

MORAL PHILOSOPHY

Historical and Contemporary Essays

Edited with Introduction

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A Contemporary Natural-Law Ethics

by

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A Contemporary Natural-Law Ethics

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1. Introduction

In 1959, I began working on ethical theory by studying St. Thomas on natural law. Over the years, I made the modifications required by modern and contemporary problems, phenomenological descriptions of moral realities, linguistic clarifications of relevant expressions, and a constant effort at critical reflection and systematization. Other philosophers, especially Joseph M. Boyle, Jr., and John Finnis, have been helping with this work. The theory we are developing is *a* -- not *the* -- contemporary natural-law ethics.

This paper only summarizes the theory. For its further explanation and defense, those interested may look into works listed in the bibliography.

Like consequentialist, Kantian, and other natural-law theories of morality, ours is cognitivist but not intuitionist. We think there are true moral principles from which the most specific moral norms can be deduced and by which judgments of conscience can be criticized. The theory we propose is less familiar than its consequentialist and Kantian alternatives, and can be initially situated by reference to them.

Consequentialist theories are teleological; they try to ground moral judgments in human well-being. Kantian theories are deontological; they try to ground moral judgments in the rational nature of the moral subject, whose inherent dignity they emphasize. Teleology appeals to many because it does not absolutize morality but subordinates it to a wider human flourishing. But deontology also has its appeal, for it

tries to defend the absolute dignity of human persons, especially against any attempt to justify using some as mere means to the goals of others.

Our theory tries to combine the strengths and avoid the weaknesses of teleology and deontology. Morality, we hold, is grounded in human goods -- the goods of real people living in the world of experience. Still, each person's dignity is protected by moral absolutes, and it never is right to treat anyone as a mere means.

2. The Idea of Basic Human Goods

In the widest sense in which the word "good" is applied to human actions and their principles it refers to anything a person can in any way desire. But people desire many things -- e.g., pleasure, wealth, and power -- whose very pursuit seems to empty a person and to divide persons from one another. However, there are other goods -- e.g., knowledge of the truth and living in friendship -- whose pursuit of itself seems to promote persons and bring them together. Goods like these are real parts of the integral fulfillment of persons. We call them "basic human goods" -- *basic* not to survival but to fulfillment.

Some goods are definite objectives, desired states of affairs -- e.g., losing twenty pounds, getting an enemy to surrender, or successfully completing a research project. But in themselves the basic human goods -- e.g., health, peace, or knowledge of the truth -- are not definite objectives. Pursuit of these goods never ends, for they cannot be attained finally and completely. Interest in them goes beyond particular objectives sought for their sake, for they transcend states of affairs which instantiate them. It follows that persons acting alone and in various forms of community can contribute to the realization of such goods and share in them, but can never become wholly identified with them.

But if the basic human goods are not definite objectives, how do they guide action? By providing the reasons to consider some possibilities choiceworthy opportunities. An enemy's surrender becomes an objective to be pursued because of the belief that it will contribute to peace; the loss of twenty pounds is sought, perhaps, for the sake of health; particular projects of theoretical research are carried out in the hope that their results will advance knowledge. These reasons for choosing and acting provided by basic human goods do not require any prior reasons. The prospects of human fulfillment held out by peace, health, knowledge, and so on, naturally generate corresponding interests in human persons as potential agents.

Thus, human practical reflection begins from the basic human goods. They are expanding fields of possibility which underlie all the reasons one has for choosing and carrying out one's choices. This fact gives human life both its constant and universal features, and its diversity and open-endedness. The basic human goods explain the creativity characteristic, in our experience, only of human beings. They provide the framework of ideals necessary for the unfolding in history of human cultures.

3. Which Are the Basic Human Goods?

Some goods, though important, are not basic, for they are not intrinsic to personal fulfillment. No external good -- nothing a person makes or has, considered as distinct from the person -- can be basic. Individuals and communities always seek such goods for ulterior reasons, which culminate within persons.

Even goods of a more personal and interpersonal character are not yet basic if they can be desired only for their instrumental value. Liberty, for example, is a great good, but not basic; by itself it does not fulfill persons, but only enables them to pursue various forms of fulfillment. Thus, people want liberty to pursue the truth, to worship as they believe right, to live in friendship, and so on.

"Enjoyment" refers to a variety of states of consciousness, which have in common only that they are preferred to their alternatives. A preferred state of consciousness is at best part of a person's sharing in some good; in other words, it is part of the instantiation of a good. Thus enjoyment is not basic. But since "enjoy" refers to conscious participation in one or more of the basic goods, one needs no ulterior reason to enjoy oneself.

