justice within the differing contexts of human
life. The Summa does not offer a picture of a leader who
is a tactician applying principles toward a goal.
Thomas's portrait is rather of an active listener who is
widely imaginative in pursuit of embodying and creating
just patterns of activity.[142]

The second area left unanswered by Rawls's deon-
tological view of justice is social criticism. Critics

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[140]S.T. II-II. 50. 1. Thomas also offers a
description of the qualities of those in authority in
Chapter 15 of De Regimine Principum.

[141]S.T. II-III. 50. 2.

[142]Porter, The Recovery of Virtue, 152-154.

charge that A Theory of Justice is limited in its ability to evaluate itself. One response to this charge is to suggest that the construct of the original position (especially the mechanism of reflective equilibrium) provides the flexibility to respond to new conditions and form the basis for stable judgments. Rawls's subsequent statements about the political rather than the metaphysical or epistemological nature of justice, however, resituate the foundation of his Theory in a way that appears to compromise that ability to criticize.

In virtue theory distributive justice offers two possibilities for criticism that could lead to review and change. The first is the understanding that those in authority alone do not shoulder the functions of distributive justice. Individual members of a society are also subjects of distributive justice. The consent of the governed molds the attitude and conduct of those in authority. This perspective can offer broad latitude for criticism while at the same time it can support continued participation in the process of governance.

The other possibility for criticism provided by virtue theory is the comparison with systems of justice in other traditions. Rawls is clear about basing his Theory in a specifically American constitutional experience, and presently excludes consideration of international relationships. Virtue theory, on the other hand, offers the

possibility of wider conversations. Its view of human functioning is not metaphysical in Rawls's sense, but is rather an ethical-political account which can be shared across cultures and provides a focus for intercultural ethical-political inquiry.[143]

The third area left unanswered in Rawls's Theory is the level of participation in the processes of justice. Rawls is concerned that large numbers of people feel disenfranchised by the political and economic systems. Fewer and fewer citizens participate in the political processes for a variety of reasons. But an interesting perspective can be gained through the comparison of the approaches to justice in deontological and virtue theory.

The level of engagement of the individual illustrates this comparison. Both principles and virtues ask a response from an individual, but in different ways. The principles of justice proposed by Rawls do suggest an immediate recognition, a symmetry between their rational structure and the rational structure of the mind. A just person would be a party to a reasonable consensus and express moral interest in fairness.[144]

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[143]Martha Nussbaum, "Aristotelian Social Democracy," Liberalism and the Good, eds. R. Bruce Douglass, Gerald M. Mara, and Henry S. Richardson (New York: Routledge, 1990), 206. This point is discussed more extensively in Chapter four.

[144]O'Connor, "Aristotelian Justice as a Personal Virtue", 423.

The classical account of justice follows an alter-
nate line of analysis. In duty ethics and even in in-
itial virtue accounts like Foot's, justice is a correc-
tive for egotism and selfishness. This view follows a
negative portrayal of human nature. In Aristotle's con-
trasting view, justice does not involve control or cor-
rection of egoistic motives. As a virtue it resists the
misorientation toward, or overvaluing of, various sorts
of inferior ends. In this it is similar to the intraper-
sonal virtues. What causes humans to fall short of
temperance and fortitude also causes them to be unjust.
Both the deontological and virtue approaches to justice
are concerned with how actions affect other people. The
classical Aristotelian account used in virtue ethics,
however, offers a fuller description of the participation
of the moral agent in just actions.

The _Summa_ also illustrates this point. Thomas dis-
tinguishes between immanent(internal) and tran-
sient(external) acts. He states that virtues perfect im-
manent acts. Initially, a question arises, since justice
appears to concentrate on transient or external acts.[145]
But although Thomas makes multiple references to the
transient aspect of justice, he also holds that the tran-
sient acts of justice are preceeded by immanent acts. He

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[145]S.T. II-II.58.2c.3c.8c.

writes: "Justice is the same as rectitude, not essentially but causally, for it is a habit which rectifies the deed and the will."[146] In other words, the just person produces just actions. For just actions to be stable and lasting over the course of a lifetime, justice must first perfect the moral subject.

Furthermore, both Aristotle and Thomas hold that perfection of the will pertains to both the individual and the common good. The focus of justice is not simply the fact of the proper orientation. Attention to orientation alone leads to altruism or impartiality. An ethics of virtue understands interactions with others as a partnership in a common pursuit. This view is different from a deontological approach where justice governs the confrontations with others, who are independent sources of valuation.[147] Hence, Aristotle speaks of the model of friendship for social interaction.

The contrast between justice as a principle and justice as a virtue is also apparent in contemporary descriptions. One example is the understanding of the term "practice." For Rawls a practice is any form of activity that a system of rules specifies, such as offices, roles, rights and duties. This system requires that all members

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[146]S.T. II-II. 58.1.ad2.

[147]O'Connor, "Aristotelian Justice as a Personal Virtue", 424.

who fall under it accept it and are bound by it.
Practices, such as the principle of reciprocity, make a
community just and fair.[148] Rawls states that justice is
not found in the outcome (as in utilitarianism), but is a
presupposition agreed to in the original position.[149]

MacIntyre's definition of a practice[150] contains
some important points of contrast with Rawls: 1) one is
initiated into a practice through the narrative of its
standards of excellence; 2) practices deal with **internal**
not **external** goods. Internal goods are for the good of
the community. External goods remain the possession and
property of the individual; 3) practices are not techni-
cal skills; 4) the goals of a practice are not fixed but
transmuted by the history of the practice; 5) practices
are not institutions but need institutions to sustain
them. According to MacIntyre, what thwarts the practice
of justice is not inherited conflicts or competing con-
ceptions of the good, but rather that the theories that
give rise to social, political and economic institutions
cannot provide the character to sustain the exercise of
justice.

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[148]Barry, Applying Ethics, 51, 53.

[149]Stanley I. Benn, "Justice," in Encyclopedia of
Philosophy, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: MacMillan
Publishing Company, 1967), 300.

[150]MacIntyre, After Virtue, 175.

Virtue theory also does not consider the activity of justice in isolation. Justice is connected to the entire person. Located in the will, it stands in relationship with prudence, temperance, and fortitude. Since it orients the will to the wider goods of others and the society in which they live, it is directive of temperance and fortitude.[151] But its realization requires prudence to discern the proper means to reach the good it aims for. It needs temperance to assure single-mindedness in this pursuit. Its elicits fortitude to stand firm in the face of challenge.[152]

The Suitability of Virtue Theory for Catholic Social Ethics

The renewal of Catholic moral theology begun by European theologians in the wake of Vatican II continues among their American counterparts. Commonly known as "revisionist" moral theology, this approach includes the application of categories borrowed from moral philosophy. American Catholic moralists like Richard McCormick and Charles Curran have demonstrated in their writings an increased awareness of the broader dimensions of the moral

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[151]Porter, The Recovery of Virtue, 124-125.

[152]William Werpehowski, "Justice" The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics, 332.

life[153] and greater attention to the person as a moral agent and subject[154]. Despite these contributions, the present discussion of proportionalism in American Catholic moral theology continues to concern itself with the grounding of norms and the moral evaluation of actions[155]. Dissatisfaction with the retention of this framework has led to calls for a further progression in Catholic moral thought.

An ethics of virtue offers a comprehensive approach to the direction of moral theology and a suitability for Catholic social ethics in two ways. First, as previously described, virtue theory's description of the category of rightness addresses serious criticism of the limits of traditional Catholic ethics. In an ethics of virtue, rightness does not narrowly define moral action in terms

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[153]See McCormick's retrospective analysis, The Critical Calling: Reflections on Moral Dilemmas Since Vatican II (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1989), especially Chapter One, "Moral Theology Since Vatican II: Clarity or Chaos?" In this chapter he speaks of the depth of the moral life, its social character, and the centrality of the person.

[154]Charles Curran, "The Person as Moral Agent and Subject," Directions in Fundamental Moral Theology (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), 63-97.

[155]James Gustafson states: "I have noted that McCormick, contintuing the dominant tradition of moral theology largely, but not exclusively, focuses on particular moral acts." See his "The Focus And Its Limitations: Reflections on Catholic Moral Theology" Moral Theology: Challenges For The Future: Essays in Honor of Richard A. McCormick (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 182.

of physical or external acts. "Object" in virtue thought
is first internal and formal.[156] Moreover, a virtue ap-
proach has deeper description of human nature than con-
temporary Catholic account of proportionalism.[157]

The second area of virtue theory's contribution to
Catholic moral theology and social ethics is its descrip-
tion of goodness. As Rigali observes, theological
discussion about the virtue of charity ceased after the
Second Vatican Council. Contemporary moral theologians
deemed the virtue of charity too individualistic to
support the new social ethics.[158] The omission of theo-
logical discussion about charity has had a negative
result. Rigali argues that lacking a biblico-theological
(sic) analysis of charity, the new moral theology that
has emerged since the Council is inherently unstable.[159]

The contribution of virtue theory to Catholic social
ethics begins with a retrieval of an understanding of the
final end in Thomistic teleology, and the examination of

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[156]Keenan, Goodness and Rightness, 83.

[157]Hoose, Proportionalism, 142.

[158]Norbert Rigali, "Toward A Moral Theology of
Social Consciousness," Horizons 4 (1977): 174-175.

[159]Ibid., 175. This judgment does recognize
subsequent efforts to connect social ethics to a
religious foundation. See Charles Curran (Directions in
Fundamental Moral Theology, 35-62) for a discussion the
five mysteries (creation, sin, incarnation, redemption
and resurrection destiny) that form the proper stance for
Christian ethics.

the theological virtue of charity. As Rigali states, the intention of contemporary Catholic moral theory in abandoning the preconciliar discussions of charity was to rid morality of its privatism and individuality. The theologians saw a problem in describing a conflict between self-love and love of neighbor. They reasoned that this conflict reflected the classical view that love was an act of the individual appetite. This understanding of charity had resulted from the historical separation of Catholic moral reflection from other theological sources - Scripture, dogmatic and ascetic theology.

The post-conciliar direction in Catholic moral theology did alleviate this perceived conflict by championing a heightened social consciousness. But it was able to achieve only limited success in connecting its approach with biblical symbols, especially with the Kingdom of God.[160] The perceived separation between the religious and moral dimensions of an individual's life remained. The discussions about the distinctiveness of Christian morality left many with the impression that in the moral life the role of belief was only motivational.

[160]See Charles Curran (<u>Directions in Fundamental Moral Theology</u>, 35-62) for a discussion the five mysteries (creation, sin, incarnation, redemption and resurrection destiny) that form the proper stance for Christian ethics.

The reconnection of the love of God and the love of
neighbor through the renewed understanding of charity has
contemporary antecedents in Gilleman[161], Rahner[162] and
Lonergan[163]. In turning to the _Summa_ as a source for
understanding the relationship of the love of God and the
love of neighbor, however, one faces the complexities of
connecting the theological with the moral virtues in a
moral approach.[164] Yet despite the difficulties, it is
possible to preserve the distinction between natural and
supernatural happiness while offering an account of the
moral life and its relationship to the economy of
grace.[165] With these questions in mind it is important

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[161]Gerard Gilleman, _The Primacy of Charity in Moral
Theology_ (London: Burns & Oates, 1959).

[162]Karl Rahner, "The 'Commandment' Of Love in
Relation To The Other Commandments," _Theological
Investigation_ Vol. V (Baltimore: Helicon Press,
1966),439-459 and "Reflections On The Unity Of The Love
Of Neighbour And The Love Of God," _Theological
Investigations_ Vol. VI (New York: Seabury Press, 1974),
231-249.

[163]Bernard J. Lonergan, _Method in Theology_ (New
York: Seabury Press, 1972).

[164]See Porter's continuing study of this
relationship: "The Desire For God: Ground Of The Moral
Life In Aquinas" _Theological Studies_ 47 (1986): 48-68;
_The Recovery of Virtue: The Relevance of Aquinas for
Christian Ethics_, 63-68 and "The Subversion of Virtue:
Acquired and Infused Virtues in the Summa Theologiae,"
Annual Society of Christian Ethics (1992): 19-41.

[165]Porter, "The Desire For God: Ground Of The Moral
Life In Aquinas," 56.

for this project to formulate an understanding of charity and its relationship to the moral life.

In his study of the moral economy of Thomas, James Keenan[166] notes that the original meaning of charity has been lost. Contrary to contemporary notions of charity as generous activity, in its original meaning charity is defined as "the love that strives for greater union with God and neighbor through attempts to realize right living."[167] As a theological virtue, charity is therefore concerned with moral goodness, a distinctive category yet related to moral rightness - the traditional preserve of prudence and the moral virtues. The distinction between goodness and rightness is further understood through the focus of each: "goodness measures whether out of love one **strives** to attain a rightly ordered self...rightness measures whether one **actually attains** a rightly ordered self."[168] The province of the virtue of charity is, therefore, what is commonly called motivation.

Keenan bases his distinction between goodness/rightness upon a retrieval of Thomistic thought. His reading differs from those post-conciliar moral theologians who, in Rigali's account, reject the scholastic

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[166]Keenan, <u>Goodness and Rightness in Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae.</u>

[167]Ibid., 11.

[168]Ibid., 137-138.

approach to the question of the love of God and the love of neighbor.[169] In Keenan's reading, Thomas's investigation of the love of friendship and the love of concupiscence leads him to examine the primary friendship out of which humans act. The fundamental love on which all other loves are based is the virtue of charity.[170]

The foundation of charity, in Keenan's view, is union with God. This union is first a **terminus a quo**, the end out of which charity operates and also a **terminus ad quem**, the end which it seeks.[171] In its activity charity is form, command and measure. As form, it does not constitute a virtue's species, but directs its end to the last end.[172] As command, it is a moral description of the will before an act of the will is measured according to specification.[173] As measure, charity relates to both interior and exterior activity. Interiorly, charity is the measure of whether one is loving as much as possible. Exteriorly charity accompanies prudence. While the rule

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[169]The term "scholastic" is often utilized broadly and as a result imprecisely. It can refer to the work of Thomas Aquinas, or his interpreters in succeeding generations, or both. Keenan's point is that many in the scholastic tradition misread Thomas on this and other points.

[170]Ibid., 123.

[171]Ibid., 126.

[172]Ibid., 128.

[173]Ibid., 129-130.

of reason determines the rightness of activity the rule of charity determines the goodness of the same activity.[174] The activity of charity as form, command and measure does not lead to a competition of loves or to a diminished capacity. The love of God which is charity is also the love by which neighbors are loved.[175]

Ordered by charity, the will prompts itself to strive as much as it can to perform virtuous acts. The order of charity is not like the order attained by reason. The order of charity formally unites the will to God and makes the will willing to strive for right behavior in the concrete world. The order of reason, on the other hand, specifies the mean and through it attains right behavior.[176]

The understanding of the two dimensions of the moral economy of the Summa provides a foundation for the practice of Catholic social ethics. Porter speaks of the transformation of the moral virtues by the theological virtues in a way that leaves intact their rational structure. The virtues of faith, hope and love add something to prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice which is beyond motivation for right behavior.[177] Keenan states

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[174]Ibid., 131-132.

[175]Ibid., 133.

[176]Ibid., 134.

that Thomas argues that external actions must be measured as flowing from charity and as fitting to reason.[178] Thus Keenan states that charity asks whether we are willing to strive for right character, and prudence and the moral virtues offer ways of attaining right character. Striving and attaining are the two tasks for those engaged in Catholic moral life and social ethics. Through the understanding of charity, social ethics can maintain its transcendental foundation and orientation. Its advocacy of justice is rooted in the sharing of God's life as well as in material need.[179] The relationship of charity and the virtues roots church efforts in the social realm in religious belief. It also serves to distinguish these efforts from those whose origin is benevolence.[180]

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[177]Porter, The Recovery of Virtue, 67.

[178]Keenan, Goodness and Rightness, 131.

[179]See Stephen Post, "The Purpose of Neighbor-Love," Journal of Religious Ethics 18 (Spring 1990): 181-193, for his survey of the ways that Christians have participated in the change of neighbor-love (with its connection to the love of God) into benevolence (with its emphasis on freedom and material welfare).

[180]See Frankena (Ethics, 58) where he identifies the law of love with his principle of beneficence supplemented by the principle of distributive justice. He writes, "If one does this, one must, of course, conceive of the principle of beneficence as asking us not to do what is in fact beneficent but also to be benevolent, i.e., to do it out of love."

Conclusion

Chapter Two completes the first stage of the study of the usefulness of virtue ethics in Catholic social ethics. Drawing on the classical sources of virtue theory and their appropriation by contemporary theorists, this chapter constructed a model of virtue ethics. At times, it was necessary to show where this model differed from contemporary readings of the virtue tradition, especially in MacIntyre's <u>After Virtue</u>.

Once assembled, chapter Two compared this outline of virtue ethics to the deontological outline according to the features of character, human nature, practical reason and teleology. The comparison between these models offers dissimilarities in emphasis in the process of ethical reflection. Each of these features offers evidence of a fuller description of ethical reflection in virtue theory. An ethics of virtue describes a more comprehensive relationship between a moral agent and his or her activity than the models of Frankena and Rawls.

Chapter Two also tested the model of the virtue approach to moral description in several preliminary areas. Moral philosophers offer three internal objections to the establishment of an ethics virtue. In each of the areas of "self-centeredness", "contingency" and "moral guidance" virtue ethics is able to respond satisfactorily to

the objections and demonstrate several advantages to its use. These advantages become clearer in the initial description of justice as a virtue in conjunction with prudence. Once again, virtue ethics maintains a more comprehensive relationship between a moral agent and his or her activity than duty ethics.

The second area of question for virtue theology is its suitability in moral theology and social ethics. Developments in Catholic moral theology and social ethics surveyed indicate several connections to virtue theory. This review shows that a theory of the theological virtue of charity, together with prudence, offers a viable approach to a position of justice rooted in religious belief.

Although both these explorations into the viability of virtue theory for service in Catholic social ethics are positive, the conclusion of Chapter Two remains a preliminary judgment. A further and more conclusive test comes with the evaluation of virtue ethics' capacity to address the questions of justice externally, that is, its ability to address the context of multiple teleologies of pluralistic society. Without this capacity, virtue ethics remains limited in philosophical application and sectarian in theological use.

Before a complete evaluation of an ethics of virtue can be made, Chapter Three examines Economic Justice, a

Pastoral Letter of the National Conference of Catholic
Bishops. This recent example of Catholic social ethics
"at work" provides an opportunity to take the initial
findings about virtue theory and examine them in a con-
crete application.

CHAPTER THREE

AN EXAMINATION OF <u>ECONOMIC JUSTICE</u>

Overview

Chapter Three of this study enters into a three-part analysis of the capacities of an ethics of virtue for service to Catholic social ethics. This chapter begins with an examination of the Pastoral Letter, <u>Economic Justice For All: A Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy</u>, written by a committee chaired by Rembert G. Weakland, O.S.B., and adopted for publication as a teaching document by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. <u>Economic Justice</u> and its immediate predecessor, <u>The Challenge of Peace</u>, are original contributions by the Catholic Church in America to the century-old tradition of papal, conciliar, and episcopal statements about Christian social ethics.

In the Pastoral Letter, the Catholic Bishops address themselves to two audiences: members of the Catholic community and all citizens of the United States. With references to biblical themes and the American historical consciousness, they invoke the religious and national imagination of their listeners. By doing so, the bishops hoped to stimulate, on the part of the church and the country, a concrete response to their efforts through a deeper reflection on, and wider participation in, the issues of justice facing America in the last quarter of the

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twentieth century. The consensus of many observers is
that despite a broad and substantial consultation process
and a text rooted in religious and secular narratives,
Economic Justice has not entirely achieved these goals.
The long-term impact of the Pastoral Letter appears rele-
gated to a limited circle of academics. The limited
reception[1] by both intended audiences raises questions
about the nature and composition of the Letter.

As a Pastoral Letter, Economic Justice is not a sys-
tematic treatment of the question of justice. The bish-
ops do, however, offer a careful and methodical moral ar-
gument that has a foundation in moral theory. This study
focuses on one aspect of the Letter's overall contribu-
tion[2] to Christian social ethics that appears tied to the
question of reception: mediation. Catholic theology has
traditionally accepted the concept of mediation in which
God's plan for human activity is known not directly from
God, but in the understanding of human reasoning. This
theology states that one cannot go directly from the gos-

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[1]The reader is reminded that "reception" refers to a
comprehensive understanding that includes participation
of church members in the development of church teaching,
and the social location of Christianity.

[2]See Roger Haight and John Langan, "Recent Catholic
Social And Ethical Teaching In Light Of The Social
Gospel," Journal of Religious Ethics 18 (Spring 1990):
114-116, for a five point outline of how social ethical
proposals are generated theologically into a Christian
social ethics.

pels to an ethical conclusion.[3] The gospels must be mediated through human experience and the human sciences.[4]

In searching for the medium to move from biblical teaching on justice to contemporary social and economic questions, Economic Justice uses both the terms "principles" and "virtues."[5] Chapter Three is an examination of the use of these terms with respect to the Letter's first audience, the members of Catholic community in America. The purpose of this examination is three-fold: 1) using the outlines of deontological and virtue theory from the preceding chapters, to understand the ethical method chosen by the authors; 2) to inquire into the relationship that exists between the acceptance of the Pastoral Letter and its ethical approach; and, 3) to show the benefits an ethics of virtue approach would bring to the goals of the Letter. This examination includes a review of the drafting process, an outline of

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[3]Charles Curran, "Social Ethics: Future Agenda for Theology and the Church," Directions in Catholic Social Ethics, 108-109.

[4]Charles Curran, "An Analysis of the United States Bishops' Pastoral Letter on the Economy," Toward an American Catholic Moral Theology (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), 177. Curran states that mediation avoids the errors of insisting that either the Church has no competency, or that it has complete certitude in judging ethical issues.

[5]Haight and Langan, "Recent Catholic Ethical and Social Teaching," 111. These authors do not specify the use of virtue language in the Letter.

the final text, and a survey of critical reactions.   It
also locates the context of <u>Economic Justice</u> in the de-
velopment of Catholic moral theology and social ethics
since the Vatican Council.   In addition, the chapter ex-
amines the complexity of applying terminology borrowed
from moral philosophy to categories of moral theology.

The Drafting Process

In 1980, the National Conference of Catholic
Bishops[6] chartered a committee to begin the process of
drafting a Pastoral Letter on Capitalism.   The drafting
committee, however, soon saw that a theoretical analysis
of capitalism was not possible.   The committee realized
that, as an economic construct, capitalism embraced mul-
tiple schools of thought and took different concrete
forms in different economies.   Consequently, the commit-
tee began to focus their efforts on a study of the na-
tional and global effects of the United States economy.[7]
The N.C.C.B. accepted this change and charged the commit-
tee to write a letter synthesizing the Catholic tradition

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[6]Henceforth known as the N.C.C.B.

[7]Oliver F. Williams, "The Making of the Pastoral
Letter," <u>Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy:</u>
<u>Working Papers for a Bishops Pastoral</u>, ed. John W. Houck
and Oliver F. Williams (Lanham: University Press of
America, 1985), 1-2.

of social ethics with questions arising out of the
American economic experience.

The drafting committee for Economic Justice included
bishops, theologians, and economic theorists. Over the
succeeding years of consultation and composition, the
committee presented three drafts (November 1984, November
1985 and June 1986, respectively) for discussion and com-
ment by the general public, church membership, and the
National Conference. The entire conference of bishops
approved the final text by a majority vote in November,
1986. The N.C.C.B. entitled the final document, Economic
Justice For All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social
Teaching and the U.S. Economy.[8]

The formative process of the economics pastoral let-
ter follows the broad outlines laid down in the drafting
procedure of the previous Pastoral Letter, The Challenge
of Peace: God's Promise and our Response,[9] which ad-
dresses the issues of war and peace. This process con-
tains four points of reference:[10] 1) the process of con-

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[8]National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Economic
Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social
Teaching and the U.S. Economy (Washington, D.C.: United
States Catholic Conference, 1986). All references in
this chapter will be taken from this edition.

[9]National Conference of Catholic Bishops, The
Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response
(Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference,
1983).

sulting a wide range of experts and representatives of
groups whose interests are affected; 2) the conception of
a dual audience for the document: both inside and outside
the church; 3) the use of a clear distinction between
fundamental moral principles, which are taught by the
church as binding in conscience, and more specific appli-
cations, which, while not so concrete as judgments in
particular cases, involve a prudential assessment of di-
verse political considerations and tradeoffs; and
4) the exercise of the teaching authority of the church
in a way that expresses the moral urgency of the issues
without being preemptory or authoritative.

The drafting process of Economic Justice also sig-
nals a change in the method of Catholic teaching. This
approach reflects what David Hollenbach, one of the mem-
bers of the drafting committee, had labeled earlier
"epistemological humility,"[11] a stance that leads to cau-
tion in specifying concrete moral demands in more recent
church statements. Using this stance, the language of
post-conciliar statements recognizes the development of
moral norms through cultural activity. The process of
consultation used in the Pastoral Letter also reflects

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[10]John Langan, "The Bishops and the Bottom Line,"
Commonweal (November 2-16, 1984): 586-587.

[11]David Hollenbach, "Modern Catholic Teaching
Concerning Justice," The Faith That Does Justice, ed.
John C. Haughey (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), 208,
215-217.

this stance when it draws upon the wisdom and experience of those involved in economics. It also takes into account a distinction between moral principles and applications that recognizes an evolution of thought and makes plural responses possible. This approach sets Economic Justice in marked contrast to the pattern of recent Catholic statements about human sexuality. Despite some significant advances, the present paradigm for these church statements continues to be seen in positions taken without the consultation and review of members of the Catholic community. Official Catholic statements about human sexuality tend to emphasize consistency with traditional doctrines, to the exclusion of development in thought, and do not consequently advocate pluralistic responses.[12]

In addition, by consciously avoiding a frontal attack and emphasizing common ground,[13] Economic Justice's

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[12]Russell B.Connors, "Justice and Sex: Differing Ethical Methodologies," Chicago Studies 27 (August 1988): 181-186. Richard Gula identifies the same dichotomy, distinguishing the order of reason approach in Catholic social ethics and the order of nature approach in Catholic sexual and medical ethics. He observes, "The order of reason approach to understanding natural law does not yield the clear unambiguous positions that the order of nature approach does." See his What are they saying about moral norms? (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 82.

[13]Peter Steinfels, "Understanding the Reactions to the Economics Pastoral," Origins 17 (June 11, 1987): 67. Steinfels makes use of the classic analysis of R.H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (Gloucester:

authors tried "to keep everyone on board dialoguing".[14]

In the view of the authors, Economic Justice was not a

final statement but a contribution to the formation of

conscience and public discussion that invites assent as

well as disagreement. This approach is clear through the

Letter's division between norms derived from Scripture

and Church teaching, and prudential judgments about ap-

plication to the social, political and economic issues of

the day. In many respects, Economic Justice was another

attempt to do what all church statements on economics

have done since Rerum Novarum:[15] to reflect on and offer

guidance to a capitalist economy, in an attempt to be the

moral force envisioned by Adam Smith insuring that an ac-

quisitive economy does not degenerate into an acquisitive

society.[16]

Peter Smith, 1962, 278ff.) to chart the relationship of
religion and economics before and after the Protestant
Reformation.

[14]Larry Rasmussen does not mean this as a
compliment, but sees this tack as the result of the
Catholic Church's long "Constantinian" hangover. See his
"Economic Policy: Creation, Covenant and Community,"
America 152 (May 4, 1985): 365-367.

[15]Rerum Novarum is the encyclical of Pope Leo XIII
in 1891 which is generally recognized as the beginning of
modern Catholic reflection on social and economic ethics.

[16]Williams, "The Making of a Pastoral Letter," 10.

The Outline of the Pastoral Letter

In its final form, the Economic Justice contains five chapters which develop its thought. The Letter begins with a Pastoral Message, which both introduces the intention of the authors and asserts the right and responsibility to offer a commentary on questions of social ethics. The bishops state that their intention is to attempt again to "share our teaching, to raise questions, to challenge one another to live our faith in the world."[17] As contemporary religious leaders, the bishops view themselves as "heirs of the biblical prophets" and "followers of Jesus" who are attempting to avoid the "tragic separation between faith and everyday life." For the bishops economic life is a proper place for moral reflection because it deeply affects all dimensions of human existence. The bishops speak as "pastors, not public officials; moral teachers, not economic technicians." As bishops, they invoke "the dual heritage of Catholic social teaching and traditional American values."

Since the Letter aspires to be a moral reflection on the U.S. economy, it initially disassociates itself from the advocacy of any particular economic theory, and from the task of seeking to reconcile differences between

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[17]Economic Justice, v-vii.

schools of economic thought.[18] In a series of comments made after the publication of Economic Justice, Rembert Weakland stated that there was no occasion in the Pastoral Letter to discuss at length the philosophical questions of the Enlightenment that form the basis of American capitalism. He also stated that the Catholic Church had neither the competence nor duty to propose an new economic "third system" between communism and capitalism. The goal of the Letter was to only allude to the values to be found in such a system, and to suggest certain general directions.[19]

Economic Justice begins with the statement of six basic moral principles found in Scripture and the social teaching of the Catholic Church.[20] In what will be the fundamental outlook of the text, these principles have their focus on the human dignity of the individual. In a manner consonant with Catholic social thought, the Letter states that this dignity is only realized by participation in a communal life. As the central criterion, this understanding of human dignity measures the diverse aspects of human life.[21] In a further elaboration, also

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[18]Economic Justice, ix.

[19]Rembert Weakland, "Foreword," The Deeper Meaning of Economic Life, viii.

[20]Economic Justice, ix-xi.

[21]Economic Justice, no. 28.

consistent with Catholic thought, the appeal to human dignity gives rise to the demands of justice in its commutative, distributive, and social forms.[22] The Letter states that these forms of justice are to be embodied concretely in a series of economic rights as well as in a priority of action for the poor.[23]

After _Economic Justice_ states the need for a new moral vision in America and offers themes from Scripture and the Catholic Tradition to support this diagnosis in the first two chapters, the Letter shifts its focus. Chapters Three and Four make the theoretical concrete when they suggest that the obligations of justice assumed by Catholics must go beyond "appealing generalities." The Letter first analyzes national and international economic issues, and then offers specific applications flowing from the stated Catholic moral principles. In addition, _Economic Justice_ makes proposals for a reformation of the existing economic structures and methods of decision-making.

The Fifth Chapter concludes with a call to conversion and action. The Letter directs this call to all hearers, cleric or lay; whether at home, in business or at leisure. It recognizes that the Catholic Church, as

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[22]_Economic Justice_, nos. 68-72.

[23]_Economic Justice_, nos. 86-92.

an institution, is also an economic actor, and so the structures and policies of the church also fall under equal evaluation and challenge as those of the larger economy.

As a whole, the bishops view their effort as an attempt to join faith and reason into a conversation about economic realities in an American context.[24] In addition to reflecting existing understanding, Economic Justice attempts to break some new ground in its call for a new "American Experiment," which attempts to secure economic rights which guarantee the minimum conditions of human dignity. This "new" experiment reflects the constitutional experiment to secure civil and political rights launched by the founders of the United States.[25]

Reactions to Economic Justice

One way to examine the Pastoral Letter is to situate it among its critics. Charles Strain suggests the objections to Economic Justice encompass two positions: the "Marxist" and "Madisonian" attacks on the letter.[26] The

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[24]See Introduction, note 9.

[25]Douglas Rasmussen and James Sterba, The Catholic Bishops and the Economy: A Debate (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1987), 3.

[26]Charles R. Strain, "Civic Virtue, Solidarity, and Justice in American Culture," Prophetic Visions And

difference between these positions, he states, lies in the description of political solidarity and the application of justice. In essence, this disagreement is between those who think the letter does not go far enough and those who think that it goes too far.

The "Marxist" approach does not advocate a Marxist solution to the questions of justice, but rather concludes that the Pastoral Letter's description of the United States economy is too superficial. In this view, the recommendations of Economic Justice are too limited in the face of destructive social structures and pressing human needs. This position charges that the solidarity with the poor, advocated by the Letter, requires a fundamental redistribution of power, and not simply the goodwill of those who are in positions of power.

One proponent of the Marxist critique is Gregory Baum.[27] A Canadian theologian, Baum views American Catholic theology as "having joined the cultural mainstream in expressing a liberal social philosophy." The present state of Catholic theology in the United States, he concludes, limits the critique of American life to a cultural analysis grounded in the method of

Economic Realities: Protestants, Jews and Catholics Confront The Bishops' Letter On The Economy, ed. Charles R. Strain (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 192-193.

