VIRTUE ETHICS: NATURAL AND CHRISTIAN

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The article seeks to give an account of Christian virtue ethics. To this end, it first examines virtue and natural virtue ethics deriving from the Aristotelian tradition and its contemporary incarnation. It then considers Christian virtue ethics deriving from the following of Jesus the Christ, and compares and contrasts this virtue ethics with natural virtue ethics. It concludes by offering an account of virtues necessary to human flourishing in the contemporary world.

J ESUS' PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN provides the keynote to what follows:

A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But when a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was and saw him, he had compassion and went up to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him (Lk 10:29–34, RSV).

This parable, one of Jesus' best known, is open to many interpretations, but Christians have long privileged one moral interpretation by naming the Samaritan in the story the "Good Samaritan." By implication the priest and the Levite are, at least, less good. We suggest, from within our

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perspective of virtue ethics, that all three agents in the story are good and moral according to the principles and actions imitated and learned in their own communities. That alternative interpretation of the story demands explanation.

Contemporary ethics takes three normative approaches to determining the morality of an action: (1) the utilitarian approach, which gauges morality by utility; (2) the deontological approach, which emphasizes rules, obligations, and duties; and (3) the "new" virtue-ethical approach, which gives precedence not to the actions of the agents but to their personal characters formed in their respective moral communities and learned through the imitation of respected role models in those communities. We share with Philippa Foot and Alasdair MacIntyre the judgment that neither utilitarianism nor deontology offers an adequately comprehensive moral theory, indeed that, because of them, "We have—very largely if not entirely—lost our comprehension, both theoretical and practical, of morality."[1] We join with them and the many other modern ethicists who advance virtue ethics as a normative ethics more promising to the moral life than utilitarianism or deontology.[2] In what follows we give an account—incomplete, due to space restrictions—of virtue ethics (and our interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan). That requires, first, a virtue *theory* and then, based on that theory, a virtue *ethics*.

VIRTUE THEORY

Since the notion of *virtue* is central to this article, we need to be clear from the outset what we mean by *virtue*. We need a virtue theory. We may begin, as such studies often do, in the Western tradition, generally with the great Greeks, specifically in this essay with Aristotle. He defines virtue as "a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean."[3] Aquinas follows Aristotle's tradition but rephrases his definition. A virtue, he argues, is a habit or a disposition[4] ordered to an act.[5] Mennonite theologian Joseph Kotva's contemporary definition is similar, if slightly more

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[1] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1984) 2. See also G. E. M. Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," *Philosophy* 33 (1958) 1–19; and Philippa Foot, "Moral Beliefs," in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 59 (1958–1959) 83–104.

[2] In addition to Foot and MacIntyre, whom most judge to be the preeminent modern virtue theorists, other important theorists in the field of virtue ethics will be introduced as the article unfolds.

[3] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (hereafter *NE*), trans. David Ross, intro. Lesley Brown (New York: Oxford University, 2009) II,6.1106b. See Rosalind Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics* (New York: Oxford University, 1999) 11.

[4] *Summa theologiae* (hereafter *ST*) 1–2, q. 49, a. 1.

[5] Ibid. a. 3.

specific: virtues are "those states of character [habits or dispositions] that enable or contribute to the realization of the human good." Virtues are involved in "both the intellectual and rational part of the self and the affective or desiring part of the self."[6]

As character state or habit, virtue not only explains why a person acts this way on this particular occasion but also why the person can be relied on to act this way always or, given human frailty, at least most of the time. Immediately, then, we can isolate three dimensions of a virtue: it is a character state, habit, or disposition; it involves a judgment of truth and choice of action; and it lies in a mean between excess and defect. These three dimensions of virtue, most proponents of virtue and virtue ethics agree, are essential to its definition. "Each of the virtues involves getting things right, for each involves *phronesis*, or practical wisdom, which is the ability to reason correctly about practical matters."[7] Without *phronesis*, no right action, and therefore no virtue, is possible. In the next section we will have much to say about practical wisdom and practical judgment.

Common to all theories of virtue, including Aristotle's, is the essential notion that virtues are not only preconditions for human flourishing but also constituents of that flourishing. "A virtue is a character trait that human beings, given their physical and psychological nature, need to flourish (or to do and fare well)."[8] The person who has the virtues of benevolence and justice will be a benevolent and just person, who will act benevolently and justly. This direction was mapped out by Aristotle, who names the ultimate human good *eudaimonia*,[9] happiness or fulfillment, and was Christianized by Aquinas, who names the ultimate Christian good union with God achieved through the virtue of *caritas*,[10] charity or self-sacrificing love. Given their different ends—happiness in the case of Aristotelian virtue ethics, union with God in the case of Christian virtue ethics—we would expect the two ethics to be different, and we will argue later that they are different.

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[6] Joseph J. Kotva Jr., *The Christian Case for Virtue Ethics* (Washington: Georgetown University, 1996) 23.

[7] Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics* 12.

[8] Rosalind Hursthouse, "Applying Virtue Ethics," in *Virtues and Reason: Philippa Foot and Moral Theory*, ed. Rosalind Hursthouse, Gavin Lawrence, and Warren Quinn (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995) 57–75, at 68. See also Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics* 13; Gregory Trianosky, "Supererogation, Wrongdoing, and Vice: On the Autonomy of the Ethics of Virtue," *Journal of Philosophy* 83 (1986) 26–40; Brad Hooker, "Does Moral Virtue Constitute a Benefit to the Agent?" in *How Should One Live?: Essays on the Virtues*, ed. Roger Crisp (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998) 141–55.

[9] *NE* I.4.1095a.   [10] *ST* 1, q. 23, a. 6.

A central element of Aristotle's definition of virtue is that it is the result of deliberation and choice; it is rational as man himself is rational (and for Aristotle it is always *a man* who is rational, never a woman, a gender inequality that contemporary ethicists rightly do not accept). Deliberation is of possible choice and action, and choice is of one action in preference to others. Choice involves reason, thought,[11] and *phronesis* or practical wisdom and judgment. The choice of one action in preference to others is made of the mean that is appropriate and proportionate for this particular person, on this occasion, and for the right reason.

The mean that is virtuous action is not an arithmetic mean but a mean relative to the individual and the circumstances in which the individual finds himself or herself. The arithmetic mean between ten and two pounds of food is six pounds, but six pounds would be "too little for Milo" (a famous wrestler of Aristotle's day) and too much for "the beginner in athletic exercises." The mean to be chosen, therefore, is "not in the object but relatively to us."[12] Importantly, deliberation is about means, never about ends; ends are given and not to be deliberated. Aristotle's virtue ethics is thoroughly teleological; the final end is human happiness or flourishing. Virtuous actions are means to that end, and deliberation and choice are about those means and their contribution to the end. We deliberate only about what lies in our power to do or not do;[13] actions we are forced to do are not freely chosen and therefore cannot be either virtuous or vicious, moral or immoral. It is because we are rational that we can know, first, that action is called for, and second, that we can choose this virtuous action or this vicious action. Virtue is ineluctably a rational activity, and to fully understand it a theory of rationality and knowledge is required. To that we now turn.

Knowledge

That virtue includes a rational, intellectual, deliberative, and decisive dimension means that some epistemological theory is required for its full understanding. To act rightly is not only to act rightly in choice and action; it is also to know rightly and to feel rightly. To understand rightly the process of human knowing, we espouse the epistemology established by Bernard Lonergan in his magisterial *Insight*, and we believe that epistemology fully elucidates both the process of coming to know and the process of coming to virtue. "All human beings," Aristotle teaches, "desire to know by nature."[14] Lonergan agrees, arguing that human knowing originates in

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[11] *NE* III.2.1112a.
[13] *NE* III.3.1112a.
[12] *NE* II.6.1106b.
[14] Aristotle, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, ed. Joseph Sachs (Santa Fe: Green Lion, 1999) 980a 20.

the "pure desire to know," in "the inquiring and critical spirit of man."[15] There is no human knowledge, no genuine answer, without a prior question. Human knowing is not simply "taking a look" at reality. It is endlessly discursive, that is, it cycles and recycles through various levels of cognitive activity until knowledge and truth are reached in the judgment, deliberated on, and a decisive choice is made for action according to truth. It begins with attention and cycles on through perception, imagination (sometimes as memory), insight, conceptualization, deliberation, and weighing of evidence, and culminates in the judgment of truth.[16] It is in the judgment of truth and only in the judgment of truth that genuine human knowledge and truth are achieved. This judgment may be followed by decision and action, and it is only at the moment of decision and action that morality enters in.

Perception is critical in the process of coming to know. Perception, Lonergan argues, is a function of a subject's relationship to an object, the subject's active patterning of the object, a dialectical interaction between the personal subject and the object in the phenomenal world. The phenomenal object does not simply impress itself upon rational subjects, as it impresses itself upon nonrational animals, nor do rational subjects simply construct or project it. Rather, the appearances of the phenomenal world are already shaped by the subjects' attention, short-term and long-term interests, loves of varying intensity, immediate and ultimate goals, the intensity of their emotional interactions, and in general the character lens through which subjects view the object.[17] The phenomenal world that persons encounter and attend to is not one of naked sense data that is "out, there, now, real,"[18] but a world already shaped by their subjective interpretations called perceptions. Perception is an exercise of practical reason leading to choice: what we "see" is a function of who we are. This claim will later have implications for virtue ethics.