Both reflections on one's own deliberation and observation of the diverse ways in which people organize their lives make it clear that there are several basic human goods. For example, truth and friendship plainly mark out distinct fields of concern. Neither is reducible to the other nor to any more fundamental concern. This diversity of basic human goods is no mere contingent fact. Rather, since such goods are aspects of the integral fulfillment of persons, they correspond to the inherent complexity of human nature, both in individuals and in various forms of association.

As *bodily beings*, human persons are living animals. Life itself -- its maintenance and transmission -- health, and safety are one category of basic human good. As *rational*, human beings can know reality and appreciate beauty and whatever intensely engages their capacities to know and feel. Knowledge and esthetic experience are another category of basic

good. As simultaneously *rational* and *animal*, human persons can transform the material world by using realities, beginning with their own bodily selves, to express meanings and/or serve purposes within human cultures. The fullness of such meaning-giving and value-creation is still another category of basic good: excellence in work and play.

Everyone shares to some extent in the preceding goods prior to any deliberate pursuit of them. Life, knowledge, and various skills are first received as gifts of nature and as parts of a cultural heritage. But children quickly come to see these goods as fields in which they can care for, expand, and improve upon what they have received. Life, knowledge, and excellence in performance are basic human goods insofar as they can be cherished, enhanced, and handed on to others.

There is another dimension of human persons. As *agents through deliberation and choice*, they can strive to avoid or overcome various forms of conflict and alienation, and can seek after harmony, integration, and fellowship. Choices themselves are essential parts of this relational dimension of persons. The already given aspects of personal unity and interpersonal relationship provide grounds for this dimension, yet it goes beyond what is given.

Most obvious among the basic human goods of this relational dimension are various forms of harmony between and among persons and groups of persons: friendship, peace, fraternity, and so on. Within individuals, similar goods can be realized; inner peace, self-integration, authenticity. And beyond human relationships, there can be harmony between humans and the wider reaches of reality and its principles. Concern for this last good underlies such diverse activities as believers' worship and environmentalists' work to save endangered species.

The relational goods are instantiated by a synthesis of elements -- feelings, experiences, beliefs, choices, performances, persons, and wider realities. Ideally, harmony enhances its diverse elements, but, in fact, conflict is seldom overcome without loss to the elements synthesized. Defective forms of harmony often are built upon a significant level of conflict. For example, established, working relationships between exploiters and exploited are a sort of peace, yet radically defective. Such defective harmonies, as harmonies, are intelligible goods; they can serve as principles of practical reasoning and action. Yet they are mutilated forms of the basic human goods.

4. The First Moral Principle

To understand right and wrong, one must bear two things in mind. First, the possibilities of human fulfillment are indefinite and always unfolding, for there are several basic human goods, and endless ways of serving and sharing in them. Second, human beings, even when they work together, can only do so much. No one can undertake every project and serve in every possible way. Nor can any community. Choices must be made.

Compulsive behavior, ineptitude, and the unwelcome results of mistakes and bad luck are not moral wrongs. Only in choosing can people go wrong morally. On any ethical theory, moral norms tell people how to choose.

On the account of human goods outlined above, it might seem hard to see how anyone can choose badly. Without reasons for choosing grounded in basic human goods, there would be no options; yet the choice of an option is never rationally necessary -- otherwise, there would not be two or more real options. Thus, on the preceding account, every choice is grounded in some intelligible good, and to that extent is rational, yet no choice has a monopoly on rationality. Moreover, virtually every choice has some negative impact on some good or other. Thus, no choice can be made without setting aside some reason for not making it.

Partly in response to this real complexity, consequentialists try to distinguish good from bad choices by their effectiveness in maximizing good and minimizing evil. But consequentialism is unworkable, for although one may be able to commensurate the measurable value and disvalue promised by different instantiations of goods, one cannot commensurate the goods and bads which make diverse possibilities choiceworthy opportunities, for these goods and bads go beyond what is definite at any moment of choice.

But if consequentialism is unworkable, how can basic human goods mark the moral distinction between choosing well and choosing badly?

There are two ways of choosing. First, one can accept the inevitable limitations of choosing and regard any particular good one chooses as a mere participation in the wider good; choosing thus, one sees the good one chooses as part of a larger and ever-expanding whole, and chooses it in a way which allows for its harmonious integration with other elements of that whole. Second, one can choose in a way which unnecessarily forecloses some further possibilities of fulfillment; one treats the particular good one is realizing here and now as if it were by itself more complete than one knows it to be.