[27]Gregory Baum, Theology and Society (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 201-205.

psychology and psychotherapy.[28] According to Baum, a critique of the culture is insufficient - a complementary structural analysis of the economic, political, and military forces is also needed. In this view, cultural conversion without structural change is fruitless. Baum and the Marxist critique seek the renewal of virtue and the reconstruction of society.[29]

To illustrate his contention, Baum compares Economic Justice with the Pastoral Messages of the Canadian Bishops.[30] His points of comparison are two: the intended audience and the design of the messages. Unlike

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[28]This is a reference to Robert Bellah et al., Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

[29]Baum, Theology and Society, 201. It is not entirely clear what Baum means by "the renewal of virtue." In his earlier works Man Becoming (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), 131ff., and Religion and Alienation (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), 208ff., he speaks of the rejection of morality as the conformity to a set of norms and the personal and social meaning of conversion. With this reference he seems to view virtue within the cultural critique of American society and economic practice. It remains both individual and insufficient, begging the complementary structural critique of institutions and practices.

[30]The Canadian economic pastoral letter, Ethical Reflections on the Economic Crisis (January 1983), and its follow-up statement, Ethical Choices and Political Challenges (December 1983) are built on a series of statements made by the Canadian bishops since 1975. See Gregory Baum and Duncan Cameron, eds. Ethics and Economics: Cananda's Catholic Bishops and the Economic Crisis (Toronto: Lorimar, 1984) for the complete texts of these statements.

the American Pastoral Letter, the Canadian statements, he

states, are addressed to the people of Canada, and not to

those in positions of authority. The design of the

Canadian effort is also different. Following the form of

the papal documents, especially Laborem Exercens, Baum

states the Canadian messages offer a critique of both na-

tional and international capitalism. These communica-

tions look forward to the creation of a new model of

"social solidarity" that has much in common with the

Latin American Bishops' statement of "preferential option

for the poor." While both the American and Canadian

Letters use this term, the sense, according to Baum, is

quite different.[31] Where the American Letter favors con-

tinuity and reform, the Canadian Letter pushes for dis-

continuity and change.[32]

Another participant in the Marxist critique of

Economic Justice is Mary E. Hobgood.[33] She argues that

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[31]For similar critiques about the relationship of cultural and structural reform see Philip Land, "Culture and Structure in Social Change: Some Personal Reflections" Center Focus Issue 75 (November 1986): 5-6. See also Gar Alperovitz, "The Coming Break in Liberal Consciousness," Commonweal (March 3, 1986): 59-65.

[32]Despite the different descriptions he offers of the American Pastoral Letter (reformist) and of the Canadian Pastoral Letter (radical), Baum draws a common conclusion. "Only a minority of Catholics in the U. S. and Canada will be willing to follow the social teaching of their bishops." Baum, "A Canadian Perspective on the U.S. Pastoral," Christianity and Crisis 44 (January 21, 1985): 518.

for the past one hundred years the approach of Catholic

social teaching has, for the most part, been inconsis-

tent. It has employed "a tripartite analysis of capital-

istic economic structures, reflecting organic, orthodox

and radical paradigms of social theory."[34] Her analysis

of the Pastoral Letter indicates that it reflects the or-

thodox paradigm.[35] Hobgood shares Baum's comparison of

the American and Canadian Bishops' Pastoral Letters.[36]

She states that the Catholic Church's long-standing dis-

comfort with capitalism will not be relieved until it of-

fers a radical economic analysis. She sees that both its

social location and economic position hinder such an

analysis within the Catholic Church because church lead-

ership refuses to acknowledge how social location (class,

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[33]Mary E. Hobgood, Catholic Social Teaching and
Economic Theory: Paradigms in Conflict (Philadelphia:
Temple University Press, 1990).

[34]The organic paradigm understands society as
continuous with nature and organized around the values of
benevolence, social cooperation and commitment to the
common good. The orthodox paradigm views market exchange
as the primary economic activity and it separates
economic activity from political, social, and cultural
dynamics. The radical paradigm views human labor, not
market exchange, as the central economic activity and
views the political economy as a single, interlocking
socioeconomic system. Ibid., 1-95.

[35]Although Hobgood acknowledges that Economic
Justice and previous church statements incorporate
organic and radical critiques of economic theory, she
still labels the Pastoral Letter as part of the orthodox
paradigm because of its modified acceptance of
capitalism. Ibid., 233.

[36]Ibid., 198-226.

race and sex privilege) affects moral sensibility, the conception of moral reason and the conclusions of moral reasoning. Moreover, since the Catholic Church evades the implications of its own teaching by relying for support on the very financial system it critiques, it cannot accomplish a thorough analysis of capitalism.[37]

Strain identifies the other critique of Economic Justice as the "Madisonian" attack. Following James Madison's position in The Federalist Paper Number 10, this analysis states that solidarity will always be confined to factions, and civic virtue, while necessary, will always be in short supply. This perspective adopts the position that Economic Justice overextends its bounds in economic analysis, in positions adopted, and in policies recommended. Although economists have adopted both critical perspectives, many more economists adopt this position.

Several Catholic theologians also press their case in Madisonian terms. The Lay Commission on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy, for example, founded and chaired by William E. Simon and Michael Novak, produced the letters Toward the Future[38] and

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[37]Ibid., 254-255.

[38]Lay Commission on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy, Toward the Future: Catholic Social Thought and the U.S. Economy, A Lay Letter (New York: American

<u>Liberty and Justice for All</u>,[39] two statements critical of <u>Economic Justice</u>. Whereas <u>Toward the Future</u> deals only with the first draft of the Pastoral Letter, <u>Liberty and Justice for All</u> focuses on the final draft. Here, while complimentary to the changes that have occurred in subsequent drafts of the Letter, the authors remain critical in several areas. <u>Economic Justice</u>, they say, speaks of foreign aid, state economic activism, "economic rights," reduced defense allocations, "economic solidarity," equality of income and wealth, and economic analysis. The Lay Commission offers several alternative descriptions and prescriptions. For example, viewing with suspicion direct economic activism by the state, they suggest that, instead of increased foreign aid, developing countries need basic institutional and cultural changes friendly to enterprise. In arguing for more positive emphasis upon enterprise and profits and less criticism of markets, they distinguish "economic rights" from "welfare rights." Defense spending, they insist, is not spending on weapons. Because economic solidarity can collide with the economic pluralism needed in the American economy, economic equality of income and wealth is incompatible

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Catholic Committee, 1984). This commission is not related to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

[39]William Simon and Michael Novak, "Liberty and Justice for All," <u>Private Virtue and Public Policy: Catholic Thought and National Life</u>, ed. James Finn, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990).

with the accepted understanding of liberty. They suggest that the economic analysis favored by the Letter simplifies the realities of the American economy. In this view, needed economic structural adjustments and change are taken into account by the economic processes themselves, not by governmental interference. The individual, not the system, needs attention.

The difference between the Marxist and Madisonian critiques of Economic Justice is actually a debate over the question of economic rights. While the Marxist critics advocate an equal recognition of political as well as economic rights, the Madisonian critics assert the primacy of political rights.[40] The debate about rights includes both immediate concrete needs (hunger, housing, employment) and philosophical and theological understandings (human meaning in its individual and social forms).[41]

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[40]The discussion about political and economic rights is usually framed in moral philosophy as the distinction between negative and positive rights. Both are concerned with the needs of moral agency, including well-being. Negative rights are those which require restraint from actions that interfere with person's freedom or autonomy. This view is often associated with Kant and the Social Contract theorists. Positive rights are those exercised when persons cannot fulfill their needs of well being by their own efforts. Positive assistance is usually required and this is most often in the form of institutional or state assistance. See Alan Gewirth, "Rights" Encyclopedia of Ethics, 1103-1109.

[41]For an example of the ongoing discussion between David Hollenbach and Michael Novak on economic rights,

One area common to both the Marxist and Madisonian
critiques of <u>Economic Justice</u> is a call for a renewal of
virtue. Baum sees virtue within the context of the cri-
tique of American society and economic practice. For
him, virtue provides individual support for the necessary
structural critique of institutions and practices.[42] For
Simon and Novak, a hunger for guidance dominates America.
Citing the work of the sociologist Daniel Bell,[43] they
seek this guidance in the pursuit of virtue. Again, with
the focus on the individual, they speak of those virtues
and practices needed to sustain a productive life and to
expand economic relationships.[44]. Virtues guide the

See Darryl M. Trimiew, "The Economic Rights Debate: The
End of One Argument, the Beginning of Another," <u>The
Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics</u> (1991): 85-108.

[42]Baum, <u>Theology and Society</u>, 201. See also <u>Man
Becoming</u> (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), 131ff., and
<u>Religion and Alienation</u> (New York: Paulist Press, 1975),
208ff.

[43]Daniel Bell, <u>The Cultural Contradictions of
Capitalism</u> (New York: Basic Books, 1976). See also his
"Resolving the Contradictions of Modernity and
Modernism," Part I and Part II, <u>Transaction Social
Science and Modern Society</u> 27 (March/April 1990): 43-50,
and 27 (May/June 1990): 66-75. According to Bell,
religion is the bulwark against the demand for
gratification in our culture. It alone can restore the
working of the capitalist system. For a critique of this
view, See Baum, "Religion and Capitalism According to
Bell," <u>The Ecumenist</u> (May-June 1976): 59-62.

[44]This is reminiscent of MacIntyre's description of
Benjamin Franklin's understanding of virtue. "Franklin's
account, like Aristotle's, is teleological; but unlike
Aristotle's, it is utilitarian. According to
Franklin...the virtues are means to an end, but he
envisages the means-ends relationship as external rather

moral and cultural system, whose breakdown, they state, spells doom not only for the society as a whole, but for the economic system that supports and undergirds it. Neither Baum's nor Simon and Novak's descriptions of virtue approximate a contemporary retrieval of virtue theory.

The preceding review of the critiques of Economic Justice is consistent with a division within most contemporary discussions of justice. The definition of justice each position accepts is tied to a particular understanding of political solidarity. The connection between justice and society helps to explain the divergent approaches both to the topic of justice itself[45] and to the continuing debate about the means of its achievement.[46]

This debate also illustrates the complexities of the issues that Economic Justice seeks to address. A preliminary assessment of the Pastoral Letter in light of the Marxist and Madisonian critiques does indicate that major portions of the discussion are about economic policy and the capacity of a religious community to address it. The chairperson of the drafting committee, Rembert

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than internal. The end to which the cultivation of the virtues ministers is happiness, but happiness understood as success, prosperity in Philadelphia and ultimately in heaven." See After Virtue, 173.

[45]See n. 7.

[46]See n. 133.

Weakland, expressed his own disappointment that critics allowed the policy recommendations to overshadow its theology, and neglecting the Letter's distinction between principles and prudential judgments.[47]

Moral Theory in Economic Justice

The range of perspectives offered in the Marxist and Madisonian critiques now invites a closer look at the moral theory used in Economic Justice. Such an examination is important because the use of a particular theoretical approach often conditions the understanding and acceptance of a text. Drawing from the outlines of moral theory presented in Chapters One and Two, this study again applies the four aspects of analysis (character, human nature, practical reason and teleology) to examine the ethical method of Economic Justice.

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[47]Rembert Weakland, "The Church and Economics," Cushwa Lecture Series Notre Dame University (Milwaukee: By the author, February 7, 1985), 33.

<u>Character</u>

Economic Justice delays the discussion of character
until its final chapter, where it receives important
treatment. The Letter views the Christian as one in whom
religious belief and the practice of justice are inti-
mately related, the relationship of faith and justice af-
fecting all dimensions of human interaction, including
family, friendship, work, leisure and citizenship. These
relationships are the locus of the moral imperative to
reflection and action. The Letter encourages Christians
to participate in public policy debates to broaden the
discussion beyond efficiency and expediency. It also
dismisses excuses for lack of participation: the complex-
ity of the issues or the limitations of personal contri-
butions should not prevent involvement. The Letter de-
scribes a Christian as a moral individual with deep per-
sonal and social dimensions who struggles to engage in
just actions.

The activity encouraged by Economic Justice, how-
ever, comes under the aegis of the norms and policies
that constitute the previous four chapters of the Letter.
Weakland states that the Pastoral Letter uses "middle
axioms" for this purpose.[48] The Letter's focus is on the

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[48]Weakland, "The Church And Economics," 35. The
term "middle axiom" has its origin in the attempt of the

application of principles, not on the persons doing the applying. Moreover, the emphasis of these sections of the Letter is on just action without any corresponding reference to the interior dynamics of the participants such as a connection between an individual and his or her activity. The Letter also does not make any reference to any stages or levels of growth and development toward just activity that would normally take place within individuals. The specification of the norms in the policy section of the Letter actually tilts the discussion away from the relationship of individual and activity, thereby transforming the presentation into a policy debate. The resulting evaluation is not of an individual's or a soci-

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Social Gospel to "give relevance and point to the Christian ethic. "Social Gospel" is the name given to the progressive, reformist, and moderate wing of Protestant social theology in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Rooted in liberal theology, theologians like Washington Gladden and Walter Rauschenbusch used scholarly methods to look to the historical Jesus to offer guides for social life in every age. These theorists understood the center of Jesus's preaching as the Kingdom of God, which they understood as a historical possibility to bring social harmony and eliminate injustice. See Robert T. Handy, "Social Gospel," The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics, 593-594. John Oldham states that middle axioms are provisional statements that bridge the gap between "a fellowship with God" and "movements for the establishment of social justice and the advancement of the common good." See his "The Function of the Church in Society," The Church and its Function in Society (Chicago: Willet Clark and Company, 1937), 220. John Bennett states that they are "more concrete than a universal ethical principle and less specific than a program that includes legislation and political strategy." See his Christian Ethics and Social Policy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), 77.

ety's growth in justice, but rather of the achievement of certain policy objectives, which in effect, becomes the definition of justice.

The focus of Economic Justice on policy objectives consequently limits the place and function of narrative. In fact, there is little attempt to recount or explore any economic narratives past or present.[49] The connection between people's lives and the economic narratives they live is limited to the ethical dimensions of financial practice and individual participation in financial gain or loss. The Letter recounts only the demonstrable stories of underemployment, unemployment and poverty. Although important to the individuals involved and to the country as a whole, this narrow focus misses the extent to which economic life involves and affects each and every individual.

Economic Justice does, however, offer an extended presentation of biblical narratives as constitutive of the Christian imagination. The Old Testament stories of Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Moses and Miriam and the

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[49]For an example of the use of economic narratives, See Roger G. Betsworth, Social Ethics: An Examination of American Moral Traditions (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990). In trying to understand the American social, political and economic narratives, Betsworth touches upon the biblical stories, the "Gospel of Success", "the Story of Well-being", "the Mission of America" in the world, and those excluded from these narratives.

prophets present the themes of "creation, covenant and community."[50] The sections on the Christian Scriptures present faith as "a summons to discipleship" and an invitation to follow the pattern of Jesus's life in the church, the community of disciples. The Christian parables of the Good Samaritan, Last Judgment, and Lazarus and Dives focus on true vision and action proper for the disciple of Christ.

These stories, as intrinsic to the Christian imagination, provide a language that defines the origin of the Christian tradition and constitutes the perspective it has on reality.[51] In using these stories, Economic Justice adopts the position that, by themselves they are insufficient for moral reflection, and are in need of assistance.[52] The Pastoral Letter builds the bridge between the scriptures and contemporary existence through the medium of moral principles. The characters and

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[50]Economic Justice, n. 30.

[51]Haight and Langan, "Recent Catholic Social and Ethical Teaching," 109.

[52]For others who share this view See: James Childress, "Scripture and Christian Ethics," Interpretation 34 (1980): 371-380, Richard McCormick, "Moral Reasoning and Storytelling," Notes on Moral Theology: 1981-1984 (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984), 125, Paul Nelson, Narrative and Morality: A Theological Inquiry (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987), 136-137, 147, and J. Wesley Robbins, "Narrative, Morality and Religion," Journal of Religious Ethics 8 (1978): 162-176.

narratives of the biblical stories are explored to elicit specific principles for guidance in moral action.

Human Nature

Economic Justice also limits its description of human nature. The Letter speaks of the dignity of the human person and cites biblical, theological and philosophical reflection through the centuries, but does not explore this understanding.[53] The Pastoral Letter states that humans are created in the "image of God," but that image is not elaborated. While the individuals spoken about in the Letter are recognized as economic actors, little more is said about them.

The contours of the description of human nature of the Pastoral Letter reflect the history of Catholic social thought, which has always shown a certain antipathy towards the "state of nature" argumentation found in the economic systems descended from Hobbes, Locke, and Smith. For the past one hundred years Catholic social thought has sought to counter the notion that human beings are "economic self-interest maximizers"[54] and the idea of the

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[53]Economic Justice, n. 28.

[54]Robert Bellah, "Resurrecting the Common Good: The Economics Pastoral, A Year Later - I," Commonweal (December 18, 1987): 737.

"economic man."[55] As a counterweight Catholic tradition

spoke of the common good as the end or goal of a society.

In this view, humans are primarily social and communi-

tarian. Human meaning and perfection are therefore found

in the mutual interrelationships of individual and soci-

ety.[56] While Economic Justice reflects the tradition of

the common good by attempting to offer a balance between

the polarities of spiritual and moral well-being and ma-

terial well-being,[57] it does not explain this understand-

ing.[58] The mention of the common good serves only as the

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[55]R. Bruce Douglass sees the term "economic man" as the symbol of the thinking that emerged from the 17th and 18th century foundations of economic activity. "Economic man" pursues one end; efficiency and economic activity follows its own immanent logic without external considerations. Douglas, The Deeper Meaning of Economic Life, xi-xii.

[56]For a survey of the common good tradition in Catholic social teaching see Charles Curran, "Official Catholic Social Teaching and the Common Good" Tensions in Moral Theology (Notre Dame: University Of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 119-137.

[57]R. Bruce Douglass, "First Things First: The Letter and the Common Good Tradition" The Deeper Meaning of Economic Life, 28,32. Douglass labels this effort as attempting to do justice to the competing demands of piety and virtue on the one hand, and economic efficiency on the other.

[58]Curran detects a shift away from the common good tradition in post-Vatican II Catholic social teaching. There is a tension between traditional distributive justice and contemporary emphasis on equalitarian justice. He states that distributive justice is the controlling concept of the Pastoral Letter in its understanding of the common good. See his "Official Catholic Social Teaching and the Common Good," 121, 132-133.

basis for the assertion of the norms of basic or minimal justice,[59] handing a considerable role to the civil authorities for its achievement.[60] Individual participation in basic justice, the Letter states, comes through education in the family and the schools.[61]

Practical Reason

Economic Justice is an example of deductive moral reasoning. As Rembert Weakland states:

> Our draft is a classic example of deductive reasoning. We begin with the biblical vision and then the ethical principles of our tradition of Catholic social teaching. That constitutes the first half of the paper. In the second half we proceed to the application of that vision and those principles to several specific areas.[62]

The Pastoral Letter, however, is sophisticated and nuanced in the application of this deductive reasoning.

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[59]Economic Justice, n. 68. The Letter states, "Basic justice demands the establishment of minimal levels of participation in the life of the human community for all persons." n. 77. The Letter explores the three dimensions of basic justice: commutative justice, distributive justice, and social justice.

[60]Douglass, "First Things First: The Letter and the Common Good Tradition," 33.

[61]Economic Justice, n. 85.

[62]Weakland, "The Church And Economics," 32.

It tests the prudential judgments on both the level of principle and policy recommendation:

> We are aware that the movement from principle to policy is complex and difficult and that although moral values are essential in determining public policies, they do not dictate specific solutions. They must interact with empirical data, with historical, social, and political realities, and with competing demands on limited resources.[63]

Furthermore, a different moral authority is given to principle and to policy.[64] The Pastoral Letter calls on Catholics to utilize the principles offered from the Gospel and Catholic Social Teaching in the formation of their moral judgments. The policy recommendations stated in the Letter are examples of the application of principle to economic circumstances. Economic Justice also suggests that these applications are open to discussion, interpretation, and change.

Teleology

Economic Justice develops its teleology in several ways. At the end of the second chapter, the authors speak of the Christian vision of the Kingdom of God, which overshadows dependency upon earthly ideologies and

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[63]Economic Justice, n. 134.

[64]Economic Justice, n. 135.

sustains the efforts of justice in the face of opposition and failure.[65] The balance of the Letter discusses the creation of a more just society reflective of this Christian vision.[66] From the outset, the Pastoral Letter is aware of the difficulties in finding common ground in discussions of economic justice.[67] The authors acknowledge the epistemological changes bequeathed by the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution; but their reading of history differs from Rawls in two significant ways. Economic Justice does not suggest any differentiation between the public citizen and private self, and it remains hopeful about finding common ground setting as its primary goal the development of a common ground in discussions of economic justice.[68]

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[65]Economic Justice, nos. 125-126.

[66]See Patrick O'Connell, "The Bishops, The Critics, And The Kingdom of God," Annual Proceedings of the College Theology Society 33 (1987): 88-116, for a comparison of the different approaches of the American Pastoral Letters and of their Madisonian critics to the understanding of the Kingdom of God.

[67]Economic Justice, n. 22.

[68]Economic Justice, n. 22.

An Evaluation of <u>Economic Justice</u> as an Example

of Catholic Social Ethics

An evaluation of <u>Economic Justice</u> as an example of
Catholic social ethics has two components. First, one
can ask, what is the moral reasoning used in the Pastoral
Letter? This analysis necessitates a reference to the
developments in Catholic moral theology and social ethics
since Vatican II mentioned in the Introduction to this
study. Two points are important here. One must in-
itially keep in mind Broad's caution that the designa-
tions of deontology and teleology rarely appear in pure
form.[69] Norton's description of the difference between
duty ethics and virtue ethics as a **soft** distinction is
also helpful here.[70] In addition, as Cahill notes, the
application of these distinctions from moral philosophy
to moral theology, although helpful, is also compli-
cated.[71]

With these points in mind, it can be said that the
method of moral reasoning employed by Frankena's <u>Ethics</u>
and Rawls's <u>Theory</u> is dissimilar to the approach of

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[69]Broad, <u>Five Types Of Ethical Theory</u>, 207-208.

[70]Norton, "Moral Minimalism and the Development of
Moral Character," <u>Midwest Studies in Philosophy</u>, 180-181.

[71]Cahill, 'Teleology, Utilitarianism, and Christian
Ethics," 604.

Economic Justice in at least two important respects. Economic Justice, reflecting the approach of Catholic moral theology and social ethics, is teleological in scope. Neither Frankena nor Rawls share this perspective in their discussions of justice. Additionally, Economic Justice is conscious of the historical context in which it speaks. As part of a particular religious and moral tradition, the Pastoral Letter attempts to integrate economic history and cultural awareness into its thinking. Frankena and Rawls, following the contours of deontological thought, make efforts to reduce the effects of historical and cultural awareness on their outline of moral reasoning.

These dissimilarities stated, the Pastoral Letter and these theorists share several other areas of moral theory. These similarities become evident in a comparison using the four aspects of moral reasoning (character, human nature, practical reasoning and teleology) selected in this study.

The first correspondence is the understanding of the relationship of principles and virtues. Like Frankena and Rawls, Economic Justice emphasizes moral principles and subordinates the virtues. The Pastoral Letter presents six moral principles from which a number of economic norms are derived for application in the concrete dimensions of economic life. Through the use of

Scripture, Tradition, and natural law categories, the
Pastoral Letter attempts to balance the justification of
the principles and norms between the teleologies of re-
ligious belief and the common good. Although the moral
principles and norms have a teleological justification,
they enjoy a role similar to their function in the moral
reasoning outlined by Frankena and Rawls.[72]

In addition to the presentation of principles and
norms, Economic Justice also makes three references to
the concept of virtue: 1) the work of Thomas Aquinas,
and the other scholastics who sought to clarify "the
meaning of both personal virtue and justice in soci-
ety;"[73] 2) the use of "prudential judgments" in the ap-
plication of moral principles;[74] and, 3) a series of
statements about the virtues of citizenship.[75] Economic
Justice also acknowledges that the economy and economic
arrangements teach virtue or vices.[76]

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[72]Gustafson makes the point that Catholic moral
theology, although teleological in focus, also has a
deontological focus in practice. Principles and rules
are important to preserve and sustain the values of human
realization. See his Protestant and Roman Catholic
Ethics, 49-50. Even with the revision of moral theology
since Vatican II, the discussion has focused on the place
and weight of moral norms or rules in moral reasoning.
See Hoose, Proportionalism, 1-25.

[73]Economic Justice, n. 58.

[74]Economic Justice, n. 134.

[75]Economic Justice, nos. 66, 296.

Since _Economic Justice_ understands the virtues in a role subordinate to principles and norms, its argumentation places less emphasis on the development of character than a virtue approach. In general, the virtues are useful to motivate the recipients of the Letter to carry out its economic norms. Prudential judgments are to support and facilitate the application of principles and law to specific cases. _Economic Justice_ conceives prudence less as a virtue than as a deductive process, and offers the virtues of citizenship only to assist the citizen in following principles. This understanding of the relationship of principles and virtues again parallels Frankena and Rawls.

The second correspondence between _Economic Justice_ and the approach of Frankena and Rawls is the presentation of justice.[77] The Pastoral Letter is similar to the

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[76]_Economic Justice_, n.5.

[77]The comparison between _Economic Justice_ and Rawls's _Theory of Justice_ offered here pertains to ethical method. The bishops in the first draft of the Pastoral Letter note a correspondence between Rawls's principle of the presumption against inequality and Catholic social thought. They also state that both approaches to justice diverge on several other key points. This reference does not appear in succeeding drafts or the final text. See National Conference of Catholic Bishops, "First Draft: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy," _Origins_ 14 (November 15, 1984): n. 23. For a thorough comparison of the approaches to justice of Rawls and the bishops, see Gerald M. Mara, "Poverty and Justice: The Bishops and Contemporary Liberalism," _The Deeper Meaning of Economic Life_, 157-178.

approach of both theorists in a focus on the distributive

form of justice. This perspective concentrates on the

procedural aspects of justice, and places great emphasis

on economic policy and activity. In adopting similar ap-

proaches, both the bishops and these theorists seem to

share two realizations. One is a sense of urgency in the

face of growing social needs. The other is the recogni-

tion that in a pluralistic world distributive justice is

a reasonable starting point for cooperation in the pur-

suit of justice.

The second component in an evaluation of Economic

Justice is its relationship to the developments of

Catholic moral theology and social ethics since the

Second Vatican Council. Pre-conciliar Catholic moral

theology, grounded in a philosophy of natural law, had a

limited focus on Scripture and made appeals to "all men

of good will" based on an application of natural law.[78]

In the face of the complexities of human experience and

new directions in social thought, efforts were made to

adapt the pre-conciliar approach.[79] In addition to the

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[78]James Gustafson, Protestant and Roman Catholic
Ethics: Prospects for Rapproachment (Chicago: University
of Chicago Press, 1978), 61-62. He judges the strengths
as clear philosophical and theological principles with
positive moral substance. "It provided a high degree of
moral certitude about practical moral judgments and
decisions.", 31.

[79]Gustafson noted the underlying factors in this
shift: historical versus classical consciousness,
recognition of the uniqueness of personal and

contributions of Richard McCormick and Charles Curran,

these assumptions are evident in Daniel Maguire's work[80]

on moral reasoning and in Timothy O'Connell's[81] work on

natural law. Moreover, Catholic social ethics also saw

the effects of this shift in a changing anthropological

base[82] and a change in method.[83]

Economic Justice reflects these advances in its

drafting process, and it integrates Scriptural symbols

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interpersonal experience, breakdown in ecclesiastical
authority, new interest in biblical thought and
Protestant theology. Ibid., 55-56.

[80]Daniel Maguire, The Moral Choice (Garden City:
Doubleday, 1978). Maguire includes feelings, experience,
community, modeling, imagination and narrative in his
outline for moral theology.

[81]Timothy J. O'Connell, Principles For A Catholic
Morality (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), 144-154.
O'Connell states that natural law expresses the
conviction that moral values are: real, experiential,
consequential, historical and proportional.

[82]See Charles Curran, "The Changing Anthropological
Bases of Catholic Social Ethics" Thomist 45 (1981): 284-
318. Curran sees this change in both the personal and
social aspects of anthropology.

[83]Charles Curran states that the shift from a
natural law approach in social ethics has two aspects.
The philosophical includes shifts from classical to
historical consciousness, from emphasis on order and
obedience to the freedom and participation of the
personal, and from the legal to a relationality-
responsibility model. See his "Official Catholic Social
and Ethical Teaching," 88-100. The theological shift
included the reuniting of the realm of the supernatural
and the natural in a combined synthesis for ethical
wisdom and knowledge. See his "A Significant
Methodological Change in Catholic Social Ethics,"
Directions in Catholic Social Ethics (Notre Dame:
University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), 43-69.

into the center of its moral argument. The composition
of the Letter marks a clear departure from past practice
of Catholic social teaching in two ways. There is a rec-
ognition that a negative critique of society, as found in
political theology, is an insufficient basis for a Church
role in social issues.[84] Economic Justice attempts to
show the positive implications of its theological in-
sights.[85]

Additionally, Economic Justice adopts an approach to
natural law that embodies theological developments since
Vatican II.[86] The bishops employ a "vision-principles-ac-
tion" approach.[87] Their employment of natural law differs
from the classical approach by not engaging in linear
reasoning or the simple deductive use of moral princi-
ples. In their description of justice, the bishops at-
tempt to integrate the strands of the principles of jus-

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[84]Hollenbach, "A Prophetic Church and the Catholic
Sacramental Imagination," 248.

[85]James M. Gustafson, "Moral Authority of the
Church," The Chicago Theological Seminary Register LXI
(1971): 6, n. 4.

[86]For an earlier example of this revised approach to
natural law in Catholic social ethics, See "The Earth Is
the Lord's: Thoughts on the Economic Order," Above Every
Name: The Lordship of Christ and Social Systems (New
York: Paulist Press, 1980), 211-243.

[87]Gerard Magill, "Public Religious Dialogue: The
Economic Pastoral And The Hermeneutics Of Democracy,"
Theological Studies (54): 682.

tice in an interpretative process of convergence to es-
tablish norms for economic life.[88]

As an example of a modified deontological approach
to Catholic social ethics, Economic Justice both partici-
pates in and advances the theological progress since
Vatican II. With a method that is open and dialogical,
while at the same time remaining faithful to its moral
tradition, it appears difficult to find many faults with
the bishops' efforts. The qualified reception the
Pastoral Letter received, however, suggests several limi-
tations obstructing the communication of its message.
These limitations are traceable to the ethical method
used in the text.

First, the Pastoral Letter does not make a direct
connection with those whom it addresses. The authors
state that their purpose is primarily to provide guidance
for members of their own church.[89] Though beyond the
bishops' intentions, discussions of distributive justice
often concentrate on those who conceive and execute eco-
nomic policies. Consequently, the focus on distributive

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[88]Ibid., 684-685. Magill suggests that by a process
of interpretation based on convergence the bishops
integrate the classical distinctions of justice in a new
way: the common good as the outcome of social justice;
the option for the poor as the outcome of distributive
justice; and human dignity as the outcome of commutative
justice.

[89]Economic Justice, n. 27.

justice in the Letter often leads to a preoccupation with governmental participation in economic life and with the adoption of policies that will produce just consequences. Although Economic Justice attempts to examine the economic realities of the middle class, and especially, the poor, the weight of the analysis is directed toward those who have influence and power in setting political and financial directions for the country. Moreover, many critics agree with Arthur Jones' assessment that most middle class Americans do not recognize themselves as addressed by the Letter at all.[90] Charles Wilber states that the discussion since the publication of the Pastoral Letter has focused on government regulation or group self-regulation because of the Letter's failure to refer to those who participate in the economy.[91]

What circumscribes a more direct connection to those addressed in Economic Justice is the description of justice as a principle. Edward Sunshine states that the Pastoral Letter attempts to constitute a certain kind of community and to express the character of that community

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[90]Arthur Jones, "Diverse Voices Add Their Two Cents to Economic Debate," National Catholic Reporter (March 16, 1990): 16.

[91]Charles Wilber, "Individualism, Interdependence, and the Common Good: Rapprochement between Economic Theory and Catholic Social Thought," Prophetic Visions and Economic Realities, 234.

once constituted.[92] This attempt is thwarted, however,
because principles lead more to considerations of fair-
ness than the creation of just people. Moral principles
focus on commanded acts and only indirectly concern the
characters of those who are engaged in the activity.[93]
An understanding of the common good can easily be equated
with achievement of legislation that promotes equality
instead of an understanding foundational to social activ-
ity.[94] Earlier reflection in Catholic social ethics had
spoken of the correlation of theological, philosophical
and sociological theories with lived human experience of
those involved. There was a recognition that theoretical
formulations were only partial explications of the human
struggle for justice.[95]

Second, there is a question whether the use of moral
principles and prudential judgments can provide the type
of moral guidance that is needed. Moral principles tend
to set up the positive and negative boundaries for moral

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[92]Edward Sunshine, Moral Argument and American
Consensus: An Examination of Statements by U.S. Catholic
Bishops on Three Public Policy Issues, 1973-1986 (Ann
Arbor: University Microfilms Inc, 1989), 292.

[93]Nelson, The Priority of Prudence, 137.