William James puts the cognitive psychology nicely: "My experience is what I agree to attend to. Only those items which I notice shape my mind—without selective interest experience is an utter chaos."[19] The Good Samaritan and his two clerical compatriots had the same retinal sensations of the same body on the same road, but because of different perceptions, that is, personally interpreted, sensations, they really "saw" and "experienced" two different realities lying on the road. Character states or habits

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[15] Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (London: Longmans, 1957) 348.

[16] Ibid. 273–74.   [17] Ibid. 190.

[18] Ibid. 251; see also Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder, 1972) 263.

[19] William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1983) 380–81.

explain not only why a person acts a certain way on a given occasion but also why the person acts this way always. Character is a set of enduring personal states or habits that affect how a person perceives, judges, acts, and ultimately lives. That is why philosopher of science Norwood Russell Hanson notes that "there is more to seeing than meets the eyeball."[20]

What, we may ask, does perception have to do with virtue? Aristotle writes that "we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts."[21] We pose two questions to that assertion. First, how do we know which actions are just and, therefore, to be performed? Second, what motivation might we have for performing those actions? The first question is easily answered. We learn what just acts (or acts of any other virtue) are from respected others—parents, teachers, mentors, friends, "saints," whom we hold as virtuous and moral. We judge an action right and moral if it is one that a virtuous person would do in the circumstances, and it is by imitation of the virtuous person that we learn which actions are right, moral, and virtuous. We need to be careful, however, how we understand the word *learn*.

Words, expositions, and arguments will never make anyone virtuous, for virtues are habits or states learned only by repeated and habitual performance. It is via habitual action, critically questioned and requestioned in the cycle of attention, perception, insight, judgment, decision, and action, that we come to learn and value the goodness, for instance, of the virtues of justice and love and the goodness of just, loving, and virtuous actions in general. The perception of moral relevance is the product of both experience and habituation, but, we repeat, there is no real morality until that moral relevance is judged to be true in the judgment of truth and then is followed by personal decision and action. Aristotle is pointing at this critical approach to learning virtues when he claims that "a morally praiseworthy act must be done in full awareness of *what* we are doing and *why* we do it. It must be an act freely chosen and not done from coercion."[22] We have already pointed out the universal Catholic position that morality enters the process of knowing only at the stage of decision and action. There is no moral action prior to my choice to do this action, nor is there any moral praise to be earned from simply imitating another person. "We are morally obliged not only to *act* well but also to *think* well."[23] That

[20] Norwood Russell Hanson, *Patterns of Discovery: An Inquiry into the Conceptual Foundations of Science* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 1958) 7.

[21] *NE* II.1, 1103b1–2.

[22] Robert J. Fitterer, *Love and Objectivity in Virtue Ethics: Aristotle, Lonergan, and Nussbaum on Emotions and Moral Insight* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2008) 6, emphasis original.

[23] Ibid., emphasis original.

thinking well, Aristotle and Lonergan agree, requires moral agents to be open to ongoing inquiry and consequent reflective grasp of their attention, perception, understanding, judgment, and decision, for personal bias and pleasure can distort them and will need to be corrected.[24]

The second question about motivation is also easily answered. MacIntyre situates virtues within a broad category he names *practice*, a "coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity."[25]

That complex definition requires instantiation for clarification. That a practice is a "socially established cooperative human activity" signals the importance of membership in, and the influence of, a community and culture on the individual learning virtue. The form of "socially established cooperative human activity" in focus here is the search for virtue or goodness; "goods internal to that form of activity" are the virtues themselves as defined in the community and culture; the desire "to achieve those standards of excellence [in that culture] appropriate to" being virtuous provides motivation to strive to achieve those virtuous goods. It is a central claim of virtue theory from Aristotle to MacIntyre that virtues are shaped in a community and culture by narratives and role models judged to be virtuous.

Virtues are *learned*—and can only be learned—within particular communities; they can be *sustained* only in those communities; they get their *content* from communities; they get their *worth* and convey worth only from and in community; and they *act back* on communities to sustain them.[26] Humans are not absolutely the autonomous and self-determining persons they are often claimed to be. Persons who are "role-figures"[27] first exemplify what it means to be just, loving, and so on, and then by personal repetition of acts of justice and love individuals who have learned from them establish those virtues as their own personal habits and dispositions. As habits are stabilized, both the virtuous exemplars and the acts of virtue learned from them need to be more and more focused and "purified" by critical examination and reexamination in the process of knowing that issues in the judgment of truth, value, decision, and action. This process of critical examination and reexamination not only purifies agents and their

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[24] *NE* II.9, 1109b1–12; Lonergan, *Insight* 225–42.

[25] MacIntyre, *After Virtue* 187.

[26] See Lawrence Bloom, "Community and Virtue," in *How Should One Live?* 231–50.

[27] Daniel Statman, "Introduction to Virtue Ethics," in *Virtue Ethics: A Critical Reader*, ed. Daniel Statman (Washington: Georgetown University, 1997) 1–41, at 15.

virtues but also leads them nearer to the self-determination and authenticity that enable their full morality.[28] MacIntyre is still correct, however, when he asserts the sociologically accepted position that "separated from the *polis* [community and culture], what could have been a human being becomes instead a wild animal."[29]

Caroline Walker Bynum registers an important caveat to this discussion of role models, warning us that "medieval hagiographers pointed out repeatedly that saints are not even primarily 'models' for ordinary mortals; the saints are far too dangerous for that."[30] The saint, Keenan observes, "has always been an original, never an imitation,"[31] a judgment that is empirically supported by a quick scan of what Jennifer Herdt calls "the rainbow cast of saints. . . . All are understood as having imitated Christ, but they are nevertheless a far cry from carbon copies of one another."[32] Augustine is not Maria Goretti, Therese of Lisieux is not Theresa of Calcutta, Francis is not Dorothy Day. The saints are all originals; they became virtuous and morally excellent in their own ways, and so too must all moral agents become virtuous and morally excellent in their own ways. They must become authentically, virtuously, and morally themselves, not simply clones of Augustine or Therese or Maria Goretti. Yet we do learn from those whom we judge to be virtuous and moral. The virtuous role model from whom we learn virtue, first, by *mimesis* or imitation offers a historical, living, and respected account of human flourishing and a demonstration that the virtues are both means and constituents of that flourishing. "We ought to attend to the undemonstrated sayings and opinions of experienced and older people or of people of practical wisdom not less than to demonstrations; for, because experience has given them an eye, they see aright."[33]

As we learn from role models, we must also submit them, their character, and their flourishing to critical attention, perception, insight, and the judgment that these role models are or are not flourishing, virtuous persons and that their virtues are means to their flourishing and wll be to ours *in our*

[28] Jennifer A. Herdt, in her *Putting on Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2008), gives a splendid account of the historical travails of this mimetic approach to learning virtue and ultimately comes down in its favor.

[29] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1988) 98.

[30] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* (Berkeley: University of California, 1987) 7.

[31] James F. Keenan, S.J., "Proposing Cardinal Virtues," *Theological Studies* 56 (1995) 709–29, at 713.

[32] Herdt, *Putting on Virtue* 8.

[33] *NE* VI.11, 1143b10–13. The Council of Trent also urged the imitation of the lives and morals of saints for the cultivation of personal piety and virtue. See DS 1824.

own ways. Children's virtues are not *their* virtues but the virtues of the one who is their role model or is in authority over them. To become authentic and authentically virtuous, children must develop into *their* authenticity, *their* virtue and *their* adulthood. The virtuous life, like human life itself, is essentially developmental. As each person has an original way of being human, so also each has an original way of being virtuous. Neither the original human nor the original virtuous character can be ultimately created by imitating past models. They can be shaped by imitating past models but finished only by a fresh articulation. The dynamic of virtue begins with imitation of role models but concludes with authentic morality through personal decision and responsibility.

Though we are not told anything about the various motivations of the protagonists in the parable of the Good Samaritan, it is not difficult to understand that the characters of the Hebrew priest and Levite would be shaped by their Hebrew culture, perhaps by the laws and customs about purity and uncleanness, and that of the good Samaritan would be shaped by his quite different Samaritan culture, in which "neighbor" might be defined other than in the contemporary Hebrew culture. Motivations, of course, are always ambiguous and therefore need to be examined in the self-correcting and upwardly spiraling process of attention, perception, insight, judgment, decision, and action. The Good Samaritan could have acted out of genuine pity and compassion for the injured man or, like the hypocrite in Jesus' saying, out of the desire to be "praised by men" (Mt 6:2). His morality or goodness would be different in either case. Not only the Samaritan needs to challenge his motivations; so too does every person seeking virtue. Such challenges can be powered by the examples of virtuous role models, themselves challenged in the self-correcting and upwardly spiraling process of attention, perception, insight, judgment, decision, and action. The search for right motivation and purity of virtue is a never-ending search; we are never the virtuous persons we could become. The human search for virtue, goodness, happiness, flourishing, and union with God is ineluctably historical, developing, and ultimately eschatological.