Choices made in the first way are well made, for they are entirely in accord with reality; choices made in the second way are badly made, for they are partly at odds with reality. This distinction between choosing well and choosing badly is the first moral principle. It can be formulated: *in voluntary acting for human goods and avoiding what is opposed to them, one ought to choose and otherwise will those and only those possibilities whose willing is compatible with integral human fulfillment.*

This formulation can be misunderstood. "Integral human fulfillment" does not refer to individualistic self-fulfillment. Rather, it refers to the good of all persons and communities. All the goods in which any person can share also can fulfill others, and individuals can share in goods such as friendship only with others.

Nor is integral human fulfillment some gigantic synthesis of the instantiations of goods in a vast state of affairs which might be projected as the goal of a U.N.O. billion-year plan. Ethics cannot be an architectonic art in that way; there can be no plan to bring about integral human fulfillment. It is a guiding ideal rather than a realizable idea, for the goods are open-ended.

Moreover, integral human fulfillment is not a supreme good, beyond basic goods such as truth and friendship. It does not provide reasons for acting as the basic goods do. Integral human fulfillment only moderates the interplay of such reasons so that deliberation will be thoroughly reasonable.

5. Specifications of the First Moral Principle

One might like the ideal of integral human fulfillment but still ask: How can the formula proposed above be a serviceable first moral principle? How can any specific moral norm be derived from it?

None can be derived directly, but the first principle does imply intermediate principles from which norms can be deduced. Among these intermediate principles is the Golden Rule (or universalizability principle), for a will marked by egoism or partiality cannot be open to integral human fulfillment. And this intermediate principle leads to some specific moral judgments -- e.g., Jane who wants her husband Jack to be faithful plainly violates it by sleeping with Sam.

Thus, there is a route from the first moral principle to specific moral norms. This route can be clarified by reflection on a case such as the intuitively obvious relationship between the first principle and the Golden Rule, and between the Golden Rule and specific norms of fairness.

Human choices are limited in diverse ways. Some limits are inevitable, others not. Among inevitable limits are those on people's insight into the basic goods, ideas of how to serve them, and available resources. Insofar as such limits are outside people's control, morality cannot require that they be transcended.

But some limits on choices are avoidable; one can voluntarily narrow the range of people and goods one cares about. Sometimes this voluntary narrowing has an intelligible basis, as when a person of many gifts chooses a profession and allows other talents to lie fallow. But sometimes avoidable limitations are voluntarily set or accepted without such a reason.

Sources of limitations of this last kind thus meet two conditions: (1) they are effective only by one's own choices; and (2) they are nonrational motives, not intelligible requirements of the basic human goods. Normally, the acting person either can allow these nonrational limiting factors to operate or can transcend them. For they are one's own feelings or emotions, insofar as these are not integrated with the rational appeal of the basic goods and communal fulfillment in them. Such nonintegrated feelings offer motives for behavior yet are not in themselves reasons for choosing.

The first principle of morality rationally prescribes that nonintegrated feelings be transcended. The Golden Rule forbids one to narrow interests and concerns by a certain set of such feelings -- one's preference for oneself and those who are near and dear. It does not forbid differential treatment when required by inevitable limits or by intelligible requirements of shared goods.

Nonrational preferences among persons are not the only feelings which incline people to prefer limited to integral human fulfillment. Hostile feelings such as anger and hatred toward oneself or others lead intelligent, sane, adult persons to choices which are often called "stupid," "irrational," and "childish." Self-destructive and spiteful actions destroy, damage, or block some instantiations of basic human goods; willing such actions obviously is not in line with a will to integral human fulfillment.

Behavior motivated by hostility need not violate the Golden Rule. People sometimes act self-destructively without being unfair to others. Moreover, revenge can be fair: An eye for an eye. But fairness does not eliminate the unreasonableness of acting on hostile feelings in ways that intelligibly benefit no one. Thus, the Golden Rule is not the only intermediate principle which specifies the first principle of morality. It follows that an ethics of a Kantian type is mistaken if it claims that universalizability is the only principle of morality. Respect for persons -- treating them always as ends and never as mere means -- must mean more than treating others fairly.

