

**Towards an Ecumenical Ethic:
Reconciling the Work of
Germain Grisez, Stanley Hauerwas and Oliver O'Donovan**

by

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Short Abstract

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This thesis is concerned to further the renewal of moral theology in an age of ecumenism by drawing three of its important contemporary protagonists - Germain Grisez, Stanley Hauerwas and Oliver O'Donovan - into an ecumenical dialogue in the hope of reconciling their different approaches. This dialogue occurs in five stages. First, the question, what makes Christian ethics *Christian*? is considered using O'Donovan's and Hauerwas' emphasis on the distinct epistemological foundations and content of a Christian ethic as a benchmark. An interpretation of Grisez's natural law ethic is then offered which satisfies these conditions. Secondly, the relationship between O'Donovan's and Grisez's essentially realist theories is considered. The difference between them emerges as being primarily one of emphasis, with O'Donovan giving priority to the need for a Christian ethic to be unequivocally realist, while Grisez focuses on the need for sound philosophical argument. A reconciliation of their approaches which seeks to do justice to both sets of concerns is then suggested in the form of a Christian realist theory. Thirdly, a careful interpretation of Hauerwas' narrative ethic, which suggests that it is less subjectivist than is usually thought to be the case, provides the basis for its reconciliation with a Christian realist theory as a complementary form of ethics. An exploration of the possibilities and limitations of narrative for moral deliberation suggests that such a complementary relationship is necessary. Fourthly, the possibility of such a relationship is secured when an analysis of Grisez's theory reveals that it is capable of meeting Hauerwas' concerns about the centrality of character, the particularity of the person in shaping moral obligations and the place of the emotions in the moral life. Finally, it is concluded that the ecumenical ethic towards which the thesis moves will be one which describes this complementary operation of a Christian realist theory and a narrative ethic from the perspective of Christian worship.

Abstract

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This thesis is concerned to further the process of the renewal of moral theology in an age of ecumenism by drawing three important protagonists in that process - Germain Grisez, Stanley Hauerwas and Oliver O'Donovan - into a dialogue in the hope of reconciling their different approaches. This dialogue is based on a model of ecumenical discussion as an attempt to move towards agreement about the truth rather than to establish a consensus. The potential ecumenical gain of such a conversation is a clearer understanding of the nature of *koinonia* and how it might be achieved. After the three authors and their central concerns have been introduced, the dialogue proceeds in five stages.

First, the question, what makes Christian ethics *Christian*? is considered. O'Donovan's and Hauerwas' common emphasis on the distinct epistemological foundations and content of a Christian ethic are taken as the benchmark for answering this question in the present discussion. It is argued that Hauerwas' and O'Donovan's claim, that broadly Thomist forms of natural law are not a form of Christian ethics in a strong sense, can be maintained in relation to Grisez's essentially secular account of his natural law theory. However, it is suggested that an interpretation of Grisez's much overlooked theological rendering of his theory is capable of meeting O'Donovan's and Hauerwas' requirements for an ethic to be *Christian*. This analysis - which follows the work of John Finnis in understanding the basic principles of practical reasoning as arising, in part, from a person's understanding of the nature of reality and not just from her understanding of the reality of human nature - interprets the specifically Christian principles which Grisez adduces as arising from a distinctly Christian account of reality. It is then observed that these principles produce a

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distinctive content to Grisez's ethic which is very similar to that produced by Hauerwas' ethic.

Secondly, the relationship between O'Donovan's and Grisez's analyses is considered. It is observed that both seek to articulate a realist form of ethics in which the order in creation is foundational for the shape of the moral order. It is then suggested that the crucial point of divergence between their theories as a whole is located in their different approaches to articulating the relationship between reality and the moral order. O'Donovan's approach to this relationship is then outlined. It is observed that he begins by reflecting upon theoretical knowledge of the order in creation - knowledge which he argues is only partial as a result both of weaknesses in scientific methodology and the consequences of the Fall. This partiality of knowledge is identified as giving rise to the architectonic importance of revelation in his account. Next, his attempt to negotiate the naturalistic fallacy is analysed. In concluding this outline of his theory, it is suggested that O'Donovan develops an approach to a realist ethic which charts a middle ground between Thomist and Scholastic natural law theories.

In exploring the nature of Grisez's ethic, the question as to whether or not he actually produces a realist theory is used to structure the discussion because O'Donovan and others have doubted its realist foundations. These doubts, however, are answered by: identifying the dependence of his account of the basic goods on the particular nature possessed by humans; highlighting the relationship between basic principles of practical reasonableness and the nature of reality; and describing the integral relationship between practical reason and theoretical knowledge in the process of moral deliberation. In answering these doubts, the commonly held philosophical assumption that a genuinely realist theory which avoids committing the naturalistic fallacy is impossible is challenged. In completing this account of the fundamental elements of Grisez's theory and his understanding of the relationship between reason and reality, the logical train which links the foundations of his theory to his normative

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conclusions is traced. In doing so, Hauerwas' claim that Grisez's account of this process involves an illicit step is rebutted.

With both realist theories outlined, the difference between them emerges as being essentially one of emphasis, with O'Donovan giving priority to the need for a Christian ethic to be realist and Grisez giving priority to the need for sound philosophical argument to be respected. A reconciliation of their approaches which seeks to do justice to both sets of concerns is then suggested in the form of a Christian realist theory. Pivotal to this theory is the concept that the first step of moral reasoning involves the simultaneous recognition of the practical and theoretical natures of basic goods and basic principles of practical reasonableness. The outline of this theory goes on to highlight one of its key features, namely, that Grisez's use of practical reason enables adequate knowledge of the moral order in creation to be obtained without the use of revelation. This conclusion means that O'Donovan's justification for the Gospel as the epistemological starting-point for Christian ethics - that humanity's powers of perception are so inescapably confused as a result of the Fall that the moral order is substantially unknowable without the Gospel - can no longer be sustained. It is also observed that this represents a serious challenge to the place of the Gospel and Scripture in many forms of Protestant ethics. A way forward for an ethic seeking to emphasise the importance of the Gospel is suggested by delineating the important place of revelation in a Christian realist theory. It is argued that revelation of that which is unknowable in creation decisively shapes the world view from which Christian ethics arises and provides the distinct theoretical knowledge which shapes a Christian ethic. Finally, on the basis of the claims which Grisez, O'Donovan and Hauerwas make for the revelation in Scripture, it is argued that Scripture should be the deliberative starting-point for a Christian realist ethic. Part of this argument involves demonstrating the way in which theoretical knowledge about moral truth, such as is contained in Scripture, can be incorporated into the operations of practical reason without committing the naturalistic fallacy.

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The third stage of the dialogue considers the relationship between Hauerwas' narrative ethic and a Christian realist theory. A careful analysis of Hauerwas' narrative theory revises the standard interpretations which suggest that his ethic is highly relativist and probably subjectivist. Instead, it is suggested that his analysis is based on a hermeneutic which enables him to make strong truth claims for ethics based on the historical truths of Jesus' life and teaching. It is then argued that his methodology also enables him to maintain what many writers believe to be irreconcilably conflicting claims: first, that religious narratives assert conflicting propositional truth claims; and, secondly, that such narratives, properly understood, do not assert propositions.

From this discussion of Hauerwas' understanding of the truthfulness of narrative, it emerges that the fundamental form of his ethic is one which enables people to pursue the human wholeness and integrity which is displayed in the gospels by following the way of life they depict in the face of the complexities and tragedies of human existence. It is suggested that, once this essential structure of Hauerwas' theory is recognised, it is capable of being reconciled with a Christian realist theory on the basis of their being complementary forms of ethics. This reconciliation on the basis of complementarity rather than unification aims to preserve the distinct contributions to ethics of both forms of theory.

The first step in exploring the nature of this complementary relationship between Hauerwas' narrative ethic and a Christian realist ethic is to consider the nature, possibilities and limits of narrative as a form of moral deliberation. It is proposed that the use of the imagination, which is central to the functioning of narrative in moral deliberation, offers much potential for advancing moral understanding. Contrary to Hauerwas' view, it is argued that these advances are capable of being incorporated into forms of moral reasoning, such as those used by O'Donovan and Grisez, which employ more open-ended and dialectical accounts of principles and rules. The limitations of narrative as a form of moral deliberation are then considered. It is argued that, as a form of analogical moral deliberation, narrative analysis will have difficulty in offering sound guidance for negotiating complex moral problems. The use

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of narratives will also be further restricted by the limited number of authoritative canonical narratives in the Christian tradition and the need to integrate moral insights from beyond the canon with those in it. It is suggested that the complementary operation of principles and rules will be important at this point, as will the adoption of a Church-centred hermeneutic which will enable moral deliberation to take account of revised understandings of scriptural narratives. Given these limitations, it is concluded that narrative ethics will need to function together with a principle and rule based form of moral deliberation. However, in order for a Christian realist theory to be such a theory, it must also be able to take account of those concerns about character and virtue which Hauerwas' narrative theory seeks to articulate.

This last question is the focus of the fourth stage of the dialogue. Having outlined the central features of Hauerwas' theory of character, it is argued that Grisez's theory, which articulates this dimension of a Christian realist ethic, is compatible with Hauerwas' theory. First, Grisez's analysis possesses an essentially compatible account of character formation. Secondly, it meets Hauerwas' requirement that an adequate role be given to the particularity of the moral agent in shaping the nature of her obligations. Thirdly, it not only satisfies Hauerwas' requirement that reason and emotion be understood as complementary forces in moral deliberation but it substantially advances his analysis at this point. Finally, Grisez also considers an integral relationship between good intentions and the emotions appropriate to those intentions to be a constituent element of virtue. In the course of discussing this relationship, a general problem for virtue ethics is considered - how can a person become virtuous, if, as appears to be the case, full moral truth is required in order to be virtuous yet the obtaining of full moral truth requires a person to be virtuous in the first place? It is suggested that this problem is soluble when it is recognised that virtue is cultivated by consistently choosing to pursue the good and then, where necessary, seeking to integrate into the process of choosing and pursuing the good emotions which are appropriate to the good being sought. This process of gradually arriving at the virtuous life by way of distinct individual choices with objective reference points

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means that it is not, in fact, necessary to have full moral truth in order to become virtuous.

On the one very substantive point of disagreement between Grisez and Hauerwas, concerning the place of character in moral deliberation, it is argued, by drawing on O'Donovan's analysis, that in giving an epistemological priority to character Hauerwas has made a serious mistake. This approach is an error because it prematurely foreshortens moral deliberation by focusing on character to the systematic neglect of other relevant dimensions of moral questions and because it distorts the moral deliberation which does occur by making character a category for deliberative thought when, except in the case of deliberations upon the question of vocation, it should only be a category for evaluative thought. However, it is suggested that Grisez's methodology offers a means of retaining the central features of Hauerwas' theory of character without giving character this priority. The discussion of this issue demonstrates how a moral theory can have a central concern for character and the cultivation of virtue without falling into the trap of 'moral self-indulgence'. This section of the dialogue concludes by drawing on the work of Paul Lauritzen and Patricia Jung to address the question, which neither Grisez nor Hauerwas have adequately considered, of the means by which emotions and sensations can be integrated with good moral choices.

With the possibility of the complementary operation of a Christian realist theory and a narrative ethic finally established, the dialogue is concluded and drawn together by suggesting that, because liturgical worship is the defining practice of the Christian community, the ecumenical ethic towards which this thesis is moving will be one which describes the complementary operation of a Christian realist theory and a narrative ethic from the perspective of Christian worship. The nature of this complementary operation of their two theories is then considered in a discussion which aims to explore the key features of the much overlooked relationship between worship, liturgy and ethics. The centrality of communal worship in the move towards an ecumenical ethic is used to highlight what this thesis, as a whole, has sought to

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achieve - namely, to make progress on the question of how this divided community might find a common approach to ethics so that it can, at the very least, grow to be united in and by a common form of life.

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achieves a balanced and fair assessment of all the three authors considered, it will in some small measure reflect his ability in carrying out this task. Our discussions have certainly given me a clearer understanding of his own work and helped me to achieve a much more balanced assessment of Stanley Hauerwas' work than would otherwise have been the case. Professor O'Donovan's comments on and criticisms of my work, especially of the overall architecture of the arguments, have been invaluable. He was also kind enough to give me access to the manuscript form of a number of his works before they were published, including his very recently published *Desire of the Nations*, so that I could incorporate material from them into my analysis of his work at a much earlier stage than would otherwise have been possible.

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For all the support which I have received in the writing of this thesis, its inadequacies remain very much my own.

Chapter 1

Ecumenical Ethics and the Renewal of Moral Theology

This is a thesis about the renewal of moral theology in an age of ecumenism. Christian ethics in the twentieth century has, in many ways, been a series of movements of renewal. These movements have come as a response to the perceived failures of moral theology across a range of traditions, from an overbearing, casuistical, manual-driven ethics apparently cut off from Scripture, theologically bereft and offering little but prohibitions, through an Enlightenment rationalism which evacuated Christian ethics of both its content and energy to a privatised biblical piety which failed to address the social challenges of modernity. Yet the challenges in producing such a renewal in theology's age of crisis have been great. The apparent triumph of autonomous reason has called into question the very place of theology in ethics. Those who have disputed this triumph with claims for the cultural dependence of reason and ethics have challenged the possibility of moral objectivity. This tension between objectivity and cultural specificity belies a more general tension in moral reasoning between universalisability and particularity which to many people has seemed unreconcilable. From another direction, modern moral philosophy claims to have cut ethics loose from its mooring to the objectivity of reality, with its insistence that a moral 'ought' cannot logically be deduced from the way reality 'is'. The natural sciences have also risen up to challenge ethics. Psychology, with its cult of technique, has claimed to offer a surer path to human well-being by seeking to integrate all the dimensions of the person - dimensions which moral reason has tended to leave in irresolvable conflict. From another direction, geneticists, social biologists and sociologists, with their reductive accounts of the person, have challenged the very coherence of the notion of moral responsibility. Finally, on theology's home front, biblical criticism has threatened to banish Scripture forever to speak only to a particular people in a distant past.

Attempts to rework moral theology in the light of these challenges have also occurred in a century of unparalleled ecumenical activity in which the theological implications of a spiritual imperative have slowly been working themselves out. However, with the moral energy of ecumenism directed towards producing common Christian responses to the pressing problems of the modern world,¹ it has contributed little to the overarching enterprise of renewing moral theology.² Indeed, it has been observed that '[e]cumenical morality is the subject of a thousand passing allusions, but of little research'.³ Yet there is much good to be gained, both ecumenically and intellectually, by drawing those divided by denomination into conversation with one another in order to meet the challenge of renewing moral theology.

The ecumenical importance of such conversations about the foundations of moral theology is clearly articulated by Oliver O'Donovan, who was a member of the second Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission. He has perceptively observed that,

Prominent in the current jargon of ecumenism is the word *koinonia*. It allows ecumenists to speak of the church without speaking of "the Church"; to circumvent the obtrusive institutional and juridical issues in ecclesiology, and to point directly to the theological reality which underpins it, *the common life which believers share in Christ ...* And that is why ecumenism, when it follows through the logic of its own agenda, finds itself compelled to think about Christian morality as it seeks to delineate the authentic form of the common life.⁴

O'Donovan goes on to note that, because 'the one moral life is lived within the widest imaginable differences of circumstances and culture[,] ... the task of moral

1 Wogaman, P.J., *Christian Ethics*, SPCK, London, 1994, pp.257-268.

2 For a good summary of the relationship between ethics and ecumenism see West, C., 'Ethics in the Ecumenical Movement', in Macquarrie, J. and Childress, J., *A New Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, SCM Press, London, 1986, 176-184.

3 O'Donovan, O., 'Moral Disagreement as an Ecumenical Issue', *Studies in Christian Ethics*, 1 (1988), 5-19, p.6. James Gustafson, in *Protestant and Roman Catholic Ethics: Prospects for Rapprochement* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1978), helpfully identifies those few works on ethics which have sought, at least in part, to articulate the relationship between Roman Catholic and Protestant ethics (*ibid.*, p.160).

4 O'Donovan, 'Disagreement', p.5, emphasis mine.

discernment is inexhaustible'.⁵ Given that this is the nature of moral reality, without a move towards an ecumenical agreement on the fundamentals of a Christian ethic - rather than just agreement about a few generalities or specific questions - the resolution of disagreements about moral conclusions will always be thrown back onto the controverted ground of ecclesiology.⁶ In other words, if Christians are to witness to their unity in a common life, they need, more than anything else, a common framework for moral deliberation.

The intellectual value of an ecumenical conversation arises from the common nature of the challenges which face those seeking to renew moral theology in the wake of modernity. An ecumenical conversation opens up the possibility of different but potentially complementary concerns, resources and traditions being brought into a mutually enriching engagement in order to meet these common challenges. The importance of these types of conversations has not gone completely unrecognised. The influential Protestant ethicist James Gustafson has directed his attention towards the subject, most notably in his work *Protestant and Roman Catholic Ethics* in which he provides an account both of the general historical roots of the divide between Protestant and Catholic ethics and of the key philosophical and theological divisions which have shaped contemporary discussions.⁷ Gustafson also maps out the convergence, following Vatican II, between more liberal Catholic ethicists, such as Richard McCormick, Charles Curran, and Joseph Fuchs and more liberal Protestants,

5 *Ibid.* For a fuller account of the fact that moral reality possesses this open-ended nature, see s.4.3.1.

6 *Ibid.*, pp.5-6.

7 Gustafson, *Ethics, passim*. It should be noted that, while Gustafson's survey is helpful, it is not a wholly adequate account of the relationship between Protestant and Roman Catholic ethics. O'Donovan states some of its crucial methodological deficiencies succinctly:

In the first place his comparative morphology of the two traditions is designed to highlight differences without placing them in ecumenical perspective. In the second place, his concentration on the method and concepts of ethics leads him to ignore the substantive questions on which we may, or may not, disagree, such as marriage, politics or the ensoulment of the embryo. In the third place, he fails to approach the two traditions and their historical interaction. (O'Donovan, 'Disagreement', p.6.)

like the Niebuhrs and Joseph Fletcher.⁸ However, Gustafson has a marked disinterest in what he considers the more conservative or orthodox accounts of Christian ethics. It is a disinterest driven, in part, by Gustafson's own dislike of such positions, for he openly identifies McCormick as a mentor and Curran as a key discussion partner,⁹ and by his view that the restatement of such positions has been a key force in bringing the process of ecumenical convergence to an end.¹⁰ This conclusion of the pre-eminent commentator on ecumenical ethics appears to have contributed to a general failure to recognise the possible gains which might arise from a conversation between the apparently more conservative forms of Christian moral reasoning.

It is in the hope of realising some of these gains, which may be of value both for those holding more liberal as well as more conservative systematic theologies, that this thesis will adopt the manifesto for ecumenical ethics which Gustafson thought became necessary in the late 1970s, given that '[t]he flush of ecumenical enthusiasm is gone' and 'we are in for a long haul of harder and more careful work':¹¹

The task is to formulate the important questions and find the most adequate and coherent answers; it is not to find the least common denominator to which both traditions can give allegiance.¹²

The only satisfactory way in which this task can be undertaken is to consider a limited number of authors in order that their arguments may be examined carefully. Three authors who have been at the intellectual forefront of the renewal of moral theology,

8 In a more recent work, Gustafson, J., 'Roman Catholic and Protestant Interaction in Ethics: An Interpretation', *Theological Studies*, 50 (1989), 44-69, Gustafson provides a commentary which brings his earlier work up to date. Once again, his focus is upon the more liberal accounts of ethics.

9 Gustafson, *Ethics*, p.xi.

10 Gustafson, 'Interaction', p.57.

11 Gustafson, *Ethics*, p.viii; see also Gustafson, 'Interaction', p.56.

12 Gustafson, *Ethics*, p.viii. While this author does not share Gustafson's particular vision for an ecumenical ethic, this present work is carried out in the methodological spirit of the rest of his manifesto:

I care not one whit whether a position or an argument has been historically identified with one or the other tradition, and by implication whether one or the other tradition can take pride in giving a more satisfactory answer. I do care, very deeply, about Christian theological ethics. (*Ibid.*)

but who are from beyond what might loosely be called the liberal tradition, particularly recommend themselves. The first is Germain Grisez, a lay Catholic who has led an important movement amongst Catholic academics to render a modern, coherent account of the Thomistic natural law tradition. The second is Stanley Hauerwas, an ordained Methodist and an influential Protestant ethicist, who has argued for the centrality of narrative in shaping moral thought and has sought to recover the importance of virtue for Christian ethics, becoming, in the process, the leading theological proponent of both narrative and virtue ethics. The third is Oliver O'Donovan, an ordained Anglican, who has worked to produce a thoroughly theological account of ethics which is deeply sensitive to the whole Christian tradition of moral reflection. This broad engagement with the Christian tradition, which is also apparent - albeit to a lesser degree - in Hauerwas' work, makes both authors particularly good conversation partners in the type of ecumenical dialogue which will be conducted in this thesis because, in effect, such a dialogue is already under way in their own work. The extent to which the work of both authors is shaped by the breadth of their engagement with the Christian tradition is also a reminder that labels like Catholic, Protestant, Methodist and Anglican may hinder rather than further understanding in the type of ecumenical dialogue to be conducted in this thesis. Hauerwas articulates an important aspect of this problem with labels when he observes, with characteristic directness, that '[i]t is time we quit trying to put labels on one another that presuppose theoretical frameworks that are not justified. Such labelling is the refuge of mediocre minds and lazy intelligence'.¹³ This thesis will not be a dialogue between those labels which represent the polarised stereotypes of different denominational traditions. Instead, it will be a dialogue between people who have engaged with the richness of their traditions to deal with the present challenges facing moral theology and who, in so doing, have explored where the boundaries of their traditions might lie. It is with the conversations that become possible where these newly understood boundaries meet and sometimes cross that ecumenical progress seems most likely. If such conversations between these three authors prove both

13 Hauerwas, S., 'Will the Real Sectarian Stand Up?', *Theology Today*, 44 (1987), 87-94, p.94.

possible and fruitful, it should be possible to speak of the outcome of this dialogue as a move towards an ecumenical ethic and to suggest that such a move is the next step in the parallel project of renewing moral theology.

In this task, the qualification 'towards' is an important one because significant elements of the Christian tradition will be unrepresented in the discussion. Clearly, those more liberal ethicists who are seeking to develop a Christian form of proportionalism are unrepresented, as are those who articulate some form of divine command theory. This qualification is, in one sense, not as great as might at first appear because Grisez, Hauerwas and O'Donovan all consider such theories to be incompatible with their own positions. If they are correct, then these theories represent alternatives to their own positions rather than theories which might enrich their own accounts on the path to a more convergent theory. Hence, in the interest of a more constructive enterprise, this thesis will not revisit the well-worn ground concerning the coherence and adequacy of proportionalist and divine command theories of ethics.

More important is the lack of someone to speak from an Orthodox perspective. Such a person would, however, probably express considerable sympathy for key elements in the work of all three authors. There would probably be much support for Hauerwas' and O'Donovan's common claim that ethics must arise from and be integrally related to a distinctively Christian theology.¹⁴ The centrality of the resurrection in O'Donovan's account¹⁵ and the generally Trinitarian framework of his understanding are also likely to endear themselves.¹⁶ Hauerwas' concern for virtue as a fundamental category for Christian ethics might also be understood as articulating the Orthodox concern with both virtue and *theosis* - 'the progress of a person toward divine similitude'¹⁷ - as central categories for shaping moral thought.¹⁸ At the same

14 See, for example, Guroian, V., *Incarnate Love*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1987, especially, pp.13-28.

15 *Ibid.*, especially, pp.15, 21.

16 *Ibid.*, especially, pp.19, 29-34.

17 *Ibid.*, p.14.

time, Grisez's account of natural law as a call to human fulfilment in Christ is likely to find resonance with important strands of Orthodox thought on ethics,¹⁹ as is his claim that prayer is the fundamental category of Christian action.²⁰

Despite the more qualified conclusion that will be necessary as a result of focusing upon only three authors - albeit three leading figures in the renewal of moral theology - the conclusions arrived at should be more secure than those resulting from a panoramic survey. It is hoped that this more limited focus will reduce the risk of mischaracterising the various theories and the relationships between them. Indeed, over-generalised forms of analysis in some contemporary philosophical and jurisprudential literature have produced just such problems. One of the few articles to consider directly the relationship between natural law and virtue theories provides a good illustration of this problem.²¹ In seeking to describe this relationship, the article's author, Russell Hittinger, attempts to place a range of natural law theories, including Grisez's, into a single class. After engaging in a similar exercise with virtue theories, he then proceeds to make general statements about the conflict between the two approaches, suggesting that a 'sharp distinction between natural law theory and virtue theory has emerged'.²² Such handling of what is, in fact, a diverse range of theories requires either misrepresentation or misunderstanding of the various theories in order to succeed. This is particularly the case in relation to Grisez's natural law theory, which both claims rather more and is far more subtle than many of the other

18 *Ibid.*, pp.13-16. It is interesting to note that while Guroian, in the article which he reworked to become a chapter in his book (*Incarnate Love*), claimed that '[a]n Eastern Orthodox ethic is a virtue ethic' (Guroian, V., 'Notes Toward an Eastern Orthodox Ethic', *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 9 (1981), 228-244, p.228), in the book he replaced it with the more nuanced observation that, 'it would be convenient simply to classify Orthodox ethics as one example of a virtue ethic. Yet I doubt seriously that any Christian ethic is so simple as to be described adequately by a single handy rubric such as *virtue ethic*' (*Incarnate Love*, p.13).

19 Harakas, S., 'Ethics in the Greek Orthodox Tradition', *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 13 (1976), 574-578, especially p.578; Harakas, S., 'Eastern Orthodox Perspectives on Natural Law', *American Journal of Jurisprudence*, 24 (1979), 86-113, especially pp.111-113.

20 Guroian, V., 'Seeing Worship as Ethics: An Orthodox Perspective', *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 13 (1985), 332-359; Guroian, V., *Ethics After Christendom*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1994, pp.53-80, 175-199.

21 Hittinger, R., 'Natural Law and Virtue: Theories at Cross Purposes', in George, R. (ed.), *Natural Law Theory: Contemporary Essays*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1992, 42-70.

22 *Ibid.*, p.44.

natural law theories which it is assumed to be like. Clearly, there is much distance to be travelled before the inaccuracy of Hittinger's claim can be established in relation to the specific natural law and virtue theories under consideration. Before beginning upon that path, it will be helpful briefly to introduce each of three authors and their major concerns so that, as different elements of their approaches are considered in detail, some sense of the place of these elements in each author's overall approach and corpus of work can be retained.

1.1 Grisez and the New Natural Law Theory

Germain Grisez works from Mount Saint Mary's College, Emmitsburg, where he is Flynn Professor in Christian Ethics - a chair created specially for him in order to enable him to pursue the writing of a multi-volume series on moral theology which has his natural law theory as its conceptual core.²³ The origins of this natural law theory can be traced to three works, written from 1964 onwards, in which he consciously set about restating and revising a Thomistic conception of natural law.²⁴ While Saint Thomas' work clearly remains inspirational for Grisez, he observes that these three works are his 'only attempts at Thomistic exegesis' and that, '[e]lsewhere, he tries to do philosophy or theology, not history, and freely parts company with Thomas, usually without saying so'.²⁵ Grisez went on to apply his theory to the question of abortion²⁶ and to outline it in a textbook designed as an introduction to ethics.²⁷ Although these works have a clear conceptual continuity with his later

23 A helpful general introduction to the broad outlines of Grisez's work can be found in Hanink, J.G., 'On Germain Grisez: Can Christian Ethics Give Answers?', *Second Opinion*, 15 (November, 1990), 84-100.

24 Grisez, G., 'Man, Natural End of', *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume 9, New York, 1967, 132-138; Grisez, G., 'First Principle of Practical Reason: A Commentary on the *Summa Theologiae* 1-2, Question 94, Article 2', *Natural Law Forum*, 10 (1965), 168-201; Grisez, G., *Contraception and the Natural Law*, Bruce, Milwaukee, Wisc., 1964.

25 Grisez, G., Boyle, J., and Finnis, J., 'Practical Principles, Moral Truth, and Ultimate Ends', *American Journal of Jurisprudence*, 32 (1987), 99-151.

26 Grisez, G., *Abortion: The Myths, the Realities, and the Arguments*, Corpus Books, New York, 1970. He does, however, still regard as valuable his discussion in this book of the issue of the personhood of the unborn.

27 Grisez, G. and Shaw, R., *Beyond the New Morality: The Responsibilities of Freedom*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1974. This work was published with revisions in 1980 and then again in a third edition in 1988 when it incorporated many of the revisions of the intervening years in order to bring it up to date. However, it still remains very much an introductory work. It

work, Grisez regards them, and other writings of this period, as superseded by his more recent efforts.²⁸

With his works on contraception and abortion, Grisez also began to mark himself out as perhaps the pre-eminent academic defender of the traditional moral teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. In these works he also began a sustained attack on consequentialist theories,²⁹ later focusing his concern upon the consequentialist theories which he argued were deployed by more liberal Catholics, such as Richard McCormick and Bruno Schüller, to undermine traditional teachings. These and other liberal Catholic writers came into Grisez's sights in his responses to challenges by Catholic theologians to the Church's traditional teaching on subjects such as contraception³⁰ and in his arguments against radical dissent in general.³¹ In pursuing this path, Grisez deliberately entered into an ideological conflict with liberal America and liberalising Roman Catholics.

One of the very unfortunate effects of the resulting intensity of the exchanges surrounding Grisez's work is that it has often been misunderstood or mischaracterised by his opponents. Robert George, one of Grisez's supporters, has highlighted this problem in demonstrating how a range of major ethical thinkers - Lloyd Weinreb, Ralph McInerny, Henry Veatch and Russell Hittinger - have failed to understand

should be noted that Russell Shaw is a professional writer who began his collaboration with Grisez on this work and has also subsequently aided Grisez in a number of projects by making his work more accessible.

28 Grisez, 'Practical Principles', p.149.

29 The most complete account of this attack on consequentialism was delivered in Grisez, G., 'Against Consequentialism', *American Journal of Jurisprudence*, 23 (1978), 21-72, although it had already taken its mature form the previous year in Grisez, G., 'Choice and Consequentialism', *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 51 (1977), 144-152.

30 Grisez, G. and Ford, J.C., 'Contraception and the Infallibility of the Ordinary Magisterium', *Theological Studies*, 39 (1978), 258-312; Grisez, G., 'Infallibility and Specific Moral Norms: A Review Discussion', *The Thomist*, 49 (1985), 248-287; Grisez, G., 'Infallibility and Contraception: A Reply to Garth Hallett', *Theological Studies*, 47 (1986), 134-145.

31 Grisez, G., *The Way of the Lord Jesus: Christian Moral Principles*, Volume 1, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, 1983 (hereafter referred to as *Principles*), pp.871-898; Grisez, G., 'History as Argument for Revision in Moral Theology: A Review Discussion', *The Thomist*, 53 (1991), 103-116.

elementary parts of Grisez's theory.³² Indeed, Grisez and his collaborators have generally expended considerable effort to correct the resultant attacks against them.³³ This thesis will attempt to avoid becoming entangled in these largely unproductive exchanges and counter-exchanges, although some misrepresentations which are particularly germane to the present discussion will be addressed.

After beginning work on his natural law theory, the next major development in Grisez's work came in 1975 with the publication of *Beyond the New Theism: A Philosophy of Religion*.³⁴ This was followed a year later by a collaborative work with Joseph Boyle and Olaf Tollefsen, *Free Choice: A Self Referential Argument*.³⁵ Although not planned as such, these two works have emerged as providing the philosophical and metaphysical foundations for Grisez's later work on natural law theory. These works were also the beginning of what has been a long and fruitful collaboration with Joseph Boyle, one of Grisez's former students. It is significant for understanding Grisez's approach to ethics to observe that his theory is effectively underpinned by two essentially philosophical rather than theological works.

32 George, R., 'Natural Law and Human Nature', in George, *Natural Law*, 31-41.

33 Important instances of these misunderstandings occur in, McInerny, R., 'The Principles of Natural Law', *American Journal of Jurisprudence*, 25 (1980), 1-15; to which a specific reply was made in, Finnis, J. and Grisez, G., 'The Basic Principles of Natural Law: A Reply to Ralph McInerny', *American Journal of Jurisprudence*, 26 (1981) 21-31. Similar misunderstandings to McInerny's also occur in, Bourke, V., 'Review of J. Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights*', *American Journal of Jurisprudence*, 26 (1981), 243-247; and Veatch, H., 'Review of J. Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights*', *American Journal of Jurisprudence*, 26 (1981), 247-259. Further significant misunderstandings occur in, Johnstone, B., 'The Structures of Practical Reason: Traditional Theories and Contemporary Questions', *The Thomist*, 50 (1986), 417-446; Schultz, J., 'Is-Ought: Prescribing and a Present Controversy', *The Thomist*, 49 (1985), 1-23; Simpson, P., 'St Thomas and the Naturalistic Fallacy', *The Thomist*, 51 (1987), 51-69 (Grisez replies to Johnstone, Schultz and Simpson in Grisez, G., 'The Structures of Practical Reason: Some Comments and Clarifications', *The Thomist*, 52 (1988), 269-291); and in Flippen, D., 'Natural Law and Natural Inclinations', *New Scholasticism*, 5 (1986), 284-316 (to which Grisez responds in Grisez, G., 'Natural Law and Natural Inclinations: Some Comments and Clarifications', *New Scholasticism*, 6 (1987), 307-320; this article also includes a further response to Shultz).

34 Grisez, G., *Beyond the New Theism: A Philosophy of Religion*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1975.

35 Boyle, J., Grisez, G., and Tollefsen, O., *Free Choice: A Self-Referential Argument*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Ind., 1976.

The actual story of Grisez's attempt to produce a full scale restatement of Catholic moral theology begins with the storm that followed the publication of *Humanae vitae* (1968). Grisez recalls that this controversy made him aware that classical moral theology was in need of a significant revision if it was to provide an adequate basis for explaining the Church's traditional moral teaching.³⁶ In 1976-77, when his hopes that someone else would undertake this task were not realised, Grisez sought to outline the practical conditions that would need to be fulfilled in order for this task to be undertaken.³⁷ When, somewhat to his surprise, these conditions were met, he began to undertake this project which has structured his life and work since that time.

The first stage of Grisez's vast task was completed in 1983 when he published *The Way of the Lord Jesus: Christian Moral Principles*. This work, which Grisez considers to be a major response to Vatican II's call for a renewal of systematic theology in general and of moral theology in particular, marks his transformation from moral philosopher to moral theologian.³⁸ A striking feature of *Christian Moral Principles* is the involvement of collaborators. Most notable for their contribution to the general project of restating the natural law tradition are Joseph Boyle and John Finnis. The involvement of John Finnis requires particular note because O'Donovan, although not commenting directly on Grisez's work, has engaged with Finnis' accounts of their natural law theory. In addition to contributing to *Christian Moral Principles*, Finnis published a jurisprudential rendering of this natural law theory, *Natural Law and Natural Rights*,³⁹ after which he and Grisez wrote together in defence of the fundamentals of natural law theory as they understood it.⁴⁰ They then co-wrote, with Joseph Boyle, a substantial work attacking nuclear deterrence strategy.⁴¹ The three of

36 Grisez, *Principles*, p.xxxi.

37 *Ibid.*

38 *Ibid.*, p.14. Interestingly, Hauerwas also sees the problems with Roman Catholic moral theology (and, indeed, Protestant moral theology) as arising from a failure to respond to this call by Vatican II (Hauerwas, S., 'The Demands of a Truthful Story: Ethics and the Pastoral Task', *Chicago Studies*, 21 (1982), 56-71, pp.60-61).

39 Finnis, J., *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1980.

40 Grisez, 'Basic Principles' and Grisez, 'Practical Principles'.

41 Finnis, J., Boyle, J. and Grisez, G., *Nuclear Deterrence, Morality and Realism*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987.

them also collaborated on an extremely dense and tightly argued article, published in 1987, which restates and clarifies the key elements of their natural law theory in the light of the criticisms which had subsequently been made of it.⁴² This close collaboration between Grisez and Finnis means that when O'Donovan is in dialogue with Finnis, he is effectively also engaging with key elements of Grisez's thought. Naturally, points where Grisez and Finnis relevantly diverge will be highlighted. Grisez, however, is actually a better dialogue partner for O'Donovan than his Oxford colleague because he attempts to set natural law theory in an explicitly Christian theological context.

Grisez's restatement of Catholic moral theology continued with the production, in 1993, of the second volume of *The Way of the Lord Jesus*, entitled *Living a Christian Life*.⁴³ As the name suggests, this is a work of applied ethics which employs the methodology developed in the first volume. Two volumes in this monumental project still remain to be completed. The first, which deals with very particular moral problems as a way of illuminating and further expounding the key principles already developed in the previous volumes, is nearing completion. The final volume, in which Grisez proposes to treat the 'responsibilities of members of the Church as such toward one another'⁴⁴ is still in the future.

1.2 Hauerwas' Virtue and Narrative Ethics

If Germain Grisez's work is marked by philosophical precision, then Stanley Hauerwas' work is best accounted for in terms of the provocative but compassionate energy which has made him one of the most influential contemporary Christian ethicists. For over twenty years, he has challenged the world to recover the importance of virtue and has called people to shape their lives in accordance with the Christian narrative. Using these twin themes of narrative and virtue, Hauerwas has sought to discern what it means to tell the Christian story in the modern world. His

42 Grisez, 'Practical Principles'.

43 Grisez, G., *The Way of the Lord Jesus: Living a Christian Life*, Volume 2, Franciscan Herald Press, Quincy, Ill., 1993 (hereafter referred to as *Living*).

44 Grisez, *Principles*, p.xxx.

message has largely been delivered in regular volleys of articles, essays and lectures. With only four of his (to date) fourteen books being sustained works of ethical reflection, Hauerwas does not claim to be a highly systematic ethicist. Indeed, not only has he observed that, 'I certainly do not have a "systematic position"',⁴⁵ at times he has even denied that he is an ethicist at all.⁴⁶ He is even fond of claiming,

I do not have the burden of being "a thinker" - that is, someone who, philosopher-like, develops strong opinions that bear the stamp of individual genius. My task is rather ... to help the church be faithful to the wonderful adventure we call the Kingdom.⁴⁷

Nevertheless, Hauerwas often writes with the confidence of someone who believes their position is firmly secured on a bed-rock of systematic analysis. The systematic foundations that his work does have are built on his account of the place of character, virtue and narrative in ethics. In developing these foundations, it was Hauerwas' interest in the formation of character and virtue which emerged first, prompted, at least in part, by James Gustafson's suggestion 'that theological ethics might best focus upon character and virtue for displaying the nature of Christian moral existence'.⁴⁸ Hauerwas' early work on this subject, in *Character and the Christian Life*,⁴⁹ came at a time when the possible importance of virtue and character was still on the margins of mainstream discussion.⁵⁰ Desiring to restate the Protestant tradition of

45 Hauerwas, S., 'The Testament of Friends', *Christian Century*, 107 (1990), 212-216, p.213.

46 Hauerwas, S., *Unleashing the Scripture*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1993, p.7.

47 Hauerwas, 'Testament', p.213. He repeats exactly the same formula of words in his attempt to 'position' himself in Hauerwas, S., *Dispatches From the Front*, Duke University Press, Durham, N.C., 1994, pp.19-20.

48 Hauerwas, S., *The Peaceable Kingdom*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1983, p.xxi.

49 Hauerwas, S., *Character and the Christian Life*, Trinity University Press, San Antonio, 1975 (reprinted with a new introduction, 1985).

50 Gregory Pence provides a useful historical survey of the revival of interest in virtues amongst predominantly secular philosophers and the debate that developed between different virtue theorists from the late 1960s through to the early 1980s which helps explain the context for the development of Hauerwas' thought. See, Pence, G.E., 'Recent Work on Virtue', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 21 (1984), 281-297. For a useful survey of the current work on virtue ethics and the location of those with specifically Christian concerns within it see, Yearly, L., 'Recent Work on Virtue', *Religious Studies Review*, 16 (1990), 1-9; and Spohn, W.C., 'The Return of Virtue Ethics', *Theological Studies*, 53 (1992), 60-75. For a helpful account of the more recent debate surrounding virtue ethics within the realm of secular philosophy see, Trianosky, G., 'What is Virtue Ethics All About', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 27 (1990), 335-344.

sanctification by drawing upon Aristotle, Aquinas and John Wesley, he argued that the moral life was best accounted for in terms of the type of character a person developed as a result of the choices she made and the way in which she described her life's experiences. In producing this account, Hauerwas engaged with and was influenced by the work of Iris Murdoch,⁵¹ Elizabeth Anscombe,⁵² Phillipa Foot,⁵³ and William Frankena⁵⁴ on the related topics of virtue, character and vision.

It was Hauerwas' concern with moral vision and the cultivation of virtue as the defining features of the moral life which laid the foundations for his interest in the ideas being generated by the increasing attention being given to the category of narrative.⁵⁵ As Hauerwas sought to articulate the relationship between a person's

51 The following arguments made by Iris Murdoch can be seen as having a particular influence on Hauerwas' work: first, that decisions should not be the focus of the moral life (see, for example, Murdoch's essay 'The Idea of Perfection', republished in her collection of essays, Murdoch, I., *The Sovereignty of the Good*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1970, 1-45; also very influential in shaping Hauerwas' understanding of this point has been, Pincoffs, E., 'Quandary Ethics', *Mind*, 80 (1970), 552-571); second, that the moral life is as much about having a truthful vision of the world as it is about making good choices (see especially, Murdoch, I., 'Vision and Choice in Morality', in Ramsey, I. (ed.), *Christian Ethics and Contemporary Philosophy*, Macmillan, New York, 1966, 195-218 and, Murdoch, I., 'Metaphysics and Ethics', in Pears, D.F. (ed.), *The Nature of Metaphysics*, Macmillan, London, 1957, 99-123). Hauerwas makes his debt to Murdoch particularly apparent in an early essay, 'The Significance of Vision: Toward an Esthetic Ethic', republished in Hauerwas, S., *Vision and Virtue*, Fides Publishers, Notre Dame, 1974, reissued by University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1981, 30-47. It should be noted that Hauerwas' use of the concept of 'vision' has largely been subsumed within his narrative analysis.

52 For works by Anscombe which have influenced Hauerwas, as well as the debate on virtue in general, see, Anscombe, G.E.M., 'Modern Moral Philosophy', *Philosophy*, 33 (1958), 1-19; Anscombe, G.E.M., *Intention*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1957; Anscombe, G.E.M., 'Thought and Action in Aristotle', in Bambrough, J.R. (ed.), *New Essays on Plato and Aristotle*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1965, 143-158. Anscombe's influence can particularly be seen in Hauerwas' interpretation of Aristotle and his understanding of intention in, Hauerwas, *Character*, pp.31, 32, 52-57, 97-98; see also, Hauerwas, *Vision*, pp.57-58.

53 Foot, P., 'Moral Beliefs', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 59 (1958), 83-104; Foot, P., 'Moral Arguments', *Mind*, 67 (1958), 502-513; see Hauerwas, *Character*, p.31.

54 See, for example, Hauerwas, S., *Truthfulness and Tragedy*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1977, pp.40-56, where he develops his account of virtue in response to Frankena's account.

55 George Stroup provides an excellent account of the evolution of the use of the concept of narrative by those with a theological interest, from its modern genesis in H. Richard Niebuhr's *The Meaning of Revelation* through to the period when Hauerwas actively took up his interest in the subject. Stroup's distillation of the key notions in the work of James McClendon and Steven Crites also makes their influence on Hauerwas easy to discern (Stroup, G., 'A Bibliographical Critique [of Narrative Theology]', *Theology Today*, 32 (1975), 133-143). A work which Hauerwas co-edited, *Why Narrative?: Readings in Narrative Theology* (edited by Hauerwas, S. and Jones, L.G., Grand Rapids, Mich., 1989) also provides a good collection of material which surveys the field.

understanding of virtue and her moral vision, the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, with its emphasis upon the notion that action must be analysed in its narrative context, proved to be particularly influential in directing him to the significance of narrative for ethics.⁵⁶ In the development of Hauerwas' account of this relationship between narrative and ethics, it is also possible to identify the clear and very formative influences of contemporaneous reflections on the significance of narrative for theology and ethics by James McClendon,⁵⁷ Steven Crites,⁵⁸ Sallie TeSelle⁵⁹ and Hans

56 In one of Hauerwas' early explorations of the relationship between narratives and moral decision-making (Hauerwas, S. and Bondi, R., 'Memory, Community, and the Reasons for Living: Theological and Ethical Reflections on Suicide and Euthanasia', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 44 (1976), 439-452, republished in Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, 101-115), he observes of his approach that, '[t]his view of ethics owes much to the work of Alasdair MacIntyre ... [who] suggests ... that in order to know the sense of such notions as suicide, murder or stealing, or such virtues as justice, courage or humility, you must know the narrative context in which they are displayed' (*ibid.*, pp.228-229). In the preface to his collection of essays, *A Community of Character*, Hauerwas also observes that, '[t]he debt I owe Alasdair MacIntyre is apparent on almost every page of this book' (Hauerwas, S., *A Community of Character*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame and London, 1981, p.x).

57 James McClendon's work (McClendon, J. and Smith, J., *Understanding Religious Convictions*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1975) appears to have contributed to Hauerwas' view that a person's understanding of the truthfulness of a proposition will be shaped by the whole matrix of beliefs that shape the kind of person he is (see Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, pp.57, 71, 214, 223). Hauerwas also appears to have been influenced by McClendon's argument that 'narrative or story is a means of expression uniquely suited to theology or at least to Christian theology' (McClendon, J., *Biography as Theology*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1974, p.188). Hauerwas quotes this passage at the start of his 'Story and Theology' (Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, 71-81, p.71). Hauerwas' second quote from *Biography as Theology* (pp.37-38) in 'Story and Theology' (pp.80-81) sets out a manifesto which much of the rest of Hauerwas' work has essentially been an elaboration of: '[f]or if as James McClendon has argued, "Christian beliefs are not so many propositions to be catalogued or juggled like truth-functions in a computer, but are living convictions which give shape to actual lives and actual communities, we open ourselves to the possibility that the only relevant critical examination of Christian beliefs may be one which begins by attending to lived lives. Theology must be at least biography ... by attending to those lives, we find ways of reforming our own theologies, making them more true, more faithful to our ancient vision, more adequate to the age now being born ... ". Hauerwas' footnotes in *Community* (pp.233, 235, 269-270, 276) also record a significant debt to McClendon in the formulation of his account of the place of narrative in relation to ethics.

58 For example, Hauerwas cites Crites' observation that, 'A man's sense of his own identity seems largely determined by the kind of story which he understands himself to have been enacting' (Crites, S., 'Myth, Story, History', in Stoneburner, T. (ed.), *Parable, Myth, and Language*, Church Society for College Work, Cambridge, Mass., 1968, 66-73, p.68; see also Crites, S., 'The Narrative Quality of Experience', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 39 (1971), 291-311) in support of another of his central claims that 'our life cannot be separated from our story' (Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.78).

59 Hauerwas draws on TeSelle, whom he quotes at some length, for the notion that the power of stories arises from the fact that 'because our lives are stories ... in the attempts of others to move temporally and painfully, we recognise our own story' (TeSelle, S., 'The Experience of Coming to Belief', *Theology Today*, 32 (1975), 159-165, pp.159-160, quoted by Hauerwas in *Truthfulness*,

Frei,⁶⁰ along with the more general influence of Hauerwas' interest in Ludwig Wittgenstein.⁶¹ In his later work on narrative, Hauerwas also acknowledges a particular debt to David Kelsey, George Lindbeck and Ron Thiemann in the development of his account.⁶² More broadly, he has sought to employ Lindbeck's postliberal, non-foundationalist theology to support his attempt to defend both the necessary distinctiveness and the truthfulness of a Christian ethic.⁶³ By the time his thought matured into his second 'systematic' book, *The Peaceable Kingdom* (1983), Hauerwas had come to see that moral truth was inseparable from narrative⁶⁴ and that the formation of character was primarily dependent on people's narrative understanding of their own lives and the world.⁶⁵

As narrative become increasingly central to Hauerwas' thought, his attention grew more tightly focused upon the distinctiveness of the Christian narrative vision of the world. In seeking to establish the nature of such a vision, Hauerwas sought to rescue Christian thought from MacIntyre's world of fragmented past moralities.⁶⁶ Strongly and openly influenced by the Mennonite and pacifist, Howard John Yoder,⁶⁷

pp.71-72) and that 'the story of my life is structured by the larger stories ... in which I understand my personal story to take place' (TeSelle, p.160, quoted by Hauerwas in *Truthfulness*, p.78).

60 Of particular importance to Hauerwas has been Hans Frei's, *The Identity of Jesus Christ*, (Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1975) and his argument that 'if the Gospel story is to function religiously in a way that is at once historical and christological, the central focus will have to be on the history-like narration of the final sequence rather than on Jesus' sayings in the preaching pericopes ...' (*ibid.*, p.141); see Hauerwas, *Community*, pp.44, 236.

61 Hauerwas acknowledges the influence of Wittgenstein, observing that Wittgenstein taught him 'that if we attend to the diversity of our language we learn to appreciate what a marvellously diverse world we inhabit and how complex the claims about the way the world is will inevitably be' (Hauerwas, S., *Christian Existence Today*, The Labyrinth Press, Durham, North Carolina, 1988, p.10).

62 Hauerwas, *Existence*, pp.54, 62. See Spohn, W., 'Parable and Narrative in Christian Ethics', *Theological Studies*, 51 (1990), 100-114, pp.103-104 for a discussion of the relationship between Hauerwas and Frei, Lindbeck and Thiemann.

63 Hauerwas, S., *Against the Nations*, Winston Press, Minneapolis, 1985, pp.1-9, especially pp.5-6.

64 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.25.

65 *Ibid.*, p.39.

66 *Ibid.*, p.2.

67 'I have been, and continue to be, strongly influenced by John Howard Yoder ... It was Yoder who taught me to be suspicious of mainstream Christian theologians' celebration of pluralism ... I have become ... deeply identified with the kind of Christological nonviolence defended by Yoder' (Hauerwas, *Dispatches*, pp.21-22).

Hauerwas has tended to consider a community built around the principle of non-violence and informed by the suffering of the cross as the way of dealing with injustice - a peaceable kingdom - to be the central feature of the Christian ethical vision. His project has become one of defining the way in which Christians should function within the Church in order to rescue their distinctive description of the world from that of liberal American culture, with which it has, in his view, become hopelessly confused. This has cast Hauerwas in the role of cultural critic as well as ethicist and theologian, although he claims to occupy the space created by 'not-quite' being any of these.⁶⁸

While Hauerwas is an engaging author, he is, at times, an intensely frustrating one. His very lack of commitment to being a systematic ethicist makes his work difficult to analyse. In a single essay, for example, he will offer an argument with very substantial implications for his whole system, yet subsequently write as though he had never mentioned the idea. On other occasions, he will offer contradictory propositions in different articles without ever resolving them. He is also prone to constant repetition, with the frustrating habit of offering variant readings which leave the reader to decide which one best states his position. Sometimes he will make sweeping claims which he will neither qualify nor adequately defend. Another form of this habit is his tendency to make powerful challenges to contemporary concerns, such as the focus by Western Christians on the social welfare agenda, but then to offer either no alternative or only poorly developed sketches of other possible patterns of concern. Many of these problems will become particularly apparent when an assessment is made of how Hauerwas determines the truth value of narratives.⁶⁹ He does, however, acknowledge that his desire vigorously to defend a position sometimes leads him to give the wrong impression.⁷⁰ In the end, the humility of Hauerwas' defensive strategy of claiming to be neither a thinker nor a systematic ethicist wears a little thin when, for so long, he has been consciously addressing an academic audience. Making

68 *Ibid.*, p.9.

69 See s.4.1.

70 Hauerwas, *Existence*, p.15.

these observations early in the discussion of Hauerwas' work means that energy can be more fruitfully directed to unpacking the engaging material which has made him one of the most influential contemporary Christian ethicists.

1.3 O'Donovan and Evangelical Ethics

The third moral theologian who will take part in the conversation is Oliver O'Donovan whose work has been marked by a quest to find a form of ethics in which Scripture plays a central and defining role. This quest has produced two quite distinct approaches: the first being a biblical ethic and the second an ethic arising from theological affirmations of the Gospel or, as he prefers to call it, 'an evangelical ethic'.⁷¹ Although it is his evangelical ethic which is of primary interest here, it is worth briefly describing the nature of his earlier biblical ethic because it was in contradistinction to the methodology underlying this initial approach that his later work developed.

The nature of O'Donovan's biblical ethic began to take shape in an early article, 'The Possibility of a Biblical Ethic',⁷² in which, essentially, he applied R.M. Hare's prescriptivist methodology⁷³ to discern in biblical texts moral propositions whose prescriptive nature and universalisability meant that they were applicable in the contemporary world.⁷⁴ He defined his position over and against Karl Barth's claim that the Bible 'contains no "universal" ethical commands'⁷⁵ and J.L. Houlden's claim that the biblical material on ethics was so historically particular that it could not be used as the basis of a contemporary ethic.⁷⁶ O'Donovan articulated this prescriptivist

71 Despite, or perhaps because of, O'Donovan's carefully argued and challenging presentation of an evangelical ethic, beyond the obligatory, and all too short, book review his systematic moral theology has not been the subject of sustained critical analysis. This thesis, which still treats only some of the key architectonic elements of his moral theology, represents the first substantial attempt at such a review.

72 O'Donovan, O., 'The Possibility of a Biblical Ethic', *TSF Bulletin*, 67 (1973), 15-23.

73 O'Donovan is quite explicit about the influence of Hare's work: see, *ibid.*, p.16, and O'Donovan, O., 'Towards an Interpretation of Biblical Ethics', *Tyndale Bulletin*, 27 (1976), 54-78, p.54.

74 O'Donovan, 'Possibility', especially, p.16.

75 *Ibid.*, p.17.

76 *Ibid.*

approach more fully in 1975 in his Tyndale Biblical Theology Lecture, 'Towards an Interpretation of Biblical Ethics'.⁷⁷ Once again, the principle of universalisability was his centre-piece for bridging the gap between Scripture and the present.⁷⁸ O'Donovan's commitment to the defensibility of generic moral categories - implied by this principle of universalisability - was also strengthened by his encounter with the work of Paul Ramsey - an encounter which had a lasting influence upon his thought.⁷⁹

While he was developing a systematic account of a biblical ethic, O'Donovan was also employing his methodology to address specific issues, often through the forum of the Grove Booklets on Ethics with their confessionally 'evangelical' audience. These works have had two focuses. The first has been on issues connected with the related questions of sexuality, marriage and human reproduction.⁸⁰ Within this field, one of O'Donovan's defining interests has been to call attention to, and provide a critique of, the impact of technology on modern society's approach to questions of reproduction and health care.⁸¹ O'Donovan's second focus has been an attempt to define the parameters, from a Christian perspective, of the legitimate use of force within a society and between states. This has led him to a concern with the issues of punishment⁸² and, most notably, with the tradition of the just war.⁸³ It is also

77 O'Donovan, 'Towards', *passim*.

78 *Ibid.*, especially, p.73.

79 *Ibid.*, especially, p.75. Other important themes of Ramsey's work which appear in O'Donovan's later work include: the necessarily theological starting-point of a Christian ethic (Ramsey, P., *Basic Christian Ethics*, Scribner, New York, 1950, p.1); the distinctiveness of a Christian ethic (see, for example, *ibid.*, p.86); and the possibility of a modern Protestant ethic having a place for natural law (see, for example, *ibid.*, pp.84-87).

80 O'Donovan, O., *The Christian and the Unborn Child*, 2nd Edition, Grove Books, Bramcote, Notts., 1975; O'Donovan, O., *Marriage and Permanence*, Grove Books, Bramcote, Notts., 1978; O'Donovan, O., *Transsexualism and Christian Marriage*, Grove Books, Bramcote, Notts., 1982 (represented for a more scholarly audience in O'Donovan, O., 'Transsexualism and Christian Marriage', *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 11 (1983), 135-162); and O'Donovan, O., 'Again: Who Is a Person?', in Channer, J.H. (ed.), *Abortion and the Sanctity of Human Life*, The Paternoster Press, Exeter, 1985, 125-137.

81 This critique receives its fullest form in, O'Donovan, O., *Begotten or Made*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1984.

82 O'Donovan, O., *Measure for Measure*, Grove Books, Bramcote, Notts., 1977.

83 O'Donovan, O., *In Pursuit of a Christian View of War*, Grove Books, Bramcote, Notts., 1977; Sider, R. and O'Donovan, O., *Peace and War: A Debate About Pacifism*, Grove Books, Bramcote,

within this field that the general influence of O'Donovan's substantial work on Augustine⁸⁴ can be most clearly discerned. These applied studies are marked by a sense of the need for a Christian ethic to be informed by the complex realities of the social, political and geo-political world. While these studies are not representative of O'Donovan's mature systematic thought, spanning the period from his biblical ethic in the 1970s through to the mid-1980s when he threw off the remaining prescriptivist influences, many remain valuable in offering insights into his understanding of important concepts in moral reasoning and as treatments of the particular issues which they address.

O'Donovan's transition towards an evangelical ethic began in the mid-1970s when he began to realise that the prescriptivist-type philosophies upon which he had relied, with their rejection of any form of moral realism (in the ethical rather than the political sense),⁸⁵ were exactly what had to be fought against. An important step in the evolution of this understanding occurred with his move to teach doctrine as Professor of Systematic Theology at Wycliffe College in Toronto. While in Toronto, he was persuaded by Leo Strauss' and George Grant's critiques of voluntarism.⁸⁶ He also met his wife, Joan Lockwood, a theologian and historian, whom he identifies as having raised the key philosophical questions which led him to rethink his approach to ethics.⁸⁷ It was also during his time in Toronto, freed by his doctrinal focus from the problems with Barth's ethical analysis, that O'Donovan embraced Barth as a systematic theologian generally and his fundamental revelation thesis in particular.⁸⁸

Notts., 1985; O'Donovan, O., *Peace and Certainty*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1989.

84 O'Donovan, O., *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1980 (the reworking of his doctoral thesis which was begun in 1970 and completed in 1975); O'Donovan, O., 'Usus and Fructus in Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana I*', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 33 (1982), 361-397; O'Donovan, O., 'Augustine's *City of God* XIX and Western Political Thought', *Dionysius*, 11 (1987), 89-110.

85 The meaning of this term will be dealt with more fully in Chapter 3.

86 Personal communication, Rev. Prof. Oliver O'Donovan, Oxford, 11 November 1994.

87 O'Donovan, O., 'The Natural Ethic', in Wright, D. (ed.), *Essays in Evangelical Social Ethics*, The Paternoster Press, Exeter, 1978, 19-35, p.32.

88 Personal communication, Rev. Prof. Oliver O'Donovan, Oxford, 11 November 1994.

The direction of O'Donovan's rethinking emerged in a paper, 'The Natural Ethic', given to the British National Evangelical Conference on Social Ethics in 1978. In the published version of the paper, O'Donovan explains that it catches his thought in 'a moment of transition' and that it is 'a kind of action snapshot' of an 'unposed and provisional character'.⁸⁹ Rejecting any form of voluntarism or nominalism, O'Donovan turned for inspiration to a variety of the very philosophy which such concepts had been used to attack. The boldness of his move became apparent in his statement that,

The first principle of the natural ethic is that reality is given to us, not simply in discrete, isolated phenomena, but in kinds. Things have a *natural meaning* ... The second principle is that these given kinds themselves are not isolated from each other, but relate to each other in a given pattern within the order of things.⁹⁰

In making this move, O'Donovan set out to recover the proper place of creation in Protestant ethical thought and to conceive of Christian ethics as shaped by the theological proclamations of the Gospel. For O'Donovan, a rightly shaped doctrine of creation provided a realist foundation for ethics upon which his careful analysis of rules and his defence of generic moral categories could be firmly fastened. This was, however, no restatement of the Thomist tradition of natural law theory with its epistemological reliance upon the naturally knowable. Such accounts, in O'Donovan's view, did no justice to that fundamentally Barthian insight that '[r]evelation in history is ... the lynchpin of Christian epistemology'.⁹¹ The limitations on what was naturally knowable are severely proscribed because 'we are dealing with fallen men with a fallen nature'.⁹² True moral knowledge, O'Donovan argued, is therefore only possible in Christ.⁹³ This distancing from the Thomist tradition led O'Donovan to approve of the 'serious attempt' made by Renaissance and Counter-Reformation thinkers 'to separate out the *ontological* from the *epistemological* universality of

89 O'Donovan, 'Natural Ethic', p.31.

90 *Ibid.*, p.23.