Emotions

Since Kant and his categorical imperative of invariant duty, it has been philosophically fashionable to dismiss human emotions as partial and, therefore, unreliable and of no ethical value. The discussions are "arbitrary and fractious" and "puzzlingly pulled in what appears to be opposing directions."[34] Only rationality, especially will, it is said, is of importance for morality. Modern virtue ethicists judge that to be a mistake. Martha

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[34] Amelie O. Rorty, *Review of Metaphysics* 38 (1984) 521–46, at 521.

Nussbaum, for instance, argues that emotions "involve judgments about important things, judgments in which, appraising an external object as salient for our own being, we acknowledge our own neediness and incompleteness before parts of the world that we do not fully control."[35] Emotions, she continues, "are forms of *evaluative* judgments that ascribe to certain things and persons outside a person's own control great importance for the person's own flourishing."[36] Along the same lines, Robert Roberts defines emotions as "concern-based construals."[37] Emotions, then, (1) have a share in rationality; they convey cognitive content as value judgments of things and persons as (2) salient or critical for (3) a person's own happiness or flourishing. We agree with these three claims relative to the cognitive function of emotions, but not with the language in which they are articulated.

Lonergan has no consideration of emotions in *Insight*, but by 1972 and *Method in Theology* he holds that emotions are "central to the apprehension of value and the judgment of value."[38] Fitterer makes the Lonerganian distinction we believe must be made between the *apprehension* of value and the *judgment* of truth and value. Given the epistemology we have elaborated above, we cannot entirely agree with Nussbaum's description of emotion as a *judgment* of value, for we restrict the word *judgment* to the judgment of truth. That judgment is not merely an apprehension of a situation or object but the outcome of the cognitive process of attention, perception, reflection, and judgment that this emotion, compassion for, or distrust of the man on the road to Jericho is not merely a passing feeling but a feeling that signals something salient for one's happiness and fulfillment. We are willing to describe emotion as a *prima facie judgment* or a *proto-judgment*,[39] but such *prima facie* or *proto*-judgments are no more than immediate apprehensions of *possible* value that must be refined through the cognitive process before any judgment of truth or *actual* value can be

[35] Martha C. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University, 2001) 19; see also her *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1994); Robert C. Roberts, *Spiritual Emotions: A Psychology of Christian Virtues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007); and Roberts, *Emotions: An Essay in Aid of Moral Psychology* (New York: Cambridge University, 2003).

[36] Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought* 22, emphasis added. For more on the evaluative character of emotions, see Michael Stocker, "How Emotions Reveal Value and Help Cure the Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories," in *How Should One Live?* 173–90.

[37] Robert C. Roberts, *Emotions: An Essay in Aid of Moral Psychology* (New York: Cambridge University, 2003) 64. See also his *Spiritual Emotions: A Psychology of Christian Virtues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007).

[38] Fitterer, *Love and Objectivity* 64.   [39] Ibid. 80.

made and acted upon. Only in the judgment of truth and value can the possible value that emotion initially signals be judged a genuine value or disvalue for my good and flourishing.

Let us assume that, when the Samaritan first saw the body on the road, he was moved to feel compassion for the injured man. The movement from feeling and apprehending compassion as a *possible* value to the judgment that compassion is a *real* and *true* value for his good and flourishing is effected in the cognitive process we have outlined. Let us assume that, when the priest first saw the body by the side of the road, he was moved to feel distrust for the injured man as a possible source of impurity. The movement from feeling and apprehending distrust as a possible value to the judgment that distrust is an actual value or disvalue for his good and flourishing is effected in the same cognitive process. The one cultural and psychological difference is that the Samaritan and the priest bring different perceptual lenses to the situation, and those different lenses lead initially to different apprehensions and perceptions of the situation and ultimately to different truth and value judgments about it.

Aristotle makes a distinction between the person he calls the "continent" or "self-controlled" and the one who is fully virtuous. The continent character is the one who, knowing what he should do, does it, but contrary to his own desires. The fully virtuous character is the one who, knowing what she should do, does it and desires to do it; her desires are in accord with her reason, and what she should do she does gladly.[40] Hence, Aristotle concludes, "just acts give pleasure to the lover of justice and in general virtuous acts to the lover of virtue."[41] The names Aristotle gives to the two characters in this distinction, the continent and the fully virtuous, reveal his evaluation of the distinction; the fully virtuous person is morally superior to the simply continent one. The fully virtuous person is the one whose emotions and desires are ultimately under the control of reason. The child and the animal do not have the capacity to be fully virtuous, Aristotle tells us, for they do not have the deliberative capacities for decision and action required for virtue.[42] They lack the judgment that can control desires.[43] No one, therefore, "would choose to live with the intellect of a child throughout his life, however much he were to be pleased at the things that children are pleased at."[44]

We believe this continent/fully virtuous distinction needs qualification. Take, for instance, this situation: a woman, without noticing it, drops her purse in a crowded shopping mall and walks on; a man picks up her purse and runs to return it to her. We would surely judge he is an honest man.

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[40] *NE* I.8 and III.9.　　　　　　　　[41] *NE* I.9, 1099a.12.
[42] *NE* III.2, 1111a.25–26, 1111b.8–9; VI.13, 1144b.8.
[43] *NE* VII.3, 1147b.5.　　　　　　　[44] *NE* X.4, 1174a.1–2.

But consider two possible circumstances that might qualify our judgment. The first is that the man who returns the woman's purse is an honest multimillionaire; the money in her purse means nothing to him. He wants to act honestly and does act honestly, but it is in no sense hard for him to do so. The second circumstance is that the man who returns the purse is a poor man whose wife has breast cancer and they have no money to buy the drugs necessary for her treatment. He also wants to act honestly and does act honestly, but we can imagine how hard it is for him to restore the purse, how much it is against a deep-seated desire to keep the money and buy drugs for his sick wife. When he returns the purse to its owner, against his desires, he qualifies as Aristotle's continent man, but surely in this situation he is more honest than the multimillionaire for whom restoring the purse was easy and totally in accord with his own desires. We believe this same sort of argument can be constructed for situations in which other virtues are in question, and as a result we offer our own axiom: the harder it is to act virtuously, the more it is against our personal emotion and desire, the more virtue is required to act virtuously.[45]

The second and third assertions above, that emotions are salient for a person's own individual goodness and flourishing are central to any consideration of virtue. The value I initially apprehend in an emotion is not just a general value for every human person but a particular value apprehended as a salient value for *my* particular good and flourishing. Emotions, Nussbaum claims (and we agree), "contain an ineliminable reference to me."[46] They are the world seen and interpreted specifically through the lens of *my* perception. It is a culturally universal value, let us assume, that all mothers are to be loved. When *your* mother dies, then, I might feel emotions of love and grief, but my love and grief will be nothing compared to yours. Nor will my love and grief at the death of your mother be as powerful as my love and grief when *my* mother dies. The fact that it is *my* mother who has died is not just an accidental fact of *my* life but a fact that essentially structures the entire experience for me and concentrates my keen attention on it. When that attention is cognitively processed through to the judgment of truth, my emotions reveal my deepest values and goals not only to me but also to any attentive observer.

If emotions are so self-centered, some ask, does training individuals to be attentive to them and the values they reveal not promote selfishness?

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[45] The ideas expressed in the preceding passage, though not Philippa Foot's, were sparked by a reading of her penetrating discussion of a famous passage of Kant's in her *Virtues and Vices* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978) 1–18. We are happy to acknowledge here our general debt to Foot, a debt we share with almost all contemporary virtue ethicists.

[46] Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought* 52.

It does promote selfishness, we respond, but not a selfishness that is exclusively self-centered and inward-looking but a selfishness that is self-attention, self-understanding, self-judgment, and self-responsibility that might lead to self-correction and greater outward-looking toward neighbors in the world. MacIntyre's *After Virtue* raised three questions that have become famous among virtue ethicists: Who are we? Who ought we to become? How do we get there? The self-understanding, self-judgment, and self-correction enabled by the cognitive processing of my emotions helps answer the first of those questions: who am I? That self-knowledge, in turn, contributes to any conversion from who I presently am to who I am to become, and the more I become who I am to become, the more I become of good character and virtue, the more I am enabled to deal virtuously with the injured man on the road, whenever, wherever, and in whatever condition I might find him. Those who have the virtue of benevolence may not always act benevolently, but they will always be, at least, prone to acting benevolently, and to feeling the emotions associated with benevolence. The virtues and vices "are all dispositions not only to act, but to feel emotions, as *re*actions as well as impulses to action . . . [and] . . . in the person with the virtues, these emotions will be felt on the right occasions, towards the *right* people or objects, for the *right* reasons, where 'right' means 'correct.'"[47]

There is another consideration here, a specifically Christian one. When asked which commandment was the first of all, Jesus replied: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart. . . . The second is this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mk 12:30–31). That injunction is well known, but perhaps not so well understood. It contains three separate injunctions: love God, love your neighbor, and love yourself. Since Augustine, Jesus' saying has been interpreted in Christian teaching as grounding a wholly legitimate and virtuous self-love.[48] Self-love that locks me into myself is certainly not virtuous, for it ignores all the real relationships I have in the real world, but self-love that empowers me to understand myself and my right place in those real relationships, and inserts me justly and lovingly into those relationships, is as virtuous as any love of neighbor and is, indeed, a necessary precondition for genuine neighbor-love.