Not only hostile feelings, but positive ones can motivate people to do evil -- i.e., to destroy, damage, or impede an instantiation of some basic human good. One can choose to bring about evil as a means. One does evil to avoid some other evil or to attain some ulterior good. In such cases, the choice can seem entirely rational, and consequentialists might commend it. But, as I explained above, the appearance of complete rationality is based on a false assumption: that human goods do not matter except insofar as they are instantiated and can be commensurated.

Thus, it is unreasonable to choose to destroy, damage, or impede some instance of a basic good for the sake of an ulterior end. If one makes such a choice, one does not have the reason of maximizing good or minimizing evil -- there is no such reason, for the goods are noncommensurable. Rather, one is motivated by different feelings toward different instances of good. In this sort of case, one plays favorites among instantiations of goods, just as in violating the Golden Rule one plays favorites among persons.

And so, in addition to the Golden Rule and the principle which excludes acting on hostile feelings, there is another intermediate principle: Do not do evil that good may come.

Because this principle generates moral absolutes, it often is considered a threat to people's vital concrete interests. But while this principle may be a threat to interests, the moral absolutes it generates also protect real human goods which are parts of the fulfillment of actual persons; and it is reasonable to sacrifice important concrete interests to the integral fulfillment of persons.

The Golden Rule and the other principles just enunciated shape the rational prescription of the first principle of morality into definite responsibilities. Hence, we call such intermediate principles "modes of responsibility." In all, we distinguish eight of them.

6. Human Action

Specific moral norms are deduced from the modes of responsibility. But one cannot explain this process without first saying something about human action.

Many people, including philosophers, unreflectively assume a rather simple model of human action, involving three elements: (1) a possible state of affairs which a potential agent wants to realize; (2) a plan to realize it by causal factors in the agent's power; and (3) the carrying out of a more or less complex set of bodily performances to bring about the desired state of affairs.

This model of action is inadequate, yet it does refer to something: to what Aristotle called *making* as distinct from *doing*. Kant saw the inadequacy of this model; he knew there is more to moral life than the pursuit of one goal after another. But because he separated the noumenal realm from the world of experience, Kant did not challenge at its own level the oversimplified account of human action. Yet reflection upon our experience as persons living our own lives will verify a more complex model.

As explained above, the basic human goods are broad fields of human possibility. Interest in these goods underlies the desire to realize any particular goal. For persons, whether acting as individuals or in groups, projects first appear as interesting possibilities, worthy of deliberation and perhaps of choice, because they seem to offer ways of uniting persons as open to fulfillment with goods which are intrinsic aspects of that fulfillment. For instance, beyond the specific objectives of any course, dedicated teachers want their students to become mature and cultured persons; beyond all his strategic objectives, a statesmanlike military commander hopes to contribute to a more peaceful and just world.

Thus, from a moral point of view, actions primarily are voluntary syntheses of acting persons or communities with basic human goods. There are at least three ways to make such a synthesis. These constitute three senses of "doing" which, from the moral point of view, are irreducibly diverse.

First, one acts when one chooses something by which one directly participates in a good. For example, when one gives a gift as an act of friendship, one chooses to realize a certain state of affairs -- giving the gift -- as a way of serving the good of friendship, the very fulfillment of self and other in this form of harmony, which is instantiated by giving and receiving the gift.

Second, one acts in a different way when one chooses something not for itself but as a means to an ulterior end. What is chosen is not willed as an instantiation of a basic good, but as something through which one expects to bring about an instantiation of a good. For example, many people work only to get their pay. The chosen means need not be such that it would never be chosen for its inherent value; for business purposes one sometimes makes a trip one might also take as a vacation.

Third, one acts in a still different way when one voluntarily accepts side effects incidental to acting in either of the two prior ways. Here one is aware that executing one's choice will affect, for good or ill, instances of goods other than those on which one's interest directly bears. Although one does not choose this impact on other goods, one foresees it and accepts it -- sometimes reluctantly (e.g., when one accepts the loss of a diseased organ to save one's life), sometimes gladly (e.g., when one

accepts the bonus of making new friends when one agrees to participate in a philosophy workshop).

Because the three sorts of willing distinguished here relate acting persons to goods in different ways, they ground three distinct meanings of "doing." The significance of the distinction emerges most clearly in negative cases. One may reveal shameful truths about another out of spite, or to arouse shame and provide an occasion for repentance, or as a side-effect of preventing harm to some other, innocent person. In all three cases, one can be said "to destroy a reputation." But the three types of action destroy reputation in different senses.

7. The Derivation of Specific Moral Norms

Specific moral norms can be derived from modes of responsibility. That is plain from the work of many philosophers with the principle of universalizability and from the examples given above pertaining to other modes. I shall now try to clarify the process of derivation.

