**Developing Virtue: Some Conceptual Issues**

Christine Swanton

This paper addresses a relatively unexplored issue in virtue ethics: how can we understand, at a conceptual level, the relation between the virtues of mature human beings and desirable traits or sensitivities of those whose virtue is in the process of developing? Can children be said to possess virtue? To answer these questions I distinguish between basic virtue, that is, virtue understood at a high level of abstraction through the thick virtue concepts as applied to dispositions, and virtue differentiated according to such things as stage of life, roles, cultural location, narrative particularity. If, in addition, basic virtue is understood as a prototype concept, it makes sense to speak of the virtues of children. The work of Erik Erikson allows us to understand such virtues as presupposing basic ‘unifying strengths’, which are needed for the development of virtue in both children and adults.