We are in complete agreement with Margaret Farley's contention that "love is the problem in ethics, not the solution."[49] It is the problem, however, because it is usually contentless, and so we give it content. We begin

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[47] Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics* 108, emphases original.
[48] See, e.g., Aquinas, *ST* 2–2, q. 25, a. 4.
[49] Margaret A. Farley, "An Ethic for Same-Sex Relations," in *A Challenge to Love: Gay and Lesbian Catholics in the Church*, ed. Robert Nugent, S.D.S. (New York: Crossroad, 1983) 93–106, at 100.

with an ancient definition: *amare est velle bonum*, to love is to will the good of another.[50] Love is an activity of the will, a will and a decision for the good of another human being. Love of another person is ecstatic, that is, in love I go out of myself to seek the good of another equal and unique self. That there are two equal selves in any loving relationship introduces the cardinal virtue of justice, "the virtue according to which, with constant and perpetual will, someone renders to someone else her or his due rights."[51] In right love, therefore, there is always an integration of love and justice. There is always, in Farley's apposite phrase, "just love."[52] In self-love, willing my own good, I go not out of myself but into myself to come to self-awareness, self-knowledge, and self-acceptance; not to stay imprisoned in my self-love but to go out of myself to another, equal person with full self-knowledge and responsibility. There is, we suggest, an ancient Latin axiom in play here: *nemo dat quod non habet*, no one gives what he does not have. We argue that not only is right self-love both humanly and Christianly legitimate, but also that it is the basis of all other right love, of neighbor-love and God-love, for if persons do not fully accept themselves, in both their wholeness and their brokenness, neither can they give themselves fully to another person or fully accept that other person.[53]

We summarize our position on the moral significance of emotions in a passage borrowed from Hursthouse: "1. The virtues (and vices) are morally significant. 2. The virtues (and vices) are all dispositions not only to act, but to feel emotions, as *re*actions as well as impulses to action. . . . 3. In the person with the virtues, these emotions will be felt on the *right* occasions, towards the *right* people or objects, for the *right* reasons, where 'right' means 'correct.'"[54] We return to the agents on the road to Jericho. When they saw the man lying on the road, what were their reactions? Let us assume the Samaritan acted out of the virtue of benevolence. What did he feel before he decided to act benevolently? He felt possibly love for the injured man, possibly compassion and empathy as he imagined what he would want people to do if he were injured, and these feelings disposed

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[50] See Aquinas, *ST* 1–2, q. 28, a. 1 c.   [51] *ST* 2–2, q. 58, a. 1.
[52] Margaret A. Farley, *Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics* (New York: Continuum, 2006).
[53] For more detail on the question of self-love, see Stephen J. Pope, "Expressive Individualism and True Self-Love: A Thomistic Perspective," *Journal of Religion* 71 (1991) 384–99; Pope, *The Evolution of Altruism and the Ordering of Love* (Washington: Georgetown University, 1994); Edward Collins Vacek, S.J., *Love, Human and Divine: The Heart of Christian Ethics* (Washington: Georgetown University, 1994) 239–73.
[54] Rosalind Hursthouse, "Virtue Ethics and the Emotions," in *Virtue Ethics* 99–117, at 108, emphases original.

him to act as virtuously as he did. It was certainly the right occasion for compassion, the injured man was the right person for compassion, and let us assume (though we are not told) that he acted and felt for the right reason—let us say to fulfill the Golden Rule. And what did the two clerics feel before they acted? They perhaps felt distrust toward a man who might compromise their purity and therefore also their religious obligations, perhaps fearing that his lying on the road might be a ruse that would place them in danger. It was the right occasion, we would surely say, to act out of the love command in Leviticus, though they might have wondered did this man qualify as a "neighbor" (Lev 19:18). In their own minds, though not in Jesus', they might have acted for the right reason. No matter. The point is not to know the reasons for which the three agents acted. The point is to understand that emotions are morally significant, sometimes as morally significant as the virtues with which they are associated.

VIRTUE ETHICS

Earlier we discussed virtue *theory*, which is concerned neutrally with the nature of virtue in general; in this section, we discuss virtue *ethics*, which is more an advocacy of virtue and virtuous action. In the post-Enlightenment period, virtue was distrusted, largely because of anxiety over both the authenticity of virtues humanly acquired through imitation of role models and questions of divine and human agency.[55] In *After Virtue*, however, MacIntyre makes the "disquieting suggestion" that in the contemporary world the language of morality is in a state of disorder. "We possess indeed simulacra of morality; we continue to use many of the key expressions. But," he argued, "we have—very largely, if not entirely— lost our comprehension, both theoretical and practical, of morality."[56] Herdt comments that "contemporary revivers of virtue ethics, in contrast [to the distrust of virtue] have enthusiastically embraced the notion that habituation in virtue takes place within the context of a community and its practices."[57] Post-Kantian moral philosophers concentrated their attention on specific acts that are mandated by laws, rules, or consequences. Post-Tridentine Catholic moral theologians also concentrated their attention on acts mandated by laws and rules, and they created a taxonomy of sins arising from the violation of laws and obligations. Such an approach ignored questions of personal and therefore also of social, virtue, character, happiness, flourishing. It ignored, Louis Janssens argued

[55] See Herdt, *Putting on Virtue*, passim.
[56] MacIntyre, *After Virtue* 2.   [57] Herdt, *Putting on Virtue* 350.

in an oft-quoted article, "the human *person* integrally and adequately considered."[58]

Janssens developed a personalism rooted in the methodological transformation in the Second Vatican Council's *Gaudium et spes* from an exclusively biological to a personalist perception of natural law. "When there is a question of harmonizing conjugal love with the responsible transmission of life," the council decreed, "the moral aspect of any procedure . . . must be determined by objective standards. These [are] *based on the nature of the human person and his acts.*"[59] At the same time, other moral philosophers and theologians were also paying increasing attention to the human person, her character, habits, dispositions, feelings, perceptions, judgments, and perhaps above all her flourishing. Virtue ethics was coming, not so much to birth as to *re*birth, for it had already flourished in the Greece of Plato and Aristotle and in the medieval Europe of Aquinas, not to mention in the Christian New Testament of the first centuries. That latter we shall consider at the end of this essay.

Focus on human persons rather than on their acts led to the common assertion that virtue ethics focuses on *being* and *character*, and that the deontological ethics of duty or utilitarian ethics of consequences focuses on the subject's *doing* or actions. That assertion is true enough, but it does not particularly clarify virtue ethics; and, indeed, if it is understood to mean that virtue ethics ignores *doing*, it is untrue, for surely we expect the virtuous person to *do* or *act* virtuously. We expect the human being and character with the virtue of benevolence to *do* benevolent actions; we expect the human being and character with the virtue of justice to *do* just actions—and the same for all the other virtues.

Therefore, contrary to critics who suggest that virtue ethics does not offer ethical directions or rules, it surely does offer rules. Virtue ethics offers prescriptive rules: do benevolently when benevolence is called for, do justly when justice is called for, and do them all on the right occasions, toward the right people, and for the right reasons. It offers also prohibitive rules: do not do what is mean, unjust, or dishonest. Moral action is action according to some virtue; vicious action is action according to some vice. The ethics of Aristotle and Aquinas was, and contemporary virtue ethics is, indeed an ethics of virtue, character, and being, but there was and always is the axiom *agere sequitur esse*, action follows being. In fact, as we argued earlier, it is the habitual doing of acts of benevolence, justice, honesty, and so on that first instills and then reinforces the instilled habits that are

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[58] Louis Janssens, "Artificial Insemination: Ethical Considerations," *Louvain Studies* 8 (1980) 3–29, at 4, emphasis added.

[59] *Gaudium et spes* no. 51, emphasis added.

virtues and the actions to which they are ordered. "Morality is ultimately in this view not about actions but about the acting subject."[60]

Rather than say, then, that virtue ethics focuses on being, and that character and deontological ethics focus on action or doing, we prefer to say that virtue ethics gives precedence to virtue, character, and being over action and doing. Broadly speaking, deontological ethics holds that only judgments about right action are basic in morality, and that virtue and the virtuous character are always derivative from right action. In virtue ethics the converse is the case: only judgments about virtue and the virtuous character are basic in morality, and right action is derivative from virtue and the virtuous character. In virtue ethics, moral agents and their characters come first, and their moral actions come second; that is, in virtue ethics, *agere vere sequitur esse*. Moral actions are as important in virtue ethics as in any other ethical system, but the basic judgment in virtue ethics is not about actions but about character.[61]

In virtue ethics, "the project of the moral life is to become a certain kind of person,"[62] a virtuous person, one who, in Aristotle's language, knows how to act and feel in ways appropriate to the circumstances. This approach, John McDowell argues, means that the moral question, how should one live?, is approached from the notion of the virtuous person, so that the notion of right and moral behavior "is grasped, as it were, from the inside in."[63] The right action in any particular circumstances is what a virtuous person would characteristically do in those circumstances.