[94]See Drew Christiansen, "On Relative Equality:
Catholic Equalitarianism After Vatican II," Theological
Studies 45 (1984): 651-675.

[95]Edward Schillebeeckx, "Church, Magisterium and
Politics," God and the Future of Man, trans. N.D. Smith
(New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968), 151.

action.[96] Economic Justice speaks of "basic justice",
the minimum requirements for living in an economy.
Marxist and Madisonian commentators dispute whether the
policy recommendations of the Letter are too little or
too much.   Theorists debate the concepts of political
versus economic rights and the duties that flow from
either.   These discussions are important, but such
quandaries leave out a significant part of the moral
life.   Principles do not focus as much on daily living
and prudential judgments of application do not inculcate
the skills for particular individual and social circum-
stances.   Prior reflection on Catholic social ethics
spoke of the "creative imagination" in a way that differs
from its use in Economic Justice.[97]

Third, principles do not fully integrate the relig-
ious dimensions of the Letter with its recommendations.
Benestad's criticism[98] that earlier N.C.C.B. statements
separate evangelism from the pursuit of justice, although
overstated, strikes a chord.   With an emphasis on par-
ticular policy recommendations, the use of Scripture in

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[96]Nelson, The Priority of Prudence, 139.

[97]Karl Rahner, "Theological Reflections On The
Problem of Secularization," Theological Investigations X
(New York: Herder and Herder, 1973), 331.

[98]Benestad, The Pursuit of a Just Social Order, 93-
118.

Economic Justice, at times, seems to undertake a motiva-
tional role.

In addition, although the authors tried to avoid the
clerical - lay dichotomy, they were not entirely success-
ful. George Higgins has noted the irony that present ef-
forts in social justice remain clerical and institutional
while pre-conciliar attempts emphasized the independent
role of the laity. Because the present focus of efforts
in social ethics seems to be on church professionals,
Higgins wonders whether the Pastoral Letter is not, in
effect, another version of a top down ecclesiology?[99]
James Gaffney concurs and suggests that the limited cate-
gories of understanding (work for example) are a result
of the continuing tensions in the Catholic Church over a
restrictive understanding of vocation and the duality of
roles still present in church polity.[100]

The general reception of the Pastoral Letter, the
post publication debates and this review of ethical
method all suggest the possibility of strengthening the
effects of Economic Justice. This study now turns its
attention to an analysis of the ways that an ethics of
virtue could support the goals of the Letter.

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[99]George Higgins, "The Social Mission of the Church
After Vatican II" America July 26, 1986, 25.

[100]James Gaffney, "Our Bishops and Our Economy"
America January 24, 1987, 48.

Some Advantages of Virtue Theory for Catholic Social Ethics

The first advantage that an ethics of virtue offers is a theological description of Catholic social ethics. Since the Vatican Council, contemporary Catholic social ethics has continued to explore the relationship between the love of God and the love of neighbor. This study has had two foci, which are both reflected in Economic Justice. On the one hand, there has been a continuing emphasis on concrete issues so that Church statements would not remain on the level of "appealing generalities".[101] Earlier, Hollenbach had stated that the foundation of justice in mutuality and love is little more than an attitudinal orientation toward the complexities of social, economic and political activity. This orientation, he said, needs to be differentiated into a theory of justice which determines the rights and duties of persons with a degree of specificity.[102] On the other hand, stronger efforts were made to integrate

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[101]Economic Justice, "Pastoral Message", n. 20.

[102]Hollenbach states that the Catholic tradition has been able to avoid falling into an appeal to love that shapes attitudes but has little to say about these complexities by retaining the relationships between commutative, distributive and social justice. See his "Modern Catholic Teaching Concerning Justice", 214, 224.

the Christian narrative (both Scripture and the

theological tradition) into the reflections about social

justice. For example, Economic Justice studies the

Scripture and the Catholic theological tradition "in the

quest for an economic life worthy of divine

revelation."[103] The Letter recognizes that biblical

justice is more comprehensive than philosophical

definitions and that the biblical understanding is the

fundamental perspective for reflections on social and

economic justice.[104] Moreover, the text of the Letter

states that the commandment to love God above all and

one's neighbor as oneself is the basis of Christian

morality.[105] Jesus's words and deeds are offered as a

model of this commandment in action. Such an emphasis

partially answers the earlier critique of Rigali and oth-

ers about the instability of Christian social ethics

since Vatican II.[106]

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[103]Economic Justice, n. 29.

[104]Economic Justice, n. 37.

[105]Economic Justice, n. 66.

[106]Rigali, "Toward A Moral Theology of Social Consciousness", 174-175. In a later review of Economic Justice, Rigali states that the bishops' recovery of the Christian story has led to the discovery of a moral truth (the obligation to evaluate social and economic activity from the viewpoint of the poor, n. 87) previously not found in Catholic moral theology. See his "The Story of Christian Morality," Chicago Studies 27 (August 1988): 180.

Rigali, however, had also pointed out that an under-
standing of the Christian life in its unity must have
charity as its core. Without a biblico-theological analy-
sis of love, he stated, efforts in moral theology and
social ethics would remain unstable.[107] In an effort to
encourage concrete social action, Economic Justice is not
as clear as it could be in stating the relationship of
the love of God with the love of neighbor. It is here
that virtue ethics, relying upon Thomas's description of
charity, can offer some assistance. As Porter observes,
Thomas reminds contemporary proponents of social ethics
that it is impossible to give an adequate account of
Christian neighbor-love without also giving a careful ac-
count of love for God. The love of God gives Christian
neighbor-love its context and point.[108]

The account of charity in the Summa offers two ways
to strengthen the efforts of Economic Justice to interre-
late the love of God with the love of neighbor. In a way
similar to the Pastoral Letter, Thomas states that neigh-
bor-love can be motivated by mercy.[109] Mercy makes one

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[107]Rigali, "Toward A Moral Theology of Social
Consciousness", 175-176.

[108]Jean Porter, "De Ordinis Caritate: Charity,
Friendship, And Justice In Thomas Aquinas' Summa
Theologiae," The Thomist 53 (April 1989): 212.

[109]S.T. 30.4 ad 2.

like God in a similarity of works.[110] This virtue is different from charity, however, because charity's love of neighbor is motivated from union with God.[111] The description of charity as union with God is the first benefit that virtue ethics offers Catholic social ethics.

In the Summa, Thomas speaks of charity as friendship with God.[112] Following Aristotle, Thomas states that this love as friendship has three qualities: benevolence, mutuality, and likeness.[113] In charity, love of neighbor is not for neighbor's goodness, but for the good of the neighbor, for the neighbor to be in God.[114] Charity combines the three facets of moral goodness: loving God,

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[110]Porter states that Thomas "associates with charity all those virtues which express themselves in active concern for the neighbor, such as beneficence (II-II.31), acts of mercy and almsgiving (II-II.32), and fraternal correction (II-II.33)." Recovery of Virtue, 171.

[111]Keenan, Goodness and Rightness, 136.

[112]S.T. I-II, 65.5.

[113]The descriptions "benevolence", "reciprocity" and "union" are from Paul Wadell, Friends of God: Virtues and Gifts in Aquinas (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 3, 31-43. See also his description of these qualities in The Primacy of Love, 64-78. Wadell remarks that the likeness brought about by union with God does not mean that God is identical to an individual, but that an individual shares the form of God. Through friendship with God one becomes like God. See S.T. I-II. 62.1.

[114]Keenan, Goodness and Rightness, 135.

searching for a well-ordered personality and seeking to love one's neighbor for the neighbor's own sake.[115]

The second benefit to social ethics from an understanding of charity is found in the evaluation of moral activity. For Thomas, neighbor-love has two measures. In the first measure, charity works to order the moral virtues to their final end. Charity unites the will to God and makes the will willing to strive for right behavior in the concrete world. This measure permits the understanding of moral goodness as a response to the gift of charity. Charity grows as the individual strives for greater union.[116] This striving recognizes that the friendship of God is a lifelong activity which has as its distinguishing mark the unfinished task of endeavoring to love as God loves.[117] In the second measure, which is the order of reason, prudence, together with the moral virtues, specifies the means of attainment of right behavior.[118]

Virtue ethics, using Thomas's account of charity, strengthens the efforts of Economic Justice to search for "an economic life worthy of divine revelation." In

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[115]Keenan, Goodness and Rightness, 137.

[116]Keenan, "Distinguishing Charity As Goodness And Prudence As Rightness", 420, 422.

[117]Wadell, Friends of God, 3.

[118]Keenan, Goodness and Rightness, 134.

speaking of charity as friendship, this account guards against two extremes in the discussion of Catholic social ethics. The first pole is the limitation of the description of social justice efforts in terms of benevolence.[119] Benevolence, although an essential part, is not the whole of the description. Second, there is the temptation to view the love of neighbor as a secondary moral act.[120] This view fails to see the radical unity between the love of God and the love of neighbor.[121] The understanding of the virtue of charity answers Hollenbach's question by stating that charity needs justice to get to neighbor-love. This understanding also responds to Rigali's caution by stating that one cannot have justice without charity.

In addition, Thomas's account of charity does not abrogate human experience.[122] Charity does not constitute the species of the moral virtues, but directs the end of that species to the last end.[123] In the Thomistic

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[119]See Post, "The Purpose of Neighbor-Love".

[120]Rahner, "The Unity of the Love of Neighbor and Love of God", 247.

[121]Rahner states "There is no love of God that is not, in itself, already a love for neighbor; and love for God only comes to its own identity through its fulfillment in a love for neighbor." The Love of Jesus and the Love of Neighbor, 71.

[122]Porter, The Recovery of Virtue, 171.

[123]Keenan, Goodness and Rightness, 128.

schema, the theological virtues and the moral virtues are inadequate without each other. This interrelationship of striving and attaining captures the tension that unfolds in the biblical narratives between the promise and the fulfillment of the Kingdom.[124]

Character

The selection of principles as the medium of expression limits the connection that <u>Economic Justice</u> has with its audience. The concentration of moral principles on action circumscribes the relationship of the actor and the activity. The emphasis on character in virtue ethics, on the other hand, provides a closer connection, because virtue has as its concern the development of the person as well as his or her proper activity. The relationship of person and activity points to the future as well as the present. As Hauerwas suggests:

> To emphasize the idea of character is to recognize that our actions are also acts of self-determination; in them we not only affirm what we have been but also determine what we will be in the future. By our actions we not only shape a particular situation, we also form ourselves to meet future situations in a particular way.[125]

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[124]<u>Economic Justice</u>, n. 53.

[125]Hauerwas, <u>Vision and Virtue</u>, 49.

Justice as a virtue contributes to the development of character and the pursuit of proper activity because it takes into account both spheres of human action: interior and exterior.

Since narrative is central to the development of character, virtue ethics also offers a better integration of the biblical stories into the lives of the listeners than moral principles can provide. Since the Council, Catholic moral theology and social ethics have striven to incorporate biblical narratives into theological reflection. Economic Justice reflects this process in its use of the biblical themes of creation, covenant and community, and the parables. The continued use of principles reflects, however, the judgment that biblical narratives are insufficient for moral reasoning, and are in need of some form of accompanying rules statement. For example, Bruno Schuller argues that biblical ethics are mostly exhortational.[126]

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[126]He writes: "Exhortation of itself does not convey any new moral insights. But it does have or is intended to have the result that the person addressed allows its moral insights to touch him personally and that he hears them as a challenge to be converted, do penance, change his life, and act as he knows he ought to act. Exhortation is to be evaluated not primarily in terms of its truth-value but in terms of its effect-value, that is, according to whether it is effective or ineffective, whether it succeeds or fails." "The Specific Character of Christian Ethics," Moral Theology, No. 2: The Distinctiveness of Christian Ethics, eds. Charles Curran and Richard McCormick, (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 216.

Others, like James Gaffney, dispute this thesis. He suggests that scriptural stories contain a combination of an intellectual stating and an emotional urging. Without content biblical moral statements would be the equivalent of moral vapor. He states: "Parenesis is an exhortation to some form of behavior, and one can respond to it ethically only if one is convinced about the moral rightness of what one is being exhorted to do."[127]

In a virtue ethics the biblical stories can engage their listeners as two sources of virtue: goodness and rightness. Jesus offered stories as challenges to the imagination of his listeners in light of his message. The disciples were invited to enter into the stories and experience the reversal of expectations and new horizons of apprehension.[128]

The distinction between goodness and rightness in virtue theory presents an opportunity to read in the bib-

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[127]James Gaffney, "Parenesis and Normative Morality," Matters of Faith and Morals (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1987), 145-146.

[128]John R. Donahue, The Gospel in Parable (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 5, 17. Donohue, whose article, "Biblical Perspectives on Justice," is used elsewhere in the Letter, defines a parable as "a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought." He cautions, "[the parables] present not simply a series of ethical paradigms or exhortations, though they are often so interpreted, but a vision of reality which becomes a presupposition to ethics."

lical stories an account of human existence that reflects
moral striving and attainment.[129] William Spohn observes
that stories have a different impact than commands. A
story induces deeper reflection and question about iden-
tity and direction in one's life. A command does not in-
vite reflection, but orders action.[130] In addition to
Scriptural stories, the Christian tradition contains a
collection of biographies and autobiographies which can
also be used to gain moral insight.[131]

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[129]Keenan writes, "We find numerous accounts of
people who love the Lord, that is, who are good, and have
the virtue we call charity, but who fail to attain some
of the virtues and are therefore not rightly
ordered....[There are others] believing in their own
justification, who do not love the Lord and see little
reason to try to become better. Rightly ordered though
bad, they manifest a lack of love that condemns them."
"Virtue Ethics: Making A Case As It Comes Of Age,"
Thought, 121-122.

[130]William Spohn, What are they saying about
scripture and Ethics? (New York: Paulist Press, 1984),
4-5.

[131]See James Wm. McClendon, Biography as Theology:
How Life Stories Can Remake Today's Theology (Nashville:
Abingdon Press, 1976), 37-38 for a statement of the need
for Christianity to find fresh exemplars of the character
of Christ if it is not to be consigned to the realm of
antiquarian lore. It is also interesting to note the
rediscovery of saints in moral philosophy. See Owen
Flanagan, "Prologue: Saints" Varieties of Moral
Personality: Ethics and Psychological Realism (Cambridge:
Harvard University Press, 1991), 1-12 and Edith
Wyschogrod, Saints and Post-Modernism (Chicago:
University of Chicago Press, 1990).

Human Nature

The description of human nature offered in <u>Economic Justice</u> follows the contours of recent Catholic social ethics. Its portrayal of human nature is not as bleak as that of the Lay Pastoral Letter.[132] <u>Economic Justice</u> recognizes the social dimensions of human existence, and calls upon its listeners to engage in a personal struggle to control whatever threatens human dignity and erodes social solidarity.[133] This account, however, lacks an in-depth description of the struggle to grow in these areas and contend with contrary impulses.

Virtue ethics offers a more comprehensive account of human nature. With a description of human appetites and virtues, virtue theory can better describe the path of human activity from where we are to where we are going.[134] It also offers a detailed description of the struggles and failures that accompany human action.[135]

The detail of the social nature account of virtue ethics is illustrated in its treatment of justice.

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[132]O'Connell, "The Bishops, The Critics, And The Kingdom of God," 109-111. O'Connell states that the central theological category for Novak is sin.

[133]<u>Economic Justice</u>, n. 328.

[134]Keenan, "Aquinas After MacIntyre," 14.

[135]Wadell, <u>The Primacy of Love: An Introduction to the Ethics of Thomas Aquinas</u>, 94-95.

Justice is not simply the development of a fairness in the treatment of others. When viewed as an interpersonal virtue, it has both a corrective and expressive dimension. As a corrective, justice opposes the misorientation toward or the overvaluing of various sorts of inferior ends. Its anthropological roots are similar to those of the intrapersonal virtues.[136] In its expressive dimension justice focuses on the excellence of action as a contribution to the common good in the context of a shared life.[137]

The account of human nature in an ethics of virtue also offers a way to reconcile the differing strategies for pursuing justice. Catholic social ethics has always displayed a certain tension in its description of the balance of individual and structural change necessary for the achievement of justice in society.[138] After the Vatican Council the balance seemed to be weighted in favor of the structural critique.[139] More recent church

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[136]O'Connor, "Aristotelian Justice As A Personal Virtue," 419.

[137]O'Connor, "Aristotelian Justice As A Personal Virtue," 424.

[138]Curran, "Social Ethics: Future Agenda for Theology and the Church," 114-115.

[139]Daniel Dorr sees a change in the approach of Paul VI from Popolorum Progressio to Octagesima Adviens. The shift is from an emphasis on economic development to a concentration on the necessity of political change. Dorr, however, also notes that in Evangelii Nuntiandi,

teaching seems to refocus back on the need for individual conversion.[140] As a virtue, justice, in its corrective and expressive aspects, unites both dimensions of conversion: personal and structural.

Virtue ethics takes both dimensions into account in its description of the relationship of practices and institutions. It argues for the development of discriminating patterns of judgment in two areas: working to sustain the practices of justice that are conducive to human flourishing, and criticizing those institutions that undermine those practices.[141]

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the papal response to the Synods of 1971 and 1974, Paul speaks of the need for attitudinal change as well as reform of the structures of society. Daniel Dorr, Option for the Poor, 162, 200.

[140]Francis Schussler-Fiorenza notes a shift in the approach from Paul VI to John Paul II in relating evangelization and social justice. John Paul focuses on the personalistic and Christological dimensions of the social mission of the church. Fiorenza does not see this as a retreat but a shift in emphasis and perspective that reflects the different backgrounds and experience of these two leaders. Francis Schussler Fiorenza, Foundational Theology: Jesus and the Church (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 209-212. For a stronger view of this difference, see James Dallen, "Reconciliatio et Paenitentia: The Postsynodal Apostolic Exhortation," Worship 59 (March 1985): 98-116. Dallen states that social consciousness and personal piety appear only extrinsically related to one another in the thought of John Paul. The pope's rich realization of human interdependence in society yields to the principle of privacy at the doors of the church.

[141]Jones, "Should Christians Affirm Rawls's Justice As Fairness? A Response To Professor Beckley," 265.

Practical Reason

The distinction that <u>Economic Justice</u> draws between moral principles and prudential judgments[142] is found both in historical and contemporary models of Catholic moral theology. Thomas's remark that moral reasoning changes as it leaves the general and engages the specific,[143] and Richard McCormick's comparison of normative ethics and pastoral understanding and compassion[144] are two examples of this distinction. The bishops use this distinction to aid their exercise of leadership, and to stimulate thought and action on the part of church members. They seek to concretize Church teaching so that it does not remain on the level of "appealing generalities". In this, they follow the traditional willingness of Catholic social ethics to specify differentiated and concrete norms of justice.[145]

As advantageous and well intentioned as the distinction between moral judgment and prudential judgment is, it does not seem to fully capture Thomas's insight about the changing nature of moral reasoning. It also presents

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[142]<u>Economic Justice</u>, "Pastoral Message," n. 20.

[143] S.T. I-II. 94, 5.

[144]McCormick, <u>The Critical Calling</u>, 64-65.

[145]Hollenbach, "Modern Catholic Teachings Concerning Justice," 214.

several limitations in a discussion of justice. There
are three problematic areas important for this discus-
sion.[146] First, there is a question whether prudential
judgments are fully moral judgments, or only derivatively
moral. There is a sense that prudential judgments leave
the realm of objective morality. Second, this distinc-
tion tends to enshrine moral principles in a way that is
open to at least one danger, and also frustrates their
continued development. The danger exists in an attempt
to reconfigure an activity to avoid incompatibility with
the moral principle.[147] The frustration occurs because
the distinction does not readily encourage the experience
of prudential judgments feeding back into to the reformu-
lation of the moral principles. Third, this distinction
does not fully overcome the questions about the roles of
clergy and laity in social ethics. The virtue of pru-
dence offers a way to encounter the problematic aspects
of the distinction between moral principles and pruden-

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[146]These areas are suggested by William George in
his critique of McCormick's distinction of normative
ethics and pastoral understanding and compassion. See
his "Moral Statement and Pastoral Adaptation: A
Problematic Distinction in McCormick's Theological
Ethics," Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics
(1992): 135-156.

[147]James Keenan notes this danger in his discussion
of the principle of the double effect. He states that,
although done out of compassion, this procedure
compromises the right reason and internal certitude of
the solution. See his "The Function of the Principle of
the Double Effect," Theological Studies, 309-311.

tial judgments. For virtue ethics, prudence does not as-
sume its primary role in the adaptation of norms to con-
crete circumstances. Prudential judgments are moral
judgments. With the exercise of prudence one does not
leave the realm of objectivity; apart from prudence, one
does not arrive at objective morality.[148] This under-
standing can be seen from Thomas's description of pru-
dence in the Summa.[149]

For Thomas, there is a distinction between the
speculative and the practical uses of reason. He notes
that the ends of practical reason are analogous to the
principles of speculative reason.[150] The measure for
speculative and practical truth is different.[151]
According to this understanding, natural reason, func-
tioning as synderesis, generates the principle that the
human good is to be in accordance with reason.[152]
Synderesis serves an explanatory function and does not
have the function of providing specific information. It
explains how individuals come to reason practically, but

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[148]George, "Moral Statement and Pastoral
Adaptation," 150.

[149]S.T. II-II. 47.

[150]S.T. 56. a.1.

[151]S.T. I-II. 57. a. 6.

[152]Porter, The Recovery of Virtue, 162.

does not explain how to reason.[153] Synderesis determines

the formal end of virtue, the correspondence to the

mean.[154]

In this understanding, the role of the first princi-

ple of practical reasoning known through synderesis is

heuristic. It lacks content until it is co-affirmed in

the act of making a prudent decision, which is for

Thomas, a moral decision.[155] For Thomas it is the role

of prudence to decide the manner and the means which

obtain the mean of reason in moral action.[156] As Porter

states:

> Prudence, which takes into account of the spe-
> cifics of an individual's own character and
> circumstances, determines what, concretely it
> means for this individual to be in accordance
> with reason: prudence does this in and through
> determining the mean of the virtues relative to
> the individual and to the demands of equality
> and the common good.[157]

What this outline suggests is the limitation of the

distinction between moral principles and prudential judg-

ments proposed by Economic Justice. Although the

Pastoral Letter uses the term prudence, it does so in a

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[153]Nelson, The Priority of Prudence, 100.

[154]S.T. II-II. 47. 7. ad 3.

[155]George, "Moral Statement and Pastoral Adaptation," 152-153.

[156]S.T. II-II. 47. a. 5.

[157]Porter, The Recovery of Virtue, 162.

limited fashion. In focusing on the understanding and
application of moral principles, the Letter engages in a
means/ends analysis. This analysis can offer only a gen-
eral idea of what is required in a particular situ-
ation.[158] It emphasizes only a quasi-part of prudence,
understanding.[159] A fuller understanding of prudence
seeks to determine what sort of action would count as an
act of virtue in a particular situation, and only then
would proceed in a calculation of the best means to
achieve that end.[160] In the process, prudence gathers
together the operation of all the parts to take counsel,
evaluate what is discovered, and to command action.[161]

This understanding of prudence provides three other
benefits not available to the distinction between moral
principles and prudential judgments. In answer to the
question about an overemphasis on moral principles and
the danger of configuring actions to fit principles, the
use of prudence offers a distinction between internal and
external certitude.[162] Internal or prudential certitude

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[158]Porter, The Recovery of Virtue, 159.

[159]S.T. II-II. 49.

[160]Porter, The Recovery of Virtue, 159.

[161]S.T. II-II. 47. 8.

[162]Keenan, "The Function Of The Principle Of The
Double Effect," 296, 313. This follows Thomas's
description of virtue as the intrinsic principle of

is based upon the compelling nature of a question's reso-
lution. External certitude does not have a justifying
function, but is heuristic and confirming. A particular
course of action can be recommended and serve as a para-
digm. This understanding of internal or prudential
certitude incorporates the idea of development or
reformulation of norms. For Thomas, every end, except
the final end, can be viewed as a means to a further end.
In addition to deliberating about means towards ends, the
orientation to ends themselves is also subject to the
prudent direction of the reason.[163] The relationship of
justice and the common good illustrates this point.[164]
In the Thomistic perspective the common good is not an
existing reality.[165] The qualities of the social whole
require constant work and creation. History is always
providing surprises, and individuals will constantly be
confronted with new situations of loving one's
neighbor.[166] Justice cannot be conceived as a formula to

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action and law as the extrinsic principle of human
activity. S.T. I-II. 90.

[163]Nelson, "The Priority of Prudence," 84.

[164]See David Hollenbach. "The Common Good
Revisited," Theological Studies 50 (March 1989): 70-94,
for a review of current interest in reviving common good
theory among philosophers, government and business
leaders.

[165]Paulhus, "The Uses and Misuses of the Term,
'Social Justice'," 277-278.

be applied to concrete situations or the response to

legislation. It is a virtue whose mode of action makes

use of the reason.

The understanding of prudence also offers some

clarification for the roles of clergy and laity in the

pursuit of justice. Through its drafting process and

qualification of moral authority, Economic Justice con-

tinues the process of the church becoming more the en-

abler of freedom[167] than the prescriber of conduct and

judge of moral mistakes.[168] Yet, as Higgins describes,

the Pastoral Letter is still a "top-down" document.

After the publication of Economic Justice, Rembert

Weakland suggested the need for a different understanding

of these roles of clergy and laity. He stated that the

emphasis on the specificity in the Pastoral Letter could

be dispensed with if a more nuanced and ongoing paradigm

of the teaching church could be found.[169]

Virtue theory contributes to the development of this

paradigm through its outline of the moral life. In

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[166]Rahner, The Love of Jesus and the Love of
Neighbor, 73.

[167]Alfons Auer, "Christianity's Dilemma: Freedom to
Be Autonomous or Freedom to Obey?," Concilium 110 (New
York: Seabury Press, 1978), 47-55.

[168]James Gustafson, Theology and Christian Ethics
(Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1974), 61.

[169]Rembert Weakland, "The Church in Worldly Affairs:
Tensions Between Clergy and Laity," America (October 18,
1986): 205.

MacIntyre's work, this is the progression from who we are
now to who we are becoming. The church exists in the
tension between the historical and the ideal. The compe-
tency of the church is to keep its members faithful to
the attitude of Christ. The leadership of the church of-
fers light to see where its members are between the his-
torical and ideal, and assistance to overcome the diffi-
culties that inhibit growth.[170] This assistance includes
the specification of helpful and necessary acts and val-
ues. But more importantly, the church leadership assists
in the formation of character through a community that
tells the narratives of the scripture and the saints, and
practices and inculcates the virtues.

Teleology

The final advantage of an ethics of virtue to the
goals of _Economic Justice_ is its eschatological refer-
ence. An eschatological orientation has always had a
strong influence on Catholic social ethics. This influ-
ence has been two-fold: a negative critique on imperfect
political, social, and economic conditions and the recog-
nition that the fullness of the eschatological vision

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[170]James Keenan, "The Issue of Compelling Assent:
Magisterium, Conscience and Oaths," _Irish Theological
Quarterly_ 57 (1991): 221-223.

will never be totally achieved.[171] Economic Justice rec-

ognizes that the efforts of justice unfold "between the

times" and take place under the tension between promise

and fulfillment.[172] The Pastoral Letter places the works

of justice in the larger schema of the Kingdom of God and

exhorts its listeners to not become discouraged.

Virtue ethics offers substance to the encouragement

needed to pursue justice through its overall description

of the moral life and its moral realism. Since the moral

life is not about individual actions or the achievement

of particular goals alone, but the development of a cer-

tain kind of person and community over a lifetime, virtue

ethics suggests a perspective on justice that highlights

this process as well as allowing room for the connection

of individual efforts with the purposes of the Kingdom.

The moral realism of virtue theory not only recognizes

and combats the limitations of human nature, but also

cultivates and develops the human appetites to empower

continued human effort.[173]

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[171]Curran, "Social Ethics: Future Agenda for
Theology and the Church," 111-112.

[172]Economic Justice, no. 53.

[173]Wadell, The Primacy of Love, 79-82.

Conclusion

Economic Justice has made a significant contribution
to the exploration of justice in the Catholic church and
in America. In setting up an extensive process of con-
sultation and dividing their presentation between moral
principles and prudential judgments, the authors of
Economic Justice create an impressive arena for continued
reflection and discussion of the moral implications of
the economy. The process of broad consultation, integral
to the drafting of the text, also concretizes the founda-
tion for future efforts in Catholic social ethics and
perhaps, other forms of church teaching. The time, en-
ergy, and resources expended signal to the larger commu-
nity the convictions of a church that takes seriously a
responsibility for a justice akin to faith and necessary
for daily living. Such an effort is important in the
face of the increasing circumstances of economic want and
deprivation in the United States.

The limited reception accorded to the Pastoral
Letter by the members of the Catholic community does,
however, point to a difficulty in the approach. Although
considerations like the complexity of the topic and the
social context for its presentation are important factors
in this evaluation, the choice of an ethical method ham-
pers the success of the goals of the Letter. Duty

ethics, with a concentration on the application of principles, allows for a limited connection with moral agents. Justice as a principle can remain external to those charged with its execution. Many of the intended recipients of Economic Justice did not disagree with its recommendations, they had difficulty internalizing them. Without the possibility of a stronger engagement with the questions of justice only a limited response is possible.

Even though virtue thought has a positive contribution to make to Catholic social ethics, the examination of an ethics of virtue has another important challenge. Economic Justice speaks to the additional audience of the leadership and the people of the United States. Catholic social ethics is not just "Catholic" - it is also "social". The members of the church are both disciples and citizens. As citizens, Catholic participate in the governance of a pluralistic society. If an ethics of virtue is not to remain sectarian, it must demonstrate an ability to participate in, and offer guidance to, the questions of justice in the concentric circles of life in America. It is to these questions that Chapter Four of this study now turns.

CHAPTER FOUR

PUBLIC THEOLOGY IN AN ETHICS OF VIRTUE

OVERVIEW

Chapter Four presents the second part of the analy-
sis of the suitability of an ethics of virtue for service
in Catholic social ethics. This chapter concentrates on
the second audience that Economic Justice addresses: the
citizens of the United States. The authors of the
Pastoral Letter seek to involve themselves in the larger
civil discourse about economic life in America. The
bishops see the Catholic Church as having a dual role in
the moral life of the country: not only as prophet and
preserver in the Catholic community, but also as partici-
pant in the patterns and processes of civil life.[1] By
assuming this goal for the Pastoral Letter, the bishops
want to make a contribution both to the Catholic commu-
nity and to the development of a public theology for the
United States. They base their participation in this
discussion on the premise of the complementarity of human
understanding and religious belief. The Pastoral Letter
states:

> Human understanding and religious belief are
> complementary, not contradictory....Therefore,
> we now want to propose an ethical framework
> that can guide economic life today in ways that

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[1]The distinctions of "prophet", "preserver" and
"participant" are originally found in James Gustafson,
"The Theologian as Prophet, Preserver and Participant,"
Theology and Christian Ethics, 78-79, 83, 94-95.

are both faithful to the gospel and shaped by human experience and reason.[2]

In entering into the realm of public theology, the authors of Economic Justice are acutely aware of the pluralistic character of American society. The Pastoral Letter recognizes the particularity of the Catholic tradition among other theologies and philosophies, and contends it has a role in public debate.[3] The bishops respond to the pluralistic context with the use of norms and principles as the medium of deliberation and expression of the Letter. Their use of natural law categories, well known in traditional Catholic social ethics, is an appeal to the general public with a claim that these categories are knowable by all rational people. These natural law categories, in their estimation, support the double audience and double intentionality of the Pastoral Letter.

This chapter argues that elements of virtue theory can engage the questions of a public theology in the areas outlined in Economic Justice. Two key questions need to be answered. First, can the use of virtue theory maintain the "Catholic" dimension or identity of the social ethic in public discussion? This question implies the

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[2]Economic Justice, n. 61.

[3]Haight and Langan, "Recent Catholic Social and Ethical Teaching," 114.

dependency of ethics on religious belief as well as an identifiable participation of a church in the delibera- tive process.[4] And secondly, can virtue theory maintain the "social" nature of Christian ethics? In other words, does virtue theory enable members of a pluralistic society to better appreciate and appropriate Christian ethical concerns?[5]

The present religious and social context in America complicates the ability to answer these questions. Ronald Thiemann states that even though there is general agreement among theologians that Christianity has public implications, there is little consensus regarding the proper form for a Christian public theology.[6] Stephen Toulmin speaks of the recovery of practical philosophy in which the demand for _episteme,_ or theoretical grasp is

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[4]See Harlan Beckley, _Passion For Justice: Retrieving The Legacies Of Walter Rauschenbusch, John A. Ryan and Reinhold Niebuhr_ (Louisville: Westminister/John Knox Press, 1992), 347-348, 366-367 for an account of the attempts by these authors to root their ethics in religious belief and maintain an ethics which is ecclesial and not simply religious.