Its heart is a deduction which can be formulated in a categorical syllogism. In the simplest case, the normative premise is a mode of responsibility, which excludes a certain way of willing toward relevant goods. The factual premise is a description of a kind of action; it indicates what willing which bears on basic human goods would be involved in doing an action of that kind. The conclusion is that doing an act of that kind is morally wrong. Actions not excluded by any mode are morally permissible; those whose omission would violate some mode are morally required.

Many ways of describing actions, especially with a focus on results, do not reveal what is necessary to derive a moral norm. For example, if killing is defined as any behavior of one person which causes the death of another, the description is insufficient for moral evaluation. Descriptions of actions adequate for moral evaluation must say or imply how the agent's will bears on relevant goods. Such descriptions indicate which of the three sorts of doing, distinguished above, will be involved in an action.

Not all the modes of responsibility apply to all three sorts of doing.

Universalizability does. Parents who show affection for a favorite child but are cold toward another violate the Golden Rule in a doing which immediately instantiates the good of familial fellowship. Superiors who assign harder jobs to subordinates they dislike and easier jobs to subordinates they like violate universalizability in choosing means. Dor-

mitory residents who party through the night while others try to sleep but complain when others make noise during daytime hours are unfair in accepting side effects.

Thus accepting side effects of one's choices can be wrong if one does it unfairly. Similarly, even without unfairness to anyone, someone excessively attached to some good can go wrong in accepting grave side effects -- for example, the aging, champion boxer who ruins his health in trying to retain his title.

However, one cannot act at all without accepting some bad side effects. In any choice, one at least devotes a certain part of one's limited time and other resources to the pursuit of a limited good and leaves unserved other goods for which one might have acted. Hence, it is impossible to have a general moral principle entirely excluding the willing of every negative impact on a basic human good. One sometimes can accept bad side effects as inevitable concomitants of a fully rational response to the intelligible requirements of goods.

Thus, the principle that evil may not be done that good may come applies only to the choice of a means to an ulterior end, not to the acceptance of side effects. Sometimes the results of doing an evil and of accepting a bad side effect can be quite similar, yet the acceptance of the side effect, if not excluded by some other mode of responsibility, will be permissible. For example, a choice to kill a suffering person, whether by a positive performance or by a purposeful omission, is morally excluded, as a case of doing evil that good may come. But a choice to limit or terminate burdensome and costly treatment, with death accepted as a side effect, need not be wrong. The treatment of free choice in the next section will help explain why differences in willing have much great moral significance, even when the results are quite similar.

Actions can be described more or less fully. If a limited description of an action makes it clear that it involves a choice to destroy, damage, or impede some instance of a basic human good, then the wrongness of any action which meets that description is settled. Additional factors may affect the degree of wrongness, but further description of the act cannot reverse its basic moral quality. For this reason, moral norms derived from this mode of responsibility can be called "moral absolutes." For example, an absolute norm forbids killing one innocent person to prevent that person and several others from being killed by a mob.

Different modes work differently, so not all specific norms are absolute. Universalizability can exclude as unfair an action proposed under a limited description, yet allow as fair an action which includes all the elements of that description together with some other morally relevant features. For example, fairness demands promise keeping, whenever the only motive for breaking a promise is of the sort whose operation

promises are meant to exclude. But someone who has another reason to break a promise -- for example, that keeping it would have such grave consequences that even those to whom it was made would agree it should be broken -- may break the promise without violating the Golden Rule.

In general, specific norms based on universalizability are nonabsolute. That may not appear to be so, since ordinary language sometimes builds the moral specification into the act description -- e.g., by limiting "stealing" to the wrongful taking of another's property. However, instances of justifiable taking can include all the elements which are present in unjustifiable taking; the addition, not the subtraction, of relevant features makes the taking justifiable.

8. Free Choice, Personal Identity, and Character

Classical moral philosophers sought the wisdom to live good lives. By their standard, the ethical theory summarized thus far is inadequate. For being a good person is more than conforming each of one's acts to an appropriate moral norm.

One makes a choice when one faces practical alternatives, believes one can and must settle which to take, and deliberately takes one. The choice is free when choosing itself determines which alternative one takes. True, factors beyond one's control provided options and limited them. But, if free, only one's choice determined which option one would adopt.