91 *Ibid.*, p.26.

92 *Ibid.*, p.28.

93 *Ibid.*

Natural Law, and to subordinate claims for natural knowledge to a very secondary position'.⁹⁴

This distinction between the ontological and epistemological claims about the nature of moral realities was crucial to the development of O'Donovan's moral theology because it enabled him to avoid a commitment to Barth's ethics, which he had long criticised, while preserving the broad claims of his epistemology. This development is most clearly articulated in O'Donovan's reflection upon Barth's work that,

[i]n the great theological attack upon Natural Law which was spearheaded earlier this century by Karl Barth, we can only regret that the ontological and epistemological issues were never properly differentiated.⁹⁵

The result of Barth's 'pursuit of an uncompromised theological epistemology' was, O'Donovan suggests, that he 'allowed himself to repudiate certain aspects of the doctrine of creation ... which ought never to have fallen under suspicion'.⁹⁶ This, in turn, forced Barth to rely upon a divine command theory which was incapable of supporting 'the extensive responsibility for moral deliberation which he would claim in practice and sometimes even defend in theory'.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, O'Donovan reaffirms that 'the *epistemological* positions of this greatest of twentieth-century theologians remain fundamentally important for Christian ethics'.⁹⁸

The ecumenical concern of this thesis makes it valuable to identify both these Barthian roots of O'Donovan's moral theology and O'Donovan's development of an important

94 O'Donovan, O., *Resurrection and Moral Order*, 2nd Edition, Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 1994, p.86, emphasis mine. O'Donovan sees this distinction between the ontological and epistemological claims as 'marked by a revealing preference for the terminology *ius naturae* ("Natural Right") rather than Thomas Aquinas's *lex naturae* ("Natural Law")' (*ibid.*). In O'Donovan's analysis, 'law' involves the implication of Thomistic thought that it is 'something constituted by reason' and, because everyone possesses reason, something knowable by all, whereas 'right' suggests 'something more objective' (*ibid.*).

95 *Ibid.*

96 *Ibid.*, p.87.

97 *Ibid.*

98 *Ibid.*

trajectory in modern Protestant thought which has been concerned to discern the proper place for creation or nature within the traditional architecture of Protestant moral theology.⁹⁹ An important part of this latter trajectory has been the growing awareness amongst Protestants of the positive place of natural law theory within their own tradition¹⁰⁰ - an awareness which has even produced some attempts to find a place for this tradition within modern Protestant ethics.¹⁰¹

The fruit of O'Donovan's fusion of a broadly Barthian epistemology with a Christian realism came with the publication in 1986 of his seminal work, *Resurrection and Moral Order*. It opens with the declaration that:

The foundations of Christian ethics must be evangelical foundations; or, to put it more simply, Christian ethics must arise from the gospel of Jesus Christ. Otherwise it could not be *Christian* ethics.¹⁰²

99 In this context it is worth noting that O'Donovan is certainly not the first Protestant ethicist to see the importance for ethics of recovering a place for creation in a broadly Barthian theology. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, for example, although still following an essentially Barthian divine command theory, had already observed in the early 1940s that '[t]he concept of the natural has fallen into discredit in Protestant ethics' and that it 'must ... be recovered on the basis of the gospel' (Bonhoeffer, D., *Ethics*, Macmillan, New York, 1965, pp.143, 144).

100 Carl Braaten provides a very brief but useful account of the evolution in Protestant theology towards a more positive assessment of natural law from its previous position of hostility (Braaten, C., 'Protestants and Natural Law', *First Things*, 19 (1992), 20-26, p.22). For evidence of the recovery of interest in the place of natural law in the Protestant tradition see, for example, McNeill, J., 'Natural Law and the Teaching of the Reformers', *Journal of Religion*, 26 (1946), 168-182; Collins, K., 'John Wesley's Platonic Conception of the Moral Law', *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 21, 116-128; Dowey, E.A., 'Law in Luther and Calvin', *Theology Today*, 41 (1984), 146-147; Helm, P., 'Calvin and Natural Law', *The Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology*, 2 (1984), 5-22. William Klempa provides a useful account of the debate amongst Calvin scholars in the twentieth century as to the role played by natural law in Calvin's theology, before offering an assessment which seeks a middle path in the debate, see Klempa, W., 'John Calvin on Natural Law', in George, T. (ed.), *John Calvin and the Church*, Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky, 1990, 72-95. There has even been a recovery of the biblical roots of such a doctrine in the Old Testament after the monochromatic Protestant reading of it in terms of command and covenant - see Barton, J., 'Natural Law and Poetic Justice in the Old Testament', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 30 (1979), 1-14.

101 See, for example, Little, D., 'Calvin and the Prospects for a Christian Theory of Natural Law' in Outka, G. and Ramsey, P. (eds), *Norm and Context in Christian Ethics*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1968, 175-197; Ramsey, I.T., 'Towards a Rehabilitation of Natural Law', in Ramsey, I.T. (ed.), *Christian Ethics and Contemporary Philosophy*, Macmillan, New York, 1966, 382-396; Macquarrie, J., *Three Issues in Ethics*, SCM, London, 1970 (his chapter on natural law is reprinted as 'Rethinking Natural Law', in Curran, C. and McCormick, R.A. (eds), *Readings in Moral Theology No. 7: Natural Law and Theology*, Paulist Press, New York, 1991, 221-246) and Ward, K., *The Divine Image*, SPCK, London, 1976.

102 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.11.

It is with this claim that the quest for an ecumenical ethic will begin in earnest.

Chapter 2

What makes Christian Ethics *Christian*?

In seeking to move towards an ecumenical ethic, it is necessary to begin with the prior question as to what is a Christian ethic.¹ This question is pivotal because both Hauerwas and O'Donovan have levelled the accusation at Thomistic forms of natural law theory that they cannot, in any full sense, be described as a form of Christian ethics.

2.1 The Distinctive Epistemology of a Christian Ethic

While there can certainly be Christians writing about ethics, what does it mean for ethics to be Christian? This question is answered in unambiguous terms by O'Donovan at the very beginning of *Resurrection and Moral Order* - a work which is, in effect, a sustained and systematic response to this problem. His response flows from his identification of the criterion of epistemological distinctness which an ethic must satisfy if it is properly to be called Christian. Put simply, 'Christian ethics must arise from the gospel of Jesus Christ. Otherwise it could not be *Christian* ethics'.² This claim for epistemological distinctness has two senses. The first is a definitional sense: what qualifies knowledge to the epithet Christian is that it arises from the distinctively Christian account of the nature of reality revealed by the Gospel. The second sense relates to why this definitional claim matters. O'Donovan's claim that, epistemologically, ethics arises from a person's knowledge of 'the whole shape of things'³ means that a Christian ethic must logically arise from a Christian understanding of 'the whole shape of things' or from the Gospel. This is not

1 Central to the discussion of the nature of Christian ethics will be the question of its distinctiveness. This perennial question for Christian ethics has been a particularly contentious one in recent times. The focus of the present project means that this wider debate will not be discussed directly. Note will be made, however, of representatives of key positions in the contemporary debate to whose work the present discussion particularly relates.

2 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.11.

3 *Ibid.*, p.91.

simply a formal claim because it means that, if a person's knowledge of 'the whole shape of things' is flawed, then her understanding of ethics will also be flawed.⁴ This claim is defended with considerable force throughout *Resurrection and Moral Order* as O'Donovan considers the ways in which the central categories by which Christians perceive reality shape both the way in which the nature of the good is understood and the way in which humans relate to it. While it is not possible to repeat his arguments in full here, it is worth recalling key elements of O'Donovan's account of creation which are particularly relevant to the present discussion and which add much to the overall cogency of his thesis. Central to O'Donovan's argument at this point is his defence of the significance for moral understanding of believing that there is a Creator:

If the Creator is not known, then the creation is not known *as creation*; for the relation of the creation to its Creator is the ground of its intelligibility as a created universe.⁵

In other words, if the universe is no longer known as creation, then any claims that it is 'ordered' lose their intelligibility and such claims are likely to be understood either as voluntarist (if they are claims about ends) or nominalist (if they are claims about kinds). Once material existence is perceived in these terms, the good must become a creation of the human will and not the divine will.⁶ The consequence of such a perception, as O'Donovan argues, is that,

all our moral beliefs, such as that every human being is the equal of every other, are not 'beliefs' at all but mere 'commitments', claiming no correspondence with reality. They are the ways in which the will projects the patterns of the mind upon the blank screen of an unordered world.⁷

The importance of an adequate account of creation for a sound ethical understanding re-emerges in O'Donovan's discussion of the relationship between different accounts of

4 *Ibid.*, p.89.

5 *Ibid.*, p.88.

6 O'Donovan is careful to maintain the notion of creation as an act of the divine will (and thus of all generic categories within creation as contingent) in order to preserve the doctrine of creation itself from the slide toward pantheism which would accompany the notion of "creation" not as creation at all, but an emanation, a reflection of the inner law of God's being, sharing its necessity and thus, in some sense, sharing its divinity' (*ibid.*, p.39).

7 *Ibid.*, p.35.

history⁸ and moral thought. O'Donovan suggests that without an adequate doctrine of creation - which he argues is the "presupposition" of history⁹ - history and the nature of value within it is liable to be understood from a historicist perspective,¹⁰ with its concomitant denial that 'a universal order exists'¹¹ and its claim that '[w]hat classical ethics thought of as transhistorical order is ... itself a historical phenomena'.¹²

In establishing the connection between a person's world view and her understanding of ethics, O'Donovan also draws attention to the importance, for a correct understanding of the nature of the good, of relating creation to its eschatological fulfilment. He observes that, '[w]hen we describe the saving work of Christ by the term "redemption", we stress the fact that it presupposes the created order'.¹³ "Redemption", he notes, 'suggests the recovery of something given and lost'.¹⁴ However, he balances this observation with the reflection that redemption is not mere restoration but that it is also the fulfilment of the purpose of creation.¹⁵ The importance, he argues, of understanding the eschatological transformation of creation as both restoration and fulfilment is that it 'rules out ... the gnostic possibility that creation is to be repudiated or overcome in the name of some higher good'.¹⁶ This means that a carefully balanced account of creation and eschatology is, in O'Donovan's view, necessary in order to defend the good that is found in creation

8 By 'history' O'Donovan observes that he does not mean 'mere events ... nor their narration in an intelligible story ... but their inherent significance and direction which makes them intelligible and narratable' (*ibid.*, p.55).

9 *Ibid.*, p.62. By this claim O'Donovan means that, 'A story has to be a story about something The subject of a story must be something of intrinsic value and worth; if it is not, the story loses all its interest and importance as a story' (*ibid.*, p.60).

10 In defining what he means by historicism, O'Donovan succinctly observes that '[t]he heart of historicism can be expressed in the thesis that all teleology is historical teleology ... Nothing can have a "point" unless it is a historical point ... The natural exists only to be superseded: everything within it serves only a supernatural end, the end of history. That may be conceived as the kingdom of heaven; it may be conceived as the communist paradise; or (especially in liberal historicism) it may simply be an undefined term of self-justifying change, receding infinitely like the horizon as we approach it' (*ibid.*, pp.58-59).

11 *Ibid.*, p.67.

12 *Ibid.*

13 *Ibid.*, p.54.

14 *Ibid.*

15 *Ibid.*, p.55.

16 *Ibid.*

as good and also to reveal its true nature as being completed in and by the divinity which is beyond creation.¹⁷

This outline of the nature of O'Donovan's thesis makes it possible to gain a clearer understanding of what he means by his argument that 'Christian ethics must *arise* from the gospel of Jesus Christ'.¹⁸ What O'Donovan is arguing is that Christian ethics must take as its starting-point the world view which has arisen from sustained reflection upon Christian Scripture and, that an understanding of ethical concepts, such as the nature of the good, should be developed by working out the implications of this world view for moral deliberation.

With the essentials of O'Donovan's thesis in mind, it is possible to understand the presuppositions upon which he bases his claim that natural law theory - at least as Finnis expresses it in *Natural Law and Natural Rights* and *Fundamentals of Ethics* - is incapable of being evangelical (i.e., Christian in a strong sense).¹⁹ O'Donovan argues that, as a result of the distinction Finnis makes between practical reason (the sort of reason people use to plan action) and theoretical reason (the type of reason which tests the truth of a proposition by seeking to establish its conformity to some prior reality),²⁰ '[o]ur knowledge of the truth about the world will not provide a context for our rational decisions about how to live and act'.²¹ In emphasising his point, O'Donovan observes,

The moral arguments of the New Testament epistles often pivot on the word 'therefore', which links the evangelical proclamation with moral inferences. It is not clear to me that Finnis can follow them.²²

17 For a further discussion of O'Donovan's account of the relationship between creation and eschatology see s.3.3.3.

18 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.11; emphasis mine.

19 O'Donovan, in what looks like an ecumenical finesse, suggests that with Finnis' theory '[h]ere, possibly, may be a "Christian" ethics, but not, I think, a theological ethics' (*ibid.*, p.x). According to the analysis O'Donovan presents in the main body of *Resurrection and Moral Order*, the sense in which Finnis' ethic is 'Christian' can, at best, be said to be the highly qualified one of being an ethic produced by a Christian in which 'Christian faith has a bearing on ethics indirectly' (*ibid.*, p.11). More candidly, O'Donovan simply observes that, as a result of his approach, 'Finnis loses purchase on an evangelical morality' (*ibid.*, p.xii).

20 For a more detailed definition of 'practical reason' and 'theoretical reason' see s.3.2.1.

21 *Ibid.*, p.x.

22 *Ibid.*

At this point it is necessary to introduce Hauerwas into the discussion because he also criticises the tradition of Catholic natural law theory for failing to be adequately shaped by the world view of the Christian tradition.²³ This criticism leads him to the same conclusion as O'Donovan, that natural law ethics is an unsuitable bearer of the title 'Christian ethics' in any strong sense. The particular form of Hauerwas' objection arises from a claim at the very centre of his narrative theory, namely, that all forms of ethic must be identified by a qualifier, such as 'Jewish, Christian, Hindu ... humanist [etc.]',²⁴ because all are shaped by the world view of the narrative tradition from which they arise.²⁵ The tradition of Catholic moral thought, Hauerwas argues, minimizes the extent to which it is shaped by arising from the Christian tradition:

Theological claims set the backdrop that made their work intelligible - e.g., God is the creator of a rational universe and moral law can be thus known without the aid of revelation. Beyond that, little theological reflection was required for explicating the nature of the Christian moral life.²⁶

2.2 The Distinctive Content of a Christian Ethic

Hauerwas develops his claim for the epistemological distinctness of Christian ethics into a further claim that a *Christian* ethic necessarily possesses a particular content which will be distinctive from that of a secular ethic. He claims that the practices which ought to flow from the Christian narrative tradition are different from the practices which result from the traditions of modern Western societies, especially those present in the United States. For Hauerwas, these key, distinct Christian practices result from a person living a life of non-violence, forgiveness and reconciliation²⁷ and treating life as a gift.²⁸ These

23 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.51.

24 *Ibid.*, p.1.

25 See s.4.2. This claim is also supported by his rejection of the notion that there is, or could be, a universally valid ethic built upon reason (see s.2.2.3).

26 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.51.

27 Hauerwas treats these themes of non-violence, forgiveness and reconciliation most extensively in *The Peaceable Kingdom*, although they continue to recur as central themes throughout his work; see especially the collection of essays in Hauerwas, *Nations*.

28 The notion of life as a gift is foundational to Hauerwas' analysis of abortion (*Community*, p.227), euthanasia (Hauerwas, S., *Suffering Presence: Theological Reflections on Medicine, the Mentally Handicapped and the Church*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1986, pp.105-107), care for retarded children (*Truthfulness*, p.153) and marriage (Hauerwas, S., *After Christendom?*, Abingdon

are not the practices Hauerwas sees arising from natural law theory.²⁹

O'Donovan levels a very similar critique against natural law in his review of John Finnis' work which leads him to observe that,

The difference between Finnis and myself, then, seems to amount to this: while I believe that a distinct behaviour is demanded by the resurrection of Jesus, he believes that the same behaviour is demanded which was demanded anyway, but that the demand is clear and more cogently perceived.³⁰

In the *Peaceable Kingdom*, Hauerwas builds upon his argument that natural law threatens the necessary particularity and distinctness of Christian ethics by suggesting that the desire to be effective in addressing various social problems will make natural law attractive for the very reason that it does away with that distinctness, thereby enabling alliances to be formed with sympathetic non-Christians which will assist in actually seeking to solve these problems.³¹ Hauerwas begins this argument by setting out what he considers to be central issues on the contemporary agenda of social ethics that are of relevance to Christians: how should the problems of the Developing World be addressed? how should social justice be achieved? and what should be done about the position of women in society?³² He then argues that,

once such questions are made central for determining an agenda for a social ethic we feel the pull of natural law as an essential feature of Christian ethics. For, to accomplish justice, to work for a more nearly free and equitable social order requires cooperation with non-Christians.³³

Hauerwas argues that Christians will only escape 'the pull of natural law' if they realise that being effective is not an essential feature of Christian ethics. Rather than attempting 'to make the world more peaceable and just', the 'first social ethical task of the church is

Press, Nashville, 1991, p.131).

29 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, pp.60-61, 63.

30 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.xi.

31 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.99.

32 *Ibid.*

33 *Ibid.*

to be the church - the servant community'.³⁴ Hauerwas explains that the Church being Church means, first and foremost, that it must tell its story and, as a peaceful community, witness to the truth about God. By being different to the world, the Church points to the reality of God's Kingdom and better enables the world to see itself as it really is.³⁵ At the same time, the Church should continue its tasks of caring for the poor and needy but according to its own agenda, not the world's. This should not be done for reasons of effectiveness but as a witness to a different way of living. Mother Teresa, Hauerwas argues, is an excellent embodiment of this approach of witness rather than effectiveness. She could be criticised for not raising money for feeding the starving of Africa when she is spending her time simply holding the hand of a dying person. However, what matters is not her effectiveness but rather her witness to the truth of God's love.³⁶ Here it is important to observe that for Hauerwas the crucial difference between Church and world lies in the world's free choice not to confess Jesus as Lord.³⁷

It is worth noting that O'Donovan also sounds a warning against the lure of effectiveness corrupting a Christian witness to moral truth, although he thinks that even many of the moral conclusions of Catholic natural law theories would need to be abandoned in order to find common ground with Western liberal culture.³⁸

From this account of O'Donovan's and Hauerwas' criticisms of the foundations of natural law theory and of the nature of its normative conclusions, four main areas of concern can be identified. First, natural law theory does not 'arise from the gospel'. The adequacy of its response to this concern will, in the end, be determinative for whether or not an ecumenical approach to Christian ethics is possible. Secondly, the ethics which natural law produces does not demonstrate the particularity and distinctiveness to be expected of an ethic founded on following the way of Jesus. Thirdly, the false lure of natural law theory as being an ethic of effectiveness makes it insufficiently open to the radical nature

34 *Ibid.*

35 *Ibid.*, p.100.

36 Hauerwas, *Existence*, p.105.

37 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.101.

38 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, pp.20-21.

of Jesus' demands. Fourthly, natural law theory neglects the primary task of Christian ethics, which is to witness to the truth of the Gospel as a Church.

2.3 Grisez's Account of Christian Moral Principles

In the light of these objections to the broadly Thomistic tradition of natural law thought within which Grisez places himself, the question arises as to what possible basis there might be for a reconciliation of his theory with those of Hauerwas and O'Donovan. At first sight the prospects do not appear promising. The starting-point of many of Grisez's and Finnis' works which have employed or articulated their natural law theory has simply been that which is naturally knowable. In producing these accounts, Grisez and Finnis appear to have signed a Faustian pact with the Enlightenment in an attempt to render natural law intelligible to modern minds. In these works, any substantive mention of God is relegated to a closing section or chapter³⁹ or is even omitted altogether.⁴⁰ In all these discussions, ethics is treated as an almost discrete science - a product, as O'Donovan rightly observes,⁴¹ of their distinction between theoretical and practical reasoning. It may well be, however, that the incredulity and blank misunderstandings which have greeted their theory in many quarters are a result of their taking this separation too far. For, as O'Donovan has observed, unless creation is understood *as Creation* there is little or no basis upon which the apparent order they discern will be intelligible as *ordered*. This problem is not overcome by a brief concluding reference to God which may have the appearance of a last-minute attempt to provide intelligibility for the substantive measure of order which they have adduced, but which the secular reader may well have already rendered intelligible as merely the workings of Grisez's and Finnis' voluntarist wills. What Grisez and Finnis have effectively produced in these accounts of their theory is an epistemologically secular natural law theory by which it is possible to know that there is a moral order while leaving open the question as to the nature of this orderedness. None of this is to disparage the enterprise itself - at the very least it suggests that fallen humanity

39 This is particularly evident in Grisez, 'Practical Principles'; Grisez, *New Morality*; Finnis, *Natural Law*; and Grisez, *Deterrence*.

40 Grisez, *Life*; and Finnis, J. *Fundamentals of Ethics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1983.

41 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.x.

is capable of substantial moral knowledge - it is simply to conclude with O'Donovan and Hauerwas that this is not a *Christian* ethic.

Of course, Grisez has not simply been concerned to produce a natural law theory which is intelligible to all but also to explain its relationship to the theological affirmations of Christian believers. However, although his account of this relationship could open up the possibility of an answer to O'Donovan's and Hauerwas's objections, the initial signs are not promising. In Grisez's Presidential Address to the American Catholic Philosophical Association he sets out his understanding of the relationship between practical reason and faith.⁴² This address begins with the question,

Can Christian faith affect practical reasoning in such a way that at least some moral judgements of those who think Christian faith true will differ from the moral judgements of nonbelievers who proceed equally rationally?⁴³

Grisez's central argument in response to this question opens with the claim, 'I do not think that Christian faith adds any principles to those naturally knowable'.⁴⁴ However, he then argues that an acceptance of the Christian account of reality can alter what those principles oblige a person to do. He takes as his key illustration Jesus' teaching on loving enemies as it is found in Luke's Gospel. Grisez observes that, in explaining his teaching that enemies should be loved, Jesus first calls upon the generally accepted moral principle, 'Do to others as you would have them do to you' (Lk 6:31). The requirements of this principle were then radically transformed when God was introduced by Jesus as somebody whose treatment of people needs to be taken into account when determining moral responsibility: 'Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged ... for the measure you give will be the measure you get back' (Lk 6:36-37, 38b). This element of Jesus' teaching is clearly illuminated, Grisez suggests, by the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Mt 18:23-35). In this story of forgiveness, the rules of fairness *per se* are not changed; what is changed is the generosity which the rules of

42 Grisez, G., 'Presidential Address: Practical Reason and Faith', *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 58 (1984), 2-14.

43 *Ibid.*, p.2.

44 *Ibid.*, p.5.

fairness have to take into account. It had been acceptable for the servant to seek the recovery of his debts on the basis of the principle of fairness - 'Do to others as you would have them do to you' (Lk 6:31) - *until* his master radically forgave him his debts. After that change in circumstances it was wrong on the basis of the same principle of fairness for the servant to continue to demand that his debts be paid. For, as the master observed on summoning the unforgiving servant,

You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave as I had mercy on you? (Mt 18:32-33)

In other words, when God's radically loving and forgiving nature is revealed in and by the life of Jesus, the rules of fairness which govern all people produce a dramatically transformed set of demands for the Christian.

While this approach will clearly produce some distinct Christian *norms*, it also seeks to make a virtue out of there not being distinct Christian moral *principles* and of there not being an epistemologically distinct Christian ethic. At this point, the prospects for a reconciliation between Hauerwas' and O'Donovan's epistemological claims and Grisez's natural law analysis appear bleak. However - and it is a decisive 'however' - what have not been considered are the implications of Grisez's seminal work of *moral theology* - *Christian Moral Principles* - especially its widely overlooked second two-thirds which covers some 600 pages and discusses the relationship between the distinctive elements of a Christian world view and moral principles. Although it still contains the claim that Christian faith brings no new moral principles, careful analysis will suggest that this is a difficult claim for Grisez's own moral theology to sustain. The clearest explanation - which is consistent with the rest of his theory - for the origin of the distinctive Christian principles which Grisez adduces in *Christian Moral Principles* is not that which he outlined in his article on practical reason and faith but rather one which supports the notion that his theory is capable of being understood as a *Christian* ethic.

In the opening pages of *Christian Moral Principles*, Grisez explicitly delineates his project as being one of systematic moral theology - one which begins by reflecting upon the

truths of faith in order 'to make clear how faith should shape the Christian life'.⁴⁵ Such theology, he maintains, arises from the revelation in Scripture and 'other authoritative expressions of the Church's faith'.⁴⁶ The rest of the work is essentially faithful to this methodology, although it does include various apologetic defences of key claims of faith, employing a rather more philosophical form of theology in order to do so. Methodologically, Grisez's whole project takes an unambiguously Christian epistemology as its starting-point.

In unfolding the moral principles related to the Christian affirmations of faith, Grisez's first step is very much in a Thomist mould. He begins by arguing that in creating, God made it possible for people to have natural knowledge about those fundamental moral truths (natural law) which would enable them to participate in his plan for the whole of creation (the eternal law).⁴⁷ Grisez also argues that this same knowledge is revealed and known in the Church in order to assist in correcting errors arising from flawed natural perceptions of such knowledge.⁴⁸ If Grisez's account of moral theology were to end here - as many have in the Thomist tradition which O'Donovan and Hauerwas criticise - his ethics could be criticised for being based on a very partial Christian epistemology which failed to account for those elements of reality which would reveal that it was based on a Christian epistemology at all. This is not, however, where Grisez concludes. From the doctrine of creation he turns to the story of the Fall and the entry of original sin into the world. He then unfolds his account of the relationship between God and sinful humankind, culminating in an account of God's redemptive work by covenant, incarnation and Christian participation in the process of redemption. The task here, however, is not to provide a summary of this essentially orthodox Catholic theology, rather, it is to try to understand the way in which Grisez's account of ethics relates to this theological scheme.

45 Grisez, *Principles*, p.6.

46 *Ibid.*, p.4.

47 *Ibid.*, pp.173-175.

48 *Ibid.*, p.176. For a challenge to this as the Roman Catholic Church's teaching see, Sullivan, F.A., 'The Theologian's Ecclesial Vocation and the 1990 CDF Instruction', *Theological Studies*, 52 (1991), 51-68, p.57, to which Peter Chirico replies in 'Revelation and Natural Law', *Theological Studies*, 52 (1991), 539-540.

The first key point at which Grisez's theological scheme begins to work itself out as moral theory comes with his observation that Jesus transforms both the nature and understanding of human fulfilment. By way of his atoning sacrifice,⁴⁹ Jesus opens up the possibility of human participation in the divine life⁵⁰ through the act of faith.⁵¹ Human fulfilment was revealed, therefore, to consist in participation in the divine life as mediated by Jesus and the Church. According to Grisez, this participation means participating in and contributing to the growth of the Kingdom of God which was inaugurated by Jesus.⁵² Grisez also describes this process of contributing to the growth of the Kingdom as coming to fulfilment in Jesus.⁵³ In other words, human fulfilment comes to be known by the light of revelation as that fulfilment which comes from participating in and contributing to the growth of the Kingdom of God.

The question which then arises for Grisez is whether contributing to 'the fulfilment of all things in Jesus' (contributing to the growth of the Kingdom) brings with it new moral principles and norms. To this question Grisez offers the general response that,

The teachings of faith neither conflict with any of the principles of morality nor add any new principles to them. Yet faith does generate specific norms proper to the Christian life.⁵⁴

Grisez seeks to explicate this statement in a chapter devoted to the principles (labelled 'modes of Christian response') which he considers should guide the Christian life.⁵⁵ Each of the modes of Christian response corresponds to one of the Beatitudes as they are found in St Matthew's Gospel. Grisez argues that because '[t]he Beatitudes propose norms of Christian life ... they are Christian moral principles'.⁵⁶ He does not, however, want

49 Grisez, *Principles*, pp.539-541.

50 *Ibid.*, p.395.

51 'Following Scripture, the Catholic Church also teaches definitively that faith is the foundation of all justification and the beginning of our salvation ... which must shape a life of good works' (*ibid.*, p.394).

52 *Ibid.*, pp.468, 470.

53 *Ibid.*, p.471.

54 *Ibid.*, p.607.

55 *Ibid.*, pp.627-659.

56 *Ibid.*, p.628.

to describe these principles as 'new' but rather as 'the *transformation* of the modes of responsibility'.⁵⁷ These modes of responsibility are the key principles which guide purely secular moral deliberation, about which more will be said briefly. In explaining the genesis of these modes of Christian response, Grisez first states a particular Beatitude and then, in usually little more than a sentence, outlines what he considers to be revealed by that Beatitude. He then immediately states the mode of Christian response which he considers, in some sense, to arise from, or correspond to, this statement of theoretical reality. The connection between the statement about reality and the mode of Christian response is almost always made by beginning the sentence concerning the mode, 'Thus'. His treatment of the first Beatitude should help to make this methodology clear. To begin, Grisez simply states the first Beatitude: 'Blessed are the poor in Spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Mt 5:3).⁵⁸ His exposition then starts:

People whose primary love is charity are disposed to divine goodness before all else. *Perceiving God's goodness as real quite apart from their own effort and action, they understand that their undertakings and achievements are only a share, given freely and generously by God, in his fullness.*⁵⁹

This statement is then immediately followed by,

Thus the basic Christian mode of response is to *expect and accept all good, including the good fruits of one's own work, as God's gift*.⁶⁰

At this point, the nature of the logical connection between the statement about reality and the mode of response which is simply described by the adverb 'Thus' is far from clear. Nor is it clear as to in what sense this mode is a 'fulfillment' or 'transformation' of the first mode of responsibility.

In seeking to understand the nature of this move, it is helpful to look back to Grisez's more fully articulated account of how the modes of responsibility arise. He begins by

57 *Ibid.*, p.627; emphasis mine. For a list of these modes of responsibility see Appendix A.

58 *Ibid.*, p.634.

59 *Ibid.*; emphasis Grisez's.

60 *Ibid.*; emphasis Grisez's.

arguing that the fundamental demand of good practical reasoning is that a person should not make choices which are incompatible with a will towards integral human fulfilment.⁶¹ He then observes that human choices are shaped both by a person's emotions, which propose definite goals for action, and by his practical reason, which identifies the intelligible goods to be pursued in any particular, definite goal.⁶² He therefore conceives the general task of practical reason as being to ensure that the emotions and feelings do not distort the process of pursuing the human fulfilment realised in the pursuit of these intelligible goods.⁶³ The modes of responsibility seek to articulate the principles Grisez regards as being necessary to prevent such distortions. Hence, they appear in his analysis as those self-evident principles for the pursuit of human fulfilment which are recognised in the light of knowledge about human nature (i.e., that humans are beings in which both reason and emotion shape the making of choices).

The difficulty with this section of Grisez's analysis is that the modes of Christian response do not appear to arise in response to knowledge about human nature but rather in response to knowledge about God as creator and redeemer. It is here that it is helpful to turn to Finnis' articulation of the basic natural law theory because it provides both a broader account and a more explicitly articulated analysis of the origin of what amounts to reasonableness in the pursuit of integral human fulfilment. Rather than speaking of modes of responsibility, Finnis prefers the language of 'the basic requirements of practical reasonableness'.⁶⁴ He describes these requirements as the 'self-evident principles'⁶⁵ which are knowable by a person 'who has experience (both of human wants and passions and of the conditions of human life) and intelligence and a desire for reasonableness stronger than the desires that might overwhelm it'.⁶⁶ In other words, the requirements of practical reasonableness arise (in the sense of being self-evident, rather

61 *Ibid.*, pp.178-189. These moves will be treated in greater detail in ss.3.2.4 and 5.5.1.

62 *Ibid.*, pp.189-191.

63 *Ibid.*, p.189.

64 Finnis, *Natural Law*, p.100. Finnis does observe, however, that 'these requirements are expressions of the most general moral principle - that one remain open to integral human fulfilment' (Finnis, *Fundamentals*, p.76).

65 Finnis, *Natural Law*, p.101.

66 *Ibid.*

than logically deduced) from knowledge about both human nature and the conditions of human life.

In his explanation of the basic requirements of practical reasonableness, Finnis provides a brief account of the conditions of human life to which particular requirements 'respond'.⁶⁷ For instance, the requirement that 'one must have a certain detachment from all the specific and limited projects which one undertakes' responds to the 'changing circumstances' of human life and to the fact that, without such detachment, 'if one's project failed ... one would consider one's life drained of meaning'.⁶⁸ This, Finnis maintains, would be an unreasonable course of action.⁶⁹ Finnis sometimes leaves the conditions which relate to particular principles largely unstated and they are often rather imprecisely delineated. However, it appears that the other conditions of human life which he considers as important conditions to which the basic requirements of practical reasonableness 'respond' are: that human life is limited by time and finite amounts of personal energy;⁷⁰ that the realisation of many worthwhile goals requires co-operation between people;⁷¹ that material resources are limited;⁷² and that different instantiations of human goods are incommensurable.⁷³ Finnis also identifies some of the requirements of practical reasonableness as arising from human nature - although his account of human nature is, at this point, a broader one than Grisez's, encompassing more than the reasoning and feeling dimensions of a person. Finnis' claim, for example, that a person should have no arbitrary preferences amongst other persons responds to the fact that the commonality of human nature in total means that there is no reason arising from the nature of a person to justify a preference for one person over another person.⁷⁴ There may, of course, be relational reasons (such as familial commitments) for preferring one person to another. The point here is not to defend all of the relationships which Finnis

67 Finnis, *Fundamentals*, p.75.

68 Finnis, *Natural Law*, p.110.

69 *Ibid.*

70 *Ibid.*, pp.104-105.

71 *Ibid.*, pp.134-156.

72 *Ibid.*, pp.111-112.

73 *Ibid.*

74 *Ibid.*, pp.106-109.

draws out but rather to highlight the integral relationship between an understanding of human nature and the human condition and the basic requirements of practical reasonableness.⁷⁵

Given that the requirements of practical reasonableness arise, in part, from a person's understanding of the 'conditions of human life', it would appear possible that radically different understandings of the 'conditions of human life' might produce different understandings as to what amounted to the self-evident requirements of practical reasonableness. If, for example, it suddenly became apparent that there were certain sorts of human projects which could not be thwarted, then it might no longer appear self-evident that a person should, as a matter of reasonableness, exercise a measure of detachment in relation to her involvement in such projects. Similarly, if, for certain purposes, familial commitments were no longer understood as morally significant, the scope of the principle requiring that there be no arbitrary preference amongst persons might be expanded. There could even be altogether new principles of practical reasonableness which responded to radically new understandings of the human condition. However, an important caveat should be noted here: while the understanding of the *human condition* could change radically, the understanding of *human nature* and the basic requirements of practical reasonableness which arise from it could remain constant.⁷⁶

From the perspective of Finnis' account, Grisez's modes of Christian response can be described as the self-evident basic requirements of practical reasonableness which arise when a person understands 'the conditions of human life' from the perspective of Christian revelation. Such an interpretation finds support in Grisez's discussion of the

75 For a brief outline of the relationship between the conditions of human life, human nature and all the basic requirements of practical reasonableness see Appendix A.

76 The fact that general moral principles arise from a person's understanding of the conditions of human life (which could reasonably be subject to substantial change as a result of faith), as well as from her understanding of human nature (which need not change as a result of faith), challenges the position adopted by McCormick and others that general demands of Christian ethics cannot be distinctive because ethics arises only from human nature - a nature which, while it might be better understood as a result of faith, is unchanged by it (McCormick, R.A., 'Does Religious Faith Add to Ethical Perception', in Curran, C.E. and McCormick, R.A. (eds), *Readings in Moral Theology No. 2: The Distinctiveness of Christian Ethics*, Paulist Press, New York, 1980, 156-173, pp.164-169).

modes of Christian response. In his discussion of each of the Christian modes of response, he follows a pattern of outlining the nature of reality as it appears to fallen humanity and the modes of responsibility associated with that understanding. He then observes that it is when the understanding of reality is altered by the light of revelation that the Christian modes of responsibility arise. Consider, for example, Grisez's treatment of the seventh Beatitude, 'Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God' (Mt 5:9).⁷⁷ The Christian revelation he considers as corresponding to this Beatitude is that,

To love goods mutilated by evil with divine love is to love them as good, not as evil, and so to separate them from their evil and restore them to wholeness.⁷⁸

The mode of Christian response which Grisez associates with this observation is that a Christian should 'respond to evil with good, not with resistance, much less with destructive action'.⁷⁹ In explaining how this principle relates to the corresponding mode of responsibility - 'One should not be moved by hostility to freely accept or choose the destruction, damaging, or impeding of an intelligible human good'⁸⁰ (the seventh mode of responsibility) - Grisez observes,

In this fallen world ... it really is impossible in many cases to pursue human good effectively without making compromises: violate some goods in order to save others and minimize evil; use bad means to achieve good ends which otherwise will not be achieved.⁸¹

In such a world, anything more demanding than seventh mode responsibility is unlikely to seem reasonable or purposeful. Only a radically transformed understanding of the nature of reality could make a more demanding principle appear reasonable or purposeful. It is

77 Grisez, *Principles*, pp.649-650.

78 *Ibid.*, p.649.

79 *Ibid.*

80 *Ibid.*, p.215; Grisez's emphasis has been removed.

81 Grisez, G. and Shaw, R., *Fulfillment in Christ*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1991, p.313. This work summarises *Christian Moral Principles* and sometimes, especially on this topic of the nature of *Christian* moral principles, states the essentials of Grisez's argument more clearly than the larger volume.

just such a radically transformed understanding which, Grisez argues, comes with Christian faith, hope and charity:

the modes of responsibility [are] transformed by faith (which tells us how to live a good life in a fallen world), by hope (which supplies the confidence in God required to make the effort), and by charity (which gives one the power to really live in this way).⁸²

This transformation of the 'conditions of human life' is both epistemological and ontological. It is epistemological in that knowledge of the way to respond to evil is unlikely to seem reasonable unless a person can trust in at least a fairly orthodox Christian account of providence and eschatology. It is ontological in that a person understands that by faith the conditions of her human life have actually been changed because she has become a participant in the project of building the Kingdom of God, which means that she can trust in a Christian account of providence and eschatology.⁸³

If Grisez's account is to be understood as yielding a distinct set of Christian moral principles which arise because '[f]aith sheds a *new* and true light on *the human condition*',⁸⁴ what is to be made of his insistence that Christian faith adds no new moral principles which are not naturally knowable?⁸⁵ This claim seems difficult to maintain, especially given the extent to which he understands some of the modes of responsibility to be transformed. The example just considered of the seventh mode of Christian response - that a Christian should 'respond to evil with good, not with resistance, much less with

82 Grisez, *Fulfillment*, pp.304-305.

83 The analysis presented here challenges Joseph Fuchs' influential argument for the congruence of Christian and non-Christian morality (Fuchs, J., 'Is There a Specifically Christian Morality', in Curran, C.E. and McCormick, R.A. (eds), *Readings in Moral Theology No. 2: The Distinctiveness of Christian Ethics*, Paulist Press, New York, 1980, 3-19). The interpretation of Grisez's analysis which is presented in this chapter suggests that the failure of non-Christians to adopt the selfless elements of Christian moral teaching - 'the cross' (*ibid.*, p.12) - is not adequately explained simply by their 'egoism as "fallen" men' (*ibid.*). The selflessness of Christians came as a response *to* the cross and not, as Fuchs suggests, from an awareness, which might also be possessed by non-Christians, that 'self denial ... may be part of authentic being-human' (*ibid.*). Contrary to Fuchs' central contention, the epistemological distinctness of the foundations of Christian and non-Christian moralities means that there will be no necessary congruence between the two.

84 Grisez, *Fulfillment*, pp.313-314; emphasis mine.

85 Grisez, *Principles*, p.607.

destructive action'⁸⁶ - provides a good illustration. The seventh mode of responsibility, which Grisez claims is transformed into this mode of Christian response, arises from the possible distortion of practical reasonableness which feelings of hostility might generate and holds that a person should not choose to harm any human good.⁸⁷ However, the mode of Christian response arises not from human nature but from knowledge of the divine nature and, rather than offering a prohibition not to harm the good, it asserts a positive duty to meet evil with good. Therefore, given that this principle arises from (i) knowledge about a different reality and (ii) entirely different epistemological presuppositions to produce (iii) a practical demand with a distinctively different nature, it would seem most accurately described as a different or new principle.

O'Donovan's account of the nature of 'new' moral knowledge presents an even stronger challenge to Grisez's claim that Christian faith brings no new moral principles. If Christian moral principles were simply a matter of knowing '*better* what we already know *in outline*',⁸⁸ then O'Donovan considers that this would be an exercise in moral learning and would not involve new moral knowledge⁸⁹ - although it might still involve the discernment of 'new' principles, in the less radical sense of the improvement of moral understanding.⁹⁰ That is not, however, what is occurring in Grisez's analysis. In his account, the acceptance of Christian faith radically changes the nature of the outline; it dramatically redraws the boundaries of the human understanding of reality to such an extent as to bring sweeping changes to what is thought to be practically reasonable. It is the moral knowledge arising from just such a change in a person's 'grasp of the whole shape of things'⁹¹ which, O'Donovan argues, is best described as new moral knowledge.

In terms of O'Donovan's analysis, all of Grisez's Christian moral principles would be new principles. In fact, all the modes of responsibility *when they arise from a Christian*

86 *Ibid.*, p.649.

87 *Ibid.*, pp.215-216.

88 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.92; emphasis O'Donovan's.

89 *Ibid.*

90 See s.4.3.1.

91 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.91.

understanding of reality will also, in this sense, be 'new' moral principles. In terms of practical demands, these Christian modes of responsibility will, of course, overlap with those modes of responsibility which arise from a purely secular world view because they will both arise from common perceptions about certain features of reality. However, Grisez's analysis also suggests that at least some of the modes of responsibility will, in fact, arise from a distinctively Christian perception of reality. Consider, for example, the fifth mode: 'One should not, in response to different feelings towards different persons, willingly proceed with a preference for anyone unless the preference is required by intelligible goods themselves'.⁹² In explicating this mode, Grisez observes that '[d]ivine revelation deepens the foundation for this mode of responsibility even before Jesus'.⁹³ Scripture, Grisez suggests, reveals that 'we are all children of the same Father. Thus, there is a basic equality - in dignity - among all persons'.⁹⁴ Grisez's language of 'deepening' obscures the fact that this scriptural understanding of reality is better understood as presenting a different vision of reality from which the mode might arise. Without a scriptural vision of reality, the mode of response arises from knowledge about a common human nature; with a scriptural vision, it arises from knowledge about a common human relationship - namely, that all people are children of God. This suggests that the fifth Christian mode of response is distinct from its secular counter-part because it arises from a quite different world view. From O'Donovan's epistemological perspective, this means that it is best understood as a new and different principle. Put another way, it is a different principle because it has a distinct and independent foundation for its truthfulness from that of its secular counterpart. Identifying this Christian principle as 'new', describes the outcome of recognising it as different. Given that Grisez explains how revelation deepens all the modes of responsibility, they all could potentially arise from a Christian vision of reality.

It would appear, therefore, that the interpretation of Grisez's theory suggested here provides a more adequate account of the origins and nature of the modes of Christian

92 Grisez, *Principles*, p.211.

93 *Ibid.*, p.212.

94 Grisez, *Fulfillment*, p.91.

response, and of Christian moral principles more generally, than one based on attempting to sustain the claim that Christian faith gives rise to no new moral principles. This interpretation should also help to avoid the risk of a creeping de-Christianisation of ethics which seems to occur when the distinctness of Christian ethics is not recognised. This problem, which emerges in various places in Grisez's own work, appears to arise because when the modes of responsibility and the Christian modes of response are understood in broadly coextensive terms, the modes of responsibility may end up being used instead of the Christian modes of response to analyse moral problems. The effect of such a move is that the richer understanding invoked by the Christian modes, with their origin in a fuller vision of reality, will become peripheral rather than central and integral to the application of moral theology to concrete problems. This movement of Christian insights to the periphery takes a number of forms. In the first form, the distinctive Christian understanding could come as a preamble with little bearing on the principles and norms used in analysing the problem. This occurs in Grisez's treatment of abortion in *Living a Christian Life*. He begins his discussion of this subject with a lengthy quotation from John Paul II, of which a central element is John Paul II's argument that '[h]uman life is precious because it is a gift of God'.⁹⁵ This observation accords with Grisez's first mode of Christian response - 'accept all goods [including life] ... as God's gift'.⁹⁶ Yet in Grisez's own discussion of the subject his analysis is conducted simply in terms of his secular natural law theory in which the wrong of abortion inheres either in the intentional killing of the innocent or in unfairly accepting their deaths.⁹⁷ There is no mention of the duty that arises to treat gifts, especially gifts of life from God, in ways appropriate to their status as gifts. A second version of this problem occurs when the Christian insight is supervened onto the main discussion when it should actually have been the starting-point for deliberation. This occurs in Grisez's treatment of self-defence in which the more stringent Christian demand comes almost as an afterthought to the main discussion which has, in fact, been about the duties of self-defence of someone who subscribes to natural

95 John Paul II, Homily at Mass for Families (Cebu City, Philippines, 1976) quoted by Grisez, *Living*, p.498.

96 Grisez, *Principles*, p.634.

97 Grisez, *Living*, pp.499-504.

law but who need not be Christian.⁹⁸ Finally, it is of course possible that there might even be situations, such as occur in Grisez's just war analysis, where specific Christian insights might be thought fairly obviously to produce a specifically Christian response, yet they are not discussed at all, with secular natural law analysis carrying the discussion.⁹⁹ While none of these movements of the Christian insight to the periphery of moral theology are logically necessitated by Grisez's analysis, the surest way to reduce the risk of this occurring would be to recognise explicitly the epistemological distinctness of a Christian ethic because doing so would help to ensure that Christian insights remained central to the analysis of moral theology.

Having considered the reasons for dropping Grisez's claim that Christian faith brings no new moral principles, it is worth examining the strength of his reasons for maintaining it. A rhetorical question which he poses reveals one of the bases of his claim: 'If human nature is not changed, how can there be a distinctive Christian morality?'¹⁰⁰ In other words, Grisez fears that a claim for new principles necessarily involves a claim that different people have different natures. This latter claim is one that is very keen to avoid because, '[w]hen it is admitted that human nature which is given differs ... the conclusion inevitably follows that ... morality based on it ... changes'.¹⁰¹ Once Finnis' point - that the basic requirements of practical reasonableness *do not simply arise from human nature* but also from the human condition - is recognised, it is possible to maintain that the new and distinct principles of Christian morality are derived not from a changed human nature but from a changed understanding of the human condition. This application of Finnis' analysis enables Grisez's claim, that human nature does not change, to be sustained.

98 *Ibid.*, pp.483-484.

99 *Ibid.*, pp.897-911; see also, Grisez, G., 'Toward a Consistent Natural-Law Ethic of Killing', *American Journal of Jurisprudence*, 15 (1970), 64-96. Grisez bases his just war theory on self-defence without reference to his seventh mode of Christian response - that a person ought 'to respond to evil with good, not with resistance, much less with destructive action' (*Principles*, p.649) - or to his summary of the proper Christian approach to evil - that '[g]ood Christians will respond to evil, with neither compromise nor violence' (*Principles*, p.824; emphasis mine). However, this is not to say that a *Christian* just war theory is impossible, simply that Grisez does not provide it.

100 Grisez *Fulfillment*, p.298.

101 Grisez, *Principles*, p.620.

There is, therefore, little at stake in Grisez abandoning the claim that faith brings no new moral principles or, more profoundly, no new moral knowledge.

The second danger which Grisez would appear to be guarding against with his claim that Christianity introduces no new principles is a conception of the Christian life in unduly other-worldly terms - being primarily concerned with attaining heaven and not with living a fully human life - thereby continuing the mistake, which he considers to have misshapen much classical moral theology, of failing to recognise the Christian life as 'at the same time completely human and divine'.¹⁰² Grisez suggests that it was in order to overcome this sense of conflict between being fully human and participating in the divine life that 'the Catholic Church has insisted - especially during the past century - upon moral teaching which belongs both to natural and to gospel law'.¹⁰³ The interpretation of his analysis presented here does not change the substance of the principles which Grisez views as governing the Christian life; rather it suggests that they are best understood as new - in the sense of epistemologically distinct - principles. Since this interpretation does not alter the practical demands which these principles make, neither does it not affect the extent to which they avoid any tension between these two dimensions of the Christian life. It would appear, therefore, that the alternative interpretation of Grisez's account of the nature and origin of those principles which shape the Christian life is capable of accommodating those concerns which led him to want to claim that they were not, in fact, new principles. There would seem, therefore, to be no substantive barrier within Grisez's theory itself to adopting this alternative account.

2.4 Meeting the Demands for a *Christian Ethic*

In the light of this reinterpretation of Grisez's theory it is now possible to return to O'Donovan's and Hauerwas' concerns and to the central question, does Grisez's moral theory arise from the Gospel? From the discussion so far it would appear that, while Grisez's natural law theory *per se* does not arise from the Gospel, the ethics of his moral theology does. Describing all of Grisez's Christian moral principles as 'new' points to

102 *Ibid.*, p.16.

103 *Ibid.*, p.17.

their epistemological origin in the Gospel. Confusion is liable to arise, however, from Grisez and Finnis' identification of the fundamental structure of practical reasoning which is common to *all* attempts to make practical decisions in accord with good reason, whatever a person's world view.¹⁰⁴ Central to this common structure is the claim that good practical reasoning, by its very nature, will be concerned to act in pursuit of what is genuinely fulfilling in human life (basic goods) by acting in accordance with principles (basic principles of practical reasoning) which coherently direct a person towards that fulfilment, given human nature and the conditions of human life. Crucially, however, the preceding discussion shows that this common structure *per se* can never, in any full sense, be the epistemological starting-point for any moral deliberation which aims to produce normative conclusions because the actual elements of this common structure for moral decision-making (i.e., what the nature of the good is understood to be and what principles should guide its pursuit) are all determined by a person's theoretical understanding of reality. When that account of reality is a Christian account - that is, one founded upon the Gospel's depiction of reality - then ethics will, necessarily, be Christian.

This account of the relationship between 'religion and morality', in which Christian moral principles arise from theological affirmations in the sense that the basic principles are self-evident in the light of these affirmations rather than logically deduced from them, overcomes one of Hauerwas' central concerns about employing this sort of structure of moral reasoning in moral theology. In his early work, Hauerwas expressed this concern in the following form:

When religious men are confronted with the religion-morality issue - especially set in terms of Hume's contention that an 'ought' is not derivable from an 'is' - they cannot provide an answer that does not do violence to their theological beliefs.¹⁰⁵

104 A recurrent form of such confusion is the failure to recognise the relationship between this common structure and its theoretical presuppositions. See, for example, Hittinger, R., 'After MacIntyre: Natural Law Theory, Virtue Ethics, and Eudaimonia', *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 29 (1989), 449-461, pp.458-459.

105 Hauerwas, *Vision*, pp.69-70.

Put simply, if 'ought' cannot be derived from 'is', how can morality - which is about 'ought' claims - arise from and be shaped by theology, which is about 'is' claims? While Grisez and Finnis affirm what has generally been taken to be Hume's basic contention, they have also provided a means by which this logical claim can be respected without violating moral theology's claim that theological beliefs are the foundations of ethics.¹⁰⁶

It is also the common structure of practical reason which Grisez and Finnis have identified that enables Grisez to use the language of transformation. In spite of all of the epistemological problems with this language in the context of developing a *Christian* ethic, it does point to the possibility that fallen humanity can possess genuine moral knowledge because it suggests the existence of a parallel relationship between key elements of a purely secular and a Christian ethic.¹⁰⁷ Given the common structure of ethics, this parallel will exist in so far as there is a compatible understanding of human nature and the human condition. From O'Donovan's perspective at least, the possibility of such 'natural' moral knowledge does not threaten the *Christian* quality of Grisez's ethic. Rather, O'Donovan regards it as important to sustain this possibility that humans have 'a certain "natural knowledge" which is also part of man's created endowment'.¹⁰⁸ Without such a possibility, O'Donovan observes, moral disagreements may simply become 'ultimate clashes of commitment which are incapable of resolution'¹⁰⁹ so that 'all Christian moral duties become analogous to such ecclesiastical house-rules as respect for the clergy ... [e]ven prohibitions of adultery and murder'.¹¹⁰ The possibility of natural

106 The underlying logic of this move and the possibilities which it opens up for a thoroughly theological ethic which is, nevertheless, built upon practical reason will be explored in greater detail in ss.3.2 - 3.3.

107 On this account, the fact that fallen humanity, working on a secular natural law theory, *is capable* of a very high degree of genuine moral knowledge and that a distinctive Christian ethic *is* still possible undermines Charles Curran's argument that a distinctive Christian ethic involves maintaining that the world is 'totally disfigured by sin' (Curran, C., *Catholic Theology in Dialogue*, Fides Publishers, Notre Dame, 1972, p.17).

108 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.20.

109 O'Donovan singles out Søren Kierkegaard and his view that 'neither faith nor morality can rest upon the foundation of reason but must simply be chosen' as 'providing the pattern for modern Christian voluntarism' from which such positions arise (*ibid.*, p.16).

110 *Ibid.* O'Donovan observes that, from this voluntarist perspective,
the failure of the non-believer to respect his marriage or his neighbour's life
is nothing extraordinary, since, lacking the faith-commitment of a Christian,
he does not have any reason to respect his marriage or his neighbour's life!

knowledge sustains the claim that all people face objective moral realities.¹¹¹ O'Donovan is, however, much more sceptical than Grisez about the extent to which fallen humanity can accurately perceive this natural order - a question which will be returned to in the following chapter.¹¹²

In order to obtain a clearer understanding of the *Christian* nature of Grisez's ethic as it has been interpreted here, it may be helpful to consider an outline of the essential relationship between secular or natural moral principles and Christian moral principles. The common content of the principles accessible to both purely secular and Christian accounts of human nature and the conditions of human life serve two purposes: first, to direct people towards the fullness of their humanity; and, secondly, to prevent people from disfiguring their humanity and the humanity of others. Christian principles embrace the content of these natural principles but, additionally, require that the Christian respond to creation as part of the divine purpose and seek to enlarge the humanity of others by participating in that part of the purpose which is the project of the Kingdom of God: the project of so enlarging people's humanity as to bring their being to wholeness. The Christian account of the 'natural' principles also takes a form which invokes the wider Christian account of reality which enables these principles to be pursued more easily and more fully. Critically, the wider Christian obligation of seeking to enlarge the humanity of others arises only as a result of an encounter with, or an awareness of, the ultimate reality of the loving God.¹¹³ Consequently, it could not be said that non-Christians were

(*Ibid.*)

111 *Ibid.*, p.17.

112 *Ibid.*, p.19. See ss.3.1.2 and 3.3.2 for a discussion of this disagreement.

113 In relation to a Christian ethic whose distinctive content arises as a result of faith, Richard McCormick has expressed the fear that,

if Christian faith and revelation add material content to what is knowable in principle by reason, then the churches conceivably could teach moral positions and conclusions independently of the reasons and analyses that recommend these conclusions. This could lend great support to a highly juridical and obediential notion of Christian morality. (McCormick, 'Perception' p.157.

The present approach will not produce this outcome because the way in which faith leads to distinct Christian moral principles is by broadening a person's understanding of reality - an understanding which itself should be recommended by reason reflecting critically on Scripture and the Christian tradition.

under a logical obligation to adhere to Christian principles.¹¹⁴ In terms of humanity's relationship to divinity, those who follow consistently secular principles do nothing to thwart the divine purpose - they do not prevent people achieving the fullness of their being. They do not stand against divinity in this sense. Indeed, in so far as they enlarge the humanity of others, they positively assist the divine purpose. The difficulty arises only when such people do thwart the humanity of others - which on a Christian account is inevitable, at least to some extent, because all people participate in the structural disfigurement of humanity which goes by the name of original sin. It is at this point that people do stand against divinity and their relationship with God will be impaired. Without faith, they are unlikely to open a path towards the divine which will allow God's forgiveness to bring this relationship to its fullness or to restore it if it has been radically broken.¹¹⁵ The point at which secular principles may begin to open such a path is when they lead people to experience the tension between the limitations presented by the human condition and the horizon of possibilities which exist for human fulfilment.

In order to resolve any lingering doubts as to whether Grisez has in fact produced a *Christian* ethic, it is helpful to move from this outline to consider the extent to which Grisez's analysis meets Hauerwas' and O'Donovan's concerns about natural law theories' failure to produce a Christian ethic with a particular and distinctive content. The first of these concerns was that natural law theories did not produce the particular and distinctive normative conclusions to be expected of a *Christian* theory of ethics. The extent to which this concern is met by Grisez's Christian moral principles is bound to cause Hauerwas the greatest surprise because Grisez's account of the Christian life which should arise from

114 A further fear of McCormick's about a distinctive Christian ethic is that, if Christian faith, rooted in God's revelation, tells us things about right and wrong in human affairs that we would not otherwise know, then it is clear that decision-making in government risks integrity unless it is Christianly informed and inspired. (*Ibid.*, p.156.)

Once again, this fear is unfounded because, while government decision-making might witness to the nature of the Kingdom if it is informed by Christian insight, its integrity as government within the bounds of created reality will be maintained by its adhering to naturally knowable principles alone (see further s.3.3.3).

115 What should be clear is that the distinctive account of Christian ethics developed here does not involve maintaining, as Charles Curran asserts all such accounts must, that non-Christians are excluded from salvation (Curran, *Dialogue*, pp.15-16), nor that there is a radical discontinuity between creation and redemption (*ibid.*, pp.18-19).

the full Christian vision of reality is one which will be shaped by all the principles and practices which Hauerwas regards as central to the distinctiveness of Christian ethics.¹¹⁶ Grisez's first mode of Christian response ('... accept all good ... as God's gift') corresponds to Hauerwas' claim that Christians should treat all life (a form of the good) as a gift. Similarly, Grisez's seventh mode ('respond to evil with good ... ') and his eighth mode ('suffer evil together with Jesus in cooperation with God's redeeming love') will produce the other practices of non-violence, forgiveness and reconciliation which Hauerwas considers as giving the Christian life its distinctive character. Doubtless, Hauerwas would complain that, in fact, the practices which issue from Grisez's principles are insufficiently distinctive because they still allow for the possibility of using violence in self-defence. Determining whether Hauerwas' complaint is a reasonable one would require an analysis of his justification for pacifism, which is beyond the scope of the present project. What is clear, however, is that Grisez's Christian principles produce practices of non-violence, forgiveness and reconciliation which greatly exceed those of natural law alone. For example, in discussing a Christian response to the question of self-defence, he observes that,

mercy, the justice of the kingdom, should prompt one to suffer death rather than defend oneself by means that would bring about the death of an assailant, for whose eventual salvation one should hope.¹¹⁷

However this dispute as to the exact extent to which a Christian ethic produces distinctive practices of non-violence is resolved,¹¹⁸ the essential point is that both Grisez's and Hauerwas' particular Christian principles and practices of non-violence arise as appropriate human responses to the revelation in Christ.