We believe this approach to and articulation of virtue ethics are correct and provide greater insight into and understanding of the nature of virtue ethics than the bald statement that virtue ethics is an ethics of being rather than doing. The precedence of virtue over action in contemporary ethical theory is no small shift. It is, in Thomas Kuhn's sense, a paradigm shift and has led and will lead to a struggle of minds and morals between those committed to the older deontological ethics and those committed to the *renewed* virtue ethics.[64]

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[60] John Mahoney, S.J., *The Making of Moral Theology: A Study of the Roman Catholic Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984) 220.

[61] See Daniel Statman, "Introduction to Virtue Ethics," in *Virtue Ethics* 7; Michael A. Slote, "Virtue Ethics and Democratic Values," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 24 (1993) 5–37, at 15; Peter Van Inwagen, "Response to Slote," *Social Theory and Practice* 16 (1990) 385–395, at 392.

[62] Paul J. Waddell, *Friendship and the Moral Life* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1989) 136.

[63] John McDowell, "Virtue and Reason," *Monist* 62 (1979) 331–50, at 331.

[64] See Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996).

This conclusion can be elucidated by a critical consideration of the personal subject. A subject is a rational, attending, perceiving, understanding, judging, choosing, and acting person, and one who carries out these rational operations not only on objects external to him but also on his own internal self. Subjects operate freely and consciously; they are agents, the cause of their own actions in the sense that they have the power to produce the results they choose, will, and intend to produce. Subjects "are in essence self-determining beings, who act upon and through their nature and environment to give their lives particular form. In a sense [subjects] control their futures by becoming the kind of [persons] they are through their present choices and actions."[65]

English poet John Donne wrote, "No man is an island";[66] no human subjects/agents are completely isolated persons. They are essentially social subjects; they live in a specific community and culture. From their community and culture, they initially learn all sorts of meanings, including, for our purpose here, meanings of what in general constitutes the good and what specifically is the right thing to do on this occasion toward this person and for this right reason. In short, they learn rules and reasons for moral or virtuous behavior. When they are children, they follow those rules to be good boys or good girls in the sense that they do what adults want them to do, to be praised by others, or simply, unthinkingly, and legalistically to follow the rules they have learned.[67]

We can say two things about children's "moral" actions. First, they act, not out of any genuine desire or intention to do good because it is the right thing to do on this occasion, toward this right person and for this right

[65] Stanley Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life: A Study in Theological Ethics* (San Antonio: Trinity University, 1979) 18. For the turn to the subject in contemporary philosophy and theology, see Michael J. Himes, "The Human Person in Contemporary Theology: Human Nature to Authentic Subjectivity," in *Introduction to Christian Ethics: A Reader*, ed. Ronald Hamel and Michael J. Himes (New York: Paulist, 1989) 49–62; Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *A Second Collection* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974); and Lonergan, *The Subject* (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 1968).

[66] John Donne, "Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions," in *The Works of John Donne, with a Memoir of His Life*, 6 vols., ed. Henry Alford (London: John W. Parker, 1839) 3:574–75.

[67] Lawrence Kohlberg has schematically outlined the child's moral development in his two-volume work, *Essays on Human Development* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981, 1984). Along with a host of contemporary ethicists, we judge Kohlberg's scheme to be too rigid and reductive. It does, however, illustrate the point we are making here. For critique of Kohlberg and other approaches to moral education, see Sharon D. Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000); and Owen Flanagan, *Varieties of Moral Personality: Ethics and Psychological Realism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1991).

reason, but because of their selfish desire for praise or fear of punishment. They act inauthentically, doing the right things for the wrong reasons; they are far from acting virtuously or morally. Second, however, those less than virtuous actions learned and habitually done in their community become the dispositions and habits leading to genuine adult virtuous actions. Their habitual repetition of virtuous acts and their ongoing critical attention to them, their perception, understanding, and judgment of them, and their personal choice of them ultimately lead people to do the right thing on the right occasion, toward the right person, and for the right reasons out of a personal habit or virtue. Habitually doing the right things for the right reasons transforms their very being and develops their characters from ones that have the simulacrum of virtuous and moral persons to ones that are authentically virtuous and moral persons.

Michael Slote charges that virtue ethics "appears to obliterate the common distinction between doing the right thing and doing the right thing for the right reasons."[68] We reject this charge and argue that virtue ethics does not obliterate that distinction but, rather, marks it as a stage in the psychological and moral development of subjects on their way to becoming virtuous and moral adult. The child who is just learning virtue may do the right thing for the wrong reason, but the adult who has learned virtue is capable of doing the right thing, toward the right person, for the right reason. He or she is capable of acting self-responsibly and authentically. The focus of virtue ethics on character is sometimes referred to as an elitist view of human excellence; only a small group of people is capable of reaching authentic virtue. Our view of this accusation is in agreement with Jeffrey Stout's view: commitment to an ethics of virtue that, through a continuous critique in the cognitive process, "is *always* in the process of projecting a higher conception of self to be achieved and leaving one's achieved self (but not its accumulated responsibilities) behind."[69]

Slote raises, but does not accept, another objection to virtue ethics and its agent-based approach. If morality is to be judged on the basis of the inner state an agent has reached, if she *is* an agent of virtuous character, does it not follow that *every* action she does will be automatically an act of virtue, whether it be an action accepted as virtuous or vicious in her community of meaning? In other words, does the transition from an act-based morality to a being-based morality mean that anything goes, that any and every act of the virtuous person will be automatically deemed an act of

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[68] Michael A. Slote, "Agent-Based Virtue Ethics," in *Virtue Ethics*, ed. Roger Crisp and Michael A. Slote (New York: Oxford University, 1997) 241.

[69] Jeffrey Stout, *Democracy and Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 2004) 29, emphasis original.

virtue? There are, we suggest, two answers to this question. The first is the one Slote suggests.[70]

Let us assume that the Good Samaritan possesses the virtue of compassion or the virtue of benevolence. To the extent that compassion and benevolence are accepted as good in his community of meaning, which is where he came to learn and know them, and to the extent that because he possesses these virtues he is judged in his community to be a man of virtue, he cannot simply do any action and classify it under compassion or benevolence. There is a generally agreed-upon vision of compassion and benevolence in his community, and his action will be judged compassionate or benevolent, and therefore virtuous and moral, on the basis of that vision. Since every agent, including the virtuous agent, is endowed with free will, each is perfectly capable of choosing a variety of actions that may or may not be compassionate or benevolent. If we assume that the Good Samaritan acted with compassion and benevolence toward the injured man, he still could have chosen to act as did the two clerics, that is, without compassion or benevolence. In virtue ethics, virtuous acts, not merely the virtuous character state of the person doing the acts, are important. As the intellectual virtues of wisdom and prudence are hard to achieve, so also is moral virtue hard to achieve. Persons who merely imitate virtuous models may well have the simulacra of virtue, but history shows that many of them do not reach authentic and consistent virtue.

There is a second answer to the question Slote raises: the human subject adequately considered is a historical, always-developing being. Lonergan delineates what he calls "the theoretical premises from which there follows the historicity of human thought and action":

(1) That human concepts, theories, affirmations, courses of action are expressions of human understanding. . . . (2) That human understanding develops over time and, as it develops, human concepts, theories, affirmations, courses of action change. . . . (3) That such change is cumulative, and (4) that the cumulative changes in one place or time are not to be expected to coincide with those in another."[71]

From these premises flows the conclusion that the meanings, values, moral norms, virtues, and virtuous actions of one sociohistorical era are not necessarily the articulations of another era or even of different groups in the same era. The world—both the world free of every human intervention and the human world fashioned by socially constructed meanings—is in a permanent state of change and evolution. It is essentially for this reason that Josef Fuchs argues—correctly in our judgment—that anyone wishing to

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[70] Slote, "Agent-based Virtue Ethics," in *Virtue Ethics* 243–44.
[71] Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 325.

make a moral judgment about any human action in the present on the basis of its givenness in the past has at least two facts to keep in mind.

First, the past did not know either the entire reality and development of the human person or its individual elements hidden in human biology and psychology. "If one wishes to make an objective moral judgment today," Fuchs points out, "then one cannot take what Augustine or the philosophers of the Middle Ages knew about sexuality as the exclusive basis of a moral reflection." Second, "we never simply 'have' nature or that which is given in nature." Rather, we know "'nature' . . . always as something that has already been interpreted in some way."[72] The careful attention to, the perception, understanding, and judgment of, and responsible decision and choice of rational persons about "nature" and what it demands is what constitutes natural law,[73] never simply the pure givenness of "nature" alone. In the moral tradition, argument is never from "nature" alone or reason alone, but always from "nature" *interpreted by* reason. For the human person subject to historicity, moral decision making and virtuous action are always the outcome of a process controlled by reason. It is never the outcome of merely looking at the "out, there, now, real" givenness of nature.