[5]Robin Lovin states that the task of public theology is to account for the ways in which a meaning that originates in one particular community can be understood and incorporated into the ideas of another. See his "Religion and Public Life: Three Relationships," _Religion and American Public Life_, ed. Robin Lovin (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 24.

[6]Ronald Thiemann, _Constructing A Public Theology: The Church In A Pluralistic Culture_ (Louisville: Westminister/John Knox Press, 1991), 19-20.

giving way to _phronesis_, or practical wisdom.[7] The
authors of _Habits of the Heart_ observe there is a gap in
ethical discourse today between the ability to articulate
self-understanding and moral action.[8] Moreover, the
Rawlsian ethical perspective, outlined in Chapter One,
sees little place for a public theology as it reduces the
influence of religion to areas of private and personal
life without a social focus. To some observers Rawls's
perspective predominates in many quarters of public dis-
cussion.[9]

In addition, the contributions of virtue ethicists
to the discussion of public theology further complicates
the situation. Alasdair MacIntyre questions whether it

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[7]Toulmin states that this shift is a return from a
theory-centered conception dominated by a concern for
stability and rigor, to a renewed acceptance of practice,
which requires adaption to the special demands of
particular occasions. See his _Cosmopolis: The Hidden
Agenda of Modernity_ (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 30-
36, 186-192.

[8]Bellah, _Habits of the Heart_, 24-25.

[9]Harlan Beckley suggests a reconciliation is
possible between Rawls's view of religion and Christian
religious belief. See his "A Christian Affirmation of
Rawls's Idea of Justice As Fairness -Part I," _Journal of
Relgious Ethics_ 13 (Fall 1985): 210-242 and "A Christian
Affirmation of Rawls's Idea of Justice As Fairness - Part
II" _Journal of Religious Ethics_ 14 (Fall 1986): 229-246.
For strong rejoiners to this position see Timothy P.
Jackson, "To Bedlam And Part Way Back: John Rawls and
Christian Justice," _Faith and Philosophy_ 8 (October
1991): 423-447 and Jones, "Should Christians Affirm
Rawls's Justice A Fairness?" A Response To Professor
Beckley," 271.

is possible for the ideas of one moral tradition to be translated into another tradition without losing the substantive thinking found in both. From an allied perspective, Stanley Hauerwas adopts a defensive position for religious communities in the face of a larger society that does not share common beliefs or values. Both MacIntyre's and Hauerwas's descriptions of practical rationality and identity raise important questions about the constitution and activity of communities utilizing an ethics of virtue. In turn, these questions relate directly to the establishment of a public theology.

Chapter Four examines the above issues in the following ways. Initially, the chapter reviews the contributions of three American thinkers, Reinhold Niebuhr, H. Richard Niebuhr, and John Courtney Murray, to the development of a public philosophy and theology in the mid-twentieth century. Each of these authors' work serves as a precedent for the efforts of Economic Justice to contribute to a public theology.[10] Next, to complete the description of public theology in the late twentieth

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[10]This chapter relies extensively on the work of the Catholic social ethicist, David Hollenbach. To avoid confusion, the reader should notice that his work encompasses three distinct, but overlapping phases: postconciliar Catholic social ethicist, one of the principal authors of Economic Justice and authoritative commentator on the Pastoral Letter. The contrast in Hollenbach's work, before and after the Pastoral Letter, is a primary issue in this chapter's presentation.

century, the chapter outlines the positions of Rawls, MacIntyre and Hauerwas. Chapter Four ends with a comparison of the ways that Economic Justice and virtue theory each address the requirements of a public theology.

In following this method, Chapter Four will demonstrate that an ethics of virtue has several notable contributions to offer the ongoing reflection of Catholic social ethics. This effort will achieve one of the claims of the dissertation - that virtue theory can meet the demands of a public theology as outlined in Economic Justice. Furthermore, this study claims that if virtue theory had been explicitly included in Economic Justice by its authors, the Pastoral Letter might have received a wider readership and would have explained elements of the Catholic social ethical tradition in terms more accessible to its own members and to the citizens of the United States.

Public Theology: Two Historical Precedents

The contemporary discussion about public theology in the United States is largely indebted to two schools of thought. Reinhold Niebuhr and H. Richard Niebuhr, and John Courtney Murray represent these two approaches. Although their groundings in theological thought are dis-

tinct (Reformed Protestant and Roman Catholic Thomist),
most critics recognize both their contributions and limi-
tations as broadly shaping the present discussion.

In his many works, Reinhold Niebuhr combines two im-
portant currents of American religious thought into a
public theology. The first current consists of public
theologians of different denominations who reflected upon
the religious experience and behavior of their members:
Jonathan Edwards, Horace Bushnell and Walter
Rauschenbusch. The second current combines public fig-
ures who used theological sources to understand the
American experience: Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson,
Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson.[11] Niebuhr's work
keeps both currents of public theology in tension and at
the same time brings them into creative interplay.[12]

Throughout his career Reinhold Niebuhr never wrote a
systematic theology or an ecclesiology, but remained in
Christian ethics. His major interest was the experience
and praxis of American life. For him, this focus relo-
cates the place of theology: his Christian ethics relates
ideas to circumstance. While circumstances change, the
ideas survive, and can be transformed.[13] In his presen-

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[11]Martin Marty, _Religion and Republic: The American
Circumstance_ (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), 96-97.

[12]Ibid., 117.

[13]Ibid., 99, 101.

tations, Niebuhr always keeps in mind his wide and diverse audience. He could "move with utter ease between the language of Zion and that of the regnant secular culture, and made his choices as the occasion suggested."[14] Although many criticized Niebuhr's popular journal articles for leaving the religious presuppositions implicit, his writing contains strong theological foundations.[15]

Niebuhr's public theology evolved into a "Christian Realism" which combined a theological grounding with a recognition of a variety of social contexts.[16] He at-

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[14]Larry Rasmussen, "Reinhold Niebuhr: Public Theologian," Cross Currents (Summer 1988): 201.

[15]Beckley states that, in spite of the group "atheists for Niebuhr," Niebuhr did not think that his standards of justice could be properly applied by those who did not share his beliefs about the demands, judgment, and mercy of God's love. See his Passion For Justice, 347. See Rasmussen, "Reinhold Niebuhr: Public Theologian," 203, for a review of the theological presuppositions of Niebuhr's thought.

[16]Niebuhr writes, "Human society represents an infinite variety of structures and systems which seek to organize their common life in terms of some kind of justice. The possibilities of realizing a higher justice are indeterminate. There is no point in historical social achievement where one may rest with an easy conscience. All structures of justice do indeed presuppose the sinfulness of man, and are all partly systems of restraint which prevent the conflicts of wills and interests from resulting in a consistent anarchy. But they are also mechanisms by which men fulfill their obligation to their fellow men, beyond the possibilities offered in direct and personal relationships. The Kingdom of God and the demands of perfect love are therefore relevant to every political system and impinge upon every social situation in which the self seeks to come to terms with the claims of other lives." Reinhold

tempts to hold in tension the bi-polarities of love and justice, individual and community, freedom and order, and self-transcendence and organic relatedness. To achieve justice, conceived as provisional and dependent on other forces, he looks for a harmony that restrains power and offers an acceptable compromise between freedom and equality.[17] Reinhold Niebuhr's presentation of the disclosive and tranformative power of Christian symbols provided public resources for an understanding of American life.[18]

The second part of the Niebuhrian contribution to public theology comes from Reinhold's brother, H. Richard Niebuhr. In his writing, H. Richard Niebuhr seeks to understand the religious pluralism present in American culture. He feared that the fragmentation of Christianity in the American ethos would result in its trivialization. Such an outcome would have negative effects not only on

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Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, 2 vols (New York: Scribner's, 1964), 192.

[17]P. Travis Kroeker, "Ethics, Economics, and Christian Realism: Religious Social Theories of Reinhold Niebuhr and Gregory Vlastos," The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics (1989): 81. Kroeker cites both Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), 4,24 and Children of Light and Children of Darkness: A Vindication of Democracy and a Critique of Its Traditional Defense (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), 50ff., 114 ff.

[18]David Tracy, "Particular Classics, Public Religion, and the American Tradition," Religion and American Public Life: Interpretations and Explorations, ed. Robin Lovin (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 126.

the church, but on the society as a whole.[19]   In an effort to explore this question, H. Richard Niebuhr attempted an analysis of the changing patterns of religion in the American experience.   He categorized these patterns under the rubric of the "kingdom of God."[20]

Niebuhr's work draws upon The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, the classic work of Ernst Troeltsch.[21]   In two volumes, Troeltsch sets out a review of the complexities and challenges of the active participation of the Christian churches in the larger world, particularly in the realm of social ethics.[22]

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[19]Dennis McCann, New Experiment in Democracy: The Challenges for American Catholicism (Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1987), 91-92.

[20]Niebuhr describes three periods in this pattern of change. "In the early period of American life, when foundations were laid upon which we have all had to build, "kingdom of God" meant "sovereignty of God"; in the creative period of awakening and revival it meant "reign of Christ"; and only in the most recent period had it come to mean "kingdom on earth." H. Richard Niebuhr, The Kingdom of God in America (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), xii.

[21]Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, trans. Olive Wyon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

[22]For the summary of Troeltsch I follow the outlines suggested by Thomas W. Ogletree, "The Public Witness of the Christian Churches: Reflections Based Upon Ernst Troeltsch's Social Teaching of the Christian Churches," The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics (1992): 42-74; Diane Yeager, "The Bishops and the Kingdom," The Deeper Meaning of Economic Life: Crictical Essays on the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter on the Economy, ed. R. Bruce Douglass (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1986), 179-200; and Robert Bellah,

These attending difficulties have been so monumental that, in his opinion, "only twice in the first eighteen hundred years of its existence did the Christian community develop a viable paradigm by means of which some sort of integral connection could be conceived to obtain between religious and social responsibilities."[23] The first connection was the synthesis of supernatural and natural in the method of Thomas Aquinas. The second was the theocracy conceived and ordered by John Calvin.

The dialectic Troeltsch finds in the Christian message of "absolute individualism" and "absolute universalism" could and did have a more important effect upon social institutions and the subsequent development of Christian social thought.[24] These absolutes employ both conservative and radical tendencies, and are reflected in discussions of church and society questions until the present day. They are also the basis of Troeltsch's tripartite typology of religious life into church, sect, and mysticism. Each type has its own attributes and particular form of distortion. The church is an organized and

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"Religion and Power in America Today," Proceedings Catholic Theological Society of America 37 (1982): 15-25.

[23]Yeager, "The Bishops and the Kingdom", 180.

[24]Ogletree cautions that Troeltsch's use of these terms is not in the modern sense. "Individualism" draws people into strong new communities. "Universalism" reflects the solidarity with others in God. See his "The Public Witness of the Christian Churches," 49, n. 12.

stable entity, which is open to conversing with the rest
of culture. Because the church stresses the priority of
the group over the individual, it is prone to authori-
tarianism.[25] The sect gives priority to the individual
over the group, and members separate themselves from the
larger society. As a voluntary association, with less
emphasis on an organizing hierarchy of ideas or status,
the sect, however, is often prone to fragmentation.[26] To
these two designations Troeltsch adds a third, mysticism.
While the roots of mysticism are in the Johannine
scriptures, he maintains that modern mysticism is present
primarily among the socially affluent, and often combines
religious ideas with ideas of social science in a
non-critical fashion.[27]

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[25]Troeltsch writes, "The Church is that type of
organization which is overwhelmingly conservative, which
to a certain extent accepts the secular order, and
dominates the masses; in principle, therefore, it is
universal, i.e., it desires to cover the whole life of
humanity." Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the
Christian Churches, 331-332.

[26]Troeltsch writes, "The Sect, which belongs
essentially to the lower classes, and which therefore
does not need to come to terms with thought in general,
goes back to the pre-church and pre-scientific
standpoint, and has not theology at all; it possesses
only a strict ethic, a living Mythos, and a passionate
hope for the future." Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of
the Christian Churches, 996.

[27]Troeltsch writes, "Mysticism means that the world
of ideas which had hardened into formal worship and
doctrine is transformed into a purely personal and inward
experience; this leads to the formation of groups on a
purely personal basis, with no permanent form, which also

Although H. Richard Niebuhr finds Troeltsch's work
helpful, he finds that his church-sect dichotomy is dif-
ficult to apply in the contemporary setting. To remedy
this, Niebuhr adds "denomination" to Troeltsch's original
three descriptions.[28] Unlike "church," "denomination"
accommodates itself to society but without the church's
intention or ability to dominate. Denominations, he
says, develop out of sects in the first crisis after the
initial fervor of the founding. Crisis demands either
compromising or risking organizational weakness, and in
Niebuhr's mind, flows from the failure of the Christian
churches.[29] Others see compromise as evidence of the
genius of American churches in adapting to their environ-
ment.[30]

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tend to weaken the significance of forms of worship,
doctrine and the historical element." Troeltsch, The
Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, 993-994.

[28]H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of
Denominationalism (New York: Meridian Books, 1929).
Anthony Battaglia, among others, is of the opinion that
the church type of social organization has never really
characterized the experience of religion in the United
States. Strictly speaking this might be so, but for the
purposes of utilization for description of the Catholic
experience, this work will make reference to the "church"
type. See his "'Sect' Or 'Denomination'?: The Place of
Religious Ethics In A Post-Churchy Culture," Journal of
Religious Ethics 16 (Spring 1988): 134.

[29]Meredith B. McGuire, Religion: The Social Context
(California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1987), 109.

[30]See H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of
Denominationalism (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), 17-20
and Andrew Greeley, The Denominational Society: A
Sociological Approach to Religion in America (New York:

Niebuhr questions how and why Christians could participate in the cultural life around them.[31] He labels this question "The Enduring Problem,"[32] since the churches could neither endorse their cultures fully nor reject them altogether.[33] Sharing Troeltsch's concern for connecting the Christian ethos to the life and tasks of society[34], he proposes a five-part typology of the relationship of religion and culture.[35] At either end of a continuum he places the Christ against culture and the Christ of culture models. Each speaks of opposition to, or identification with, the existing ethos. Between these two extremes, he places three models: Christ above culture; Christ and Culture in Paradox; and Christ, The Transformer of Culture.

Catholic theologian John Courtney Murray represents the other point of view for public theology in America.[36]

Scott, Foresman, 1972) for opposing viewpoints on this issue. See The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, 494-501, for Troeltsch's account of the development of compromise in the Protestant ethic.

[31]H. Richard Niebuhr, The Kingdom of God in America (New York: Harper & Row, 1935).

[32]He gives it this title in Christ and Culture (New York: Harper & Row, 1951), 1-44.

[33]Charles Scriven, The Transformation of Culture: Christian Social Ethics After H. Richard Niebuhr (Scottdale: Herald Press), 37.

[34]Ibid., 38.

[35]Niebuhr, Christ and Culture, 129-141.

Writing on the issues of religion and society during the 1950's and 1960's, Murray is the first major American Catholic theologian to gain a hearing from the wider audience of American thinkers, leaders and citizens.[37] Murray recognized a spiritual crisis in America because religion was acceptable only in a private sphere in a culture where the secular outlook prevails. He labored to develop a public consensus and a public philosophy through the explication of reason in the natural law, and drew significantly from the thought of Thomas Aquinas for the foundation of his work. Murray held

> firmly to the idea that government has a moral basis; that the universal moral law is the foundation of society; that the legal order of society - that is, the state - is subject to judgment by a law that is not statistical but inherent in the nature of man; that the eternal reason of God is the ultimate origin of all law.[38]

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[36]See his We Hold These Truths (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1960) and The Problem of Religious Freedom (Westminster, Maryland, 1965).

[37]Marty notes the informal contributions of Isaac Hecker and Orestes Brownson, but suggests that Roman Catholic theology, in its most formal sense, was not free to raise and explore these issues until the middle of the twentieth century. See his Religion and Republic, 95. John Coleman also notes that Jacques Maritain was another twentieth century interpreter of Thomas whose work (The Person and the Common Good) gained a wide reading. See his An American Strategic Theology (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 98.

[38]Coleman, An American Strategic Theology, 98.

In particular, Murray drew from Thomas the conclusion
that reality displays an analogical structure. This un-
derstanding led him to distinguish between the secular
and the sacred, society and the state, and the common
good and public order.[39]

In the 1950's, Murray's work configured the meaning
of American society to be a series of value-laden propo-
sitions: "We hold these truths". In the 1960's, he of-
fered a process of social self-correction in the face of
changing circumstances by constructing a broad field of
conversation that could avoid the factionalizing play of
blind force. He based his approach on a process of human
social reasoning grounded in a public commitment to human
attentiveness, intelligence and judgment.[40] This ap-
proach both respects the autonomy of the public realm and
the dignity of all and revitalizes public discourse and
institutions.[41] In his own words,

> The whole premise of the public argument, if it
> is to be civilized and civilizing, is that the
> consensus is real, that among the people every-
> thing is not in doubt, but that there is a core

[39]Ibid., 98-100.

[40]J. Leon Hooper, The Ethics of Discourse: The
Social Philosophy of John Courtney Murray (Washington,
D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1986), 203.

[41]Stephen J. Pope, review of The Search for an
American Public Theology: The Theology of John Courtney
Murray by Robert W. McElroy, in Horizons 17 (Fall 1990):
360-361.

of agreement, accord, concurrence, acquies-
cence. We hold certain truths; therefore we
can argue about them.[42]

Murray's contribution to public theology is found in
his ability to appeal simultaneously to theological
sources and natural law.[43] Theological sources anchor
religious statements in the identity of the religious
traditions, and motivate believers in maintaining public
moral stances. The natural law argumentation opens the
possibilities of dialogue with others who did not share a
common religious belief.

Recent Catholic Discussion of Public Theology

Many theologians who recognized Murray's genius and
relied upon his explication of natural law also came to
realize the limitations of this approach to public theol-
ogy. In the 1970's many commentators debated the effi-
cacy of Murray's thought for contemporary application in
a public theology.[44] They took note, first, of the ab-
sence of biblical and religious symbols in his thought.

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[42]Murray, We Hold These Truths, 98.

[43]Coleman, An American Strategic Theology, 213.

[44]David Hollenbach moderated and served as editor of
two discussions of Murray's thought in Theological
Studies. See his "Public Theology in America: Some Ques-
tions for Catholicism After John Courtney Murray,"
Theological Studies 37 (1976): 302-303 and David

> The missing element in the public ethos of
> America is the sense of the sacred in history
> and in society and human interaction. It is
> the unique power of the imaginative, the para-
> bolic, and the dramatic to evoke this sense of
> the sacred in human consciousness and to sus-
> tain it in a shared world of public discourse.
> Murray, and with him the entire American
> Catholic social tradition, clearly had a pro-
> found sense of the sacredness within time. But
> this sense has been obscured from public view
> by the almost exclusive reliance on critical
> philosophical reflection drawn from the natural
> law tradition.[45]

Second, these commentators debated Murray's reliance upon

natural law categories. Even though some defended

Murray's approach,[46] they nonetheless concluded that it

needed to be expanded.[47] The question the participants

posed concerned the future course of the contemporary

Hollenbach, "Theology and Philosophy In Public: A
Symposium On John Courtney Murray's Unfinished Agenda,"
Theological Studies 40 (December 1979): 714-715.

[45]Hollenbach, "Public Theology in America," 302-303.

[46]In a more recent defense of Murray's natural law
agumentation Robert McElroy writes: "In our own time,
when both the pluralism and the secularism of American
culture are even more pronounced than in Murray's day, it
would be ill-advised to sacrifice that insight even to
capture the added inspiration which a biblically-centered
public theology might generate." See his The Search for
An American Public Theology (New York: Paulist Press,
1989), 157-158.

[47]See Hooper, The Ethics of Discourse: The Social
Philosophy of John Courtney Murray, 196, 203, 209 for his
suggestion that Murray's rationalism blocked his
recognition of other necessary forms of social
communication and meaning. Hooper states that this
blockage renders Murray's theory insufficient for (but
not irrelevant to) an adequate understanding of the
forces that direct social life.

Catholic approach to church participation in public dis-
cussion. Should the church pursue a public philosophy or
a public theology?[48] David Hollenbach suggested that the
answer lay in the rooting of public philosophy and
theology in a fundamental theology:

> Without such reflection public theology will
> lose contact with the ways God is actively pre-
> sent in the contemporary social world.
> Similarly, without such reflection public phi-
> losophy risks uncritical affirmation of the
> categories of contemporary culture and uncriti-
> cal appropriation of cultural biases which are
> in contradiction with the moral content of the
> Christian faith.[49]

Prior to the discussion of the legacy of Murray for
public theology, Hollenbach had begun to explore the re-
lationship between fundamental theology and social eth-
ics.[50] He stated that an approach which emphasized so-
cial criticism alone was insufficient pragmatically and
theoretically for Catholic social ethics. Following
Rahner and Schillebeeckx, Hollenbach argued that the
theological vision of Christianity could only have public

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[48]J. Bryan Hehir also argues for a continuation of
the approach of public philosophy. He states, "While
remaining sympathetic to the possibilities of a public
theology, I cannot agree that it should be the dominant
mode of policy discourse for the Church." "Theology and
Public Philosophy," 711

[49]Hollenbach, "Theology and Philosophy in Public,"
714-715.

[50]Hollenbach, "A Prophetic Church and the Catholic
Sacramental Imagination," The Faith That Does Justice,
234-263.

influence if the human experience of the struggle for justice was correlated with philosophical and social scientific reflection. This correlation could not be viewed as an analytical relationship of rational deduction of principles. Rather, it is a synthetic art which engages human freedom and affectivity, and involves the creativity of human imagination. In this outline, Hollenbach stated that moral principles represented "a theoretical crystallization of theological reflection" on past experiences of the Christian community. But these principles could not define a unique path for all Christians, nor address the increasing number of new questions of justice facing Christians.[51]

Moreover, Hollenbach suggested that the fundamental symbols and doctrines of the Christian faith shape the moral imagination of Christians.[52] The sacramental ho-

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[51]Hollenbach, "A Prophetic Church and the Catholic Sacramental Imagination," 246-247.

[52]For a more recent effort to demonstrate how public theology can incorporate the Catholic symbols of creation, the Trinity, grace, the incarnation and the communion of saints see Michael Himes and Kenneth Himes, Fullness of Faith: The Public Significance of Theology (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 182. The Himes's description also sees the need to make the central symbols of the Catholic tradition accessible to society. They state that those who do not hold the Catholic tradition must be able to ascertain the elements of a believers' vision of society. See also Joseph Komonchak, "Toward A Public Theology," Commonweal (September 24, 1993): 27-29 for a critical review of Fullness of Faith. Komonchak states that the intersection of the communitarian orientation of Catholic teaching with other

rizon of Catholic theology affirms that there is an anal-
ogy between the inner sacramental life of the church and
the public life of society. A sacramental vision coun-
terbalances the futurist tendencies of eschatological
theology with the belief that both the Church and society
can both be partial realizations in history of the
Kingdom of God.

Hollenbach saw the incorporation of the these themes
from fundamental theology as continuing the legacy of
Catholics engaging in a public theology inherited from
John Courtney Murray. Fundamental theology, for him,
provided a way for past theological critiques of social
and economic practices to be converted into a Christian
social ethics. The participation of Catholics in a so-
cial ethics included not only individuals, but also the
Church as a socially organized body.

Other Contemporary Reflections on Public Philosophy and Public Theology

The efforts of the Niebuhrs and John Courtney
Murray, as well as recent Catholic reflection, to forge a
public theology based on a conversation with the larger
culture have their counterparts in distinctly different
approaches. During the mid-to-latter part of this cen-
tury, the loss of confidence in the viability of the

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other perspectives needs to be argued for, rather than
simply stated.

Enlightenment project to establish a universal standard
of rationality and a universal standard of ethics,
spawned another approach to ethics. In the fields of
public philosophy and public theology, Alasdair MacIntyre
and Stanley Hauerwas advocate the need to progress beyond
the Enlightenment grounding. As energetic as the
Niebuhrs and Murray were to engage in a public conversa-
tion, MacIntyre and Hauerwas are steadfast in their oppo-
sition to the possibility of such a conversation in phi-
losophy or theology.

In his book, <u>Whose Justice? Which Rationality?</u>[53]
MacIntyre's emphasis is on the relationship of practical
rationality to justice. Tracing the thought of
Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas and Hume, MacIntyre states
that a particular view of justice or practical reasoning
derives its coherence only from being embedded within a
particular historical tradition. Justice and practical
reasoning, he concludes, are not therefore "ahistorical,
universal, unchanging and unrelated concepts."[54]
MacIntyre argues rather that liberal theory, the fruit of
the Enlightenment, is not above tradition, but is, in

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[53]Alasdair MacIntyre, <u>Whose Justice? Which
Rationality?</u> (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press,
1986).

[54]Stephen E. Fowl, "Could Horace Talk With the
Hebrews? Translatability and Moral Disagreement in
MacIntyre and Stout," <u>Journal of Religious Ethics</u> 19
(Spring 1991): 3.

fact, another tradition and should be approached as such. He states that liberalism lacks both a theory of the good and precise principles of justice, and has the standard earmarks of a tradition: a starting point, standards of justification, authoritative texts, hierarchy of expression, institution and activity. The possibility of conversation between traditions, particularly those of modernity, is doubtful.[55] MacIntyre cautions that even though conversation between traditions is possible and necessary, the common ground discovered and claimed is often illusory.

Stanley Hauerwas is a critical associate of MacIntyre's who acknowledges his dependence upon MacIntyre's efforts. Hauerwas incorporates MacIntyre's outline of knowledge and reason into his study of theology.[56] Also relying on the work of Hans Frei[57] and

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[55]MacIntyre, Whose Justice? Which Rationality?, 337-384.

[56]Stanley Hauerwas, A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 6.

[57]Frei is often credited with beginning postliberal theology. In his biblical hermeneutics he advocates beginning with the biblical world and letting the biblical narratives define the lives of the reader. The reader is invited into the biblical framework and not vice versa. See his The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974) and The Identity of Jesus Christ (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975). As a general theological approach Frei also advocates a theology which does not make use of philosophical foundations for its reflection and discourse. See also

George Lindbeck,[58] Hauerwas views liberalism as the
foremost challenge to the understanding, description and
activity of the moral life.[59] For Hauerwas, knowledge is
based on testimony and tradition, and is valid only
within a particular community of interpretation.
Universal reason, he argues, is a facade which histori-
cally has been used violently to justify the imposition
of one culture's view of reality upon another's. Within
its idea of universalism are contained the seeds of a
will-to-power. As a result, Hauerwas states that phi-
losophy is not the foundation of theology, but rather,
the foundation of theology is narrative and a hermeneutic
of goals, methods and criteria of a particular tradition.
He, too, views liberalism as one among many moral tradi-

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his Types of Christian Theology (New Haven: Yale
University Press, 1992).

[58]Lindbeck, also a postliberal theologian, adopts a
cultural-linguistic model of religion over the
propositionalist and experiential-expressivist forms.
This understanding of religion focuses on the internal
dynamics of faith, and how belief contours the experience
and reality of persons within Christianity. See his The
Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a
Post-Liberal Age (Philadelphia: Westminister Press,
1984).

[59]Gustafson suggests that the passion of Protestant
theologians since the last century has been to come to
grips with the difficulties created by Hume and Kant for
the enterprise of "natural" knowledge of God. This sets
the stage for the search for another grounding for
ethics, since rational knowledge of the moral order of
Being or God is judged to be impossible or dubious in
light of these philosophers. Hauerwas is part of this
effort. See Gustafson, Protestant and Roman Catholic
Ethics, 62-80.

tions but chooses to use the term "myth" to describe its social origins.[60]

But as MacIntyre frames his analysis in the general intellectual and social currents of post-Enlightenment thinking, Hauerwas makes an effort to shape his work around the particular American experience. Hauerwas, therefore, not only includes the intellectual and the social spheres, but also draws in the political as exemplified by the United States Constitution.[61] James Madison and his associates, he states, build upon the distinct, but not dissimilar, foundations of Hobbes and Locke, who establish the liberal paradigm of the cooperation of individuals with conflicting interests. Contemporary problems, both social and political, in Hauerwas's view, flow from similar liberal Enlightenment presuppositions.

An important part of Hauerwas's analysis is the history of Protestantism in America. Following Max Stackhouse, he suggests that American Protestantism adds to Troeltsch's Catholic and Calvinist models of social philosophy a third, "conciliar denominationalism."[62]

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[60]Hauerwas, A Community of Character, 78.

[61]He writes, "Thus liberalism is a political philosophy committed to the proposition that a social order and corresponding mode of government can be formed on self-interest and consent." Ibid., 78.

[62]Max Stackhouse, Introduction to The Righteousness of the Kingdom of God by Walter Rauschenbusch, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968).

This model begins with The Social Gospel Movement, particularly the work of Walter Rauschenbush's <u>A Theology for the Social Gospel</u>. The social gospel approach of binding Christianity and democracy was continued and expanded, Hauerwas says, in the works of Reinhold Niebuhr[63], and currently in the works of Richard Neuhaus.[64] In the social sciences it appears in <u>Habits of the Heart</u>.[65] Hauerwas summarizes:

> In effect, from Rauschenbusch to the present, Christian social ethics has had as its primary agenda to show why American democracy possesses distinctive religious status. The primary subject of Christian ethics in America has been America.[66]

Hauerwas's own project flows from the political and religious history that he outlines. From the beginning, he rejects the direction that social ethics in the Christian churches has taken in formulating a public theology. He states that the base of Christian efforts to avoid their own marginalization is the mere desire for

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[63]Reinhold Niebuhr, <u>Moral Man, Immoral Society</u> (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960).

[64]Richard Neuhaus, <u>The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America</u> (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984).

[65]Bellah, <u>Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life</u>.

[66]Hauerwas, "A Christian Critique of Christian America," 256. Hauerwas also suggests a similar project in Roman Catholic social ethics, which is exemplified by the work of John Courtney Murray.

power.[67] Hauerwas's point of departure sets both the tone and direction of his efforts. In rejecting the search for power or participation in the public arena, his approach refuses to let the larger secular society determine the agenda for theology or for the church. When translated into a social ethic, this approach, according to Hauerwas, concentrates upon fidelity, and not the improvement of the world. For Hauerwas, the church's politics ought not to be concerned with social change (forms of justice, social theory, economic structures), but with articulating the virtues and characters necessary to the Christian story and supportive of its living.[68] Moreover, Hauerwas insists on the impossibility of the liberal task - translating Christian concepts into the language of secularity.

But, while he accepts MacIntyre's criticisms of liberalism, Hauerwas is also critical of his ally and men-

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[67]He writes, "Part of the reason has to do with the church's attempt to remain a societal actor in societies that we feel are slipping away from our control....We say we want justice, but I suspect even more we want power - power to do good, to be sure, but power just the same." See his "The Politics of Justice: Why Justice Is A Bad Idea For Christians," After Christendom? (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 58-60.

[68]In addition to the Hauerwas's works, I am indebted to the summaries of Hauerwas's theology in Paul Giurlanda, "The Challenge of Post-Liberal Theology," Commonweal (January 30, 1987): 40-42 and Paul Nelson, Narrative and Morality: A Theological Inquiry (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University State Press, 1987), 109-139.

tor. He criticizes the vagueness of MacIntyre's descrip-
tion of the virtues, and suggests that such vagueness
arises from MacIntyre's "attempt to treat them [the vir-
tues] abstracted from any specific narrative account
and/or tradition." MacIntyre, Hauerwas states, refuses

> to explicitly identify the Christian story as
> his own....Without some specification of what
> narrative MacIntyre espouses, his community of-
> fers little hope, and that's because, without a
> sense of who we are and what we ought to be-
> come, it is difficult to determine what we
> ought to do. Until then, After Virtue remains
> trapped in the very tragedy it fears.[69]

Economic Justice As Public Theology

The drafts and final text of Economic Justice indi-
cate that its authors were very cognizant of previous ef-
forts at articulating a public theology, and, in Murray's
case, sought to build upon his foundation. The Pastoral
Letter does not only engage in prophetic critique, but
also seeks the role of participant by influencing the
exercise of powers that are formative in shaping the
economic present and future of America.[70] The focus of
this role is the fulfillment of God's creative and

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[69]Stanley Hauerwas and Paul Wadell, review of After
Virtue by Alasdair MacIntyre, in Thomist 46 (1984): 320,
321.

[70]Gustafson, "The Theologian as Prophet, Preserver
or Participant," 84.

redemptive purposes in the Kingdom of God, which takes place in history and society. For the bishops, the world, as a partial realization of the Kingdom, is the field of human activity and the object of judgment and blessing.[71]

As participants in the public discussion, the bishops propose a "New American Experiment" of thinking about justice and imagining the institutions that secure it in a new way. Following the legacy of Murray, the bishops attempt to renew public philosophy by a retrieval of the values of biblical faith and civic virtue.[72] In doing so, they reflect the tendency in Catholic social ethics to separate Catholic efforts in public theology from two other models of public discourse.[73]

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[71]Gustafson, "The Theologian as Prophet, Preserver or Participant," 89-91.