Hauerwas' and O'Donovan's second concern about the content of natural law theories was that the lure of effectiveness leads such theories to be insufficiently open to the radical nature of Jesus' demands. It should already be clear from the discussion of the content of

116 See s.5.1.

117 Grisez, *Living*, p.484. Grisez's qualification to this principle is that duties owed to others (such as a person's duty to care for his young children) could permit the use of force (*ibid.*).

118 A suggestion as to how this dispute might be resolved will be offered in s.3.3.3.

Grisez's ethic that it *is* open to the radical dimension of Jesus' teaching. In addition, it is worth observing that Grisez makes it clear that he does not regard effectiveness as a force which should shape a Christian natural law theory. In fact, his approach to this question accords closely with Hauerwas' position:

Politics is the art of the possible, and nonbelievers naturally limit the possible to what is *humanly* possible ... In bearing witness to the gospel, however, one should assume that whatever is right, even if it is humanly impossible, is possible to God and worth pursuing. So, prejudices about feasibility should be set aside.¹¹⁹

And further,

Quite often, one's best efforts on behalf of justice and peace will appear to meet with little or no success. Even when something is accomplished, the good outcome is likely to be vulnerable and temporary.¹²⁰

Like Hauerwas, Grisez argues that people should not despair in the face of such a situation but take strength in the eschatological hope of God's perfecting all things.¹²¹

The final concern raised by Hauerwas and O'Donovan about natural law theories was that they neglected the primary task of Christian ethics, which is to witness to the truth of the Gospel. Directed against natural law *qua* natural law, it is a criticism which finds its mark. Practical reason alone does not know of the Gospel and so can hardly witness to its truth. However, the expectation of an ethic which witnesses to the Gospel is fully realised by Grisez's account of the Christian life. As members of the Church, Grisez observes, all Christians are called to participate in its mission which is 'to preach the gospel, to manifest its truth in the communal life shaped by love'.¹²² Hauerwas could hardly have put it better himself! For Grisez, this means that every Christian vocation is essentially apostolic¹²³ and that '[e]very part of one's life should help to spread the faith, for one

119 Grisez, *Living*, p.377.

120 *Ibid.*

121 *Ibid.*, p.378.

122 *Ibid.*, p.103.

123 *Ibid.*, p.104.

should do everything in Jesus' name'.¹²⁴ Grisez goes on to explain that, in their apostolic mission,

Lay persons have a special responsibility in the temporal sphere ... Besides their role in bringing the gospel and holiness to others, they have a special responsibility "of permeating the temporal order with the spirit of the gospel" ...¹²⁵

Grisez argues, therefore, that Christian '[a]ctivity in the temporal sphere must be authentically apostolate'.¹²⁶ At first sight, Grisez's account as to what this involves might trouble Hauerwas because he suggests that,

Christians must know and respect the proper principles of realities of the temporal order, because these principles direct action to the specific goods and human benefits of that order. Christians also must know and respect the traditions of their own society, and live their faith within the framework of their own culture.¹²⁷

Hauerwas should be reassured, however, by the fact that Grisez argues that such an approach requires the maintenance of a distinctively Christian life based upon a distinctively Christian understanding:

Many people think of social justice as an objective which can be promoted in only one way, and suppose that way to be common to nonbelievers and Christians alike. But faithfulness to Jesus, who proclaimed the truth and bore consistent witness to it by his action, requires Christians to proceed as he did. If they do, their efforts to promote social justice will be a genuine apostolate and will markedly differ from nonbelievers' efforts.¹²⁸

Rather than emphasise non-violence, as Hauerwas does, Grisez claims that what is distinctive about a specifically Christian approach to social justice is that it 'strives to remedy the spiritual poverty of those who do injustice, as well as the material poverty'.¹²⁹ This approach requires, primarily, a witness to the Christian truth.¹³⁰ In

124 *Ibid.*, p.105.

125 *Ibid.*, p.108.

126 *Ibid.*, p.109.

127 *Ibid.*

128 *Ibid.*, p.376; the heading of the section in which this passage appears is: 'One Should Act in Specifically Christian Ways to Promote Justice'.

129 *Ibid.*

being active in the world, Grisez argues that '[t]he apostle must be both adaptable and uncompromising'.¹³¹ To explain this position, he quotes Pope Paul VI's *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964):

Our dialogue must not weaken our attachment to our faith. Our apostolate must not make vague compromises concerning the principles which regulate and govern the profession of the Christian faith both in theory and in practice.

An immoderate desire to make peace and sink differences at all costs (irenism and syncretism) is ultimately nothing more than scepticism about the power and content of the Word of God which we desire to preach.¹³²

Clearly, Grisez's essential position on the need for a Christian ethic to witness to the Gospel emerges as remarkably similar to that offered by Hauerwas.

In conclusion, it appears that, interpreted in the way suggested in this chapter, Grisez has indeed developed a *Christian* ethic which both arises from the Gospel and produces distinctively Christian principles and practices.¹³³ Therefore, given the broadly compatible account of all three authors as to the epistemology of a Christian ethic, it will be possible in the next two chapters to explore the extent to which their moral theologies are actually capable of being reconciled with one another.

130 *Ibid.*, pp.376-377.

131 *Ibid.*, p.107.

132 *Ibid.*

133 It is worth noting that the position developed in this chapter on the question of the distinctiveness of a Christian ethic is, in its broad structure, similar to that developed by James Gustafson (Gustafson, J., *Can Ethics be Christian?*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1975, especially pp.163-168), with the vital distinction that his reductive account of the distinctly Christian beliefs removes any substantive epistemological or practical significance from his account of the distinctiveness of a Christian ethic.

Chapter 3

The Nature of a Christian Realist Ethic

If the foundations of Christian moral reasoning are the capacity to apprehend the good and the means by which it is to be pursued, the question which naturally arises is, how, as a matter of logic, are these foundations to be known? From an essentially common starting-point, O'Donovan and Grisez develop different approaches to this question. Hauerwas' narrative solution takes a yet more distinctive form, eschewing the logical structures adopted by Grisez and O'Donovan. The true nature of his solution will be most clearly revealed in the light of a careful exposition of their two approaches.

In assessing O'Donovan's and Grisez's approaches, it is helpful to begin by identifying the common foundation from which their accounts of ethics proceed. Both authors agree that creation is ordered and that this order is morally significant. Creation, in other words, is the ultimate root of both Grisez's and O'Donovan's understanding of the good. In seeking to develop an ethic which claims that the ultimate epistemological grounding for moral truth is a given objective reality external to the will, both Grisez and O'Donovan can be understood as expounding a form of moral realism.¹ However, while both authors agree that the good has its origin in the

1 The term 'moral realism' has been subject to a range of definitions which have variously emphasised it as being a form of moral theory which is concerned with: (i) the literal truth or falsity of moral claims (Sayer-McCord, G., 'Introduction: The Many Moral Realisms' in Sayer-McCord, G. (ed.), *Essays on Moral Realism*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1988, 1-23, p.5); (ii) the objectivity of moral claims (Drummett, M., *Truth and Other Enigmas*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1978, p.146); (iii) natural realities having moral properties (Brink, D.O., *Moral Realism and the Foundation of Ethics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, p.7); (iv) moral truth consisting in the correspondence with 'some fact or state of affairs' (Blackburn, S., *Essays in Quasi-Realism*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1993, p.111); or, (v) it being a moral theory analogous to scientific realism (Boyd, R.N., 'How to Be a Moral Realist' in Sayer-McCord, *Essays*, 181-228, p.182). At this stage, before the exact relationship between reality and moral claims has been delineated, it is preferable to opt for the

fact that creation is ordered in such a way that it will 'continue and flourish',² they approach creation from different theological perspectives. Grisez begins his reflection upon creation from what might be described as a pre-Fall perspective, considering creation '[a]s it comes from the hand of God'³ and being little concerned with the problem that, as a matter of epistemology, the Fall might have resulted in humans only being capable of possessing a very partial vision of that order. O'Donovan, by contrast, is much more concerned about this 'concealment of creation'.⁴ For O'Donovan, creation can only adequately be viewed from a soteriological perspective in which the redemption and revelation wrought by the incarnation and resurrection of Christ both restore the order of creation⁵ from its disfigurement by human hands⁶ and enable it to be known with clarity.⁷ Despite creation being surveyed from different theological vantage points, both Grisez and O'Donovan are viewing one and the same creation - creation as God willed it to be - and it is the order of this creation which is of primary moral significance for both authors. Thus, there is a common reality about which discussion can occur. Nonetheless, it should be recognised at the outset that focusing discussion on this common ground risks understating the extent to which their overall accounts of Christian ethics are shaped and coloured by their distinct theological perspectives - especially O'Donovan's soteriological perspective.⁸ This is, nevertheless, a risk worth taking because the centrality of the connection between creation and ethics in both accounts means that much fruitful conversation

very broad definition suggested in the text to avoid prematurely and, as will be suggested, unnecessarily becoming committed to the defence of concepts such as 'moral facts', moral truth consisting in correspondence with theoretical knowledge, or moral realism being analogous to scientific realism. More generally, it is worth noting that while it is not the purpose of this project to engage the arguments in moral philosophy surrounding the question of moral realism, once an account of what is meant by it has been developed, reference will be made to some of the substantial implications of this account for the wider debate on moral realism (see s.3.3.1).

2 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.31; or, in Grisez's analogous concept, a move toward 'fullness of being': Grisez, *Principles*, p.117.

3 Grisez, *Principles*, p.115.

4 O'Donovan, O., *On the 39 Articles*, The Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 1986, p.65.

5 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.15.

6 *Ibid.*, p.14.

7 *Ibid.*, p.19.

8 In an attempt to offer something of a corrective to this problem, s.3.3.3 discusses how O'Donovan's soteriological perspective modifies an ethic based purely on creation by incorporating the fact that creation is brought to completion through salvation.

about this fundamental relationship is possible. What is more, it is a conversation which begins, perhaps not surprisingly, with agreement about the essential nature of creation itself: that it was brought about by a single creator⁹ and that it is purposefully ordered.¹⁰

Where disagreement arises is over how to articulate the nature of the relationship between created reality and ethics. The constraint which proves to be decisive in determining Grisez's account of the nature of this relationship is the logical claim, commonly called the naturalistic fallacy¹¹ - perhaps more helpfully described as the *non-derivability thesis* - that,

from a set of theoretical premises, one cannot logically derive any practical truth, since sound reasoning does not introduce what is not in the premises. And the relationship of principles to conclusions is a logical one among propositions. Therefore, the ultimate principles of morality cannot be theoretical truths of metaphysical and/or philosophical anthropology.¹²

The effect of this thesis on Grisez's approach is that the starting-point of moral reasoning must be practical reason (the sort of reason people use to plan action) and not theoretical reason (the type of reason which tests the truth of a proposition by seeking to establish its conformity to some prior reality such as scientific reason).¹³ This is not to say that the nature of reality is unrelated to an ethic of practical reason but rather that reflection upon this relationship is not the logical foundation for ethical reasoning. Ethics, on this account, is essentially a task of deductive practical reason.

This approach is unacceptable to O'Donovan. He considers that it does not sufficiently relate theoretical knowledge and moral reasoning and so cannot ground the sort of unambiguously realist ethic which O'Donovan understands the theological affirmations

9 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.31; Grisez, *Principles*, p.116.

10 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.31; Grisez, *Living*, p.11.

11 For a detailed account of the origin, nature and cogency of this objection see, Finnis, *Natural Law*, pp.36-48.

12 Grisez, 'Practical Principles', p.102.

13 For a more detailed definition of 'practical reason' and 'theoretical reason' see s.3.2.1.

about the nature of creation to demand.¹⁴ While O'Donovan acknowledges the importance of the distinction between theoretical and practical knowledge for ethical reasoning,¹⁵ he considers Grisez's assertion of the non-derivability thesis to be too sweeping. He observes that:

The formal question, as old as Aristotle, has been revived intensively in modern philosophy, and some have found no logic to connect the 'is' and the 'ought'. We need not quarrel with the modest claim that this logic is not deductive. But not all rational inference is deductive.¹⁶

Instead of basing ethics upon a deductive exercise of practical reason, O'Donovan finds moral reasoning upon an inductive train of reasoning which begins with observations of the order discernible in creation.

At first sight, Grisez's and O'Donovan's approaches might appear irreconcilable. This would be an unduly hasty conclusion. The moves which divide them are essentially defensive, designed to protect what each understands as needing to be sustained by a coherent Christian realist theory. Focusing upon such defensive moves often exaggerates the real differences. A careful consideration of the positive content of their theories and the exact nature of the key moves which each make is called for in order to explore the real possibilities which may exist for reconciliation. This fuller exposition of their theories will also provide a better context for assessing the relative merits of those moves which do continue to divide them. It is an approach which will certainly be more illuminating than a generalised treatment of the questions which underlie their disagreements, such as the cogency of the non-derivability thesis, not least because such generalised analyses often do little justice to the subtler positions, like those which Grisez and O'Donovan develop, in these debates.

14 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.x.

15 O'Donovan, O., 'Christian Moral Reasoning', in Atkinson, D.J. and Field, D.H. (eds), *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology*, Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 1995, 122-127, p.122.

16 O'Donovan, O., 'Evangelicalism and the Foundation of Ethics', in France, R.T. and McGrath, A.E. (eds), *Evangelical Anglicans*, SPCK, London, 1993, 96-107, p.99.

3.1 O'Donovan's Evangelical Natural Ethic

In unfolding a more developed account of Grisez's and O'Donovan's theories it is helpful to begin with O'Donovan's analysis. It will be recalled from the discussion in the previous chapter that it was Grisez's failure to provide an account of creation as ordered before he revealed the orderedness of ethics which undermined the plausibility of his claims about practical reason.¹⁷ Therefore, in order to satisfy the pre-conditions for the plausibility of any genuinely realist theory, O'Donovan's analysis provides the natural starting-point because his opening moves provide an account of the orderedness of creation and respond to the challenges of voluntarists and nominalists, both secular and theological.

3.1.1 The Order in Creation

In the very act of creation O'Donovan understands two types of relationship to have been established. The first is a vertical relationship between the creator and creation. He proposes that this necessarily implies a second, horizontal relationship between various fellow-creatures because they are placed in relationship to one another in a way which is distinct from their relationship to the creator.¹⁸ He then suggests that this most basic form of order is the foundation for the concepts of "end" and "kind", or "teleological" and "generic" order'.¹⁹

By generic order O'Donovan explains that he is referring to things which share a relationship of 'reciprocity' with one another: they are things of the same kind, in the sense that some constant feature(s) could be described as belonging to those things.²⁰ O'Donovan describes things of the same kind as being 'ordered-alongside'.²¹ As an example he suggests that Christianity has always regarded the relationship of humans as generic and involving an 'ordering-alongside' one another.²²

17 See s.2.3.

18 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, pp.31-32.

19 *Ibid.*, p.32.

20 *Ibid.*

21 *Ibid.*, p.33.

22 *Ibid.*

In describing the order of teleological relationships, O'Donovan observes that they can have two forms. The first is a Platonic form where 'A is ordered-to-serve-B: the vegetable creation is ordered-to-serve the animal, the animal ordered-to-serve the rational, and reason ordered-to-serve divine truth'.²³ This form of relationship constantly raises the question as to what is the transcending end of the particular entity. There is also the Aristotelian form of teleology where 'A is ordered-to-flourish as A: the vegetable creation to grow luxuriantly, the animal creation to move with strength and vigour, the rational creation to think'.²⁴ For the purposes of moral analysis, it is this Aristotelian teleology which is primarily load-bearing. Nevertheless, in a typically Augustinian observation, O'Donovan maintains that it is important to retain a Platonic account of ordering because it is only by humans looking to their 'super-natural end' that they will truly know what human flourishing is.²⁵

Having identified these basic forms of order, O'Donovan observes that, while 'there is a complex network of teleological and generic relations'²⁶ within creation which he goes on to provide some account of,²⁷ only certain types of relationship are of importance for moral analysis.²⁸ At this point, it is only necessary to identify one form of relationship which O'Donovan considers to be of particular importance for moral analysis - that which exists *between* teleological and generic orderings. This form of order arises, he argues, because it is not possible to make 'generic determinations in nature without also acknowledging teleological determinations'; things are not simply kinds but stand in relationship to other kinds and it is this relationship which is significant for determining the nature of kinds.²⁹ An example of this interrelationship is that humanity must have some concept of its own unique teleology in order to establish its generic relationship with other animals and thus to

23 *Ibid.*, p.34.

24 *Ibid.*

25 *Ibid.*, p.35.

26 *Ibid.*, p.33.

27 *Ibid.*, pp.34-48.

28 *Ibid.*, pp.33-34.

29 *Ibid.*, p.47.

give itself a different status to them. Another important illustration of this type of order, to which O'Donovan points, is that upon which various types of justice claims are based. Many such claims, he observes,

presuppose certain preferences among the kinds ... In requiring that like things should be treated in like ways, it [moral reason] has already made some judgements as to what likenesses are significant and what are irrelevant for morality. These judgements are teleological. Without them generic consistency amounts to no more than loyalty to an arbitrarily chosen class or set.³⁰

An abstract account of the different types of morally relevant order that are possible in creation is only half the task of establishing the orderedness in creation which is the pre-requisite to moral deliberation. It is also necessary to know the concrete forms of this order - indeed, it may well be necessary to know, to some extent, what these concrete forms are before it is even possible to construct such an abstract account. So, for example, before the knowledge that there is an Aristotelian form of teleology where 'A is ordered-to-flourish as A' can be of any moral use, it will be necessary to know, amongst other things, what it is for a human to flourish as a human. Obtaining such knowledge is the task of scientific inquiry. Given that such theoretical knowledge is the prerequisite to moral knowledge in O'Donovan's analysis, it is necessary to establish what he considers to be the general possibilities and limits of this type of inquiry.

Central to O'Donovan's discussion of scientific inquiry is his observation that the intellectual forces of voluntarism and nominalism which gave birth and sustenance to the Western scientific enterprise have risen up to challenge the claim that the results of its inquiries could be of moral value.³¹ Voluntarism enabled the view to be taken that '[v]alues may be imposed upon the natural order by technology, but not discerned' by an examination of things' ends.³² Nominalism, on the other hand,

30 *Ibid.*, p.48.

31 For an account of his understanding and critique of science see, O'Donovan, 'Natural Ethic', pp.22-25.

32 *Ibid.*, p.22.

challenged the category of the generic by proposing 'that 'kinds' of things do not have any real existence in nature, but are simply interpretations that the mind imposes on particular phenomena'.³³ Despite these nominalist and voluntarist influences upon scientific methodology, it is O'Donovan's view that they have not completely captured the scientific account of reality because - ultimately - they do not support the scientific endeavour itself. In relation to nominalism, O'Donovan argues that,

in the long run science found nominalism an enemy of its project; for science is interested in nothing if not regularities, and nominalism must deny that the regularities which science purports to observe are real.³⁴

Similarly, in the case of voluntarism, O'Donovan observes that, at least within particular scientific disciplines, science has discovered that '[s]ome kinds of scientific description simply cannot be done non-teleologically'.³⁵ He points to zoology and biology as good examples of such disciplines, noting, as an illustration, that '[h]ow would you describe the digestive organs without saying that they were *for* digestion ... ?'³⁶ Nevertheless, O'Donovan recognises that voluntarism, still exercises its pervasive influence in a general desire to understand reality without a consideration of ends which, in turn, sustains the '[f]ragmentation which is the hallmark of scientific knowledge itself'.³⁷ This voluntarist influence has two important effects for the way in which scientific knowledge might be appropriated for moral deliberation. The first is that, while scientific observation is, at least to some extent, prepared and able to support observations about objective reality in generic categories, it has little to say about the relationships between these categories. As has been noted, O'Donovan views knowledge of the teleological coordination of these generic categories as important for moral understanding, not least for the understanding of central concepts such as justice. The second problem is that, so long as science retains its opposition to a broad-ranging teleology, it will be unable to place the various elements of its

33 *Ibid.*

34 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.49.

35 O'Donovan, 'Natural Ethic', p.24.

36 *Ibid.*

37 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.50.

knowledge in the context of an understanding of the whole. Yet, as O'Donovan argues, the attempt to understand knowledge as a part of the whole is a necessary element of what it means to know at all because,

Knowledge which admits discontinuity as anything other than a challenge to be overcome has in principle abandoned the task of being knowledge, which is the perception of differing fields of vision as one universe.³⁸

All of this would appear to leave modern science as a rather uncomfortable bedfellow for ethics. While O'Donovan is persuasive in arguing that scientific inquiry is capable of yielding insights into reality which provide substance for moral reflection, all too often it would seem that these insights are actually likely to come in a form which does not make them particularly amenable to such reflection. Consequently, the ethicist, who is rarely equipped with the mind of scientific inquiry, will regularly be called upon to complete the scientific task before even beginning the process of moral deliberation. This uncomfortable relationship between science and ethics is especially apparent in the task - which is of considerable importance for O'Donovan's analysis - of establishing the constituent elements of human flourishing. There is a great volume of diverse observations in anthropological literature alone (not to mention the observations of those other sciences concerned with human nature, such as psychology, biology and sociology) about particular peoples in particular places and times,³⁹ which needs to be related and assessed in order to establish the content of human nature.⁴⁰ What makes this task more difficult is that many of the

38 *Ibid.*, pp.49-50.

39 A good illustration of the size of this task is provided by Beis who records that in a cross-cultural survey at Yale University by mid this century they had '500,000 cards containing full or substantial information on 150 cultures' (Beis, R.H., 'Some Contributions of Anthropology to Ethics', *The Thomist*, 28 (1964), 174-224, p.205). For a more complete picture of the data which must be consulted see Davitt, T.E., 'The Basic Values in Law: A Study of the Ethico-Legal Implications of Psychology and Anthropology', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 58(5) (1968), 1-144, which provides one of the most comprehensive recent surveys, from a philosophical perspective, of a large volume of anthropological data in relation to basic human drives and attitudes to and regulation of behaviour, along with relevant psychological data.

40 The difficulties in interpreting such data are highlighted by Clifford Geertz, a leading contemporary anthropologist, who has cogently argued (in Geertz, C., 'The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man' in Geertz, G., *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Basic Books, New York, 1973; Fontana, London, 1993, 33-54) that both the Enlightenment attempt to find behind or in all

methodologies used to produce these observations are ill-suited to the task of drawing conclusions about human nature, in part because of the very failings to which O'Donovan has pointed in his analysis of the methodologies of scientific inquiry.⁴¹ It may be as a result of these difficulties that O'Donovan rarely draws a logical line from observations about human nature to any of the elements of human flourishing which he discusses. One notable exception is in his prologue to the second edition of *Resurrection and Moral Order*, where he argues that 'our friendships afford an *evidence* of the sociality of human nature' and in doing so 'afford a *reason* for us to pursue our friendships'.⁴² This is not, however, a particularly secure inductive conclusion because the individual's experience is only of limited evidentiary value and must, until scientifically verified by being related to other relevant evidence, always remain open to correction. Elsewhere, O'Donovan does identify - with varying degrees of explicitness - other activities which he considers to constitute human flourishing: the pursuit of knowledge;⁴³ procreation;⁴⁴ the building up and

this data a 'natural man' and classical anthropology's attempt to find a 'consensual man' have failed (pp.34-37 and 39-43). Geertz does not deny that humans have a nature (as various cultural relativists have done) but he does argue that the path to establishing this by means of scientific observations will involve a 'terrifying complexity' (p.54). Before such an inquiry can even proceed, it will first be necessary to overcome the conclusions of some anthropologists, such as the enduringly influential Ruth Benedict who, in a survey of just three cultures, concluded that,

They differ ... because they are oriented as wholes in different directions. They are travelling along different roads in pursuit of different ends, and these ends and the means in one society cannot be judged in terms of those of another society, because essentially they are incommensurable. (Benedict, R., *Patterns of Culture*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1935, p.161.)

41 For the difficulties presented by anthropological methodology alone see MacBeath, A., *Experiments in Living*, Macmillan, London, 1952, pp.24-28, who provides a valuable account of these difficulties for those seeking to employ it in moral philosophical inquiries. He notes in particular: (i) that the anthropologists' insistence that the highly integrated nature of communities' ways of life means that 'none of them [elements of those ways of life] can be understood in isolation from its context in the way of life of which it forms part' (p.24); (ii) the focus of inquiry is primarily upon the observation of institutions rather than people's intentions (p.26); (iii) that generally '[a]nthropologists ... seem to be more interested in the reasons which explain why people act in particular ways than in the reasons which justify the actions' (p.27); and (iv) there is an undue focus on religion as the explanation for any apparently 'moral' actions (p.28). For a further discussion of these methodological problems and suggestions as to how they might be negotiated see, Edel, M. and Edel, A., *Anthropology and Ethics*, Charles C. Thomas, Springfield, Ill., 1959, pp.3-6.

42 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.xi.

43 *Ibid.*, pp.122, 245.

44 O'Donovan, *Begotten*, p.16.

maintenance of community;⁴⁵ the maintenance of family life;⁴⁶ appreciation of beauty;⁴⁷ the creation of art;⁴⁸ play;⁴⁹ work;⁵⁰ and religion.⁵¹ Given that O'Donovan sees the moral order as being discerned in creation, if he is to give a logically secure account of these activities as constituent elements of human flourishing, substantial work will be required to infer them from anthropological analysis. Daunting though this task may be, an adequate and defensible account of human nature is essential for the plausibility of an ethic which seeks to ground the moral order in the order of creation. It is the lack of just such an account which is, perhaps, the most frequent reason for rejecting such an ethic. Hauerwas provides a good illustration of someone rejecting this form of ethics on this ground.

While Hauerwas is prepared to make some important claims about human nature, such as its 'essential sociality',⁵² he sees these claims as being sufficient only as preconditions for reflection about general theological propositions⁵³ and not as the basis for moral reasoning. The evidence for any wider claims is, in his view, simply too thin. He observes that, although 'there are points of contact between Christian ethics and other forms of moral life ... they are not sufficient to provide a basis for a 'universal' ethic grounded in human nature *per se*'.⁵⁴ Hauerwas suggests that, while it might be possible to compile a great volume of

descriptions of the virtues and how they may be thought to perfect human nature ... [and] ...to cull from these lists some virtues common to all, that would not demonstrate that there is a unique set of virtues required by our common human nature. Although there might be

45 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.122.

46 *Ibid.*, p.246.

47 *Ibid.*, p.122.

48 *Ibid.*

49 O'Donovan, *Begotten*, pp.17, 19-20.

50 *Ibid.*, p.19.

51 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, pp.34-35.

52 Hauerwas, *Character*, p.102.

53 Hauerwas is, therefore, more interested in claims about human nature with a directly doctrinal significance, such as that it is a fallen nature; see Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.35.

54 *Ibid.*, p.60-61.

widespread consensus on the importance of such virtues as temperance and courage, agreement often extends no further than name.⁵⁵

Despite affirming a doctrine of creation, Hauerwas concludes that human nature ‘will always be ambiguous ... it cannot be intelligibly displayed and analysed’⁵⁶ and that, consequently, it does not have ‘an integrity sufficient to sustain an autonomous ethic’.⁵⁷ While it should be recognised that Hauerwas’ assertions are not themselves based on any actual weighing of the evidence, few would challenge his observation that a consensus on moral values hardly leaps from the pages of history. This suggests that the realist who seeks to ground ethics in an account of human nature carries the burden of proof and that to be plausible she will have to offer a much more substantive and secure account of human nature than O’Donovan has so far done.

3.1.2 Recognising the Moral Order in Creation

The purely scientific observations which have been under discussion and which are important as a foundation for O’Donovan’s system of moral reasoning are still only a form of pre-moral reflection. Until their relationship to moral reasoning is established, such observations remain only of scientific interest. For, as O’Donovan observes,

moral deliberation cannot begin immediately from the findings of human sciences. Those findings, to be a useful part of moral reasoning, must first be integrated into an understanding of reality which can ground deliberative freedom; and this requires the teleological insight of philosophy or theology.⁵⁸

In this passage, O’Donovan’s account of the relationship between the theoretical/reflective knowledge of the previous discussion and the process of moral reasoning begins to unfold - a relationship to which he has given little specific attention in his writings.⁵⁹ Once the ‘teleological insight of philosophy or theology’,

55 Hauerwas, *Community*, p.123.

56 *Ibid.*, p.160.

57 *Ibid.*

58 O’Donovan, ‘Moral Reasoning’, p.123.

59 I have been greatly aided in my understanding of O’Donovan’s argument as to the relationship between reflective knowledge and moral deliberation by a number of conversations with him on

such as he outlines in *Resurrection and Moral Order*, is integrated with the findings of science, particularly those findings concerning the content of human nature, it would appear that it becomes possible to know the moral significance of this reflective knowledge about creation. Before proceeding, it is worth highlighting that the 'teleological insight' which transforms reflective knowledge into moral knowledge need not *necessarily*, even on O'Donovan's account, be that of the Gospel - it could also be that 'of *philosophy*'.⁶⁰ The discussion of O'Donovan's position in the previous chapter suggested that he would see at least some theistic account of creation as *ordered* by a creator as a necessary part of such a teleological insight⁶¹ but here, in his more recent work, there would appear to be a little more flexibility in allowing for other compatible types of teleological insight to serve the same basic function as that performed by theology. This suggests that the key function of the Gospel in O'Donovan's account of a Christian ethic is not to be found in this stage of his analysis.

In actually analysing O'Donovan's account of this relationship between reflective knowledge and moral deliberation the key question is, what is the logical process by which the moral significance of reflective knowledge is known for the purposes of moral deliberation? It will be recalled that, in response to the non-derivability thesis, O'Donovan maintained that, '[w]e need not quarrel with the modest claim that this logic is not deductive. But not all rational inference is deductive'.⁶² This suggests that the moral significance of a person's integrated theological and scientific knowledge is known by some form of non-deductive inferential reason. Recently, his use of the language of 'recognition' to describe a non-deductive process by which moral realities can be apprehended has provided an indication of the sort of exercise

this subject. The schematisation of his argument is, however, very much mine rather than his. Most importantly, for purposes of analytic clarity, I have sharpened the distinction between theoretical and practical reason - a distinction whose sharpness he considers to threaten the realism of ethics but which I will maintain - that rightly understood - poses no such threat (see ss. 3.2.3 and 3.3.1).

60 O'Donovan, 'Moral Reasoning', p.123.

61 See s.2.1.

62 O'Donovan, 'Evangelicalism', p.99.

of reason he has in mind. His use of this concept emerges in his discussion of the process of determining whether a *particular* situation is covered by a *generic* rule:

A particular moral decision is never derived directly from a generic rule; an act of recognition must intervene. There can be no rule for performing this act of recognition; if there were one, it would be part of the moral rule itself. *Recognition must just happen; it depends on insight.*⁶³

O'Donovan appears to understand this process of 'recognition' as a form of inductive inference by which a logical relationship is known by a simple act of apprehension. Although this is O'Donovan's explicit and primary use of the concept of recognition, a *similar* form of recognition would appear to be implicit in his understanding of the logical relationship between reflective knowledge of reality and moral deliberation. Consider, for example, an important observation in one of O'Donovan's few brief discussions of the nature of this relationship. He observes, by way of distinguishing his position from that of Finnis, that '[w]hat he [Finnis] denies (and what I maintain) is that the sociability of human nature affords a *reason* for us to pursue our friendships'.⁶⁴ Given that O'Donovan has accepted that this reason cannot logically be deduced from knowledge of human sociality, its origin would appear explicable in terms of an inferential process of recognition which enables a logical relationship to be apprehended without having to be logically deduced. According to such an explanation, when a person with appropriate reflective knowledge is engaged in moral deliberation she will, in recognising the relationship between certain pursuits of human life (e.g., friendship) and particular features of human nature which she has theoretically observed that people possess (e.g., their sociable nature), recognise those pursuits as instances of the good. This is an inferential process because the conclusion - that friendship is a good - is inferred by this process of recognition from the prior premises of person's theoretical knowledge about human nature. In a *further* act of recognition, which O'Donovan would clearly also want to understand as *inferential* in

63 O'Donovan, 'Moral Reasoning', p.126.

64 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.xi.

order to preserve the logical priority of theoretical knowledge,⁶⁵ the deliberative significance of the theoretical knowledge of the good is recognised (e.g., that friendship is a reason for action). This dual process of recognition also operates at the level of choosing between proposals: a person, deliberating about what to do in a vacation, might adopt the proposal that he should take a holiday by the sea because he recognised that such a holiday would be a way of pursuing the good of health and, having recognised the nature of the good embodied in the proposal, he would further recognise the deliberative truth that this particular instance of the good of health provided a reason to choose to take a holiday by the sea. Knowledge of the good on this account is part of a person's reflective (theoretical) knowledge, the deliberative implications (practical nature) of which are recognised in the process of moral deliberation.

The account of O'Donovan's understanding of the relationship between reflective knowledge and moral deliberation suggested here is certainly consistent with one of his key observations in his attempt to map his position over and against that of Finnis: '[i]t [theoretical knowledge] includes ... a knowledge of that good which practical reason grasps'.⁶⁶ O'Donovan's notion that practical reason 'grasps' certain truths, although shaped by its being a response to Finnis' analysis, is also highly suggestive of the concept of recognition just outlined. At the very least, some form of inferential reasoning is a necessary corollary to O'Donovan's project of securing the realist quality of a Christian ethic because he maintains that reflective knowledge is necessarily logically prior to moral deliberation.⁶⁷ However, his relatively brief treatment of the general question of the relationship between reflective knowledge and moral deliberation makes it difficult to develop a more detailed description of its exact nature. These moves made by O'Donovan in attempting to describe the first step of

65 O'Donovan, 'Moral Reasoning', p.17.

66 *Ibid.*

67 *Ibid.*

moral reasoning whilst respecting the non-derivability thesis will be returned to and assessed once Grisez and Finnis' treatment of this first step has been considered.⁶⁸

While O'Donovan may have successfully negotiated the non-derivability thesis by the use of a concept of recognition, the problem remains that actually recognising the moral order will be difficult because of the ambiguous nature of the theoretical observations which are being relied upon. This difficulty in recognising the moral order is not simply a matter of inadequate scientific methodology. It is, in O'Donovan's analysis, far more significantly a consequence of the Fall. For, as O'Donovan observes, '[i]n speaking of man's fallenness we point not only to his persistent rejection of the created order, but also to an *inescapable confusion in his perceptions of it*'.⁶⁹ What is the cause of this 'inescapable confusion in his perceptions'? O'Donovan appears to leave two possibilities open: the first is that the Fall has actually harmed the human capacity for perception; the second, which seems to play a greater role in his analysis,⁷⁰ is that the 'persistent rejection of the created order' has caused the order to be difficult to perceive. To some extent, both possibilities would seem to be true. The first, because those who do evil, especially when they think they are doing good, will not easily, or even at all, be able to perceive the aspects of the good presented by the created order which they are violating. The second, because persistent actions contrary to the created order will generate considerable ambiguity for the observer seeking to determine the content of that order simply by observing the behaviour of fallen humanity. The result, O'Donovan concludes, is that,

The *epistemological* programme for an ethic that is 'natural', in the sense that its contents are simply known to all, has to face dauntingly high barriers. But we are not to conclude from this that there is no *ontological* basis for an 'ethic of nature', no objective order to which the moral life can respond. We may only conclude that any certainty

68 See s.3.3.1.

69 O'Donovan, 'Moral Reasoning', p.19; emphasis mine.

70 See, for example, his treatment of the question of whether or not marriage is ordered to fidelity in the following discussion.

we may have about the order which God has made depends upon God's own disclosure of himself and his works.⁷¹

Thus, this dauntingly high epistemological barrier caused by the 'inescapable confusion' in humanity's perceptions leads O'Donovan to introduce revelation as a means of clarifying a person's vision of reality. Revelation, O'Donovan argues, provides an interpretative framework which enables secure inductive inferences to be made from otherwise ambiguous data. O'Donovan's treatment of the claim that marriage is ordered to fidelity provides a good illustration of this process. Acknowledging that the claim - that marriage is a 'natural institution' which is ordered to the particular form of monogamy - is a controversial one, O'Donovan asks '[t]o say that monogamy is natural what evidence do we need?'⁷² His response begins by reflecting that '[n]aturally, statistical evidence in favour of monogamy supports this claim, and evidence against it makes that claim more difficult'.⁷³ O'Donovan grants that such evidence is not decisive. Observing that the very invocation of the notion of nature, by implication, says something about God, he proposes that,

Like other foundational statements of the Christian faith ... it [the claim that monogamy is natural] moves inductively beyond the scope of empirical statements to describe the shape of things as a whole ... There is an empirical basis for the claim certainly, but experience has been generalized and interpreted in the light of Christian revelation.⁷⁴

In the simplest sense, revelation, in casting its light, provides a 'measure against which to prove our claims to find purposive order in the world'.⁷⁵ So, for example, if revelation effectively states (or can be interpreted as stating) a proposition, such as

71 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.19.

72 O'Donovan, *Marriage*, p.4. O'Donovan also claims that marriage is ordered to fidelity in *Resurrection* (p.34), however, his treatment of the question is most extensive in *Marriage and Permanence* which, although published in 1978, bears all the signs of his embrace of a naturalistic ethic.

73 O'Donovan, *Marriage*, p.5.

74 *Ibid.*

75 O'Donovan, 'Moral Reasoning', p.123.

that marriage is 'a gift of creation' whose proper structure is fidelity,⁷⁶ it will illuminate the full significance of the previously ambiguous theoretical observations. In the light of such a revelation, these theoretical observations demonstrate, at once, both that the proper structure of marriage is monogamy and that its proper form has been disfigured by the consequences of the Fall.

O'Donovan also appears to suggest that revelation may have a second, somewhat more complex, operation. He observes, in the quotation immediately above, that the ambiguous data will be interpreted in the light of a Christian understanding of 'the shape of things as a whole'.⁷⁷ This undeveloped observation is suggestive of Grisez and Finnis' account, discussed in the previous chapter, of the way in which the knowledge of the general structure of reality provided by the affirmations of faith operates to shape the way in which key elements of it are apprehended.⁷⁸

Although the introduction of revelation would appear to be helpful in clarifying a person's vision of the moral order, its effectiveness as a corrective measure is open to serious question. The problem lies primarily with O'Donovan's first use of revelation because the content, interpretation and application of revelation which was intended to bring certainty may itself be plagued by uncertainties. The extent of the uncertainty surrounding revelation is a product of the nature both of revelation and of the sources transmitting it. Mapping the exact extent of such uncertainty is a task beyond the scope of this chapter - what is important is that some significant measure of uncertainty exists. The extent of uncertainty is indicated by the fact O'Donovan and Grisez do not interpret the teachings of the New Testament as categorically prohibiting the use of force, whereas Hauerwas does and considers it to be one of the central revelations of the New Testament. The problem is not, as Gustafson has claimed, that O'Donovan is simply 'unperturbed by questions that biblical and

76 O'Donovan, *Marriage*, p.4.

77 *Ibid.*, p.5.

78 See s.2.3.

theological scholars might ask about biblical authority and the use of the Bible⁷⁹ but rather that his theological confidence in the actual soundness of the essential method of modern biblical scholarship⁸⁰ may outstrip its actual capacity. The nature of the revelation in Scripture will be returned to in more detail, however, for the present it would appear that the certainties of ethics, in O'Donovan's analysis, risk being compromised by the uncertainties of biblical scholarship.⁸¹

3.1.3 The Nature of an Evangelical Natural Ethic

Whatever the difficulties may be in apprehending the moral order, the question still remains as to why, once it has been apprehended, a person should act according to it. Rather than simply discussing O'Donovan's treatment of moral obligation, the overall nature of his theory will be better illuminated by placing his understanding of this concept in the context of a discussion of the general relationship between O'Donovan's theory and other forms of natural law theory. Plotting O'Donovan's theory in relation to other natural law theories will also be of considerable assistance in understanding its relationship to Grisez's theory and in determining the extent to which Grisez and Finnis' criticisms of previous natural law theories apply to O'Donovan's approach.

In seeking to locate O'Donovan's evangelical natural ethic, it is helpful to turn to Finnis' typology of natural law theories in which he identifies two essential forms: a 'genuinely' Aristotelian and Thomistic form; and what might loosely be called 'a scholastic' form, most famously associated with Francisco Suarez, Gabriel Vazquez and Hugo Grotius.⁸² Finnis identifies two criteria by which to distinguish these forms

79 Gustafson, J., [Review of Oliver O'Donovan's *Resurrection and Moral Order*], *Journal of Religion*, 68 (1988), 131-132, p.131.

80 O'Donovan's account of the theological soundness of modern biblical scholarship is to be found in his *On the 39 Articles*, pp.58-64, in which his central argument is that modern scholarship's illumination of the historical dimensions of the biblical text enables justice to be done to the 'belief in sacred history [which] is one of the fundamental elements in Christian faith itself' (p.58) and to the concomitant belief in 'the biblical God, who makes himself known by acts of history, whose self-revelation, therefore, must take the form of history' (p.60).

81 See ss.3.3.3, 4.3.2 - 4.3.3.

82 Finnis, *Natural Law*, pp.29-48.

of natural law theory. The first concerns the way in which the moral order is apprehended, while the second concerns the basis of moral obligation. In relation to the first of these criteria, concerning the way in which the moral order is apprehended, Finnis observes of the scholastic approaches that,

in discerning the content of the natural law, reason's decisive act consists in discerning precepts of the form 'φ is unfitting to human, i.e. rational, nature and thus has the quality of moral wrongfulness' ...⁸³

Another way in which he describes this feature of scholastic theories is that 'the primary and self-evident principles of natural law ... are initially grasped as principles concerned with self-evident relations of conformity or dis-conformity to human nature'.⁸⁴

By contrast, in a genuinely Thomistic natural law theory,

what is decisive, in discerning the content of the natural law, is one's understanding of the basic forms of (not-yet-moral) human well-being as desirable and potentially realisable ends and opportunities and thus to be pursued and realized in one's actions ...⁸⁵

A genuinely Thomistic theory does not, in other words, begin with a theoretical inquiry into human nature, rather it grasps the truth that there are certain irreducible reasons for acting; or, as Finnis expresses it, a genuinely Thomistic theory does not ask, 'what is in accordance with human nature, but what is reasonable'.⁸⁶

In relation to the second criteria concerning the basis of moral obligation, Finnis observes of scholastic theories that,

the normative or motivating significance of moral rightness or wrongness ... depends fundamentally upon there being a decree

83 *Ibid.*, p.45.

84 *Ibid.*, pp.47-48.

85 *Ibid.*, p.45.

86 *Ibid.*, p.36.

expressing God's will that the right be done ... and the wrong be avoided ...⁸⁷

On the other hand, in a Thomistic theory, obligation is the 'rational necessity' which arises from attempting coherently (that is, according to the principles of practical reasonableness) to pursue human well-being.⁸⁸

The importance of this distinction between forms of natural law theory becomes apparent in Grisez's fierce attack on the inadequacy of scholastic natural law theories. Not only does he regard them as being logically unsound for violating the non-derivability thesis, but also as being the ultimate cause of classical moral theology being negativistic, minimalistic and 'vulnerable to the charge that it [moral theology] is too much concerned with laws and too little concerned with persons'.⁸⁹ Such theories, Grisez maintains, operate by claiming, '[h]ere you are - here is your nature - now be what you are', thereby accounting for morality in terms of conformity to some 'built-in pattern'.⁹⁰ Grisez argues that, while

Such advice can have a true sense[,] ... unless human persons have possibilities which are not yet defined, there is no room for them to unfold themselves through intelligent creativity and freedom.⁹¹

This approach, Grisez suggests, produces a negativistic and minimalistic ethic because,

What does not conform to human nature can be forbidden absolutely. What does conform cannot be absolutely required, since people cannot possibly do everything which is permissible ... Thus scholastic natural-law theory is far more adept at issuing a few prohibitions than at directing people's lives toward growth and flourishing.⁹²

87 *Ibid.*, p.44.

88 *Ibid.*, pp.45-46.

89 Grisez, *Principles*, pp.105-106, quotation from p.106.

90 *Ibid.*, p.105.

91 *Ibid.*

92 *Ibid.*, pp.105-106.

Grisez's exposure of the serious shortcomings of scholastic natural law theories raises the stakes in the question as to where O'Donovan's evangelical natural ethic stands in relation to Grisez's and Finnis' descriptions of 'scholastic' and 'genuinely Thomist' theories.

In relation to the first criterion for discerning the character of a natural law theory - the nature of the apprehension of the moral order - it has already become clear that an important element of O'Donovan's approach has been to ask what are, in Finnis' words, the 'self-evident relations of *conformity* or *dis-conformity* to human nature'?⁹³ Or, as O'Donovan has expressed it, '[i]t is possible to speak of the *appropriateness* or *inappropriateness* of given acts to given realities'.⁹⁴ In this sense, O'Donovan's ethic has a distinctly scholastic *quality*. It does not, however, conform neatly to Finnis' scholastic designation. O'Donovan's account of human nature is more closely related to Finnis' Thomistic theories in which the content of human flourishing is only known generically, not specifically and in detail. Human nature (and the created order more generally) is not *simply* a model to which a person is obliged to conform. O'Donovan's choice of the notion of 'appropriateness', rather than 'conformity', highlights that his account of human nature and the moral order is more open-textured.

Turning to the criterion of obligation, the approach which O'Donovan initially articulated in developing his evangelical natural ethic also appears to have a scholastic quality. His summary of the basic nature of the moral demand upon Christians - 'God *calls us* through the resurrection of Jesus Christ ... to become precisely what he made us to be'⁹⁵ - certainly has a scholastic ring to it. In the more developed rendering of his theory,⁹⁶ however, O'Donovan makes it emphatically clear that he does not subscribe to a scholastic account of moral obligation:

93 Finnis, *Natural Law*, p.48; emphasis mine.

94 O'Donovan, 'Evangelicalism', p.99; emphasis mine.

95 O'Donovan, *Begotten*, p.66; emphasis mine.

96 *Begotten* was published in 1984, while *Resurrection and Moral Order*, which most fully articulates O'Donovan's naturalistic ethic, was published in 1986.

Natural Law thinkers of the Renaissance and Counter-Reformation showed themselves under the sway of voluntarism when they asked what it was that gave the natural order its authority, and replied that it was authorized by the command of God. The creation thus appeared to them to be an inert thing, meaningless for human action until assigned by divine command a significance that it did not otherwise have. Our aim is simply to contradict this. The created order carries its authority for action in itself ...⁹⁷

O'Donovan's most recent work suggests that this observation does not, in fact, directly contradict his earlier claim. In the course of a discussion on deliberation (i.e., practical reasoning), O'Donovan holds that, '[t]o form that attitude rightly [to come to a moral conclusion according to good practical reason] is part of the obedience we each owe God'.⁹⁸ What O'Donovan appears to be claiming is that to recognise the basic shape of Christian moral obligation is to recognise that *adhering to the demands of good moral reasoning is doing what God commands*. More obviously than in the case of the first criterion, this suggests that O'Donovan is locating himself on the middle ground between Finnis' descriptions of the scholastic and Thomist traditions.

If O'Donovan is edging towards such a middle position, the key question is, has he moved far enough to avoid Grisez's criticisms of the general quality of scholastic natural law theory? From the discussion of O'Donovan's basic account of the nature of the good, it should be clear that he leaves the person, as Grisez considers that a sound ethic must, with 'possibilities which are not yet defined' and, therefore, with the possibility of 'unfold[ing] themselves through intelligent *creativity* and *freedom*'.⁹⁹ A person, for example, can know that, generically, friendship is a form of human flourishing but she will have to discern, in the context of her own life, the particular forms of friendship in which she will participate: will she make the commitment of marriage or remain single; will she have many friends or only a few very close friends; will her friends primarily be amongst her family or amongst her

97 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.127.

98 *Ibid.*, p.124.

99 Grisez, *Principles*, p.105; emphasis mine.

professional colleagues; etc. O'Donovan's account of the nature of 'Christian freedom' in moral decision-making makes his understanding of the open-to-be-specified nature of human flourishing particularly clear. An essential part of the 'Christian freedom'¹⁰⁰ which the Gospel brings, he suggests, is that, in the face of the objective order, it 'allows man to make moral responses *creatively*'.¹⁰¹ This means that the Christian *does not* 'merely ... adhere to certain designations which have already been made for him',¹⁰² rather, he unfolds the possibilities for moral action open to him, given the particularity of his life and circumstances. For O'Donovan, therefore, the moral life is a life of learning in which moral understanding is deepened by reflection and *new* possibilities for moral action are discerned by both individuals and communities.¹⁰³ Although O'Donovan does not couch it in these terms, this process must involve the type of anticipation of the human flourishing to be realised by the pursuit of new forms or instances of the good which is so essential to Grisez's account of an open-ended ethic.¹⁰⁴ The person pursuing friendship must, for example, see the generic good of friendship in a particular form of instance of friendship which presents itself as a possible choice. O'Donovan's analysis suggests that practical reason, in calling people to act appropriately to their nature,¹⁰⁵ is calling people to participate in the inexhaustible possibilities for human flourishing.

Underlying this more open-textured quality of O'Donovan's ethic may be the fact that, while he emphasises the importance of reflective (theoretical) knowledge, he nevertheless maintains that moral reasoning is also very much a form of deliberation (i.e., practical reasoning). This more Thomistic emphasis on deliberation would appear to contribute to his asking the question, 'what is to be done?', in its more open-ended form. O'Donovan makes the importance of deliberation in his account of

100 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.24; emphasis mine.

101 *Ibid.*; emphasis mine.

102 *Ibid.*

103 This process will be discussed in more detail in s.4.3.1.

104 Grisez, 'Practical Principles', pp.117-118.

105 O'Donovan, 'Evangelicalism', p.99.

moral reasoning particularly clear in his recent dictionary article on 'Christian Moral Reasoning' when he begins by observing that,

Christian moral reasoning involves the exercise of *two kinds of thought together*: 1. reflection; and 2. deliberation. Reflection is thought *about* something; ... Deliberation is thought *towards action*; when we deliberate, we ask 'What are we to do?'¹⁰⁶

This balanced description of the place of deliberation in moral reasoning not only helps to explain the more open-textured nature of O'Donovan's ethic in relation to scholastic theories, it also indicates that his emphasis on reflection does not imply that deliberation (i.e., practical reasoning) is not also an integral and an important part of his account of moral reasoning.

Although this more open-textured quality of O'Donovan's ethic enables him to avoid the sharp edge of Grisez's criticisms, his ethic does strike difficulties in avoiding entirely the accusations of 'negativism' and 'minimalism'. The problem is not that his account of human nature fails to direct people towards a sufficiently open-ended account of their flourishing but rather that it is too difficult, methodologically, to determine adequately the nature of this flourishing. O'Donovan has not provided even a sketch of what he understands to constitute human flourishing, although, as was noted earlier, at least a partial one can be constructed from various of his observations.¹⁰⁷ Nor has he developed an outline of the general principles which direct people towards their flourishing. Yet without such an account as a central point of reference, the claim that an ethic is concerned to direct people to their flourishing will have a hollow ring. In the absence of a full vision of human flourishing, moral rules will appear to have the negative quality of *simply* prohibiting wrong-doing, rather than the positive quality of being integral elements of the means of pursuing human wholeness. Once again, this emphasises the importance of developing a more secure means by which human nature can be known.

106 O'Donovan, 'Moral Reasoning', p.122; the first emphasis is mine, the remaining emphases are O'Donovan's.

107 See s.3.1.1.

With the key architectonic features of O'Donovan's ethic described, it is possible to step back to see the type of theory he has constructed. Its ontological foundations are securely grounded in his account of creation: it is an unequivocally realist ethic. Viewing the structure built upon these foundations is, however, a far more difficult task. The swirling mists of human sin and the poor eyesight of modern science mean that it can only be glimpsed like some great Gothic cathedral in the depths of winter. Crucially, it is this difficulty with perception which creates the need for the evangelical dimension of O'Donovan's ethic - the need for the Gospels to reveal the structure clearly and enable the relationship of the parts to the whole to be known. This, in the end, is very much the shape to be expected of a Protestant ethic centred on the marriage of a broadly Barthian epistemology with a Christian realism.

3.2 Reason and Reality in Grisez's Natural Law Theory

With the essential features of O'Donovan's evangelical natural ethic mapped out, it is possible to turn to Grisez's natural law theory. In the previous chapter, the evangelical quality of Grisez's ethic was the subject of contention. In this present discussion, the realist quality of his ethic will provide the organising theme for exploring its nature because the architectonic importance of this feature of Grisez's theory has also been called into doubt by O'Donovan. This concern about the realist quality of Grisez's ethic has arisen primarily because of the strategic logical move which Grisez and Finnis make in distinguishing the nature and operations of theoretical reason (reason concerned with knowing reality) from practical reasoning (reason employed in deciding what to do). This strategic move was made in order to avoid the claim that a natural law theory must necessarily violate the non-derivability thesis by being founded on an illicit inference of values (i.e., of moral reasons for action) from facts about the nature of reality and, specifically, from facts about human nature. It is this objection to natural law theory, which they consider to have been central to the collapse of its intellectual respectability since the Enlightenment,¹⁰⁸ which Grisez and Finnis have been keenest to counter. The task of this section, in

108 Finnis, *Natural Law*, pp.33-48.

exploring the nature of their natural law theory, is therefore to determine whether this strategic move, aimed at preserving its logical coherence, does, in fact, undermine or deny the integral relationship between reason and reality in their ethics as so many commentators, like O'Donovan, have thought it to do.¹⁰⁹ Or, to put the question another way, is Alasdair MacIntyre right to claim that,

we may safely assume that, if some amended version of the "No 'ought' conclusion from an 'is'" premises principle is to hold good, it must exclude functional concepts [theoretical claims about the purposes or functions of reality] from its scope.¹¹⁰

The invocation of MacIntyre at this point is valuable because it calls attention to the much wider importance of the relationship between reality and practical reason in Grisez's work. For, if Grisez's account of the relationship between reason and reality is substantive and coherent, it opens up new vistas for those involved in the 'recoverist project' by suggesting a way in which the Enlightenment's best insights into the content of good practical reasoning might be capable of being fused with the best insights of pre-Enlightenment moral thought concerning the nature and centrality of human teleology in moral reasoning.

109 Other commentators, in what has been perceived by some to be perhaps the most significant assault on their theory, have made essentially the same challenge in the form of the charge that Grisez and Finnis' theory is not grounded in human nature or humanity's place in nature. See, Hitinger, R., 'The Recovery of Natural Law and the "Common Morality"', *This World*, 18 (1987), 79-100, pp.67-68; Hitinger, R., *Critique of the New Natural Law Theory*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1987, in which he claims, that '[a] natural law theory must show how nature is normative with regard to practical rationality. This has not been accomplished by the Grisez-Finnis method' (*ibid.*, p.192). Henry Veatch claims that Finnis and Grisez 'maintain' that a complete 'wall of separation ... exists between practical reason and theoretical reason, between ethics and metaphysics, between nature and morals, between "is" and "ought"' (Veatch, H., 'Natural Law and the "Is" - "Ought" Question', *Catholic Lawyer*, 26 (1981), 251-265, p.265); and, in a related criticism, Lisska argues that Finnis' account of natural law theory lacks an adequate metaphysical account of human nature (Lisska, A.J., 'Finnis and Veatch on Natural Law in Aristotle and Aquinas', *American Journal of Jurisprudence*, 36 (1991), 55-71). Robert George provides a succinct response to some of these objections. He suggests that they are a result of a misreading of Grisez and Finnis' account (George, 'Natural Law', pp.31-35).

110 MacIntyre, A., *After Virtue*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1981, p.58. Or, as Henry Veatch has claimed, 'one must either produce the means by which to proceed from facts to norms, or discontinue the attempt to espouse natural-law philosophy' (Veatch, 'Natural Law', p.253).

3.2.1 The Distinction Between Theoretical and Practical Reason

The starting point in unravelling Grisez's understanding of the relationship between reality and moral reasoning is to seek to understand the nature of the foundational distinction between theoretical and practical reason upon which he draws. It is a distinction ultimately founded upon the proposition that different forms of reasoning are employed to deal with different types of questions. *Theoretical reason*, Grisez and Finnis argue, *is used to pursue knowledge about aspects of reality*.¹¹¹ It seeks to establish the truth of a proposition by testing the conformity of the content of that proposition with some prior reality.¹¹² Theoretical reason can establish this conformity by both deductive and inductive forms of reasoning. The product of such reasoning is theoretical knowledge. A wide range of forms of intellectual inquiry produce this sort knowledge, ranging from historical research, to scientific reason and metaphysics. Its products are most easily identified by the use of 'is' and 'are': for example, the velocity of light *is* 299,792 kilometres per second; humans *are* sociable; God *is* love. Theoretical knowledge can also be concerned with possible realities because, as Grisez observes, '[t]he theoretical mind ... can grasp everything, actual or possible, whose reality is not conditioned upon the thought and action of man'.¹¹³ In fact, theoretical reason can even grasp the possible realities that other humans may bring about when it states 'laws' of human behaviour, as it does, for example, in economics. Nevertheless, the truth value of all such speculative exercises of theoretical reason is still grounded upon observations of prior realities.

In contrast to theoretical reason's central concern with existing realities, Grisez emphasises that *practical reason* is fundamentally concerned with actually bringing realities into being.¹¹⁴ It is the form of reason which a person uses when she has to make a choice about what she is going to do in the future. *It is reason concerned with planning action*. It poses questions, such as 'what should I do today on my day off?',

111 Finnis, *Fundamentals*, p.2.

112 Grisez, 'Practical Principles', p.115.

113 Grisez, 'First Principle', p.176.

114 Grisez, 'Practical Principles', pp.115-117.

suggests possible answers, 'you could go for a walk in the country or see a film with friends' and provides a reason(s) why a particular proposal should be adopted, for example, 'you should keep a good balance in what you do and you haven't been for a walk lately so you should go for a walk'. Practical knowledge is constituted by the propositions, such as those just listed, which are produced by practical reason. In using practical reason to decide what to do, a person acts on the basis of a possible future reality rather than on the basis of a prior reality. If, for example, a person acts in pursuit of some form of knowledge (for example, Italian history) it is by her so acting that the reality of her knowledge is actually brought about. While she will have understood the general nature of the knowledge (including that it is a worthwhile thing to pursue), she did not actually possess that knowledge until she brought it about. It is the envisaging of what will come from the activity which provides the reason for acting.

With all of this emphasis on the relationship of practical reason and knowledge to envisaged reality, the question naturally arises as to the sense in which a proposition of practical knowledge could be true. In answering this question, Grisez and Finnis begin by denying that "'truth" can only mean conformity of knowledge to subject matter, adequation of mind to reality'.¹¹⁵ They then offer an alternative account as to how practical knowledge (i.e., a proposition produced by practical reason) can be said to be true. They state this claim formally in the following terms:

The truth (that is, the adequation) of practical knowledge is the *conformity of what is to be through knowing to the knowledge* which will help bring it about.¹¹⁶

The 'knowledge which will bring it [i.e., 'what is to be'] about' is practical reason. Put simply, practical knowledge will be true if it conforms to practical reason. Thus the truthfulness of practical knowledge is ultimately derived from the truthfulness of the practical reason to which such knowledge conforms. The significant question is,

115 *Ibid.*, p.117.

116 *Ibid.*; emphasis Grisez's.

therefore, in what sense is practical reason itself true? The short answer is that the basic principles of practical reason are just self-evidently true.¹¹⁷ These foundational principles are known to be true 'just by knowing the meaning of their terms'.¹¹⁸ Finnis supports the legitimacy of this notion of self-evidence by observing that logical reasoning in other disciplines, including those of a theoretical nature, also ultimately rests upon self-evidently true concepts and principles. In support of this conclusion, Finnis highlights various of the self-evidently true principles upon which theoretical inquiry relies:

principles of logic, for example the forms of deductive inference, are to be used and adhered to in all of one's thinking even though no non-circular proof of their validity is possible (since any proof would employ them) ... self defeating theses are to be abandoned ... a full description of data is to be preferred to partial descriptions ... an account or explanation of phenomena is not to be accepted if it requires or postulates something inconsistent with the data for which it is supposed to account.¹¹⁹

The truthfulness of moral reasoning *qua* moral reasoning in Grisez and Finnis' natural law theory is not founded upon any proposition's coherence or conformity to any theoretically observable reality but rather upon its being a wholly coherent exercise of practical reasoning. Hence, the sense in which a moral proposition can be said to be true is very distinct from the way in which a theoretical proposition, such as a scientific observation, can be said to be true.¹²⁰ In discussing Finnis' work,

117 *Ibid.*, p.106.