The particular goal realized by a successful action is sensibly good and experienced as such, but the appealing goodness with respect to which one determines oneself in choosing to do that action is intelligible and transcends that experience. For example, recovery from a particular illness is sensibly good; health, to which one determines oneself in choosing to do what is necessary to get well, is intelligibly good. In many successful human actions, the goods concretely realized can also be realized by natural processes or spontaneous human acts without choice; by contrast, the sharing in and service to goods to which one determines oneself by choice can only occur in one's self-determining choice.

As self-creative, free choices transcend the material world. They are not events or processes or things in the world; they must be distinguished from the performances which execute them. The performances of particular acts come and go, but a choice, once made, determines the self unless and until one makes another, incompatible choice. Self-determination through choice means that the self is actualized and limited; one's orientation toward further possibilities is more or less set-

tled. By choices, one not only brings about instantiations of goods, but participates in definite ways in the basic human goods.

There are large choices, which put one in the position of having to carry them out by many small choices. Examples of large choices are to become a philosopher, to get married, and to take up photography as a hobby. Some large choices can be called "commitments." To make a commitment is more than to adopt a long-range goal. Commitments bear directly upon goods such as religion, justice, friendship, authenticity, and so on. Since these are interrelated, any commitment will somehow bear on all of them. And since they include interpersonal harmony, every commitment joins one to a particular person or group.

The first moral principle requires willing in line with integral human fulfillment. Such willing must meet the conditions for effective and consistent participation in basic human goods. Without an integrated set of upright commitments, one cannot participate in goods effectively and consistently. Therefore, each of us must discern which commitments are personally appropriate, make and integrate them, and faithfully carry them out.

Some aspects of personal identity are given: One has a certain genetic make up, is brought up in a certain culture, and so forth. But the matrix of moral self-identity is one's free choices; mature people define themselves by their commitments. Still, a morally mature, good person is more than a set of upright commitments. For to faithfully carry out upright commitments, the whole personality must be developed and limited in line with them; they must shape feelings, beliefs, experiences, modes of behavior, skills, and so on. Thus, a good person is one whose whole self is formed by a comprehensive set of upright commitments.

Such a person has good character, whose facets are called "virtues." Since there are many ways of distinguishing facets of character, there are many classifications of virtues. But however classified, virtues are moral fruits, not moral principles. For virtues are only parts of a personality shaped by the carrying out of morally upright commitments, and such commitments are upright because they arise from and are shaped by propositional principles of practical reasoning and of morality.

9. The Way of the Lord Jesus

Describing the good person is easy; living a good life often seems impossible. The good we achieve and enjoy is mutilated and threatened by ineptitude, failure, breakdown, ignorance, error, misunderstanding, pain, sickness, and death. We sometimes freely choose to violate known moral

truths; we never perfectly fulfill our commitments. Perhaps we could live better private lives if we had the support of a good society, and we also need a good society because the human is naturally social. But there are many wicked people in the world, and powerful people seem especially likely to be wicked. Thus, every political society constitutionally compromises with systematic injustice and other sorts of immorality. All humankind lives in slavery, though some are always only slaves, while others sometimes also play the role of master.

Philosophical reflection seems unable to explain this situation and to show the way to freedom. Immorality, precisely insofar as it is rooted in truly free choices, is inexplicable and unpreventable. Apart from immorality, most repugnant aspects of the human condition are epitomized by death, which seems natural and inevitable. Wrestling with the mystery of the human situation, ancient and non-Western philosophers ignore free choice, and modern and contemporary Western philosophers deny it. Almost all try to evade the reality of death by making some sort of rationally indefensible distinction between the morally significant human person and the human organism doomed to die.

The Christian gospel, I believe, offers a more adequate account of the situation. According to this account, God is a communion of three persons, who created human persons so that they might share in divine communion and live in human fellowship. In creating, God promised to forestall death, naturally inevitable for the human organism as such, if men and women cooperated with the divine plan. But from humankind's beginning wrongful free choices blocked the formation and development of an inclusive human community, constitutionally uncompromised by evil. And so God permitted nature to take its course and humans to taste death, at least partly so that they might experience the wretchedness of their fallen condition, and be eager to escape it.

Human liberation, according to the gospel's proposal, can be gained in two stages, by any who truly desire it. One of the divine persons became the man Jesus, who lived a morally unblemished human life. In doing so, he not only provided a unique example of how to live uprightly in the broken human situation, but also made himself available as the head of the human community God had planned from the beginning. All are invited to make faith in Jesus and his cause the central commitment of their lives. In making such a commitment, the gospel teaches, Jesus' disciples enter not only into fellowship with one another but into the communion of the divine family.