[72]David Hollenbach, "Justice As Participation: Public Moral Discourse and the U.S. Economy," Community in America: The Challenge of Habits of the Heart, ed. Charles H. Reynolds and Ralph V. Norman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 223.

[73]Economic Justice does not directly address the positions of Rawls, MacIntyre or Hauerwas on the possibility of public theology. I base the critique of these theorists on two evaluations: first, the general direction of Economic Justice which asserts a public religious role which is contrary to the above positions; second, the writings of Hollenbach whose strong criticism of these theorists after the publication of the Pastoral Letter implies that the positions of Rawls, MacIntyre and Hauerwas were examined and rejected during the drafting process.

The first is Rawls's model of the role that religion should undertake in democratic processes.[74] Although there is a convergence between the Catholic social ethics (as exemplified by Murray) and Rawls on the need for democratic institutions, distinct differences appear regarding the nature of religious participation.[75] Catholic social ethics disagrees with Rawls's ultimate conclusion that political justice need not have any underlying metaphysical or epistemological foundations.[76] It also takes issue with Rawls's contention that private conceptions of the human good cannot have a role in the discussion and formulation of political policy.[77]

The second model rejected by Economic Justice is MacIntyre's and Hauerwas's outline of moral communities. In their view, the maintenance and inter-generational teaching of a community's narrative is integral to the development of moral communities. For the process of

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[74]Rawls, "Overlapping Consensus," 6-7.

[75]David Hollenbach, "Religion and Public Life," Theological Studies, 52 (March 1991): 91-95.

[76]Richard Rorty argues for an extreme reading of Rawls's "justice as political not metaphysical." The social reality of liberal democracy, he argues, needs no philosophic justification, either with regard to the self, human nature, the motive of human behavior or the meaning of human life. See his "The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy," Prospects for a Common Morality, 261.

[77]Rawls, "Political Not Metaphysical," 231.

communication and identity to remain integral, however,
there must be "enclosure".[78] "Enclosure" is first epis-
temological since no real communication is possible with
outsiders. Secondly, "enclosure" is theological since
those who are not with the community are, theoretically,
against it.[79] For the Catholic social ethicians,
MacIntyre's and Hauerwas's formulations of common life
remain vague, utopian and sectarian.[80] Catholic social
ethics is unwilling to preserve the identity of
Christianity at the cost of sociological, philosophical
and theological intelligibility, and its participation in

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[78]These communities allow their members to ride out
the storm of moral conflict and preserve the thought and
life of the virtues until such time as the necessary
social ingredients of a moral community revive along with
the capacity for their proper formulation. See
MacIntyre, After Virtue, 245.

[79]Hauerwas speaks of "hospitality" for the stranger.
Strangers are welcomed into the Christian community, but
there is no attempt to dialogue with or appropriate the
stranger's cultural background.

[80]John Langan observes, "It is a shrewd and
significant move on MacIntyre's part that he evokes the
figure of St. Benedict. The Benedictine tradition lacks
the aspiration to a comprehensive political order that is
found in Ambrose, Augustine and Gregory the Great, as
well as the architectonic intellectual drive that is so
prominent in both Augustine and Aquinas. The vagueness
of his vision - which makes sense, given his views about
the dependence of moral views on long-term social change
- also frees him from the burdens and failures of
concrete historical communities, whether these be
religious or secular." See his "Political Hopes and
Political Tasks," Questions of Special Urgency, ed.
Judith Dwyer (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University
Press, 1986), 106.

social life.[81] Hollenbach states:

> I think that the sectarian retreat of MacIntyre
> and Hauerwas is ultimately, if unwittingly, a
> failure of nerve. It fails to appreciate new
> possibilities present today for expressing love
> of one's neighbor by engaging in the long march
> of cultural transformation.[82]

The eschatology and ecclesiology of the Pastoral

Letter also reflect the influence of the Niebuhrs' ef-

forts in public theology, particularly H. Richard

Niebuhr.[83] In adopting a reformist and pragmatic stance,

the Letter corresponds to the model of Christ

transforming culture. There is a call for change and

modification of existing policies and structures and a

caution against the expectation of perfection in this

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[81]James Gustafson, "The Sectarian Temptation:
Reflections On Theology, The Church And The University,"
Catholic Theological Society of America Proceedings Vol.
40 (1985): 90-94.

[82]David Hollenbach, "Justice As Participation,"
Community in America, (Berkeley: University of California
Press, 1988), 224.

[83]Charles Curran, Toward An American Catholic Moral
Theology, 180-183. Karen Lebacqz states that Reinhold
Niebuhr would consider as unrealistic the Catholic
assumption of harmony between individual interests and
the greater or common good. For Niebuhr, sin or conflict
among people is a persistent and enduring aspect of all
human life. See her Six Theories of Justice
(Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing, 1986), 91. It is also
doubtful that the authors of the Letter would adopt
Reinhold Niebuhr's distinction between the capacity for
transcending individuals and the more limited capacities
and resources of collective action. See his Moral Man
and Immoral Society, 74. Furthermore, the bishops offer
more practical guidance for social strategies to overcome
the distortions of self-interest of human beings. See
Kroeker, "Ethics, Economics and Christian Realism," 80.

life. The type of "Christ, the Transformer of Culture" also connects the Letter to Troeltsch's descriptions of religion, adopted and broadened by Niebuhr. <u>Economic Justice</u> offers an ecclesiological model that fits the designation of the churchy, as opposed to sectarian, model. The broad consultation process, the publication of multiple drafts, and the adoption of the distinction between moral principle and prudential judgment clearly illustrate the dimensions of the churchy model.

In the "New American Experiment," <u>Economic Justice</u> also proposes a revised conception of justice. The Pastoral Letter employs "the language of rights and freedoms associated with liberalism" and also the "language of the virtues and the common good associated with communitarianism."[84] Both languages, however, are critically employed. Communitarianism is questioned because of its portrayal of individual and societal good and its understanding of the role of the state.[85] Classic liberal theory is questioned because of its confrontational view of society that traditionally emphasizes difference to the neglect of cohesion, and because it lacks a theory of the good.[86] The authors of the Letter attempt to inte-

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[84]David Hollenbach, "Liberalism, Communitarianism, and the Bishop's Pastoral Letter on the Economy," <u>The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics</u> (1987): 25.

[85]Ibid., 28-33.

grate these two traditions in the text and combine institutional pluralism and social differentiation. As Hollenbach remarks:

> The bishops' letter does not simply split the difference between the two alternative social theories. Rather, it argues that each of them is relevant to a different domain of social existence - the liberal theory of justice and rights to the political order, and the communitarian vision of the common good to the rest of social activity.[87]

The integration of liberal and communitarian thought, in the bishops' pastoral letter, presents an understanding of justice that is more substantial than Rawls's presentation. "Basic justice," which includes participation, is a "thicker" concept than "justice as fairness," which specifies cooperation. The Pastoral Letter attempts to ground justice in social participation and personhood in a way not found in either liberal or communitarian thought.[88]

The language that _Economic Justice_ employs to enter into the public discussion and to illustrate its conception of justice is neither sectarian nor religiously neutral. In employing biblical images and themes, the Pastoral Letter moves beyond Murray's incorporation of the civic republican tradition with natural law

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[86]Ibid., 33-37.

[87]Ibid., 33.

[88]Hollenbach, "Liberalism, Communitarianism and the Bishops' Pastoral Letter," 33-34.

thinking.[89] The bishops use the biblical images to illumine the economic situation and challenge presuppositions and encrusted views of the world. [90] These images are joined together in an imaginative vision that has two dimensions: public and Christian. The appeal to the imagination serves as the conduit of the conversation between religion and society.[91]

Although the authors of Economic Justice go beyond the categories of Murray, they still have confidence in the value of principles and norms to serve their discussions both within the church community and throughout the larger society. In this sense, as Dennis McCann suggests,[92] the Pastoral Letter follows the ethical tradition of American Protestantism, from Walter Rauschenbusch to Reinhold Niebuhr and H. Richard Niebuhr, in fulfilling the relevant standards of public discourse in a pluralistic society. McCann likens the use of principles in the Pastoral Letter to the use of "middle axioms."

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[89]William Spohn, "Virtue and American Culture," Theological Studies 48 (March 1987): 134-135.

[90]William Spohn, "Discerning the Politics of the Imagination," New Theology Review 1 (August 1988): 13.

[91]Magill, "Public Religious Dialogue: The Economic Pastoral And The Hermeneutics of Democracy," 696.

[92]McCann, Experiment in Democracy: The Challenges for American Catholicism 113-115. See also Dennis McCann and Charles Strain Polity and Praxis: A Program For American Practical Theology (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1985), 161-167.

Because of their ability to formulate a community's "generalizable interests", McCann argues that "middle axioms" are a continuing basis for public dialogue in a pluralistic society.[93]

An evaluation of Economic Justice as public theology reveals many of the elements necessary for a public religious discourse. The Pastoral Letter avoids many of the pitfalls of intellectual reflections: prophetic discourse which concentrates on the critical, and policy discourse which emphasizes the technical. It is neither a moralizing document (with the rhetoric of moral indignation) nor an empirical evaluation policy recommendation that eliminates all moral and human value questions.[94] In addition, Economic Justice is able to maintain a religious identity, avoid a sectarian stance and contribute to the larger public discussion.

Can it be said that Economic Justice is, then, successful as public theology? Has the Letter been able to move the public discourse on public affairs from debate

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[93]He writes, "Hence, what results is not simply another theoretical speculation, but a concrete action-guideline that translates the bishops' sense of the tradition and its proposed claims upon its two-fold audience. Formal Church teaching must yield a middle axiom, then, that mediates between relatively abstract 'universal moral principles' and quite specific 'prudential judgments' involved in recommending actual policies." See "New Experiment in Democracy," 114-115.

[94]James Gustafson, "The University as a Community of Moral Discourse," Journal of Religion 53 (1973): 397.

about policy decisions to discussion about ethics and theology?[95] Does the text adequately identify the hidden spiritual dimensions, the religious destiny of public ethics?[96] Is the Letter able to reconcile the idea of personal freedom in liberalism and the idea of community traditions in communitarianism?[97]

In the view of this study, Economic Justice is not entirely successful as an example of public theology. This conclusion is prompted by two considerations. The first becomes apparent in a comparison between the discussion of Catholic social ethics occurring in the mid-1970's and the text of the Pastoral Letter. The earlier discussions among Catholic theologians about Catholic social ethics speak of an analogy between the inner sacramental life of the church and the external life of society. The earlier discussions also spend considerable time analyzing the correlation of freedom and affectivity in the practical intellect with human experience through the use of the imagination. These accounts retain the

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[95]Murray, We Hold These Truths, 15-16.

[96]James Sellers, "Ways of Going Public in American Theology," Word & World IV (Summer 1984): 247. See his account of Jonathan Edwards tripartite ethics in which the public (the general and the natural) is contrasted with the private.

[97]Timothy P. Jackson, "Liberalism and Agape: The Priority of Charity to Democracy and Philosophy," The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics (1993): 70.

use of moral principles, but in a derivative function.[98]
Economic Justice, however, does not have this focus in
its presentation. The Pastoral Letter first concentrates
on generating principles and then focuses their applica-
tion.

The second limitation of _Economic Justice_ in its at-
tempt to formulate a public theology is its concentration
on distributive justice. As Timothy Jackson observes,
"The fair distribution of benefits and burdens arises as
an issue only when individual persons have been produced
who are capable of being significantly benefited and bur-
dened."[99] Jackson argues that a Christian social ethics
needs to focus on the maturation of free and meaningful
human beings as the presupposition of the concern with
distributive matters. These people, he says, are made,
not found.[100] What is missing in the Pastoral Letter is
an elaboration of the moral psychology that underlies
their statements.[101] This limitation results from the
lack of an adequate account of the virtues.[102] This lack

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[98]Hollenbach, "A Prophetic Church and the Catholic
Sacramental Imagination," 244-246.

[99]Jackson, "Liberalism and Agape," 68. In
attempting to draw an analogy, Jackson acknowledges the
limitation of the language of production when applied to
persons.

[100]Jackson, "Liberalism and Agape," 68.

[101]Mara, "Poverty and Justice", 173.

of attention to a description of the moral agent also im-
pedes attempts to more fully integrate the relationship
of the church and the world. David O'Brien has warned
that not until the lay person, conceived as the Christian
and citizen, becomes the center of pastoral attention and
theoretical reflection will the dichotomy of church and
world be overcome.[103]

The limitations of the efforts of Economic Justice
to formulate a public theology again rest with its ethi-
cal approach. These difficulties prompt another look at
the capacities of virtue theory for engaging in religious
and public discussion of political, social and economic
issues. Can virtue theory meet the philosophical and
theological challenges that confront a public theology?
Any answer first requires a review of the positions of
MacIntyre and Hauerwas.

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[102]J. Brian Benestad writes: "Their letter on the
economy also stresses the importance of personal virtue
in any just society. In this reviewer's judgment, the
bishops stress policy over virtue. And so does
Hollenbach. He does endorse the effort to recover "the
primacy of virtue and character for the moral life, but
does not integrate his brief comments on virtue into the
principal themes of his social ethics." See his review
of Justice, Peace, and Human Rights: American Catholic
Social Ethics in a Pluralistic World, by David
Hollenbach, in Theological Studies 50 (December 1989):
816.

[103]O'Brien, Public Catholicism, 251.

Virtue Theory and Public Theology:
A Response to MacIntyre

Hollenbach's charge that the positions of MacIntyre
and Hauerwas are contrary to the attempts of Economic
Justice to engage in a public theology does not result in
a rejection of virtue thought for Catholic social ethics.
But it does require some clear distinctions in the ef-
forts to retrieve the idea of virtue from the classical
tradition, since both MacIntyre and Hauerwas are signifi-
cantly involved in constructing a contemporary ethic re-
flecting this approach. A response to Hollenbach compels
reexamination of virtue thought in light of MacIntyre's
position on translatability between moral traditions, and
Hauerwas's description of moral and religious communi-
ties.

The questions about the ability of virtue ethics to
engage in translation of ideas and values between tradi-
tions forcefully emerged when MacIntyre entered the dis-
cussion. In After Virtue MacIntyre judges the efforts of
the Enlightenment philosophers and their successors to
establish a universal reason to be a failure. The publi-
cation of Whose Justice, Which Rationality? continues his
probe of the limitations of liberal thought begun in
After Virtue. When his research led him to conclude the
improbability of translation between traditions, a shadow

fell not only on him, but on virtue theory in general. Would virtue ethics become a moral system bounded by the limitation of cultural relativism? A further examination of the tradition of virtue suggests otherwise.

A recurring theme in many of the criticisms of MacIntyre's work has been his accuracy and fairness in the depiction of schools of moral thought. Both the advocates of liberal thought[104] and virtue theory equally make this charge. Investigating this question offers a way to evaluate the abilities of an ethics of virtue to meet the test of "translation."

From a virtue perspective, Martha Nussbaum suggests that the limitations of a duty ethic in the public sphere lie in its ability to generate only principles of high generality that are not linked to any tradition and seem to be removed from concrete human experience.[105] She sees in MacIntyre's alternate position, however, a turn toward relativism. This is "the view that the only appropriate criteria of ethical goodness are local ones, internal to the traditions and practices of each local

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[104]Charles Larmore, review of Whose Justice? Which Rationality? by Alasdair MacIntyre, in The Journal of Philosophy LXXXVI (August 1989): 437-442, and Stephen Holmes, "The Permanent Structure of Antiliberal Thought," Liberalism and the Moral Life, ed. Nancy L. Rosenblum (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 227-291.

[105]Martha Nussbaum, "Recoiling From Reason," New York Review of Books (December 7, 1989): 36.

society or group that asks itself questions about the good."[106] As a consequence, the ability to criticize different conceptions of the good is lacking, because MacIntyre offers no trans-cultural understandings or reasons of universal human validity. She finds this position all the more surprising because of MacIntyre's reliance on Aristotle's theory of the virtues. In response, she argues a different reading of Aristotle, which sees him offering a single objective account of the human good. She writes:

> This account is supposed to be objective in the sense that it is justifiable with reference to reasons that do not derive merely from local traditions, but rather from features of humanness that lie beneath all local traditions and are there to be seen whether or not they are in fact recognized in local traditions.[107]

Moreover, Nussbaum suggests that Aristotelian virtue theory is also capable of attending to the historical enlargement of conversations. She charges that the relativist argument is inaccurate in three areas.[108] First, in the area of grounding experiences, there is a certain amount of attunement, recognition and overlap that actually obtains across cultures. Second, cross cultural

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[106]Martha Nussbaum, "Non-Relative Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach," <u>Midwest Studies in Philosophy</u>, 33.

[107]Ibid., 33.

[108]Ibid., 46-47.

conversation and debate are common today and external in-
novations are assessed as possible contributors to flour-
ishing. Third, differences at the level of grounding ex-
periences are being combined with critiques of existing
social arrangements and with new elaborations of human
flourishing.

Critics also judge MacIntyre's understanding of
Thomistic thought inadequate. In an unpublished manu-
script Keenan states that MacIntyre incorrectly appropri-
ates Thomas's teleology.[109] In Keenan's view, MacIntyre
views the teleology described in the Summa as singular.
MacIntyre connects the moral virtues with the last or ul-
timate end.[110] Thomistic thought, according to Keenan,
contains a two-dimensional understanding of the telos. In
addition to his reflection on the last end, Thomas also
speaks of "proximate ends," and in the Thomistic system,
the moral virtues are related to the proximate ends, not
the ultimate end. Thomas describes the proximate end as
the intention which is antecedent to action, and is what
an individual has in mind to do. Intention is also the
immediate explanation for action. The moral species of
an act comes from its proximate end, and all moral action

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[109]See James Keenan, "Aquinas After MacIntyre," TMs,
Weston School of Theology Boston, Massachusetts, 1-30.

[110]Ibid., 4-6.

originates in moral species. The virtue that appoints these ends, according to Thomas, is prudence.

Thomas's view of proximate ends counters MacIntyre's assertion that the origin of human action is in the last end. In other words, MacIntyre confuses prudence with charity.[111] In missing Thomas's emphasis on proximate ends, he fails to discover that virtue which permits and encourages Thomas's moral system to engage in the conversation between traditions. Since Thomas's teleology is two-fold, moral conversations can occur with different traditions using the paradigm of rightness, that is, a conversations dominated by prudence without direct reference to moral goodness. The question of moral identity can be explored according to the telos invoked, proximate or ultimate.[112]

Both Nussbaum's and Keenan's reading of the classical foundations of virtue theory provide a pathway for clearer response to the question of translation than the one MacIntyre provides. Jeffrey Stout shares common ground with Nussbaum and Keenan here. Disagreeing with the bleakness of MacIntyre's moral landscape, he offers a counter portrayal of contemporary moral discussion. The

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[111]Keenan writes, "On these grounds, Aquinas noted that the righteousness effected by prudence is different from the righteousness effected by charity" (ST I-II 56, 1, ad 1; 68, 1, ad 3). See "Aquinas After MacIntyre".

[112]Keenan, Aquinas After MacIntyre, 11.

present climate, he says, is not the result of a downward
slide (as in MacIntyre's understanding), but rather a
logical response to the historical conflict and discord
described in Frankena and Rawls. Stout states that com-
plete agreement on the good may not be possible, but a
"thin conception" could be attained and would provide and
assure both peaceful cooperation and respectful disagree-
ment. He calls for the discovery of a mean between ap-
proval of the status quo and alienation from it, a posi-
tion between MacIntyre and his liberal critics.[113]

Like Nussbaum, Stout sees the reality of experiences
overlapping between traditions and cultures, and there-
fore the possibility of communication and translation.
His approach to these questions makes a distinction be-
tween justification and truth. The first is relative and
the second is not. He argues that individuals can hold
culturally acquired beliefs so long as they have no rea-
son to doubt them and so long as they are not a result of

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[113]Stout writes, "We do not confront a choice
between a society in which political freedom reigns but
the people are lousy and one in which somewhat better
people would emerge if we were only willing to sacrifice
political freedom. We do, however, live in a society
where economic and other forces seem increasingly to
produce people who lack the virtues needed to use this
freedom well - whether in the political arena, in the
workplace, at home, or elsewhere. Terminal wistfulness
doesn't help, but neither does the idea that liberal
freedom is worth the price of bad people. The latter is
as far removed from our actual choices as the former."
Ethics After Babel (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988), 232.

an epistemic fault, such as neglect of evidence.

Justifications can be aimed at limited audiences, while

truth makes possible larger conversations.[114] Stout also

suggests a temporal element in the process. What is not

possible (translation) at one time, may well be possible

at another.[115]

Stout borrows from the Thomistic tradition of

"proximate" ends when he states that it is quite possible

in this time and culture to formulate ends which are

"provisional." This process entails an active under-

standing and use of phronesis or prudence. In his view,

prudence alleviates the dichotomy between individual and

communal purposes, and recognizes the language of rights

and tolerance. Prudence further permits the examination

of social practices in the sense that MacIntyre advo-

cates.[116]

Furthermore, virtues can be described as what David

Tracy calls "classics"[117] and assist in "conversa-

114Jeffrey Stout, "On Having A Morality in Common,"
Prospects for a Common Morality, 215-232.

115Stout, Ethics After Babel, 60-71.

116Stout, Ethics After Babel, 141-146.

117Tracy defines a classic as a text, event, image,
symbol, ritual or person where what can be recognized is
nothing less than the disclosure of a reality that cannot
but be named the truth. This disclosure is a
"recognition" that can surprise, provoke, challenge,
shock and eventually transforms. It is an experience
that upsets conventional opinions and expands the sense

tions"[118] between groups. Like Nussbaum, Tracy sees an example of a classic in Aristotle's use of _phronesis_.[119] Tracy contends that in a world of porous traditions, concentration upon the classics is the only means of public discussion. In this "reading of the classics," the dimensions of the religious and the secular are enlarged. He states:

> Each of us contributes more to the common good when we dare to undertake a journey into our own particularity...than when we attempt to homogenize all differences in favor of some lowest common denominator. Like the ancient Romans who made a desert and called it peace, we are tempted to root out all particularity and call it publicness.[120]

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of the possible. It is a realized experience of that which is essential, that which endures. Classics are present in every culture. Besides enduring, they await ever new appropriations and new interpretations. See his _The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism_ (New York: Crossroad, 1986), 99-153.

[118]Tracy states that real conversation occurs only when the participants allow the question, the subject matter, to assume primacy. It occurs only when our ususal fears about our own self-image die....That fear dies only because we are carried along, and sometimes away, by the subject matter itself into the rare event or happening named "thinking" and "understanding." For understanding happens; it occurs not as the result of personal achievement but in the back-and-forth movement of the conversation itself. See his _Analogical Imagination_, 99-153.

[119]In Tracy's view, prudence is not a search for a _via media_, which often ends up an _aurea mediocritas_. It is not a "middle ground" but "an articulation of the only ground upon which any one of us stand: the ground of real finitude and radical historicity in all hermeneutical understanding. Former meanings can be retrieved in new interpretations." _The Analogical Imagination_, 103-104.

Virtue Theory and Public Theology:
A Response to Hauerwas

MacIntyre's negation of the possibility of meaning-
ful conversation between different moral traditions leads
to the question raised by Stanley Hauerwas: the nature of
the moral community that practices the virtues. Hauerwas
follows MacIntyre in proposing the church as a small com-
munity which allows its members to ride out the storm of
moral conflict. These communities preserve the thought
and life of the virtues until such time as the necessary
social ingredients of a moral community revive, along
with the capacity for their proper formulation.[121] His
fear is that the price of a public conversation is the
cutting and trimming of the gospel to fit the categories
and assumptions of particular philosophical and cultural
positions.[122]

Many in the Protestant theological community,
alarmed by the decline of liberal Protestant
Christianity, share Hauerwas's concern, but not the form
of his response. Thiemann writes: "I am convinced that
religious communities will recover their public voices

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[120]David Tracy, "Defending the Public Character of
Theology," The Christian Century 98 (1981): 353.

[121]MacIntyre, After Virtue, 245.

[122]William C. Placher, Unapologetical Theology: A
Christian Voice in a Pluralistic Conversation
(Lousiville: Westminister/John Knox Press, 1989), 160.

only when they rediscover their own roots, only when they
seek to appropriate and reform their own traditions."[123]
Although these concerns are also shared by Catholics, the
question must be posed differently. For Catholic theol-
ogy, as opposed to the historically prevailing
(Protestant) sense of Christianity in America, truth is
mediated rather than immediate and subjectively experien-
tial. The historical embodiment of this mediation is the
Church, which is more than a voluntary association of be-
lievers.[124] In the Catholic context, Hauerwas's question
becomes two-fold: not only the fear of losing a religious
identity, but also speaking in a way that integrates be-
lief and living. Critics charge that the use of
evangelical language in addressing Catholics, and the use
of republican language in addressing the larger society
in Economic Justice has had the cumulative effect of
reinforcing the division between the church and everyday
life. Evangelical language devalues the everyday and re-
publican language offers no religious meaning to daily
experience.[125] The religious language and symbols util-
ized are confined largely to the church. Besides policy

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[123]Thiemann, Constructing A Public Theology, 40.

[124]Richard Wentz, "The 'Catholic Tradition' of
Christianity and the 'Religion of the Republic',"
Horizons 20 (1993): 83.

[125]O'Brien, Public Catholicism, 251.

proposals and appeals for ethical behavior, there is no
religious description of daily life.[126]

David Tracy's tripartite outline of theology as a
"mutually critical correlation"[127] between the interpre-
tations of the Christian tradition and contemporary expe-
rience can serve to illustrate the capacities of virtue
theory to preserve and expand the "Christian" identity of
public theology. Tracy maintains that every interpreta-
tion of Christianity is, in fact, already a correlation
of the disclosive and transformative truth to human expe-
rience. The correlation model of theology, he states,
not merely allows, but demands, that theology enter into
serious conversation with all others in the public realm.

The relationship of charity, prudence and moral vir-
tues offers a model to engage in this correlation. With
a teleology that is two-dimensional, natural and super-
natural happiness, an ethics of virtue illustrates the
interconnection between theology and human experience.[128]

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[126]O'Brien, Public Catholicism, 250.

[127]David Tracy, "The Role of Theology in Public
Life," Word & World IV (Summer 1984): 235-239. The
correlation that Tracy advocates seems more involved than
sharing common ground or joint activities. For an
example of the latter see William Werpehowski, "Ad Hoc
Apologetics," Journal of Religion 66 (June 1986): 282-
301. It is interesting to note that Hollenbach returns to
the theme of correlation in his "Fundamental Theology and
the Christian Life," Faithful Witness: Foundations of
Theology for Today's Church, ed. Leo J. Donovan and T.
Howland Sanks (New York: Crosssroad, 1989), 178-179.

Rather than placing the concern for moral principles in the forefront as in the Pastoral Letter, the model of virtue theory for public theology fulfills the prerequisites of correlation in several ways. First, charity and the moral virtues, as an analogy for the mystery of God in the church and the world, can meet the demands for a pluralism of interpretations and new interpretations. The relationship between religion and society has varying degrees of complexity.[129] The support that theology offers public life is not restricted to the level of spe-

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[128]Contemporay systematic theology has raised important questions about the use of the terms "natural" and "supernatural." Criticism has focused on the distinction that Thomas made between them, and how this distinction became a separation in later Scholasticism. Although a discussion of this question is beyond the scope of this study, three points are important. First, theologians like George Klubertanz ("The Root of Freedom in St. Thomas's Later Works" Gregorianum 42 (1961): 701), and Klaus Riesenhuber ("The Bases and Meaning of Freedom in Thomas Aquinas" American Catholic Philosophical Association 48 (1974): 101) base their understanding on the recent discovery (1929) of a development in Thomas's thought about the relationship of the will and reason. Second, in making this distinction, moral theologians see the possibility of discussions about justice instead of charity, which Thomas says is always formal. Third, while acknowledging the questions about this distinction and its implications, theologians like Roger Haight see the possibility of incorporating Thomas's thought in contemporary discussions about the love of God and the love of neighbor. See his The Experience and Language of Grace (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 159.

[129]Francis Schussler Fiorenza writes that activity is not understood as religious "by a specific difference, but by a complex intersection of motivation and purpose, context and meaning, religious history and tradition." See his Foundational Theology: Jesus and the Church (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 216-217.

cific policy questions, but includes underlying beliefs about order, freedom, and justice.[130] Second, the scope of virtue theory, with its distinctive emphasis on character, describes human experience in a way not available to moral principles. Third, virtue theory is able to incorporate the insights of societal narratives and the social sciences for use in a mutually critical religious reflection.[131] Fourth, virtue theory assists in radical confrontation in which false theological and societal notions are challenged.[132]

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[130]See Lovin, "Religion and American Public Life: Three Relationships", 9-26. Fiorenza states that the primary function of a public theology is to uncover the latent symbols, values and belief systems that undergird the particular society in which the church exists. This undercovering is both affirmative and critical. Foundational Theology, 227-228.

[131]See Richard McCormick, "Moral Reasoning and Storytelling," Notes on Moral Theology: 1981-1984 (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984), 121 for examples of how secular narratives aided and even corrected religious reflection in the areas of liberty, racism and sexism. See also Owen Flanagan, Varieties of Moral Personality: Ethics and Moral Realism for an example of what moral psychology contributes to moral theory.

[132]Brueggemann states the need for mutual criticism. Without this type of criticism, the biblical narrative can become sectarian and the public narrative can become absolutist and remain oblivious to human suffering. He also states that a grounding in religious narratives enables those who join in the public conversation to be present freely, imaginatively, and critically. See his "The Legitimacy of a Sectarian Hermeneutic: 2 Kings 18-19," Education for Citizenship and Discipleship, ed. Mary C. Boys (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1989), 13.

The Contribution of Virtue Ethics to Public Theology

Thiemann states that most of the debate about public theology has focused on whether theological arguments are available for public examination, and whether theological assertions are intelligible beyond the confines of a particular religious community. He states that the far more important questions are whether theological analyses have any real impact on the public life.[133] If, as this study suggests, virtue theory is able to engage in conversations with different moral traditions and constitute moral communities that are not isolated, but involved in society, it also has to describe the mode of this involvement. One of the purposes of <u>Economic Justice</u> was to enlarge the concept of justice used in economic reflection.[134] An ethics of virtue has to demonstrate its capacity to achieve this purpose. Chapter Four again returns to the four features of analysis to show how an ethics of virtue can contribute to the roles of discipleship and citizenship.

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[133]Thiemann, <u>Constructing A Public Theology</u>, 43.

[134]Jackson observes that the negative reaction to <u>Economic Justice</u> on the part of the business community derives from a different understanding of justice. The biblical standard of justice is different from the view of justice as avoidance of transactional wrong-doing. See his "Liberalism and Agape," 61, n. 29.

Character

The use of the category of character in public the-
ology has three advantages for connecting the Christian
heritage with the efforts of the larger secular society.
These advantages offer grounding for the church's role in
discussion of political, social and economic issues.
First, character offers a focus. Public theology is not
just about ideas or even concrete action.[135] It is, more
importantly, concerned with those who reflect on these
ideas and perform these actions. The development of
moral character connects the ideas and actions with the
individuals who originate these activities. Tracy states
that the correlation of Christianity and contemporary ex-
perience occurs in the histories of the interpreters.
The "quirks and turns, hopes and fears, needs and de-
sires" all enter into the questioning, listening and
quest for the truth.[136] The interpreter and the inter-
pretation are directly related. Virtue theory, with its
concentration on character and moral development, offers

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[135]A focus on the development of moral character
also helps alleviate the criticism of Economic Justice
for its advocacy of governmental activity or statism.

[136]Tracy, "The Role of Theology in Public Life,"
235.

a greater degree of involvement in this process than the use of moral principles.

Second, character suggests a more complex role for public theology. In addition to public discussions and joint activities, the emphasis on the importance of narrative offers wider categories for reflection in the public realm. The use of Christian narratives can assist in the rediscovery of secular narratives.[137] These narratives also expose the connections between religious and secular ideals.[138] Narrative can also be reinterpreted.[139] Thiemann warns that broadside attacks on liberalism can have the unintended but devastating conse-

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[137]See Nelson, Narrative and Morality, 149-150 for his suggestion that there are some liberal narratives that display virtues that exert influence and help shape character. Narratives like Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin, John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath, E.M. Forster's Passage to India, and Alan Paton's Cry Beloved Country display virtues like tolerance and respect for persons. Nelson also suggests that there are many sub-narratives, especially among immigrant and ethic groups, in the larger American narrative.

[138]See Fiorenza, Foundational Theology: Jesus and the Church, 220-221 for his suggestion that a belief in a transcendent God correlates with the emergence of the belief in the inviolability of human personhood.