118 *Ibid.*

119 Finnis, *Natural Law*, p.68.

120 Attempts have been made to demonstrate that a moral realist position cannot be maintained because the way in which the truth of moral observations is established is disanalogous with the way in which the truth value of scientific observations is established. For example, Gilbert Harman asks, 'Can moral principles be tested and confirmed in the way scientific principles can?' (Harman, G., *The Nature of Morality*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1977, p.3, see also pp.3-10). Such challenges to moral realism usually also assume, as Harman's does, that if moral truthfulness cannot be established by the same means as scientific/theoretical observations then there cannot be a necessary relationship between a given reality and a moral truth. When it is demonstrated that the truth of moral (practical) principles is not established in the same way as the truthfulness of scientific (theoretical) observations but that, nevertheless, moral truthfulness is necessarily related to a particular set of given facts about reality (see s.3.2.2) then this objection to moral realism loses its force entirely.

O'Donovan seeks to explain the implications of this conclusion for the realist quality of natural law theory:

He [Finnis] does not deny right practical judgements a coherence with reality. But that coherence cannot itself be known by practical reason ... In this way the realist principle, while not denied, is rendered practically ineffective. Our [theoretical] knowledge of the truth about the world will not provide a content for our rational decisions about how to live and act.¹²¹

These observations call into doubt the architectonic importance of the relationship between reality and reason in Finnis and Grisez's theory. On O'Donovan's account, Finnis' acceptance that 'practical judgements [have] a coherence with reality' seems to be little more than a metaethical or metaphysical affirmation which his distinction between practical and theoretical reason renders structurally unimportant for the actual shape of moral conclusions. What is more, if knowledge about the way the world or reality is does not, in a strictly logical sense, determine the shape of moral decisions, then the suspicion is raised that moral choices are, or at least risk being, simply a product of the human will. In considering O'Donovan's observations about Finnis' approach and the doubts and suspicions they raise about Finnis and Grisez's natural law theory in general, it will be helpful to divide the discussion into a consideration of the *architectonic question* about the structural relationship between reality and reason in the foundations of their theory and the *operational question* concerning the function of 'knowledge of the truth about the world'¹²² in the actual process of moral deliberation.

3.2.2 The Realist Foundations of Grisez's Natural Law Theory

It is most helpful to begin an examination of the architectonic question - as to the relationship between reason and reality in the foundations of Grisez and Finnis' theory - by considering the nature of basic human goods because these goods form the basis of Grisez and Finnis' account. They establish the horizon of possibilities for action -

121 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.x.

122 *Ibid.*

they delimit 'the rational decisions about how to live and act'¹²³ which are open to a person. There can be no doubting the realism of O'Donovan's account of the nature of the good, moving as it does from theoretical observations about human nature to practical conclusions. It may be because Grisez tackles this question from the opposite direction - beginning with practical reason from which theoretical conclusions can be drawn - that O'Donovan significantly understates the essential realism of Grisez's position.

While Grisez's analysis starts from substantially the same premise as O'Donovan's - that '[a]ny creature which acts is one whose reality is not fully given at the outset; it has possibilities which can be realised only through acting'¹²⁴ - he quickly changes tack. Rather than seeking to determine what these possibilities might be by theoretical observation, as O'Donovan does, Grisez argues that they are best discovered, in the case of human beings, by asking the practical question "'Why are you doing that?" and "Why should we do that?"' about all the activities in which they, and other members of their community, participate.¹²⁵ Continuing to ask these questions in response to each answer will, eventually, yield a series of reasons for acting for which no further reason can be given. These reasons will indicate the most basic nature of all the possibilities which could be realised by acting. So, for example, a person might be asked, 'Why are you going out to tonight?', to which she might reply, 'in order to catch up with some friends'. To this reply she could then be asked, 'Why do you want to catch up with those friends?', to which she might answer, 'in order to maintain my friendship with them'. Once again, the question might come, 'Why do you want to maintain your friendship with them?', to which a reply might simply be, 'because I value friendship'. This series of questions reveals that one of

123 *Ibid.*

124 Grisez, 'Practical Principles', p.114; compare with, O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, pp.34-35.

125 Grisez, 'Practical Principles', pp.106-107. It should be noted that, while the asking of such questions presumes theoretical knowledge, it is not that knowledge *but the practical questions asked of it* which provide the practical knowledge. For example, a person's realisation that they are often inclined to paint does not enable them to conclude from this theoretical observation about themselves that creating art is a basic good. Such a realisation might, however, prompt them to ask, 'why do I paint?', at which point this practical question will produce a practical insight. On this point see Grisez, *Principles*, p.196.

the most basic possibilities which a person can realise through acting is the pursuit of friendship.

Until some reason emerges (and Grisez, at least, does not find one) to eliminate the pursuit of friendship *per se*, or any of the most basic possibilities for action, as not proper to the human form (as distinct from eliminating improper means of realising them), these possibilities will define the nature and parameters of human flourishing or fulfilment.¹²⁶ This is a claim of very substantial theoretical importance.¹²⁷ The 'object(ive)s'¹²⁸ of these possibilities for action, such as friendship, can be described as 'basic goods' in order to indicate their nature as rationally desirable goals whose pursuit contributes to the flourishing of the human person. They are, however, goods in a *pre-moral* sense because they can be identified prior to the derivation of moral obligation.

Simply because basic goods come to be known *by way of practical reason* rather than by theoretical observation does not make them any less a part of humanity's given nature. On this point Grisez is unambiguous: 'what last end [or ends] every man should seek is *predetermined by the nature of man and by his inescapable place in reality*'.¹²⁹ In relation to basic goods, he specifically observes that they are,

neither a mere contingent fact about human psychology nor an accident of history. Rather, being aspects of the fulfilment of persons, these goods correspond to the inherent complexities of human nature.¹³⁰

126 It is important to note that collectively the basic goods alone do not constitute human fulfilment. For Grisez, human fulfilment is a state of being which is progressively realised by the individual freely pursuing the basic goods in accordance with good practical reason. See, Grisez, 'Clarifications', p.277.

127 The considerable wider significance of this claim will be returned to later in s.3.3.2.

128 Finnis, *Fundamentals*, p.21.

129 Grisez, 'Man', p.137; emphasis mine.

130 Grisez, 'Practical Principles', p.107. It is important that Grisez and Finnis' careful account of the integral relationship between human nature and the basic goods is recognised, otherwise there is the danger that they will be misread as having, 'a theory of certain irreducible goods without a theory of human nature' which does not provide an objective foundation for moral claims (Hittinger, 'After MacIntyre', pp.458-460, quotation from p.460).

Grisez employs various dimensions of this relationship between the basic goods and human nature to structure his account of what these goods actually are - an account which bears many similarities to that which can be found in O'Donovan's work.¹³¹ Grisez begins by observing that the basic good of *life*, which includes its maintenance and transmission, correlates with the quality of humans as 'animate'.¹³² As 'rational' beings capable of possessing knowledge and experiencing feelings, humans have the capacity to pursue the basic goods of *knowledge* and *aesthetic experience*. Being 'simultaneously animal and rational', Grisez observes, 'human persons can transform the natural world by using realities, beginning with their own bodily selves to express meanings and serve purposes'.¹³³ This capacity gives rise to the possibility of the basic goods of *excellence in the skills of 'work and play'*.¹³⁴ Finally, as a result of being 'agents through deliberation and choice', humans have the capacity to seek various forms of harmony:¹³⁵ as people in relationships, *harmony with other people* is perhaps the most apparent of these possibilities;¹³⁶ as agents making choices,

131	A Comparison of O'Donovan's and Grisez's Accounts of Human Goods	
	O'Donovan	Grisez
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Life and Procreation · Knowledge · Work and Play · Creation of Art · Appreciation of Beauty · Friendship · Maintenance and Building of Community · Maintenance of Family Life · Religion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Life and its Transmission · Knowledge · Excellence in the Skills of Work and Play · Aesthetic Experience · Harmony with Others (Friendship) · Marriage · Harmony between Different Dimensions of the Person · Practical Reasonableness · Harmony with Some Greater-Than-Human Source of Meaning and Value
	(References for O'Donovan's list of goods can be found in s.3.1.1.)	(References for Grisez's list can be found in this section.)

132 Grisez, 'Practical Principles', p.107.

133 *Ibid.*

134 *Ibid.*

135 *Ibid.*, pp.107-108.

136 Recently, Grisez has argued that marriage is a basic good which cannot, as he had supposed in 'Practical Principles', be reduced to the goods of friendship and life (*Living*, pp.567-569). It is beyond the scope of this thesis, however, to provide an adequate analysis of this move because doing so would require an assessment of Grisez's much wider discussion of the nature of marriage, upon which he bases this argument.

harmony (ie., consistency) can be sought between what are thought to be the right choices and the actual choices made; and, as a human person, there is the possibility of seeking harmony between the different dimensions of the human person. The final form of harmony which is open to people to pursue arises from the experience of being in relation to 'the wider reaches of reality'.¹³⁷ Grisez suggests that this experience gives rise to the possibility of pursuing harmony with 'some more-than-human source of meaning and value'.¹³⁸ This account of the correlation between the different facets of what it is to be human and the basic goods suggests that this relationship is so integral that if human nature were different the basic goods would necessarily be different. If, for example, people lacked emotions, there would be no possibility of seeking harmony between their emotions and the choices they made.

The integral nature of the relationship between practical reason and theoretical knowledge is further highlighted by Grisez's strategy of deploying theoretical reason in support of practical reason's account of the basic goods and to correct what he argues are false accounts of the basic goods.¹³⁹

Grisez's strategy of using theoretical knowledge *in support* of his account of the basic goods can be illustrated by considering the two methods which he employs for this task. In the first, Grisez observes that 'theoretical studies of human persons, including empirical psychology and philosophical anthropology ... taken as a whole testify to natural inclinations to stay alive and healthy, to know, to do good work and to play [etc.]'.¹⁴⁰ Grisez is not claiming to derive his account of the basic goods from such

137 Grisez, 'Practical Principles', p.108.

138 *Ibid.* Although this is not the place to provide a defence of this notion, it is also arguable that people's experience of their relationship to the natural world (or the rest of creation) gives rise to the possibility of people seeking to be in *harmony with the non-human world*.

139 This feature of Grisez and Finnis' theory is often overlooked. For example, Lloyd Weinreb observes, incorrectly, that '[r]ejecting explicitly any proof for his claims except that of the self-evident truth of these claims themselves, Finnis argues his case in the only way open to him, by presenting the basic goods and methodological requirements and asking his readers to reflect about them' (Weinreb, L., *Natural Law and Justice*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1987, p.109).

140 Grisez, 'Practical Principles', p.113. For a survey of those theoretical studies which would support Grisez's assertion at this point and which also includes a strong response to the arguments of

studies. Rather, because both forms of investigation are concerned with the one reality, correlations between the two forms of knowledge provide an *additional* reason for accepting his account. Such studies are capable of being used in this way because, prior to considering them, practical reason has provided a framework for interpreting the complex of information they present.¹⁴¹ A second interesting way in which Grisez uses theoretical knowledge to support his account of the basic goods is his argument that the very possibility of anthropology, as a science, is dependent on some sort of account of the basic goods. Without such an account, Grisez suggests, it would be impossible to render explicable (in the sense of understanding the reason for) the behaviour of people in other societies and cultures.¹⁴²

Grisez also uses theoretical reason *to correct* what he considers to be false accounts of practical reason. An important instance of such a move is his theoretical argument against the frequently made claim or assumption that life is an instrumental good. Hauerwas is a good example of an ethicist who makes this claim. In an early article, 'Natural Law, Tragedy and Theological Ethics', Hauerwas effectively asserted life to be merely an instrumental good when he observed that, '[n]one live for survival as an end in itself ... rather we live for goods that make survival worthwhile'.¹⁴³ Such assertions, Grisez argues, 'involve a theoretically indefensible dualistic account of the person'.¹⁴⁴ By contrast, Grisez's argument, briefly stated, begins with the theoretical observation that human reflection necessarily begins within the individual's conception of the self as a 'unitary being'.¹⁴⁵ Bodily life is, necessarily, a part of that starting-point because the individual's physical existence is integral to her initial conception of

cultural relativists (such as Benedict, whose position was noted earlier in s.3.1.1), see Beis, pp.174-224. For an account of anthropological and psychological evidence in relation to the 'basic drives' which could be interpreted as evidence of the pursuit of the basic goods see, Davitt, pp.13-14.

141 This point and its relationship to the critique of O'Donovan's use of theoretical observations about human nature will be discussed at length in s.3.3.2.

142 Grisez, 'Practical Principles', p.113.

143 Hauerwas, S., 'Natural Law, Tragedy and Theological Ethics', *American Journal of Jurisprudence*, 20 (1975), 1-19, p.10.

144 Grisez, 'Practical Principles', p.113.

145 This account of Grisez's position is drawn from Grisez, *Deterrence*, pp.308-309.

self. To view bodily life as an instrumental good is to hold it to be a reality distinct from the rest of the self. An instrumental conception of bodily life suggests that it is only a means to pursue enrichment of the self, not an integral part of the self. Yet this contradicts the initial conception of self, in which bodily life was a part of the one reality of that self. Grisez concludes, therefore, that any analysis of the elements of self must, in order to be coherent (in the sense of not contradicting the premises upon which it is based), occur within the 'original unity' of the self. In *Christian Moral Principles*, Grisez adds to this argument by observing that the dualism presupposed in an account of bodily life as an instrumental good is also inconsistent with Christianity's concept of the resurrection which vindicates the value of bodily life and affirms a non-dualist account of the person.¹⁴⁶

It is worth observing that it is not simply practical reason's apprehension of the basic goods which can be supported and defended by theoretical reason. Much of Grisez and Finnis' attack on proportionalism, for example, uses theoretical reason to demonstrate why the claim that a person should pursue the option which brings the greatest proportion of benefit to harm could only be a practical principle in a much more limited sense than that claimed by proportionalist theories.¹⁴⁷

Interestingly, O'Donovan recognises that theoretical knowledge can be used to challenge 'false deliveries of practical reason, such as the notion that the only or chief good is sensual pleasure'.¹⁴⁸ However, he argues that the very capacity of theoretical reason to make these challenges means that 'the supposed logical bar [of the non-derivability thesis] seems to have lost its force entirely'.¹⁴⁹ O'Donovan appears, therefore, to be arguing that the capacity of theoretical and practical knowledge to illuminate a single reality suggests that they are not distinct forms of

146 Grisez, *Principles*, p.138.

147 Finnis' theoretical arguments in support of his claim that '[o]ne must not waste one's opportunities by using inefficient methods' is a basic requirement of practical reasonableness and, against claims for any wider principle being a basic requirement, provides a particularly good illustration of a theoretical defence of a practical principle (Finnis, *Natural Law*, pp.111-118).

148 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.xii.

149 *Ibid.*

reasoning at all. Grisez has anticipated such challenges. In beginning his careful account of the use of theoretical reason to support practical reason, he observes that, '[o]ne can argue for a proposition without using a middle term to prove it. Dialectical arguments relate a proposition to be defended to other knowledge, and show that denying it has unacceptable consequences'.¹⁵⁰ Once again, Grisez's theoretical critique of the practical claim that life is an instrumental good (discussed above) provides a helpful illustration. The argument that holding life to be an instrumental good involves an unacceptable dualism does not logically blur the distinction between practical and theoretical reason nor, consequently, weaken the logical bar between facts and values. There is no blurring of logical categories because the practical knowledge that life is a good is not logically dependent upon theoretical conclusions as to the nature, dualist or otherwise, of a person. Practical knowledge about the good of life is simply derived by practical reason's consideration of the most basic reasons for a person acting.

On the basis of this account of Grisez's understanding of the nature of the basic goods and of the integral way in which theoretical and practical knowledge can be employed in discussing this one reality, it is possible to conclude that his ethics and the conclusions it will produce are fundamentally shaped by the nature of reality. This conclusion is further strengthened by recalling the discussion in the previous chapter in which it was argued that knowledge of the principles of practical reasonableness arises (in a non-inferential sense) from the way in which reality is understood.¹⁵¹ This means that the *true* principles of practical reasonableness (those principles which will actually guide people towards human fulfilment) are, as with the basic goods, inextricably dependent upon the *actual* nature of reality. To put this point another way: if some morally relevant dimension of the nature of reality is incorrectly understood, this is likely to give rise to a false understanding of the demands of practical reasonableness (i.e., it is likely to give rise to principle(s) which do not direct people towards human fulfilment). Those teenagers who fail to accept the

150 Grisez, 'Practical Principles', p.111.

151 See ss.2.3-2.4.

limitations of human life illustrate the general nature of this problem. Their failure to accept these limitations can give rise to the failure to recognise, as basic principles of practical reasonableness, the need to have some sort of coherent life-plan and a substantial commitment to the significant projects in which they are involved.¹⁵²

The architectonic importance of the realist foundations of Grisez's ethic should no longer be in doubt once it is recognised that the nature of reality determines both the possibilities for moral action and the framework of practical reason for making 'our rational decisions about how to live and act'¹⁵³ in pursuing those possibilities. What this discussion should also have made clear is that, contrary to O'Donovan's view, for an ethic to be an effective realist ethic it is not essential that it be *logically derived from* '[theoretical] *knowledge* of the truth about reality'.¹⁵⁴ What is essential is that the structure and content of ethics be *dependent upon reality* in such a way that, if some morally relevant feature of reality were different, ethics would necessarily also be different. The much overlooked subtlety of Grisez's form of realism, which meets this latter test for a realist ethic, is that it respects the demands for logical coherence articulated by the non-derivability thesis while still being a realist form of ethics. It is no longer possible to assume safely, as MacIntyre suggests - and as O'Donovan may perhaps all too readily have done - that respecting the non-derivability thesis means that a moral theory '*must* exclude functional concepts [theoretical claims about the purposes or functions of reality] from its scope'.¹⁵⁵ Clearly, Grisez and Finnis have developed a form of moral realism which radically challenges some of the key orthodox assumptions made by modern moral philosophy about moral realism, as well as the critiques built upon them.¹⁵⁶ It is now necessary to return to another of these assumptions about realist forms of ethics.

152 For a discussion of these principles see, Finnis, *Natural Law*, pp.103-105, 109-110.

153 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.x.

154 *Ibid.*

155 MacIntyre, *Virtue*, p.58; emphasis mine.

156 The considerable importance of this move for responding to modern critiques of realism will be briefly considered in s.3.3.1.

3.2.3 The Operational Relationship Between Practical & Theoretical Reason

O'Donovan's conclusion - that the sharp distinction which Finnis makes between practical and theoretical reason would have the result that '[o]ur [theoretical] knowledge of the truth about the world will not provide a content for our rational decisions about how to live and act'¹⁵⁷ - not only raises the type of architectonic question which has just been considered but also, and rather more directly, the *operational* question as to the function of theoretical knowledge in the actual process of moral deliberation. It is one thing to demonstrate that the framework of moral reason will be shaped by the nature of reality but, on O'Donovan's account, if an ethic is to be a thoroughly realist ethic, then the moral deliberation which employs this framework in the making of actual decisions must take account of true theoretical knowledge about the world. The reason why O'Donovan assumes theoretical knowledge can, in this sense, play no part in Finnis' ethics can be discerned from his general observation about the empiricist tradition to which he thinks Finnis belongs:

The dominant philosophical traditions, especially in the English-speaking world, have rejected the thought that things, in and of themselves, have points or purposes which they are supposed to realize. In the sharp divorce of fact and value, characteristic of English philosophy, facticity is ascribed to things, but points and purposes are supposed to reside *only* in the minds of human agents.¹⁵⁸

O'Donovan's argument would appear to be that if ethics is an exercise of practical reason then it will have no need to refer to theoretical knowledge - if points and purposes reside *only* in the mind, how could theoretical knowledge be an integral part of directing people towards those points and purposes? Yet Finnis and Grisez's actual analysis points to a very different answer. In their discussion of the relationship between theoretical and practical reason, Grisez and Finnis observe that,

Theoretical reflection deepens understanding of the basic goods, and *knowledge about facts bearing on their instantiation is necessary to pursue them effectively*. For instance, one cannot effectively promote

157 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.x.

158 O'Donovan, 'Marriage', p.7; emphasis mine. O'Donovan identifies Finnis as belonging to this tradition in *Resurrection* (p.x), although he acknowledges that Finnis has 'become more guarded about aligning himself with that school of thought' (*ibid.*).

health without knowing biology ... Moreover, one needs theoretical knowledge about one's powers and actual situation to know what one might choose to do.¹⁵⁹

While in this statement Finnis and Grisez recognise the relationship between theoretical knowledge and practical reason for determining the shape of moral obligation, they significantly understate its importance. It is not that knowledge about theoretical facts concerning basic goods is 'necessary to pursue them *effectively*' but rather that such theoretical knowledge is logically necessary in order to pursue the basic goods *at all*. This logically necessary relationship becomes apparent when Grisez and Finnis' own analysis of human acts is carefully considered. They observe that people act for purposes and that a purpose is 'something concrete which can exist or not exist in reality'.¹⁶⁰ Two distinct aspects of a purpose are then identified: the benefit and the goal. *The benefit* is that which is 'the intelligible aspect of a basic purpose'¹⁶¹ - it is the good (the basic reason for acting) which makes the purpose rationally desirable. *The goal*, on the other hand, is the 'concrete and imaginable' state of affairs¹⁶² - the actual reality which is the object of the purpose. Every purpose (i.e., every moral choice) will possess both these features.¹⁶³ So, for example, when an individual's purpose is to learn about Italian Renaissance art, he acts because of the benefit of the good of knowledge which is embodied in the goal of actually knowing about such art. Although Grisez and Finnis do not bring this out explicitly in their analysis, practical reason *can only be concerned with benefits* and not with goals. As a logical operation, practical reason is concerned with reasons for action - with 'the intelligible aspect of a basic purpose' - and not with actual reality - with the 'concrete and imaginable'. Reality, on the other hand, is the subject of theoretical knowledge and theoretical reason. Every purpose, therefore, will

159 Grisez, 'Practical Principles', p.111; emphasis mine.

160 *Ibid.*, p.102.

161 *Ibid.*, p.104.

162 *Ibid.*

163 *Ibid.*

necessarily involve both theoretical knowledge and practical reason. They will, in other words, be integrally related in the process of making *any* moral decision.

In the first place, it will be necessary to have theoretical knowledge of a goal before the benefit involved in pursuing it will be capable of being recognised and pursued as a good at all. So, for example, a person will not be able to pursue the excellence of a skill that is internal to play until she first knows of at least one particular form of play and of skill(s) internal to it. More concretely, a person will need to know of the sport of cricket before she can recognise it as a form of play and she will need to know something of its skills, such as how to hold the bat and ball in an effective way, before she can even consider seeking to develop them. Or, to return to Grisez and Finnis' example of the pursuit of health, health cannot be pursued by choice at all unless a person knows what health is and how to pursue it - both matters of theoretical knowledge. When a person knows what health is, as a theoretical reality, practical reason can identify the benefit which makes it an attractive goal to pursue.

Theoretical knowledge is necessary not only for pursuing a benefit (a good) in the first place, it is also integral to every decision to pursue a good because it will always be necessary to possess theoretical knowledge in order to know what is actually involved in the pursuit of a particular good. This integral relationship means that theoretical knowledge plays a critical role in shaping moral obligation. The pursuit of the good of harmony with some-greater-than-human source of meaning and value illustrates this point. Once a person possesses sufficient theoretical knowledge to recognise that there is some-greater-than-human dimension of reality with which he could be in harmony, he will be able to recognise that being in harmony with this reality would be a benefit - a reason for acting. His pursuit of this benefit will be completely shaped by his theoretical knowledge (which may take the form of metaphysics and/or faith in some form of revelation) of what is involved in pursuing harmony with this ultimate reality. This knowledge will determine whether and in what form he prays, makes sacrifices, and participates in community with fellow believers. In effect, the particular form of the moral obligation to pursue harmony

with this ultimate reality will be determined by theoretical knowledge. This conclusion also holds more generally in relation to the other basic goods, with the result that the nature of the reality which embodies various goods will be important in determining the way in which they are pursued.

Thus the concern emerging from O'Donovan's work that Finnis and Grisez's theory might have no place for theoretical knowledge in the process of moral deliberation because it belonged to a tradition in which 'points and purposes reside only in the mind' does not actually arise in relation to their theory. A purpose, in their account, only arises when a human intention *focuses upon* and *is shaped by* a known structure of reality. There is no purpose until this engagement between practical reason and theoretical knowledge has occurred. Human intentions do not, on their account, create the structures of reality but nor do the structures of reality simply possess purposes from which human intention can read.

Yet while the concerns arising from O'Donovan's work appear largely unfounded, Finnis and Grisez's understatement of the role of the structures of reality in shaping moral deliberations suggests that the type of inquiries which O'Donovan makes into the theoretical structures of reality are more important than they allow. It may be true, for instance, that observations about the generic relationships between kinds do not, of themselves, found moral obligation. However, without such observations, important truths which shape significant dimensions of moral obligation - such as that all humans are generically the same despite variations in skin colour, ethnicity, etc. - could not be known. Despite the importance of theoretical knowledge, it is critical to recognise that errors and inaccuracies in such knowledge do not necessarily imperil the making of right moral choices. A person might, for example, be mistaken as to what the pursuit of health involves and might actually harm his health by taking unnecessarily high doses of vitamin tablets. Nevertheless, he will have done nothing morally wrong because he genuinely believed that he was acting in order to pursue his health. Of course, objective harm still arises from his action or, to put it another way, while his body may be imperiled by his action, his soul is not. On this account of the

relationship between practical reason and theoretical knowledge, therefore, moral knowledge, although deepened by theoretical inquiry, is not a hostage to science.

In concluding this discussion of the integral relationship between theoretical and practical reason, it is worth observing that Grisez and Finnis' failure explicitly to identify the full extent of the operation of theoretical knowledge in shaping moral obligation appears to be a key reason why they have, in general, so significantly understated the place of theoretical knowledge in their analysis. This understatement is doubtless also the result of their desire to keep the focus of their analysis firmly on the existential quality of the goods. Despite the misleading effects of this understatement, it should have become clear that their distinction between practical and theoretical reason does not, conceptually, amount to establishing a radical divide between the two forms of reason and knowledge in moral deliberation. On the contrary, the two forms of reason and knowledge are *necessarily* complementary. Indeed, the integral operation of both is required in order that the true nature of ethics be understood and the actual shape of moral obligation determined.

3.2.4 From Realist Foundations to Moral Conclusions

In order fully to appreciate the nature of the relationship between reason and reality in Grisez's natural law theory and the general shape of his ethic, it is helpful to understand the way in which his realist, but pre-moral, observations about human nature become the foundations of his moral conclusions. These steps are also worth tracing in some detail in order to respond to Hauerwas' concern that natural law theories, including Grisez's, involve an illicit logical step somewhere between their foundations and their normative conclusions.¹⁶⁴ Hauerwas raises this concern in his article 'Natural Law, Tragedy, and Theological Ethics' where he observes that, 'it is by no means clear how or why questions of the status and types of moral norms and

164 These steps require a careful restating because they have often been misunderstood by Grisez's and Finnis' interpreters and critics. For example, Lloyd Weinreb appears to believe that Finnis' rendering of the theory involves stating the first principles of practical reasonableness and then maintaining that certain conclusions, such as that abortion is always wrong except to save a mother's life, are simply self-evident implications of these first principles (Weinreb, *Natural Law*, pp.112-113).

principles are intrinsically tied to natural law'.¹⁶⁵ He states this concern more fully in a footnote attached to this statement, where he accuses natural law thinkers, including Grisez, of moving 'unaccountably from metaethical arguments to ethical or political conclusions'¹⁶⁶ of an ideological kind on issues such as abortion and euthanasia. Unfortunately, Hauerwas does not actually identify the nature of the illicit step which he alleges is taken.¹⁶⁷ Hauerwas may well be correct when he suggests that Grisez's thought is, at least to some extent, shaped by ideology and a desire to produce certain normative conclusions which serve the needs of the Catholic Church to which he is profoundly committed. The critical question, however, is whether, and at what point, this forces Grisez into making logically illicit moves in order to produce his 'desired' conclusions. As should already be apparent, Grisez and his collaborators are extremely careful and precise in their logical analysis; consequently, any charge against their logic needs to be more than a rhetorical flourish.

Grisez's reasoning towards normative conclusions is most fully described in his substantive article, written with Finnis and Boyle, 'Practical Principles, Moral Truth and Ultimate Ends'.¹⁶⁸ In this account, Grisez begins his train of reasoning with the identification of basic goods as irreducible reasons for action which direct people towards human fulfilment.¹⁶⁹ Basic goods present people with a range of attractive possibilities for choice. Making such choices will require the use of practical reason - it will involve deliberating about what to do. The second step in Grisez's analysis is to establish the basic form of the demand of practical reasonableness. Fundamentally, the essential demand of practical reason is, as with any other form of reasoning, to be fully reasonable. For '[r]ight reason', as Grisez observes, 'is nothing but *unfettered*

165 Hauerwas, 'Natural Law', pp.1-2.

166 *Ibid.*, p.2.

167 It is worth noting that, in an earlier article of Hauerwas' on Grisez's work in which he pays much closer attention to the logical structure of Grisez's theory (as it was then formulated), while he still perceives Grisez's work to be affected by his ideological struggle, he does not claim that this results in logically illicit moves. See Hauerwas, S., 'Abortion and Normative Ethics', *Cross Currents*, (1971), 399-414, pp.400, 411-414.

168 Grisez, 'Practical Reasoning', pp.99-141.

169 See s.3.2.2 for a more detailed discussion of the nature of basic goods.

reason'.¹⁷⁰ In order to explain the nature of the demand of this particular form of reason, Grisez inquires as to its key organising principles. The principle which he sees as most helpful for this task is the demand, which he labels the first principle of practical reasonableness, 'Good is to be done and pursued'.¹⁷¹ This first principle functions by seeking to prevent pointlessness and, more specifically, by seeking to prevent deviation from the point of practical reasoning itself.¹⁷² 'The point of practical knowledge', Grisez maintains, 'is the intelligent direction toward human fulfillment'.¹⁷³ That this is the point of practical knowledge and reasoning should be fairly apparent. Practical reasoning's function is to deal with the situation presented by the horizon of attractive possibilities for choice that are generated by the existence of basic goods. Integral to what makes each of those possibilities attractive is that they are constituent elements of human fulfilment. Consequently, *the function of practical reasoning - its point - is to enable people to make intelligent choices about how to pursue human fulfilment*. On the basis of these observations about the nature and function of practical reasoning, Grisez is able to formulate the essential form of its demand in these terms,

Insofar as it is in your power, allow nothing but the principles corresponding to the basic goods, to shape your practical thinking as you find, develop, and use your opportunities to pursue human fulfilment through your chosen actions.¹⁷⁴

It is in this principle's function of aiming to prevent *all* unreasonable choices that the

170 Grisez, 'Practical Principles', p.121; the emphasis is Grisez's. Given the universal recognisability of basic goods and basic principles of practical reasonableness (at least within broadly compatible accounts of the human condition) this argument suggests - contrary to Bernard Williams' argument against moral realism in 'Internal and External Reasons', in Williams, B., *Moral Luck*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981, 101-113 - that it is plausible to suppose that there can be 'external reasons' for moral action, i.e., reasons for an action which a moral agent should accept if he deliberated rationally even if he did not originally hold such reasons, nor was originally motivated to act in that particular way.

171 Grisez, 'Practical Principles', p.119.

172 It is important to note that the first principle is only first in the sense that it expresses the general orientation of practical reasonableness. As Grisez observes, it alone is not a moral demand because many unreasonable choices can still have a point to them. Lying, for instance, usually has a point - some good (in the non-moral sense) is being pursued by not telling the truth. *Ibid.*

173 *Ibid.*, p.120.

174 *Ibid.*, p.121.

moral 'ought' emerges. Implicit in this principle - which Grisez labels the first principle of morality - is the fact that it is possible for a person to choose to act other than in accordance with it, by, for example, choosing to act in accordance with his feelings instead.¹⁷⁵ Since this first principle of morality articulates the demand of reason as to why a particular choice should be made, it is making an 'ought' claim because, in Grisez's analysis, an 'ought' claim is a summary expression of the reason(s) why a particular course of action should (or should not) be chosen in preference to another. Put simply, *being moral is nothing less than being completely practically reasonable* in the making of decisions about what to do. In order to facilitate its operational use, Grisez restates the demand of the first principle of morality as follows:

In voluntarily 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 a will towards integral human fulfilment.¹⁷⁶

The third step in Grisez's analysis is to seek to outline the other basic (in the sense of irreducible and self-evident) principles of practical reasonableness which articulate the demand of the first principle of morality. In effect, the first principle of morality expresses the nature of the demand when all of these basic principles of practical reasonableness are being adhered to in the making of decisions. Grisez labels these requirements of practical reasonableness the 'modes of responsibility'. They are the operational edge of his system because, as a form of intermediate principles, they shape all the normative conclusions. As was noted in the previous chapter,¹⁷⁷ Grisez and Finnis have adopted different strategies for expressing these principles. Nevertheless, they differ little in content. Grisez's modes of responsibility are listed in Appendix A, with Finnis' account of the basic requirements of practical reasonableness listed in parallel - albeit an approximate one, given the divergence between their approaches - in order to illustrate both the similarities and the

175 *Ibid.*, pp.123-125.

176 *Ibid.*, p.128.

177 See s.2.3.

differences in their formulations. This list of Finnis' principles, which is not in the order he articulates them, also provides a less artificial and, as such, a more plausible account of the basic demands of practical reasonableness because it is not structured, as Grisez's list is, in an attempt to mirror the Beatitudes. It is also worth noting, in an observation which will be returned to at length in Chapter 5,¹⁷⁸ that Grisez identifies each of these modes as corresponding to a virtuous disposition.

The fourth step in Grisez's analysis is the specification of moral norms.¹⁷⁹ This is a process which differs between specifying negative and positive norms. The specification of *negative norms* begins with a *generic* proposal for choice (as distinct from a *particular* proposal for choice). Such a generic proposal might be to bomb enemy civilians as a strategy for bringing a war to an end. It is then necessary to consider, first, how the choices involved in such a proposal relate to the basic goods and, secondly, what the modes of responsibility have to say about this relationship. In the proposal to bomb civilians, it would be necessary to choose to kill them (in other words, to choose to harm the good of life) in order to effect the choice of ending the war - the choice to pursue harmony (in the form of just relationships) between people. On the basis of the eighth mode (that a good should not be deliberately harmed - in this case, life - in the pursuit of another good), it is possible to deduce that this type of action cannot rightly be chosen and to formulate a norm to express this conclusion: you should not kill enemy civilians as a means of bringing a war to an end.

Positive norms, on the other hand, arise from the integral directiveness of practical reason which points people towards human fulfilment. They are primarily concerned to open up choices to people rather than close them off. Positive norms, therefore, will be formulated when a generic proposal for action directs people towards participation in a basic good(s) without violating any of the modes of responsibility. Many of these norms will not be obligatory because people could rightly choose to act

178 See s.5.3.

179 For Grisez's discussion of the process of norm formulation see Grisez, *Principles*, pp.254-256. The process of norm formulation will be further discussed in s.4.3.1.

on the basis of other norms. 'You should help the poor' is not obligatory because a person could rightly choose to act on the basis of some other norm, such as, 'You should care for the sick'. Positive norms become obligatory when they propose a course of action for which all the alternatives are ruled out by various of the modes of responsibility. Often these sorts of norms, such as 'You should only wage war by discriminate means', are positive ways of stating the general shape of moral obligation which arises from the identification of a series of negative norms.

The obligatory nature of many positive norms only becomes known when a particular person faces a specific situation. This level of moral decision making - as distinct from the formulation of general moral norms - represents the final step in Grisez's basic scheme. This important part of Grisez's analysis will be the subject of further discussion in Chapter 5.¹⁸⁰ For the present, an illustration may prove helpful. When a person is faced with the options of being able to help the poor and/or the sick, simply on the basis of the norms outlined above, no single norm will emerge as obligatory. In order to determine whether either of these norms is obligatory, it is necessary to consider the particular circumstances of the particular person facing the choice. Perhaps the person is married and the poor people he is able to serve are in his immediate neighbourhood, whereas the sick he could care for are much further afield and reaching them would require a large amount of time spent in travelling. In this case, the norm, 'You should care for the poor', is likely to emerge as obligatory because the other norm could not morally be followed since the time taken in travelling, in addition to that of actually caring for the sick, would leave insufficient time for the person to maintain his prior family commitments. This example highlights the way in which the obligatory nature of many positive norms can only be known in the light of knowledge about the particularity of the person to whom they apply (in this case, that the person has family commitments) and the particularity of that person's circumstances (the fact he lives in a poor neighbourhood which is long way from the hospice at which he could do volunteer work).

180 See s.5.3.

This final step in Grisez's analysis also reveals that one of the distinct differences between his and O'Donovan's terminology is essentially one of emphasis. Where Grisez speaks of moral *choices*, O'Donovan prefers to speak of moral *decisions*. O'Donovan appears to prefer the word 'decisions' in order to avoid the voluntarist quality which could so easily be associated with the concept of choice in situations where the existential dimension of the individual's freedom to choose was over-emphasised. By using the word 'decisions', O'Donovan seeks to emphasise the fact that it is always possible to find criteria which enable one option to be preferred to another. Grisez, it emerges, would agree with O'Donovan that, in the face of a concrete choice, criteria could always be found by which one option can be determined as preferential to the others. So when Grisez uses the word 'choice', what he seeks to emphasise is the reality of the existential dimension of the person as determining her character by her choices. While O'Donovan does not focus on this dimension of the person in his analysis, neither does he deny its potential significance. The words 'choice' and 'decision', as Grisez and O'Donovan understand them, are, therefore, generally interchangeable, albeit that at times one can usefully be preferred to the other in order to highlight either the importance of the agent or the importance of the given moral order.¹⁸¹

What should be clear from this discussion of the essential elements of Grisez's framework for the derivation of moral conclusions is that he has made a special effort to protect himself against claims of logical incoherence. His strict use of deductive reasoning also makes it difficult to establish the presence of illicit influences in the

181 Grisez's understanding of the meaning of choice will be further explored in s.5.3. It is also worth noting that in Grisez's theory, although a decision can be arrived at by a process of practical reason, a person could still feel the residual tension between two morally appealing options as an emotion of regret at not having chosen the option which not pursued. This possibility arises because there will be basic goods (rationally justifiable goals) present in the unpursued option, the presence of which is why the need for a choice arose in the first place. Choices in health care allocation often present such cases. This meets an objection which Bernard Williams makes to 'purely cognitive' moral theories by demonstrating that at least Grisez's theory is capable of sustaining that there can be one right (in the sense of rationally compelling) answer in situations of moral choice without denying, as Williams believes all such theories must to the cost of their credibility, the possibility of such feelings of regret (Williams, B., 'Ethical Consistency', in Sayer-McCord, *Essays*, 41-58, pp.49, 56).

logical steps of his argument - which is not say that his scheme, as a whole, is immune from 'ideological' influence. In the end, claiming that he makes an illicit logical step requires a much higher burden of proof than Hauerwas' sweeping assertions are able to satisfy.

3.3 The Shape of a Christian Realist Ethic

With the essential features of Grisez's and O'Donovan's approaches now delineated, it is possible to turn to the question as to how their two theories relate to one another. It is easy to start such a sketch with the apparent polarities of their positions. O'Donovan begins with theoretical observations about the order in creation, whereas Grisez begins with the operations of practical reason. From O'Donovan's perspective, if ethics is not based upon theoretical knowledge, both its realist quality and the place of revelation are imperilled. For Grisez, on the other hand, beginning with theoretical observations can only lead to the logical problems upon which scholastic natural law theory foundered and to the misshapenly negative forms of ethics which brought classical moral theology into disrepute. These polarities, however, primarily mark what each author rightly sees as needing to be either defended or sustained by a coherent realist ethic. They are also polarities which hide substantial common ground. Grisez's scheme has emerged as every bit as realist as O'Donovan's and O'Donovan, while emphasizing the importance of reflective (theoretical) knowledge, nevertheless maintains that moral reasoning is also essentially a form of deliberation (i.e., practical reasoning). This common ground opens up the possibility of reconciling their two approaches in such a way as to preserve the key insights which are defended and sustained by both theories. *The moral theory emerging from this reconciliation between O'Donovan's evangelical natural ethic and Grisez's natural law theory, as interpreted in the previous chapter, will be described as a Christian realist ethic.* The description - realist ethic - emphasises the ultimate epistemological grounding of moral truth in a given objective reality. The qualifier *Christian* points out - in a way which the title *natural* law does not - that the realities upon which a *Christian* ethic are grounded include not only those found in nature or creation but also the uncreated

reality of the nature of God, the salvation-historical realities established by God's entry into creation and the hoped-for eschatological realities.

3.3.1 Recognising the Practical & Theoretical Nature of Basic Moral Realities

The logical starting place for seeking to reconcile Grisez's and O'Donovan's approaches into a form of Christian realism is with their accounts of the foundational relationship between theoretical/reflective knowledge and practical reason/deliberation. O'Donovan's approach to this first step of moral reasoning has emerged as involving two *inferential* acts of recognition, the first in which a particular good (e.g., friendship) is inferentially recognised as a form of human flourishing and the second in which the deliberative implication(s) of this knowledge is recognised by a further act of inductive inference.¹⁸² By contrast, Grisez and Finnis' approach involves what may be described as a *non-inferential* act of recognition by practical reason of the basic goods and the basic principles of practical reasonableness.¹⁸³ Finnis describes this act (which he, perhaps less elegantly, labels as 'grasping')¹⁸⁴ most fully when he observes that a person is able to know that a certain inclination to do a particular activity is an instance of the good:

by a simple act of *non-inferential understanding* one grasps that the object of the inclination which one experiences is an instance of a general form of good, for oneself (and others like one).¹⁸⁵

This process of 'grasping' is the means of knowing irreducible and self-evident moral truths. It could not be a form of inferential reasoning because there is no prior premise. This process of non-inferential grasping is not, however, an exercise in 'pure' reason because it relies upon a person's experience. Indeed, as Grisez observes, '[i]n experiencing a tendency and its satisfaction, one learns factual truths

182 See s.3.1.2.

183 See s.2.3.

184 Finnis, *Natural Law*, p.34; emphasis mine.

185 *Ibid.*

which provide a background for practical insight'.¹⁸⁶ As an illustration of this relationship, he observes that,

for instance, children are naturally curious and naturally grow in understanding as they ask and answer questions. Insight into this process provides the basis for the practical insight that knowledge is a good which can be pursued by one's own deliberate action.¹⁸⁷

The previous discussion of the relationship between practical and theoretical reason suggests that to describe theoretical knowledge simply as 'a background for practical insight' understates the fact that theoretical knowledge will be *necessary* for recognising either the basic goods or the practical principles *at all*. As the previous discussion also suggested, the *intrinsic* nature of this relationship should not be understated in the course of preserving logical truths about the operation of practical reason.

Of importance for the present discussion is Finnis' observation that the process of grasping certain things as basic goods and basic principles of practical reasonableness is not simply a reflexive one because, as he observes, it is also the means by which the good in *other* people's lives is grasped.¹⁸⁸ Practical reason, in other words, can operate in relation to the relevant aspects of a person's whole theoretical knowledge about reality.

From O'Donovan's perspective, this non-inferential act of recognising basic principles of practical reasonableness obscures, at the very least, the theoretical knowledge upon which, as emerged in the previous chapter, it is (in a non-inferential sense) dependent.¹⁸⁹ At this point, rather than turning back to O'Donovan's inferential account in an attempt to establish the integral relationship of theoretical and practical reason, it is possible to take a different tack because it would appear implausible,

186 Grisez, *Principles*, p.196.

187 *Ibid.*

188 *Ibid.*, p.67.

189 See ss.2.3-2.4.

given a Christian theoretical understanding of reality, that the only reality which would be recognised in recognising something 'as an instance of a general form of good' would be a practical one. It would seem far more plausible that the *necessary and integral relationship* of practical reason and theoretical knowledge involved in this non-inferential act of recognition will, in fact, lead to a *simultaneous* recognition of *both the practical and the theoretical* nature of the particular instance of the good. So, for example, when a person holding a Christian account of the orderedness of creation experiences an inclination to seek knowledge, she will recognise both its practical nature - as a most basic reason for acting - and its theoretical nature - as a basic form of the human flourishing towards which people are ordered. In the case of the recognition of a principle of practical reasonableness (such as, that a person should not arbitrarily discriminate amongst other people) it will simultaneously be recognised as giving expression to the orderedness of creation (in this case, of the generic relationship between human persons).

This idea that the foundation of moral reasoning involves a simultaneous non-inferential act of recognition of both the theoretical/reflective and practical/deliberative dimensions of *the one reality* of a basic human good or a principle of practical reasonableness, enables both O'Donovan's and Grisez's concerns to be met. From O'Donovan's perspective, the realist nature of a Christian ethic is secure. Not only, as became apparent in the previous chapter, is a Christian realist ethic epistemologically grounded in the Gospel's vision of reality but its realist foundations are now apparent with the recognition, in the first step of moral reasoning itself, of the theoretical and practical dimensions of a single reality. The concept of simultaneous recognition also provides a framework for the account, developed earlier, of the integral operational relationship between theoretical knowledge and practical reason which is involved in the actual pursuit of basic goods.¹⁹⁰ With the realist nature of this account of Christian ethics made fully manifest, O'Donovan need

190 See s.3.2.3.

no longer be concerned that, 'if we describe reflection¹⁹¹ as "theoretical" *as opposed* to "practical", we may obscure the point that moral reasoning has a stake in reflection on reality'.¹⁹²

The advantage of retaining the distinction between theoretical and practical reason by means of the notion of simultaneous recognition is that it enables Grisez and Finnis' carefully worked out account of the logical relationship between theoretical and practical reason to be preserved. This means that the train of practical reasoning can begin with a practical proposition and thus unequivocally avoid violating the non-derivability thesis. While O'Donovan's *inferential* account of recognition holds out the prospect of overcoming the non-derivability thesis, to do so convincingly it requires greater elaboration than he has so far provided. Even if it were to be successful, O'Donovan's account would employ a form of inductive inference in the first step of moral reasoning because it would be coherent to suppose that the premises (the theoretical knowledge) were true but that the conclusion (the practical implication) did not necessarily logically follow. This would introduce a measure of uncertainty into the moral argument which Grisez and Finnis' approach avoids because their entire argument is able to proceed deductively from non-inferentially known premises. Given the importance, especially in a theological context where soteriological issues are at stake, of secure moral knowledge, this is a strong reason for preferring Grisez and Finnis' methodology for grounding practical reasoning and, therefore, an account of the *simultaneous* recognition which preserves this methodological move.

If the notion of the simultaneous recognition of practical and theoretical truth preserves the distinct logical operations of these modes of reason, it also strengthens Grisez and Finnis' claim that practical and theoretical reasoning are two modes of reasoning within the one reality of reason.¹⁹³ This is a claim which is in need of

191 Reflection, it will be recalled, is O'Donovan's designation for what Grisez and Finnis call theoretical reason/knowledge.

192 O'Donovan, 'Moral Reasoning', p.122; emphasis mine.

193 Grisez, 'Structures', p.271. In *Christian Moral Principles*, Grisez offers the following clear illustration of his understanding of the integrally related operation of practical and theoretical

support because their intense focus on the distinct operations of practical reasoning have, at times, left some readers with the impression that practical reasoning is an almost autonomous human reasoning faculty.¹⁹⁴ The notion of simultaneous recognition does not allow for the operations of reason to be conceived of in this autonomous form because a person's capacity for recognition is dependent upon a single power of reason which correlates and connects the insights yielded by these different modes of thought.

It would appear that the idea of the simultaneous recognition of practical and theoretical realities as the first step of moral reasoning serves to protect both the unequivocally realist foundations of the moral theory *and* the logical truths which ensure that it is a coherent exercise of reason which produces a comprehensive and positive account of ethics. This Christian realist approach to recognition suggests a middle position between Finnis' description of Thomist and scholastic theories. If the good is simultaneously recognised as a form of human flourishing and a reason for acting, then Finnis' claim to define the clearly alternative foundations for a natural law theory as 'what is in accordance with human nature' and 'what is reasonable'¹⁹⁵ represents a false dichotomy. The claim for the simultaneous recognition of practical and theoretical truths suggests that *to recognise what is in accordance with human nature is to recognise what is reasonable* and vice versa. Both realities, practical and theoretical, are simultaneously recognised as the foundation of ethics. The nature of this Christian realist position as a form of middle ground is further secured by the adoption of O'Donovan's 'middle ground' account of the nature of moral obligation which was discussed earlier - namely, that *to recognise the basic shape of Christian*

reason within a single power of reason, when he observes that practical knowledge can sometimes be

grasped in ... [a] way so basic and so obvious that it is *seldom* stated or *expressly considered by itself*. People who become aware that food is scarce think they must try to ensure their supply. Underlying this thought is awareness of a fact - food is necessary for survival - and the practical truth: Life is to be preserved. (Grisez, *Principles*, p.196; emphasis mine.)

194 See, for example, Johnstone, p.425.

195 See s.3.1.3.

*moral obligation is to recognise that adhering to the demands of good moral reasoning is doing what God wills or commands.*¹⁹⁶

Although it is not the direct concern of this project, it is worth noting briefly that this form of moral realism also recommends itself by the fact that it would appear to provide the basis for a strong series of responses to the criticisms of moral realism raised by various moral philosophers in recent times.¹⁹⁷ Perhaps most significantly, it enables the integral relationship between reality and morals to be accounted for, while avoiding the emotivist solution to the dilemma of, on the one hand, defining the good as a natural (theoretical) property (ruled out by G.E. Moore's account of the 'naturalistic fallacy')¹⁹⁸ or, on the other hand, retreating into some unacceptably mysterious intuitivism. In avoiding this dilemma, the present form of moral realism is able to maintain that there is a necessary relationship between reality and moral truth without violating the non-derivability thesis¹⁹⁹ - usually thought, as David Brink observes, to 'be inimical to moral realism'.²⁰⁰ In sustaining this relationship, it is also capable of maintaining that moral truths are not strictly logically entailed by naturalistic properties or relations without severing the necessary relationship between a particular state of reality and the particular moral truths to which it gives rise.²⁰¹ This form of moral realism also avoids more recent restatements, such as John Mackie's 'argument from queerness', of essentially the same basic challenge to the possibility of there being objective values. In his argument, Mackie proposes that, '[i]f there were objective values, then they would be entities or qualities or relations of a very strange sort, utterly different from anything else in the universe'²⁰² and that, for such values to be perceived, it would be necessary for people to have 'some

196 See s.3.1.3. Subsequent uses of the word 'recognition' in this thesis will employ it in the non-inferential sense developed in this section.

197 For responses to challenges other than those listed here see footnotes 120, 170, 181, and 222.

198 Moore, G.E., *Principia Ethica*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1903, pp.1-21.

199 See s.3.2.2.

200 Brink, p.144.

201 This being a possibility to which Simon Blackburn thinks moral realism must give rise, with the concomitant result that it would have to admit that moral truth could be severed from its realist foundations (Blackburn, pp.114-123).

202 Mackie, J.L., *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1977, p.38.

faculty of moral perception or intuition utterly different from our ordinary ways of knowing everything else'.²⁰³ As Grisez and Finnis' account makes particularly clear, objective values are not 'queer' entities. Rather, they simply articulate the demands of sound practical reasoning arrived at without the use of any special faculty of moral perception to perceive otherwise unexaminable realities. Mackie accepts that those standing in a broadly Aristotelian/Thomist tradition might consider his argument from queerness wide of the mark.²⁰⁴ Nevertheless, he sees problems with the objective claims of that tradition as well. It is a tradition which he sees as dogged by the confusion of descriptive and prescriptive claims and categories.²⁰⁵ More substantively, he argues that, 'the radical diversity of the goals that men actually pursue and find satisfying makes it implausible to construe such pursuits as resulting from an imperfect grasp of a unitary true good'.²⁰⁶ Although Mackie's last argument is a sound one, the present realist theory, with its account of there being a large number of incommensurable goals (basic goods) instead of a single 'unitary true good', explains this observation more than it is challenged by it. What is more, Grisez and Finnis have done much to untangle the confusion of descriptive and prescriptive claims about which Mackie was also rightly concerned.

There is another important challenge to moral realism, raised by Mackie and others, which is based upon the plurality of normative moral systems which exist and have existed in history. This challenge, however, is best considered in the next section.

3.3.2 Practical Reason and Knowledge of the Moral Order in Creation

If the notion of the simultaneous recognition of the theoretical and practical nature of basic moral realities provides the basis for reconciling O'Donovan's and Grisez's approaches into a form of Christian moral realism, then the implications of the integral relationship between practical and theoretical reason for knowledge of the

203 *Ibid.*

204 *Ibid.*, p.46.

205 *Ibid.*, p.47.

206 *Ibid.*, p.48.

moral order in creation provide the key to determining the remaining architectonic elements of this theory.

It was observed earlier, in the discussion of basic goods, that practical reason provides the foundation for a substantial theoretical claim about a morally important dimension of human nature, namely, that basic goods (a person's most basic reason for acting) identify the constituent elements of human flourishing.²⁰⁷ Practical reasoning, in other words, cuts through the Gordian knot tied by the ambiguities of theoretical observations which bar the way to a clear vision of this dimension of human nature. Helpfully, this move is described by Finnis in the following terms:

There is a legitimate, theoretical (non-practical) investigation and description of human nature ... [however] it cannot be a satisfactory description unless it incorporates results which cannot be obtained except by that practical pursuit that Aristotle called ethics.²⁰⁸

Finnis observes that, while human investigation of other species' natures may be limited to external observations, there is no reason to suppose that the techniques for exploring human nature, which can be known from the 'inside', are similarly limited.²⁰⁹ Finnis' essential point is that practical reason contributes to the interpretation of theoretical knowledge about human nature by pointing to the 'object(ive)s' of human life for which human beings have a potentiality and in whose pursuit they flourish.²¹⁰ It is important to note that, when Finnis observes that theoretical knowledge 'incorporates' the results which can be known by practical reason, he does not mean - as O'Donovan understands him to²¹¹ - that theoretical knowledge therefore also embodies (in the sense of being a form of) practical knowledge. That O'Donovan thinks this is what Finnis means is not surprising because Finnis provides little account of how this process of 'incorporation' occurs, beyond observing that 'the descriptions ["of human affairs"] are not *deduced* from the

207 See s.3.2.2.

208 Finnis, *Fundamentals*, p.20.

209 *Ibid.*

210 *Ibid.*, p.22 see also Finnis, *Natural Law*, p.19.

211 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, pp.xi-xii.

evaluations [of moral choices]'.²¹² It may be less ambiguous to describe this process as the simultaneous recognition of basic moral realities. Finnis' notion of 'incorporation' inevitably suggests an inferential step from practical to theoretical realities, whereas the concept of simultaneous recognition suggests that what is apprehended is a single basic moral reality which possesses an integrally related practical and theoretical dimension. It is the recognition of this theoretical dimension as to what constitutes generic potentialities of humans which can then be used to inform an account of human nature.

The great advantage of this integral use of practical reason for discerning the moral order *in Creation* is that it will enable many of the difficulties which arise from the use of theoretical reason alone to be overcome. First, practical knowledge will not be distorted by scientific methodology which is, at best, uninterested in discerning the morally relevant dimensions of order in creation. Secondly, the effects of bad moral decisions in distorting theoretical observations of human nature will be largely avoided. Practical reason, in discerning the basic goods, is asking a *pre-moral* question. Even bad moral choices will reveal human nature accurately because they will still be concerned with the pursuit of some human good - albeit in (sometimes grossly) inadequate ways which might involve harming other goods. Similarly, the capacity of practical reason to recognise the basic principles of practical reasonableness overcomes the need to attempt to deduce the principles which direct people towards their flourishing from ambiguous theoretical observations about operational realities such as marriage. The recognition of such principles requires only knowledge of the condition of humanity in the fallen state in which people find themselves, in addition to the recognition of what constitutes human flourishing.²¹³ It is possible to conclude, therefore, that the integral relationship between practical reason and theoretical knowledge is capable of producing a full and clear picture of the important morally relevant features of the order in Creation.

212 Finnis, *Natural Law*, p.19.

213 See s.2.3.

It is critical to observe that the knowledge which practical reason provides is only of *a* dimension of human nature. As Finnis observes, 'I am not for a moment saying that everything that we know about human nature comes from our ethical understanding'.²¹⁴ Practical reason is not some new tool in the Enlightenment quest for 'natural man' or classical anthropology's quest for 'consensual man'.²¹⁵ On the contrary, it would be possible for Grisez and Finnis to agree, in large measure, with the eminent anthropologist Clifford Geertz when he observes that,

Man is to be defined neither by his innate capacities alone, as the Enlightenment sought to do, nor by his actual behaviours alone, as much contemporary social science seeks to do, but rather by the link between them, by the way in which the first is transformed into the second, his generic potentialities focused into his specific performances. It is in man's *career*, in its characteristic course, that we can discern, however dimly, his nature ...²¹⁶

Grisez and Finnis could affirm Geertz's basic approach to the definition of human nature as consistent with their own analysis. Where they would differ is that, in relation to the morally significant 'generic potentialities' of the human person, it is unnecessary simply to rely upon theoretical observations 'of not only various cultures but the various sorts of individuals within each culture'.²¹⁷ In the light of Grisez and Finnis' analysis, what is particularly valuable in Geertz's definition is its emphasis on the diverse flourishing of humans as an integral part of what it is to be human. If this is sound anthropology, it is also sound moral theology. Combined with a recognition of a full account of incommensurable basic goods, it suggests that there is great value in the diverse flowering of human cultures because each, potentially, represents an incommensurably valuable expression of both the good that humans can realise and of what it is to be human.