Lonergan was convinced that something new was happening in history in the 20th century and that, since a living morality and virtuous life ought to be part of what was taking place in history, humans were living in a new age that required a new moral approach. That new approach, he prophesied correctly, would be necessarily historical and empirical. His distinction between a classicist and a historical or empirical notion of culture has itself become classical. "The classicist notion of culture was normative: at least *de iure* there was but one culture that was both universal and permanent." The empirical notion of culture was "the set of meanings and values that informs a way of life. It may remain unchanged for ages. It may be in the process of slow development or rapid resolution."[74] Classicist culture is static; historical culture is dynamic. Morality, which is necessarily part of culture, mirrors this distinction.

In its classicist mode ethics is a static, permanent achievement that anyone can learn as he or she learns algebra; in its historical mode it is a dynamic, ongoing process requiring a rational, attentive, perceptive, insightful,

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[72] Josef Fuchs, S.J., *Moral Demands and Personal Obligations* (Washington: Georgetown University, 1993) 36.

[73] See Aquinas, *In duo praecepta caritatis . . .* , in *Opuscula theologica*, 2 vols. (Turin: Marietti, 1954) 2:245–71; John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor* nos. 40, 42, 44; Martin Rhonheimer, *Ethics of Procreation and the Defense of Human Life*, ed. William F. Murphy Jr. (Washington: Catholic University, 2010) 3–7.

[74] Lonergan, *Method* xi.

understanding, judging, and decisive subject. The classicist understanding, Fuchs writes, conceives of the human person as "a series of created, static, and thus definitively ordered temporal facts." The historical understanding conceives of the person as a subject in process of "self-realization in accordance with a project that develops in God-given autonomy, that is, along a path of human reason and insight, carried out in the present with a view to the future."[75] Classicist ethics sees moral norms coming from the past as once-and-for-all definitive; virtue norms enunciated in the fifth or 16th centuries continue to apply absolutely in the 21st century. Historical ethics sees the moral norms of the past not as facts for uncritical acceptance but as partial insights that provide bases for critical attention, perception, understanding, judging, deciding, and choosing in the present. What Augustine and his medieval successors knew about human sexuality, for instance, cannot be the exclusive basis for a moral judgment about sexuality today.

So it is that persons deemed virtuous may on occasion act less than virtuously. As subjects in history, they have not yet finished their journeys to virtue. They may be deemed already virtuous, but they are not yet as authentically or consistently virtuous as they can be. Aristotle recognized this problem and solved it by arguing that a person is not to be judged virtuous except "in a complete life. For one swallow does not make a summer . . . and so too one day, or a short time, does not make a man blessed and happy" or virtuous.[76] Contemporary theologians say that subjects-in-history, along with their virtues and morality, are ineluctably eschatological. Poet Rainer Maria Rilke perhaps says it best: "Just keep going. No feeling is final."[77]

CHRISTIAN VIRTUE ETHICS

We have argued that virtue, virtue ethics, and the learning of both are rooted in some community and culture, and up to this point we have been developing a virtue ethics rooted broadly in the human community. In other words we have been developing a natural virtue ethics. We turn our attention now briefly to a Christian virtue ethics, one rooted in belief in Jesus Christ and the God he reveals.[78]

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[75] Fuchs, *Moral Demands* 39.   [76] *NE* I.7.1098a, 18–19.

[77] Rainer Maria Rilke, "Let Everything Happen," *Rilke's Book of Hours: Love Poems to God*, trans. Anita Barrows and Joanna Macy (New York: Riverhead, 1996) 88, http://www.inwardoutward.org/author/rainer-maria-rilke (accessed June 27, 2012).

[78] For modern treatments of Christian virtue ethics, see Gilbert Meilaender, *The Theory and Practice of Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1984); Klaus Demmer, *Leben in Menschenhand* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1987); Josef

In the 1970s, some Catholic moralists were tempted to argue that Christian morality was not distinctively different from natural morality.[79] They meant by that claim that virtuous actions were the same in both natural and Christian ethics. We, and most Christian ethicists today, do not accept their argument. Those earlier ethicists were locked into an ethics that focused on actions as moral or immoral, and they meant that natural ethics and Christian ethics held many of the same actions as moral. We grant that many of the virtues and the moral actions they demand and enable are the same in natural and Christian ethics, but the community in which Christians learn virtues, the rainbow of role models they have for the imitation and habituation of virtuous actions, the proximate and final ends to which their virtuous actions tend, the vision out of which they are done, all are entirely different in natural and Christian ethics. That, we submit, creates major differences between natural and Christian ethics.

The Christian vision, which will control our subsequent discussion, shines out as backdrop throughout the New Testament, but we call attention to two specific texts, one in the conclusion to the parable of the Good Samaritan, the other in Paul's letter to the Philippians. After offering his parable, Jesus asks the lawyer who initiated the discussion, "Which of these do you think proved neighbor to the man who fell among robbers?" The lawyer answered, "The one who showed mercy on him." And Jesus said to him "go and do likewise" (Lk 10:36–37). That "go and do likewise" controls everything moral that Christians are called to do. Paul articulated the same vision, if in different language: "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of

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Fuchs, S.J., *Essere del Signore* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1981); Fuchs, *Personal Responsibility and Christian Morality*, trans. William Cleves et al. (Washington: Georgetown University, 1983); Richard A. McCormick, S.J., *Notes on Moral Theology, 1981 through 1984* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984); Bruno Schüller, *Wholly Human: Essays on the Theory and Language of Morality*, trans. Peter Heinegg (Washington: Georgetown University, 1985); Joseph J. Kotva Jr., *Christian Case for Virtue Ethics*; William C. Spohn, "The Return of Virtue Ethics," *Theological Studies* 53 (1992) 60–75; and Spohn, *Go and Do Likewise: Jesus and Ethics* (New York: Continuum, 1999); Keenan, "Proposing Cardinal Virtues"; Daniel J. Harrington, S.J., and James F. Keenan, S.J., *Jesus and Virtue Ethics: Building Bridges between New Testament Studies and Moral Theology* (Lanham: Sheed & Ward, 2002); and Harrington and Keenan, *Paul and Virtue Ethics: Building Bridges between New Testament Studies and Moral Theology* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010). Though not specifically about virtue ethics, H. Richard Niebuhr, *An Essay in Christian Moral Philosophy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), is well worth consulting.

[79] See Norbert J. Rigali, "On Christian Ethics," *Chicago Studies* 10 (1971) 227–47.

God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men" (Phil 2:5–7). Self-sacrificing love for God and neighbor and obedience to God's known will—these specifically distinguish the person the Christian is called to be.

Virtue ethics, we have argued, offers an answer to the question, who am I to become? The New Testament invites the followers of Jesus to *become* and *be* like Jesus and, because they *are* like him, to *do* as he did. The controlling principle of Christian virtue ethics is *imitatio Christi*: first, *be* like Jesus, then *do* as he did. That principle roots a specifically Christian virtue ethics. Note that it is, as is all virtue ethics, agent-centered; *who* Christians are and are called to be takes precedence over *what* they are called to do. The imitation of Christ is not some means external to characters that makes being and doing as Christ did possible; it is something that is an internal, essential constituent of their specifically Christian character. It is what Karl Rahner called an *existential* of their Christian character, "an ontological modification . . . added indeed to nature by God's grace and therefore 'supernatural,' [which protects the Catholic priority of God's grace] but in fact never lacking in the real order."[80] Having the mind of Christ as an essential specification of their character, Christians habitually act out of that mind, so that not only do they become and act more and more as Christ did, but also, like Aristotle's fully virtuous man, they gladly do as Christ did. They act, as the New Testament regularly says, out of their "heart" (e.g., Mt 5:8, 28; 6:21; 12:34, 40; 13:15; 15:8, 18, 19; 22:37), which, in Jewish anthropology, is the zone of "intelligence, mind, wisdom, folly, intention, plan, will, affection, love, hate, sight, regard, blindness."[81]

Consideration of the "heart" leads us immediately to the virtue Aquinas called "the mother and root of all virtues"[82] and "the most excellent of the virtues,"[83] namely, *caritas*, charity or self-sacrificing love. Mark reports that a scribe asked Jesus, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered that the first is "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart," and "the second is this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself." To which he added, "There is no other commandment greater than these"

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[80] Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, *Concise Theological Dictionary*, ed. Cornelius Ernst, trans. Richard Strachan (London: Burns & Oates, 1965) 161. See also Karl Rahner, "The Dignity and Freedom of Man," in *Theological Investigations* 2, trans. Karl-H. Kruger (London: Darton, Longman, & Todd, 1967) 239–40.

[81] Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993) 74.

[82] *ST* 1–2, q. 62, a. 4.   [83] *ST* 2–2, q. 23, a. 6.