[139]See Michael Novak, The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (New York: The Free Press, 1992) for an attempt to view capitalism outside the Weberian lens of the singleminded pursuit of the increase in capital. He argues that capitalism contains the "practices" of creativity, co-operative effort, invention, opportunity and social initiative. Social justice can be viewed as in the distinctive virtue of free persons associating themselves together, co-operatively, in a free society.

quences of discouraging Christian participation in political action in the public realm.[140] Public theology can recognize that a "tolerant, pluralistic society is itself a substantive good - not something to be accepted as the result of moral breakdown but worthy of promotion for its own sake."[141]

Third, in seeking correlations that are "similarities-in-difference" in secular life, public theology supports not only itself, but also the development of models of the good life for all citizens.[142] Narrative and character also bring into sharper focus the role of churches in fostering the "habits of the heart" - the virtues necessary for public life.[143] Contemporary American experience is characterized by conflicts between groups defined by racial, national, sexual, political and

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[140]Thiemann, Constructing A Public Theology, 25.

[141]Jackson, "To Bedlam And Part Way Back: John Rawls and Christian Justice," 444.

[142]John Coleman advances three theses about discipleship and citizenship: 1) Christianity has not adequately adumbrated or embodied the moral ideal of the citizen in its social ethics or popular preaching; 2) Christianity has a positive contribution to make to the classic ideal of the active and critical citizen; 3) the ideal of citizenship has a rightful autonomy as a moral goal. "The Christian as Citizen," Commonweal (September 9, 1983): 457-462. A more lengthy exposition of this is found in his "The Two Pedagogies: Discipleship and Citizenship," Education for Citizenship and Discipleship, ed. Mary C. Boys (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1989), 35-75.

[143]Thiemann, Constructing A Public Theology, 43.

religious identities. These differences also include

different economic classes. The ability to overcome the

conflicts may well depend on virtues which are public.[144]

Human Nature

Neither Economic Justice, nor most public theologi-

ans, accept the alternative societal schemes of Nietzsche

or a new St. Benedict that MacIntyre offers in After

Virtue. Most discussions about economic life, however,

spend significant amounts of time debating social legis-

lation. The description of human nature in virtue the-

ory, while not negating the necessity of concrete action,

again offers an important but missing presupposition for

this discussion. The correlation that Tracy proposes is

not only personal, but also communal. In maintaining the

deep social nature of human beings, virtue theory assists

the contribution of churches to public theology in sev-

eral ways. First, reflecting Troeltsch's typology, only

churches and not sects can address the relationship of

the "economic man" of American Capitalism with the col-

lapse of mysticism into the "psychological man" of the

"new consciousness".[145]   Second, the achievement of the

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[144]John D. Barbour, "Religious Ressentiment and
Public Virtues," Journal of Religious Ethics Vol. 11
(Fall 1983): 267-268.

societal goals of legislation establishing entitlements, rights and priorities does not address the problems of loneliness and personal needs. Churches can foster the recognition of the need of personal contact and supportive communities.[146] Third, churches can help these supportive communities recognize the need to reach beyond similarities to have contact with those who are unlike or different from themselves. Churches are a reminder that love of neighbor means that a neighbor is not someone chosen but someone discovered and built up.[147]

Practical Reason

MacIntyre notes that most political and economic debates are almost exclusively between conservative liberals, liberal liberals and radical liberals."[148]

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[145]Robert Bellah writes, "Only the church as a type of Christian social organization can effectively combat the radical individualism and the managerial manipulativeness of modern society. Only the church as a type can resist the cooptation into nothing more than a form of therapy that the privatization and depoliticization of modern religion implies." See his "Religion and Power in America Today," Proceedings, Catholic Theological Society of America 37 (1982): 22-24.

[146]Fiorenza, Foundational Theology, 233.

[147]Jackson, Liberalism and Agape, 68-69.

[148]MacIntyre, Whose Justice, Which Rationality?, 392. Franklin Gamwell identifies this debate as flowing from the development of each group from Kant's second formulation of the moral law. Since Kant's moral law is radically non-teleological, there are no grounds on which

William Sullivan states that the social application of reason in these debates has become instrumental - a means to satisfy individually conceived desires, with politics as a power struggle the logical result.[149] Because a universal foundation is lacking, these debates often slip into a moral relativism.[150]

Virtue theory can contribute to these discussions in the creation of a "community of phronesis."[151] The practice of prudence allows a commitment to open and undistorted communication. Conversations can occur between religious and secular communities of discourse without becoming sectarian or relativistic. Prudential reasoning begins the conversation with proximate, not ultimate, ends as they are articulated within narratives which concern experiences shared by those involved in the dia-

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to decide what state of affairs ought to obtain. See his The Divine Good: Modern Moral Theory and the Necessity of God (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1990), 46-48.

[149]William Sullivan, Reconstructing Public Philosophy (Berkeley: University Of California Press, 1982), 19. The analysis and critique of instrumentalism is a major focus in Sullivan's work.

[150]Richard Bernstein labels these alternatives as the "Cartesian anxiety." He writes, that "either there is some support for our being, a fixed foundation for our knowledge, or we cannot escape the forces of darkness that envelop us with madness, with intellectual and moral chaos." See his Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 18.

[151]Edward J. Dobbin, "Sensus Fidelium Reconsidered," New Theology Review, Vol. 2 No. 3 (August 1989): 58-62.

logue. Prudence does not fear diverse opinions because it recognizes that listening does not mean accordance of equal merit to all spoken thoughts. Prudential reasoning occurs within a tradition and not outside it. Such reasoning is willing to imagine, to understand other viewpoints and to be open to change. As MacIntyre says:

> It follows that the only rational way for the adherents of any tradition to approach intellectually, culturally, and linguistically alien rivals is one that allows for the possibility that in one or more areas the others may be rationally superior to it in respect precisely of that in the alien tradition which it cannot as yet comprehend.[152]

In prudential reasoning compromise is an effective means of arriving at a desired proximate end. Prudence trusts that traditions which embody continuities of conflict can become communities of argument.[153]

A community of phronesis also readily acknowledges bias and limited possession of facts and answers.[154] It is also willing to share its wisdom. Jackson observes that to assist individuals and groups to pursue virtue freely is part of what it means to treat them as neigh-

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[152]MacIntyre, _Whose Justice? Which Rationality?_, 388.

[153]MacIntyre, _After Virtue_, 206.

[154]MacIntyre states that sometimes no formula is available in advance. How the law is to be applied and what justice demands are sometimes unclear. At such times, decisions are made according to right reason. _After Virtue_, 143.

bors. He suggests "the trick is to be rabbinic enough to be transformative without being cruel, ironic enough to admit fallibility without becoming nihilistic or sectarian."[155]

The community of phronesis also displays a more complete understanding of toleration. One danger of public theology is that its conversations can possibly continue the exclusions and marginalizations that occur in the larger society.[156] The understanding of prudence in a virtue ethics can widen the circle of conversation, allowing the fears associated with self-image expressed as arrogance or scrupulosity to disappear.[157] In addition to understanding, prudence possesses docility, which connects the need to listen with the possibility of changing one's heart and mind. A community's willingness to listen to the "many" and, to find its unity in its diversity, determines a moral community.[158]

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[155]Jackson, "To Bedlam And Part Way Back: John Rawls and Christian Justice," 444.

[156]W.D. Lindsey, "Public Theology As Civil Discourse: What Are Wee Talking About?," Horizons 19 (1992): 64. Lindsey criticizes McCann, and implicitly John Courtney Murray, for a minimal attention to marginalized groups in society.

[157]Tracy, Analogical Imagination, 101.

[158]George, "Moral Statement and Pastoral Adaptation," 154.

Teleology

A teleological foundation for ethics is equally problematic for liberal as well as post-liberal theory. For Rawls and other liberal theorists, the concept of a single telos is an impossibility in a pluralistic age. For Hauerwas and other post-liberal theologians, a teleology is the focus of identity, and thus screens or limits membership and joint action. The debate in Catholic social ethics over public philosophy and public theology reflects a recognition of the complexities of speaking about teleological foundations for ethics.[159]

The understanding of teleology in virtue ethics offers a way to avoid either of the extremes of liberal or post-liberal theory. Virtue theory respects the Augustinian reservation that no concrete form of human activity can constitute the full human good or the common good. It also offers the Thomistic perspective that the foregoing limitations are not a barrier, but an invitation, to participation.[160] Since an ethics of virtue begins conversations on the level of proximate ends, the

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[159]As Komonchak notes, Murray himself was "acutely aware of the danger of Balkanization of the public arena that can follow from appeals to distinctly religious warrants and of the need to achieve a substantial social consensus." See his "Toward a Public Theology," 29.

[160]David Hollenbach, "The Common Good Revisited," Theological Studies 50 (1989): 93-94.

possibility exists for joint efforts on the part of dis-

ciples and citizens which are neither automatically ob-

structed or reduced to insignificant gestures.[161] The

flexibility also exists for the development of a hierar-

chy of different proximate ends for difference groups.

Virtue theory also offers common proximate goals for

other disciplines.[162]

Conclusion

As this chapter shows, the difficulties encountered

in formulating a public theology are numerous. Among

them are the crisis of cognitive claims,[163] a history of

a dichotomy between religion's rhetorical importance and

political impotence,[164] and differing understandings of

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[161]This is the fear expressed by Stephen Fowl in his attempt to incorporate MacIntyre into the contemporary moral discussion. See his "Can Horace Talk With The Hebrews? Translatability and Moral Disagreement in MacIntyre and Stout," 10-11.

[162]Both philosophers and sociologists have spoke of the need of an integrating vision to offer a path between individualism and statism in political life. For a survey, see Richard Mouw and Sander Griffioen, Pluralisms and Horizons: An Essay in Christian Public Philosophy (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993). See also Richard Bernstein, The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), William Sullivan, Restructuring Public Philosophy and Robert Bellah et al., Habits of the Heart.

[163]Tracy, The Analogical Imagination, 78.

justice. In drawing upon previous efforts, and distin-
guishing its efforts from present formulations, Economic
Justice makes a solid contribution to public theology.
The Pastoral Letter takes serious note of the economic
suffering in the United States and holds out for solu-
tions that reflect religious participation in the public
decision-making process. In its plea for a common moral
vision[165] and a partnership for the public good,[166]
Economic Justice proposes a shift from competition to co-
operation[167].

Chapter Four suggests, however, that because of its
ethical method, Economic Justice is only partially suc-
cessful in this attempt. Its use of moral principles
does not offer the degree of intersection of religious
and social consciousness that a theory of the virtues
can. By themselves, principles are limited in their de-
scription of moral practices. They soon become preoccu-
pied with activity and often become reduced to discus-
sions about strategies for implementation. The minimal
description offered character in the Pastoral Letter does

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[164]Thiemann, Constructing A Public Theology, 33.

[165]Economic Justice, nos. 22-24.

[166]Economic Justice, nos. 295-325.

[167]Drew Christiansen, "The Common Good and the
Politics of Self-Interest: A Catholic Contribution to the
Practice of Citizenship," Beyond Individualism: Toward A
Retrieval Of Moral Discourse In America (Notre Dame:
University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 60.

not meet all the needs of a public theology in a plural-
istic society. As Thiemann observes, what is needed in
the discussions of public theology are individuals who
combine a prophetic vision with careful analysis.[168]

The focus of virtue theory on character offers an
alternative approach to public theology that meets this
need. By focusing on the development of moral character
through the cultivation of the virtues, an ethics of vir-
tue provides a wider understanding of "just persons" and
"just activity." It offers the ability for Catholic so-
cial ethics to be "bilingual"[169] without fear of the dis-
solution of its religious identity and with the confi-
dence of contributing to the development of both relig-
ious and social communities. An ethics of virtue also
begins this discussion on the level of commitments and
values before proceeding to speak about concrete moral
actions. Moreover, it maintains a flexibility through
prudence and proximate ends to debate, confront and
strategize about concrete actions.

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[168]Thiemann, Constructing A Public Theology, 42.

[169]Brueggemann, "The Legitimacy of a Sectarian
Hermeneutic: 2 Kings 18-19," 5-6.

CHAPTER FIVE

PREACHING, ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND VIRTUE ETHICS

Overview

Chapter five is the third part of the analysis of the contribution of virtue theory to Catholic social ethics. Its focus is the relationship between preaching at the Sunday Eucharist and social ethics. This chapter explores the advantages that virtue ethics offers homiletic efforts to strengthen the unity of the moral and the spiritual life.

An examination of homiletic theology is important to this study for two reasons. First, preaching is a fundamental form of communication within a religious community. Viewed within the context of the Sunday liturgy, preaching offers most members of the church much of their understanding of the spiritual and moral life of Catholicism. A homilist attempts to sustain and deepen the connections between the listener's personal, social and religious life and the religious tradition to which he or she belongs. Preaching, therefore, is an important means through which Catholics pursue justice.

Second, in its final chapter, Economic Justice refers to the integral connection between justice and the celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist.[1] The

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[1]Economic Justice, nos. 330-331.

principles for the implementation of <u>Economic Justice</u>
also recommend the teaching and preaching of the contents
of the Letter. Furthermore, theological commentators
have offered important reasons for a consideration of the
relationship between preaching and social ethics. Roger
Haight, for example, states that the limited effect of
the Social Gospel Movement was due in no small part to
the belief that education was regarded as the medium of
virtue. The present need, he states, is for social eth-
ics "to turn this discussion [among theologians] back
into the churches in such a way that the religious and
spiritual dimensions of this mission can empower Chris-
tian discipleship."[2] David O'Brien's review of Catholic
efforts in social justice also indicates the need for a
stronger connection between the moral and spiritual
dimensions of Christian living.[3] In his critique of
<u>Economic Justice</u>, James Gaffney suggests that efforts in
generating movement for the kind of economic reforms
advocated in the Pastoral Letter, "will depend on more of
what is usually meant by preaching."[4] Each of these
reasons - the importance of preaching in Catholic life,
and the need to expand the discussion of Catholic social

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[2]Haight, "Mission of the Church and Social Gospel,"
497.

[3]O'Brien, <u>Public Catholicism</u>, 251.

[4]Gaffney, "Our Bishops and Our Economy," 49.

ethics beyond theological commentary - suggest the need
for this part of the analysis of Economic Justice.

Chapter Five of this study proposes that an ethics
of virtue can assist preachers of justice in a way that
integrates the requirement for concrete action with the
liturgical context of homiletics. The basis for the as-
sistance of virtue ethics to Sunday homilies about social
justice is the mutual relationship of preaching with sys-
tematic theology. Like preaching, systematic theology,
among other foundations, has similar grounding in
Scripture, the liturgy, and the Christian life. Preach-
ing, however, is not simply the application of insights
or principles derived from systematics. Rather, in re-
flecting on these foundations, preaching evokes the dif-
ficult questions with which systematic theology must
wrestle.[5] As Karl Rahner states, preaching precedes and
grounds teaching.[6] Systematic theology does, however,
have a role in clarifying and critiquing the operative

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[5]Mary Catherine Hilkert, "Preaching and Theology:
Rethinking the Relationship," Worship 65 (September
1991): 407.

[6]Rahner writes, "Because there is preaching - for
that reason there is theology: not vice-versa. For the
same reason it is the preaching Church with her demand
for faith which is the norm of theology; it is not the
'science' of theology which is the norm of an haute
vulgarization which could not be called preaching." See
his "Priest and Poet," Theological Investigations III,
trans. Karl H. and Boniface Kruger (Baltimore: Helicon
Press, 1967), 303.

theology of preaching.[7] As a method of systematic moral theology, virtue ethics can assist in clarifying the process of preaching on the Christian moral life.

Four advantages flow from a recognition of the value of an ethics of virtue in homiletic preparation. First, virtue ethics suggests a way to widen the discussion about homilies examining the issues of justice. Many contemporary treatments frame the discussion in terms of concreteness or specificity. Homilists wrestle with the relationship of ancient Scriptural values with contemporary complex issues, and struggle with how to portray the Christian life in concrete ways. Virtue ethics, while cognizant of the necessity of concrete action, understands the requirements of moral reasoning as first having to do with the individual who reasons and the development of moral character. This approach meets the demands of concreteness, but in a different way.

Second, preaching engages in an interpretation of the religious dimensions of a congregant's individual and social life.[8] Preaching interprets human experience within the context of traditions: personal, familial, cultural and religious. These traditions form the indi-

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[7]Hilkert, "Preaching and Theology: Rethinking the Relationship," 399.

[8]Mary Catherine Hilkert, "Naming Grace: A Theology of Proclamation," Worship 60 (September 1986): 441-445.

vidual and are the framework within which perception and understanding take place. Moreover, preaching speaks of the modification or rejection of tradition based upon contrasting experiences. In virtue ethics, a moral tradition, with its formative influence on the development of character and on the exercise of moral activity, also holds a central place.

Third, preaching is related to rhetoric.[9] Rhetoric seeks not only to change the mind, but also to lead an individual to action.[10] Preaching leads a listener to the action of the Eucharist, the transformation of a community and, through its members, the world. Virtue theory, like all ethical theories, is concerned with moral activity. There seems, however, to be a particular correspondence in an ethics of virtue to preaching's attention to conversion and action. The focus of the virtue of charity on the striving to grow in the love of God and the love of neighbor corresponds to preaching's exhortation to conversion. The emphasis of prudence and the moral virtues on attaining right action corresponds to preaching's counsel of responsive living informed by Christian faith.

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[9]James M. Schmitmeyer, "Literature, Homiletics and the Absence of God," Worship 63 (January 1989): 49.

[10]David S. Cunningham, "Theology As Rhetoric," Theological Studies 52 (September 1991): 415.

Finally, in the Roman Catholic Tradition, preaching at the Sunday Eucharist is not regarded solely as a commentary on the Scriptures, but is an integral part of the act of liturgical worship. The Catholic liturgy has twin functions. One is formational, in which the "deep knowledge" of the religious community passes from one generation to another. The other is transformational, in which the participants leave their everyday ways of doing things and move into mediating states to contemplate the mysteries that face all humans.[11] An ethics of virtue can assist preachers of justice in a way that integrates the requirement for concrete action with the liturgical context of homiletics. In its discussion of human affections and the use of the imagination, virtue ethics supports the liturgy's focus on the dimensions of religious meaning beyond the cognitive.

To state that virtue ethics, as a form of systematic moral theology, intersects with a theology of preaching is not to overlook the serious challenges that attend to contemporary homilies about justice. First, although

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[11]Kathleen Hughes, R.S.C.J. "Liturgy and Justice: An Intrinsic Relationship," Living No Longer for Ourselves, ed. Kathleen Hughes and Mark R. Francis. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991), 45-46. Hughes makes extensive use of Turner's work on ritual. See Victor Turner ("Passages, Margins and Poverty: Religious Symbols of Communitas," Worship 46 (1972): 399. For a discussion of the terms, "formation" and "transformation," See Rosemary Haughton, The Transformation of Man (Springfield: Templegate Publishers, 1967), 34-37.

Economic Justice sees an intimate connection between the
liturgy and acts of justice, it does not elaborate on
this point. For example, in their recommendations for
the implementation of Economic Justice, the bishops sim-
ply suggest the teaching of "moral principles" in parish
gatherings, schools and the liturgy.[12] Second, the
change in the context from teaching to preaching requires
a thorough understanding of the distinction, as well as
the interrelationship. Third, the nature of economics
necessitates a familiarity, or at least a respect, on the
part of the homilist and listener of complex sources of
non-theological material.[13] Third, as Hauerwas states:
"most preaching in the Christian church today is done

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[12]Anthony M. Pilla, "How To Implement Economic
Justice for All," America (January 31, 1987): 77. The
author is the Bishop of Cleveland and elected chairperson
of the ad hoc committee for follow-up efforts to the
Pastoral Letter. Building Economic Justice: The Bishops'
Pastoral Letter and Tools for Action, (Washington, D.C.:
The United States Catholic Conference, 1986), the
authorized manual for implementation of the Pastoral
Letter, does not contain any references to preaching.

[13]For a good example of the complex relationship of
ethics and economics, See Daniel Rush Finn, "Ethical
Dimensions of the Debate on Economic Planning," Catholic
Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy, 399-443, "The
Church and the Economy in the Modern World," Questions of
Special Urgency: The Church in the Modern World Two
Decades After Vatican II ed. Judith Dwyer Washington,
D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1986, 141-172, and
"Self-Interest, Markets, and the Four Problems of
Economic Life," The Annual of the Society of Christian
Ethics, (1989): 23-53. See also his (with Prentiss L.
Pemberton) Toward a Christian Economic Life (Minneapolis:
Winston Press, 1985). Finn was a member of the drafting
committee of Economic Justice.

before strangers."[14] He states that many listeners lack the communal experience or patterns of thought common to members of a consistent congregation. For example, these listeners who focus only on the desire for personal fulfillment or in the success of their children, typically lack the dynamism for communal undertakings.[15]

The exploration of how virtue ethics can support the practice of preaching about social ethics proceeds as follows. Initially, chapter five reviews developments in scripture, moral theology and culture since Vatican II as they affect the practice of preaching. Next, the chapter explores the theology of preaching according to the documents of the Catholic Church and other theological commentaries. Only then does the chapter examine the relationship of preaching to social ethics. Finally, the four aspects of analysis employed throughout this study make it possible to enumerate specific ways in which an

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[14]He writes, "The Greeks assumed that a stranger had a very distinct moral status. What it meant to be Greek was that you shared the same stories and around civic occasions you could tell those stories with understanding and appreciation. Strangers were those people who did not necessarily share your stories, but who seemed capable of hearing your stories and appreciating them with understanding. The stranger could be invited to join the Greek's civic festivals and might even contribute to Greek life by introducing new stories that could be made part of the Greek tradition." William H. Willimon and Stanley Hauerwas, Preaching to Strangers (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 5-7.

[15]De Vaucelles, "Reception of Vatican II," 54-55.

ethics of virtue can join the moral and spiritual dimen-
sions of the Christian life.

Three Theological Developments Affecting
Preaching

Before analyzing the contribution that an ethics of
virtue can make to preaching about social ethics, two
preliminary inquiries are necessary. The first inquires
into recent theological developments and their impact
upon the theology of preaching. These developments are
foundational to the theology of preaching presented in
Vatican Council II and the National Conference of
Catholic Bishops. Three developments are important to
this inquiry.

Scripture and Ethics

The work that biblical theologians have done on the
relationship of Scripture and ethics impacts on the the-
ology of preaching in two important ways.[16] The first is

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[16]See William C. Spohn, What Are They Saying About
Scripture and Ethics? (New York: Paulist Press, 1984) for
a review of this discussion. See also Charles Curran and
Richard McCormick, ed. Readings in Moral Theology, No. 4:
The Use of Scripture in Moral Theology (New York: Paulist
Press, 1984) for a collection of articles in this subject
area. In addition, see Stephen Charles Mott, "The Use Of
The New Testament For Social Ethics," Journal of

a shift in hermeneutical method away from a predominant

historical-critical method to what Peter Milk calls a

more "literary era."[17] This shift is occasioned by a new

interest in applying the techniques of literary theory

(narratology, rhetorical approaches, structuralism and

social setting) to the study of Scripture.[18] In the

opinion of the proponents, these studies contribute new

insights into the relationships between the Scripture and

truth, moral judgment and spirituality.[19]

Religious Ethics Vol. 15 (1987): 225-260, Thomas
Ogletree, The Use of the Bible in Christian Ethics
(Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), Jack Sanders,
Ethics in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress
Press, 1975) and Wolfgang Schrage, Ethics of the New
Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

[17]P.W. Milk, "The Coming Revolution: The New
Literary Approach to New Testament Interpretation," The
Promise and Practice of Biblical Theology, ed. John
Reumann, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 7.

[18]Walter Brueggemann suggests that this interest is
not a rejection of historical criticism, as much as a
recognition that the circumstances that led to its
development are now changing. The exploration of literary
criticism is an attempt to explore the ways the biblical
texts can address the changes in thinking and acting
operative at the end of the twentieth century. See his
Texts Under Negotiation (Minneapolis: Fortress Press
1993), viii,1-2.

[19]Sean McEvenue, "Uses and Abuses of the Bible in
the Liturgy and Preaching," Concilium (1991/1), ed. Wm.
Beuken, Sean Freyne and Anton Weiler (Philadelphia:
Trinity Press International), 91-92. John Reumann is not
sure about the ultimate effect of the literary/narrative
approach on hermeneutics. Although he notes that many
exegetes are incorporating literary categories in their
work, he cites several problems with a narrative approach
that is dependent upon theologians such as Hans Frei.
Among these problems are a sectarian temptation to avoid
Modernity by returning to the pre-critical days of

The new attention to literary theory includes a focus on the reader/listener of the biblical text.[20] In the dialogue of reader and text, the concept of "recognition" is central.[21] Through recognition, the text grasps the reader and, in any given moment, objectifies his or her moral and spiritual life. The text articulates the questions, the desires, the hope and love of one who listens and hears. It shatters former meanings and is the cause of psychological and spiritual change.[22]

The choice of texts is the second area of development in the relationship of Scripture and ethics that affects preaching. Traditionally, social ethicists have turned to the writings of the Jewish prophets for suppor-

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exegesis. See his "Afterword," The Promise and Practice of Biblical Theology, 194-199.

[20]Edgar V. McKnight writes, "Concentration here is on the influence of one's worldview and the expression of truth within a particular universe of meaning. In this sense, the reader/listener becomes the touchstone or schema. The thought here is that the end of biblical study is not simply factual information or dogmatic truth. It is found more in the relationship between the cognitive and recognitive functions." See his Post-Modern Use of the Bible: The Emergence of Reader Oriented Criticism (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 58-61.

[21]Diana Culbertson states that recognition differs from cognition (it includes implications as well as ideas) and from perception (it involves the whole of awareness, knowledge, values and idea of existence). See her "Recognition: The Beginning of Religious Experience," The Poetics of Revelation: Revelation and the Narrative Tradition (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1989), 9.

[22]Ibid., 9, 184-185.

tive texts. More recently, however, exegetes have sug-
gested two additional sources for ethical reflection: the
parables and the apocalyptic material. Current exegetical
studies which contrast the parables with myths[23] note
that myths have the double function of mediating "irredu-
cible opposites" and creating a belief in the possibility
of reconciliation. In contrast, parables "erupt" in the
midst of myths. They create and embrace the contradic-
tions and paradoxes of life and thereby become the active
agents of change.[24] While recommending parables as a
source for ethical reflection, exegetes also warn against
moralizing the stories. Parables, they state, are not a
source of motivation for ethical behavior.[25] The parables
function only as a presupposition to an ethics.[26] The
reader does not interpret the parable; the parable is
meant to interpret the reader.[27]

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[23]See Madeleine Boucher, "The Mysterious Parable,"
Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 6 (1977), 1-
41 for a helpful literary study of the parables along the
lines suggested by McEvenue.

[24]John Dominic Crossan, The Dark Interval: Towards a
Theology of Story (Niles, Illinois: Argus Communications,
1975).

[25]Benedict M. Guevin, "The Moral Imagination and the
Shaping Power of the Parables," The Journal of Religious
Ethics 17 (Spring 1989): 70. Spohn writes, "If we try to
avoid imaginative involvement in the parable by reducing
it to a moral, our lives will remain unchanged." What are
they saying about Scripture and Ethics, 101.

[26]Donahue, The Gospel in Parable, 5, 17.

A second recovery in biblical research useful for
social ethics is the renewed interest in biblical apoca-
lypticism. Traditionally, many ethicists considered the
apocalyptic material an embarrassment, since the classi-
cal interpretation of this literature is otherworldly.[28]
Contemporary readings of the apocalyptic parables such as
the Sheep and the Goats (Matt. 25), suggests something
more immediate: that the love and praxis of Jesus' minis-
try needs the complementarity of justice and solidarity
with the poor. As a source for social ethics apocalyptic
material may in fact overcome any temptation to sectari-
anism,[29] may refute the myth of progress,[30] and as an

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[27]Sallie Teselle writes, "Metaphors cannot be
interpreted - a metaphor does not have a message, it is a
message. If we have really focused on one parable, if we
have let it work on us (rather than working on it to
abstract out its "meaning"), we find that we are
interpreted." See her Speaking in Parables: A Study in
Metaphor and Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress Press,
1975), 71-72.

[28]Any use of apocalyptic material in social ethics
has to keep in mind several criticisms of its theological
outlook. William C. Marrin suggests that Jesus used the
language of apocalyptic while critiquing many of its
features: 1) the calculation of when the end will come -
Jesus refuses to discuss time-tables; 2) relegation of
responsibility to a world of higher powers - Jesus
promises power over unclean spirits; 3) lack of the need
for conversion - Jesus's message summed up with the word
metanoeite - be converted; and, 4) loss of the sense of
God's presence now - Jesus speaks of God's availability.
"The Kingdom in the Gospel" TMs [photocopy], p. 3

[29]Donohue, The Gospel in Parable, 123-124.

[30]Klaus Baumlin, "Heaven and Earth Will Pass Away:
Thoughts on Apocalyptic," Theology Digest 36 (Summer
1989): 144.

appeal which is directed primarily to the imagination,
may help to envision concrete alternatives to the world
of present experience.[31]

Both the application of literary theory to the study
of Scripture and the broadening selection of textual
sources are indicative of a change in the biblical rela-
tionship with ethics. The insights they provide suggest
that the preaching of Jesus provokes not the crisis of a
new ethical system, but the crisis of recognition. In
other words, the challenge some scholars claim is not to
view Jesus as an ethical teacher, but to recognize the
reign of God as breaking into the world in his person.[32]
This recognition demands a response.[33]

Changing Directions in Moral Theology

The focus on narrative in biblical studies has also
had influence in moral theology. Narrative studies began
to question the traditional and contemporary forms of the

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[31]John J. Collins, "Old Testament Apocalypticism And
Eschatology," The New Jerome Biblical Commentary, ed.
Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmeyer and Roland E.
Murphy (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1990), 304.

[32]Nathan Mitchell, ed. The Rite of Penance:
Commentaries, Background and Directions (Washington,
D.C.: The Liturgical Conference, 1978).

[33]Norman Perrin, Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus
(New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 109-153.

relationship of moral theology to secular foundations.
The traditional form of moral theology rested on the
foundations of natural law. Prior to Vatican Council II,
the Manualist approach contrasted the moral life of the
commandments with the spiritual life of the evangelical
counsels. Neither understanding offered a whole model of
the Christian life.[34] In this view, the difference be-
tween Christian and humanist moralities was merely inci-
dental or accidental; values connoting perfection were
relegated to ascetic theology. The evangelical values
become incidental to the ordinary Christian moral life,
and essential only to other states, like the religious
life.[35]

The contemporary form of the secularization of moral
theology is influenced by Kantian ethical thought.
Revisionist moral theologians, like McCormick and Curran,
began to question the distinctiveness of Christian eth-
ics. Christian ethics, they argued, cannot add anything
to human ethical self-understanding as it already exists.
Rather, Christian ethics is the objectification in Jesus
of what every person experiences. The role of faith is

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[34]James Gustafson states that moral theology
neglected the wellsprings of disposition and action and
ascetical theology neglected the relationship of the
mystical to the moral. See his "Spiritual Life and Moral
Life," Theology and Christian Ethics, 161-176.

[35]Norbert Rigali, "Christian Ethics and Perfection,"
Chicago Studies 14 (Fall 1975): 227-228.

to motivate and intensify recognition of, and reflection on, ethical questions.[36]

Many Catholic moral theologians have now questioned both these foundations of secular thought for moral theology. Norbert Rigali, for example, disagrees with McCormick's and Currans's position when he claims that the narrative of Jesus's life speaks of the uniqueness of God's activity.[37] The result is a specifically Christian moral life, a life which in his view, is a whole and not simply a sum of discrete parts (moral decisions, norms, attitudes, dispositions).[38] This understanding of the moral life as a whole also calls for the reunion of moral theology with ascetic theology. In light of the teaching of the Council all Christians are called to lives of perfection.

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[36]Richard McCormick, "Does Faith Add to Ethical Perception?," Readings in Moral Theology, No. 2: The Distinctiveness of Christian Ethics, ed. Charles Curran and Richard McCormick (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 162.

[37]Norbert Rigali, "Christ and Morality," Moral Formation And Christianity Concilium 110 (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), 12-20.

[38]Rigali, "The Story of Christian Morality", 177.

The Change in the Listener

Another development that affects the theology of preaching is the change in status of the listener. Although Hauerwas's characterization of the contemporary listener of a homily as a "stranger" is correct in many ways, this description of the question as a problem of secularization is only of limited assistance. More helpful is Walter Ong's comprehensive analysis of the change taking place in all listening audiences as western culture shifts from a literary to a new oral culture.[39] Ong's suggestion that the present culture is in transition to a new orality has important consequences for understanding the practice of preaching and the preaching audience. He states that the use of the human word as an analogue for the divine is changing in a way more complicated than the shift to the literary culture in the 16th-century.[40] The challenge facing preachers is more complex than the problem of secularization. Their challenge is to seek God's presence while living with a newly arranged constellation of sensory apprehensions.[41]

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[39]Walter Ong, _Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word_ (London: Methuen, 1982) and _The Presence of the Word_ (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

[40]Ong, _Presence of the Word_, 287.

[41]Ong, _Presence of the Word_, 288.