This account of the relationship between human nature and the realisation of the good

214 Finnis, *Fundamentals*, p.22. See also Grisez, *Principles*, pp.58-59.

215 See s.3.1.1.

216 Geertz, p.52.

217 *Ibid.*, p.53.

provides the foundation for a dramatic reversal of the objection based on moral and cultural diversity which critics like Hauerwas²¹⁸ think to present an insurmountable objection to natural law theory and which others believe are fatal to moral realist theories in general.²¹⁹ Rather than moral and cultural diversity being at odds with a realist theory, it *is to be expected* of one maintaining that there is a rich diversity of incommensurable goods and incommensurable instantiations of those goods for individuals and communities to choose amongst. It is also to be expected that communities will choose different mixes and forms of instantiation of the good and that different moral norms will be needed to support these different communal choices. For example, the moral norms necessary to support a society's decision to place a priority on the community and the family in their pursuit of harmony between people will be different from those of a society where pursuit of the material well-being necessary for life and the advancement of knowledge is thought to be best achieved by individual competition.²²⁰ Further diversity, of a less positive kind, is to be expected and accounted for by failures of reason in determining how to pursue the basic goods. Such failures account for some of the most troubling elements of diversity amongst humans over moral action. Communities that have engaged in human sacrifices, for example, are almost always employed to undermine dramatically any attempt to establish a consensus about moral norms. Such wickedness points both to the universality of the structures of practical reason - for such people's action is intelligible as the pursuit of harmony with some greater-than-human source of

218 See s.3.1.1.

219 For example, Mackie, pp.36-38.

220 Grisez's explanation of the diverse ways in which communities can legitimately pursue the good helps to overcome the objections to natural law which are well stated by Marcel Bovin when he observes that, '[s]peculation on the nature of man and on natural law can however impoverish man by focussing on common denominators; it also risks to erect views proper to one culture into principles mistakenly assumed to be absolute and universal' (Bovin, M., 'Natural Law and Cultural Norms', *African Ecclesiastical Review*, 20 (1978), 230-235, p.234). Grisez's account can be used to point out how the common denominators of human nature are also the foundation for cultural diversity and why some values are indeed relative to culture. Thus, Grisez's theory sustains Bovin's observation that,

man's nature is not exhausted in what men have in common. The fact that there should be appreciable difference suggests that man's nature is fully realised in no one culture[,] that man is an *unfinished symphony* about the last movement of which each culture has something to say. (*Ibid.*)

meaning and value - and to its fallibility. Finnis provides a valuable account of the diversity of moral norms produced by the failings of practical reason, arguing that these failings arise from poor practical reasoning where a limited range of goods are unduly focused upon or where particular requirements of practical reason are wrongly emphasised at the expense of others, which may have been misunderstood anyway. He views these distortions in practical reasonableness as being explicable

by reference to an uncritical, unintelligent spontaneity; sometimes by reference to the bias and oversight induced by convictions of language, social structure, and social practices; and sometimes (and always, perhaps, most radically) by the bias of self-love or of other emotions and inclinations that resist the concern to be simply reasonable.²²¹

While Finnis accounts for moral diversity primarily in terms of the failure of practical reason, failures of theoretical reason should not be underestimated as the cause of erroneous moral norms. The tribe engaging in human sacrifice, for example, might only have sacrificed infants because of a genuine, albeit mistaken, belief that they were not persons. On the door-step of theoretical beliefs about the relative capacities of the sexes and various races can also be placed much of the responsibility for the misshapen moral understandings surrounding these issues. Failures of moral reasoning are, in other words, often failures of scientific reason. This only serves to highlight the importance of the relationship for good moral reasoning of both good practical and theoretical reasoning.²²² These various explanations, built on natural law reasoning itself, of the causes of moral diversity mean that it is possible to echo Finnis' observation that 'we can see how "natural" is that diversity of moral opinion which the sceptic makes such play of'.²²³

Interestingly, despite Hauerwas' various objections to the foundations of natural law theory, he actually identifies the possibility of adopting the approach to these

221 Finnis, *Natural Law*, p.127.

222 These explanations as to how moral errors arise provides the sort of substantive theory of error which Bernard Williams believes any broadly Aristotelian account of ethics needs to possess to be plausible but which he doubts can be produced (Williams, B., *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, Fontana Press/Collins, London, 1985, pp.43-44).

223 Finnis, *Natural Law*, p.127.

problems which Grisez takes:

It may be ... that virtues such as courage and temperance are integral to all attempts to reason rightly, but the stress must be on 'rightly'. It is not as if reason *simpliciter* requires courage, but any account of rationality that is normative implies courage.²²⁴

This is, in fact, Grisez's very point for, while reason *simpliciter* will not produce universal moral norms, if that reason is wholly adhered to (i.e., if a person is reasoning 'rightly'), it will yield various universally applicable moral norms (in addition, it should be noted for Hauerwas' benefit, to many norms applicable only to particular persons in particular situations).

This discussion of the implications of the integral relationship between practical and theoretical reason for knowledge of the moral order in creation has considerable bearing on one of the logically pivotal features of O'Donovan's evangelical natural ethic: the uncertainty that O'Donovan argued was associated with seeking to know the moral order in creation without the aid of revelation. To begin with, the account of the origin of moral diversity should make it clear that 'the epistemological programme for an ethic that is "natural"' is not, as O'Donovan claims, 'that its contents are simply known to all'²²⁵ but rather that they *are capable* of being known by all. If apprehension of the moral order does not need to take as its starting-point theoretical observations, there is no epistemological need to claim that its contents be known to all. Even more importantly, by avoiding the need to rely upon ambiguous theoretical observations about the natural order, the integral operation of theoretical and practical reason makes it possible to obtain a full and clear understanding of the moral order *in creation* without the need to resort to revelation. O'Donovan's argument as to why the Gospel had to be the epistemological foundation *for ethics* turned on his claim that 'man's ... confusion in *his perceptions*' of the created order was 'inescapable'.²²⁶ It has now emerged that this confusion in humanity's powers of perception is not

224 Hauerwas, *Community*, p.265.

225 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.19.

226 *Ibid.*, p.18; emphasis mine.

‘inescapable’. That such a development is possible should not be a complete surprise because O’Donovan understood the barrier to knowledge of the moral order to be epistemological, not ontological. O’Donovan did not claim that the created order *per se* had been disfigured - indeed, he specifically rules this out.²²⁷ Rather, he claimed that because humans are prone to make choices contrary to that order (i.e., immoral decisions), theoretical knowledge of that order would be difficult to establish in the face of all the resultant contradictory evidence. These difficulties are overcome by a decisive change in epistemological strategy which utilises practical reasoning’s capacity to determine the content of the pre-moral foundations of moral reasoning in a way which is unaffected by the consequences of immoral choices. Of course, this is a capacity which will always risk being inadequately exercised. However, Grisez and Finnis’ analysis itself suggests it is, in fact, sufficiently capable of being well exercised to provide secure foundations for moral reasoning.

The effect of the removal of this epistemological barrier, from the perspective of O’Donovan’s account, is that it is no longer *necessary* to look to the Gospel as providing the only secure source of knowledge about the moral order *in creation*. What is more, when the integral operation of practical and theoretical reason furnishes more certain moral knowledge than that provided by Scripture, then that knowledge should be used as the foundation of moral reasoning. For, once a basic duty of concern for others (and/or for the self) is recognised, along with the potential to do harm to others (and/or the self) arising from immoral choices, the more probably correct moral knowledge should always be preferred. This means that the extent to which Scripture should be consulted in preference to reason for knowledge about the moral order in creation will depend upon the strength and nature of the claims which can be sustained for its containing revelation. Certainly, O’Donovan, Grisez and Hauerwas all have a sufficiently ‘high’ view of Scripture in terms of the revelation contained in it, its accessibility and its relevance to mean that at least in a

227 *Ibid.*, p.19.

reconciliation of their positions it will continue to have an important role.²²⁸ The nature of its place in a Christian ethic will, however, need to be stated carefully because, as regards the moral order in creation, the justification for its being the epistemological starting for Christian ethics can no longer be that humanity's powers of perception are so inescapably confused that the moral order is substantially unknowable without the Gospel.

This conclusion has profound implications for Protestant ethics far beyond its implications for the shape of O'Donovan's evangelical natural ethic because it is a very familiar move for Protestant theologians to turn to the Gospel as the foundation of their ethics, at least in part, because of the dogmatic belief that knowledge of the created order is substantially unknowable to fallen humanity. This Protestant dogma would appear to need serious revision and with it the place of the Gospel and Scripture in Protestant ethics in general. A possible direction which such a revision might take is suggested by the place which revelation will have in the kind of *Christian* realist theory which is emerging from the present ecumenical discussion. It is to that question which it is now necessary to turn.

3.3.3 The Role of Revelation in a Realist Theory

A central contention of both this and the previous chapter is that, in order for a moral theory to be *Christian*, ethics must be an enterprise which is subsequent to embracing the world view which is revealed by the Gospel. For it is the revelation of the Gospel which enables people to know those dimensions of reality which *are unknowable* in creation as creation: those aspects of the nature of God which are not revealed by creation itself, the salvation-historical intentions of this ultimate reality and the nature of what lies beyond the eschatological horizon. These features of reality, unknowable without revelation, will then give rise to the distinctiveness of a Christian ethic in two ways: first, as emerged in Chapter 2, they will lead to the recognition of new basic

228 Grisez, *Principles*, pp.835-839; O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, pp.85, 137, 143, 158-160; for a consideration of Hauerwas' understanding of the nature of Scripture see ss.4.1-4.2. For an account of all three authors' positions on the contemporary relevance of Scripture see ss.4.3.2-4.3.3.

principles of practical reasonableness; and, secondly, they will provide new theoretical knowledge which will shape the way in which principles of practical reasonableness should be pursued - exactly how this occurs will be considered shortly. So, while it may have appeared that the place of revelation in a Christian ethic was imperilled by the possibility that moral order in creation was knowable without the aid of revelation, it transpires that revelation is, in fact, a more secure epistemological starting-point for a *Christian* ethic than before. *Christian* ethics, therefore, must always be a form of moral *theology* in which theology epistemologically precedes ethics.

Although this function of revelation in shaping the world view from which ethics arises has been explored primarily in terms of Grisez's analysis, it could also, as has been suggested earlier in this chapter, be used to explain O'Donovan's observation that revelation's description of 'the shape of things as a whole' enables the moral order in creation to be recognised with clarity.²²⁹ What is more, O'Donovan's account of the relationship between Scripture's revelation about eschatology and moral understanding clearly illustrates the way in which the revelation of new theoretical knowledge about reality will profoundly shape the way in which principles of practical reasonableness should be pursued. Consideration of this element of O'Donovan's analysis is usefully focused on the question of the vocations which a Christian may pursue. This presumes that, on the basis of a Christian world view, a person has already recognised as a new principle that she should pursue her role - her vocation - in the Kingdom of God.²³⁰ The question then becomes, what vocations are there in the Kingdom of God which it is open to a Christian to pursue? In bringing eschatological insights to bear on this question, the vocation which O'Donovan has considered in most detail is that of marriage. He argues that Jesus' teaching that 'in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage' (Mt 22:30) indicates that '[h]umanity in the presence of God will know a community in which the fidelity of love which marriage makes possible will be extended beyond the limits of

229 O'Donovan, *Marriage*, p.4. See also s.3.1.2.

230 This presumption and the concept of vocation are treated in more detail in s.5.3.2.

marriage'.²³¹ He then proposes that this eschatological transformation is of moral significance for this age because, once it is known, witness can be born to it. The possibility and coherence of such a witness arose in the early Church because the Church fostered the social conditions which could support the vocation of witness which was the single life.²³² The early Church, he argues,

conceived of marriage and singleness as alternative vocations, each a worthy form of life, the two together comprising the whole Christian witness to the nature of affectionate community. The one declared that God had vindicated the order in creation, the other pointed beyond it to its eschatological transformation. But the coexistence of the two within the Christian church did not mean a loss of integrity to either.²³³

What this suggests is that within the Church, which by its nature witnesses to both the present and the eschatological realities of the Kingdom of God, it is possible for there to be witnesses to both the present and the eschatological nature of moral realities. Lest this be seen as establishing some kind of dualism between an ethic of the Kingdom and an ethic of creation, O'Donovan emphasises that the eschatological moral reality must be a fulfilment of present moral realities.²³⁴ In the case of marriage, it is not that there is simply no marriage in the Kingdom but that the particular type of relationship which marriage makes possible in creation no longer requires the structures of marriage itself. O'Donovan's approach certainly appears to offer a good basis to account for the nature of the moral realities of other vocations of witness to the Kingdom of God. These vocations need not only be the traditional vocations of the religious but might also include lay vocations, such as a pacifist vocation to witness to an eschatological ordering of relationships which does not employ coercion.

This particular element of O'Donovan's analysis offers considerable insight. It both accounts for the distinctive shape of a Christian ethic and resolves the apparently

231 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.70.

232 *Ibid.*

233 *Ibid.*

234 *Ibid.*, p.15.

intractable tension between the moral demands of creation and those distinctive demands born of the eschatological nature of Christian ethics. The value of this aspect of O'Donovan's analysis can be highlighted by briefly suggesting how it might enable him to meet Hauerwas 'half-way' in his claim for the essentially pacifist nature of a Christian ethic. Hauerwas makes a strong case for the non-coercive ordering of relationships (his understanding of pacifism) as a defining eschatological reality of the Kingdom of God.²³⁵ This is a reality to which Christians have a duty to 'witness'²³⁶ by making it manifest in the community of the Church.²³⁷ However, Hauerwas argues that the 'faithful manifestation of the peaceable kingdom in the world'²³⁸ is the *only* vocation of those who are members of the Church.²³⁹ While O'Donovan appears to agree that the Church *as Church* (as a gathering body of Christians) has a vocation to witness to 'the uncoercive harmony of God's reign',²⁴⁰ he maintains that this does not exhaust the vocations open to those who are members of the Church because God's eschatological reign is not only uncoercive but also just. There is, therefore, a Christian vocation, which is part of *the Church's mission* (part of what Christians do *outside* the peaceable community of the Church), to seek to have the secular order witness to the just ordering of human relationships which is part of Christ's rule in the Kingdom of God.²⁴¹ O'Donovan's analysis means that those who are members of the Church can have vocations both to seek the just ordering of human relationships and to witness to their eschatological transformation as relationships of mercy. Only in the full eschatological realisation of the Kingdom

235 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, pp.85-91.

236 Hauerwas, *Nations*, p.117.

237 *Ibid.*, p.118. Hauerwas is careful to argue that '[t]he church is not the kingdom but the foretaste of the kingdom' and that 'the life of the kingdom is broader than even that of the church' (Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.97).

238 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.99.

239 *Ibid.*, pp.99-102.

240 O'Donovan, O., 'War and Peace', in McGrath, A. (ed), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1993, 652-656, p.656.

241 O'Donovan, O., *Desire of the Nations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, pp.211-212, 218. It should be noted that Grisez does not have an adequate account of the Christian use of force relying primarily on a notion of self-defence. His account would be considerably strengthened by adopting O'Donovan's analysis of this point.

of God will be the just ordering of human relationships and the non-coercive relationships of mercy to which the Church witnesses 'be entirely one'.²⁴²

In terms of the analysis developed in this chapter, O'Donovan's account of the way in which revealed knowledge about eschatology shapes ethics can be summarised as follows. The revelation of the nature of eschatological realities and their relationship to present realities, including the Kingdom of God, alters a person's world view. This means, first, that they will recognise the truthfulness of the new basic principles of practical reasonableness which arise from this changed understanding of the nature of reality. Secondly, this new account of reality will provide important theoretical knowledge about how these principles might be pursued. In the case of the principle that a person should pursue her role in the Kingdom of God (her vocation), the revelation of eschatological realities and their relationship to present realities will provide her with knowledge about the range and nature of the vocations which she has to discern between in deciding upon her particular role in the Kingdom.

In addition to this general epistemological function of shaping a Christian ethic, revelation will also have a more direct role to play in discerning moral truth. For when a person begins on the practical task of deliberating about which action to pursue, he does not have to deliberate alone, unaided by the wisdom and experience of others. Quite to the contrary. It will be integral to the pursuit of the good of practical reasoning - 'of being able to bring one's intelligence to bear effectively ... on the problems of choosing one's actions'²⁴³ - that a person employ those means which will enable him to bring his intelligence to bear more effectively on the task of choosing what to do.²⁴⁴ If there were means available to assist with the task of discerning practical truth - for example, parents, wise friends, or ethical writings -

242 *Ibid.*, p.260. For the notion that '[a]n ordered world peace is a part of the eschatological hope that Christians derived from Israel' see *ibid.*, p.267.

243 Finnis, *Natural Law*, p.88.

244 The implications of this argument for the relationship between theoretical and practical reason will be returned to in s.4.2 in the context of a more specific discussion about the relationship between Scripture and practical reason.

but a person deliberately chose not to consult them, he would be violating the requirement of practical reasoning not to choose against a basic good by deliberately choosing against the requirements of good practical reasoning itself. There will, of course, sometimes be good reasons not to consult potential sources of moral illumination such as, 'I will learn more if I puzzle this problem out for myself', 'This is a very personal choice and I want to avoid being unduly influenced by others', or 'This ethics book is just too difficult to follow!' However, if there were a source of substantial general practical knowledge about which very strong claims were made for its truth value, it would be irresponsible for a person not to seek to know what this source taught if he accepted the claims for its truth value. Scripture understood as revelation or as containing revelation of moral relevance could be just such a source.²⁴⁵ As was noted earlier, all three authors defend a strong account of Scripture as revelation.²⁴⁶ These accounts are sufficiently strong to suggest not simply that Scripture should be consulted but that it should be the *operational starting-point* of moral deliberation.

It is very important to recognise the qualification that Scripture is the *operational* starting-point for moral deliberation - the point at which a Christian begins when she directly addresses the question, 'what should I do?' - rather than the *epistemological* starting-point. As should already be clear, the epistemological starting-point of a Christian realist ethic is a *theological* description of the world, not simply a *scriptural* description. Of course, this theological description will have its origins in Scripture but the real shape of this theological description of reality will arise from reflections *upon* Scripture *in the light of* contemporary understandings, including contemporary understandings of the nature of Scripture itself. The implications of the relationship between these two starting-points for the nature of the moral insights which will actually be recognised in Scripture will be returned to once the basic process of

245 While Grisez argues that the teaching of the magisterium of the Catholic Church is another such source (Grisez, *Principles*, pp.831-835), discussion will be focused on the agreement about Scripture, not least because to do otherwise would be to engage in an argument about ecclesiology which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

246 *Ibid.*, pp.835-839; O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, pp.85, 137, 143, 158-160; for a consideration of Hauerwas' understanding of the nature of Scripture see ss.4.1-4.2.

recognising the moral insights in Scripture has been discussed. It is also important to recognise that Scripture is the *starting-point* of moral deliberation. This means that moral deliberation is not limited to reflection upon Scripture. Scripture itself does not explicitly claim to contain all moral truth. If it were interpreted so as to suggest that it does, there are strong reasons, which will be considered in the next chapter, for considering such an understanding of Scripture to be unsound.²⁴⁷

If Scripture is the operational starting-point for moral deliberation, such deliberation will need to begin by discerning what is revealed as being worthwhile to pursue in life. The first question of such an inquiry should not be, ‘why do I do what I do?’, but rather, ‘why did Jesus do he what did?’, because Jesus’ *life*, not simply his teachings, is a decisive form of revelation.²⁴⁸ The aim of such questions is to produce a practical answer whose truth can, in a non-inferential sense, be recognised. In asking why Jesus did what he did, part of the answer is likely to be ‘for friendship’, at which point the questioner should also recognise friendship as something which is good in itself, something which it would be worthwhile to pursue. Having inquired of Jesus’ life, the next field of inquiry should be into what the matriarchs, patriarchs, prophets, psalmists and intimate company of Jesus saw as being of value in human life. Finally, a Christian should reflect on the lives of the saints more generally, for these are also lives which the Christian can consider to be more likely to embody moral truth than his own and, indeed, though in a weaker sense than Scripture, they might also be said to be revelatory. Only once these revelatory sources have been considered should the question be asked, ‘why do I do what I do?’, in order to determine those activities which may be humanly fulfilling but which are difficult to identify in the revelatory lives, either because of the particular focuses of activity in those lives or simply because of the lack of historical details about aspects of them. This reflexive deliberation will be an important stage in moral deliberation because, although most elements of human fulfilment are relatively easy to discern because

247 See ss.4.3.2-4.3.3.

248 This is a claim which will be discussed at greater length in s.4.1.3.

Scripture is a record of human lives, the intrinsically valuable nature of some goods, such as work and play, may be more difficult to perceive.

Once a person has an understanding of the worthwhile things and activities to be pursued in life (the basic goods), then there is the question as to how these goods might be coherently and effectively pursued. This is first a matter of determining the principles of good practical reasoning. For those with a high view of the revelation to be found in the Bible, it provides the central reference point for such an inquiry - although, as will be discussed in the following chapter, it need not and, in fact, should not be the only reference point.²⁴⁹ Some principles will be explicitly articulated in Scripture - 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself' (Mk 12:31); others will be implicit in the actions of the lives of those depicted in the Bible and will need to be discerned. Having discerned the principles which guide a person towards human fulfilment, Scripture may also provide theoretical knowledge as to how these goods are to be pursued. Most obviously, it will provide knowledge about what is involved in seeking harmony with the more-than-human source of meaning and value. For the Christian, this will involve reflection on a substantial range of scriptural teachings from those concerning the requirements for reconciliation with God to reflections upon the nature of prayer.

It is important to recognise that this use of Scripture in these foundational moves of moral deliberation needs to be handled with some analytic care if it is not to violate the non-derivability thesis. If it were simply to involve saying, for instance, 'I should not be violent because Jesus, whose life revealed the truth as to what living well means, was not violent', it would violate the non-derivability thesis. The premises of this deductive exercise of reason are two theoretical propositions - that Jesus' life reveals the truth about what living well means and that he was not violent - while the conclusion is a practical one, 'I should not be violent'. This problem can, however, be overcome by the following approach to the same basic facts: 'In seeking to choose

249 See s.4.3.3.

how best to act, I should reflect upon the life of Jesus because it reveals the divine truth as to what living well means', the likely result of this reflection will be the recognition of the practical truth that 'in seeking to live well, one should not be violent'. Theoretical knowledge can, in other words, contain practical truths whose nature as a practical insight is capable of being recognised or accepted when it is approached from the perspective of practical reason. Put another way: there can be theoretical knowledge about ethics. This was an observation which was avoided earlier, lest it obscure the discussion of the distinct operations of the two forms of reason - a distinctness which, nevertheless, it is critical to keep in mind in the present discussion. Most broadly, theoretical knowledge is the subject of any quest to know the truth. If ethics has an objective content then it is capable of being the subject of a substantial body of theoretical knowledge.²⁵⁰ What makes knowledge about ethics complex is that, as Finnis observes, 'alone amongst all academic pursuits' it has two objectives: knowledge of truth (theoretical knowledge) and knowledge about how to act (practical knowledge).²⁵¹

A proposition about ethics which is asserted to be true, as a matter of theoretical knowledge, will be true if it conforms with practical knowledge about ethics. As such, it is a statement of a theoretical truth - of a proposition whose truth is known by its conformity to a prior reality, in this case by its conformity to the practical knowledge produced by practical reason. The statement of a theoretical truth (of a fact) such as 'you should not use bad means to good ends', cannot, however, found a deductive train of practical reasoning because such a proposition does not, as a fact, provide a reason not to use bad means. It is simply that, as a statement of theoretical truth, it cannot be the foundation for a deductive train of moral reasoning. This is not to say, however, that the practical truth embodied in such a statement cannot be the foundation of a train of moral reasoning in any sense. Although ethics has the dual objectives of discerning how to act and discerning the truth, both are dealing with the

250 Although even to claim that it does not have an objective content is to make a theoretical truth claim about the content of ethics.

251 Finnis, *Fundamentals*, p.4.

same reality as to what is involved in being moral. The two forms of reason act as separate spotlights on the one reality. Each spotlight illuminates this one reality to further its own objective. Nevertheless, once either form of reasoning has illuminated this one reality, the other form of reasoning will be capable of recognising it. So, when the theoretical claim is made that 'you should not use bad means to good ends', a person will be capable of recognising the practical truth embodied in this statement. Such an act of recognition is precisely that - 'an act of recognition' and not a deduction of a practical truth from a theoretical truth. In this non-inferential sense, then, a theoretical statement of the truth about ethics can be the foundation of a train of moral reasoning.

The fact that theoretical and practical reason have distinct operations in this sort of non-deductive use of theoretical knowledge as a foundation for a train of moral reasoning is particularly apparent in situations where, in the face of a single statement of a theoretical truth claim about ethics, one person recognises it as a truth which should guide practical deliberation but the other does not. Both could recognise the theoretical truth of a statement, such as 'you should not use bad means to good ends', in the sense that it is a proposition which conforms to the practical knowledge which is the product of somebody's practical reasoning. Nevertheless, as a result of different world views, the two might disagree as to the truth value of the exercise of practical reasoning which generated the practical knowledge and which was embodied in the theoretical statement. Even in disagreeing about its practical truthfulness, both people are capable of recognising the practical claim embodied in the theoretical statement. In other words, the spotlight of theoretical reason has illuminated what practical reason can recognise as a practical claim but which it does not recognise as a *true* practical claim. This capacity to recognise the practical claim in a theoretical statement, even when it is not immediately recognised as a true claim, is particularly important in the context of revelation because it opens up the possibility of a person *accepting* as true the practical claim in a statement of revelation, even when she does not recognise it as true.

Having outlined this analytic framework by which the revelation in Scripture can be integrated into the process of practical reasoning, it is possible to summarise this relationship by observing that in the process of moral deliberation the primary task of revelation is to open people's eyes so that they recognise the world as it really is. Revelation, it can be concluded, has the authority of truth, of being able to reveal that which is ultimately rationally compelling. It is because the authority of revelation is the authority of truth that O'Donovan warns that reason must know its limits, that it must accept that sometimes it may not immediately recognise the reason in that which is ultimately rationally compelling:

Because reason know the cosmos from within, as an embracing mystery which surrounds it, it knows that it can never be uncritical of any of its own perceptions, not even the strictly formal ones, and that it must always be open to the possibility of revelation from the standpoint of transcendence.²⁵²

There may be times when the revelation in Scripture will have to be trusted as offering a guide to action which is rational, even when the rationality of that guidance is not apparent. However, because the authority of divine truth in the form of revelation is still the authority of truth - of reason - it will be a trust that what is called for is not some irresolvable paradox. Such a step of trust, O'Donovan argues, must be taken by the disciple with the 'hope to see the moment of critical confrontation finally resolved by the elevation of his reason to grasp God's action as a coherent whole'.²⁵³

If reason must know its limits because the authority of revelation is the authority of truth, then similarly Scripture must know the limits of its capacity to communicate revelation because of reason's capacity to discern the truth. While these limits will be returned to in greater detail in the following chapter,²⁵⁴ the limit which is worth noting in the present context is that which arises from the difference between the

252 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.133.

253 *Ibid.*, p.136.

254 See s.4.3.3.

world view which is the epistemological foundation for a modern Christian ethic and the world view(s) which shape Scripture. The result of these differences is that the truthfulness of various ethical claims in Scripture may not be recognised because they arise from a world view incompatible with that produced by the modern theology from which a person's capacity to recognise moral truth arises. Perhaps the most obvious area where this is likely to occur is in relation to the practical principles and morally significant theoretical knowledge generated by a belief in an imminent eschaton such as may be found in Paul's teaching on marriage (1 Cor 7), which would appear to suggest that marriage is not an equivalently preferable vocation to singleness. This limit on what will be recognised as true in Scripture also suggests that the process of moral theology coming to Scripture with its pre-existing theological framework, which usually raises the hackles of biblical critics,²⁵⁵ may, in fact, be a way of meeting, at least in part, their very concerns because the result of this process will be that those moral insights which are particular to the theology of the Bible are likely to be recognised as just that. Despite these limits generated by a modern theology on the moral truth recognisable in Scripture as revelation, both Scripture and revelation remain vitally important in shaping the nature of a *Christian* ethic. Their primary operation, however, is at the epistemological level rather than at the level of propositional claims.

3.3.4 In Summary

What has emerged in the last two chapters is a form of Christian realism which seeks to preserve the critical insights and emphases of both O'Donovan's and Grisez's approaches. The starting-point of such a theory is the Gospel - that is, the theological account of reality which arises from reflection upon Scripture. Before it is possible to answer the question, 'what am I to do?', it is necessary to have some understanding of who the 'I' is and what the options are 'to do'. This requires an account of how reality 'is'. In the case of the Christian, it requires an account of the nature of God, creation, humanity and eschatology - all of which open up and shape the possibilities

255 See, for example, Nineham, D., *The Use and Abuse of the Bible*, Macmillan, London, 1976 and Houlden, J.L., *Ethics and the New Testament*, Mowbray, Oxford, 1975, especially pp.3-4.

for human action. It is, in other words, theological reflection which will ground and shape a Christian's understanding of these realities. The result of this will be that, when a person holding to a Christian world view turns to Scripture and experience for an understanding of the most basic possibilities for action (the basic goods), she will simultaneously recognise these realities as a given part of the orderedness of creation. In seeking to discern how to pursue these possibilities, a Christian account of reality will give rise to practical principles which will produce a form of moral obligation with significant elements which are very distinct from those which arise from other accounts of reality. Those, for example, who do not see creation as a particular possibility purposefully brought about by a creator will not recognise as a principle of practical reasonableness that one should treat all good things as God's gifts; and those who do not know that the ultimate ground of being is love will not recognise the practical principle that all people should be treated according to God's perfect measure of mercy. This integral connectedness between the process of practical reasoning and theoretical knowledge about reality which forms the foundation of a Christian realist ethic will remain the defining dimension of moral deliberation as it operates to shape the nature of moral obligation.

If ethics begins with the Gospel, it also ends with Gospel. The Gospel is not simply the precursor to moral deliberation. It is a constant point of reference because it is a truthful witness to the nature of reality and, finally, because it points to the fulfilment which is the project of ethics in that supreme reality which is the ultimate origin of ethics itself.

Chapter 4

The Relationship Between Narrative Ethics and Christian Moral Realism

With the shape of a Christian realist theory sketched out, it is possible to turn to consider the relationship between such a theory and Hauerwas' claims for the role of narrative in ethics. What makes this inquiry possible is that the *Christian* realist theory, which has emerged in the previous two chapters, puts to rest Hauerwas' concern that all broadly natural law theories threaten both the epistemological distinctness and the discrete content of a Christian ethic.¹ It is, in other words, no longer necessary to fear that all forms of natural law theory have a hidden agenda to secularise and universalise Christian ethics. On the contrary, a Christian realist theory has an interest in more fully articulating the relationship between its distinct claims and the particular world view of the Gospel. Hauerwas' claim that Christian ethics is founded upon the distinct narrative tradition of the gospels is, therefore, an important subject for investigation by a theory claiming to be *Christian* in a strong sense.

In order to elicit the essential form of Hauerwas' narrative ethic for the purposes of relating it to a Christian realist theory, the most helpful path of inquiry is to ask, in what sense does Hauerwas understand narratives to be true? This question is a helpful one because it demands a clarification of the relationship between Hauerwas' hermeneutical and epistemological claims - claims which, it will be suggested, have often been confused by commentators on his work, with the result that the fundamental structure of Hauerwas' ethics has generally not been understood. Part of this confusion may also have arisen because the question of the nature of the

1 For an account of Hauerwas' concerns see ss.2.1-2.2.

truthfulness of religious narratives has been little considered, as Gary Comstock, a philosopher of religion and a perceptive commentator on narrative theology in general,² has observed:

Over the past several decades philosophers of religion have spent a great deal of time analyzing the truth of religious belief ... By comparison, we have spent very little time in analyzing the truth of religious narratives.³

Before proceeding to that question, it is necessary to identify what is encompassed by the category of narrative in Hauerwas' thought. Although Hauerwas agrees with George Stroup's criticism that 'much of the theology emphasising the category of narrative tends to offer a vague description of story'⁴ and, as a result, makes some attempt at definition,⁵ Thomas Ogletree, in an overall survey of Hauerwas' work, is nevertheless able to observe that,

Hauerwas' discussion of narrative ... is overgeneralized. He uses this category to speak of autobiography, short story, novel, parable, the story of people (which presumably would include historical recollections, legends, hero stories, tall tales, and the like), 'archetypal stories' or myths or 'exemplary stories' (e.g., the Christian story, or the story of God), and even philosophical attempts to characterize broad movements in the dominant modalities of human understanding.⁶

It is certainly true that Hauerwas exercises little control over the boundaries of his category of narrative; however, this not really a substantive criticism because what it points to is that his real interest is in the narrative quality of various forms of communication, rather than in narrative as a literary genre. Hauerwas' enterprise is a moral - not a literary - one and, as will emerge, what is particularly morally

2 See, for example, Comstock, G., 'Two Types of Religious Narrative', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 55 (1986), 687-717; this article is said to be '[t]he most commonly cited essay on the Chicago and Yale Schools of narrative theology' (Stiver, D.R., *The Philosophy of Religious Language*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1996, p.246).

3 Comstock, G., 'The Truth of Religious Narratives', *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 34 (1993), 131-150.

4 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.74, referring to Stroup, 'Critique', p.134.

5 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, pp.74-76.

6 Ogletree, T., 'Character and Narrative: Stanley Hauerwas' Studies of the Christian Life', *Religious Studies Review*, 6 (1980), 25-30, p.28.

significant is the *narrative quality* of certain forms of knowledge upon which he focuses and not the *literary genre* to which they belong. For Hauerwas, it is sufficient, if a form of knowledge or communication has this narrative quality or, to put it more formally, if it enables the identity of an entity (including a person) or a concept to be tracked through time. Nevertheless, at some points, his analysis - such as his treatment of the truthfulness of Scripture - would be advanced by at least some explicit attempt to distinguish basic genres of narrative, such as historical narrative and myth.⁷ Where the real problem arises is that his failure to mark clear boundaries contributes to his paying only lip-service to the non-narrative material within Scripture. He is certainly prepared to acknowledge the presence of such material in theory:

It is certainly true ... that scripture contains much material that is not narrative in character. But such material ... gains its intelligibility by being a product of and contribution to a community that lives through remembering.⁸

Despite this claim, in practice the combined forces of Hauerwas' concern for the category of narrative and his eschewing of an interest in moral rules, which is driven by his virtue theory, means that the propositional material contained in Scripture is rarely considered, except on some occasions when it might be used to support his interpretation of a narrative.⁹ Material which is primarily symbolic in its operation, such as the Book of Revelation, is more or less ignored altogether. His Bible might as well have been published without Leviticus, Numbers, much of Deuteronomy, Proverbs, the Epistles, the Book of Revelation and all but the passion narrative of St John's Gospel. Largely ignoring this material helps Hauerwas to sustain his consideration of only the general value orientations of Scripture and to avoid

7 See s.4.1.3.

8 Hauerwas, *Community*, p.67. It is worth noting that the suggestion that non-narrative material is only intelligible in the context of the narrative tradition to which it belongs does not undermine Hauerwas' recognition of its non-narrative quality, rather, it is a claim of a similar nature to his assertion that all forms of rationality are narrative-dependent. For a discussion of this claim see s.4.3.1.

9 See, for example, Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.75, where Hauerwas quotes at length Jesus' teaching that people should love their enemies in the Sermon on the Mount in support of his pacifist rendering of the gospels' narrative depiction of Jesus' life.

discussion of the choices to be made in the face of particular moral questions. This failure to engage with a large category of apparently morally relevant biblical material is a significant challenge to Hauerwas' project of basing his ethics upon the gospels' vision of reality because such material makes a strong claim to be part of that vision. Much of the moral teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, for example, comes in the form of propositional teachings set against Old Testament laws.¹⁰ Hauerwas' move is one which can only really be justified if his arguments for a virtue-based ethics are strong enough to suggest that this material is not sufficiently morally relevant to merit careful consideration. Assessment of that move will have to wait until the following chapter. At present, the interest lies in his claims for the moral significance of biblical narratives.

Given the ecumenical nature of this project, it is also worth noting that the category of narrative could be yet further expanded to embrace the visual arts, as indeed Hauerwas seems to allow,¹¹ in order to incorporate the narrative function of icons¹²

10 'You have heard that it was said to the men of old "You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgement" [Gn 9:5-6; Ex 20:13; Dt 5:17], But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother, you will be liable to judgement ... ' (Mt 5:21-22); 'You have heard it said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." [Ex 21:24; Lev 24:20; Dt 19:21] But I say to you do not resist an evildoer' (Mt 5:38-39); 'You have heard it said "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." [Lev 19:18; Prov 25:21-22] But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you' (Mt 5:43-44).

11 See Hauerwas, *Vision*, p.39. More recently, Hauerwas is reported to have argued that '[g]reat art trains the affections, teaches the meaning of beauty and the good, and creates "people of judgement"' and that "'[g]reat art ... un-selfs the self, while bad art takes the self into ever deeper pools of narcissism'" (reported in the summary of a conference on virtue in which Hauerwas took part in Neuhaus, R. (ed.), *Virtue - Public and Private*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1986, p.59). Hauerwas could similarly have made most of these observations about literary narratives.

12 Indeed, there should be nothing particularly controversial about the expansion of the definition of narrative to include the visual arts because, as the eminent art historian Ernst Gombrich observes, Pope Gregory the Great ... reminded the people who were against all paintings that many members of the Church could neither read nor write, and that, for the purpose of teaching ... "Painting can do for the illiterate what writing does for those who can read" (Gombrich, E., *The Story of Art*, Revised and Expanded 16th Edition, Phaidon, London, 1995, p.135.)

Gregory the Great's position was reinforced by John of Damascus in the iconoclast controversy when he argued, 'Since, however, not all know letters nor do all have leisure to read, the Fathers deemed it fit that these events should be depicted as a sort of memorial and terse reminder' (John of Damascus, 'On Images' in *Saint John of Damascus, Writings*, translated by Chase, F.H., in *Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 37, Fathers of the Church, New York, 1958, 370-373, p.372).

which remain an integral part of the theology and worship of the Orthodox Church.¹³

In the course of discussing narrative theology and ethics, it will be necessary to identify their relationship to other forms of theology and ethics. The key generic distinction possessed by non-narrative forms of theology and ethics, which will be important to describing their relationship to narrative theories, is the more central place of propositions in their analysis. Hence, for the purposes of describing this relationship these non-narrative approaches will be described, very broadly and rather less than elegantly, as propositional forms of theology and propositional forms of ethics.

4.1 The Truthfulness of Narratives and the Structure of Narrative Ethics

With the important definitional and terminological preliminaries considered, it is possible to turn to the organising theme for the exploration of the nature of Hauerwas' narrative ethic: in what sense does Hauerwas understand narratives to be true? Hauerwas does not make it easy for those seeking to develop an outline of his position which does justice to all the affirmations about theology, narrative, Scripture and truth which he makes. In the case of the truthfulness of narrative, he has appeared to some as providing an account of the truthfulness of narrative which is wholly self-referential and thus subjective¹⁴ - as is suggested by statements such as: '[t]here is no story of

13 See Ouspensky, L., *The Theology of the Icon*, Vol. I., St Vladimir's Seminary Press, New York, 1992.

14 Smith, J., 'The Need for 'Rule Ethics' and the Practice of Virtue', *Religious Education*, 80 (1985), 255-264, p.262. James Gustafson has observed of Hauerwas' narrative methodology that, '[f]idelity to narratives becomes virtually self-justifying ... and ethics becomes incorrigible by anything outside of the community itself' (Gustafson, J., 'The Sectarian Temptation: Reflections on Theology, the Church and the University', *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society*, 40 (1985), 83-94, p.88). Wesley Robbins has argued, '[i]f Hauerwas' pure narrative theory of moral rationality were to be adopted, the results would include an unavoidable acceptance of moral relativism' (Robbins, J.W., 'Narrative, Morality and Religion', *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 8 (1980), 161-176, p.175). Gene Outka, who is more aware of the subtleties of Hauerwas' account, thinks that in practice he come close to producing a simply subjective account of ethics, not least because many of his attempts to ground it on some non-narrative basis 'are, by his own admission, piecemeal and nonconclusive' (Outka, G., 'Character, Vision and Narrative', *Religious Studies Review*, 6 (1980), 110-118, pp.117-118). On the other hand, James McClendon considers that the 'rejection of his [Hauerwas'] work as relativistic is demonstrably a misunderstanding of it' (McClendon, J., 'Three Strands of Christian Ethics', *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 6 (1978), 54-80, p.73).

stories, i.e., an account that is literal and that thus provides a criterion to say which stories are true or false';¹⁵ '[t]here are "criteria" of moral truthfulness, though such criteria can never be independent of a substantive narrative';¹⁶ 'there exists no "story of stories" from which the many stories of existence can be analyzed and evaluated';¹⁷ and, when speaking of Scripture, 'of course the text has no "real meaning"'.¹⁸ It is easy to see why, when considered in isolation, such passages, and even whole works, lend themselves to a subjectivist rendering. However, subjectivist interpretations of Hauerwas which are based upon such passages rarely do justice to his 'concern to understand how Christian convictions can be said to be true or false',¹⁹ nor to his observations that, 'we fail to see that the real issue is whether our conventions are truthful'²⁰ and that, '[w]e should not want to know if religious convictions are functional; we should want to know if they are true'.²¹ Contrary to the first set of declarations, these statements suggest that Hauerwas does have a concern to found the truthfulness of narrative on non-self-referential criteria. The juxtaposition of these two sets of affirmations from different parts of Hauerwas' work suggests that his preference for the essay as a genre is a major cause of the interpretative difficulties surrounding his work.²² As self-contained pieces, his essays often discourage people (and perhaps even Hauerwas himself) from connecting the

15 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, pp.78-79.

16 *Ibid.*, p.9.

17 Hauerwas, *Community*, p.96. Hauerwas' apparent rejection of philosophical criteria or even a master-narrative by which the truthfulness of a particular narrative could be tested means that he seems to close off the possibilities which Hittinger left open to him, when commenting on his and MacIntyre's virtue ethics, for establishing the truthfulness and objectivity of a virtue ethic based on narrative:

virtue ethics appears unable to escape conventionalism, unless perhaps speculative philosophy is able to judge the truth or falsity of the narratives, or (which amounts to the same thing) unless it is able to furnish a philosophically intelligible and defensible mega-narrative. (Hittinger, 'After MacIntyre', p.454.)

18 Hauerwas, *Scripture*, p.36.

19 Hauerwas, *Existence*, p.1.

20 Hauerwas, *Dispatches*, p.57.

21 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.15. See also, Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.72.

22 Julian Hartt, after juxtaposing two such sets of quotations taken from a single collection of Hauerwas' essays - *A Community of Character* - is led to ask, 'On Hauerwas's terms ... what is the truth-bridge from tradition-community-history to actuality?' (Hartt, J., 'Theological Investments in Story: Some Comments on Recent Developments and Some Proposals', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 52 (1984), 117-130, p.126).

various elements of his system together. In order to get a clearer picture, therefore, it will be necessary to try to draw together the concerns which his essays mark out.

4.1.1 From Hermeneutics to Epistemology

A logical starting-point for an attempt to develop a clearer picture of Hauerwas' understanding of the truthfulness of narrative is his treatment of Scripture because it contains the foundational Christian narratives. In a recent work, *Unleashing the Scripture*, Hauerwas sets out to state his understanding of the relationship between biblical texts, the narrative tradition of the Church and the meaning of those biblical texts. He begins by outlining the theory of interpretation developed by Stanley Fish in his *Is There a Text in This Class?*²³ Fish, Hauerwas observes, argues that texts do not have a 'real meaning', suggesting instead that their meaning is always determined by the interpretative strategies of the community to which the individual interpreter belongs.²⁴ On the basis of Fish's analysis, Hauerwas observes that whenever the Bible is read the meaning derived from it will be shaped by the interpretative strategy brought to that exercise. He then identifies three broad interpretative approaches within American culture (the subject of his particular concern): that offered by fundamentalism; that offered by biblical criticism; and that offered by the Church - none of which he defines with any precision.²⁵ From amongst these options, it is the interpretative approach of the Church which Hauerwas argues that Christians should choose to adopt.

The main positive reason which Hauerwas offers for this choice is that it enables Christians to live out what it means to be a Christian.²⁶ This central proposition is consistent with his general claim - which he also makes elsewhere²⁷ - that for a person to live a moral life consistent with that presented in a narrative, she must

23 Fish, S., *Is There a Text in This Class?*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1980, especially pp.1-15, 303-371; Hauerwas, *Scripture*, pp.19-21.

24 Hauerwas, *Scripture*, pp.19-20.

25 *Ibid.*, pp.22-28.

26 *Ibid.*, pp.36-38.

27 Hauerwas, *Dispatches*, pp.77-79.

belong to a community built around that narrative whose practices will support her in following them. '[E]thics', Hauerwas argues, 'depends upon vital communities sufficient to produce well lived lives'.²⁸ On the basis of this argument, Hauerwas rejects the approaches of fundamentalism and biblical criticism because they separate the text, and hence the individual, from the community of the Church and, consequently, from what it is to be Christian.²⁹ He then provides some additional support for his choice by expressing doubt about the capacity of biblical criticism to provide the 'real meaning' - by which he means 'the meaning which it had in the mind of the Prophet or Evangelist who first uttered or wrote to the hearers or readers who first received it'³⁰ - of a text.³¹ Hauerwas brings these two arguments, about the 'real meaning' of Scripture and the practical importance of adopting the Church's interpretative strategy, together in his observation that,

of course the [biblical] text has no 'real meaning'; rather the Scriptures are maintained by the Church as having particular prominence because Christians have learned that the Scriptures exist to further the practices of witness and conversion.³²

Yet Hauerwas' account of the reasons for embracing the Church's hermeneutic strategy does not reveal any details about the strategy itself. Hauerwas' central concern in *Unleashing the Scripture* was to establish that the individual member of the Church should, at the very minimum, follow the interpretative strategy of the Church and, at least to some extent, the actual interpretations of the Church. His reasons why the Church's strategy should be followed are primarily shaped by the practical and moral concern as to what is required for Scripture to shape the Christian life, not by an investigation into the truth claims of Scripture. In other words, Hauerwas is essentially concerned with making hermeneutical rather than epistemological observations. It may be that a confusion as to the type of observation which Hauerwas is making at any particular time has contributed to the more general confusion

28 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.15.

29 Hauerwas, *Scripture*, pp.36-38.

30 *Ibid.*, p.33.

31 *Ibid.*, pp.33-35.

32 *Ibid.*, p.36.

concerning the sense in which he understands narrative - and, indeed, ethics - to have an objectively true content. Further, given that Hauerwas' interests in *Unleashing the Scripture* are primarily hermeneutical, it should not be assumed that, because he has adopted an important insight offered by Fish into hermeneutics, he has necessarily also adopted Fish's form of highly subjectivist epistemology which, expressed very summarily, centres on the claim that 'disagreements cannot resolved by reference to facts, because the facts emerge only in the context of some point of view'.³³ In order to determine whether Hauerwas' adoption of Fish's general hermeneutical observation about the nature of textual interpretation - as always being shaped by the community creating or interpreting the text - ultimately imperils any epistemological sense in which scriptural narratives, and therefore narrative ethics, can be said to have an objective content, it is necessary to consider Hauerwas' understanding of the nature of the meaning which *is* to be found in scriptural narratives. For the only meaning which Hauerwas has actually ruled out is the meaning in the mind of the originator of the text.

4.1.2 The Irreducible Meaning in Narratives

Any inquiry into Hauerwas' understanding of the meaning to be found in Scripture needs to begin with his challenging claims for the irreducible meaning in narratives. These claims, which are liberally sprinkled throughout his work, commonly take the form that 'there is no "point" which can be separated from the story'³⁴ and that 'there is no meaning that is separable from the story itself'.³⁵ In reference to biblical material, these claims are expressed in the terms that 'there is no moral point or message that is separable from the story of Jesus as we find it in the Gospels'.³⁶ Hauerwas rejects both the notion of "'stories" as illustrations of some deeper truth

33 Fish, p.338. Fish acknowledges that, '[t]he facts one points to are still there (in a sense that would not be consoling to an objectivist) but only as a consequence of the interpretative (man-made) model that has called them into being' (*ibid.*, p.13).

34 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.25.

35 Hauerwas, *Character*, p.43. See also, for example: 'stories do not illustrate a meaning, they do not symbolise a meaning, but rather the meaning is embodied in the form of the story itself' (Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.77); and, 'there is no point or meaning that can be separated from the story' (Hauerwas, 'Demands', p.63).

36 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.42.

that we can, and should, learn to articulate in a non-narrative mode' and the notion that they are 'but attempts to say "mythically" or "symbolically" what might be said directly'.³⁷ Such statements provoke the question, what type of meaning is it that is actually inseparable from narratives and, therefore, incapable of expression in the sort of propositional form which might provide a common currency for the testing of their truth value by comparison with propositions derived from history, metaphysics, science, other narrative traditions or practical reasoning. Where, in short, does the real tension lie between claims for the irreducible meaning in narratives and claims for their truthfulness? A careful reading of Hauerwas' work indicates that almost all the statements which have just been noted relate to moral rather than to theological meaning, suggesting that this tension does not arise, in the first instance, in relation to the theological meaning to be drawn from Scripture. Rather than demonstrating this conclusion by analysing each of these texts, it may be more useful to the general task of establishing the nature of meaning which Hauerwas understands to be present in Scripture, to make this point by suggesting that this interpretation of these passages is the one which is most consistent with Hauerwas' account of the general relationship between narratives and theology. Hauerwas' understanding of this relationship is probably best revealed by taking seriously his recommendation in *The Peaceable Kingdom* that '[f]or a fuller analysis of the place of narrative in theology see Michael Goldberg's *Theology and Narrative*'.³⁸ In that book, Goldberg argues that narrative theology's central claim - that 'an adequate theology must attend to narrative'³⁹ - does not mean

that the systematic theological task must itself be done in story form, as though discursive reasoning and expository writing were now to be abandoned. Rather, it is the claim that a theologian, regardless of the propositional statements he or she may have to make about a community's convictions, must consciously and continuously strive to keep those statements in intimate contact with the narratives which gave rise to those convictions, within which they gain their sense and meaning, and *from which they have been abstracted*.⁴⁰

37 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.24.

38 *Ibid.*, p.155.

39 Goldberg, M., *Theology and Narrative: A Critical Introduction*, Abingdon, Nashville, 1982, p.35.

40 *Ibid.*

This account of the relationship between narrative and theology accurately describes the way in which Hauerwas actually sets about the task of theology. His preparedness to abstract theological propositions from stories, with which he nevertheless keeps them in close relationship, is made particularly clear, for example, in a section entitled 'The Narrative Character of Christian Convictions' in *The Peaceable Kingdom*.⁴¹ In summing up the section, he observes,

the emphasis on narrative as theologically central for an explication of Christian existence reminds us of at least three claims [propositions!]. First, narrative formally displays our existence and that of the world as creatures - as *contingent* beings ...⁴²

Similarly, in his 'Sermonic Exhibits' in *Unleashing the Scripture* Hauerwas is constantly extracting points from stories. For example, following a recounting of the resurrection experience on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-15) and the recognition of Jesus in the breaking of the bread, Hauerwas asks, 'What are we to make of this strange occurrence?'⁴³ In other words, 'What is the point of this story?' Hauerwas' answer to this question, as to what the story 'means', is substantive. It begins, '[c]ertainly it [the story] at least *means* Jesus is present to the disciples ... and to us most powerfully in the fellowship meal of the new age'.⁴⁴ Hence, whenever Hauerwas wants to talk about the incarnation he is not forced to begin, 'In the days of King Herod of Judea' (Lk 1:5). These observations would certainly accord with Hauerwas' own claim that, 'it has never been my intention to develop a narrative theology [in the strong sense of theology done in a narrative form] ... Theology itself does not tell stories; rather it is critical reflection on a story'.⁴⁵

Hauerwas' understanding of the relationship between theology and narrative,

41 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, pp.24-29.

42 *Ibid.*, p.28.

43 Hauerwas, *Scripture*, p.60.

44 *Ibid.*

45 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.xxv. He also observes that 'very few people, if any would claim ... that narrative is sufficient in and of itself' (Hauerwas, *Narrative*, p.3).

therefore, would seem to leave open the possibility of an engagement with propositional theology. The significance of this openness to propositional theology is that it means that the truth value of a propositional claim about the nature of reality is capable of being assessed. If a proposition can be abstracted from a narrative, then, *prima facie*, the possibility exists not only of comparing that proposition with (i) other propositions derived from the same narrative tradition but (ii) with propositions derived from other narrative traditions, and also (iii) with propositions produced by other forms of reasoning for the purpose of assessing their relative value. The second of these possibilities could, however, be closed off by an assertion of the complete incommensurability of different narrative traditions - but this would involve a strong claim that all rationality was dependent upon the narrative tradition in which it functioned. There are times, as was noted at the beginning of this chapter, when Hauerwas appears, at the very least, to be straying close to making this type of claim for the incommensurability of narrative traditions, for example when he observes that, '[t]here are "criteria" of moral truthfulness, though such criteria can never be independent of a substantive narrative'.⁴⁶ It would, however, be a misreading of Hauerwas to understand this claim in such strong terms because, later in the same work, he observes that,

it would be disastrous if this emphasis on the significance of story for theological reflection became a way to avoid the question of how religious convictions or stories may be true or false, i.e., you have your story and we have ours and there is no way to judge the truth of either.⁴⁷

If Hauerwas accepts that 'religious convictions or stories may be true or false', the question naturally arises as to how this truth value is to be established. Drawing on the work of the narrative theologian James McClendon, Hauerwas answers that the truth value of a theological understanding is to be judged by the sort of lives it shapes⁴⁸ and that this is essentially a moral question. For, as Hauerwas puts it,

46 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.9.

47 *Ibid.*, p.72.

48 *Ibid.*, pp.80-81.

‘[l]earning how Christian convictions are a morality is crucial for understanding what it means to claim those convictions are true’.⁴⁹ In the end, this means that the truthfulness of theological convictions will, in Hauerwas’ analysis, be founded upon the truthfulness of moral understandings.

It is at this point, therefore, as it becomes clear that the truthfulness of theological meaning to be drawn from Scripture rests, in Hauerwas’ account, upon the truthfulness of moral propositions, that it is necessary to ask exactly what Hauerwas means *in a moral context* by his claim that ‘there is no "point" which can be separated from the story’?⁵⁰ Only by asking such a question is it possible to determine the extent to which the moral truth in narratives is irreducible to propositions and thus presents difficulties for establishing its truth value. While, in some moments of rhetorical flourish, Hauerwas gives the impression that no moral meaning of any kind can be separated from the story, in his more systematic reflections he reveals that this is not the case. In discussing the ‘standard account of moral rationality’ in his seminal essay ‘From System to Story’, Hauerwas observes that he is ‘not proposing a wholesale rejection of that [standard] account’⁵¹ because

the manner of proceeding which we associate with the standard account embodies concerns which any substantive moral narrative must respect: ... the demand that we be able to offer reasons for acting at once cogent and appropriate, and a way to develop critical skills of discrimination and judgement. Finally, *any morality depends on a capacity to generate and to articulate moral principles that can set boundaries for proper behaviour and guide our conduct.*⁵²

In this essay, Hauerwas goes on to observe that ‘our emphasis on narrative need not militate against any of these distinctive concerns’,⁵³ suggesting also that ‘[a]bstractions play useful roles in reasoning’.⁵⁴ Formulating such ‘moral principles’

49 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.16.

50 *Ibid.*, p.25.

51 *Ibid.*, p.26.

52 *Ibid.*; emphasis mine.

53 *Ibid.*

54 *Ibid.*

and making ‘abstractions’ will certainly require extracting points or propositions from narratives if narratives are the primary bearers of moral truth. The key question, therefore, is, what sort of moral propositions might be extracted from narratives or, to put the question the other way, what is the nature of the moral meaning which is incapable of being separated from narrative? In answering this question, it is possible to identify two significant and quite distinct senses in which Hauerwas understands meaning as being irreducibly narrative in form.

The first of these senses emerges, perhaps most clearly, in one of Hauerwas’ critiques of the so-called ‘standard accounts of moral rationality’⁵⁵ in which he observes that ‘our very notion of rationality depends on narrative’.⁵⁶ In developing this argument, Hauerwas proposes that the ‘standard account of moral rationality’ attempts ‘to separate our moral notions from their narrative context, by trying to ground or derive their meaning from rationality itself’.⁵⁷ This strategy, he then suggests, has failed because people’s understanding of apparently basic moral concepts is, in fact, dependent upon the narrative tradition to which they belong.⁵⁸ He develops this argument at some length in two important articles on abortion,⁵⁹ pointing out that questions such as, who is a person? and, what understanding should shape a response to the unborn? are ultimately determined by the way in which the world is understood.⁶⁰ For a Christian, the attitude that an unborn child should be accepted as a gift is, Hauerwas argues, grounded in her belief in a God who is both creator and redeemer and who providentially cares for history and commands people, through the

55 This is a catch-all title which Hauerwas uses for all the forms of ethics which he considers to be primarily concerned with the making of decisions about difficult questions, including, to his mind, all forms of utilitarian ethics, Kantian ethics and natural law theories. See, Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, pp.18-21.

56 *Ibid.*, p.21.

57 *Ibid.*

58 *Ibid.*, p.22.

59 Hauerwas, S., ‘Why Abortion Is a Religious Issue’, in *Truthfulness*, 196-211; and Hauerwas, S., ‘Abortion: Why the Arguments Fail’, also in *Truthfulness*, 212-229.

60 See especially, *Truthfulness*, pp.213-214, 223-228. It is worth noting that O’Donovan takes the same methodological approach in relation to the question as to who is a person. See O’Donovan, ‘Person?’, pp.125-126.

life of Jesus, to love the weak, the ill and children.⁶¹ In support of his position, Hauerwas argues that only when the extent to which basic moral concepts are formed by narrative traditions is recognised, does it become possible to explain the intractability of moral controversies such as those over abortion.⁶²

If basic moral concepts cannot be deductively argued for but rather arise from a person's narrative tradition, then, Hauerwas concludes, narratives develop an individual's 'skills of [moral] perception and understanding'.⁶³ Hauerwas' use of the language of 'perception' provides a helpful pointer to the fact that his argument is, in essence, the same as that proposed in the previous two chapters in relation to natural law theory and a Christian realist theory more generally, where it was suggested that basic moral realities were 'recognised' and that the capacity to recognise these realities was dependent upon the world view which a person held.⁶⁴ Both theories, in other words, affirm that important elements of moral rationality depend upon the narrative tradition or world view which a person holds. While these elements of moral rationality might be amenable to dialectical arguments which suggest why the holding of them is inconsistent with other notions recognisable within the particular tradition, establishing the truthfulness of such propositions is ultimately dependent upon the truthfulness of the world view from which they arise.

A second important sense in which Hauerwas' claim that meaning cannot be extracted from a story emerges in his article, 'The Story as Self'.⁶⁵ In that article, after likening stories to metaphors, he argues that '[o]ne can no more translate the metaphor into literal language than poetry can be translated into prose'.⁶⁶ In seeking to explain this notion, Hauerwas presents the example of a person - perhaps better described as a saint - who 'seems to be the perfect example of one who actually lives

61 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, pp.226-227.

62 See especially, Hauerwas, *Community*, pp.212-214; and Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, pp.21-22.

63 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.36; and, p.21.

64 See ss.2.3-2.4 and 3.3.2.

65 Hauerwas, *Vision*, pp.68-89.

66 *Ibid.*, p.72.

and orders his behaviour so as to love others as he loves himself'.⁶⁷ This saint, Hauerwas explains, says that he does not live by that principle but simply by 'loving and treating all men as brothers in Christ'.⁶⁸ Hauerwas then claims that, while this figure clearly embodies moral rules, it would be impossible to translate his understanding of 'loving and treating all men as brothers in Christ' into rules of fairness, not least because, for the saint, 'men are not just to be treated fairly, they are literally brothers in Christ'.⁶⁹ A significant part of the point which Hauerwas seems to be making here is that the saint's righteousness cannot simply be reduced to his conduct in treating other people fairly. This interpretation fits well with a similar general observation which Hauerwas makes a few pages earlier, in a discussion which sets the context for his consideration of the saint. '[M]oral behaviour', he observes,

involves more than simply the decisions and choices men make about specific problems; it also includes the kind of men they are (their character and virtues), the kind of beliefs they hold, and the way that they integrate and organize their resources and energies to form a coherent plan of life.⁷⁰

In relation to the saint, this would appear to mean that the saint's general beliefs about others (that they are 'literally brothers in Christ'), his intention (to love others) and his emotional response to them (feelings of love) were all, in addition to his action, important in accurately accounting for his righteousness.⁷¹ In other words, living rightly is a matter of the whole person - of the self - not simply some element of the person, such as his conduct. This is very much the sort of argument which Hauerwas seeks to make in his ethic of character.⁷² The role of narrative is to offer a vision of this moral life by depicting a whole person.

67 *Ibid.*, p.73.

68 *Ibid.*

69 *Ibid.*

70 *Ibid.*, p.69.

71 This particular interpretation of Hauerwas' understanding of the nature of the saint's righteousness draws upon his general claims for the nature of virtue. These claims will be discussed in detail in the following chapter (see especially s.5.5.2).