The gospel teaches Christians that if they live their lives to implement their faith in Jesus, they will live the best human lives possible in this broken world. Following the way of the Lord Jesus, individual Christians can become good people, and on the basis of their common

bond with Jesus they can work together to build up decent community in the Church and in their Christian families.

Yet this first stage of liberation is incomplete, since the upright must suffer at the hands of the wicked and all must suffer the human misery which culminates in death. The second, and final, stage of liberation requires a divine act of re-creation. This re-creation, according to the gospel, began with Jesus' resurrection from the dead, and will be completed by the raising up of all who die in faith, and their reunion in an unending divine-human fellowship, protected forever from the wicked.

If the Christian gospel is true, the normative ethical theory outlined in the previous sections remains adequate. The basic human goods remain, though they unfold in unexpected ways. The modes of responsibility remain, though they generate many specifically Christian norms, to govern actions people without faith either could not think of at all or would not think of as choiceworthy.

Most important, the Christian need not accept an Augustinian or Thomistic version of neo-Platonism, with its supposition that the human heart is naturally insatiable by human fulfillment, and naturally drawn to fulfillment in the Beatific Vision of God. For faith does not substitute a supreme instantiation of a supernatural good for integral human fulfillment.

Rather, it holds out the hope of an unending marriage feast. In this communion of divine and human persons, all the basic human goods will be instantiated without the defects imposed by death. And the more-than-human fulfillment which is naturally proper to God alone also will be enjoyed by his adopted sons and daughters.

Selected Bibliography

Germain Grisez, *Contraception and the Natural Law* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1964), xiii + 245. Chapter three is an early version of the theory; for understanding its mature form, only the critique of "conventional" natural-law approaches remains helpful. The critique of consequentialism ("situationism") here, and up to "Choice and Consequentialism," mistakenly focuses on the noncommensurability of the different categories of basic human goods.

_____, "The First Principle of Practical Reason: A Commentary on the *Summa Theologiae*, 1-2, Question 94, Article 2," *The Natural Law Forum*, 10 (1965), 168-201; abridged version: *Modern Studies in Philosophy: Aquinas: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Anthony

Kenny (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1969), 340-82. (Kenny did some significant, unauthorized editing, so it is best to use the original.) Of works listed in this bibliography, this article and the next are Grisez's only attempts at Thomistic exegesis. Elsewhere, he tries to do philosophy or theology, not history, and freely parts company with St. Thomas, often without saying so.

_____, "Man, Natural End of," *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 9:132-38. By examining the efforts of various groups of Thomists to make sense of St. Thomas's teaching on the natural end of human persons, and by pointing out many inconsistencies in what he says about the ultimate end, this article deliberately comes within a step of rejecting his position (and with it, the positions of both Aristotle and St. Augustine) on the ultimate end of human persons.

_____, *Abortion: The Myths, the Realities, and the Arguments* (New York and Cleveland: Corpus Books, 1970), ix + 559. Chapter six is a restatement of the theory, with its application to abortion and other killing, including capital punishment and war. Some find this presentation of the theory especially attractive, perhaps partly because it is easier to follow than later, more adequate versions. Certain critics, including Richard A. McCormick, S. J., still deal with this statement of the theory, and make objections whose answers they could find in later works.

_____ and Russell Shaw, *Beyond the New Morality: The Responsibilities of Freedom*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), xi + 256. Intended for use with beginning students as part of an introduction to ethics, this version of the theory is accessible, but somewhat simplified. Many important aspects of the theory and arguments for it are deliberately omitted, even from the third edition.

Joseph M. Boyle, Jr., "Aquinas and Prescriptive Ethics," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 49 (1975), 82-95. A clear account and critique of Hare's prescriptivism.

Germain Grisez, *Beyond the New Theism: A Philosophy of Religion* (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), xiii + 418. The metaphysical foundations of the ethical theory are explained and defended in this book, which had the benefit of many years of work with Boyle and Tollefsen, especially on the book listed next. Chapters six through thirteen are an exposition and criticism of the modern and contemporary alternatives; chapter twenty-three deals with the irreducible complexity of the human person and community of persons.

Joseph M. Boyle, Jr., Germain Grisez, and Olaf Tollefsen, *Free Choice: A Self-Referential Argument* (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976), xi + 207. The most complete account of free choice and related elements of action theory, and a criticism of alternative views of these matters, which are so essential to ethical theory.