Ong's research on the first orality illuminates the
questions about preaching in several ways. Oral cultures
code information in words through the use of proverbs,
formulas, repetition, contrasting and stark figures of
speech. Knowledge is refined through debate and disputes
must be settled by appeal to a wise authority who can ar-
ticulate communal wisdom.[42] Reading has a different
function in oral cultures from what it has in literary
cultures. The primary function of reading in oral cul-
tures is not to gather information but to become more
grounded in the present.[43] Reading helps to make present
the past and to predict the future. Reading stirs the
memory to remember primal, deep-rooted memories long
forgotten. It is an exercise in the imagination.

According to Ong, contemporary individuals are in
the midst of a new orality that combines with technology.
In spite of the complexities that this combination bring,
Ong is hopeful about the potential of religion in this
setting.[44] Even though technology emphasizes a presence
in things and their ability to be pictured, Ong considers
this picturing incomplete. A full presence is measured

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[42]Mark Nielsen, "A Bridge Builder: Walter Ong at
80," America (November 21, 1992): 405.

[43]I am indebted to Benilde Montgomery, Ph.D, of the
English Department of S.U.N.Y. Stony Brook for this
explanation.

[44]Ong, Presence of the Word, 298-324.

only in persons, and the fullness of personal presence
begins only with the voice and words that join in commu-
nity. This new orality differs from the other earlier
orality in that the theophanies of time and place known
to all traditional religious belief have now been comple-
mented by a new and cosmic interchange of humans with hu-
mans, of an unprecedented intersubjectivity and partici-
pation with others in distant lands. Ong views these new
theophanies as the matrix by which God's presence can
grow in the complementarity of the love of God and the
love of others (Matt. 22: 36-40). These new theophanies,
he adds, take their place within a sense of community.
This communal sense reflects the gospel pronouncement -
"Where two or three are gathered in my name there am I in
their midst" (Matt. 18-20).

This review of recent theological developments since
Vatican Council II provides a perspective for an under-
standing of the theology of preaching about social eth-
ics. The discussions of biblical stories, the view of
the moral life as narrative, and the notion of presence
in an oral culture each suggest an initial correspondence
with an ethics of virtue. A more substantial evaluation
of the contribution of virtue ethics to the practice of
preaching awaits an examination of current Roman Catholic
homiletic theology.

Roman Catholic Theology of Preaching

In addition to an review of theological developments
since Vatican Council II, a discussion of the contribu-
tions of virtue ethics to preaching about social ethics
requires an examination of the Catholic theology of
preaching. The Roman Catholic liturgical tradition has
several different ways of describing the different types
of preaching.[45] In current Catholic usage, a "homily" is
distinguished from a "sermon"; the latter names a form of
preaching not necessarily attached to biblical readings
and which can be heard outside of the Sunday Eucharist.[46]

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[45]For example, Ernst Haensli offers two divisions.
Preaching in the Christian Scriptures has several
different types: **gospel**, Acts 8:40; 15:17; 16:10;
proclamation, Acts 8:5; 10 42; **discourse**, 1 Cor 2; 1 Tim
4:6; **consolation-encouragement**, 1 Cor 14:3; **testimony**, 1
Cor 1:6; 2:1. He also suggests a contemporary division
according to pastoral activities: 1) normal activities -
biblical preaching, liturgical preaching, apologetic and
dogmatic preaching, catechetical preaching; 2) special
activities - the mission sermon, the conduct of spiritual
exercises and occasional sacramental sermons; and, 3)
addresses on radio and television. See his "Preaching,"
Sacramentum Mundi 5 ed. Karl Rahner New York: Herder &
Herder, 1970, 81-88. Gerard T. Broccolo makes the
following division: **pre-evangelization** is preaching about
human values to dispose listeners to the gospel;
evangelization intends an inner conversion of heart
through the proclamation of the gospel; **catechesis**
instructs in matters of doctrine or morality and
encourages the practice of these teachings; and the
reflection of the Sunday readings called a homily. See
his "About Those Homilies...," Aim (Winter 1982): 18.

[46]Robert S. Waznak, "Homily," in The New Dictionary
of Sacramental Worship, 552.

A homily is normally situated within the Sunday
celebration of the Eucharist and reflects on the day's
Scripture and the present action of God in the lives of
its listeners. In the purview of the Conciliar reform,
liturgical homilies have "pride of place" among the other
forms of preaching.[47]

In only a short time, Catholic homiletic theology
has radically changed. Prior to Vatican Council II, the
neo-scholastic method of preaching had as its aim the
giving of doctrinal instruction. This method was based
on the propositional model of revelation.[48] Reflecting a
more sacramental approach, the Council states that the
liturgy of the Word and the Eucharist are integral to
each other,[49] and thereby returns preaching to the an-
cient tradition of reflecting on biblical texts in the
context of the liturgy. The homily is thus part of the
act of worship and not as before, a mere appendage to, or
commentary upon it.

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[47]"Dei Verbum," No. 24. The Documents of Vatican II,
ed. Walter Abbott (New York: America Press, 1966).

[48]Mary Catherine Hilkert, "Theology of Preaching,"
in The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship ed. Peter
Fink (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990), 996. For an
evaluation of the propositional model of revelation, See
Avery Dulles, Models of Revelation (Garden City:
Doubleday, 1983), 36-52.

[49]Waznak, "Homily," 556.

Fulfilled In Your Hearing, the official statement of
the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on preaching,
suggests that the purpose of a homily is to lead a con-
gregation to thanksgiving and praise by enabling those
assembled to celebrate the liturgy more deeply and thus
be formed for Christian witness in the world.[50] Relying
on literary methods of interpretation, as well as on his-
torical criticism, FIYH takes the conciliar position a
step further. In this description, preaching is the in-
teraction of the biblical text with the actual human
situation which allows an interpretive word of faith to
emerge.[51] FIYH advances a preaching model in which the
homilist "does not so much attempt to explain the
Scriptures as to interpret the human situation through
the Scriptures" so that the congregation is able to cele-
brate the Eucharist.[52]

Both the conciliar and conference statements de-
scribe preaching as a complex art of communication.
Homilies address the affective and emotional as well as
the intellectual dimensions of the human person.[53] The

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[50]National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Fulfilled
in Your Hearing: The Homily in the Sunday Assembly
(Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference,
1982), 18. Henceforth known as FIYH.

[51]FIYH, 21.

[52]FIYH, 20.

genre of preaching is close to that of classical rheto-
ric, discourse capable of moving the human spirit.[54]
This communication occurs at the very depth of human ex-
perience, at the very limits and boundaries where the
listener raises ultimate questions of life.

A homily requires a particular use of language. The
modern homily replaces the language of the propositional
model of revelation with the language of image which
makes its method more "expansive, evocative and vision-
ary."[55] Homilies also use primordial words which are
more variable than fabricated, technical, utility
words.[56] The homilist is then more poet than teacher or
moralist, offering "a poetic construal of an alternative
world."[57] Moreover, the homilist assumes the role of a

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[53]Hilkert, "Preaching and Theology: Rethinking the
Relationship," 400, 406.

[54]Donald Senior, "Scripture and Homiletics: What the
Bible Can Teach the Preacher," Worship 65 (September
1991): 389-391. Waznak also suggests that the rhetorical
allusions not overshadow the kerygmatic nature of
homilies. Kerygmatic preaching proclaims saving events,
not simply teaching and it does not rely on persuasive
words alone, but the demonstration of spirit and power (1
Cor. 2:4). See his "Homily", 554.

[55]Senior, "Scripture and Homiletics: What the Bible
Can Teach the Preacher," 394.

[56]Rahner writes, "There are words which render a
single thing translucent to the infinity of all reality.
They are like sea-shells, in which can be heard the sound
of the ocean of infinity. They bring light to us, not we
to them. They open doors to great works and they decide
over eternities." See his "Priest and Poet", 295-296.

mystagogue, an unveiler of meaning,[58] fusing together the world of the text and the world of the listener in the creative imagination.[59] This fusion has a contemporary and present quality so that the scriptural and preached word are not heard apart from the listener's present experience or from a specific moment of history. Recollection of past mercies and hope for future blessings are integrated into a reflection on the activity of God in the present moment.

Recent discussion on social justice and preaching has remained rather consistent since the Vatican Council. FIYH stresses that the liturgical gathering is not an educational assembly[60] and that liturgy and preaching are not the place for moral argumentation or exhortation.[61]

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[57]Walter Brueggemann, Finally Comes The Poet: Daring Speech for Proclamation (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 6.

[58]Henry J. Charles writes, "The mystagogue is someone familiar with spiritual possibility, its forms of advancement and peril, its rhythms and seasons, its productive avenues and dead ends, its special demands and genuine manifestations." See his "Three Images of Priesthood," Review for Religious 51 (July-August 1992): 618-620.

[59]Schmitmeyer, "Literature, Homiletics and the Absence of God," 52.

[60]FIYH, 18.

[61]William A. Richard writes, "The primary reason to avoid moralizing is that it distorts the Christian message. In most biblical texts indicative precedes imperative; we learn who we are and who God is before we learn the behavioral consequences of this knowledge. Moral directives are usually contained in the Bible by

In addition, as FIYH notes, "the oral presentation of a
single person is not a particularly effective to impart
new information or to bring about a change in attitude or
behavior."[62]

Preaching and Social Ethics: Recent Discussion

Although FIYH adopts the position that preaching is
more interpretative than exhortative - that is, enabling
listeners to recognize the implications, in liturgy and
life, of the faith that is **already** theirs - theological
discussions since the Council about social justice homi-
lies have wrestled with this question in a different
way.[63] Theologians continue to debate about the
"specificity" or "concreteness" of homilies.

Mindful of the complexity of political and so-
cio-economic issues, George Higgins states that rele-
vancy, pontificated answers and negative criticism are
homiletic tools with accompanying heavy burdens. He pre-

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secondary inference. Consequently, moral directives in
the homily should - following - the biblical pattern - be
present by secondary inference." See his "Preaching the
Dark Side of the Gospel" Worship 65 (March 1987):
149-150.

[62]FIYH, 26.

[63]It is interesting to contrast this part of FIYH
with a previous section that recognizes that a preacher
might invite a congregation to devote themselves to some
specific action as a way of sharing in God's creative and
redemptive word. See FIYH, 19.

fers only a limited exposition of specific issues in a homily and a more expanded discussion of them in other parish forums.[64] Avery Dulles's position is sharper. Specific applications, he states, not only test the competence of the homilist, but also can contribute to undermining the preaching project as well as the complex relationship of the moral dimension to the Christian life as a whole.[65]

More recently, Walter Burghardt characterizes the general understanding of preaching as a willingness to look for a hole in the world and listen between its sounds.[66] He writes:

> The primary way in which the liturgy becomes a social force is through its own inner dynamism, by its incomparable power to turn the human heart inside out, free it from its focus on self, fling it out unfettered to the service of sisters and brothers enslaved.[67]

Burghardt's exposition illustrates the tensions in preaching about social justice. He understands the relationship of the homily to the liturgy as a whole, recognizes its power to change hearts and to refocus

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[64]George Higgins, "Politics: What Place in Church?," Origins, 2 (April 1973): 214.

[65]Avery Dulles, "Preaching the Dilemmas," Origins 4 (May 15, 1975): 746-750.

[66]Walter Burghardt, Preaching: The Art and the Craft (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 28.

[67]Burghardt, Preaching the Art and the Craft, 131.

self-concern to others, and calls for prior collective

discernment on the part of preacher and listener.

But when Burghardt turns his attention to the rela-

tionship of preaching and justice issues, he returns to

the question of specificity. On the one hand, he wants

to maintain a focus and balance in preaching. He writes:

> Here, I suggest, two extremes should be
> avoided: on the one hand, manipulation of the
> Mass in the interests of ideologies; on the
> other, a perilous conservatism that would make
> the liturgy utterly inoffensive, a peaceful
> Sunday service where oppressed and oppressor
> can escape from the furies and passions of the
> week, simply praise God for His wonderful
> works.[68]

On the other hand, Burghardt's effort to maintain

focus and balance seems dominated by the shadow of an-

other question, which he describes as "the neuralgic

problem." For him, the question concerns the concrete-

ness or specificity of homilies. To remain on the level

of general principles is to betray the tradition of the

church and to risk saying nothing.[69] He suggests a

careful discernment of the particular, relevant issue and

the liturgical context.[70]

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[68]Walter Burghardt, "Let Justice Roll Down Like
Waters," Preaching: The Art and The Craft (New York:
Paulist Press, 1987), 131.

[69]Ibid., 134.

[70]In addition to launching the program, "Preaching
the Just Word", Burghardt is collaborating with David
H.C. Read in an ecumenical journal, "Living Pulpit". In
its thematic issue on justice, Read writes of the

Burghardt's diagnosis of the central challenge fac-
ing homilists is shared by others who urge homiletic com-
ment on Economic Justice. Most recent references to the
Pastoral Letter continue to wrestle with the question of
specificity in homilies. In the face of the complex eco-
nomic issues mentioned in the Pastoral Letter, Fredric
Hang urges homilists to avoid oversimplification and na-
ive optimism.[71] While stating that the task of the
preacher is the formation of conscience and not the pre-
scription of political stances, David Hollenbach recog-
nizes the difficulty of concrete discussion of social is-
sues in homilies.[72] These authors' rightful cautions and
careful distinctions, however, serve to highlight, but
not resolve, the question of specificity in homilies.

The recurring question of "concreteness" or
"specificity" in homilies that touch social ethical
themes can be understood in part as a consequence of the
changing nature of the liturgy. In the vernacular litur-

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two-fold dilemma of the preacher in this area: either to
expound the biblical meaning of the term or to focus on a
specific case of injustice. His article recommends ways
to avoid making the former dull, and the latter, a
political tirade. See his "Thoughts Before Preaching
About Justice" The Living Pulpit 2 (January-March 1993):
48.

[71]Fredric G. Hang. "Preaching the Economic
Pastoral," The Bible Today (November, 1986): 400-401.

[72]David Hollenbach, "Preaching and Politics: The
Problem of Consistency and Compromise," Justice, Peace,
and Human Rights, 407-408.

gy, the ritual words change their function from being sa-
cred sounds to being a communication of meaning.[73] With
this change the burden of the communication of meaning
falls heavily on preaching, often at the expense of the
meaning of the entire liturgy.[74] Moreover, the introduc-
tion of instrumental values into the liturgy can cause
the organization and execution of liturgy and preaching
to have as their goals only the production of measurable
rather than spiritual results.[75]

The focus on "concreteness" or "specificity" is
also, however, a consequence of a moral method that uses
principles to support the connection between religious
faith and social responsibility. Although Economic
Justice and many commentators advocate an interrelation-
ship between principle and concrete application, this re-

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[73]McEvenue, "Uses and Abuses of the Bible in the
Liturgy and Preaching," 91-92. He observes that since
that time, the liturgy, for many, ceased being a
prayerful encounter with God, and has become rather a
failed communication and an aesthetic disappointment.

[74]David Power observes, "The bodily mode of
Christian worship and not only the verbal, can enhance
the prophetic role that a Christian community plays in
society." See his Unsearchable Riches: The Symbolic
Nature of Liturgy, (New York: Pueblo Books, 1984), 98.
Power also notes that the resulting inattention to symbol
and ritual often reduced the master images used in the
liturgy to nostalgic remnants. See his "The Song of the
Lord in an Alien Land," Concilium 92 (New York: Herder
and Herder, 1974), 126-127.

[75]See Turner, "Passages, Margins, and Poverty:
Religious Symbols of Communitas", 390-412 for his
critique of this aspect of the reformed Catholic liturgy.

lationship does not always seem able to meet the distinct needs of preaching about social ethics within the liturgy. The questions of "how much?" or "how little?" tend to overshadow the other considerations necessary for Eucharistic homilies. The focus and balance of official church statements and liturgical theologians' commentaries have not resolved all the questions about preaching and social justice. The continuing nature of this discussion provides the opportunity to explore an alternate approach.

Virtue Theory's Contribution to Preaching

Hauerwas's criticism of contemporary preaching is rooted in his critique of Paul Tillich's homilies. While sympathizing with the position of Tillich and his successors - the search for ways to express for "strangers" the human experience to which biblical and ecclesiological terminology point - he finds such "apologetical" homilies an experience of accommodation. This kind of preaching, he states, makes it possible for listeners to assume that their concern for their own significance is in fact at the heart of what the Christian faith is about. In this context, preaching is not a proclamation of news other-

wise unavailable, but a form of apologetics meant to con-
firm what the hearer already knows.[76]

Although Hauerwas is probably overly negative in his
evaluation of this form of preaching, and his own solu-
tions border on the sectarian, he does make a point.
Since FIYH recommends a similar method of reflecting on
present experience to uncover the activity of God, its
recommended form of preaching is susceptible to some of
the same liabilities. With respect to homilies about is-
sues of justice the question could be framed in terms of
the relationship of the love of God and the love of
neighbor. In either case, in a general or a specific ap-
proach to homilies, the central point remains conversion
- the first task of preaching.

Virtue ethics offers its first assistance to
preaching about social justice in a consideration of the
virtue of charity. Charity describes the task of inviting
the preaching audience to conversion through its two
functions. First, individuals receive charity as God's
gift and the goal of charity is union with God. In fact,
as Thomas states, this union with God is not simply a
goal to be achieved, but is a union already enjoyed.[77]

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[76]Willimon and Hauerwas, "Introduction," Preaching
to Strangers, 7-9.

[77]S.T. II-II. 27.4. See James Keenan,
"Distinguishing Charity as Goodness and Prudence as

The order of charity formally unites the will to God and
makes the will willing to strive for right behavior in
the concrete world. Charity functions as the source out
of which all morally good actions are done.[78] The second
function of charity of assistance to preaching is the
individual response to the gift of this virtue which is
understood as merit. It is the initiative of an individ-
ual striving to love God and one's neighbor as much as
possible.[79] Charity functions in this way through com-
manding virtuous acts.

This understanding of the two functions of charity
has three advantages for preaching: 1) it avoids
Hauerwas's criticism of the potential liabilities of
homilies reflecting on human activity; 2) its focus is
the conversion of the listener to the realization of the
love of God; and, 3) this conversion takes place in the
first response to God's gift to which preaching in the
liturgy points - the action of thanksgiving. Preaching
assisted by this understanding of charity has God, and
not other motivations, such as human benevolence, as the
source of moral activity. Charity, as a description of
moral goodness, has its locus in the human heart. In

Rightness: A Key To Thomas's Secunda Pars," The Thomist
56 (July 1992): 419.

[78]Ibid., 419.

[79]Ibid., 424.

virtue ethics it is the first and most formal description
of human activity, antecedent to any descriptions of
right actions. As a description of the human person,
charity not only encourages an individual to question his
or her motivation for moral activity, but also suggests
the path of growth. The measure of charity is not at-
tainment, but the willingness to strive to attain. In
the striving to grow in union with God and in the love of
one's neighbor charity increases by becoming more present
in the individual.[80]

But even as charity commands virtuous acts and the
individual strives to attain concrete right action in the
world, charity remains formal. Charity does not pertain
to the specification of moral action. This understanding
points to the second contribution that virtue ethics
makes to preaching about social justice -the response to
God's gift in concrete behavior and action which prudence
and the moral virtues describe. As Dulles points out,
the social teaching of the church is more closely related
to the responding phase of Christian life than to the
proclamatory.[81] A final review of the aspects of

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[80]S.T. II-II. 24.5 ad 3. Ibid., 420.

[81]Dulles, "The Gospel, The Church and Politics,"
645. In discussing the relationship of faith and
justice, Charles Murphy offers an explanation that fits
into the relationship of charity and prudence outlined in
this study. He writes: "The best method of approach, if
not solution, lies in the indicative/imperative modality

analysis used throughout this study suggests some of the ways that the two aspects of virtue theory, striving and attaining, assist preachers to connect the moral and spiritual dimensions of Christian living.

Character

With an emphasis on formation of character, virtue ethics resists two tendencies in biblical interpretation and preaching. One is the attempt to convert the teaching of Jesus into new rules. The explication of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's gospel records the tension between kerygma and law in the early Jewish-Christian communities.[82] Paul's Letter to the Romans also reveals the

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of biblical ethics and in the vocabulary of "gift" and "task"....The "indicative" is who God is and what God has done and is doing. The "imperative" is the conformity of human action to God's action. The human response is the sign and the mediation of the divine activity but does not exhaust the potentialities of God's activity. The divine significance of human activity constitutes the meaning of human history. God's grace comes first and last in that history, but the "middle" which is the human response is indispensable as the necessary response to the divine initiative." See his "Action For Justice As Constitutive Of The Preaching Of The Gospel," 310.

[82]Robert Guelich writes that the Antitheses of the Sermon on the Mount were not given to be legalistically interpreted or applied. These demands for specific conduct represent behavior stemming from whole, restored relationships characteristic of the Kingdom. They represent conduct commensurate with and stemming from God's redemptive activity in human history. See his The Sermon On The Mount, (Texas: Word Books, 1982), 262-265.

tensions surrounding the formational nature of the Law.[83]

Dulles notes that the seventeenth and eighteenth century

reduction of Christianity into a series of articles of

belief influenced by Enlightenment categories continues

to have adherents today.[84] The other tendency is a call

for a return to the catechetical or teaching model of

preaching as a way to remedy the lack of general

religious knowledge on the part of Catholic congrega-

tions.[85]

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[83]Paul Achtemeier states that in Paul's mind the problem with the law was not that it could not be fulfilled no matter how hard one tried, and hence led to despair. Rather, the problem was precisely that it could be fulfilled and thus led to a false confidence that its fulfillment led to a valid relationship with God. See his Romans Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1985), 126-130. Rosemary Haughton notes that the Law provided a necessary order, structure of activity, security and identity. One of its benefits was in the way it protected individuals and societies from deeper challenges until such time as they were able to face them without panic or bravado. But like all protection, it could easily become a prison, and a self-chosen one at that. See her The Passionate God (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 286.

[84]Avery Dulles, "Revelation and Discovery," Theology and Discovery: Essays in honor of Karl Rahner, S.J., ed. William J. Kelly (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1980), 27.

[85]FIYH recommends that preaching intended to instruct in doctrine or morality take place in catechetical homilies. It envisions that the weight of the Church's preaching will encompass all four forms of preaching: pre-evangelization, evangelization, catechetical and homiletic. A Sunday homily complements the other forms by remaining distinctive.

In speaking of two aspects of Christian living, striving and attaining, an ethics of virtue can clearly illustrate the dynamics of Jesus's life and preaching. He calls his disciples to an openness of heart, to an "inbreaking" of the Kingdom which can be described as charity. But he also challenges his listeners to develop a "certain habit of mind"[86] in facing the questions of everyday existence. This habit of the mind is similar to virtue theory's description of prudence and the moral virtues.

Preaching asks a response from the listener by the active participation in the pattern of Jesus's life. When viewed through the lens of preaching, virtue ethics sees character, which is the basis of action, as the locus of the moral life. First, in the style of the Church Fathers, virtue ethics describes preaching as a school

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[86]Francis Greenwood Peabody, Jesus Christ And The Social Question: An Examination Of The Teaching Of Jesus In Its Relation To Some Of The Problems Of Modern Social Life (London: MacMillan & Co., Ltd, 1904), 82.

for the training in virtue.[87] As Dulles notes:

> The Christian is defined as being a person on
> the way to discovery, on the way to a revela-
> tion not yet given, or at least not yet given
> in final form....Faith is something we must
> grow into, and the normal way of growing into
> it is through nurture in a community of
> faith.[88]

This description of discipleship echoes the focus on character in virtue ethics. This focus on character re- quires a deeper interest in agency, development, context, narrative and community than is normally required in an approach that concentrates on principles.

In addition, character formation in the liturgy is not an isolated event, but is joined to the process of the liturgical year and to an individual's communal life. In virtue theory, an individual learns about virtue by first attaching himself or herself to a virtuous person.

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[87]Robert L. Wilken writes of the Alexandrian School, "The teachers of Alexandria were not interested solely in conveying knowledge or transmitting intellectual skills. They were interested in moral and spiritual formation. These ancient teachers were interested in the whole person, mind, heart and will. Their goal was to form the lives of their students in light of the ideal set forth in the Scripture and imaged in Christ. The school of Alexandria was a school for training in virtue. See his "Alexandria: A School for Training in Virtue," Schools of Thought in the Christian Tradition, ed. Patrick Henry (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 19.

[88]Dulles, "Revelation and Discovery," Theology and Discovery: Essays in honor of Karl Rahner, S.J., 28. See his interesting comparison of the development of Christian discipleship with Michael Polyani's description of the apprenticeship of a scientist.

In the liturgy, an individual Christian attaches himself or herself to the person of the virtuous preacher.[89] Preaching thereby is not only an entry into the practice of discipleship,[90] but also an embodiment of this practice by a "friendship of service" which seeks the good of the other.[91]

This friendship connects the listener to the process that the preacher represents, a process that is the remembrance of a tradition. The liturgy as a whole and preaching in particular contribute to the remembering of the symbol of the Kingdom of God. The Eucharistic Liturgy reflects this activity in its designation as an "anamnesis".[92] The activity of "anamnesis" in the lit-

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[89]In Alexandria the relationship between teacher and students was seen as one of spiritual direction and often labeled as a friendship. A student of Origen at Alexandria wrote that through his teacher he learned to love the Word, and the friend and interpreter of the Word. Wilken, "Alexandria: A School for Training in Virtue," 21-22.

[90]See MacIntyre's understanding of a practice. After Virtue, 177.

[91]Stephan A. Dinan, "Tradition, Friendship and Moral Knowledge" American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly LXV (August 1991): 455-461. Citing Aristotle and Augustine, Dinan argues that friendship, in addition to competence, characterizes a teacher in a tradition.

[92]Frank Senn writes: "This Greek word is practically untranslatable in English. 'Memorial,' 'commemoration,' 'remembrance,' all suggest a recollection of the past, whereas "anamnesis" means making present an object or person from the past." See his "Anamnesis," in The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship, ed. Peter Fink (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990), 45.

urgy has a similar major focus in virtue theory when it speaks of belonging to a moral tradition. As MacIntyre states, a tradition is a basis, a starting point from which a person begins to reflect, to understand and to ultimately constitute a moral life.[93] A tradition is present before a person is born and provides an identity which is inherited.[94]

Second, the correcting, reproving, encouraging and exhorting that are part of a training in a tradition bespeak a process of growth and development. The formation of character in virtue ethics is more conducive to the kind of communication that accompanies each of these developmental stages. Duties, principles and norms cannot reveal the internal integration of character that should accompany the moral actions. In addition, a virtue approach to preaching can avoid the difficulties that beset a discussion of the call to perfection in the gospels.

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[93]He writes, "I inherit from the past of my family, my city, my tribe, my nation, a variety of debts, inheritances, rightful expectations and obligations. These constitute the given of my life, my moral starting point. This is in part what gives my life its own moral particularity." MacIntyre, After Virtue, 205.

[94]It should be noted that MacIntyre's description of a tradition is neither static nor impervious to faults. He states: "When a tradition is in good order it is always partially constituted by an argument about the goods the pursuit of which gives to that tradition its particular point and purpose." For him the key to the growth or decay of a tradition is the exercise or lack of exercise of the relevant virtues. See his After Virtue, 206-207.

In Matthew the call to "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect"[95] is not a pursuit of perfection as a striving for individual moral perfection. Rather, it advocates a life-long stretching of one's capacity to love as God loves.[96] It is not a call to self-absorption that can result in reinforcing a pharisaic righteousness.[97] As Keenan points out, Thomas reflects this understanding in his frequent use of "perfect" not as a noun, but as a verb when he is speaking of the virtues. This usage, he states, suggests perfection as a developing condition and not as an existing state.[98] Understanding perfection from the point of view of virtue theory lays the groundwork for the rejoining of the moral life of the commandments and the ascetic life of the counsels into a new narrative of the whole Christian life.[99]

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[95]Matt. 5:48.

[96]Wilkie Au and Noreen Cannon, "The Plague of Perfectionism," Human Development 13 (Fall 1992): 11.

[97]William Spohn writes: "Too often the pursuit of perfection becomes more concerned with the servant than those who need to be served. In the New Testament, gratitude and compassion, not the drive for perfection, channel Christian commitment into action." "The Moral Vision of the Catechism: Thirty Years That Did Not Happen," America, (March 3, 1990): 192.

[98]Keenan, "Aquinas After MacIntyre," 19.

[99]In his discussion of the oft-misunderstood story of the Rich Young Man (Matt. 19:16-22) Douglas Hare suggests that the perfection called forth by Jesus is not found in the performance of a supremely good deed (selling all his possessions) but in undivided devotion

A consequence of a faulty understanding of gospel

perfection is the temptation to criticize those who are

not able to live up to its impersonal standards. As

Keenan notes, moral theology and preaching have sometimes

contributed to this disservice.[100] When virtue theory

distinguishes between goodness and rightness, it offers

homilists a way of speaking about human beings as morally

good in spite of their failures and of offering psycho-

logical, social, and economic encouragement to pursue

right actions through growth in the moral virtues.[101]

(a change of heart - moral goodness). Hare also implies
that although the response for the man is suggested by
his present and possible new identity, it will not take
the same form for all who hear the gospel. See his
Matthew Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Preaching
and Teaching (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press,
1993), 225-227.

[100]He writes, "We know that our society say, in the
first world, demonstrates that people with education,
decent and more-than-decent salaries, affordable time for
leisure and culture, access to self-help groups and the
like, have a much greater opportunity for attaining
temperance, fortitude, prudence, etc. than those without
such supports. People whose upbringing was/is privileged
have the privilege of developing further habits of right
living which give them happiness. People whose
upbringing was/is occurs in the context of deprivation do
not enjoy privilege and the occasions for developing new
habits of right living are foreign to their ordinary
experience." See his The Acquired Virtues as Right (Not
Good) Living: A More Just Description of Moral Expression
"Die erworbenen Tugenden als richtige (nicht gute) Leben-
fuehrung: ein genauerer Ausdruck ethischer Beschreibung,"
Ethische Theories praktisch edited by Franz Furger
(Muenster: Aschendorff, 1991), 23-24.

[101]Ralph Keifer observes, "The major problem is that
the official Church, in whose hands the liturgy is, tends
to be less than affirming about where its membership
lives and affirms life. It is usually only through

Finally, this focus on character can assist the con-
tinued reading of the Scripture by the Church. The com-
munity of Christians engaged in the liturgy and preaching
is not perfect, either in the person of the homilist or
in the listening assembly. Both can err in their inter-
pretation of Scripture and in their own history.
Character formation can assist in the avoidance of inter-
pretative self-deception. The interpretation and perfor-
mance of Scripture requires not only proper biblical
criticism, but also an embodiment of the Scriptural in-
terpretation that produces a certain character. Virtuous
character reinforces faithful interpretation of biblical
texts; corrupt character reinforces failures in interpre-
tation.[102]

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special groups that many people can find a zone of
affirmation for their own moral struggles as these
actually shape the world in which they live." See his
"Liturgy and Ethics: Some Unresolved Dilemmas," Living No
Longer for Ourselves, 81.

[102]Stephen Fowl and L. Gregory Jones argue that
character plays a central role in the ability to
interpret and perform Scripture faithfully. This
position does not discount proper exegesis, but does
suggest that unless a community embodies an
interpretation, the interpretation is in vain. Lacking
virtuous character communities can lose the ability to
read Scripture over-against themselves in ways that
challenge predominant thinking and acting. The authors
cite Paul and the Galatians, the conflict between
Jeremiah and Hananiah and the South African Dutch
Reformed Church as examples. See their Reading In
Communion: Scripture and Ethics in Christian Life (Grand
Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991),
84-109.

Human Nature

In its call to conversion and action, preaching, echoing the entire liturgy, appeals to both the cognitive dimensions as well as the affections of the listeners. The appeal to the affections is not understood as a means of ethical motivation.[103] The liturgy is the communal rehearsal of the affections and virtues of a life in Christ; it is not an imitation of, but a participation in the symbols of faith.[104] By their nature, the Scriptural narratives, which preaching refers to, stretch the horizon of ordinary emotions: the command to love the stranger and the enemy, the reversals inherent in the Beatitudes and the parables, justice as mercy, the death and resurrection of Jesus. The liturgical rituals are a school to transform and reorient the emotions. The Eucharist can renew the emotions of repentance, gratitude, compassion and generosity.[105] In the liturgy, participants engage in behavior proper to a life in God. Transformation occurs as lives are restructured and the

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[103]Saliers, "Liturgy and Ethics: "Some New Beginnings," 187.

[104]Saliers, "Liturgy and Ethics: Some New Beginnings," 181.