72 For a full discussion of the nature of Hauerwas' claims about character see Chapter 5.

In light of the developments present in Grisez's and O'Donovan's theories regarding the capacity of moral rules to describe and prescribe the moral life,⁷³ it is important to identify exactly what it is that narrative has to offer in depicting the moral life. What Hauerwas seems to have missed is that non-narrative theories do not have to attempt to reduce the whole of a moral life into rules of fairness concerning conduct as they might in a more Kantian conception of ethics. The account of rules articulated by Grisez's natural law theory, for example, is concerned with intention and emotions as well as with conduct. It is more than capable of describing the beliefs which would need to be held for conduct to be moral.⁷⁴ The various other features of the saint's righteousness, which Hauerwas believes all standard accounts of rationality will overlook, are, in fact, capable of description and prescription. This broader account of rules enables much more of the meaning embedded in the narrative to be extracted from it than Hauerwas appears to allow.

Nevertheless, although all of Grisez's rules can prescribe what is required for the moral life and even describe what is involved in the saint's moral life, Hauerwas' central point remains: such rules simply cannot *depict* or offer a *vision* of the moral life. Hauerwas argues that only a narrative can explain what a moral life means for a person, because only a narrative can explain *who* a person is, as distinct from *what* he is. Here Hauerwas draws on the work of narrative theologians and others who argue that narrative or story is indispensable to the description of the self.⁷⁵ In seeking to establish his belief that 'a self is best understood exactly as a story',⁷⁶ he begins by adopting a line of argument from Hannah Arendt:

the moment we want to say *who* somebody is, our very vocabulary leads us astray into saying *what* he is; we get entangled in a description of qualities he necessarily shares with others like him ...⁷⁷

73 For an account of their understanding of moral rules see s.4.3.1.

74 See ss.5.2-5.3.

75 At this point, Hauerwas is especially influenced by the work of Steven Crites, Sallie TeSelle and Hannah Arendt on the relationship between narrative and identity.

76 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.78.

77 Arendt, H., *The Human Condition*, Doubleday Anchor, New York, 1958, p.181; cited by Hauerwas in *Truthfulness*, p.79.

Hauerwas then agrees with Arendt when she suggests a solution to this problem: 'Who somebody is or was we can know only by knowing the story of which he is himself the hero - his biography'.⁷⁸ Thus, Hauerwas is led to conclude that '[w]hat we must know how to do is to spell out in story form that a person is not like a type, but is a proper name'.⁷⁹

It is not only that stories are necessary in order to depict the self - they are also necessary, Hauerwas argues, in order to provide an account of the relationship between a person's action and the self that is formed by those actions. 'Stories', Hauerwas suggests, 'are ... a necessary form of our knowledge inasmuch as it is only through narrative that we can catch the connections between actions and responses of men that are inherently particular and contingent'.⁸⁰ Put another way, stories are indispensable to the task of binding 'events and agents together in an intelligible pattern'.⁸¹ Here the distinction between propositions and narratives is clearest. At best, a proposition can state the relationship between action and character - 'if a person is consistently kind in his actions he will become a kind person' - but it cannot describe what it means for a person to become kind through consistently kind actions because a proposition cannot display the changes that occur in a person as his kind actions transform him into a kind person. A proposition can predict that a transformation of character will occur, it can claim that one is occurring or that one has occurred, but it cannot provide knowledge of the transformation itself.

The reason for this distinction lies in the simple fact that propositions and narratives perform different functions. Propositions are used to describe the nature of entities or concepts and their relationship to one another, whereas narratives enable the identity of those entities (including people) and concepts to be tracked through time. As such, narratives enable the process of change in those entities and concepts, as well as the

78 Arendt, p.296; cited in Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.79.

79 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.79.

80 *Ibid.*, p.75.

81 *Ibid.*, p.76.

changing relationship between those entities and concepts and their contexts, to be observed. In the case of people, by observing these changes it is possible to observe the changes in the person. If ethics is about the transformation of the person, as Hauerwas and Grisez would agree that it is,⁸² then in order to understand ethics, narrative will be an indispensable category because only it can provide knowledge of this transformation. Only narrative can enable people to understand or know what ethics really means.

4.1.3 Resolving the Tension Between the Truthfulness and the Irreducibility of Narrative

With Hauerwas' account of the irreducibility of narrative sketched out, it becomes possible to see clearly the fundamental tension which will surround any discussion of the truthfulness of narratives which are said to contain irreducible meaning. Gary Comstock has described this tension with particular clarity. He observes that in the discussion of the truthfulness of religious narratives, where strong arguments are made for the irreducibility of their meaning, two plausible, but apparently incompatible, claims will emerge:

- (1) Religious narratives (RNs) assert conflicting propositions (ps) [which are then amenable to having their truth value tested by comparison with other propositions], and
- (2) RNs [religious narratives] are not properly understood as asserting ps [propositions].⁸³

In the context of the present discussion, this tension will take the following form: if a vision of the moral life is incapable of being reduced to propositions, how is it possible to determine whether this is a true vision of the moral life? Comstock observes that many people who have treated this general tension have tried to resolve it by denying one or the other claim.⁸⁴ Hauerwas, along with George Lindbeck and Hans Frei, is among those whom he charges with having made such a move - in their cases by

82 See s.5.3.

83 Comstock, 'Truth', p.135.

84 *Ibid.*, pp.136-145.

asserting that the truth of the biblical narrative appears neither in the correspondence between the narratives and history nor in the knowledge of the transcendent conveyed by the stories but in the fruit stories bear in the believers.⁸⁵

The question arises as to whether this is, in fact, an accurate description of the move which Hauerwas makes. He certainly maintains that *the truth of a theological proposition* abstracted from a scriptural narrative can be determined by the sort of life it shapes. This does not amount, however, to saying that *the truth of biblical narratives* is established by the fruit these narratives bear in the lives of the believers. It is, therefore, necessary to turn to the crucial questions, which are also central for determining Hauerwas' understanding of the nature of the moral meaning to be found in Scripture, first, as to *how Hauerwas actually establishes the truth of biblical narratives* and, secondly, *whether, in doing so, a methodology emerges from his analysis which is able to resolve the tension between the two claims about narrative without denying either of them.*

Turning to the first of these questions, Hauerwas' treatment of the truthfulness of biblical narratives is laid most systematically out in the pivotal chapter of *The Peaceable Kingdom*⁸⁶ in which he sets out to establish 'The Ethical Significance of Jesus'.⁸⁷ He begins this discussion with the claim, similar to that made in *Unleashing the Scripture*, that '[t]here is no possibility of knowing the "historical Jesus"'.⁸⁸ However, and it turns out to be a very significant 'however', it is possible to know 'the Jesus given to us by the early church'.⁸⁹ This possibility arises, Hauerwas argues, because Scripture is the product of a community which was transformed by Jesus' life and teaching. As such, it can be expected that Scripture will contain a portrayal of those truths about his life and teaching which actually transformed that

85 *Ibid.*, p.138.

86 Hauerwas specifically calls attention to the pivotal nature of this chapter when he observes of it that, '[e]verything I have done in this book has been a preparation for this chapter'; see, Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.72.

87 *Ibid.*

88 *Ibid.*, pp.72-73.

89 *Ibid.*

community.⁹⁰ It is here that the limits of Hauerwas' scepticism and relativism are marked. He is prepared to rehabilitate biblical criticism in the service of the Church's interpretation by arguing that it can give access to the understanding of the very early Church. While it may be true that the 'real meaning of Scripture' - 'the meaning which it had in the mind of the Prophet or Evangelist'⁹¹ - cannot be known, the central facts about Jesus' life and teaching are knowable.⁹² These are the facts upon which Hauerwas seeks to found his ethics. In doing so, he begins by observing that 'one of the most significant "discoveries" of recent [biblical] scholarship is that Jesus' teaching was not first of all focused upon his own status but on the proclamation of the kingdom of God'.⁹³ In seeking to draw out the moral significance of this discovery, Hauerwas argues that,

the early Christians rightly saw that what Jesus came to proclaim, the kingdom of God as a present and future reality, could only be grasped by recognizing how Jesus exemplified the standards of that kingdom.⁹⁴

In support of this interpretation, Hauerwas draws upon the biblical scholarship of E.J. Tinsley⁹⁵ who argued, in Hauerwas' words, that Israel came to understand her encounters with God as a call 'to walk in the way of the Lord'.⁹⁶ As a result,

Each of the major offices in Israel - king, priest, and prophet - ... drew its substance from the need for Israel to have a visible exemplar

90 *Ibid.*

91 Hauerwas, *Scripture*, p.33.

92 For a much more developed and carefully defended but essentially similar position to that taken by Hauerwas on the question of Jesus' revelation see, Ward, K., *Religion and Revelation*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994, pp.232-258. Ward, however, additionally allows for a much broader operation of revelation than Hauerwas. The comparative narrowness of Hauerwas' account of revelation, for which Hauerwas has been criticised (see, for example, Holland, S., 'The Problems and Prospects of a "Sectarian Ethic": A Critique of the Hauerwas Reading of the Jesus Story', *The Conrad Grebel Review: A Journal of Christian Enquiry*, 10 (1992), 157-168, especially, pp.166-167), will be difficult for him to escape while he still broadly subscribes to the approach of Lindbeck and the other nonfoundationalists - whatever qualifications he might make to their approach in order better to secure the truthfulness of the Christian linguistic-narrative tradition.

93 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.73.

94 *Ibid.*, p.74. That Hauerwas is able to say that the early Church 'rightly saw' what Jesus was proclaiming suggests, once again, that he believes that he can obtain some access to the 'real meaning' of Jesus' message by which he can assess the adequacy of the early Church's understanding.

95 Tinsley, E.J., *The Imitation of God in Christ*, S.C.M. Press, London, 1960.

96 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.77.

to show how to follow the Lord. What was needed were people who embodied in their lives and work the vocation of Israel to 'walk' in the 'way' of the Lord.⁹⁷

Hauerwas then concludes that,

It is against this background that the early Christians came to understand and believe in Jesus' life, death and resurrection. They had found a continuation of Israel's vocation to imitate God and thus in a decisive way to depict God's kingdom for the world. Jesus' life was seen as a recapitulation of the life of Israel and thus presented the very life of God in the world.⁹⁸

Hauerwas places this notion that 'Jesus exemplified the standards of that Kingdom'⁹⁹ at the centre of his ethical system, arguing that 'the very heart of following the way of God's kingdom involves nothing less than learning to be like God'.¹⁰⁰ This occurs, he suggests, when people learn 'to follow and be like this man whom God has sent to be our forerunner in the kingdom'.¹⁰¹

It is worthwhile pausing here to observe that Hauerwas is sufficiently confident of this general methodology, with its use of biblical criticism for gaining access to the very early Church's understanding of the transforming truths about Jesus, that he is able to test the truthfulness of the Church's current interpretation of Scripture against it. This confidence is particularly apparent in *Unleashing the Scripture* in which, despite his emphasis on the importance of adopting the contemporary Church's hermeneutic, Hauerwas adopts his own pacifist hermeneutic as being the true interpretation of Scripture in preference to that of the Church to which he belongs.¹⁰²

97 *Ibid.*, p.78.

98 *Ibid.*

99 *Ibid.*, p.74.

100 *Ibid.*, p.75.

101 *Ibid.*

102 Hauerwas clearly distinguishes his approach from the official position of the Methodist Church in the U.S.A. in his 'Epilogue' to Paul Ramsey's *Speak up for Just War or Pacifism!* (Hauerwas, S., 'Epilogue' to Ramsey, P., *Speak Up for Just War or Pacifism*, Pennsylvania State University Press, State Park, 1986, 149-182).

Before turning to the details of what Hauerwas considers to be involved in 'following the way of God's Kingdom', it is necessary to emphasise the significance of his move to found his ethics on the central facts of Jesus' life and teaching which biblical scholarship provides because it is his strategic defence against the risk of his narrative theory losing purchase on reality. For this is a risk which he perceives to be present in the post-liberal narrative theology of Frei and Lindbeck, as he makes clear when he observes,

Hans Frei makes the useful suggestion that the gospels are best thought of not as history, but rather [as] realistic narratives, which while "history like" are not history. But this suggestion would be disastrous if it is an attempt to make irrelevant whether Jesus in fact did not exist and act in a way very much like the way he is portrayed in the gospel accounts.¹⁰³

Despite the centrality of this strategic defence in the most systematic statement of his position - *The Peaceable Kingdom* - the general importance of this move for Hauerwas' understanding of the nature and authority of Scripture has been widely overlooked. The most significant yet most overlooked implication of this move concerns what it discloses about Hauerwas' account of revelation. A clear example of such oversight is provided by Sykes, in an article published long after *The Peaceable Kingdom* (1983), in which he argued, by focusing upon *A Community of Character* (1981), that for Hauerwas, 'Scripture has authority for the simple reason that Christian communities regard it as authoritative'.¹⁰⁴ As a result, Sykes suggests, that 'Hauerwas's treatment of Biblical authority would be greatly strengthened if he were to address the way in which the Christian community and its sacred texts may be said

103 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.72. It is worth noting that this is the same work as that referred to by Comstock in support of his interpretation that Hauerwas holds the same position as Frei and Lindbeck (Comstock, 'Truth', p.149).

104 Sykes, J., 'Narrative Accounts of Biblical Authority: The Need for a Doctrine of Revelation', *Modern Theology*, 5 (1989), 327-342, p.330. Sykes does record, in a footnote at the end of his article, that in Hauerwas' most recent work, well after *The Peaceable Kingdom*, he sees Hauerwas meeting some of his objections. Gregory Jones has also accused Sykes of misrepresenting Hauerwas on the question of the authority of Scripture (see Jones, L.G., 'A Response to Sykes: Revelation and the Practice of Interpreting Scripture', *Modern Theology*, 5 (1989), 343-348). For a similar failure to recognise Hauerwas' account of revelation as central to his understanding of the authority of Scripture see, Cady, L.E., 'Foundation vs Scaffolding: The Possibility of Justification in an Historicist Approach to Ethics', *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, 41 (1987), 45-62, p.52.

to be a response to God's initiative'.¹⁰⁵ Put simply, Sykes' argument is that 'Hauerwas's position requires a doctrine of revelation'.¹⁰⁶ Yet that is exactly what Hauerwas provides in *The Peaceable Kingdom*. Jesus, Hauerwas argues, was the man 'whom God has sent'¹⁰⁷ whose life and teaching revealed what it means to follow 'in the way of God's kingdom' and 'to be like God'.¹⁰⁸ Jesus himself, in Hauerwas' account, is the revelation of God. This architectonically important, but generally understated, rendering of a potentially strong doctrine of revelation is one of the features of Hauerwas' theology which distinguishes his work from the non-foundationalist theologies of Frei, Lindbeck, and Theimann to which it is similar in other respects. Indeed, if Hauerwas made more of this distinction, he would find it easier to free himself from Gustafson's remarkably enduring accusation that he had produced a 'classically sectarian' ethic.¹⁰⁹ Emphasising his doctrine of revelation would enable Hauerwas to avail himself of the defence which Gustafson leaves open for those seeking to defend the epistemological distinctiveness of a Christian ethic, namely, that it was justified on the basis 'of Christ as the revelation of the God who is for man'.¹¹⁰

While reflecting on the strength of Hauerwas' foundational truth claims, it is also worth noting that his defence of the truthfulness of Scripture would be improved if he paid more attention to the different literary genres of narrative that are contained in the biblical material, not least in the stories about Jesus. Even a distinction between

105 Sykes, p.332.

106 *Ibid.*, p.330.

107 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.75.

108 *Ibid.*

109 Gustafson, 'Sectarian', p.88. For Hauerwas' response to Gustafson's accusations see, Hauerwas, *Existence*, pp.3-18. A more subtle account of the sense in which Hauerwas' ethic is sectarian is provided by Michael Quirk in his 'Beyond Sectarianism', *Theology Today*, 44 (1987), 78-86.

110 Gustafson, 'Sectarian', pp.88-89. In contradistinction to the work of Hauerwas and Lindbeck, Gustafson considers the 'confessionally' distinct theologies of Barth and the Niebuhrs to have been justified because they had strong doctrines of revelation, including that quoted (*ibid.*). This still leaves the challenge that Hauerwas is arguing for a form of sociological sectarianism (see, for example, Miscamble, W.D., 'Sectarian Passivism?', *Theology Today*, 44 (1987), 69-77). However, as Hauerwas points out, the strength of this charge, as it is put by people such as Miscamble, is dependent, to a large extent, on a misrepresentation of his position which fails to recognise the genuine space he leaves for the Church to engage liberal society and for Christians to participate in such a society (Hauerwas, 'Sectarian', pp.87-92).

basic categories like historical narrative and myth would enable Hauerwas' methodology to suggest whether a scriptural narrative was true simply as an existential observation, if it was a myth, or as history, if it was a historical narrative. In the light of Julian Hartt's criticism of his failure to make just such distinctions,¹¹¹ Hauerwas acknowledged,

that many of us who tried have tried to illuminate the kind of truth claims made by the Gospel by exposing its narrative form have employed the latter category in far too crude manner.¹¹²

Unfortunately, this acknowledgment has not prevented Hauerwas from continuing to use Scripture in such a manner.¹¹³

Now that the significance of Hauerwas' grounding his account of morality on the revelation of Jesus' life and teaching has been emphasised, it is possible to ask what he understands following this revelation (i.e., 'following in the way of Jesus') to mean in concrete terms. In answering this question, Hauerwas' work is openly in debt to the pacifist interpretation of the New Testament produced by John Howard Yoder. In line with this approach, Hauerwas argues that in Jesus Christians see that 'perfection ... is at the very least nothing less than forgiving our enemies'.¹¹⁴ He therefore concludes that the central feature of the Kingdom is that its members' lives are so configured by the forgiveness and love of their enemies that they no longer resort to any form of violence or coercive relationship in organising their community or dealing with the world.¹¹⁵ The kingdom which is given expression in Jesus' life is, in Hauerwas' words, 'a peaceable kingdom' - a kingdom in which people learn to live with the

111 Hartt, p.127.

112 Hauerwas, S., 'Why the Truth Demands Truthfulness: An Imperious Engagement with Hartt', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 52 (1984), 142-147, p.143.

113 For a more substantial defence of the importance of making such distinctions for assessing the truthfulness of Scripture see, Goldberg, pp.48-61 - a work which Hauerwas cites approvingly on this very point (Hauerwas, 'Truth', p.143). It is also worth noting that these distinctions would enable a more accurate correlation to be made with other methodologies for assessing the truthfulness of Scripture.

114 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.76.

115 *Ibid.*, pp.85-87.

powerlessness that arises from their refusal to resort to violence.¹¹⁶ Although tragedy is not eliminated, people 'have the means to recognise and accept the tragic without turning to violence'.¹¹⁷ It is a kingdom in which '*[m]y wholeness, my integrity, is made possible by the truthfulness of the story*'.¹¹⁸

It is at this point that both the nature of the truthfulness and the essential structure of Hauerwas' narrative ethics becomes particularly apparent. It is not simply, as Comstock and others have thought, that the truthfulness of a narrative is constituted by 'the fruit the stories bear in the believers',¹¹⁹ but rather that a narrative is truthful if there is a 'correspondence between the narratives and history [about the life and teaching of Jesus]',¹²⁰ in which case it should bear fruit in the lives of the believers. Hauerwas' narrative ethic, therefore, is one which *enables people to pursue the human wholeness and integrity* which is displayed in the gospels, by following the way of life which they depict in the face of the complexities and tragedies of human existence. For Hauerwas, this way of life is essentially a peaceable one.

This same essential structure and understanding of the grounding of the truthfulness of narrative is also present in Hauerwas' more philosophical rendering of his narrative ethics in his seminal essay, written with David Burrell, 'From System to Story'.¹²¹ What is liable to mislead is that, in the absence of a discussion of the biblical premises as to what constitutes a life of wholeness and integrity, Hauerwas begins this account directly with the claim that '[t]he test of each story is the sort of person it

116 *Ibid.*, p.89.

117 *Ibid.*, p.48.

118 *Ibid.*, p.94; emphasis mine. The fact that the Christian story enables people to live lives of wholeness in a world of tragedy answers James McClendon's key concern about Hauerwas' early work, namely, that while he rightly identified the 'necessarily tragic' in human life he did not adequately allow for 'the transformation of man' or 'the eschatological renewal of the present world' (McClendon, 'Three Strands', p.73).

119 Comstock, 'Truth', p.138.

120 *Ibid.*

121 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, pp.34-39. Hauerwas appears to attach particular importance to this essay because he chose it as representative of his work in a collection of essays by different authors on narrative theology which he edited with Gregory Jones: Hauerwas, *Why Narrative?*, 158-190.

shapes'.¹²² Nevertheless, these biblical premises become apparent in the familiar form of the sort of person a story should help someone to become and the path they must take to pursue that end. This familiar form emerges as Hauerwas argues that stories must 'help us ... to relate to our world and our destiny: the origins and goals of our lives',¹²³ enable people to 'discover [their] ... human self more effectively',¹²⁴ thereby leading them to 'personal fulfillment'.¹²⁵ The particular path to this 'fulfillment' becomes evident in four criteria which a story must possess if it is to enable a person to achieve or, at least, pursue that 'goal':

- (1) power to release us from destructive alternatives;
- (2) ways of seeing through current distortions;
- (3) room to keep us from having to resort to violence;
- (4) a sense for the tragic: how meaning transcends power.¹²⁶

122 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.35.

123 *Ibid.*, p.36.

124 *Ibid.*, p.39.

125 *Ibid.*, p.36. This phrase arises in the context of Hauerwas' contrast of 'standard accounts of moral rationality' with his narrative account, in the course of which he observes that 'current problem-solving techniques will invariably *also* be packaged as a set of practices leading to *personal fulfillment*' (*ibid.*, emphasis mine), thereby suggesting that it is 'personal fulfillment' towards which narratives should also conduce.

126 *Ibid.*, p.35. In addition to these four criteria, it also worth noting that Hauerwas has, at various times and in a rather *ad hoc* fashion, called upon other non-narrative-dependent criteria by which to test the truthfulness of narrative. Paul Nelson, a very perceptive commentator upon Hauerwas' work, has listed these criteria and suggests that they give expression to Hauerwas' view that there is an 'aspect of our morality' which is universal and constant (Nelson, P., *Narrative and Morality: A Theological Inquiry*, Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Penn., 1987, p.124). The first of the methods which Nelson notes is Hauerwas' attempt to argue that there are certain virtues that do not in themselves constitute morality but which all societies possess (Hauerwas presents this view in *Vision*, pp.86-89 and defends it in: Hauerwas, S., 'Learning to See Red Wheelbarrows: On Vision and Relativism', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 45 (1977), 643-655, p.649). The second method arises from Hauerwas' proposal that there are a 'cluster of roles, relations and actions the agent must order and form to have a character appropriate to the limits and possibilities of existence' (Hauerwas, 'Natural Law', p.3). Nelson plausibly interprets Hauerwas as suggesting that 'human sociability entails certain patterns of behaviour that cannot be violated without risking the destruction of cooperative human life' (Nelson, p.126). The implication of Hauerwas' observation seems to be that living in accordance with such patterns is normative. Hauerwas does not use either of these accounts consistently, nor does he develop them into a more serviceable form. Given his constant emphasis on the importance of particularity, Hauerwas' third method for testing narrative truth comes in the somewhat surprising endorsement of the principle of universalisability as 'a necessary condition of morality, [though] not a sufficient condition' (Hauerwas, *Vision*, p.87; incorrectly cited by Nelson (p.126) as being from *Truthfulness*, p.87). Once again, Hauerwas does not develop the implications of this, or similar statements, for his narrative-based scheme. To this list might be added his observation that 'at least one indication of the truthfulness of a community's story is how it forces me to live in it in a manner that gives me the skill to take responsibility for my character' (Hauerwas, *Community*, p.149).

For Hauerwas, once again, the truthfulness of a narrative lies in its capacity to enable people to live fulfilled lives of wholeness and integrity by living peaceably in the face of a world of violence, complexity and tragedy. Although the congruence of this ostensibly philosophical account of narrative ethics with Hauerwas' explicitly Christian rendering should be very apparent, it has been widely missed. One person has, however, perceived this connection. In relation to Hauerwas' four criteria, Michael Goldberg has observed that,

Hauerwas has been roundly and rightly criticised at this juncture, for other than the bare assertion of these criteria, he fails to support his claim for their necessity. [At this point Goldberg refers to the work of Outka and Robbins.]¹²⁷ Not only is it unclear why these criteria are ones that any justifiable narrative theology must employ, but also it is equally unclear, at least upon initial inspection, how such criteria are related to narrative in general. Perhaps the solution lies in the fact that these "criteria" are not linked at all to "narrative-in-general", - but rather to one specific narrative - the story of Christ. Thus, ironically, almost despite himself, Hauerwas had ended up demonstrating his more basic and pervasive thesis that every justifiable theology must have reference to some narrative in order to display the "grammar", the logic - the rationality - of its convictions.¹²⁸

The preceding analysis of Hauerwas' treatment of biblical narratives suggests that Goldberg's solution is correct - Hauerwas is fundamentally a *Christian* ethicist who grounds the truth claims of all his ethics in the vision of reality and the possibilities for human wholeness depicted in the gospels. That the likes of Outka and Robbins have missed this point and accused Hauerwas of simply asserting his four criteria is consistent with their suspicion of his having a subjective account of ethics.¹²⁹ What they have failed to understand is that, in the end, Hauerwas is prepared to claim that the Christian vision of reality and the moral life is a true vision over and against the visions of other narrative traditions. For, as Hauerwas concludes, 'Christians must

127 Outka, 'Character', pp.116-118; Robbins, 'Narrative', p.175.

128 Goldberg, *Narrative*, pp.237-238.

129 Outka, 'Character', pp.25-30; Robbins, 'Narrative', p.167.

attempt to be nothing less than a people whose ethic shines *as a beacon to others* illuminating how life should be well lived'.¹³⁰

Not only has the general shape of Hauerwas' ethic emerged in this consideration of the question as to how he establishes the truthfulness of biblical narratives but, in the light of Hauerwas' production of a list of criteria - or propositions - as to the qualities which a narrative must possess if it is truthful, it is possible to turn to the question of *whether, from his analysis, a methodology emerges which is able to resolve the tension between the claims for irreducible meaning to be found in narratives and the claims for their truthfulness.* In answering this question, it is illuminating to observe Comstock's proposed solution to this tension:

When RNs [religious narratives] are interpreted by readers, the conjunction of the familiar horizons of the reader's world (RW) with the horizons of the RN give rise to a projected world (PW)... PWs consist of states of affairs and of attitudes toward those states. The states of affairs may be described in propositions even though the overall plot may be lost in the process ... Propositions properly derived from RNs not only express mere slices of the entire PW, but their meanings are relative to the interests and purposes of authors, redactors, and historical communities of reception and circulation who are the co-projectors of PW. Even though RNs assert propositions, then, propositions properly derived from RNs cannot be said to be "the meaning" of the text, nor can RNs be properly understood as reducible to those propositions.¹³¹

Careful consideration of Hauerwas' approach suggests that he adopts a very similar solution to that proposed by Comstock in order to ground the truthfulness of his moral claims. The gospels' narratives, in Hauerwas' analysis, give rise to a projected world where the text meets the interpreting community of the contemporary Church. This projected world involves claims about certain states of affairs, including claims about the life and teachings of Jesus, as Hauerwas indeed recognises when he observes that,

130 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.34; emphasis mine.

131 Comstock, 'Truth', pp.144-145.

the kind of story we find in the Gospels requires that certain facts be true - that Jesus did call disciples, did get to Jerusalem, was tried, and that his body was missing from his tomb.¹³²

These states of affairs are capable of being described in terms of propositions, which, in order to test their truthfulness, can then be compared with those held by the early Church. What enables the early Church's interpretation - to which, Hauerwas understands, modern biblical scholarship provides access - to act as such a benchmark is that its projected world reflects an encounter with Jesus himself which, by its nature, gives access to that historical reality. This ability to describe and test the truthfulness of the propositional claims embodied in narratives involves neither a claim to describe the irreducible role of the narrative in depicting a vision of the moral life, nor to replace the capacity of moral recognition which can only exist when a person possesses a particular integrated understanding of the world. It is possible to conclude, therefore, that Hauerwas' general hermeneutical observation that the meaning of texts is always shaped by the community creating or interpreting the text - which was the starting-point of this whole inquiry - does not, in the end, imperil any epistemological sense in which scriptural narratives, and therefore ethics, can be said to have an objective content.

Where Hauerwas' account does differ sharply from Comstock's proposed solution is that, once the truthfulness of the moral dimension of biblical narratives has been established, Hauerwas uses the truthfulness of this moral dimension to test the truthfulness of all the other states of affairs involved in the projected worlds of the Church's interpretation of biblical narrative, such as its Christological claims, its claims for God as creator and his nature as Trinitarian.¹³³ The truthfulness of these theoretical claims is known by people in the Christian narrative tradition as they come to recognise that these claims are central for producing lives of wholeness amidst the tragedies of the world.¹³⁴ It is the historically based knowledge as to what constitutes

132 Hauerwas, 'Truth', p.143.

133 See, for example, Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, pp.24-34.

134 *Ibid.*, p.30.

integrity and wholeness of life which provides the benchmark for testing the veracity of these broadly metaphysical beliefs.

Lying behind this indirect methodology for establishing the truthfulness of general theological convictions is the fact that, while Hauerwas is prepared to trust history as the foundation for truth claims, he simply is not prepared to trust metaphysics. In part, this is because metaphysics, unlike history, threatens to make the sort of universal claims which would undermine Hauerwas' concern for the distinctness of Christian moral and theological understandings.¹³⁵ More generally, however, Hauerwas has acknowledged that he has 'often given ["metaphysical issues"], at best, a sidelong glance',¹³⁶

partly ... because I think others are more skilled to deal with such matters, but also because for theological purposes I think the metaphysical issues are more appropriately dealt with indirectly.¹³⁷

From the discussion in this chapter it should be clear that at the heart of Hauerwas argument, that metaphysical issues are best dealt with indirectly, is the view that it is the transformation of the person by participation in a Christian community formed by the narrative tradition arising from the God's dealings with the people of Israel and his manifestation in Jesus, which is the central theological truth of the Gospel. As a result, Hauerwas' primary concern is not with the truthfulness of theological convictions *per se* but rather with their 'inherently practical character'.¹³⁸ This practical focus leads him to conclude that,

Christian convictions are not meant to picture the world. They do not give us a primitive metaphysics about how the world is constituted. Rather the gospel is a story that gives you a way of being in the world.¹³⁹

135 For an expression of this concern see *ibid.*, pp.54-55.

136 Hauerwas, 'Truth', p.141.

137 *Ibid.*

138 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.114.

139 *Ibid.*

The problem with this approach is that Hauerwas is overlooking the implications of his own argument for the irreducibility of narrative. If moral beliefs are integrally related to the way in which people understand reality - as Hauerwas claims them to be - then 'the gospel provides a way of being in the world' in part by describing 'how the world is constituted'. It matters, therefore, whether it provides an accurate account as to 'how the world is constituted'. While the sort of person produced by a particular understanding of reality can be of assistance in assessing the truthfulness of that understanding, the moral importance of an accurate vision of reality suggests that it would be imprudent to foreclose the possibility of other forms of inquiry which might support such a task. Given that, as emerged earlier, Hauerwas does consider it to be possible to state theological understandings in propositional terms, there is no reason why they could not also have their truth value assessed by their correspondence with the conclusions of coherent metaphysics. In other words, Hauerwas' own methodology is open to, and would be greatly strengthened by, additional means of supporting the truthfulness of the Gospel's claims about 'how the world is constituted'. The task here is not to inquire into such means but rather to highlight this openness in order to demonstrate the possibility and value of an engagement between Hauerwas' broadly narrative theology, which underpins his narrative ethics, and the propositional theology which is assumed by a Christian realist theory.

4.2 Towards the Complementarity of Narrative Ethics and Christian Moral Realism

With the form of Hauerwas' narrative ethics uncovered, it should now be possible to discern the relationship between his narrative theory and a Christian realist theory. What emerges is that at a metaethical level both theories have an essentially parallel structure. Three features of this parallel structure should be immediately apparent. First, and most importantly, both approaches are centrally concerned with directing people towards the form of human wholeness revealed in the gospels and the life of the Church. Secondly, the moral acceptability of any particular course of action is determined, in both approaches, by the adequacy with which it directs a person towards that wholeness in the light of a Christian understanding of the nature of

reality. Thirdly, according to both methodologies, the distinct Christian understanding of the nature of reality will produce distinct approaches to pursuing a life well lived.

In a sense, this parallel structure should come as little surprise because, on the question of the nature of ethics, both theories owe a profound debt to Aristotle. In relation to a Christian realist theory, Finnis makes this debt particularly clear in *Natural Law and Natural Rights* and, especially, in *The Fundamentals of Ethics* by tracing many of his organising ideas back to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, avoiding the mediation of St Thomas. Hauerwas' work is similarly influenced by an Aristotelian heritage. It is worth recalling that Hauerwas' interest in narrative arose as a vehicle for giving expression to his ethic of character and virtue - an ethic which took as its starting-point reflection upon Aristotle's and Aquinas' accounts of ethics.¹⁴⁰ Aristotle has not merely been Hauerwas' starting-point. Time and again he has returned to reflect upon Aristotle's work, so much so that in his recent *Dispatches from the Front* he was able to observe, with a measure of Hauerwasian irony, that 'I am better acquainted with the text of the *Nicomachean Ethics* than I am of the New Testament'.¹⁴¹ Indeed, Hauerwas' Aristotelianism has even led him to be accused of producing an insufficiently Christian ethic!¹⁴²

Amongst Hauerwas' commentators, the person who will not be surprised by the general conclusion that Hauerwas' narrative ethic has a structure parallel to a broadly natural law theory is Paul Nelson who has observed that if Hauerwas' test for the truthfulness of narrative is 'not entirely narrative-dependent, then one must conclude that there is in Hauerwas's position a submerged theory of something like natural law'.¹⁴³ This chapter sought to raise that submerged theory into the full light of day.

140 Hauerwas, *Character*, pp.35-82.

141 Hauerwas, *Dispatches*, p.22.

142 Quinn, P.L., 'Is Athens Revived Jerusalem Denied?', *The Asbury Theological Journal*, 45 (1990), 49-57. For Hauerwas' aptly named response see, Hauerwas, S., 'Athens May Be a Long Way from Jerusalem But Prussia is Even Further', *The Asbury Theological Journal*, 45 (1990), 59-63. See also, Bilynskyj, S.S., 'Christian Ethics and the Ethics of Virtue' *Covenant Quarterly*, 45 (1987), 125-135, especially pp.130-131, for a defence of the 'Greek' notion of virtue as a suitable concept for a thoroughly *Christian* ethic.

143 Nelson, p.128.

Interestingly, even Hauerwas, who has been so critical of natural law theories, has shown an openness to the possibility, implied by this parallel structure, of there being an acceptable form of ethics which contains a broadly natural law theory as a central feature. His openness to such a possibility appears most clearly in his observation that his attacks on natural law,

hardly do justice to Aquinas' account of the meaning, or role, of natural law ... For Aquinas natural law serves neither as a principle that justifies a "universal ethic" abstracted from a community's practices nor as agents' character and virtues ...¹⁴⁴

Here Hauerwas appears to open up the possibility that a natural law theory which paid more attention to the thoroughly theological nature of Aquinas' ethics and his account of virtue might, in fact, be relatively immune from Hauerwas' own criticisms of more traditional scholastic natural law theories. In the light of such an observation, it could well be asked why has Hauerwas not already recognised that Grisez's account may be such just a theory. An unfortunate explanation can be found in the same article in which this positive comment on natural law theory appeared. In support of his criticisms of recent Catholic natural law theories, Hauerwas suggests that Russell Hittinger's *A Critique of the New Natural Law Theory* provides 'an excellent critique'.¹⁴⁵ However, this work, which is primarily concerned with Grisez's theory, is anything but 'an excellent critique'. Both Grisez¹⁴⁶ and Robert George¹⁴⁷ have pointed out that Hittinger's criticisms are 'based on fundamental misunderstandings of important claims and arguments Grisez and Finnis make'.¹⁴⁸

144 Hauerwas, S., 'The Importance of Being Catholic: Unsolicited Advice from a Protestant Bystander', *Listening*, 25 (1990), 27-46, p.32.

145 *Ibid.*, p.44. It should also be noted that Hittinger's work is one in a series of books of which Hauerwas is one of the general editors and that Hittinger thanks Hauerwas for reading the manuscript and for making suggestions (Hittinger, *Critique*, p.9).

146 Grisez, G., 'A Critique of Russell Hittinger's Book, *A Critique of the New Natural Law Theory*', *New Scholasticism*, 62 (1988), 438-465.

147 George, R., 'Recent Criticism of Natural Law Theory', *The University of Chicago Law Review*, 55 (1988), 1371-1429, pp.1407-1429.

148 *Ibid.*, p.1429.

The structural parallels between Hauerwas' theory and the theories which have contributed to the formation of a Christian realist ethic do not end with the immediately obvious features which have already been highlighted. A very significant further parallel emerges in relation to Hauerwas' central claim regarding the irreducible content of narrative understanding - namely, that only narrative can adequately depict personal identity. It is in O'Donovan's reflection upon the important question as to who is a person that this parallel surfaces. It does so perhaps most clearly when he observes that,

A *persona* is an individual appearance that has continuity through a story. It is the appearance of an agent to whom things happen and who does things, of one who has, as we say, a 'history' ... To speak of a person, then, is to speak of 'identity', that which constitutes sameness between one appearance and another, and so makes us beings with histories and names.¹⁴⁹

For O'Donovan, the category of story or history not only provides a more adequate account of the person, it is also an integral part of the Christian theological understanding of what it is to be human. In *Begotten or Made?* O'Donovan helpfully traces the evolution of the Christian understanding of the person as it broke away from 'the purely *qualitative* categories' of ancient classical philosophy, such as intellect or soul, which lacked a historical dimension.¹⁵⁰ The central force, O'Donovan argues, which shaped the Christian understanding of the person was the Christological controversies in which qualitative terms like 'mind' presented insuperable barriers to reconciling Jesus' humanity and divinity in a single individual. O'Donovan points out, however, that the resolution of these controversies in the Chalcedonian definition of Christ as 'one person in two natures' had profound implications for a general understanding of personhood. Central to the Chalcedonian definition was the idea 'that the concepts of person and nature should be kept distinct'.¹⁵¹ On this account, '[a] person is a substance, and a nature is the "specific property" of a substance' or, as O'Donovan explains, 'the distinctive qualities of

149 O'Donovan, *Begotten*, pp.50-51.

150 *Ibid.*, p.51. For his account of this evolution see *ibid.*, pp.50-56.

151 *Ibid.*, p.54.

humanity are attributable to person, not person to the qualities of humanity'.¹⁵² Such an understanding of the person means that a person's identity is primarily a question of her history and not of the qualities she possesses at any particular moment in that history. O'Donovan points out that this understanding of the person sits well with the account to be found in Scripture, in which a person's identity can be known while he is still in the womb and is defined by his prospective history and in which the people of Israel's sense of identity, is, collectively and individually, bound up with the history of their relationship to God.¹⁵³ On this account, therefore, a person's identity 'is *historical*, that is, it makes a sequence of events *into someone's history*'.¹⁵⁴

While O'Donovan does not (nor, indeed, does Hauerwas for that matter) maintain that the only way in which a person's identity can be discussed is by means of narrative,¹⁵⁵ he does maintain that history or story is *the* means by which it is possible to depict the actual relationship between individual events, including the acts people perform and their identity. This understanding of identity leads him to the same conclusion reached by Hauerwas' analysis of the irreducibility of narrative. If ethics is essentially about transforming *the person* towards a vision of human wholeness and if stories are indispensable for understanding the nature of the person, then narratives will be indispensable for understanding the very nature and meaning of ethics itself. Looking forward towards the next chapter, it is worth observing that if a Christian doctrine of the person is one which understands the person in terms of history or story, rather than qualities, then a Christian ethic will have to be an ethic of character. For the present, it is sufficient to observe that narratives in Hauerwas' and O'Donovan's analyses will, therefore, be both the means by which a Christian understanding of the person is preserved and the means by which the implications of this account of the person for a Christian understanding of the moral life are displayed. These stories will, of course, have to be Christian stories in order that the

152 *Ibid.*

153 *Ibid.*, pp.51-52.

154 *Ibid.*, p.52.

155 Hauerwas, for example, is also prepared to discuss the question of identity in terms of the category of virtue.

particular nature of the *Christian* understanding of the moral life can be depicted. This conclusion does not require that O'Donovan adopt some form of narrative ethics. What might be required will be considered in Chapter 6. It should also be noted that although this discussion has focused on Hauerwas and O'Donovan because of the explicit parallels in theories at this point, this does not mean that Grisez's approach is diametrically opposed to theirs. Quite to the contrary, although Grisez does not explicitly adopt a narrative theory for understanding personal identity, he appears implicitly to draw on such a theory when he suggests that the best means of understanding a person's identity is to know his life story.¹⁵⁶ Adopting such a theory would certainly strengthen his position in relation to the personhood of the unborn.¹⁵⁷

With the key parallel features of Hauerwas' narrative ethics and a Christian realist theory identified, it is possible to consider the way in which these theories might be related to one another. Rather than seeking to reconcile the two theories by unifying them into a single theory, as was done with O'Donovan's and Grisez's approaches, it is suggested that the possibility should be explored of their being reconciled as complementary theories. Drawing O'Donovan's and Grisez's theories together could be justified by the fact that, in using analytic reason, they employed an essentially common form of logical operation to fulfil both the functions of discerning moral truth and of shaping people's lives in accordance with it. Hauerwas' approach, however, with its narrative mode of operation, seeks to fulfil these functions in a quite different way. Therefore, seeking to reconcile his approach with a Christian moral realism on the basis of their being complementary theories might better enable the potentially complementary functional differences between the two theories to be preserved than if an attempt were made to reduce them to a unified theory of ethics. It may be that ethics has different modes of operation and that different but complementary theories are necessary in order fully to describe the functions of these

156 Grisez, *Principles*, p.55.

157 For a concise statement of his position on the personhood of the unborn see, Grisez, *Living*, pp.489-498.

modes. Consequently, the common metaethical tasks of discerning moral truth and of shaping people's lives in accordance with that truth may well be best served by two separate forms of ethics, each possessing a parallel metaethical structure but distinct modes of operation for performing its essential functions.

Before considering the possibility of a complementary operation between Hauerwas' narrative ethics and a Christian moral realism, one fundamental logical disagreement as to the way in which a moral understanding can be said to be truthful needs to be settled. Hauerwas seeks to establish this moral truthfulness on the basis of its conformity to the theoretical truths regarding what Jesus' life reveals about 'following the way of God's kingdom'.¹⁵⁸ The problem with such an approach, from the perspective of a Christian realist theory, is that it violates the non-derivability thesis. According to this thesis, the bare statement of a theoretical truth about Jesus' life, such as that he eschewed the use of violence, is simply a fact from which a practical conclusion cannot logically be derived. Hauerwas explicitly sets the non-derivability thesis to one side because, as was noted in Chapter 2, he believes that it prevents ethics arising from, and being shaped by, theological convictions.¹⁵⁹ From Hauerwas perspective, the non-derivability thesis would also appear to mean that Scripture, which is also a form of theoretical knowledge, could have little or no role to play in guiding people's action in an ethic which respected its logical demands. Exactly the same problem in substance arose in the previous chapter in the context of the relationship between practical reason and the theoretical knowledge which contained in Scripture.¹⁶⁰ The solution to that problem is capable of being applied here, so that the Hauerwas' argument for the truth value of Scripture, rather than being the first step in a deductive train of logic as to why a person should follow a particular narrative, becomes the reason why Scripture should be the starting-point for moral deliberation. According to this approach, people will recognise the practical moral truths concerning how to live their lives which are arrived at through, or are involved in,

158 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.75.

159 See s.2.4.

160 See s.3.3.3.

the use of scriptural narratives for the purposes of moral deliberation. This very quickly raises the question, how does narrative function as a form of moral deliberation? Consideration of such a question, in its turn, raises further questions about the possibilities and limits of narrative as a form of moral deliberation. It is these questions which are central to the first stage of determining the nature of the complementary functions of a narrative ethic and a Christian moral realist theory in discerning moral truth and directing people towards it.

4.3 Narrative as Moral Deliberation

In seeking to answer these questions as to the nature, possibilities and limits of narrative as a form of moral deliberation, it is helpful to begin by noting why Hauerwas turned to narrative in the first place. The key reason for this move was his scepticism about the capacity of a system of ethics based upon the use of principles and rules to enable people to cultivate a virtuous character. As a result, he turned to narrative to provide both the vision of human wholeness and the means for directing people towards that vision. Whether such a decisive turn away from principles and rules to narrative was, in fact, necessary will be considered at length in the following chapter. While the answer to that question will obviously be important for the extent to which a Christian realist theory and a narrative ethic are capable of a complementary operation, what is of interest, for the present, is what Hauerwas has achieved by this decisive move of using narrative as the central organising motif for his whole approach to the task of moral deliberation. In order for narrative to have this function, Hauerwas draws upon a variety of different uses to which narrative can be put. For this reason, a simple or global assessment of the value of narrative for the task of moral deliberation is not possible. Rather, an inquiry into Hauerwas' different uses of narrative in the range of operations involved in moral deliberation, from discerning the shape of moral truths to their application to specific moral problems, is necessary.

4.3.1 Narrative, Imagination and the Evolution of Moral Rules

In the first of these operations of moral deliberation - discernment of the particular shape of moral obligation - narrative appears to have the capacity to reverse the operation of traditional moral deliberation, by suggesting that it is possible to know what is moral before it has been defined as such by any rules or principles. This function of narrative appears clearly in an observation which Hauerwas makes about the life of a saint who lives by literally treating all people as brothers in Christ. This saint's actions, Hauerwas suggests, 'will at times entail concrete behaviour that is not envisaged in the rule [that all people 'are ... to be treated fairly' or, indeed, by any moral rule at all].'¹⁶¹ In this observation, Hauerwas appears to be suggesting that this person's essentially narrative understanding of reality, which presumably arises from seeking to live according to the story of Jesus, is capable of producing behaviour which can be recognised as moral by an observer but which has not previously been identified as such by any rule. Hauerwas reveals a little more of his understanding of this function of narrative when he observes that, 'poetry does not just describe the known; it reveals dimensions of the unknown that makes the known seem unfamiliar'.¹⁶² Part of what he seems to be suggesting here is that the imaginative capacities invoked in responding to stories have the potential to produce new insights of moral relevance. Such an interpretation would certainly accord with his observation that the imagination is of considerable importance for a 'Christian moral casuistry':¹⁶³

Imagination is morally required because we refuse to allow the "necessities" of the world, which are often but stale habit, to go

161 Hauerwas, *Vision*, p.72.

162 *Ibid.*

163 Hauerwas, *Nations*, p.55. This interpretation would also accord with the observations made by others who have reflected upon the operations or functions of stories and metaphors. David Tracy, for example, has observed that,

Human beings need story ... to disclose to their imaginations some genuinely new possibilities for existence; possibilities which conceptual analysis, committed as it is to understand present actualities, cannot adequately provide. (Tracy, D., *Blessed Rage for Order*, The Seabury Press, New York, 1975, p.207.)

In a more philosophical vein, Richard Swinburne has observed that there are contexts in which 'the role of metaphor is more to stimulate the imagination than to convey truth' (Swinburne, R., *Revelation*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992, p.49).

unchanged or unchallenged when they are in fact susceptible to the power of imagination.¹⁶⁴

The imagination, Hauerwas argues, is able to break the bonds of stale habit because of its relative freedom from 'constraint, discipline, or necessity'.¹⁶⁵ It enables the connection and creation of ideas and images which would not have coalesced under the discipline of the rules of reason.¹⁶⁶ Imagination is also able to go further than breaking the bonds of stale habit by, as in the case of the saint, illuminating simply undiscovered possibilities for moral action. Hauerwas' point, however, is not simply that powerful stories or metaphors, such as 'all people are brothers in Christ', have the capacity to stimulate the imagination to new moral insights but also that the narratives created by such exercises of the imagination can then embody these insights in a form which enables the imaginations of readers and listeners to grasp them.

It is worth observing that Hauerwas' account of the function of narrative in generating new moral insights suggests that such insights will be capable of being generated by the creative imagination generally and not just by the imagination responding to a story. While the value of the imagination in responding directly to the stories of narrative canon is that its insights will tend to have a broad consistency with the tradition because many of the assumptions embodied in the stories will still exercise an influence, there is a role for a wider and more radical operation of the narrative imagination. In the least radical sense, stories from within the broad tradition of the narrative canon may be illuminating. Eco's challenge to the very possibility of accurately knowing reality at all in *The Name of the Rose*, or Conrad's confrontation with the nature of human evil in *Heart of Darkness*, or Huxley's prophetic proclamation of what it means to be human in *A Brave New World* constitute but the briefest list of the possibilities offered for exploration by the narrative imagination. More radically, there may be stories from beyond the broad narrative tradition itself

164 Hauerwas, *Nations*, p.55.

165 *Ibid.*, p.52, and generally, pp.51-60.

166 *Ibid.*

which are also profoundly illuminating.¹⁶⁷ For many Christians, the story of Gandhi's life, for example, has been very illuminating as to what is involved in 'turning the other cheek'.¹⁶⁸

The example of Gandhi's life also illustrates that narrative does not have to be the creation of a fictional life in order to reveal new moral insights. Hauerwas' illustration of the saint living by treating people as 'literally brothers in Christ' suggests that a person can employ her imagination to shape her own life in ways which give expression to a new image of the moral life. In fact, the narratives of real lives that are revelatory of what it means to be moral are likely to be more powerful than fictional accounts because they emphasise that this new image is possible for *real* people.

Already this discussion of the narrative imagination has travelled far from Hauerwas' usual territory. His interest is almost exclusively focused on the wholesome works of people like Austen and Trollope, whose narratives have a strongly biographical quality¹⁶⁹ and resonate with obvious Christian themes. Yet in invoking a wider category of narrative, the possibilities for its use in moral reasoning are greatly expanded. Stories need no longer be something simply to be followed, as they largely are in Hauerwas' work, but rather something which can challenge their readers or hearers, perhaps profoundly. The stories which will offer such challenges are, in fact, those most likely to break the bonds of 'stale habit'¹⁷⁰ because they are less liable to

167 The question of integrating these moral insights from beyond the narrative canon with those within it will be considered in more detail in s.4.3.3.

168 Though not, it should be noted, to Hauerwas, who observes that 'Gandhi's strategy does not embody the nonresistance of Jesus. Rather, Gandhi's nonviolent coercion and resistance still tries to achieve political objectives' (Hauerwas, *Dispatches*, p.130). Instead, Hauerwas argues, Jesus' strategy began with the practices of 'forgiveness and reconciliation' (*ibid.*).

169 Thomas Ogletree observes that, while Hauerwas' definition of narrative is wide, his primary concern is with 'autobiography, biography, and fictional stories concerned with the narrative articulation of individual human lives' (Ogletree, p.29).

170 Hauerwas, *Nations*, p.55.

be bound by the 'constraint, discipline, or necessity' of the more strictly canonical stories.¹⁷¹

It is worth observing that other forms of human creative expression, particularly the visual arts and music, also serve Hauerwas' purpose of freeing the mind to explore and present reality in new and insightful ways.¹⁷² Indeed, the visual arts can literally call people to a new way of seeing. Perhaps Renaissance art provides the clearest illustration of this process. The Renaissance artists' visual reinstatement of humanity by their naturalistic depiction of interrelated groups of people in the context of a three-dimensional socio-historical reality was an integral part of the Renaissance humanists' deepening understanding of what human dignity involved.¹⁷³

Whatever form of imagination is considered, Hauerwas' essential idea remains: it is possible for narratives to give expression to imaginative insights which reveal that which is recognisably moral but which has not yet been described by principles or rules. Hauerwas appears to assume that, at this point, all the 'standard accounts of moral rationality' will be left stranded, unable to accommodate new moral insights which were not generated by the schemes of reason which produced their various principles and rules. In substance, this is not a new challenge for Christian moral reasoning. Situationists, utilitarians in all their guises and divine command theorists all thought they posed a similar challenge. One of the key responses to these challenges was the redescription of the nature of rules and principles. The substance of perhaps the most important of these redescriptions - that produced by Paul Ramsey in his seminal article 'The Case of the Curious Exception'¹⁷⁴ - is employed by both Grisez¹⁷⁵ and O'Donovan¹⁷⁶ in their accounts of the nature of principles and rules. Consequently, Ramsey's account, as a more complete description of the method

171 *Ibid.*, p.52.

172 A possibility to which Hauerwas points, see *ibid.*, pp.52-53.

173 Murray, P. and Murray, L., *The Art of the Renaissance*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1963, pp.7-15.

174 Ramsey, P., 'The Case of the Curious Exception', in Outka, *Norm and Context*, 67-135.

175 Grisez, *Principles*, p.273.

176 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, pp.195-197.

employed by both contributors to a Christian realist theory can, be taken as offering a framework for such a theory's understanding of the nature of rules. This framework should enable Hauerwas' account of the imaginative and narrative generation of new moral insights to function in a complementary way to the principle and rule based analysis of a Christian realist ethic.

Ramsey's account begins by questioning the extent to which individual situations are actually unique or discontinuous from the perspective of moral reasoning.¹⁷⁷ It is unlikely, for example, that the day of the week or the country in which an event occurs will be morally significant. He argues that any particular case will, due to the nature of moral reasoning and the particularity of the situation, have a certain limited number of 'morally relevant features'.¹⁷⁸ These features might be things such as the values open to be pursued or the categories of people (such as neighbours, the innocent or the guilty) whose interests should be considered. Once the morally relevant features of a situation have been identified, it will be possible to discern the relationship between them. It is a function of rules to describe the way in which the morally relevant features of a situation relate to one another in shaping moral obligation. When an unusual case presents itself, the task of moral deliberation is to consider how it relates to existing rules. The claim that a situation calls for an exception to be made to a rule arises when an existing rule does not seem to give adequate advice as to how to respond to those particular circumstances. Ramsey's argument is that such a perception should give rise to a question as to why the rule's advice is inadequate. The result of an inquiry into this question, he suggests, may well be a clarification of the rule as it is discovered how to describe the situation's morally relevant features more accurately.¹⁷⁹ It is, of course, possible that reflection on the exceptional situation might lead to the identification of morally relevant features which mean that the situation is simply not covered by the rule to which it

177 Ramsey, 'Exception', pp.77-80.

178 *Ibid.*, p.79.

179 *Ibid.*, pp.87-92.

was thought to be an exception, or, possibly, by any rule at all.¹⁸⁰ In this case, the process of identifying the distinguishing features of the apparently exceptional situation represents the first step towards defining a new rule which will deal with such situations. In summary, then, Ramsey's central argument is that when an exception - a possibility for moral choice and action apparently proscribed by existing rules - presents itself, the response of good moral reasoning should be to reflect upon it in order to deepen its understanding of the relevant moral rule(s) and, if necessary, to reformulate it (or them) in the light of the insights gained from such reflection. The exceptional should not be seen as a threat to principles and rules, rather it is to be viewed as an opportunity to understand them better.

In the light of Ramsey's analysis, the moral insights generated in Hauerwas' account by the imagination and its engagement with narrative which are not covered by existing rules will present themselves to a Christian realist theory either as exceptions of the nature considered by Ramsey or, simply, as possibilities for action not yet covered by any rule. In either case, Ramsey's response commends itself as offering a way by which a Christian realist theory could embrace Hauerwas' account of the generation of new moral insights as a valuable complementary function to its account of principles and rules. So, to take Hauerwas' example, it may be true that the saint's behaviour towards others is not adequately described by the existing rules of fairness. Careful examination of this person's behaviour, however, will lead either to a reformulation of the rules of fairness or to the development of new rules to account for behaviour possessing those features which even the reformulated rules of fairness do not adequately describe. O'Donovan is keen to emphasise that Ramsey's analysis demonstrates that the development of moral understanding in these situations 'arises with', and not 'from', experience.¹⁸¹ Ramsey's point, O'Donovan is suggesting, is not that the experience itself supplies the new moral understanding, in the sense that

180 Given his concern for exceptions, this possibility is not much explored by Ramsey. However, it would seem to be necessarily implied by his argument that any alleged exception will possess morally relevant features which will make the formulation of a new rule possible (see especially, *ibid.*, p.78).

181 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.196.

the experience provides the criteria by which right and wrong are discerned. Rather, the experience provides the material which enables moral reflection to occur, reflection which takes as its starting-point pre-existing criteria for determining right and wrong. It is these pre-existing criteria, which are independent of the actual experience, which will be developed or clarified. It is, of course, also possible that some situations might lead to the recognition of previously unrecognised foundational principles of practical reasonableness or even previously undelineated basic goods. In relation to Hauerwas' analysis, this argument suggests that it is not strictly the narrative itself which supplies the new insight but the moral reflection *upon* the narrative.

There is a wider significance to Ramsey's account of moral rules which is worthy of note because it helps to put to rest some of the concerns which underlie Hauerwas' hostility towards casuistry and which contributed to his turn to narrative. O'Donovan highlights this significance when he identifies the capacity for moral discernment, the operation of which Ramsey's account describes, as an integral part of the freedom of the Gospel. With such powers of discernment, O'Donovan argues, the Christian no longer has 'to adhere to certain designations that have already been made for him [by "the law"]'.¹⁸² This is not, of course, the freedom to make any designation, rather it is the capacity to make '*the appropriate pattern of free response to objective reality*'.¹⁸³ Expressed in the terms of a Christian realist theory, O'Donovan's observations mean that the Christian does not simply follow laws which have been laid down; rather she formulates these laws as part of her ability to respond to situations in ways which allow her to expand her possibilities for human flourishing. If laws were simply to be obeyed, they would threaten the possibilities for human well-being. Not only would some laws close off possibilities for further human wholeness which might be present in a particular situation, but obeying rules would become an end in itself. If obeying rules becomes an end in itself, rules will indeed be a form of oppression because their purpose will have been lost sight of and they will

182 *Ibid.*, p.24.

183 *Ibid.*, p.25; emphasis O'Donovan's.

fail to fulfil their function of directing people towards their, and the community's, well-being. What is more, when rules become an end in themselves there is a grave risk that a person's relationship with God will be distorted. God becomes the divine legislator, to be obeyed simply because of his status as legislator rather than because he is the ultimate Wisdom which lovingly points people towards their true ends. The final problem of treating the law in this way, which Paul warns of in his epistles, is that if the law is understood to offer justification, this closes people off from the fact that grace comes through accepting God's love made manifest in the life of Christ (for example, 2 Cor 3:4-6; Gal 5:4). People misunderstand their own nature if they think they can be justified simply by doing what God wants, rather than allowing a forgiving God to accept them in their weakness and transform them into his likeness. The true freedom of the Gospel is to liberate people from understanding the law as authoritative in itself. Law is not to be obeyed for its own sake. Rather, it is a counsel to be sought as offering wisdom about how to live fully. When existing principles fail to offer such insights, the Christian is called to turn to the Spirit for help in the task of discerning the right path to take. The Law no longer stands in the way of human fulfilment and wholeness, for the Gospel brings the freedom to discern moral reality and to participate in the evolution of moral understanding. This freedom enables people to realise their human potential ever more fully. This account of the nature of principles and rules, which emerges from the inclusion of Ramsey's analysis in a Christian realist theory, is important, not only because it represents a reply to Hauerwas' complaints but also because it answers those earlier objectors to realist theories, such as Joseph Fletcher¹⁸⁴ and Karl Barth,¹⁸⁵ who found traditional forms of moral deliberation - often styled as casuistry - so inadequate that they felt compelled to abandon them altogether.