(Mk 12:29–31). Nor in the Christian vision is there any other virtue greater than charity or self-sacrificing love, for all other virtues are informed or, as Aquinas says, "quickened" by charity and receive from charity their full complement as virtues. Virtues, as we noted earlier, are both means to and constituents of human flourishing or happiness. Now Aquinas argues that man's happiness is twofold. "One is proportionate to human nature, a happiness, to wit, which man can obtain by means of his natural principles. The other is a happiness surpassing man's nature, and which man can obtain by the power of God alone." It is necessary, then, "for man to receive from God some additional principles, whereby he may be directed to supernatural happiness. . . . Such principles are called *theological virtues*: first, because their object is God, inasmuch as they direct us aright to God; secondly, because they are infused in us by God alone."[84] Charity is such an infused theological virtue, and so are faith and hope.

"Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God."[85] Jesus' greatest commandment invites us to do acts of love toward God and neighbor. "Faith is the theological virtue by which we believe in God and believe all that he has said and revealed to us."[86] Paul insisted on the necessity of theological faith for salvation (Rom 1:16–17; 3:26–30; 5:1; Gal 3:6–9), and that theological tradition flowered on both sides of the Reformation controversies. Martin Luther took his stand on "faith alone," and the Council of Trent taught that faith is "the beginning of human salvation . . . without which it is impossible to please God."[87] Neither doubted that faith must issue in works, that is, acts in accord with faith. Another notable difference appears here between natural and Christian ethics: the natural man practices virtue according to reason; the Christian practices virtue through reason quickened by charity and faith. "Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven [or God] and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises."[88] Hope too must issue in action. There is a critical caveat, however, to which we must attend when we talk of virtues, even God-infused virtues, and their contribution to supernatural flourishing or happiness.

All virtues, including theological virtues, are qualities that are dispositions or habits[89] ordered to acts.[90] A virtue is a necessary prerequisite to its corresponding act, but it is not the act, nor does it ineluctably lead to the act. Translation from the virtue to the act requires the agent to be rational,

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[84] *ST* 1–2, q. 62, a. 1, emphasis added.
[85] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York: Paulist, 1994) no. 1822.
[86] Ibid. no. 1814.   [87] DS no. 1532.
[88] *Catechism* no. 1817.   [89] *ST* 3, q. 69, a. 4.
[90] *ST* 1–2, q. 49, a. 3.

to attend, perceive, understand, judge, and decide; and again it is only at the point of judgment, decision, and action that morality enters in. The Catholic tradition holds that the virtues of charity, faith, and hope are infused into the new Christian at baptism. For any of those virtues to become personal acts of love, faith, or hope, however, they must be translated by the believer, under grace, into free and therefore moral action.

In Thomistic terms, one might argue, both acquired and infused virtues are more potency than act. Jean Porter notes correctly that infused virtues are "present only potentially in those who lack the use of reason, and . . . present only in a minimal degree even in some of those who possess the use of reason."[91] That is, for a person to be self-responsible and personally moral even "infused virtue must blossom out in a personal act."[92] As we have seen, "a habit of virtue cannot be caused by one act, but only by many."[93] Repeated acts of charity, faith, and hope, therefore, on the right occasion, toward the right people, and for the right reason habituate the theological virtues in the Christian character, as repeated acts of acquired virtue habituate it in any agent's character. Thus does the Christian become and do more and more like Christ. Even the theological virtues, infused by God though they are, need to be exercised over and over by the agent, to habituate the character to Christian excellence and ultimate happiness.

Besides the three God-infused virtues, there are four "cardinal virtues" important to Christians—cardinal because they are pivots around which all other human virtues turn. They are prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, described by Aquinas as principles of integration of both the agent and his action.[94] Aristotle argued that prudence is "a true and *reasoned* state of capacity to act with regard to the things that are good or bad for man."[95] Aquinas followed him, arguing that prudence is a special virtue[96] by which "right reason is applied to action."[97] Prudence is a virtue of the practical intellect, which discerns and applies universal principles to particular situations and enables agents to make practical judgments that this is the right thing to do on this occasion, toward this right person, and for this right reason. Its moral importance is evident from the fact that practical judgment is what the Catholic tradition calls "conscience."

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[91] Jean Porter, "The Subversion of Virtue: Acquired and Infused Virtues in the *Summa Theologiae*," *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* 12 (1992) 19–41, at 30.

[92] Ladislas M. Orsy, S.J., "Faith, Sacrament, Contract, and Christian Marriage: Disputed Questions," *Theological Studies* 43 (1982) 379–98, at 383 n. 7. See also Michael G. Lawler, "Faith, Contract, and Sacrament in Christian Marriage: A Theological Approach," *Theological Studies* 52 (1991) 712–31.

[93] *ST* 1–2, q. 51, a. 3.   [94] *ST* 1–2, q. 61, a. 2 and 3.

[95] *NE* VI.5.1140b, 5, emphasis added.

[96] *ST* 2–2, q. 47, a. 5.   [97] *ST* 2–2, q. 47, a. 2.

The pivotal position of prudence can be seen by a consideration, again, of the parable of the Good Samaritan. The Samaritan finds the injured man on the road: it appears that this is the right occasion, and the injured man is the right person, for the Samaritan to exercise compassion for the right reason. It is the task of prudence to go through the rational process to reach the judgment and decision that this is, indeed, the right occasion, the right person, and the right reason for compassion. Here prudence controls the right exercise of compassion. It similarly controls and integrates the right exercise of all other moral virtues. Precisely because *prudentia* controls the practical judgments that precede the exercise of all other moral virtues—and must precede for those virtues to be moral—both Aristotle and Aquinas hold that without it no other virtuous state or action can be achieved. Prudence is crucially important for both the natural and the Christian agent.

Justice is "the perpetual and constant will to render to each one his right."[98] Justice is essentially about equality[99]—for the natural man equality as human; for the Christian that too but also equality as child of God. Since it is about rendering to each person his or her right, it is also essentially about human relationships, for persons must be somehow related to other persons in order to render them their rights. Indeed, in relations between equal agents, Aristotle writes, "justice is often thought to be the greatest of virtues."[100] Aquinas agrees: justice "excels the other moral virtues," and it excels them for two reasons: first, it is "in the more excellent part of the soul, viz. the rational appetite or will"; second, "justice is somewhat the good of another person."[101] Is it because justice excels the other moral virtues that the paradigmatic virtuous man is often called simply the "just man," as is Joseph (Mt 1:19), or the "righteous man," as is Noah (Gen 6:9). "Keep justice and do righteousness," preaches Isaiah; "blessed is the man who does this" (56:1); and Jesus condemns the scribes and Pharisees who, he judges, "have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith" (Mt 23:23). The virtuous or excellent Christian, thus far in our analysis, is the one who *is* prudent and just and *does* prudence and justice quickened by charity.

Aristotle argues that virtue is "the state of character which makes a man good and which makes him do his own work well."[102] Aquinas agrees,

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[98] *ST* 2–2, q. 58, aa. 1 and 11.
[99] See Paul Ricoeur, "Love and Justice," in *Radical Pluralism and Truth: David Tracy and the Hermeneutics of Religion*, ed. Werner G. Jeanrond and Jennifer L. Rike (New York: Crossroad, 1991) 195. Ricoeur argues that from Aristotle to Rawls justice has always been about equality.
[100] *NE* V.1, 1129b.27.   [101] *ST* 2–2, q. 58, a. 12.
[102] *NE* II.6, 1106a.22–23.

and argues further that virtue must be in accord with reason. The human will, however,

is hindered in two ways from following the rectitude of reason. First, by being drawn by some object of pleasure to something other than what the rectitude of reason requires; and this obstacle is removed by the virtue of temperance. Secondly, through the will being disinclined to follow that which is in accord with reason, on account of some difficulty that presents itself.

Fortitude of mind is required to remove this difficulty.[103]

Fortitude and temperance are cardinal virtues required to clear away difficulties for the practice of other moral virtues. "Fortitude is the moral virtue that ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good."[104] It strengthens an agent to overcome obstacles that present themselves to the practice of the virtues and the moral life. Humans easily understand physical fortitude or courage in the face of a physical challenge, but Aquinas emphasizes "fortitude of mind," which is required in the face of intellectual difficulties. When the Samaritan found the injured man on the road, he might have had all sorts of thoughts: What can I do to help; it's not my problem. What will it do to my bank account if I help him? What will "they" think of me if I stop to help this man? It is mental fortitude that enables the Samaritan to overcome these obstacles and clears the way for him to exercise the virtues, for instance, of charity and compassion. His act of charity and compassion hinges on his prior act of mental fortitude; this makes fortitude a cardinal virtue.