The Teachings of Christ: A Catholic Catechism for Adults, ed. Ronald Lawler, O.F.M. Cap., Donald W. Wuerl, and Thomas Comerford Lawler (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor, 1976), 640. Finnis and Grisez (Finnis more than Grisez) did the first draft of chapters eighteen through twenty-one, but their draft was revised considerably by the editors. Work on this project was the most important starting point of the subsequent development of the ethical theory in the context of moral theology.

Germain Grisez, "Choice and Consequentialism," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 51 (1977), 144-52. The first presentation of the mature version (which corrects earlier ones) of the argument against consequentialism based on the noncommensurability of those goods and bads which are the intelligible grounds for the options between or among which a free choice must be made.

_____, "Against Consequentialism," *The American Journal of Jurisprudence and Legal Philosophy*, 3 (1978), 21-72. The most thorough critique of consequentialism.

Joseph M. Boyle, Jr., "Praeter intentionem in Aquinas," *The Thomist*, 42 (1978), 649-65. A clarification of the notion of *side effect*.

Germain Grisez and Joseph M. Boyle, Jr., *Life and Death with Liberty and Justice: A Contribution to the Euthanasia Debate* (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), xiii + 521. Chapters eleven and twelve benefit from Boyle's work in action theory; everything necessary to deal with life and death issues reaches nearly mature form here. The political philosophy in this book needs development and, perhaps, certain corrections. The authors now think it is usually wrong to withhold food and water from comatose patients.

John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), xv + 425. Chapters three through five deploy the ethical theory with originality, as a basis for Finnis's altogether independent philosophy of law. He gives special attention to epistemological issues raised by the empiricist tradition. There are some differences in ethical theory between Finnis, on the one hand, and Grisez and Boyle, on the

other. But most differences are in formulation rather than in substance, and the more important substantive differences concern applications rather than the theory itself.

Joseph M. Boyle, Jr., "Toward Understanding the Principle of Double Effect," *Ethics*, 90 (1980), 527-38. A defense of the principle of double effect, with a clarification of the theory of agency it presupposes.

John Finnis and Germain Grisez, "The Basic Principles of Natural Law: A Reply to Ralph McInerny," *The American Journal of Jurisprudence and Legal Philosophy*, 26 (1981), 21-31. A defense against a Thomist of stricter observance.

John Finnis, *Fundamentals of Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press; Washington, D. C.: Georgetown University Press, 1983), x + 163. Finnis restates much of the theory, and engages in a rich dialectic both with the history of philosophy and with contemporary English-language work in ethical theory.

Germain Grisez, *The Way of the Lord Jesus*, vol. one, *Christian Moral Principles*, with the help of Joseph M. Boyle, Jr., Basil Cole, O. P., John M. Finnis, John A. Geinzer, Jeannette Grisez, Robert G. Kennedy, Patrick Lee, William E. May, and Russell Shaw (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983), xxxiv + 971. Chapters two through twelve are the most mature and complete statement of the theory thus far. Boyle contributed a total of more than six months of intense, *full-time* work to this volume. The rethinking in a theological context of the whole theory without reference to any particular issue (such as abortion or euthanasia) led to many important developments, and a considerable increase in the tightness of the system. Chapters nineteen and thirty-four provide a theological account of the ultimate end of human persons; chapters twenty-five and twenty-six explain the specificity of Christian ethics.

John Finnis, "Practical Reasoning, Human Goods, and the End of Man," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 58 (1984), 23-36. A conciliatory comparison of the ideal of integral human fulfillment with the ultimate end as St. Thomas understands it. Finnis, whose view is closer than Grisez's to that of St. Thomas, here emphasizes points of agreement.

Joseph M. Boyle, Jr., "Aquinas, Kant, and Donagan on Moral Principles," *The New Scholasticism*, 58 (1984), 391-408. A criticism of Donagan's nonconsequentialist (Kantian) ethics.

John Finnis, Joseph M. Boyle, Jr., and Germain Grisez, *Nuclear Deterrence, Morality and Realism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), xv + 429. A fresh, philosophical presentation of the theory, with a careful application to the morality of nuclear deterrence. The present paper is in part a considerable revised version of a first draft of chapter ten of this book.

Germain Grisez, Joseph Boyle, and John Finnis, "Practical Principles, Moral Truth, and Ultimate Ends," *The American Journal of Jurisprudence*, 32 (1987), 99-151. A restatement, clarification, and updating of many elements of the theory often criticized (and generally misunderstood) by philosophers in the (broadly speaking, Thomistic) natural-law tradition from which the theory was developed.