Much has already been said about the function of imagination in generating new moral insights. Yet this operation of the narrative imagination does not exhaust its role in

184 Fletcher, J., 'What is in a Rule? A Situationist's View', in Outka, *Norm and Context*, 325-349.

185 For a very helpful account of Barth's response to traditional casuistry see Biggar, N., *The Hastening that Waits: Karl Barth's Ethics*, Revised Edition, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995, pp.40-41.

the discernment of moral truth. For imagination has two further functions which, especially when complemented by a propositional form of ethics, are valuable for advancing moral understanding. In the first instance, narrative imagination sometimes proves to be a vital tool for this purpose by exploring difficult moral questions before they are actually encountered. The value of this function of narrative imagination is obvious enough: the immediate circumstances of a dilemma can make adequate reflection difficult. The longer term dimensions of a problem may, for example, be discounted or emotional forces may be unduly determinative. In the case of an individual's moral reflection, the responsible solution when the possibility of such dilemmas can be foreseen is to imagine the difficult situations which might be encountered in order to seek to identify or formulate rules and principles which will be of assistance when these situations are actually confronted. Teenagers, for example, would do well to imagine themselves at the end of their first hot date when they face the question, 'Well, do you?'

More broadly, the imagining of difficult moral problems and possible solutions to them may be of considerable assistance in advancing moral understanding. The third of Grisez's *The Way of the Lord Jesus* series represents an extraordinary application of this approach.¹⁸⁶ Through various journals he asked people to send him their accounts of the difficult moral problems which they had encountered in their lives so that he could see how his analysis responded to them. In this volume, Grisez reworks their stories, seeking to preserve people's anonymity yet retain their original narrative presentation. In some cases, where he was not supplied with real problems on various issues, Grisez has imagined the stories. In his responses to these narrative problems, Grisez both explores how his natural law theory might be applied in order to offer people guidance as to how to respond to these problems and seeks to clarify his own analysis in the light of the challenges and questions posed by these stories. O'Donovan, similarly, highlights the value of the narrative exploration of moral

186 I was privileged enough to be able to attend a number of seminars given by Professor Grisez while he was in Oxford during January and February 1995. In these seminars, Professor Grisez presented some of the questions he was considering in this work and sought other people's approaches to them, as well as feedback on his responses. The volume is forthcoming.

problems when he points out that Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure* represent particularly fine explorations of the tension between justice and mercy.¹⁸⁷ After all, on first hearing the play, who has failed to be impressed by Portia's solution?

The final function of the narrative imagination in moral deliberation is its operation not in posing but in solving moral problems.¹⁸⁸ When the principles required adequately to resolve a particular moral dilemma prove elusive, it is, at times, possible to imagine a good resolution of the specific problem. Having been able to engage in such an imaginative enterprise, it may be possible once again to reverse-engineer the imagined narrative to discern the moral truth it embodies. Luther offers an illustration of this kind of approach. Having observed that '[g]ood judgement is not to be found in books ... But it is love and natural law, with which all reason is filled', he says, '[l]et me give you an example':¹⁸⁹

There is a story told of Duke Charles of Burgundy. A nobleman captured his enemy. The wife of the captive came to ransom him. The nobleman said he would give the man back to her if she slept with him. The woman was virtuous, but wanted her husband released, and so she went and asked her husband whether she should do it to get him freed. The man wanted to be free and to save his life, and permitted it. But the day after the nobleman had slept with the woman, he had her husband beheaded, and gave him back to her dead. The woman complained of this to Duke Charles ...¹⁹⁰

At this point the reader gasps and wonders what could be done to ensure that the nobleman was justly dealt with. Luther completes the story:

Duke Charles ... summoned the nobleman and ordered him to take the woman as his wife. After the wedding day, he had the man beheaded,

187 O'Donovan, *Nations*, p.370. O'Donovan suggests that the truth about the relationship between justice and mercy which both plays reveal is that, 'the justice which is appropriate to the human community must be "merciful" - and that precisely for the reason which Jesus gave to the accusers of the adulteress: it must be administered by sinners on sinners' (*ibid.*).

188 Hauerwas rather generally points to this operation of the imagination in *Nations*, pp.54-59.

189 Luther, M., *On Secular Authority*, Trans., Höpfl, H., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p.42.

190 *Ibid.*, pp.42-43.

placed the women in possession of his goods and restored her honour.¹⁹¹

On this judgement, Luther comments: '[n]ow no pope, no lawyer and no book could have taught him to give such a verdict'.¹⁹² Luther does not seek to explicate the principle it reveals, preferring simply to observe that 'it is so just a judgement that everyone is bound to approve it and find in his heart that it is right'.¹⁹³ Luther could, however, have explored why it was so just. In doing so, he might have provided a fascinating exposition of the notion that a punishment should fit the crime which suggested that any truly just punishment will embody both retribution and restitution in a form that reflects the wrongdoing to which they respond. While the actual verdict may not, in fact, be one of which 'everyone is bound to approve', for Luther, it was the outcome of a creative imagination, well schooled by good moral reasoning, which was able to envisage a just outcome that was no simple application of principle. This qualification that the imagination was 'well schooled by good moral reasoning' is an important one and one which Hauerwas highlights in his general discussion of the operation of imagination in 'the moral life',¹⁹⁴ although he prefers the imagination to be schooled by virtues other than moral reasoning.¹⁹⁵ Whether it be virtues or moral reasoning, the point is that a sound moral understanding is likely to ensure that those options genuinely repugnant to it are simply not considered, leaving the imagination free to roam the possibilities which might actually advance moral understanding.

From this discussion as a whole, it should have become clear that narrative has a valuable role to play in advancing moral understanding and that this function of narrative ethics would, in its various forms, provide a valuable complement to the

191 *Ibid.*, p.43.

192 *Ibid.*

193 *Ibid.*

194 Hauerwas, *Nations*, p.54.

195 *Ibid.*, pp.52-55.

principle based analysis of a Christian realist theory which employed Paul Ramsey's understanding of rules.

4.3.2 Narrative as a Form of Analogical Moral Reasoning

While the imagination stimulated by narrative has an important role to play in advancing moral understanding, Hauerwas also sees narrative as playing a central role in guiding people towards the vision of the moral life. This raises the question, how does narrative perform this function? Remarkably, this is an issue to which Hauerwas pays little attention.¹⁹⁶ It will be recalled, however, that in his discussion about the truthfulness of Scripture, the function of the gospels' narratives was to display the life of Jesus so that people could 'follow and [thus] be like this man whom God has sent'.¹⁹⁷ According to Hauerwas, this means that 'Christian ethics involves learning to imitate another'.¹⁹⁸ This point is further explained when he observes that,

We become just by copying the deeds of just people, but "copy" is not some mechanical imitation, though that may not be a bad start, but rather it involves having the same feelings, emotions, desires that the virtuous person has when she acts.¹⁹⁹

In other words, for an individual to become a person of virtue she should seek to pattern her life on the virtuous lives displayed in various narratives. Put simply, Hauerwas' narrative ethic is an analogical ethic. This is a conclusion which William Spohn, in his survey of the use of parable and narrative in ethics, affirms generally when he observes that '[t]he common denominator for ... uses of narrative and symbols in moral reflection is *analogy*'.²⁰⁰ As a form of moral deliberation, however, analogy has distinct limits.

196 See Guevin, B.M., 'The Moral Imagination and the Shaping Power of Parables', *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 17 (1989), 63-79, who makes a similar observation (p.63) before proposing his own solution.

197 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.75.

198 Hauerwas, *Community*, p.130. It is worth noting that, even in this summary statement of the basic form of narrative ethics, Hauerwas does not exclude the operation of principles - the passage quoted ends '... before it involves acting on principles (though principles are not excluded)'.

199 Hauerwas, S., 'The Difference of Virtue and the Difference it Makes: Courage Exemplified', *Modern Theology*, 9 (1993), 249-264, p.251.

200 Spohn, 'Parable', p.111.

In order to seek to define these limits, it is helpful to turn to Grisez, who has both astutely observed how the methodology of analogical moral argument operates and identified the problems it leads to in dealing with difficult moral problems. Often, Grisez observes, moral argument by analogy works in the following way:

A real or imagined case which seems simple and clear is taken as a premiss, and the extent to which people's moral judgements about the case coincide is used as another premiss. The conclusion is then drawn that the same moral judgement should hold for a somewhat similar but less simple and clear case, concerning which moral judgements have diverged.²⁰¹

This will almost certainly be the process deployed by narrative ethics because the narrative canon of a community will be composed of narratives which have at least some measure of clarity about them and which have already proved useful in explicating various truths. They are unlikely to be narratives about whose meaning people significantly disagree because, if that were the case, they would have ceased to serve their purpose of integrating the community around a common vision of reality. Where significant disagreements persist, the result may be the formation of different communities - as the Church knows all too well. On the other hand, the situations which give rise to moral query are likely to be those events in people's life stories which lack the clarity of the community's narratives. The danger in such situations is, as Grisez points out, that '[i]f the instances which are compared are not alike in all [morally] relevant ways, then the analogy although persuasive, loses its rational cogency'.²⁰² This danger is apparent when Hauerwas' and Grisez's treatments of Judith Jarvis Thompson's well worn but well known violinist analogy are compared. This analogy, used to defend abortion, particularly in the case of rape, should be familiar enough.²⁰³ A person wakes up and finds herself connected to a famous violinist whose blood is being purified by her kidneys. When she inquires why and how she came to be in this situation, it is explained that a Music Lovers' Society was desperate to save the famous violinist's life and they learned that the only way of

201 Grisez, *Life*, p.338.

202 *Ibid.*

203 Thompson, J.J., 'A Defence of Abortion', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 1 (1971), 47-66.

doing so was to hook him up to someone with exactly the same rare blood type for nine months while his kidneys recovered from what would otherwise be a fatal condition. It is then explained to the person now hooked up, that the Music Lovers' Society discovered that she had just this blood type, that she had been kidnapped by them and then connected to the violinist. The head of the hospital is very sympathetic to her plight but says that it would be wrong to unhook the violinist because to do so would kill him.

In considering the question of abortion more generally, as a preface to discussing this analogy with rape, Hauerwas observes that, '[u]nlike many, [Susan] Nicholson rightly sees that the moral analysis of abortion requires carefully controlled analogical arguments'.²⁰⁴ Having observed that the violinist case provides a close analogy to the situation of rape, Hauerwas proposes that '[t]he *one* disanalogy between the two cases, however, is that there is a genetic relationship between the rape victim and the foetus'.²⁰⁵ It is true that this is *a* disanalogous feature of the two cases but it is not the only one. Grisez would agree with Hauerwas (who follows Nicholson) in seeing this first point of disanalogy as not being morally determinative. What is more, both Hauerwas and Grisez accept that, in the case of rape as in case of the violinist, there is a legitimate claim to end the injustice caused by the denial of liberty. This means that the whole argument pivots on whether or not it is fair to the dependent person (the violinist case accepts that the foetus is a person) to act on the basis of this claim, with the result that the dependent person will die or be killed. Precisely at this crucial point, a series of disanalogies arise. While it is not the task of this thesis to settle the argument as to whether or not abortion in the case of rape treats the foetal person unfairly, listing the disanalogies to which Grisez points indicates that Hauerwas' methodology possesses some serious limitations for dealing with such questions.

For the analogy between the violinist and the rape victim to be more adequate in a moral sense, Grisez proposes the following amendments:

204 Hauerwas, *Community*, p.203.

205 *Ibid.*, p.204; emphasis mine.

First, we should assume that the Society of Music Lovers did not purposely hook one to the violinist in order to save his life. Rather, the Society attacked one, and the violinist happened to become hooked to one as a result of the attack.²⁰⁶

This first amendment highlights the fact that in the case of rape the foetus' dependent state is highly unlikely to be a desired part of someone's plan of wrongdoing and certainly not part of a plan to bring him good. The sense in which the foetus is a victim of the attack and not a planned beneficiary of wrongdoing is further detailed by Grisez's second proposed amendment to the analogy:

we should assume that the violinist was not in such a condition that he would have otherwise died, but rather that his condition of temporary dependence rose from the attack itself, so that he is as much a victim of the attack as the person to whom he is hooked.²⁰⁷

This amendment significantly alters any judgements about the fairness of unhooking the violinist because the equivalent innocence of both parties is revealed.

The disanalogy as to the actual nature of the denial of liberty involved in the pregnancy (as distinct from the rape itself) and the connection between violinist and victim is highlighted by Grisez's third proposed amendment to the story:

we should assume that the burden of being hooked to the violinist is not greater than that of pregnancy; one can very likely go about one's normal activities, not be compelled to stay in a hospital bed for nine months ...²⁰⁸

In further exploring the nature of the denial of liberty involved, Grisez observes that,

we should assume that one's condition of being hooked to the violinist was not a unique state of affairs, but an instance of a common type - that people regularly become hooked to others in this way, but usually

206 Grisez, *Life*, p.206.

207 *Ibid.*

208 *Ibid.*, p.207. Thompson also raises the possibility that the victim of the Music Lover's Society's attack may have to be hooked up to the violinist for the rest of her life. In noting this observation, Grisez remarks, 'Thomson here perhaps alludes to the fact that a parent has a long-term responsibility for children, but this long-term responsibility is not analogous to being hooked to the violinist and need not be accepted by the woman who conceives as a result of rape' (*ibid.*).

only as a result of an act to which they consented - except that one is hooked to the violinist without the usual prior consent on one's own part.²⁰⁹

Part of the reason why no attempt is being made here to settle the issue as to whether or not unhooking the violinist would be fair is that much more time would need to be devoted to extending the analogy in the opposite direction to Grisez's improvements in order to do justice to the sense of ongoing violation suffered by the rape victim.

What all of these disanalogies point to is that the usefulness of narratives in negotiating complex moral problems is often likely to be limited. Rules and principles will be of critical importance in determining the morally relevant features of both the narrative and the particular situation which gives rise to the moral problem in order to avoid disanalogies which lead to simplistic and erroneous understandings of the difficult situations. Hauerwas seems to be broadly aware of this general problem, for he has observed that 'stories without principles will have no way of concretely specifying the actions and practices consistent with the general orientation of the story'.²¹⁰ The problem - as is often the case with his narrative methodology - is that these nods to the formal requirements of good moral deliberation affect neither the general structure of Hauerwas' narrative theory nor his practical application of it.

If moral argument by analogy is a highly problematic methodology for dealing with complex moral problems generally, then these problems are only magnified when the analogies being used are at least two thousand years old and come from a place and culture very different to that of most modern, especially Western, Christians. Yet these are the very analogies which are at the heart of Hauerwas' narrative ethic. In the case of biblical narratives concerning actual people and especially Jesus, the very particularity of their lives further compounds these challenges. Grisez puts this point well when he observes that,

209 *Ibid.*

210 Hauerwas, *Vision*, p.89. He has made similar statements elsewhere, for example: Hauerwas, *Community*, pp.10, 130; Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, pp.75-76.

Often, traditional spiritual guidance talks about imitating or conforming to Christ ... But what does it mean to imitate or conform to Jesus? He lived a long time ago, in a culture very different from ours, [and] was unmarried. Most people have abilities, opportunities, and responsibilities very different from his. How can they live as he did? The only way to answer this question is to make some very precise distinctions concerning human acts.²¹¹

Hauerwas appears to be aware of the challenges which the particularity of Jesus' life present to narrative analysis, for he observes that '[w]e are called upon to be *like* Jesus, not to *be* Jesus'.²¹² One of the ways in which he deals with this challenge is to draw out principles from the narratives of Jesus' life in order to provide a common currency between Jesus' life and the lives of those who seek to follow him. Hauerwas observes, for example, that to live faithfully to the Jesus story means seeking, 'perfection ... [which] is at the very least nothing less than forgiving our enemies'.²¹³ He does not, however, adopt this approach systematically and, more importantly, even if he does acknowledge the problem of personal particularity, he largely puts important dimensions of the problems of historical particularity to one side. His primary reason for avoiding technical discussion of these points of particularity would appear to be that being faithful to the broad claims of his narrative ethic requires narratives to be read as complete stories - a form of reading which would seem to be threatened by critical biblical scholarship breaking the stories up into their constituent elements in order to settle such issues. Hauerwas' narrative reading of Scripture also means that he largely avoids consideration of many of those passages - which tend to be propositional in nature - which raise the questions of historical particularity most acutely, such as those concerning divorce,²¹⁴ the adultery qualification to divorce,²¹⁵ homosexuality,²¹⁶ the status of women²¹⁷ and

211 Grisez, *Principles*, pp.244-245.

212 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.76. Indeed, Hauerwas' collaborator, Richard Bondi, has observed that 'bridging the temporal gap inherent in any contemporary retelling of an interpretative story [is] a large part of the role of the theological ethicist, who functions as a sort of editor and translator of the lives of the saints and the primary Christian narratives' (Bondi, R., 'The Elements of Character', *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 12 (1984), 201-218, p.215).

213 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.76.

214 Mk 10:11-12.

215 Mt 5:32.

legitimacy of slavery.²¹⁸ When such passages are considered, Hauerwas tends to draw his discussion of them into the context of his larger narrative themes, simply laying aside questions of historical particularity.²¹⁹ Often he achieves much by means of such an approach, drawing out vital and often overlooked connections between different aspects of morality in the contemporary world, for example, between current attitudes to sex, adultery, divorce and attitudes to violence.²²⁰ This skill of provocatively illuminating the moral landscape of the modern world is a crucial element in what has made him an influential writer. However, the challenges mounted by those sceptical of the usefulness of biblical material for the purposes of ethical analysis because of its historically particular qualities are simply too strong, or at least too numerous, to be avoided entirely²²¹ - especially if, as in Hauerwas' case, it is an actual historical encounter which ultimately grounds the truthfulness of the ethic which is meant to be morally demanding in the contemporary world. If successful, such challenges would radically undermine Hauerwas' narrative strategy of operating at a more general level by suggesting that his doing so merely hides foundations which, if exposed, would be revealed to be so qualified by historical particularity as to be insecure in the very different circumstances of the late twentieth century. Meeting these challenges would appear to present another opportunity for a propositional form of ethics, such as may be found in O'Donovan's earlier work on biblical ethics, to be employed in a complementary relationship with Hauerwas' narrative ethics.

In his work on biblical ethics, which, in its use of principles to deal with the

216 See, for example, 1 Cor 6:9-10; Rom 1:26-27; 1 Tim 1:10.

217 See, for example, Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19; 1 Tim 2:11-15; 1 Pet 3:1-7.

218 See, for example, Eph 6:5-9; Col 3:22-4:1; 1 Tim 6:1-2; Titus 2:9-10; 1 Pet 2:18-21.

219 See, for example, his consideration of St Matthew's account of Jesus' teaching on adultery and divorce (Mt 5:27-32) in Hauerwas, *Scripture*, pp.126-133.

220 *Ibid.*

221 See, for example, Nineham, and Houlden. However, it is worth noting John Barton's succinct and perceptive critique of this type of argument as being unduly shaped by the presuppositions of the biblical fundamentalists' position it is challenging and, as a result, overstating the case for historical particularity (Barton, J., 'The Place of the Bible in Moral Debate', *Theology*, (May, 1988), 204-209).

historicity of Scripture, could be incorporated into a Christian realist theory as a way of complementing Hauerwas' narrative ethics, O'Donovan provides a vigorous response to arguments made by biblical critics, especially J.L. Houlden, which threaten, on the basis of its historical particularity, to denude biblical material of any substantive content.²²² In this response, O'Donovan acknowledges that the task of determining what is and what is not historically particular in Scripture is sometimes very difficult and will require careful historical critical analysis.²²³ Nevertheless, he argues, it is possible to bridge this gap of history first by identifying those moral propositions which are embedded in the biblical material and then, secondly, by applying the principle of universalisability to test for the 'timelessness' of these propositions.²²⁴ Before this task can even occur, it will, at times - as Paul Nelson points out - be necessary to resolve disputed interpretations about biblical narratives, for example on the question of the nature of marriage, by an appeal to principle.²²⁵

While Hauerwas may largely ignore the problems of historical particularity in his analysis of individual narratives, he does respond to the much more general and potentially all encompassing claim for historical particularity made by those who stand in the tradition of wanting to qualify eschatologically Jesus' moral teaching as only offering a very historically particular 'interim' ethic.²²⁶ In his response, Hauerwas

222 O'Donovan, 'Possibility', *passim*; and O'Donovan, 'Toward', *passim*.

223 O'Donovan, 'Towards', pp.73-74.

224 *Ibid.*, p.73. This test states that 'norms are "moral" only if they apply indifferently to all situations which are in relevant respects alike' (*ibid.*). For illustrations of O'Donovan's application of essentially this method, see O'Donovan, *Marriage*, (especially, pp.9-10, 20-21) on the question of divorce and O'Donovan, *Nations*, (pp.374-377) on the question of slavery.

225 Given that Nelson has devoted quite some energy in his account of the relationship between narratives and moral reasoning to demonstrating that there will be times when it will be impossible to resolve disputed interpretations of the same story without resorting to principles (Nelson, especially, pp.143-147; and Ogletree, p.29), this point - the truth of which should be fairly apparent to all but the most fervent narrative theologians - will not be revisited here.

226 A tradition, which in the English speaking world, takes Schweitzer, A., *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*, 1906 (English Translation, 1910) as its foundation and which continues to exert an important influence in the work of people like J.L. Houlden, J.T Sanders (*Ethics and the New Testament*, SCM, London, 1976) who develops a very Schweitzerian position, and Charles Curran (Curran, C.E., 'The Role and Function of Scripture in Moral Theology', in Curran, C. and McCormick, R. (eds), *Readings in Moral Theology No. 4: The Use of Scripture in Moral Theology*, Paulist Press, New York, 1984, 178-212, pp.188-190). An effective reply to this of position is provided by Schnackenburg, R., *The Moral Teaching of the New Testament*, translated

argues that, while biblical scholarship is unlikely to settle definitively the extent to which Jesus' teaching is qualified by the eschatological or realised dimensions of the Kingdom,²²⁷ in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus knowledge of the eschatological realities which underpin the radical demands of the life of the Kingdom are made sufficiently present to those who follow Jesus to make such a way of life realistic.²²⁸ Hauerwas makes this argument particularly clear in his oft-repeated defence of a radical Christian pacifism, in which he argues that it is only in the light of the assurance which comes with the resurrection of a final and complete eschatological victory over all evil which enables Christians to accept that they do not need to use violence 'to make history come out right'²²⁹ and that the meaningfulness of peaceably serving one's neighbour will be vindicated even in the face of death.²³⁰ From the perspective of the complementarity of Hauerwas' narrative ethic with the Christian realist ethic which arises from the engagement of Grisez's and O'Donovan's approaches, it is worth observing that Grisez takes a very similar approach to Hauerwas at this point, emphasising, as was noted in Chapter 2, the centrality of Christian hope which he also sees as sufficiently revealed and made present in Jesus to make living by the radical demands of the Kingdom possible.²³¹ Both Hauerwas' and Grisez's rendering of this relationship between the moral requirements and the realised and future eschatological dimensions would be enhanced by embracing O'Donovan's more fully developed and nuanced account of this relationship.²³²

All of the problems with moral reasoning by analogy which have been highlighted so far relate primarily to dealing with situations involving a significant degree of particularity. The more particular a situation or an analogy, the more likely it is that it will possess morally relevant features which are not present in the corresponding

by Holland-Smith, J. and O'Hara, W.J., Burns and Oates, London, 1965, pp.24, 81-89, 185-196.

227 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.82.

228 *Ibid.*, pp.83-91.

229 *Ibid.*, p.106.

230 Hauerwas' clearest exposition of his position is to be found in Hauerwas, 'Epilogue', especially pp.160, 181.

231 See s.2.4; see Grisez, *Living*, pp.78-87, 121, 127-129; and Grisez, *Principles*, pp.861-862.

232 See s.3.3.3.

analogy or situation with which it is being compared. Put simply, narrative is a bad form of casuistry. This does not mean, however, that analogy and thus narrative has no place in good moral reasoning. Rather, it suggests that the appropriate field of operation for narrative is in dealing with moral values at a high level of generality. So long as analogical reasoning is conducted at this high level of generality, the very broad value judgements which will be the focus of its concern are exactly the sort of judgements least likely to be affected by the particularity of the context out which they arise or to which they are being applied. However, Hauerwas' virtue ethic has meant that it is at exactly this high level of generality that his narrative ethic primarily operates. The focus of his narrative ethic is upon the type of people which a Christian community should be in very general terms - namely, a community of 'love',²³³ 'peace',²³⁴ 'forgiveness',²³⁵ 'faith',²³⁶ 'hope',²³⁷ 'patience',²³⁸ 'courage',²³⁹ and 'charity'.²⁴⁰ The real question, therefore, is whether moral reasoning can be conducted satisfactorily at this level of generality. In other words, the validity of the sweeping claims of narrative ethics rests on the strength of the claims for virtue ethics. These claims will be considered in detail in the next chapter. If it emerges that moral reasoning cannot leave behind its traditional occupation of analysing complex moral problems, then narrative ethics will have to admit a scheme of moral deliberation which deploys rules and principles in order to specify what it actually means to be a community of 'faith', 'hope' and 'charity'.

4.3.3 The Limits of a Narrative Canon and the Importance of the Church

Once it is recognised that analogical moral reasoning will fail in situations where the apparently appropriate analogy is inadequate to deal with the problem at hand, a rather wider challenge for a strictly narrative ethic emerges. This problem will arise

233 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.91.

234 *Ibid.*

235 *Ibid.*, p.90.

236 *Ibid.*, p.93.

237 Hauerwas, *Existence*, p.214.

238 Hauerwas, *Community*, p.128.

239 Hauerwas, *Nations*, p.52.

240 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.141.

because, given the grounding of the truth claims of Hauerwas' narrative ethic in those narratives which witness to an encounter with God which reveals what it means to live 'in the way of God's kingdom',²⁴¹ there will be a limited canon of authoritative (because truthful) analogies which can be called upon. Therefore, when a situation presents itself for which there is no suitable analogy, a thoroughgoing narrative ethic will be left mute. Speech is required but it has no language - no adequate analogy - with which to address the situation. A story cannot simply be invented, otherwise the authority of the canon will be lost. The only language open to the narrative ethicist, at this point, is the language of principles and rules. Thus, an attempt must be made to discern the principles embodied in the narratives in order to determine which insights might accurately be applied to deal with the particular problem.

Interestingly, when Hauerwas considers topics for which there are no immediately relevant narratives within the Christian tradition, this is effectively what he does. In his consideration of the moral legitimacy of *in vitro* fertilisation, for example, he is quite explicit about this process.²⁴² Having observed that his general approach to ethics is very dependent on theological propositions, Hauerwas continues:

After having made this claim about the dependence of my argument on theological presuppositions, however, I must tell you that there is no *direct* connection between theological belief and the question of the permissibility or impermissibility of *in vitro* fertilisation. There is nothing in Scripture that says, "You shall not commit *in vitro* fertilisation"; nor do I think you can show any direct connections between theological assertions about God's creative and redemptive purposes and *in vitro* fertilization.²⁴³

Hauerwas then proceeds to argue that determining the approach to be taken to *in vitro* fertilisation is 'a *practical judgement* of whether this kind of technique furthers or is compatible with our community's [narratively constructed] understanding of itself'.²⁴⁴

241 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.75.

242 Perhaps also worthy of particular note is Hauerwas' essay, 'Religious Concepts of Brain Death and Associated Problems', which he does not call 'Religious Narratives about Brain Death' (see Hauerwas, *Suffering*, pp.87-99).

243 *Ibid.*, p.143.

244 *Ibid.*, pp.143-144; emphasis mine.

A closely related problem will present itself when a moral insight is discerned which is not embodied in any canonical story.²⁴⁵ The question as to whether Hauerwas' account of a narrative tradition actually permits such a possibility is best set to one side for the moment. When such an extra-canonical insight emerges, two approaches are open. The first is to attempt to read the particular insight(s) into the narrative itself. Paul Ramsey has argued that this is a method which Hauerwas employs. Ramsey observes, for example, that,

Hauerwas' attempt to ground fidelity in the church's commitment to exclusive relationships [is] ... "an assortment of current anthropological soteriological insights diligently in search of an account of biblical narrative that fits".²⁴⁶

However, this approach is unsatisfactory because it fails to take seriously the historical particularity of the scriptural narratives, while also contradicting Hauerwas' own methodology for establishing the truthfulness of narrative. A narrative is true either because it witnesses to those truths about Jesus' life and teaching which were transforming or because it witnesses to the understanding of what it means 'to walk in the way of the Lord'²⁴⁷ which arose from Israel's encounter with God. The ground of these truth claims is that the early Church's understanding was *in fact* transformed by Jesus' life and teaching. Any attempt to add insights to the early Church's understanding weakens the basis of the truth claim, upon which the moral authority of the canonical narratives depend, by obscuring their actual understanding.

A second, more satisfactory, approach is to accept that the narrative canon cannot embody all moral insights and to acknowledge that these issues will need to be analysed by a complementary system of practical reason employing principles and

245 An important instance of insights beyond the narrative canon requiring integration with those in the canon was highlighted in the previous chapter in the discussion of the relationship between revelation and natural law theory in which it was argued that, in order to develop an adequate account of human fulfilment, it would be necessary to incorporate insights beyond those to be gained by reflecting upon the very particular lives of those depicted in Scripture. (See s.3.3.3.)

246 Nelson, p.146, quoting Ramsey, P., 'A Question (or Two) for Stanley Hauerwas', an unpublished paper presented at a symposium convened by The Centre for Theological Inquiry, Princeton, 19-21 November 1982, p.19.

247 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.77.

rules. While Ramsey is no doubt correct that Hauerwas' narrative focus means that, at times, he makes narratives carry meanings which they cannot reasonably be thought to have, it should be clear from Hauerwas' treatment of the question of *in vitro* fertilisation that he is more open to the use of practical reasoning to advance a community's moral understanding than his rhetoric sometimes suggests.

It is now possible to return to the question as to whether or not Hauerwas' account of a narrative tradition admits the possibility of extra-canonical insights. It has been vigorously argued by Todd Whitemore that Hauerwas does not allow for such insights and that 'his narrative is unrevisable'.²⁴⁸ Whitemore's argument appears to arise from his over-emphasis upon Hauerwas' claims for the distinctness of Christian ethics and from aligning him too closely, on epistemological issues, with Lindbeck's rendering of a nonfoundationalist position. Although Hauerwas does not provide a systematic treatment of this question of the revisability of the narrative tradition, his theory would certainly appear to allow for it. To begin with, the question is not of the revisability of narratives *per se* but the revisability of the interpretation of narratives in the canon. However, the discussion of Hauerwas' understanding of the imagination - as functioning to challenge accepted understandings and to produce moral insights which are recognisable but not embodied in any rule - suggests that a narrative tradition *is* capable of revision in the light of fresh insights. The test of the acceptability of such insights will be - as in the case of the fresh insights of practical reason dealing with novel problems - whether they are 'compatible with our community's understanding of itself'.²⁴⁹ Unless communities are completely incapable of understanding one another - and, as should be clear by now, Hauerwas' understanding of the distinctness of narrative traditions does not amount to such a claim - there is no reason why insights arising from an engagement with communities beyond that formed by a particular narrative tradition could not lead to a revised interpretation of that tradition. In Hauerwas' case, for example, it would appear that

248 Whitemore, T., 'Beyond Liberalism and Communitarianism in Christian Ethics: A Critique of Stanley Hauerwas', *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics*, (1989), 207-225, p.222.

249 Hauerwas, *Suffering*, pp.143-144.

he has no difficulty accepting the revised interpretations of those narratives concerning women held by those portions of the Church which have embraced at least some of the insights of modern feminism or the revised interpretations of those narratives concerning slavery.

The previous discussion of the limits of narrative - which indicated that principles and rules would be necessary to analyse and embody extra-canonical insights - suggests that Hauerwas' notion of a narrative tradition needs, at this point, to be broad enough to incorporate the fact that moral (and theological) insights within that tradition will be embodied in propositions. This means that the notion of the revision of the narrative tradition also needs to extend from the revision of the interpretation of narratives to the incorporation and revision of the moral (and theological) insights embodied in propositions - propositions which may well be the basis for the revised interpretations.

Whatever the scope of the narrative tradition, it is important to emphasise that within Hauerwas' framework of analysis (and indeed, O'Donovan's and Grisez's as well) these extra-canonical insights will produce *revised* understandings of the tradition and will not represent *new* understandings (in the strong sense, that these understandings imply or require a significant change to the outline of the tradition as a whole). For, unless such understandings find some resonance in the narrative tradition, they will not be recognised as improvements in understanding but rather as conflicting claims. The revised understandings about women and slavery, even if generated by sources external to that tradition, were capable of precipitating a revised Christian understanding because equality is an important motif in the Christian tradition.

The extent to which such a process of revision is possible will depend upon the nature of a tradition and a community's understanding of it. A tradition, such as the Christian tradition, which possesses a rich diversity of motifs will be more capable of revising itself than one which is more monochromatic or one which forgets the diversity of motifs in its history in a desperate desire not to be bound by its past or, at

least, those parts of its past with which it is uncomfortable. The wider the vision of the past, the greater will be the capacity to see clearly in the present. That is why, in part, a community which truly wants to deepen its moral understanding should understand narratives which display what later come to be understood as unsatisfactory moral perspectives, as elements of a larger narrative about the community's evolution of moral understanding, rather than purging its past of embarrassments. What is more, it may well be the case that various practices which have come to be understood as totally unacceptable were once more coherent in different social, economic and political circumstances. Indeed, if a community does not pay attention to these historically contingent features, it risks misunderstanding exactly what it has learnt. O'Donovan makes this point clearly in relation to slavery when he highlights its role as an important aspect of the ancient economic institution of the household.²⁵⁰ To neglect what originally made sense of slavery, in the belief that all forms of slavery are equivalently morally wicked because all similarly violate a principle of equality, risks, O'Donovan suggests, leading to a serious misunderstanding of what has been learnt about equality itself. Rejecting the notion that slavery could ever have been a defensible practice is liable, on the basis of O'Donovan's analysis, to lead to a view of equality which denies the legitimacy of a differentiation of roles and thus of authority in a society.²⁵¹ The importance of a community preserving and developing a narrative of its entire tradition is worth emphasising in the present context because Hauerwas has a tendency to treat the Christian tradition as though it ended with the conversion of Constantine and did not begin again until John Howard Yoder!

250 O'Donovan, *Nations*, p.264.

251 *Ibid.*, p.263. This suggestion draws upon O'Donovan's argument that,

A substantial doctrine of equality must be capable of challenging some alleged distinctions which may be supposed to justify the differences in the way in which we treat people. But there is a difficulty: all the social structures of affinity ... depend upon differentiated social roles which introduce or depend on inequalities between one person and another. Leadership, responsibility, initiative and authority are forms of differentiation without which a community cannot function or survive ... (*Ibid.*, pp.262-263.)

This account of the relationship between the evolution of moral understanding and the reading of scriptural narratives enables the discussion, which was begun in the previous chapter, of the place of revelation and Scripture in moral deliberation, to be advanced. Knowledge of what Scripture teaches, it has been argued, should be the *operational* starting-point for moral deliberation in a Christian ethic because of the truth claims made for it as a substantial source of general practical knowledge.²⁵² These truth claims were founded on Scripture being, or embodying, revelation. In this chapter, it has become more apparent that the historical particularity of Scripture and the claims of biblical critics mean that caution must be exercised in identifying both what is revelation in Scripture and the extent to which its content addresses the present. It has also become clear that the evolution of moral understanding will play a role in identifying those understandings in Scripture which are historically contingent. These revised understandings will, in turn, shape perceptions of the revelation of Scripture. This suggests that there is a reciprocal relationship between revelation and the evolution of moral understanding in which revelation will, at times, advance moral understanding, while, at other times, moral understanding will advance the understanding of revelation. The possibility and bounds of such a relationship are grounded in both the nature of revelation as the communication of truth and in the nature of the tradition within which the moral deliberation is occurring.

The implications for moral deliberation of this account of the evolving understanding of the revelation in Scripture are twofold. First, moral deliberation must seek to begin with what is, in fact, revelation - it must seek to take account of the evolved understanding of the revelation in Scripture. This makes it necessary to take seriously the Church's claim, or rather the claim of parts of the Church, to be the bearer of the apostolic knowledge of the unfolding meaning of Scripture, including its nature as revelation. If this claim is accepted, then good practical reasoning would require that moral deliberation begin with the Church's understanding of what Scripture teaches. Of course, different churches have different understandings and different foundations

252 See s.3.3.3.

for their particular claims to be the bearers of this apostolic tradition. Deciding which of these understandings or claims is to be preferred would require moving beyond the present discussion into far muddier ecumenical waters. For the present, what is significant is that a person may have good reason to look to the understanding of Scripture contained within the Church as her operational starting-point for moral deliberation.

The second implication of this account of the evolving understanding of the revelation in Scripture is that, as less of Scripture is understood to possess directly relevant revelations about ethics, people will increasingly need to rely on the knowledge about ethics which they recognise on the basis of their contemporary epistemological starting-point for moral deliberation. This does, however, leave Christians simply to attempt to reinvent ethics for themselves in every generation. For a Christian will share, albeit to varying degrees, her epistemological starting-point for ethics with others because she will share with them, again to varying degrees, a common world view. These others need not only be contemporaries but may well stretch back deep into the Christian tradition. If a person has reason to think that any of those within her tradition have reflected with particular clarity on ethics on the basis of essentially the same epistemological starting-point, then she will be able to look to such people for guidance in the process of discerning moral truth.

It is here that Hauerwas' emphasis on the importance of the Church's hermeneutic should be recalled.²⁵³ When consideration of that hermeneutic began the central concern was that Hauerwas' apparently strong claim for the role of a community in shaping the meaning of texts might ultimately imperil any epistemological sense in which scriptural narratives and, therefore, ethics could be said to have an objective content. In fact, the objectivity of Scripture has emerged as depending upon the community creating and interpreting the text in the light of their own understanding. The objectivity of Scripture depended upon the first Christians, whose interpretative

253 See s.4.1.1.

strategy was to record those truths about Jesus' life and teaching which were transforming and it has continued to depend upon the Church's hermeneutic embodying its evolving understanding of the meaning of Scripture. So, while Hauerwas' primary reason for adopting the Church's reading of Scripture was essentially a practical one, based on the need for a community to share a common understanding if its members' lives were to be shaped by that understanding, it is now clear that there is also a strong epistemological reason for preferring the Church's understanding.

In the context of this discussion about the relationship between the Church, new moral insights and the narrative canon, it is worth concluding with Paul Nelson's essentially sociological observation that, because of the pressure to remain entirely faithful to the narrative, 'those who think in terms of fables, especially public religious fables, have more difficulty than followers of principles in altering their moral judgements to fit new circumstances'.²⁵⁴ A system which actually allows for the interrelation of fables (narratives) and principles may, therefore, be helpful in overcoming this lack of adaptability, both by providing an avenue by which corrections can occur, as well as by a general openness to the possibility of an evolving understanding. Further, once it is acknowledged that no single narrative tradition has a complete understanding of moral truth, the task of moral deliberation would also be enhanced by a systematic openness to engagements with other narrative traditions.

4.4 Returning to Rules

From this analysis of the central functions of narrative in moral deliberation, it emerges that imagination and analogy are important tools for the more general task of narrative ethics in directing people towards the gospels' vision of human wholeness.²⁵⁵ It has also emerged, with similar clarity, that by themselves these narrative tools are insufficient for this metaethical task which narrative ethics sets

254 Nelson, p.30.

255 Although it is beyond the immediate focus of concern, it is worth noting that Hauerwas also conceives of narratives as having a positive and an essentially psychological function in assisting people in forming their personal identities. See, for example, Hauerwas, *Community*, pp.144-147.

itself. In order to be able to address complex moral problems and to deal with the historically particular quality of Scripture, a scheme of rules and principles is necessary. Of course, as has been noted, until the claims of virtue ethics are assessed, it is still something of an open question as to whether a moral scheme must be capable of performing this type of analysis. If it emerges that ethics must, in fact, be capable of deliberating about the difficult and the particular, then the insufficiency of a purely narrative scheme will be dramatic. Whatever the answer to this question, a scheme of moral reasoning embracing the use of rules and principles will be necessary in order to address moral problems for which there are no suitable analogies in the narrative canon, as well as for integrating moral insights from beyond the narrative canon with those embodied in it.

Narrative ethics, in other words, cannot stand alone. To realise its own objectives it needs to function together with a complementary scheme of principle and rule based moral deliberation. A Christian realist theory presents itself as a strong candidate possessing, as it does, a common account of the fundamental nature of ethics in which the moral acceptability of a particular course of action is determined by the adequacy with which it directs a person towards the form of human wholeness revealed in the gospels and in the life of the Church. Not only does it possess a common ethical structure, it is also an account which begins, epistemologically, with a vision of reality which arises from reflection upon Scripture and which is open to the notion that such reflection should take seriously the narrative quality of the material contained in Scripture. Furthermore, it is an account which begins its moral deliberation by considering the narrative depictions of the paradigmatic moral lives presented in Scripture as the foundation of its description of the nature of human wholeness and fulfilment. Nevertheless, Hauerwas is still liable to be resistant to such a highly integrated complementary relationship with a propositional form of ethics because it would be a first step on the path back to the type of moral rationality from which he has done so much to escape. Before he could even contemplate such a journey, Hauerwas would need to be confident that such a scheme was actually capable of directing the whole person in all her particularity towards the gospels'

vision of human wholeness. Only then might it be possible to develop an account by which the insights and operations of narrative ethics could be integrated with the analysis of realist theory into a complementary form of Christian ethics.

Chapter 5

Choice, Character, Virtue and Emotion:

Towards an Integrated Account of Moral Agency

Behind Hauerwas' narrative ethics lies his theory of character and virtue. In the previous chapter the focuses of inquiry were the advantages and limitations of Hauerwas' move *to narrative*. It emerged that, at least at the level of moral deliberation, narrative could not stand alone as an adequate account of ethics. The task of this chapter is to ask whether such a dramatic shift *away from principles and practical reason* is actually necessary in order to articulate Hauerwas' concerns about character and virtue. If it transpires that Grisez's account of practical reason does not, in fact, necessitate a flight from principle in order to do justice to the notions of character and virtue, then the possibility will arise of narrative and practical reason complementing one another in a very full sense in the task of directing people towards human wholeness.

5.1 The Need for a Theory of Character

In seeking to understand Hauerwas' view that ethics should be shaped by a concern for character and virtue, it is helpful to begin by asking why he sought to develop a theory of character in the first place. His explanation is found in his seminal work, *Character and the Christian Life*, in which he lays out the foundations of his theory of character and virtue. He opens this discussion of character with a critique of what he identifies as the central 'metaphor' of Protestant ethics, namely, the notion of command.¹ Hauerwas argues that this 'language of command',² which he sees as

1 In his 'New Introduction' to *Character* (1985), Hauerwas doubts that he was correct to speak of the notion of command as a metaphor, suggesting rather that 'dialogue' may be more appropriate as a metaphor for Protestant ethics (pp.xxvi-xxvii).

arising from 'the Protestant concern to deny any significance to the actual shape of a man's life for the attainment of his righteousness',³

tends to be inherently occasionalistic with a correlative understanding of the self that is passive and atomistic. The self that is justified is the self at this time and in this place but not the self that has any duration and growth.⁴

The result of this understanding of the Christian life, as a constant state of flux between sin and justification, is that there is no room for a satisfactory account of the doctrine of sanctification.⁵ Without such an account, the relationship between nature and grace which it, in part, sustains is also distorted. The switching of polarities between sin and salvation means that there is always a discontinuity between the grace of one command and the next, so that 'nature has no positive relation to God's free giving of himself ... [and] [c]reation is only negatively related to redemption'.⁶ Where Protestant theology does preserve a notion of the continuity of the self, the problem shifts from being theological to metaphysical. Where the self is conceived as continuous, Hauerwas observes, it is the 'internal' or 'spiritual' self as distinct from the 'external' or 'bodily' self. It is the spiritual which is transformed and saved while the bodily (the flesh) remains sinful. The result, Hauerwas argues, is an unacceptable dualism in which, '[a] man's "external" acts are only ambiguous manifestations of his "true" internal self which ethically speaking cannot be formed or subject to growth'.⁷

With a doctrine of sanctification pointing to the importance of developing an account of ethics which recognised the growth of the individual as the central subject of ethics, he discovered few resources in the then contemporary ethics of the early 1970s

2 *Ibid.*, p.3.

3 *Ibid.*, p.4.

4 *Ibid.*, p.3.

5 *Ibid.*, pp.3-4.

6 *Ibid.*, p.5.

7 *Ibid.*, p.4. This is not the place to assess the adequacy either of Hauerwas' account of the Protestant tradition of divine command ethics or his critique of it, other than to observe that both Grisez (*Principles*, pp.101-102) and O'Donovan (*Resurrection*, pp.86-87, 134-136) also find substantial grounds for rejecting the notion of divine command as the organising concept of a Christian ethic.

for this task. The central problem with those contemporary accounts, Hauerwas observed, arose from their ‘concentration on the spectator’s point of view as the moral point of view’,⁸ with the result that they took little or no account of ‘the agent standing before the decision’.⁹ This concentration on the spectator’s point of view, often focused by a principle of universalisability, meant that the particularity of a person’s life was not the direct subject of moral deliberation, receiving instead only indirect consideration through the qualification ‘exactly the same circumstances’.¹⁰ In subsequent work, Hauerwas generalised this attack on contemporary accounts of moral reason into an attack on ‘the standard account of moral rationality’.¹¹ Although this account, as O’Donovan observes, ‘is actually rather difficult to attribute to anyone in particular’,¹² Hauerwas regards as encompassing natural law theories along with utilitarian, Kantian, and Rawlsian theories. All these theories, in his view, represent an attempt to ‘free moral behaviour from the arbitrary and contingent nature of the agent’s beliefs, dispositions and character’.¹³

In *Character and the Christian Life* Hauerwas also identified a wider problem arising from the standard accounts’ failure to make the particularity of the person the subject of moral deliberation: these theories simply had no account of the role of the social and cultural environment which shaped the person making the decisions.¹⁴ In a sense, the very aim of these theories was not to have such an account in order that moral judgements might be universalisable. For Hauerwas, however, this was to deny that which shaped the person and, therefore, that which had to be taken into account by any moral theory concerned with the person.¹⁵

8 Hauerwas, *Character*, p.33.

9 *Ibid.*

10 *Ibid.*, p.31.

11 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.16.

12 O’Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.213.

13 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.16.

14 Hauerwas, *Character*, p.33.

15 *Ibid.*

It was, therefore, the twin forces of Hauerwas' theological concerns about traditional Protestant ethics and the limitations of contemporary moral philosophy which led him to turn to Aristotle and Aquinas to provide the inspiration and guidance for his own account of the relationship between the self and moral decisions.

5.2 Hauerwas' Account of Character

The conceptual core of Hauerwas' account of character which emerged from his engagement with the work of Aristotle and Aquinas may be found in his account of the reciprocal relationship between choice and character. He states this relationship succinctly when he observes that,

It is by choice, as Aristotle correctly saw, that we determine who we are by electing to act one way rather than another. Choice is the centre of our action, but character is the determination of choice as well as its continuing result.¹⁶

Hauerwas argues that this relationship exists because 'Man's choices consist in limiting an indeterminate range of possibilities by ordering them in accordance with his intentions',¹⁷ with the result that '[o]ur character is dependent on the fact that we are disposed to have a range of reasons for actions rather than others'.¹⁸ The essence of this argument appears to be that in making concrete choices amongst a range of possibilities, a person will be acting on the basis of certain reasons in preference to others and, having acted on the basis of those reasons, will later be likewise disposed to act on the basis of them in the making of further choices. If, for example, a person chooses to tell the truth when it might have been easier to tell a lie because he reasons that it is wrong to lie, then, unless he finds a cause(s) to change his reasoning, he will, in future, be disposed to act in accordance with his existing reasons for not lying.

It is at this point that Hauerwas' account of virtue begins to emerge as a

16 *Ibid.*, pp.112-113.

17 *Ibid.*, p.114.

18 *Ibid.*, p.115.

complementary theme to his theory of character. For when a person's dispositions are to the good they can be described as virtues and when they are dispositions to the bad they can be described as vices.¹⁹ It is worth noting that it is a general weakness of virtue theories, including Hauerwas', that they have much to say about virtue and little to say about vice, however much the theory of character upon which they are based would logically suggest a more symmetrical treatment. Regardless of whether or not vices are adequately taken into account, what is central is that virtues and vices involve a consistency in a person's disposition to act.²⁰

While virtues and vices can be used to describe a person's particular dispositions to act, Hauerwas argues that character cannot simply be accounted for by a description of all these particular dispositions.²¹ Rather, character 'may ... be thought of in terms of the particular "mix" or connection between the various virtues characteristic of any one person's life pattern'.²² So, for example, the overall shape of a person's disposition to act would not accurately be delineated if they were said simply to possess the virtue of honesty but the vice of cowardice because the disposition which such a person would possess when his honesty and cowardice came into conflict would not be described. Hauerwas formalises this observation in his definition of character as 'the qualification or determination of our self-agency, formed by having certain intentions (and beliefs) rather than others'.²³ Given this account of character, no substantive moral theory could, in a strict sense, be a theory of virtue (or a virtue ethic) but only a theory of character (or moral agency).

On the basis of his analysis, Hauerwas is led to the conclusion, laden with normative implications for the shape of his moral theory, that because virtues are central in

19 *Ibid.*, p.71.

20 *Ibid.*, pp.69-74.

21 *Ibid.*, p.75.

22 *Ibid.*, pp.75-76.

23 *Ibid.*, p.115. In his 'New Introduction' to *Character and the Christian Life*, Hauerwas modifies this formulation, arguing that his account of character as the qualification of our self-agency was too dualist. He therefore proposes that he might more accurately have described character as 'the form of our agency' (*ibid.*, p.xx).

shaping a person's character and because the key feature which they possess is the production of *consistency* in a person's disposition, then '[t]he coherence of our character is dependent to a large extent on how consistent our different intentions and projects are within our overall character'.²⁴ This intrinsic valuing of consistency really only arises as a result of Hauerwas' focus upon virtues. If the implications of vices as also producing a consistency of disposition in a person's character were fully recognised, then consistency of character *per se* would have no intrinsic moral value. It would not be something to be sought for its own sake as has come to be the case in Hauerwas' theory. Nevertheless, the intrinsic value which Hauerwas attaches to consistency contributes a subtle but very significant shift in his analysis as he transforms his theory of character formation into a moral theory to guide action. This shift can be observed, for example, in his important essay 'From System to Story' when he argues that,

from the perspective of the standard account [of moral rationality], beliefs and dispositions cannot be subject to rational deliberation and formation ... It is our contention, however, that it is character ... that provides the context necessary to pose the terms of a decision, or to determine whether a decision should be made at all.²⁵

If it is character that is necessary to 'pose the terms of a decision' about an act, because only posing it in those terms could do justice to who a person is, then the primary question will be whether such a decision would be consistent with the dispositions which a person already has - would it be a coherent decision, given the rest of a person's character? Only by such a process of making the self the direct subject of moral deliberation does Hauerwas consider that who a person is will shape what that person is morally obliged to do.²⁶ This shift in analysis - which might broadly be described as a move from choices forming character to character forming character - will be revisited and assessed in much greater detail after the other elements of Hauerwas' theory of character have been considered.²⁷ For present

24 *Ibid.*, p.121.

25 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.20.

26 *Ibid.*, p.17.

27 See s.5.4.

purposes, it is important simply to recognise that Hauerwas' move to make the person, in all her particularity, the subject of moral deliberation comes as a response to his perception of the failures of the standard accounts of moral reason, rather than as a logically necessary development of his theory of character formation.

From this consideration of the essential means by which Hauerwas understands character to be formed, it is necessary to turn to the second organising theme in his theory of character - a theme which comes as a response to his perception of the standard moral theories' failure to account for the role of a person's heredity in shaping her moral choices. Using his basic account of character formation, Hauerwas seeks to explain how a person can still be responsible for his character even when it is shaped by his social and personal inheritance. His central argument is that,

Our character is not determined by our particular society, environment, or psychological traits; these become part of our character, to be sure, but only as they are received and interpreted in the descriptions which we embody in our intentional action [i.e., through our choices].²⁸

Hauerwas' clearest explanation of this argument comes in his discussion of the way in which social forces shape a person's character. After labelling the social constructs which shape a person's character as 'descriptions', Hauerwas argues that,

we alone determine which of the descriptions society offers and which way of relating them will form our character. The description may well be given by society, yet it is for us to embody or not embody through the configuration it may form with our past determinations.²⁹

Hauerwas accepts that a person will not always be conscious of the 'descriptions' which shape his life - though, he observes, that even these descriptions will still shape his life by being embodied in the choices he makes.³⁰ However, he argues that because conscious choices can be made, a person will be responsible, albeit to varying

28 Hauerwas, *Character*, p.115.

29 *Ibid.*, p.116.

30 *Ibid.*

extents, for his character.³¹ Acknowledging the complexity of the relationship between those features of character which might be said to be 'determined' (in the sense of not being chosen) and those for which a person could be said to be responsible, Hauerwas concludes,

I have no interest in trying to establish a criterion by which a sure guide can be given as to how much our character is determined and how much we determine. This obviously varies from society to society, from one position in society to another, from individual to individual.³²

At this point, Hauerwas' theory of character has been thought by some notable commentators to be particularly vulnerable. In his perceptive and influential article 'Character, Vision and Narrative',³³ Gene Outka - who is perhaps foremost amongst these commentators - argues that there is a serious tension between Hauerwas' claims for the freedom of the individual to shape his own character and Hauerwas' claims for the "essential sociality of man's nature".³⁴ In seeking to establish this tension, Outka selects and isolates the strongest claims which Hauerwas makes for the freedom of a person to determine her own character:

persons: "are *in essence* self-determining beings"; they are "at the mercy of external forces only if they allow themselves to be." To be a person "is to be an *autonomous centre of activity* and the source of one's own determinations."³⁵

31 *Ibid.*, p.117.

32 *Ibid.*

33 Outka, 'Character', *passim*.

34 *Ibid.*, p.111 (quoting Hauerwas, *Character*, p.102). For a similar criticism focused upon Hauerwas' alleged failure adequately to account for the influence of human 'materiality', see, Allik, T.K., 'Narrative Approaches to Human Personhood: Agency, Grace and Innocent Suffering', *Philosophy and Theology*, 1 (1987), 305-333, especially pp.305-307, 310-315; and Allik, T.K., 'Nature and Spirit: Agency and Concupiscence in Hauerwas and Rahner', *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 15 (1987), 14-32. See also Murray, L.E., 'Confessional Postmodernism and the Process-Relation Vision', *Process Studies*, 18 (1989), 83-94. Murray argues that, in the end, Hauerwas offers 'a substantialist understanding of the self' (*ibid.*, p.84) in contrast to a process-theologian's account of the self as both relational yet still free to realise novel possibilities (*ibid.*, pp.90-91). Pinches rightly observes, however, that Murray 'overstates the substantialism in Hauerwas' and that, rather than being an alternative, a process account of the self could usefully be employed to articulate Hauerwas' position (Pinches, C., 'Hauerwas Represented: A Response to Murray', *Process Studies*, 18 (1989), 95-101, p.100).

35 Outka, 'Character', p.118 (quoting Hauerwas, *Character*, p.18); the emphasis is Outka's.

Outka then juxtaposes these claims with Hauerwas' strongest claims for the socially determined nature of a person's character. He also highlights the influences on Hauerwas' own analysis of social determinists such as G.H. Mead. Acknowledging that Hauerwas does seek to sustain the claim that the distinction between the agent and social forces cannot be dissolved, Outka argues that Hauerwas does not realise the full implications of his acceptance of this notion that people are profoundly shaped by their social environment for his account of the formation of character. Outka points out that much about a person's character has actually been demonstrated to be formed by their interrelations with others.³⁶ He suggests, for example, that children who are regularly given a negative evaluation by others are likely to have low self-esteem and be dependent.³⁷ Consequently, Outka concludes that it is difficult for Hauerwas to maintain the strength of his claims for a person's role in shaping her own character because,

[the] influence [of others] is much too pervasive ... Each of us is in fact so moulded by communications we receive from others that we can never disentangle with confidence what we are given and what we do.³⁸

The problem with Outka's critique is that it relies heavily on Hauerwas' most incautious phrases and skims far too quickly over Hauerwas' quite careful qualifications of his account. Outka, for example, takes no cognisance of the fact that while Hauerwas cites Mead's work approvingly he also observes that, '[m]y difficulty with Mead is his inability to loose himself from the assumptions of social determinism in his analysis of the "I"'.³⁹ Hauerwas then recommends a work which provides, 'a good criticism of Mead's tendency to reduce the agent "I" to the social "me"'.⁴⁰ More generally, Hauerwas never claims that people can confidently disentangle all that they are given in order to open up some wide horizon of choice. His claim is a

36 Outka, 'Character', p.112. It should be noted that Outka supplies almost no evidence by way of argument or reference to the work of others to support his claim that the socially determined nature of a person to has been 'demonstrated'.

37 *Ibid.*

38 *Ibid.*

39 Hauerwas, *Character*, p.103.

40 *Ibid.*

much more moderate one, namely, that what people are given leaves open to them the possibility of some choice by which, within such limits, they are able to determine their character. What Hauerwas does resist is the notion that a person is so socially determined that no choices are open to him. Yet he is careful to point out that the range of options for choice which are open to people will vary greatly and that this variation must be taken into account when assessing their character.⁴¹

It may be that Outka is actually reading back into Hauerwas' earlier work a criticism which may be more accurately directed against his work after he introduced the concept of narrative into his account of character. In his work subsequent to *Character and the Christian Life*, Hauerwas employed the notion of narrative to encapsulate all the personal, social, cultural and historical dimensions of a person's heredity. Narrative was particularly amenable to such a use because, as emerged in the previous chapter, it could be utilised both to discuss personal identity⁴² and to describe the way in which a person's understanding of reality shaped his capacity to make choices. Richard Bondi in an article which Hauerwas considers 'the most telling critique of ... my notion of character',⁴³ provides a very accurate description of the change in the form of Hauerwas' analysis produced by his introduction of narrative into discussions of character. Bondi argues that Hauerwas, in pursuing questions about the relationship between the choices people make and the narratives through which they understand the world, 'shifts the topic of the language of character from the self as agent to the self as story'.⁴⁴ The overall result is that '[t]he focus in his later work ... [meaning subsequent to *Character and the Christian Life*] is no longer on the self who does the choosing but on the story which gives direction to choice'.⁴⁵ This shift which Bondi has observed complements the shift identified earlier in this chapter from choice forming character to character forming character, with the result that the final

41 *Ibid.*, p.127.

42 For Hauerwas' further uses of narrative in this regard see, Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.42; Hauerwas, *Community*, pp.144-147; and Hauerwas, *Vision*, pp.74-75.

43 Hauerwas, *Character*, p.xvi.

44 Bondi, 'Character', p.203.

45 *Ibid.*

shape of Hauerwas' theory of character, broadly conceived, is of community narrative forming individual character (itself understood as personal narrative).

Outka's criticism of Hauerwas' analysis was written in the light of this development in Hauerwas' theory and he certainly perceived it as consolidating the problems he identified in Hauerwas' earlier work, such that he observes that 'the "I"'s dependence on narrative appears sometimes so extreme as to eclipse the possibility for independent choice'.⁴⁶ In this observation, Outka is much closer to the mark, for there are moments when Hauerwas' enthusiasm for narrative appears to produce just such a result. One of these moments - to which Outka points - is Hauerwas' claim that 'I cannot make my behavior mean anything I want it to mean, for I have learned to understand my life from the stories I have learned from others'.⁴⁷ Outka reflects that this comment suggests that, '[s]ome of us then seem virtually fated to be victims of the narratives which form us in secret, to perpetuate programs we did not write'.⁴⁸ Outka does, however, consider that the narrative development in Hauerwas' theory of character could also open up important possibilities for choice. In approaching this conclusion, Outka first observes that,

While it is obvious I cannot avoid "coming to terms" with the narratively articulated tradition into which I was born, I never find myself *perfectly* in any narrative tradition ... I identify with some part of my inherited narrative more than others, I believe I should struggle to find my own way, to make a given role distinctly mine ...⁴⁹

He then argues that,

I can intelligibly ask: *Which* narrative should I adopt? And this question presupposes some sense of an "I" who stands outside any given stories, who deliberates and then "consents" to making one story his or her own.⁵⁰

46 Outka, 'Character', p.116.

47 *Ibid.* (quoting Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.21).

