According to the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew, the standard of the Final Judgment is "whatever you did for the least of my brothers, you did for me." Successfully fulfilling this all-important dictum requires the practice of hospitality.

Constraints of space permit only a cursory treatment of the remaining two themes, Distributism and pacifism. Distributism can most helpfully be seen not as a competing economic system (a third way), but as a set of propositions which ensure that any given economic system respects and serves the human person. Distilled, it is nothing more than the traditional requirements of the Church for economic justice (40). As for Day’s pacifism (46-51), it raises important questions and difficulties that I believe are best resolved by Germain Grisez in his various treatments of killing.

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**Notes**


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A few years ago, with the Berlin wall down, democratic states cropping up in Eastern Europe and Russia holding democratic elections, it seemed that democracy was destined to rule the world. Perhaps we took it for granted that since we believe that democracy is the best form of political association, it would naturally win out over other forms of government. Today the victories of democracy appear a bit tarnished. In Russia democracy may be foundering, while in many Eastern European countries it seems to be an increasingly distant dream. Even as we continue to believe that democracy is the best form of government, what we mean by the term "democracy," why it is best, and what is necessary to establish and maintain it, seem far from clear.

In this book, Vukan Kuic gives a brief review of most of Yves R. Simon’s significant essays on democracy and freedom. In doing so Kuic questions whether our contemporary society—in which philosophy is "inspired by natural sciences that end with reservations about external reality, and by a social science of the same inspiration that denies human freedom"—can adequately sustain the theory and practice of democracy (24). Might democracy in the developed world be almost as fragile as that in Russia and in parts of Eastern Europe? Kuic examines this problem by means of a study of Simon’s various

Simon takes the problem of philosophy to be both theoretical and practical. He notes that unlike science, which is a pursuit largely limited to scientists, the practice of philosophy belongs to the nature of all human beings. Thus the task of philosophy is doubled as it must overcome both the errors of the discipline and the errors of popular understanding. In this light, Kuic addresses the confusions in both philosophy and science which would undermine our ability to sustain a viable theory and practice of democracy. In philosophy and political theory, a firm conviction about the real benefit of democratic association is undermined by a skeptical view of reality and of human freedom. In the sciences this conviction is undermined by confusion about the relation between the determinacy of the physical world and that of the realm of human actions. Kuic argues that since politics is an issue of making and acting as well as a problem of knowledge, a pluralist epistemology is necessary to give it an adequate account. "Thomist epistemology not only divides science into different kinds; it also recognizes a distinct knowledge that is indispensable for coping with reality" (28). However, a realist view such as that held by John Searle is inadequate as a basis for democracy. For Searle the nature of social reality, and thus of political reality, seems to be understood as a problem of how we symbolize reality rather than a problem of how we develop and live in reality (25).

In a similar vein, Kuic uses Simon’s development of human freedom in *Freedom of Choice* to argue that freedom is neither a problem of indetermination and passivity nor a problem of material determination and necessity. Rather it is the result of what Simon calls "super-determination." That is, the good that is desired as the end of any and all human actions is an infinite good determining our actions through our human nature. We do not merely desire to be happy here and now, but to be happy in all ways and for all time. However, all the particular goods that are presented to us in the context of life are radically inadequate to fulfill this infinite desire. As soon as we become aware of this discrepancy, no particular good could possibly determine us to act by its own limited nature. What can determine our action here is precisely the power of the will that is given to us along with the desire for this infinite good. A theory about the freedom of democracy makes little sense without an understanding of personal freedom that allows citizens to act freely within the context of their political freedom.

Skepticism and positivism, however, are not the only threats to maintaining an active and viable democratic system. Kuic’s development of his thesis shows that it is crucial that we recognize the defining characteristics of democracy as well as the essential role of authority in its exercise. Here Kuic
develops Simon's definitive understanding of the role of authority, not simply as a substitute for undeveloped self-government, but also as the necessary condition for true personal autonomy (69). He shows how individual civil rights, which are often identified as the end of government, are in fact simply the means by which the citizens achieve adequate limits to the possibility of a government corrupted either by overzealous or by abusive actions (88).

Kuic then clarifies the relation between capitalism and democratic freedom and shows the clear risks as well as possible benefits of modern technology. Money, like technology, is indifferent to its use; and issues of use can only be decided in the context of a theory of what is good for the individual and the community (117). Thus the fact of material or technological abundance serves as no guarantee that citizens will benefit from this abundance. Simon argues that the reason people in democratic states currently may have more freedom, equality, and justice is because they have been able to use labor unions, producer cooperatives, and consumer advocacy groups to force the capitalistic market to adjust to their demands.6

To first appearances it would seem that the good of the technologic community might coincide with that of the community at large. Technology seems to "promise a life of ease for all" (123). However, the most feasible technological solution to a problem may be morally questionable. For example, the problem of pain and suffering at the end of life might be solved most feasibly by the institution of physician-assisted suicide. Kuic argues that the tension between technology and the good demands the presence and activity of prudent political leaders able to persuade the people to prefer the just solution above the most feasible one (123).

The strengths of this book are numerous. It clearly and succinctly identifies the characteristics that are essential to the practice of democracy. It identifies the confusions that conflate democracy with liberalism or with free market capitalism. It spells out the historical and contemporary factors that would put democracy at risk and it outlines the difficulty of supporting and advancing the theory and practice of democracy today. It takes the views of a number of modern thinkers, puts them up against Simon's theories and shows how they fail at their own task, the support of modern democracy. As an exercise of prudence, democracy, like virtue itself, requires hard work, attention to detail, a clear understanding of the end and the means to it, and knowledge of the obstacles that are in the way. Kuic's book, like books and essays by Simon himself, contains scores of insights, distinctions and clarifications that will be useful to those who are interested in the reality of democracy, now and for the future.

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In the introduction to his book, Professor McInerny, to make a point, draws on Jacinta, one of the three children in the Fatima apparitions, who said:

I saw the Holy Father in a very large house, kneeling before a table with his face in his hands. He was crying. Many people were in front of the house; some were throwing stones, while others were cursing him and using foul language.

Asks McInerny: "Has anyone described better the beleaguered state of the Papacy and the Magisterium of the Church since Vatican II?"

In seven short chapters, written in his classical but easy style, this Notre Dame philosopher and literary parent of "Father Dowling" takes the reader through the teachings of Vatican II, now forgotten, the *Humanae Vitae* controversy of 1968 (i.e., "the year the Church fell apart"), a discussion of "who" owns the Church, the "whipsawing" of the Catholic laity by the Church’s theologians and their resistance to professing the faith, and the emergence of a firm Vatican response to dissent.

The overview is comprehensive, with cameo appearances of poignant moments during and after Vatican II, such as Cardinal Alfrink switching off the microphone of Cardinal Ottoviani: "Ottoviani stumbled back to his seat in humiliation. The most powerful Cardinal in the Roman Curia had been silenced, and the Council Fathers clapped with glee." As when, in the *Humanae Vitae* case, two hundred theologians decided that "the Pope had flunked theology," not only for the content of his message, but for forgetting that "the function of the pope is to promulgate and endorse the consensus of believers."

Ralph McInerny raises a subject that deserves more attention than it has received. He wonders aloud why dissenting theologians considered their