**Key Terms**

*Ethical Choices*, Third Edition

Richard Burnor and Yvonne Raley

Chapter 12: Virtue Ethics

**attaining virtue** A practicability problem since virtue ethics asks us to transform our very characters.

**character motivation** A feature of virtue theory that attributes the motivations for acting morally to one’s character.

**deficiency** For Aristotle, the point where an act or feeling is not enough and so counts as vicious, not virtuous.

**direct democracy** A political system in which the people make laws and establish policies directly and not through a representative.

**eudaimonia** Aristotle’s notion of human flourishing (happiness); to achieve this, one must live in accordance with reason (virtuously), thereby fulfilling one’s human function.

**excess** For Aristotle, the point where an act or feeling is too much and so counts as vicious, not virtuous.

**explaining virtues** An explanatory power problem since the goodness of foundational virtues is unexplained.

**good-promoting virtues** Virtues that promote specific values or goods—for example, sociability and generosity.

**incompleteness** A completeness problem since virtue ethics does not address certain moral problems.

**limiting virtues** Virtues that help us control and manage our inclinations and feelings, for example, courage.

**mean** For Aristotle, the point between excess and deficiency where an act or feeling achieves the proper balance and so counts as virtuous.

**moral luck** Factors beyond our control that affect, to some extent, both our ability to act morally in a given situation and the consequences of what we do.

**moral saint** A moral saint, for a specific ethical theory, fulfills the requirements of that theory (e.g., a Kantian saint).

**obligation virtues** Virtues that help us fulfill our moral obligations to act in certain ways—for example, truthfulness.

**primacy of character** A feature of virtue theory that says our primary moral responsibility is to develop a virtuous character which then defines right actions and principles.

**representational democracy** A political system in which people elect representatives to make laws and establish policies on their behalf.

**several right choices** A feature of virtue theory which says that more than one choice can be equally right for the same situation.

**vice** A specific character trait, like dishonesty, that is morally bad and that opposes some good character trait; a vicious person has many vices.

**virtue** A specific character trait, like honesty, that is morally good; a virtuous person has many virtues.