[105]William Spohn, "Passion and Principles," Theological Studies 52 (March 1991): 84-85.

possible is made actual. That which is lived in the lit-
urgy is then possible outside it.[106]

Virtue ethics can make a three-fold contribution to
the appeal of preaching and the litergy to a conversion
of the affective dimension of an individual's life.
First, virtue ethics, following Aristotle and Thomas,
suggests that human affectivity does have a role in moral
reflection and that the passions can be educated. In
Thomas the passions are already ordered to reason by vir-
tue of creation.[107] The virtues participate in the proc-
ess of integrating the passions to fully participate in
moral reasoning.[108] This understanding of the passions
in moral agency, that is, acting through empowerment by
an other, offers a connection with Christian agency.[109]
As Hauerwas writes, "Christian character is the formation
of our affections and actions according to the fundamen-
tal beliefs of the Christian faith and life."[110]

Second, the description of human nature in virtue
theory also contributes to preaching by taking into ac-

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[106]Peter Fink, "Imagination and Worship," in The New
Dictionary of Sacramental Worship , 594.

[107]S.T. I-II. 50. 3. ad 1 and 34. 1.

[108]Simon Harak, Virtuous Passions: The Formation of
Christian Character (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 91.

[109]Ibid., 48.

[110]Stanley Hauerwas, Character and the Christian
Life (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1975), 203.

count the process and horizon of growth. The tripartite structure of virtue theory ("who am I?" and "who ought I to become?" and "how do I grow from one position to another?") reflects a realistic assessment of human nature and the potential for moral development. Jesus's preaching rejects the sensible accommodation to human "hardness of heart" and the "evils of the times" of legal tradition of the Pharisees. He challenges all pessimism about human possibility. Although his disciples would always live in a world of conflicting states of mind and action, he did not advocate the sectarianism of the Essenes and even suggested the possibility of good people's contaminating sinners with their goodness.[111]

Third, the understanding of human nature which connects the individual and the society contributes to the understanding of the church community. The early Christians saw themselves as new communities coming into being.[112] The perfectionist language of Scripture was addressed to whole communities, not to isolated religious individuals, as the locus of holiness. This communal form was reflected in the constitution of these communities whose invitation did not stop at any personal, racial, sexual or national boundaries.

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[111]Pheme Perkins, Love Commands In The New Testament (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 49-50.

[112]Perkins, Love Commands in the New Testament, 5-6.

Practical Reason

Earlier in the chapter this study reviewed and com-
pared theological discussion about an overview of the
Roman Catholic theology of preaching and specific refer-
ence in preaching about social issues. It noted that a
certain degree of tension existed between the focus on
concreteness in social justice preaching and the general
approach to preaching as specified by FIYH. Many recom-
mendations for inclusion of Economic Justice in Sunday
homilies acknowledge the tensions brought about by spe-
cific mention of issues and suggest that preachers care-
fully distinguish the word of God and the teaching of the
church about fundamental moral principles from the pru-
dential judgments about concrete policies.[113] The dis-
tinctions made in these discussions are wise and skill-
ful. They flow from an understanding that the role of a
homilist is not to indoctrinate a congregation, but to
function as a facilitator, inviting a community of faith
to critically receive a message of faith which has pro-
found implications for their lives. These distinctions
also flow from the recognition that legitimate compro-
mises are often required on candidates, issues or legis-

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[113]Hollenbach, "Preaching and Politics: The Problem
of Consistency and Compromise", 210.

lation.[114] Not every position can be labeled as a "gospel demand."[115]

As true as these approaches are, they do not exhaust the understanding of preaching about issues of justice. In fact, as this study has suggested, these approaches have a different focus from prior discussions about the relationship of faith and justice. Whereas Economic Justice and other examples of Catholic social ethics focus on economic policies and the role of government, earlier discussions of Catholic social ethics also emphasize the questions of daily life. Since many of issues raised by the Pastoral Letter are both crucial and complex, one can understand its focus. Preaching about social justice, however, requires a fuller understanding that includes the issues of daily living as well as the larger issues of economic life. As Power suggests, the invitation to the transformation of daily relations and actions

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[114]Hollenbach, "Preaching and Politics: The Problem of Consistency and Compromise", 211.

[115]John Coleman writes, "Moralistic critiques follow a strategy of rejection or sheer counter-cultural substitution. Besides being naive, in an anthropological sense, these moralistic approaches neglect the very patient discernment models of culture inherent in the gospel's parable of the wheat and the chaff and its lovely metaphor of faith and discipleship as leavening presence within culture." See his "American Culture As A Challenge to Catholic Intellectuals" President's Conference, St Catherine's College, ed. Cassian Yuhaus, 13-14.

can open the possibilities of new horizons and a conver-
sion to new values.[116]

Virtue ethics contributes to the invitation that
preaching can offer in several ways. First, virtue eth-
ics makes a strong connection to human experience. In
the Summa, Thomas distinguishes between art and pru-
dence[117] which for him is the difference between making
and doing. Art is concerned with making external things.
As a virtue, it perfects the artisan's ability to make
something well. On the other hand, prudence concerns
not only an action, but also the activity within the per-
son.[118]

Second, virtue ethics through the use of the imagi-
nation can encourage a variety of responses to the ques-
tions posed by preaching. Imagination in this account
goes beyond a reflection on the prudential application of
principles. It engages those virtues and values on which
principles are based. The parables are an illustration
of this type of imaginative reasoning.

The use of the parables in social justice preaching
understands that Jesus chose a form of discourse that ap-
pealed to human freedom risked himself with human free-

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[116]Power, "The Song of the Lord in an Alien Land,"
93.

[117]S.T. I-II, q. 57, a. 4.

[118]S.T. II-II q. 47, a. 5.

dom.[119] In both the parables of the Unmerciful Servant
(Matt. 18:23-35) and the Laborers in Vineyard (Matt.
20:1-16), the biblical text plays against the routine
patterns of thinking. The resolution of the tension cre-
ated between expectation and text is possible only within
the arena of the human imagination.[120] These parables
invite the listener to recognize the transformation of
accepted standards of justice into mercy and to partici-
pate in like actions.[121] The parabolic nature of Jesus's
preaching does not dictate a response, but opens the pos-
sibilities for one.[122] Responding is not a matter of re-

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[119]Donahue, The Gospel in Parable, 19.

[120]Brian McDermott, "Power and Parable in Jesus'
Ministry," Above Every Name: The Lordship of Christ and
Social Systems, ed. Thomas E. Clarke, (New York: Paulist
Press, 1980), 83-106.

[121]Donahue writes, "God's justice is not to be
limited by human conceptions of a strict mathematical
judgment where reward is in exact proportion to merit.
Mercy and goodness challenge us to move beyond justice,
even though they do not exist at the expense of justice.
God's ways are not human ways. Those categories of worth
and value which people erect to separate themselves from
others are reversed in God's eyes. See his The Gospel in
Parable, 84-85.

[122]Mark Searle writes, "Thus, the story that Jesus
tells in response to a question or to a particular
situation is one whose unexpected contrasts enable the
listeners to come to an entirely different perspective
concerning the matter at hand. Having come to that new
point of view, they are then left free to decide how to
react. It is typical of Jesus - and therefore of God's
justice - that he does not attempt to force people in a
particular direction but invites them to discover the
true dimensions of the Kingdom and to act accordingly.
By opening up new horizons, Jesus allows his hearers to

peating what Jesus did, but of imitating it.[123] The

faith experience of one generation cannot be a substitute

for the faith experiences of subsequent generations.[124]

Fourth, virtue theory recognizes a variety of roles

in the preaching exercise. Preaching can form con-

sciences by rousing and training them for autonomous and

responsible action in the complexity and changing circum-

stances of contemporary life. The Church then becomes a

moral community without moralizing.[125] Responsibilities

are assumed by the membership of the church who are

equipped as disciples for their task.[126] The diversity

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exercise their freedom in a more complete way." See his
"Serving the Lord With Justice," 30-31.

[123]Jacques-Marie Pohier states that contemporary
Christian should do in their time what Jesus did in his -
overturn the divisions brought about by economic,
cultural, moral and religious systems. Christians are to
look for ways to behave as religiously and socially
scandalously as Jesus did. See his "Preaching on the
Mountain or Dining with Whores?" Concilium Vol. 110, ed.
Franz Bockle and Jacques-Marie Pohiers (New York: Seabury
Press, 1978), 67.

[124]Culbertson, The Poetics of Revelation, 183-185.

[125]Karl Rahner, The Shape of the Church To Come,
trans. Edward Quinn (New York: Seabury Press, 1972), 66.

[126]Ralph A. Keifer writes, "In a pluralistic and
democratic society where the official Church lacks
coercive and legislative power, it seems to me to be
fairly obvious that the primary agents of the Christian
mission are the convinced and convincing laity. Much if
not most of the doing of that mission will be carried out
in collaboration with others, not necessarily, certainly
not exclusively, of the same household of faith and
sometimes of none." See his "Liturgy and Ethics: Some
Unresolved Dilemmas" Living No Longer for Ourselves, 80.

of roles also opens the way for dialogue with a variety

of sources for reflection.[127]

Teleology

Throughout Jesus' preaching about the Kingdom of God
there is a tension between the prophetic and apocalyptic
eschatology offered, that is, between the present and fu-
ture dimensions of the kingdom. Economic Justice under-
stands this tension when it states that the efforts of
justice unfold "between the times" and take place under
the tension between promise and fulfillment.[128] In doing
so, the Pastoral Letter recognizes the provisional nature
of its policy recommendations as well as all activities
that seek to establish justice in the world.

Since the narratives in the Scripture are invita-
tions to imagine and work toward a world reflective of
the values of the Kingdom of God, preaching in light of
this eschatology calls for a broader exercise of the
imagination than the use of principles and prudential
judgments provide. Economic Justice does recognize the

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[127]Porter sees Aquinas as a model for the
incorporation of a variety of sources to ethics. See her
"The Subversion of Virtue: Acquired and Infused Virtues
in the Summa Theologiae," The Annual of the Society of
Christian Ethics (1992): 41.

[128]Economic Justice, no. 53.

"already but not yet", but principles, for the most part,
focus on the present. Virtue ethics has insights in the
virtues that are always being re-defined. The insights
of the present function in a heuristic manner that is
constantly pointing toward the future.

The narratives of Scripture are also heuristic in
that they point to the present as well as the future.
Preaching on these narratives and from virtuous communi-
ties can engage the listeners in way that principles can-
not. Homilies invite the hearers to embody the virtuous
dispositions of these narratives and bring them into his-
tory by their lives and hopes. These narratives are also
embodied in the formation of eschatological communities
characterized by the "presence of the new age in the
midst of the old."[129] One example of a disposition from
Scriptural narratives is the call of Paul for Christians
to be ambassadors of reconciliation (2Cor 5). Christians
are invited to work out the meaning of reconciliation
prudently for the present and the future.

Conclusion

The Liturgy of the Eucharist has an intrinsic rela-
tionship with social ethics. The Eucharist gives the

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[129]E. Clinton Gardner, "Eschatological Ethics," in
The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics, 204.

dominant eschatological direction within which specific operations are planned.[130] Through the use of symbols, the liturgy invites a two-fold reflection invites an understanding on the Christian life. Initially, this reflection invites an understanding of human activity in a moral sense. Intermingled within this process, however, is a deeper reflection about human desires.[131] In failing to satisfy desires completely, the ethical points to the deepest desire of union with God. This union is the ultimate freedom which is the most religious dimension of the gospel and the most important politically.[132]

As a critical part of this reflective process, preaching connects God's revelation and human experience. Homilies attempt to express verbally the meaning of revelation in terms of the historical context in which human questions and concerns arise.[133] Preaching takes into account developments in theological understanding as well as other dimensions of human experience. A social ethical focus in homilies recognizes that justice is a reve-

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[130]Power, "The Song of the Lord in an Alien Land," 89.

[131]Power, "The Song of the Lord in an Alien Land," 89-90.

[132]Power, "The Song of the Lord in an Alien Land," 90.

[133]John f. Haught, "Revelation," in The New Dictionary of Theology, 886.

latory aspect of human relationships. Without justice, the God of revelation can remain obscured or hidden.[134] Preaching encourages a reflection on the practice of justice and its deeper connection to union with God.

Recent discussions on preaching and social ethics are very cognizant of the theological dimensions of justice and the liturgy. The preoccupation with "concreteness" or "specificity" in homilies, however, can detract from the goals in Economic Justice, and Catholic social teaching in general, of uniting the spiritual and moral life and empowering Christian discipleship and citizenship. These discussions, which seek to appropriate the distinction between moral principles and prudential judgments for use in preaching, consequently, use the language of degree and compromise.[135] Although they encourage a process of moral discernment necessary for concrete action, the description focuses on intellectual clarity and the use of critical reflection.[136] What is offered, in the words of H. Richard Niebuhr, has the effect of amounting to an "outer history" instead of the

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[134]Haught, "Revelation," 891.

[135]Hollenbach, "Preaching and Politics: The Problem of Consistency and Compromise," 210-211.

[136]Gustafson, "Moral Discernment in the Christian Life," Theology and Christian Ethics, 103. Gustafson notes that this description is insufficient to exhaust the understanding of discernment.

closer connection with an "inner history".[137] For

Niebuhr, the role of the church is to provide a context

for the intimacy of the "inner history" to be experi-

enced. The connection with the revelation of God in his-

tory, the basis of just activity, is membership in a com-

munity founded on "inner history".[138]

Through the assistance of an ethics of virtue, homi-

letic theology has a greater opportunity to integrate the

preaching about justice with the liturgy than with the

discussion of the application of principles. This advan-

tage is manifest in several ways. First, virtue theory,

through its language of the virtues, is more reflective

of human experience than language of principles. The

virtues of charity and prudence, the questions of striv-

ing and attaining, can better integrate faith and daily

living than the expression of the right principle and

suggestions for its application. As Schillebeeckx ob-

serves, the contrast experience between what is occurring

and the reality of the Christian life occurs in an act of

personal and affective synthesis, not on the rational

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[137]The distinction, "inner history" and "outer
history" comes from H. Richard Niebuhr. "Outer history"
is external history which chronicles the past as
understood within events. "Inner history" reflects on
the value and meaning of events through the narrative of
a community. See his The Meaning of Revelation (New
York: MacMillan, 1941), 44.

[138]Haught, "Revelation," 890.

level of principles and analysis.[139] Second, the experi-
ence of the liturgy is directed toward the whole individ-
ual, mind as well as body and emotions. Virtue theory
complements this attention with an understanding of place
of the passions in moral reasoning. Third, both the
irony and apparent contradictions of the parables, and
the hopeful testimony of the eschatological texts find
their formulations in present reality more readily en-
couraged in the exercise of prudence and the moral vir-
tues than the prudential application of principles.

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[139]Schillebeeckx, "Church, Magisterium and
Politics," God and the Future of Man, 154.

CONCLUSION

The thesis of this dissertation proposes that the goals established for the Pastoral Letter, _Economic Justice_, would have been advanced by the use of an ethics of virtue approach to moral reasoning. The study agrees with those who suggest that an ethics of virtue, through a comprehensive account of moral living and its flexible moral vocabulary, offers a viable alternative to the application of moral principles in Catholic social ethics.

As has been demonstrated, _Economic Justice_ was developed with a broad consultation and under public reviews, which permitted the drafting committee to present to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops a final text rooted in an unprecedented and unique reliance on current Catholic moral reflection from a wide range of sources. Despite the use of these procedures, the advance of _Economic Justice_ remains primarily one of academic interest.

This dissertation claims that the bishops's desire for the church to assemble as a "community of moral discourse"[1] in order to discuss the questions of justice did not occur. The development process, though it included the expertise of professionals in the field of government

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[1]See James Gustafson, "The Church: A Community of Moral Discourse," _The Church as Moral Decision-Maker_ (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, 1970), 83-95.

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and economics, did not include those who bear the conse-
quences of economic activity. Since Economic Justice was
not rooted in community consensus, it became another form
of directives from the "top-down," which has occasioned
only "bottom-up" commentaries.[2] As Fiorenza states, re-
ception does not give religious meaning its truth, but
rather the meaning of a religious vision depends on how
it is received and transformed into a living belief and
praxis.[3]

The use of an ethics of virtue as one way to under-
stand and extend the goals of Economic Justice presented
a number of questions addressed in the dissertation.
First, as an ethical method, virtue ethics had been
eclipsed by deontological thought and consequentialism.
Contemporary usage of virtue thought, therefore, requires
not only retrieval of classical sources, but also criti-
cal application to radically different contexts than
those of its origins. Second, since contemporary virtue
theory is an emerging ethical approach with several dif-
ferent voices, its usage also necessitates a evaluation
of these variations. Third, an ethics of virtue needs to
demonstrate its ability to speak to the two audiences ad-

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[2]Paul Lakeland, Theology and Critical Theory: The
Discourse of the Church (Nashville: Abingdon Press,
1990), 189-191.

[3]Fiorenza, Foundational Theology, 237.

dressed in _Economic Justice_: the Roman Catholic Community
and the citizens of the United States. The main thrust
of this study has been dedicated to substantiating the
claim that virtue thought is capable of meeting these
challenges and contributing to the task of Catholic
social ethics.

Even though it seems to contradict a long tradition
of ethical reflection, this claim is plausible for sev-
eral reasons. The recent contribution of Thomistic moral
studies (Porter, Keenan, Nelson and Wadell) offer a nec-
essary corrective to earlier appropriations of virtue
thought and answer initial criticisms. Moreover,
Catholic moral theology, with a focus on the moral sub-
ject, has made increasing reference to narrative and
character in an attempt to modify the use of principles.
Furthermore, Catholic social ethics, in an effort to ex-
pand Murray's foundation of public philosophy, has spoken
of Scripture and the Tradition as contributing to the
moral imagination. The conclusion of this study now
turns to a review of the specific and general ways that
an ethics of virtue can assist the task of Catholic so-
cial ethics as reflected in _Economic Justice_.

The first area of assistance is the description of
justice. One of the aims of John Rawls's _A Theory of
Justice_ is to overcome the limitations of liberal eco-
nomic theory in meeting the needs of the least advan-

taged. In <u>Economic Justice</u>, the bishops address the same concern with a decidedly different approach to poverty. The Pastoral Letter is a response to the question, "What should I do?", instead of "How should I fare?".[4] It favors a more concrete than abstract definition of poverty, and contextual, rather than straightforward, application. These differences flow from an understanding of communal life which is constitutive of, rather than simply available to, human existence.[5]

Although this difference in the description of human nature, along with a marked contrast in teleological understanding, should not be minimized, there is one area in which <u>Economic Justice</u> does share a commonality with Rawls and other liberal theorists. Both <u>A Theory of Justice</u> and the Pastoral Letter have a distinctly modern emphasis in the discussions of justice, and follow a modern form of ethical analysis. In Rawls's text and the bishops' letter, justice is described primarily as distributive, and examined as the attribute of economic, social and political systems. Each work uses an ethical method of analysis that focuses on principles and their application with virtues in a subsidiary, motivational

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[4]Mara, "Poverty and Justice: The Bishops and Contemporary Liberalism", 166-167.

[5]Mara, "Poverty and Justice: The Bishops and Contemporary Liberalism", 171-172.

role. Though this focus on justice is understandable in light of similar concerns to remedy the excesses of liberal economic theory, it does give rise to a criticism that Economic Justice does not address the daily questions of justice in individual lives.

In describing justice as a virtue, virtue ethics relies upon Thomas's analysis of moral activity. For Thomas, the acquired virtues are descriptions of right activity, not moral goodness. Their role is neither motivational nor exhortative. The virtues bear content, and focus moral reasoning toward proximate ends. In discussing moral activity, Thomas does not focus primarily on external actions as many contemporary accounts do. He expands the description to include immanent as well as transient activity. Moral reasoning, he states, has its origin in the intention, not in the act.[6] It begins in a focus on immanent activity; a consideration of the formal object, not particular ways of acting.[7]

Thomas's description of moral reasoning places the discussion of justice in a fuller light. As a principle for application in economic systems, justice can seem remote from individual lives in daily living. As a virtue,

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[6]Keenan, Goodness and Rightness in Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae, 81.

[7]Keenan, Goodness and Rightness in Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae, 109.

the focus of justice begins with a consideration of the immanent activity of a moral subject and flows into his or her transient activity. Justice transforms the subject as well as the subject's activity. Joined with prudence, the virtue of justice allows the agent to examine social systems for their capacity to support the minimum means of virtuous activity,[8] and reflect on ways for citizens to participate in framing laws and carrying them out.[9] Through the understanding of the virtue of justice the question posed in Economic Justice, "What should I do?", enters into closer proximity to those who are asked to answer it.

The second area of contribution to Catholic social ethics from virtue theory is a clarification of the roles of clergy and laity in church teaching. Economic Justice received warm approval for offering a local reflection on economics in the spirit of Octagesima Adveniens, and for following a broad consultation process. Many critics, however, questioned the competency of the bishops to specify concrete judgments about economic policy. Such criticism overshadowed the Pastoral Letter's careful distinctions between moral principles and prudential judgments.

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[8]Nelson, The Priority of Prudence, 37.

[9]Porter, The Recovery of Virtue, 164-165.

Commentators offered several criticisms of the bish-
ops' attempts to advance beyond writing about "appealing
generalities." These included: the leadership role of
the clergy in social justice efforts (Higgins), the pres-
ervation of religious authority (Dulles), and the sepa-
rate role of experts (Bayer). Despite their differences,
each critique shares a common recognition of the need for
ethical guidance among those who face the questions of
daily economic life. In his review of the drafting com-
mittee's efforts, Rembert Weakland spoke of advancing to
a process of teaching that would refocus attention away
from the question of the degree of specificity with which
the bishops should speak.[10]

Catholic social teaching generally follows a schema
that proceeds from a "contrast experience" to an elabora-
tion of a vision of reality drawn from Scripture and tra-
dition, and results in faith's common values articulated
in general moral principles.[11] Economic Justice is an
example of this schema in its attempt to articulate moral
principles in biblically sensitive and historically con-
scious ways.[12] The Pastoral Letter does not use princi-

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[10]Weakland, "The Church in Worldly Affairs: Tensions
Between the Clergy and Laity," 215.

[11]Haight and Langan, "Recent Catholic Social and
Ethical Teaching in Light of the Social Gospel," 114-155.

[12]Magill, "Public Religious Dialogue: The Economic
Pastoral And The Hermeneutics of Democracy," 682.

ples in a negative critique alone[13], but to engage its audience imaginatively in thinking and acting differently.[14] Despite these efforts to inform the imagination, Economic Justice is often perceived as church leaders dictating solutions to economic problems.

An ethics of virtue clarifies the role of church leadership in social ethics in two ways. First, virtue theory provides a deeper level of engagement in the process. Writing before the Pastoral Letter, Hollenbach stated that the prophetic insight was a personal and affective synthesis, and not an analysis of principles and applications. There was a need, he said, of weighing and testing experience before formulating insights into principles or plans for social and economic change.[15] In speaking of a moral subject as a "doer" and not a "maker", virtue theory offers an account of evaluating experience that is wider than a discussion of principles and their application. When virtue ethics describes the immanent operation of the reflective process, it emphasizes the transformation of the moral subject as well as

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[13]See Hollenbach's criticism of the exclusive negative function of principles in Catholic social teaching. See his "A Prophetic Church and the Catholic Sacramental Imagination," 246.

[14]Economic Justice, n. 25.

[15]Hollenbach, "A Prophetic Church and the Catholic Sacramental Imagination," 247.

the activity. The tripartite structure of virtue ethics details a process moving progressively forward: the individual and his or her capacity for justice becoming better. This progression is corporate as well as individual. The role of church leadership in this process is to maintain the tension between the present and the future, the historical and the ideal.[16] Leadership does so by encouraging the reflective process (rethinking accepted responses in light of deepening faith) and suggesting the means to do so (the virtues). Although Economic Justice attempts to stimulate new ways of thinking and acting, virtue theory seems closer to Schillebeeckx's insight into the pastoral prophetic function of the church to "call forth" and "to stimulate a continuous search" in preparation for the future.[17]

Second, virtue theory suggests a way for the church leadership to speak specifically. In asking what an economy does to, and for, citizens, the bishops propose to examine economic relationships.[18] The Pastoral Letter

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[16]Keenan, "The Issue of Compelling Assent: Magisterium, Conscience and Oaths," 221.

[17]As Schillebeeckx notes, the ethical formulation of principles is neither the most important nor the most decisive. A Christian's life, he states, is not helped by the proposal of general principles, since such principles are the tail end of a preceding history. See his "Church, Magisterium and Politics," 155-156, 164-165.

[18]Economic Justice, n. 1.

does so by making policy recommendations for greater participation in economic life based upon moral principles. This procedure has led to many criticisms of the Letter. Virtue theory's specification would draw closer to the intent of the Pastoral Letter by promoting actions and values in the context of virtues. Following Hollenbach's earlier statement that prophetic insights arise in the midst of practices,[19] an ethics of virtue examines practices and their relationships to institutions. The role of the church would be to develop discriminating patterns of judgment about internal and external goods. This type of examination incorporates the achievement of just institutions with the formation of just people in a way that the evaluation of economic activities alone cannot. Using virtue thought, the bishops' critique could function as a call for the reinstitution of those social practices that are able to form individuals in the virtues necessary for the sustenance of just institutions.[20]

The third area of contribution to Catholic Social Ethics is a clearer focus on the religious identity of church statements. Economic Justice spends considerable time reflecting on the Scriptural and moral foundations

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[19]Hollenbach, "A Prophetic Church and the Catholic Sacramental Imagination," 247.

[20]Jones, "Should Christians Affirm Rawls's Justice as Fairness? A Response to Professor Beckley," 265.

of its argumentation. It is evident, however, that the theological warrants offered in the Pastoral Letter are placed at the service of the economic analysis and policy recommendations.[21] Dulles observes that the impression given is that, in the eyes of the bishops, structuring of human society in more habitable terms is more important than faith or holiness. He states, additionally, that the Letter's lack of eschatological reference suggests that the authors have little confidence in the church's spiritual patrimony.[22]

Virtue ethics can bolster the religious identity of Catholic Social Teaching by a firmer connection to Scripture and foundational theology than the use of principles allow. The use of the Christian Scriptures for social ethics follows a complex pattern. As Ogletree states, economic systems for producing and distributing the means of subsistence were not viewed as objects for critical thought in the early Christian communities. This approach contrasts with pentateuchal traditions and prophetic literature. In Synoptic thought, however, there is much comment about the disposition of material

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[21]See Donald Senior, "The New Testament and the U.S. Economy," The Bible Today Vol. 24 No. 6 (November 1986): 357-362 for the author's attempt to connect the call for basic justice in the Pastoral Letter with the underlying motif of biblical inclusion in the Christian Scriptures.

[22]Dulles, "The Gospel, The Church and Politics," 643.

resources and what these resources mean for spiritual life. Accordingly, social ethics, Ogletree states, is the work of the productive imagination. It takes into account the eschatology of the gospels, which provides matrices of experience, to generate new insights in exploring the meaning of Christian existence in different economic circumstances.[23]

Virtue ethics follows the contours of New Testament thought by appealing, like the preaching of Jesus, to the reflective pattern in individuals. Jesus sends his disciples out to strive for the right. He tells them that rightness is not found in terms of laws or norms, and there is no upward limit in what is right. They are constantly to embody the Kingdom in new and inventive ways (the Parables), while always realizing that no effort completes the Kingdom (the eschatological orientation). The tripartite structure of virtue ethics reflects the dimensions of the New Testament preaching by focusing on the growth of the individual as well as his or her activities.

The fourth area where virtue ethics can make a contribution to Catholic social ethics is in the effort to construct a public theology. As Rahner states, the Catholic Church can achieve something more in its rela-

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[23]Ogletree, The Use Of The Bible In Christian Ethics, 117-118.

tionship to the secularized world than mere counseling of the world by preaching principles and mere collaboration through individuals working in secular institutions.[24] The authors of Economic Justice recognize the importance of the church's acting as a sacrament for the world in their attempts to broaden the discussion of justice beyond a minimalist understanding. Virtue ethics can assist these efforts in the ways in which it corresponds to contemporary pluralistic conversations. These conversations have the following contours: 1) arguments arise in the local community that one comes from; 2) pluralistic communities acknowledge the diversity of reasoning backgrounds and the presupposition of their members; and, 3) there is a need for a method to bridge the ethical foundations that diversify the participants. Virtue theory argues that: 1) that the virtues can provide a moral articulation of the values of the Christian community; and, 2) the virtues can serve as a bridge for discussion between diverse communities through their ability to describe spheres of life that all people experience.

In addition to offering assistance to these specific questions of Catholic social ethics, virtue ethics is also of general assistance to the process of moral rea-

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[24]Karl Rahner, "Theological Reflections On The Problem of Secularization," Theological Investigations Vol. X (New York: Herder and Herder, 1973), 331.

soning in this post-modern age. This ability is able to overcome Hollenbach's criticism of MacIntyre's and Hauerwas's failure to appreciate the new possibilities for expressing love of one's neighbor by engaging in the process of cultural transformation.[25]

A survey of the literature describing post-modernism reveals both the expected and the surprising. There are many expositions of the limitations of the Enlightenment project and liberal economic theory. What is more sur-prising, however, are the proscriptions for future thought. Many thinkers are quite positive about the prospects. Their analysis suggests that the Enlightenment began not as an assertion of autonomy, but a valiant attempt to meet the anxiety that ensued as the medieval world collapsed.[26] The present shift of Western thought away from the Enlightenment project contains within it the seeds for the next paradigm.[27] These thinkers state that it is neither possible to cling to modernity in its historical form nor possible to reject

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[25]Hollenbach, "Justice As Participation", 224.

[26]Susan Bordo, The Flight to Objectivity: Essays on Cartesianism and Culture (Albany: State University Press of New York, 1987. See also Toulmin, Cosmopolis, 57, 212.

[27]Edward Vacek, "Popular Ethical Subjectivism: Four Preludes to Objectivity," Horizons 11 (1984): 42-60. Vacek argues that prevalent forms of subjectivism which reject objectivism can in fact prepare an individual for an ethics inclusive of subjectivity and objectivity.

it totally. What is needed is to reform modernity by hu-
manizing it.[28]

Virtue theory contributes to this effort, not by
constructing a full alternative world, but by providing
the pieces, materials, and resources out of which a new
world can be imagined.[29] This contribution can be meas-
ured in the four ways that reflection is being broadened
to include again the dimensions of the oral, the particu-
lar, the local, and the timely.[30] In the oral, rhetoric,
as well as narrative, assumes an importance. Virtue the-
ory complements the attention of rhetoric to the histori-
cal and concrete circumstances of the speaker speaking
and the reader reading.[31] The particular revives casu-
istry or case ethics. Through the virtue of prudence,
virtue ethics provides a dependable moral taxonomy.
Virtue theory assists the return to the local by empha-
sizing the way in which moral questions are raised and
reflected upon in different cultural and historical con-
texts. Finally, virtue theory reflects the shift to
timeliness by understanding moral action in the context

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[28]Toulmin, Cosmopolis, 180-181.

[29]Brueggemann, Texts Under Negotiation, 19-20.

[30]Toulmin, Cosmopolis, 186-190.

[31]Cunningham, "Theology As Rhetoric", 423-424.

of reflecting as the occasion requires, and not just the calculation of timeless formulae.

In sum, this study began with the intention of contributing to Catholic Social Ethics, and as a challenge to the method chosen by the authors of <u>Economic Justice</u>. Despite the advances in procedure, and intense grappling with the complexities of economic living, the achievements of the Pastoral Letter are less than expected. If this study has been successful, it has opened the way for a consideration of virtue ethics for service in Catholic Social ethics, and suggested several areas for further study in the complex, but necessary, endeavor of ethical reflection in and on economic life.

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"<u>Economic Justice</u>" Through The Eyes Of An Ethics of
Virtue

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The application of an ethics of virtue to Catholic
social ethics requires several steps. First, there is
required a retrieval of virtue theory from its classical
sources. Virtue ethics originated in ancient Greek phi-
losophy and continued its development in medieval scho-
lastic thought. The philosopher Aristotle and the theo-
logian Thomas Aquinas are most responsible for its accep-
tance as a mode of moral reasoning. During the Enligh-
tenment virtue theory was rejected as a basis of ethics
and moral philosophers, like Kant, began evolve a deonto-
logical approach to ethics commonly known as duty ethics.
Beginning with Elizabeth Anscombe in 1959, moral theor-
ists started to reexamine aspects of virtue theory, such
as its emphasis on moral character, as a way to address
perceived limitations in deontological thought. During
succeeding decades philosophers and theologians have de-
bated the efficacy of virtue thought for moral reasoning
in the post-modern age. Although a final form of virtue

ethics does not yet exist, the outline of its theory has reached a level of critical acceptance for application in moral philosophy and moral theology.

The second step in this study is an examination of the applicability of an ethics of virtue for use in Catholic social ethics. In 1986, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops published the Pastoral Letter on Catholic social teaching and the U.S. Economy entitled, <u>Economic Justice For All</u>. This study analyses the ethical approach of the Pastoral Letter in light of its goals to address both the membership of the Catholic Community as well as the citizen of the United States. The final part of this study makes critical application of certain aspects of virtue theory in an effort to determine the benefit of an ethics of virtue for discussions of justice as directed by the Pastoral Letter and an overall approach to Catholic social ethics.

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