Aristotle and Aquinas also agree that temperance is a virtue, but Aquinas argues that it is also a cardinal virtue.[105] Temperance withholds "the appetite from those things that are most seductive to man,"[106] especially pleasures of touch.[107] It "is the moral virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods."[108] Temperance is about balance, the mean between excess and defect that prudence finds to indicate where virtue lies. From the Christian perspective, the behavior of the two clerics on the road to Jericho is a series of excesses: disdain instead of charity, contempt instead of compassion, injustice instead of justice toward an equal child of God. Temperance, quickened by charity and illuminated by prudence, clears the way for the balanced act of charity, compassion, and justice. Temperance, then, is a cardinal virtue. But since it "moderates only the desires and pleasures which affect man himself," it is not as excellent as justice and fortitude, which regard more

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[103] *ST* 2–2, q. 123, a. 1.
[105] *ST* 2-2, q. 141, a. 7.
[107] *ST* 2–2, q. 141, a. 4.
[104] *Catechism* no. 1808.
[106] *ST* 2–2, q. 141, a. 2.
[108] *Catechism* no. 1809.

the common good. "Prudence and the theological virtues are more excel-lent" than any of the other virtues.[109]

James Keenan suggests that we "think of the virtues not in the classicist expression as perfecting individual powers within an individual person [to do acts] but rather [in the empirical expression] as rightly realizing the ways that we are related."[110] "Our identity," he further argues, empirically, "is relational in three ways: generally, specifically, and uniquely."[111] We prefer a different triad: generally, particularly, and self-ishly. Our choice of this triad, and particularly our choice of the term "self-ishly," will be explained in what now follows. In general, we are beings in relation to other beings who, as humans, are our equals and, as Christian, are equal to us as children of God. This essential human and religious equality demands the virtue of justice as we have explained it. Specifically, we are in relation to particular persons with bonds of family or friendship. Christians, the Letter to Timothy tells us, are to provide for these particular persons, and "especially for family members" (1 Tim 5:8). Of course, as Augustine enjoins, we are in general to love all within our ambit,[112] but, Aquinas further specifies, we are to love those nearest us most of all.[113] Justice is about universality and impartiality; fidelity is about legitimate particu-larity and partiality. John Henry Newman endorses legitimate partiality when he argues that "the best preparation for loving the world at large, and loving it duly and wisely [under the guidance of prudence], is to cultivate an intimate friendship and affection toward those who are imme-diately about us."[114] All these relationships demand the virtue of fidelity and its cognates, loyalty and constancy.

Each of us is also in essential relationship to our unique self. We describe this relationship to self as "self-ish" and/or self-loving, but "self-ish" is to be carefully distinguished from the common "selfish." While the latter is focused *only* on self to the exclusion of others, the former is focused on self to fashion a self that can be shared with others without threat to the self. Everything we said earlier about the Christian legitimacy of self-love recurs here again for "selfishness," and this legitimate and moral relationship of "self-ishness" or self-love demands what Keenan calls the virtue of self-care. Self-care includes, but is by no means limited to, self-awareness,

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[109] *ST* 2–2, q. 141, a. 8.

[110] Harrington and Keenan, *Jesus and Virtue Ethics* 122.

[111] Ibid. 123.

[112] Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods, intro. Thomas Merton (New York: Modern Library, 1994) 693.

[113] *ST* 2–2, q. 26, aa. 6, 7, and 8.

[114] John Henry Newman, Sermon 5, in *Parochial and Plain Sermons* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1987) 258.

self-knowledge, self-acceptance, self-disclosure, and self-love. Psychological studies repeatedly indicate that one of the greatest threats to healthy human flourishing is poor self-esteem,[115] and despite Jesus' injunction to "love your neighbor *as yourself*" (Mk 12:31), the Christian tradition has not been a noted promoter of healthy self-love.[116] Self-care is the virtue that permits healthy self-love and invites reflection on my unique self as a gift of God that summons me to recognize, accept, appreciate, and use that gift in the Christian task of drawing closer in self-sacrificing love to neighbor and to God. The three virtues of justice, fidelity, and self-care—none of which precedes the others in importance—clear the ground for the practice of other virtues in each relationship. In other words, they are, Keenan argues, cardinal virtues. But they are all preceded in importance by a fourth cardinal virtue, prudence, which discerns and judges which acts qualify as just, faithful, and self-caring, just as it discerns and judges which acts are just, courageous, and temperate for the traditional cardinal virtues. Whether one numbers the cardinal virtues with the tradition or with Keenan, it remains critical that they be habituated by repeated exercise in imitation of role models respected in one's community.

An obvious and much-raised objection to the very notion of a Christian virtue ethics is the fact that it is *Christian* and therefore not universally applicable. It is applicable, so runs the objection, only to Christians and is therefore relative. The answer to this objection stretches in a line from MacIntyre and Lonergan all the way back to Aristotle: meaning systems, including ethical meaning systems, are learned in a specific community and therefore are indeed all community-relative. Such a claim, of course, raises in many minds both the specter of relativism and the unwarranted conclusion from it, namely, the untruth of every community-relative meaning system.

With Lonergan, however, we prefer to speak of perspectivism rather than relativism. While relativism concludes to the falsity of a judgment, perspectivism concludes to its partial truth. Lonergan advances three reasons for perspectivism in human knowledge. First, human knowers are finite, the information available to them at any one time is incomplete, and they seldom attend to all the data available to them. Second, the knowers are selective, given their past socialization and personal experience. Third, knowers are individually different, so we can expect

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[115] See Jack Dominian, "Sexuality and Personal Relationships," in *Embracing Sexuality: Authority and Experience in the Catholic Church*, ed. Joseph Selling (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001) 13.

[116] In his "Proposing Cardinal Virtues," Keenan eschews both self-love and self-esteem in favor of self-care (727). We have no problem with the notion of self-love as we have earlier explained it.

them to make different selections of data. The individual trained in the philosophy of Plato—Augustine for instance—will attend to different data, achieve different understandings, make different judgments, and act on different decisions than the individual trained in the philosophy of Aristotle—Aquinas for instance. Augustine and Aquinas will each produce a different theological system, both of which will be partial and incomplete explanations of an infinitely complex reality. Augustine and Aquinas are like two individuals at fourth-story and 13th-story windows of a skyscraper; each gets a different but no less partial view of the total panorama that unfolds outside the building. There are no meaning systems, including no ethical systems, that are universal and nonperspectival. "So far from resting on knowledge of the universe," Lonergan observes, "[a judgment] is to the effect that, no matter what the rest of the universe may prove to be, at least *this* is so."[117]

It is, of course, inevitable that different groups of equally rational human beings, attending, perceiving, understanding, judging, and deciding from different social perspectives, may derive different interpretations of "nature" and moral obligation deriving from "nature," and that any given interpretation may be right or wrong. This is a fact that has been demonstrated time and again in history, including Christian history.[118] It is also something taken for granted in the social scientific enterprise known as the sociology of knowledge. One of the founders of this discipline, Alfred Schutz, presents its taken-for-granted principle: "It is the *meaning* of our experiences and not the *ontological structure* of the objects that constitute reality."[119] "The potter, and not the pot," Alfred North Whitehead adds metaphorically, "is responsible for the shape of the pot."[120] The uninterpreted experience of "nature," as of every other objective reality, is restricted to its mere facticity. Nature is indeed "out, there, now, real," but it is void of meaning, a quality that does not inhere in "nature" but is assigned to it by rational and social beings in interpretive acts. Meaning is what is or was meant by the *agent*, who is always to be understood not as an Enlightenment radical *individual* but as an Aristotelian-Thomistic

[117] Lonergan, *Insight* 344, emphasis added. For a fuller explanation of perspectivism, see Todd A. Salzman and Michael G. Lawler, *Sexual Ethics: A Theological Introduction* (Washington: Georgetown University, 2012) xxi–xxiii.

[118] See John T. Noonan Jr., *A Church That Can and Cannot Change: The Development of Catholic Moral Teaching* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2005); Michael G. Lawler, *What Is and What Ought to Be: The Dialectic of Experience, Theology, and Church* (New York: Continuum, 2005) 127–29.

[119] Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers*, 5 vols. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964–1967) 1:230, emphases added.

[120] Alfred North Whitehead, *Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effect* (New York: Putnam's, 1959) 8.

radically *social being*. MacIntyre is correct: "Separated from the *polis* [community and culture], what could have been a human being becomes instead a wild animal."[121]

A second answer to the objection is a genuinely empirical one. For all their undoubted perspectivisms, the great ethical systems reach conclusions that are not as different as is often supposed. What we have called the systems' "visions" may be different, but they agree broadly on core ethical values, norms, and behaviors, as evidenced by their various, and uncommonly similar, versions of the Golden Rule. For Christians it is: "Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets" (Mt 7:12). For Jews: "What is hateful to you do not do to your fellowman. This is the entire law; all the rest is commentary" (Talmud, Shabbat, 3id). For Muslims: "No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself" (Sunnah). For Buddhists: "Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful" (Udana-Varga 5,1). For Hindus: "This is the sum of duty; do naught unto others what you would not have them do unto you" (Mahabharata 5, 1517). The saints in these various religious traditions, the paradigmatically virtuous persons to be imitated for the habituation of virtue, all endorse and exhibit a common core of behaviors. Since *agere sequitur esse*, it is easy to conclude to similar character states and virtues that are shaped and limited, but in no way nullified, because they derive from particular perspectives.

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[121] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice?* 98.