48 Outka, 'Character', p.116.

49 *Ibid.*, p.115.

50 *Ibid.*

Interestingly, this is essentially the same argument which Hauerwas made in seeking to sustain the balance between choice and determination in relation to social forces. It is odd, therefore, that Outka does not give this argument more credence when it is made by Hauerwas. It is perhaps equally odd that Hauerwas does not adopt this lead offered to him by Outka, although his reason for not doing so is probably that such an approach would appear to require adopting some wholly non-narrative means by which all narratives could be judged - a move which he does not consider to be possible.

Even without the developments suggested by Outka, Hauerwas' introduction of narrative has not led him to close off all possibilities for choice. The previous chapter's analysis of Hauerwas' use of narrative should have made it very apparent that he introduced narrative as a form of moral deliberation to guide choice rather than to replace choice and moral deliberation altogether. As Bondi points out, the narrative development in Hauerwas' theory is, as much as anything else, a shift in 'focus'.⁵¹ He does not simply abandon the analysis which he developed in *Character and the Christian Life*. Indeed, however submerged his original analysis might have become, he still sees his whole account of ethics as being dependent upon it. For, as he observes in his new introduction to *Character and the Christian Life*, '[m]y emphasis on the importance of vision and the centrality of narrative ... are all the result of trying to work out the loose ends and implications involved in this book'⁵² - in other words, the implications of his theory of character. In relation to the arguments he made about 'the nature of agency' in the first edition of *Character and the Christian Life*, Hauerwas maintains that they were necessary for 'an adequate account of character'.⁵³ He certainly does not develop an alternative methodology to replace the theory of character formation which he first developed. Nonetheless, the real problem - which Outka and Bondi have both highlighted - is that various aspects

51 Bondi, 'Character', p.203; emphasis mine.

52 Hauerwas, *Character*, p.xvii.

53 *Ibid.*, p.xix.

of Hauerwas' later analysis sit uncomfortably with the original arguments which apparently licensed these developments in the first place.

While these developments in the broad shape of his theory were occurring, Hauerwas was also paying attention to an important matter internal to his account of character. In *Character and the Christian Life*, character emerged as essentially a disposition to chose in accordance with a consistent set of reasons. This account of character was criticised - most notably by Patricia Jung - 'for being "one sidedly intellectualistic" and for failing to provide an appropriate account of "the embodied nature of the moral agent."' ⁵⁴ As a result of this criticism, Hauerwas sought to enrich his account of character and the virtues by seeking a proper place for the emotions in his moral theory. His starting-point is the case made by Mary Midgley, that any description of human nature founded on human rationality alone is flawed because humans are, in fact, "a rich and complex arrangement of powers and qualities" ⁵⁵ Hauerwas develops this argument, in an account which is explicitly and heavily dependent on Bernard Williams' analysis, by proposing that an undue concern for rationality in moral theory results in a false dichotomy between reason and the passions. Following Williams, Hauerwas observes that reason and the passions are generally assumed to be opposing forces, with rationality being solely what guides right action and with the human passions being reduced to "blind causal forces or merely animal characteristics" ⁵⁶

Paradigmatic, for Hauerwas, of this false dichotomy between reason and passion is Stoic thought. In making this claim, Hauerwas draws on Aquinas when Aquinas

54 Hauerwas, *Community*, p.267. Hauerwas repeats this observation in his 'New Introduction' to *Character*, p.xvi. The central elements of Patricia Jung's very constructive criticisms, originally made in her doctoral thesis (Jung, P., 'The Embodied Nature of Character: A Study of Theological Ethics', Dissertation, Ph.D., Vanderbilt, 1977), appear in Jung, P., 'Sanctification: An Interpretation in the Light of Embodiment', *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 11 (1983), 75-95. Her account will be returned to in s.5.5.4 because it offers possibilities for further enriching Hauerwas' account of the place of the emotions in moral theory.

55 Hauerwas, *Community*, p.123 (quoting Midgely, M., *Beast and Man: The Roots of Human Nature*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, N.Y., 1978, p.207).

56 Hauerwas, *Community*, p.124 (quoting Williams, B., *Morality: An Introduction to Ethics*, Harper Torchbooks, New York, 1972, pp.65-66).

argues, in Hauerwas' paraphrase, 'that only because the Stoics mistakenly understood passion as any affection in discord with reason did they argue that virtuousness required the suppression or eradication of all passion'.⁵⁷ Continuing to draw on Aquinas, Hauerwas proposes that, by contrast, the passions 'do not so much need control as they need direction',⁵⁸ before concluding that, in fact, '[o]nce passions are correctly understood as "movements of the sensitive appetite" the virtuous man cannot be without them'.⁵⁹ In other words, Hauerwas argues that the passions - a concept which he leaves rather undefined - can play a positive role in creating a disposition within a person to do and be good. Exactly how the passions play this role remains an undeveloped feature of Hauerwas' theory.

For Hauerwas, the passions do not only play a positive role in creating a disposition towards doing the good, he also comes to assume that appropriate emotions are, in fact, part of a virtuous disposition itself.⁶⁰ This assumption, which he never systematically articulates but which runs throughout his later discussion of virtue, is most clearly expressed in *The Peaceable Kingdom* when he observes that,

there is no way to learn to "imitate" God by trying to copy *in an external manner* the action of Jesus. No one can become virtuous *merely by doing* what virtuous people do. We can only be virtuous by doing what virtuous people do *in the manner* they do it.⁶¹

It would appear that by 'in the manner' Hauerwas means not simply 'with the same

57 Hauerwas, *Community*, p.124. See Aquinas, T., *Summa Theologiae*, I.II.q59a2, Vol. 23, Gilby, T. (ed.), Eyre and Spottiswoode, London, 1966.

58 Hauerwas, *Community*, p.124. See Aquinas, *Summa*, I.II.q59a5.

59 Hauerwas, *Community*, p.124.

60 See s.5.5 for a terminological discussion of the relationship between the passions and the emotions. For present purposes they can be treated as synonymous.

61 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.76, emphasis mine. This notion remains a key part of Hauerwas' thought because, in an important and more recent article, he restates this proposition in similar terms:

Acts that appear to be just and self-controlled cannot properly be called such without reference to the person who has performed them: [as Aristotle says] "The just and self-controlled man is not he who performs these acts, but he who performs them in the way self-controlled men do" ... We cannot become courageous by slavishly imitating the actions we associate with courage, but we must *be* the kind of person who is capable of acting courageously. (Hauerwas, S., 'The Virtue of Happiness', *The Asbury Theological Journal*, 45 (1990), 21-33, p. 24.)

intention' but 'with the same whole disposition which includes the emotions'. This interpretation - that right emotions are an integral part of what it means to be virtuous - is supported by an observation which he makes later in *The Peaceable Kingdom* in a discussion of joy (a concept that necessarily includes emotional feelings). Here, Hauerwas observes that 'joy is not that for which we hope, but is a present disposition that pervades our whole life. It is the presupposition of all the virtues'.⁶² Clearly, while much of Hauerwas' writing is focused on intentions rather than emotions, there is much of interest in these tantalising hints which will be more aptly explored in the context of a more general discussion of the place of the emotions in the moral life.⁶³

5.3 The Relationship Between a Christian Realist Ethic and Hauerwas' Theory of Character

In moving beyond this outline of Hauerwas' theory of character to its engagement with other forms of ethics, it is helpful to recall that an important impetus behind his drive to develop a theory of character and virtue in the first place was his perception that the so-called 'standard account of moral rationality' had failed to provide a form of ethics which took adequate account of the person in all her particularity. Central to his attack on these accounts was his argument that '[a]ll of these views assume that "objectivity" will be attained in the moral life by freeing the moral judgements from the "subjective" story of the agent'.⁶⁴ At this point, it is very important to untangle the two objections which Hauerwas makes to the claim of the standard accounts of moral rationality to establish 'objectivity'.

Hauerwas' first complaint is that these accounts attempt to establish moral 'objectivity', in the sense of truthfulness, without reference to the narrative tradition (or world view) out of which they arise - a claim which has already been considered in relation to Grisez's natural law theory and to a Christian realist theory more generally.⁶⁵ Hauerwas' second complaint, which is the subject of present concern, is

62 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.147.

63 See s.5.5.

64 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.17.

65 See ss.2.3-2.4 and ss.3.3.2-3.3.3.

that these theories, in seeking to establish objectivity, go so far as to deny that the particularity of the agent can be relevant in establishing the truthfulness of moral obligations. Interestingly, when making this second claim in his seminal essay 'From System to Story', Hauerwas lists the logical features which he thinks give rise to this form of objectivity - 'the categorical imperative, the ideal observer, universalizability or more recently, the original position'⁶⁶ - none of which describes any broadly Thomistic form of natural law. He also acknowledges, in a footnote, that even his judgement about the positions which he does list 'would need to be qualified if each of these positions were considered in detail'.⁶⁷ In other words, Hauerwas appears to have left open the possibility that there might be a non-narrative form of moral rationality which has at least a concern for the agent's perspective and the cultivation of virtue. This possibility is made more apparent in an essay, written subsequent to 'From System to Story', in which Hauerwas offers a more balanced description of the relationship between standard accounts of moral rationality and an ethic of virtue. In this essay, 'The Virtues and Our Communities',⁶⁸ he observes that,

attempts to contrast an ethic of virtue with that of duty are often misleading. Neither the language of duty nor of virtue excludes the other *on principle*, though often theoretical accounts fail to describe adequately the ways virtue and duty interrelate in our moral experience. Moreover, while certain moral traditions seem to be more appropriately expressed conceptually in terms of one rather than the other, at a formal level there is no inherent conflict between duty and virtue.⁶⁹

This 'on principle' possibility raises the central question for this chapter. Is a Christian realist ethic a form of ethics which 'describe[s] adequately the ways virtue and duty interrelate in our moral experience' and would it, therefore, be capable of a complementary relationship with Hauerwas' virtue ethic? Or, to separate this question

66 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.17.

67 *Ibid.*, p.205. Wesley Robbins supports this observation, arguing that Hauerwas over-generalises his attack on the standard account of morality. Robbins suggests that there are theorists who consider the agent's perspective important, although they might fall short of Hauerwas' demand that agents have a much more complete vision of their lives. See Robbins, J.W., 'On the Role of Vision in Morality', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 45 (1977), 623-643, pp.628-629; and also Ogletree, pp.26-27.

68 Hauerwas, *Community*, pp.111-128.

69 *Ibid.*, p.114; emphasis mine.

into its constituent elements, does a Christian realist ethic, from the perspective of Hauerwas' theory: (i) possess a compatible account of character formation; (ii) have an account of moral deliberation which gives an adequate role to the particularity of the moral agent in shaping the nature of her obligations; (iii) include an account of moral deliberation in which reason and emotion are understood as complementary forces; and (iv) is an integral relationship between good intentions and emotions appropriate to those intentions considered to be a constituent element of virtue? In answering these questions, Grisez's natural law theory will be taken as articulating the positive content of a Christian realist ethic because he has provided a much more substantive account of these issues than O'Donovan. Furthermore, those observations which O'Donovan has made concerning these issues suggests that, although he would disagree with Grisez about the exact nature of the relationship between acts and virtues,⁷⁰ his account is nevertheless broadly compatible with Grisez's analysis.⁷¹ Where O'Donovan does makes a particularly important contribution to this discussion as a whole is in his critique of the move by Hauerwas which most threatens the prospect of a complementary relationship between a virtue ethic and a Christian realist theory. However, before that move can be considered, it is necessary to return to the first question as to whether or not a Christian realist theory possesses an account of character formation which is compatible with that developed by Hauerwas.

5.3.1 On the Question of Character Formation

The starting-point for exploring this first question of the relationship between Hauerwas' and Grisez's theories of character formation is the observation - perhaps surprising to some - made by Grisez early in *Christian Moral Principles*:

Stanley Hauerwas [in] *Character and the Christian Life* ... provides an analysis of character very close to mine ... Because of the similarity of concept, much of what he says in his study about current action theory and Protestant ethics could be brought to bear to fill out the present necessarily brief summary.⁷²

70 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, pp.209-210.

71 See especially, *ibid.*, pp.207-209 (on the nature of virtue and character) and p.125 (on the right ordering of emotions as part of the task of moral deliberation).

72 Grisez, *Principles*, p.71.

This statement comes at the end of Grisez's second chapter, during the course of which he has argued for the centrality of the notions of free choice, character, virtue and vice in understanding the nature of morality⁷³ - concepts which, he maintains, are the starting-point of Christian ethics.⁷⁴ The question is, how closely do Grisez's understandings of these concepts relate to those proposed by Hauerwas?

Beginning with the question of character formation, a very considerable measure of similarity starts to emerge. At the centre of Grisez's theory is the same reciprocal relationship between choice and character as is at the heart of Hauerwas' account. The only real difference is that Grisez provides a more detailed description of the logical operation of this relationship:

Once the choice is made, a certain aspect of one's self is involved in the good one has chosen which is not involved in the alternative. One is as one has chosen to be. If the very same alternatives were to present themselves again - everything one judges to be good or bad being the same - one could have no reason for choosing otherwise. And so no new choice would be necessary. This is why previous choices provide fixed points of reference to resolve further situations without new choices ...⁷⁵

73 *Ibid.*, see especially, pp.55-59.

74 Grisez, *Fulfillment*, p.12.

75 Grisez, *Principles*, pp.51-52; see also Grisez, *Life*, pp.381-390. Finnis provides a helpful elaboration of this explanation which is consistent with Grisez's reasoning in *Fundamentals*, pp.139-142. Of particular help in explaining this argument is Finnis' observation that it is the very structure of good reasoning itself which shapes future choices as being consistent with past ones:

I cannot, in reason, say to myself 'X is the right, or reasonable, thing to do here and now but I won't ever do it again.' ... The principles or methods of evaluation (whether moral or not) which one used in identifying X as the right thing to do, here and now, are principles applicable in like fashion to other situations; usually they will be applicable, like it or not, to *many* future situations ... Nothing short of repentance, a subsequent new and incompatible act of choice, will free one from the implications of one's former decision to follow those principles. (*Ibid.*, p.141.)

It should be noted that there is also an important use of the imagination - overlooked by both Grisez's and Hauerwas' focus on reason - which supports the making of consistent choices. Once a person has made a choice, especially one that involves some particular challenge, such as overcoming a strong contrary emotional impulse, when he is called upon to make a similar choice in the future he will be able to recall his past experience to give himself confidence in his ability to repeat the choice. People often meet tough demands with the reply, 'I will never be able to do that!'. Once they have 'done that' they know that they can do both that thing and similar such things in the future. Carrying one difficult choice through to completion may well provide a person with the imaginative resources to know that he will be able to complete other, broadly analogous,

This analysis of the relationship between choices and character also leads Grisez to provide the same foundational definition of virtues as Hauerwas:

Virtues and vices are considered to be both the residue of one's previous acts and dispositions to engage in further acts similar in moral quality to those which gave rise to the dispositions.⁷⁶

Finally, Grisez is led to a similar description of character as that produced by Hauerwas' parallel analysis:

"[C]haracter" ... is the integral identity of the person - the entire person in all his or her dimensions as shaped by morally good and bad choices - considered as a disposition to further choices.⁷⁷

Yet unlike Hauerwas, Grisez does not make it clear that character cannot simply be described in terms of virtues and vices but must also take account of their unique combination in each person. This may be one of the aspects of Grisez's theory which is in need of being 'filled out' by Hauerwas' account.

Where differences appear to emerge between Grisez and Hauerwas is in the accounts of free choice which undergird their theories. While Hauerwas does not provide an explicit philosophical treatment of this question, two features of his account can be identified as significant. The first is that the range of character forming free choices extends from major life decisions right through to apparently trivial choices, such as whether or not to go to the football.⁷⁸ The second, which should already be apparent, is that a person's heredity will significantly, although to varying degrees, qualify her free choice. By contrast, Grisez's account of free choice begins with the strong affirmation that 'choice is free [only] when choosing itself determines which alternative one takes'.⁷⁹ Elsewhere, Grisez defines free choices as being choices,

choices.

76 Grisez, *Principles*, p.58.

77 *Ibid.*, p.59.

78 See especially Hauerwas' essay, 'Taking Time for Peace: The Ethical Significance of the Trivial', in *Existence*, 253-266.

79 Grisez, *Principles*, p.50.

where one really does have reason for alternative choices but these are not determinative (i.e. are necessary but sufficient conditions for making one or the other choice), so that no factor but the choosing itself *settles* which alternative is chosen.⁸⁰

On this account of free choice, it would appear that character is only formed in moments of almost blindly existential free choice in which the individual stands radically above the limits of her heredity. Not only do both these features of Grisez's account run counter to those of Hauerwas' account but, at first sight, this description of free choice also suggests the presence of the sort of lurking voluntarism which O'Donovan suspects Grisez's theory of possessing because, in the face of a range of morally acceptable options, it is only the choosing itself which determines what is morally right. What is more, moral choices appear to arise only in situations where two or more completely incommensurable options present themselves, in which case moral choice is really a matter of random selection.

However, a careful reading of Grisez indicates that his account of free choice is primarily an account of the situation which a person is in *before* she begins the process of moral deliberation. In fact, his account of free choice is essentially part of a metaphysical mine clearance operation aimed at clearing the ground for the possibility of moral deliberation in the face of challenges from hard determinists. When a situation of moral choice actually arises, reason demands that the process of choosing be a matter of deliberation and not of random selection. This point becomes clearer when the logical moves by which Grisez establishes moral obligation are recalled.⁸¹ He began by observing that the pre-moral basic goods present people with an attractive horizon of possibilities for choice because each represents an incommensurable reason for acting. It is at this juncture, prior to practical reason being employed to decide which option is to be chosen, that the situation of free choice exists in Grisez's strong sense. However, because of the practical nature of such a choice, reason requires that its practical operation be employed. Such a choice

80 Grisez, *Deterrence*, p.256.

81 See s.3.2.5.

will be a decision made on the basis of the principles of practical reasonableness; it will not be a matter of random selection. This point is again made particularly clear in *Living a Christian Life* when Grisez addresses the question, 'How should one discern between or among good options?':⁸²

After what is involved [in each option] has been carefully analyzed, norms have been applied, and emotional motives have been examined, moral reflection sometimes reaches a confident judgement: both A and B are good, and one or the other is to be chosen. Still both cannot be chosen ... while knowing the moral truth about what one should not do, *one still lacks the full moral truth about what should be done.*⁸³

In this instance, even after much moral deliberation, a person still faces a free choice in a strong sense. Nevertheless, exercising this choice cannot simply be a random selection because Grisez holds that, until a person has a reason why a particular option should be chosen, she 'still lacks the full moral truth about what should be done'. In this case, he argues that, in order to find which option should be pursued, a person must seek to discern which option would best comport with her emotions.⁸⁴

By placing a metaphysical defence of free choice prior to moral deliberation, Grisez effectively extends the range of character forming choices to any situation where practical reason has been employed in deciding what is to be pursued. The nature of practical reason as a response to the metaphysical condition of free choice is that in its operations it presumes the existence of such choice and, therefore, furnishes practical reasons as to why a particular option should be pursued. What matters for the formation of character is not the extent to which this presumption is correct in any particular case but the reasons for action which practical reason supplies on the basis of this presumption. Hence, it is acting on the basis of a particular set of reasons which is foundational in both Grisez's and Hauerwas' accounts of the formation of character because acting on the basis of those reasons will create in a person a disposition to act on them again in the future.

82 Grisez, *Living*, p.291.

83 *Ibid.*; emphasis mine.

84 *Ibid.*, p.292.

This relationship between metaphysical free choice and moral deliberation means that there is character forming significance, even in Grisez's scheme, in a decision to pursue what is recognised as the only course of action morally open in a situation and in those choices which appear insignificant. In each case, once a person recognises or determines the reason for his action, he has made a character forming decision. In the first instance, for example, a person asked to cooperate in killing a relative in order to obtain an inheritance might never actually contemplate doing so but, in refusing, would nevertheless recognise that her reason for her refusal was that she thought killing was wrong. Even this bare recognition of the principle underlying her reaction will be significant in forming her character because, having recognised that she should act according to this principle, she will have no reason not to act on the basis of this principle in the future. The second instance concerns the character forming significance of apparently trivial decisions. A person preparing a meal, for example, might think, 'the meal will look more attractive if I lay out the food neatly'. Even in this small decision, the person recognises that he could simply dollop the food out canteen-style or arrange it attractively. In choosing the latter, he acts in pursuit, at least, of the skill of artistic expression.

From this consideration of Grisez's analysis, it is possible to conclude that Grisez adopts a similar approach to that taken by Hauerwas in identifying *the range of choices* which have character forming significance. This immediately raises the further question of *the role of heredity* in shaping that range of choices. While Grisez treats this subject in far less detail than Hauerwas, he adopts the same basic approach, accepting that heredity will affect the horizon of choices that are open to a person but that, nevertheless, a range of choices will be open. Like Hauerwas, Grisez observes that,

Determinists also point out, quite correctly, that many factors limit the possibilities open to us, and we are not usually even conscious of some of these. They are, however, mistaken in thinking that factors beyond our control which limit our possibilities also settle what we will choose

within these limits. Because there are limits on what one can choose, it does not follow that one cannot choose freely within limits.⁸⁵

It would appear, therefore, that Grisez and Hauerwas do indeed share an essentially common approach to the question of *character formation*.

5.3.2 On the Question of Moral Deliberation

This conclusion in relation to character formation enables consideration of the second key question for exploring the relationship between Hauerwas' virtue ethic and Grisez's natural law theory. Does Grisez's account of *moral deliberation* give an adequate place to the particularity of the moral agent in shaping the nature of her obligation? Initially, such a possibility might seem unlikely because it will be recalled that Hauerwas objects to all standard accounts of moral rationality (including natural law) on the basis that they fail adequately to account for the particularity of the person in determining the shape of moral obligation. The result of such theories, he argues, is that,

What I am morally obliged to do is not what derives from being a father, or a son, or an American, or a teacher, or a doctor, or a Christian, but what follows from being a person of reason.⁸⁶

Hauerwas further complains that such theories cannot provide 'any moral reasons why I should become a husband, father, teacher, doctor or Christian in the first place'.⁸⁷ Yet, in understanding the shape of a person's moral obligations, Grisez's Christian rendering of his theory introduces the concept of vocation at just this point where Hauerwas assumes that all standard accounts are left speechless. This concept emerges in the context of a Christian vision of Jesus' redeeming work⁸⁸ and his call for people to participate in the realisation of the Kingdom⁸⁹ - a vision of reality which Grisez understands as giving rise to the demand of practical reason that a person should seek

85 Grisez, *Principles*, p.45.

86 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.17.

87 *Ibid.*

88 Grisez, *Principles*, pp.555-562.

89 *Ibid.*, pp.468, 470.

to discern and pursue her vocation.⁹⁰ This vocation, Grisez holds, is that use of her 'personal gifts' in the light of her 'unique situation' which represents an appropriate response to God's love.⁹¹ Given the particularity of each person and her circumstances, each person's vocation will take 'a unique form'.⁹² This 'unique form' will be known by considering the particular commitments necessary to articulate the general form of that vocation in the particular life and circumstances of the individual.⁹³ So, for example, a person might generally discern that his vocation is to be a doctor, a husband and a father. The unique shape of this vocation will be known by the commitments necessary to articulate this general vocation in his particular life and circumstances. It may be that his wife is a medical specialist with intense demands on her time, in which case the form of the husband's vocation may be to work part-time as a doctor to ensure that the children receive adequate parental care. This example also helps to illustrate that Grisez's concept of each person's vocation having 'a unique form' is a much richer one than is to be found in common speech, where the notion of vocation tends to have a much more generic meaning in referring to the general pursuit of some known occupation, trade or profession.

In Grisez's view, an individual's entire moral life should be shaped by the particular commitments necessary to fulfil her unique vocation.⁹⁴ The concept of vocation, Grisez argues, is 'the key ... for the whole of Christian practice'.⁹⁵ A vocation is not, however, a long-term goal: being married or being a teacher are not goals which are

90 *Ibid.*, pp.637-644.

91 *Ibid.*, p.559; see also all of Chapter 23.

92 *Ibid.*

93 *Ibid.*, p.560.

94 The importance of this concept of vocation for structuring the way in which an individual pursues the basic goods should be noted because Hittinger has accused Grisez of lacking an objective basis for maintaining the unity of a human life (Hittinger, 'After MacIntyre', p.460). Grisez's concept of vocation, which responds to objective realities (the individual's personal gifts and actual situation and the nature of the Kingdom of God), provides just such an objective foundation. It is true that 'Grisez and Finnis prescind from the issue of what is the best life for man to live' (*ibid.*) but that is because they hold that there is no such thing as *the* best life. As Hittinger recognises, to hold such a view would threaten the incommensurability of the basic goods (*ibid.*, pp.459-460). Grisez's concept of vocation makes it clear, however, that denying that there is *a* best way of life does not mean denying an objective foundation for unifying a human life, as Hittinger seems to assume.

95 Grisez, G., 'Personal Vocation: A Key to Authentic Renewal of the Church', *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, 85 (April 1985), 10-20, p.13.

realised. Rather, they are ways of life in which goods are realised in the very living of such a life. The commitments which articulate a person's vocation are not, therefore, choices to pursue some long-term goal;⁹⁶ they are choices to live out that vocation in a way which is appropriate to that person and his circumstances. At this juncture, it is important to recognise that the obligations surrounding a vocation arise from *the whole range of commitments* which it involves because Hauerwas has suggested that the usual and, in his view, unsatisfactory means by which the standard theories of moral rationality take account of the obligations arising from being a 'teacher or a doctor' is 'by translating such role-dependent obligations as relations of *promise-keeping* that are universalizable'.⁹⁷ In the case of Grisez's theory, however, the obligations surrounding being a teacher or a doctor are built up from a range of different types of commitments which are not reducible to promises, although some, of course, may be promises. This becomes clear when the exact nature of a promise, as Grisez describes it, is considered. 'A promise', Grisez observes, 'is a deliberate and free expression both of an intention to fulfill another's hope and of the acceptance of the added responsibility which follows expressing an intention to do so'.⁹⁸ In the light of this understanding of the nature of a promise, it becomes apparent that, although important, they only account for a limited range of moral obligations. A doctor's obligation, for example, not to harm, whether deliberately or carelessly, a patient is primarily based on the requirement of practical reason not to chose directly against the good of life; it is not based on some kind of implicit promise made to the patient. Indeed, it would be a serious mislocation of the wrong involved in carelessly killing or injuring a patient to say that the wrong was essentially the breach of a promise to the patient rather than the breach of an obligation to respect his life. As it is, Hauerwas' opposition to vocational obligations as promise-keeping appears to have arisen, in the first place, from his assumption that the requirement of universalisability will, once again, remove the particularity of the individual from sight. Whatever the accuracy of Hauerwas' assumption, it should be apparent that Grisez's approach

96 Grisez, *Principles*, pp.237-238.

97 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.17; emphasis mine.

98 Grisez, *Living*, p.412.

would avoid such a problem because, in his account, vocational obligations arise from the commitments which articulate the individual's unique vocation which itself arises from the uniqueness of the particular person.

While Grisez only discusses the concept of vocation in the context of Christian belief, practical reason exercised within a generally secular world view is likely to produce an analogous secular concept. This secular concept of vocation will arise from the requirement of good practical reason identified by Finnis, although not recognised by Grisez, that a person should have 'a coherent plan of life'⁹⁹ or, more specifically, 'a harmonious set of orientations, purposes and commitments'.¹⁰⁰ It is part of this requirement that commitments are selected in the first place because, as Finnis observes, '[i]t is unreasonable to live merely from moment to moment'.¹⁰¹ Although Finnis does not discuss the requirements which should shape this process of selection, it would appear that at least two further requirements of practical reason are crucial, namely, that the common good of the community should be fostered and that harmony should be sought between the various dimensions of the self. Therefore, a person should choose commitments which he discerns to be appropriate to himself as a whole person (including not only his reason but all his emotional and physical dimensions) and which will enable him, given his circumstances, to foster the common good of the community. So, for example, a person should choose to be a doctor if she considers that she has the sort of overall disposition suited to being a doctor and that being a doctor is something she could plausibly pursue in order to foster the common good of her community. A coherent life plan should, therefore, coordinate a person's commitments so that she can follow a way of life which is appropriate to her in all her particularity. What is more, practical reason requires that, once such a life plan has been adopted, the general commitments which it involves should be pursued, 'with creativity and not abandoned lightly'.¹⁰²

99 Finnis, *Natural Law*, p.103.

100 Finnis, *Fundamentals*, p.75.

101 Finnis, *Natural Law*, p.104.

102 *Ibid.*

Although, at this point, it is possible to conclude that the concept of vocation or life plan meets the primary demand generated by Hauerwas' concern for character - namely, that the particularity of the person should shape the process of moral deliberation and the nature of her moral obligations - it will be useful for the subsequent discussion to go on to consider more broadly the place that 'character' has in Grisez's overall account of moral deliberation. Character, it will be recalled, is a person's overall disposition in the making of choices. As such, character is an element of a person's particularity. It shapes moral deliberation by being a central fact which has to be taken into account when a person is seeking to discern his vocation. A disposition to being friendly and caring, for example, may be very important in a person discerning that his vocation is as a community nurse. Character is, however, only one element, albeit an important element, of a person's particularity which has to be taken into account in determining the overall shape of his obligations. The other dimensions of a person's being, such as his bodily dimension, are also significant. Thoughts of a vocation as a community nurse may be cut short by a person realising that his weak physical constitution makes him unsuited to such work. In addition, a person's circumstances and those of his community need to be taken into account. It may be that being a low paid community nurse would not be part of a person's vocation if it that meant he could not adequately care for other members of his family. It may even be that the community has a sufficient number of community nurses but a shortage of nursing care for the elderly. Yet none of these important factors in determining a person's vocation are captured by the concept of character. What this suggests is that character is, in fact, an unsuitably narrow concept to use in moral deliberation to take into account the concerns which an interest in it first raised. A person is such a complex entity that no single category or quality will capture all the morally relevant particularities of that complexity.

Despite its substantial effect on the overall shape of a person's moral obligation, the only point at which character is the direct subject of moral deliberation is in the discernment of vocation. And, it is important to note, even here moral deliberation retains a priority over character because it is capable of recognising that there are bad

features of a person's character - such as selfishness or dishonesty - which should not be determinative in discerning that person's vocation. Just because a person is selfish and dishonest does not mean that her appropriate vocation is as a bank robber. Nevertheless, the very nature of practical reason, in Grisez's account, ensures that a person's character will be sustained and developed. This process begins with a person's discernment of his vocation. Given that a vocation should be appropriate to the person, the commitments necessary to realising it are then likely to sustain many of those features of the person's character which made it appropriate in the first place. In the case of the community nurse, the choices which flow from the commitment to caring for others will then sustain and develop the caring and friendly elements of his character. At the same time, those aspects of a person's character which are not sustained by his vocational commitments will still be sustained and developed by the relationship between choices and character which both Hauerwas and Grisez have identified. So, for example, consistent telling of the truth will lead a person to have the disposition described by the virtue of honesty. As long as this person deliberates soundly, his virtue of honesty will be sustained without needing any reference to be made in that deliberation to his being a honest person. The nature of sound practical reason itself, in Grisez's account, will maintain this consistency of past and future choices. In the case of the virtue of honesty, for example, since it will always be contrary to good practical reasoning deliberately to harm some instance of a basic good - in this case knowledge - there will never be an occasion in which a person deliberating well will undermine his virtuous disposition or character by being dishonest. Indeed, consistent choosing is such a central feature of Grisez's account of practical reason that it enables him to identify the type of virtues which will be produced by each of his various modes of responsibility. In the case of the seventh mode of responsibility (that '[o]ne should not be moved by hostility to freely accept or choose the destruction, damaging or impeding of any intelligible good'),¹⁰³ for example, Grisez observes that it will produce the virtuous dispositions 'signified by at

103 Grisez, *Principles*, p.215.

least some uses of "forbearing", "patient", "longsuffering", "forgiving", "easygoing", "gentle", and so on'.¹⁰⁴

From this analysis, it appears that, at the very least, Hauerwas has falsely assumed that there is a dichotomy in all standard accounts of moral reason between moral obligation being shaped by a person's particularity and the requirements of practical reason. For, as both Grisez's and Finnis' accounts demonstrate, a person's moral obligations arise both from his being 'a person of reason'¹⁰⁵ and from his being 'a father ... or a teacher or a doctor'.¹⁰⁶ More significantly, this also represents a false assumption that all standard forms of *act analysis* are incapable of incorporating satisfactorily the concerns of a theory of character. What Grisez's analysis makes clear is that the concept of vocation and the nature of good practical reasoning enables his form of act analysis to embrace the concerns of a theory of character. It is the assumption by Hauerwas and other virtue theorists that such a move is impossible which has led them to make the consideration of character itself central to moral deliberation. As a result, their moral deliberation has what O'Donovan helpfully identifies as 'an epistemological priority of character over act'.¹⁰⁷ Character, in other words, becomes the starting-point of analysis which must also always be kept central to the actual form of the analysis itself. This move presents a serious challenge to any attempt to reconcile Hauerwas' and Grisez's accounts of the place of character in moral deliberation because, as has become clear, character has a much more limited place in Grisez's account of moral deliberation. It will be necessary, therefore, carefully to examine and assess this important move made by virtue ethicists in order to determine whether any reconciliation is possible and, if so, what its nature might be.

104 *Ibid.*, p.216.

105 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.17.

106 *Ibid.*

107 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.211.

5.4 The Epistemological Priority of Character and its Problems

This move to give character an epistemological priority over acts becomes particularly clear in Hauerwas' essay, 'From System to Story'.¹⁰⁸ Drawing on Edmund Pincoffs' influential article 'Quandary Ethics',¹⁰⁹ Hauerwas begins by observing that the standard accounts of moral rationality focus on developing decision-making procedures 'for resolving conflict-of-choice situations'.¹¹⁰ Yet such dilemmas are not, he suggests, the primary moral reality. Rather, it is the person who is the proper and primary subject of ethics. By focusing on dilemmas, 'ethical analysis gives the impression that judgements can be justified apart from the agent who finds himself or herself in the situation'.¹¹¹ Hauerwas then outlines the epistemological shift which he considers necessary for restoring the person to her proper place in ethical analysis:

Positions based on the standard account do not claim that our disposition, or our character, are irrelevant to how we act morally. But these aspects of our self are rational only as they enter into a moral decision. It is our contention, however, *that it is character ... that provides the context necessary to pose the terms of a decision, or to determine whether a decision should be made at all.*¹¹²

Hauerwas then proceeds to affirm this shift in perspective with the observation that,

if the individual agent's intentions and motives - in short ... his or her character - are to have *systematic significance* for moral judgement, then it seems that we will have to give preference to the agent's interpretation of what he has done.¹¹³

It is a shift perhaps best captured by one of Hauerwas' favourite aphorisms, that the first question of ethics, 'is not "what should I or we do?" but rather "What should I or we be?"'.¹¹⁴ This shift in perspective is by no means Hauerwas' alone. For, as

108 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, pp.15-39.

109 Pincoffs, *passim*.

110 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.18.

111 *Ibid.*

112 *Ibid.*, p.20; the emphasis is mine, with the intention of highlighting Hauerwas' statement of this epistemological priority of character.

113 *Ibid.*; emphasis mine.

114 See, for example, Hauerwas, 'Demands', p.67.

Gregory Trianosky, a perceptive commentator on virtue ethics, observes, this attempt to find a new way to approach ethics lies at the heart of modern virtue theories:

Since its introduction into the contemporary discussion by Anscombe, the ethics of virtue has come to be seen as a "third option", competing with both deontological and utilitarian views. On this way of looking at the matter, deontological theories take judgements about the right as basic; utilitarianism takes judgements about the "desirability of certain states of affairs that [actions] produce" as basic; and the thesis of virtue "derives the desirability of the act from the desirability of ... motives or traits of character ..."¹¹⁵

This development, however, is far from unproblematic. O'Donovan - having already so perceptively described the nature of this epistemological shift - provides a particularly clear account of the problems which it generates for the process of moral reasoning.

5.4.1 The Foreshortening of Moral Deliberation

O'Donovan's first substantive concern is that giving a priority to character in moral deliberation might act to 'short-circuit the process of deliberation and distort proper consideration of the moral field'.¹¹⁶ In explaining this concern, O'Donovan focuses his discussion on the way in which a character based theory might treat a woman's dilemma as to whether or not to have an abortion. He suggests that, in this case, virtue analysis - of the type conducted by Hauerwas and others - might wrongly introduce character to forestall consideration of various relevant factors. O'Donovan worries that a concern for character might lead to a particular priority being placed on the woman's virtuous quality of being conscientious in the maintenance of the welfare of her children. A woman might then decide to have an abortion thinking, "I have

115 Trianosky, 'Virtue', p.337; his quotes are from Dent, N.J.H., *The Moral Psychology of Virtue*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984, pp.32-34. Despite the value of this observation, Trianosky does not improve matters by proposing a different distinction on the basis of a division between an ethics of duty and an ethics of virtue. He then suggests that each of these classifications of ethics could be specified further into 'either a teleological or non-teleological, "deontological" form' (Trianosky, 'Virtue', p.338). Clearly, the chances of the relationship between Grisez's natural law theory and virtue ethics being clearly understood in the face of the almost hopeless taxonomic confusion that is rife in philosophical and theological circles must be rated as small.

116 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.212.

always been careful where my children's material welfare is concerned, and I don't intend to change now!"¹¹⁷ Such a train of thought, O'Donovan argues,

would be to narrow the field of moral claims prematurely. It would make for an unconscientious decision, because it would refuse to confront the possibility that where the life of the unborn child was at stake, even the material welfare of one's existing children might be a secondary consideration.¹¹⁸

This foreshortening of moral deliberation produced by a concentration upon virtue and character takes a distinct form in Hauerwas' thought due to his identification of the importance of the community and its narratives in forming an individual's character. Once Hauerwas has made the move to argue that it is a community's character - that is, the dispositions which are characteristic of a particular community - which forms individual character, then, for the purposes of moral deliberation, it is really the community's character which comes to have the epistemological priority. The result of this shift is that, in Hauerwas' analyses of concrete issues, the focus of deliberation is not on sustaining the virtuous quality of an individual's character but on sustaining the beliefs or qualities necessary to be a particular sort of community with a particular sort of character.¹¹⁹ Hauerwas' actual treatment of the question of abortion provides a good illustration of this form of giving an epistemological priority to character. His discussion of this question is shaped by his observation that,

we must remember that "abortion" is not a description of a particular kind of behavior; rather it is a word that teaches us *to see a singular kind of behaviour from a particular community's moral perspective*.¹²⁰

Central to Hauerwas' analysis, therefore, is the consideration as to what is required for a community to be such a people. Given Hauerwas' account of the role of

117 *Ibid.*, p.213.

118 *Ibid.*

119 It should be noted that, when it serves his needs, Hauerwas does, at times, introduce a much more traditional 'quandary ethic' with its focus on individual acts into his analysis without apparent discomfort. Consider, for example, his treatment of the debate surrounding the ethics of nuclear disarmament in his essay, 'On Surviving Justly: Ethics and Nuclear Disarmament', in Hauerwas, *Nations*, pp.132-155, especially pp.153-154.

120 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.224; emphasis mine.

narrative in shaping a person's moral understanding, this means that the primary focus of his analysis is upon the convictions, such as that God is the creator,¹²¹ which enable Christians 'to be the kind of people who are ready to receive and welcome children into the world'.¹²² This focus upon community and its beliefs leads Hauerwas, in both his theory and in his analyses of concrete issues prematurely to narrow the moral field for consideration. Consequently, the way in which the particularity of the person and her circumstances shapes the nature of moral obligation is not systematically interrelated with these wider concerns. It is not that Hauerwas formally rules out such a relationship, rather his theory provides no systematic account of how such particularity is to be taken into account. This problem is further compounded by Hauerwas' use of narrative to articulate his theory of virtue and character because, as became apparent in the previous chapter, this analogical form of moral deliberation, while useful in describing general community orientations, is ill-suited to dealing with the particularities of a situation.¹²³ This type of foreshortening, which seeks to escape consideration of the particular, is a serious problem because, as the assessment of the analogical use of narrative made clear, the particularities of a person and her circumstances may be very significant to the final shape of her moral obligations.¹²⁴ By losing sight of the fact that the individual's character will never entirely be captured by the community's character, it would appear that Hauerwas' epistemological priority of character in moral deliberation actually undermines his more general interest to ensure that ethics is shaped by a concern for the individual in all her particularity.

The foreshortening of moral deliberation in the interest of a concern for character has led other critics of virtue theory to argue that, given that people must necessarily make decisions in their lives, virtue theory proves to be very unhelpful because of it

121 *Ibid.*, pp.224-227.

122 *Ibid.*, p.227.

123 See s.4.3.2.

124 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.227.

is unable to provide careful guidance in complex situations. Robert Louden, a thoughtful critic of virtue ethics, puts this objection very effectively:

It has often been said that for virtue ethics the central question is not "What ought I to *do*?" but rather "What sort of person ought I to *be*?" However, people have always expected ethical theory to tell them something about what they ought to do, and it seems to me that virtue ethics is structurally unable to say much of anything about this issue.¹²⁵

Hauerwas' treatment of the question of divorce illustrates Louden's point very clearly. Hauerwas begins his discussion of this issue by observing that the Church's traditional teaching (by which he seems to mean, in this instance, the Roman Catholic Church's teaching) prohibiting divorce has been subject to challenge because it seems insensitive to the *actual situations* in which people find themselves.¹²⁶ These challenges, Hauerwas observes, have been thought sufficiently strong that whether or not a person should seek a divorce in various situations now presents itself as a dilemma.¹²⁷ He then immediately argues that the first question to be asked when faced with such a dilemma should not be 'what should I do' but 'what should I be'.¹²⁸

This initial question enables Hauerwas to shift the focus of his attention to the way in which a community's narratives shape a person's character.¹²⁹ In doing so, he relies upon some observations which he made prior to the discussion of the concrete issue of divorce, where he argued that, 'as Christians we cannot avoid the fact that we are constituted as a community through a story'.¹³⁰ He then argues that it is the Church's task to help its members grow in the virtues depicted in such a story.¹³¹ However, despite his shift to the epistemological priority of the community's

125 Louden, R., 'On Some Vices of Virtue Ethics', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 21 (1984), 227-236, p.229.

126 Hauerwas, 'Demands', p.67.

127 *Ibid.*

128 *Ibid.*

129 *Ibid.*, pp.67-68.

130 *Ibid.*, p.62.

131 *Ibid.*, p.68.

character, Hauerwas cannot escape the original dilemma. Having discussed the general importance of cultivating virtue, he is forced to observe,

*But we still are pastorally confronted by dead marriages for which divorce seems the only option. We may have our attention directed away from such "quandaries" by the tack I have taken, but they still remain.*¹³²

Hauerwas then appears to be move towards a resolution by suggesting that, as a result of having considered the importance of the cultivation of virtue and the role of affirming a Christian understanding of reality, 'such "quandaries" appear differently against the background I have developed'.¹³³ This difference, he proposes, is that '[a]t the very least we now have the means to make the church's stance about marriage and divorce more theologically and morally intelligible'.¹³⁴ This intelligibility, he suggests, is the realisation that,

the "prohibition" against divorce, and other negative "absolutes", can only be sustained and justified by showing they are crucial as an aid to help us live more nearly faithful to the story that forms the Christian community.¹³⁵

At this point, what would be expected is a discussion as to whether or not a prohibition on divorce, or perhaps what types of restrictions on divorce, would aid in helping a community to be 'more nearly faithful to the story that forms the Christian community'. Yet - presumably in order to avoid a 'descent' into quandary ethics - it is at this very point that Hauerwas' analysis concludes. He observes simply that, on the one hand, 'the prohibition against divorce [serves] as a reminder of what kind of virtues are necessary to sustain a Christian people to carry on the story of God'¹³⁶ and then, on the other, '[o]f course that does not mean that all discussion of the meaning or permissibility of divorce is excluded from the Christian community'.¹³⁷

132 *Ibid.*, p.69; emphasis mine.

133 *Ibid.*

134 *Ibid.*

135 *Ibid.*

136 *Ibid.*, p.70.

137 *Ibid.*

In this case, the foreshortening of moral reasoning leads not to an inadequate conclusion but to no conclusion at all.¹³⁸ So long as Hauerwas' virtue theory retains its epistemological priority of character, Loudon, it appears, will be right in arguing that such theories are 'structurally unable' adequately to address the particular dilemmas which people actually face in seeking to live the good life.

5.4.2 The Distortion of Moral Deliberation

Unfortunately, the problems arising from the epistemological priority of character do not end with the foreshortening of moral deliberation but extend to the deliberation which in fact occurs. In this regard, the central problem, O'Donovan argues, is that '[k]nowledge of the agent's character ... cannot contribute to *deliberative* moral thought'.¹³⁹ This is not to say that O'Donovan regards character as an unimportant element of moral theory. On the contrary, he holds that, '[i]nformation about the agent's character is necessary for an *evaluative* process of moral thought in which the thinker stands at an observer's distance from the agent and her acts and assesses them'.¹⁴⁰ Nor does O'Donovan consider that the particularity of the person and her circumstances is irrelevant to moral deliberation.¹⁴¹ Rather, he objects to making a person's dispositions a category for the purposes of moral deliberation.

138 Perhaps Hauerwas might claim that this article was not a specific treatment of the question of divorce and so no further resolution was required. However, the article was about how narrative ethics might be able to overcome the tension between traditional Church teachings on moral matters and the demands of the pastoral situation. By developing his analysis of narrative in relation to the question of divorce, Hauerwas naturally leads the reader to expect that she will be able to judge the tree by its fruits.

139 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.215.

140 *Ibid.*, p.211. The epistemological priority given to character by virtue theorists can, in fact, also distort the process of making evaluative judgements by confusing judgements about the moral quality of acts with judgements about the moral quality of character. Glenn Hartz, for example, argues that if a person performed an out of character act, such as a racist sailor helping a drowning black man into his overcrowded lifeboat out of some Kantian like sense of duty, such an act should really be considered 'a fluke and of little moral significance' (Hartz, G., 'Desire and Emotion in the Virtue Tradition', *Philosophia*, 20 (1990), 145-165, p.151). Yet what the analysis produced in this thesis suggests is that the moral worth of an act and of character should be assessed separately - albeit with an awareness of the interrelationship between the two which might enable a further judgement to be made about the possible implications for a person's character of the choices which he made in performing a particular act.

141 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.212.

The problems with character as a category for moral deliberation begin with the difficulty of a person knowing his own character because, as O'Donovan observes, 'I am the last person to form an accurate assessment of my own character'.¹⁴² People are rarely good impartial judges of themselves. They will tend to overrate either the good or the bad in themselves or possibly even both. However, if character matters, then some kind of adequate understanding of it is important. If a person considers himself to be courageous and, in fact, is not, moral disaster may ensue. Such a person may see a situation which requires courage, act in response to it (believing he has that courage) and then, at some vital moment, retreat in a moment of cowardice, leaving those who had relied on his act of courage worse off than if he had not acted at all. The military world knows the dangers of this type of problem, with many a soldier betrayed by the loss of another's nerve.

Nonetheless, O'Donovan expresses some hope that a third person, such as a counsellor or an adviser, may be able to form an adequate assessment of a someone's character.¹⁴³ But there are even doubts about this approach. Loudon gives effective voice to these doubts when he inquires how the third person could determine a person's character. He observes that the standard response 'might be called the "externalist" one: we try to infer character by observing conduct'.¹⁴⁴ However, the central problem with the externalist strategy, Loudon argues, is that a person's conduct may inadequately reveal 'internal' character traits, such as self-respect and integrity, which nevertheless have a considerable role in shaping his conduct. Nor would such an externalist strategy be acceptable to virtue theorists because, as Loudon argues, although many may not have not realised it, they must be committed to the claim that essentially private traits are of central importance for character. For, as he observes,

142 *Ibid.*

143 *Ibid.*

144 Loudon, p.232. These externalist observations could also be supplemented by what the person says about his own conduct. However, the problem (as has just been noted) is that such observations may not be reliable.

one central issue behind the 'Being vs. Doing' debate is the virtue theorist's contention that the moral value of Being is not reducible to or dependent on Doing; that the measure of an agent's character is not exhausted by or even dependent on the values of the actions which he may perform.¹⁴⁵

An 'internalist' approach to determining character will also fail, Loudon argues, because it would require some kind of attempt to suggest that virtues are associated with particular, observable, brain states.¹⁴⁶ The problem is that it would first be necessary to know who possessed the virtues that were being looked for - yet this is exactly what the externalist objection demonstrates cannot be done.¹⁴⁷ Loudon concludes that if it is not possible to know, as a *descriptive exercise*, who is virtuous, then scepticism enters the very core of virtue ethics because it 'call[s] into question our ability to identify the very object of our inquiry'.¹⁴⁸

Loudon's argument is not, however, decisive. When the dichotomy between choices and character is resolved and virtues are seen as descriptions of what happens to character when right intentions are consistently followed, then the problems of determining a person's character exist only for making *evaluative* judgements about people and not for making *deliberative* judgements about what is to be done. Furthermore, once the problems for the making of deliberative judgements are resolved, the challenges for making evaluative judgements are also reduced. Given that, according to Grisez's analysis, it is possible conceptually to determine the 'internal' dimensions, such as intention, of a virtue, it will be possible to ask a person whether he perceives himself to possess these elements. In other words, once it is possible to establish the content of the virtues conceptually, the problems to which Loudon points, arising from an attempt empirically to determine their content, can be avoided because the observer is no longer caught in the paradox of only being able to know the criteria for inquiry after he has conducted the inquiry. It is, therefore,

145 *Ibid.*

146 *Ibid.*

147 *Ibid.*

148 *Ibid.*, p.233.

possible that careful reflection, especially with the assistance of third person, might enable a person to know at least the broad nature of her character. This will be especially important when a person is determining her vocation - a use of the category of character in moral deliberation which O'Donovan has not considered and to which, with the qualifications suggested above, his criticisms do not apply.

Nevertheless, even when it is possible to gain an adequate understanding of a person's character, O'Donovan objects that it could not be relevant to the actual process of deliberating about *particular choices* because, as he observes,

We cannot resolve in advance that, whatever the situation, we will do the compassionate thing, the just thing, the courageous thing; for that would be to conclude our moral enquiry before we had ascertained whether compassion, justice or courage was what this particular situation was most importantly about.¹⁴⁹

Taking account of Grisez's theory of moral choice and character formation, this objection of O'Donovan's might be articulated in the following terms. The development of some personal virtue is not an end to be sought in itself; rather, virtue develops as a consequence of pursuing the good in a particular situation, given personal commitments. If a personal virtue is regarded as an end in itself, then the genuinely good ends which are open to a person to pursue in a given situation may not be considered. What is worse, the situation may be wrongly responded to and much harm done. O'Donovan illustrates this point well:

It may happen, of course, that someone who, at a formative stage of life, finds himself constantly in situations where one virtue in particular, let us say courage, is required of him, will tend thereafter to interpret all the decisions he faces in terms of courage. But this is not a virtue, it is a vice. It means that he cannot discern the reality of what he faces because of the presuppositions he brings with him. It is the problem of the soldier-turned-politician ...¹⁵⁰

149 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.216.

150 *Ibid.*, pp.216-217.

Finally, O'Donovan highlights a perhaps even greater danger from the use of character as a category for moral deliberation when he points out that a commitment to an active pursuit of some particular virtue may result in inquiry being curtailed into the question of whether it was right to pursue that supposed virtue in the first place.¹⁵¹ Such an outcome, he argues, also runs counter to the Christian understanding that each decision which a person takes presents the possibility of repentance. It also means that a person does not approach the new situation with an openness to letting it correct his moral understanding.¹⁵²

5.4.3 Is a Concern for Character a Form of Moral Self-Indulgence?

Giving an epistemological priority to character will not simply distort the process of moral deliberation about particular issues, it will also risk distorting the whole moral enterprise itself by turning it into a form of 'moral self-indulgence'.¹⁵³ This concern has received particular attention from Gilbert Meilaender in *The Theory and Practice of Virtue*. Meilaender begins by observing that,

Some day, when a historian writes a history of ethics in twentieth-century America, perhaps he or she will note that the turn in ethics to a concentration upon self, development of the self's character and vision, and the turn to an emphasis upon being rather than doing were not unexpected turns in an increasingly narcissistic age ... even those thinkers who have returned to notions of virtue in an attempt to escape the individualism of our times - and there are such thinkers - may be part of a larger current in history in which their turn is only a small part of an increasingly dangerous concentration upon self and self-development.¹⁵⁴

Interestingly, O'Donovan makes a very similar observation when he concludes,

The conception of moral decision as conscious projection of one's character really arises from the modern voluntarist conception of the

151 *Ibid.*, p.216.

152 *Ibid.* The importance of difficult moral situations enriching a person's moral understanding was highlighted in the previous chapter (see s.4.3.1).

153 This is a phrase and an idea which Meilaender (Meilaender, G.C., *The Theory and Practice of Virtue*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1984, p.14) has adopted from Bernard Williams' essay, 'Utilitarianism and Moral Self-Indulgence', in Lewis, H.D. (ed.), *Contemporary British Philosophy*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1976, 306-321.

154 Meilaender, *Virtue*, p.13.

self as historical project, the very conception to which many representatives of this school boast that they have found an alternative.¹⁵⁵

In the light of such salutatory warnings, Meilaender outlines his basic complaint. By focusing on the individual's cultivation of virtue, he argues, virtue ethics becomes a self-centred ethic in which action ends up being justified, not because it is inherently right or is the fulfilment of a duty, but because it serves to fulfil the self.¹⁵⁶ Meilaender argues that once a person's attention is directed from others to the self, so will his actions be directed.¹⁵⁷ What is more, he observes that, once morality is concerned with self-fulfilment, it becomes difficult to see how it could require any significant self-sacrifice, let alone ultimate forms of self-sacrifice.¹⁵⁸ In the end, there is the risk, as David Wisdo observes, that 'one might easily be tempted to make the subtle and questionable shift from characterizing one's actions as virtuous to describing the acquisition of virtue as the *aim* of one's actions'.¹⁵⁹

In fact, Hauerwas demonstrates at least an awareness of the genre of the problem to which Meilaender points when he asks rhetorically, '[i]f loving another is but a form of self-love, then can we be said to be genuinely loving another as another?'.¹⁶⁰

155 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, p.217.

156 Meilaender, *Virtue*, pp.13-15.

157 *Ibid.*, p.15. Although Meilaender does recognise that a regard for self may actually cultivate some degree of other-regardedness, his critique is to some extent overstated. For, as Spohn observes in response to Meilaender, while some virtues like temperance might be self directed, others, 'such as, justice and compassion, are other-directed' (Spohn, 'Virtue', p.62). This 'other-directed' quality of some virtues will, at least to some extent, counter a person's tendency to inwardness.

158 Meilaender, *Virtue*, p.41. In making this argument, Meilaender draws on Alastair MacIntyre's observation that, 'Any account of morality which does not allow for the fact that my death may be required of me at any moment is thereby an inadequate account' (MacIntyre, A., 'Can Medicine Dispense with a Theological Perspective on Human Nature', in Engelhart, T. and Callahan, D. (eds), *Knowledge, Value and Belief*, The Institute of Society, Ethics, and the Life Sciences, Hastings-on-Hudson, 1977, p.26).

159 Wisdo, D., 'Simone Weil on the Limits of Virtue', *The Bible and Intellectual Life*, 6 (1989), 228-239, p.230. By exploring Simone Weil's view of the nature and dangers of what he labels as 'moral egoism' Wisdo provides a much more balanced critique than that offered by Meilaender, observing that '[a]lthough he [Aristotle] is right to suggest that a person becomes virtuous by performing good actions, there is no reason to suppose that the person must characterize the action as virtuous' (*ibid.*).

160 Hauerwas, S., 'Theological Reflections on Aristotelian Themes/Part III: Companionship on the

Hauerwas' response, however, is simply to assert that, '[i]f we love ourselves rightly, that is as people of virtue, then we will rightly love others. As good people we should love ourselves, for such love is not the base form of egoism that does everything for its own sake'.¹⁶¹ While this claim appears reasonable, Hauerwas does not explain how, given his concentration on the cultivation of character, people will actually come to love others with a proper other-regardedness. Without such an explanation, the challenges which Meilaender puts to virtue theories seem inescapable. Indeed, it might well be asked whether any form of ethics which considers the development of virtue to be an important feature of the moral life can escape these challenges. However, Grisez's natural law theory, which retains a concern for the importance of virtues but steadfastly resists giving character an epistemological priority, appears to offer a methodology which meets these challenges.

Grisez's theory is able to sustain the connection between moral action and human fulfilment without making the self a moral project because, in deliberating morally, a person does not act *in order to pursue self fulfilment*, rather, he acts *in accordance with good practical reason*. Nevertheless, an inextricable connection between moral action and human fulfilment means that it is integral to the nature of moral choices that they will lead to human self fulfilment. This connection exists because it is the pursuit of intelligible good(s) which brings human fulfilment and any moral choice will necessarily involve the pursuit of such goods.¹⁶² This relationship between acting morally and human self fulfilment is perhaps best understood in terms of the different senses of 'end' present in Grisez's theory. In the practical task of moral deliberation, the primary sense of 'end' is that good which a person intends to pursue by means of a choice. It is the pursuit of ends in this sense which is the task of practical reason. However, when theoretical reason reflects upon the moral life, it observes a second sense of 'end' - the ends towards which the moral life as a whole tends or is directed. Given the connection between the pursuit of the good and human

Way: The Necessity of Friendship', *Asbury Theological Journal*, 45 (1990), 35-48, p.41.

161 *Ibid.*

162 See s.3.2.4.

fulfilment, such theoretical reflection - which is not concerned with deciding what to do - will notice that the pursuit of the good for its own sake directs a person towards human fulfilment.

The differing practical and theoretical perspectives on the relationship between moral action and human fulfilment become clearest when self-sacrificing decisions are considered. Practical reason could well demand that a person make highly self-sacrificing decisions. For example, a woman might discern that her particular skills and the circumstances of her society meant that her vocation was to work for the relief of the poorest of the poor. Such a commitment might require the giving up of many things which brought her fulfilment, comfort, happiness and security, from a rewarding and well-paying career to living close to her family. Although it is possible to make the theoretical observation that fulfilment will nevertheless come from living out her vocation because it will involve the pursuit, amongst other goods, of harmony among people and health, this was never *why* practical reason demanded such a life. It was the needs of others and her capacity to help them that demanded such a life. This illustration highlights that it is human goods *per se* which justify action and not simply those goods in which the self has a personal interest. That is why practical reason can effectively demand that the primary end of a person's choice is the realisation of good(s) for others. So, to take another example, when a person acts to save another's life by rescuing him, it is for the good of the other's life that the person acts. However, in acting, such a person also commits herself to pursue the good of practical reason (in the form of fairness) and the good of life (embodied in the person she is rescuing), pursuits which are fulfilling in themselves.

The nature of this relationship between the demands of practical reason and human fulfilment is put in its starkest terms when the self-sacrifice required by practical reason involves a person risking her own life or accepting her own death. The classic difficult case, which provides a good illustration of such a situation, is that of a person who is asked to reveal, under threat of death, the identity of someone so that he can be unjustly executed. In this case, Grisez argues, practical reason requires that

a person not lie, even if it is likely or certain that the consequence of not lying is that both people will be killed.¹⁶³ It may be a very real question as to whether a person will adhere to reason in such situations - doing so may be greatly aided by a particular type of world view. However, it is not open to Meilaender to say that an ethic which recognises that fulfilment comes from choosing rightly cannot also demand adherence to duties to the point of extreme self-sacrifice. Only a theoretical description beyond that offered by practical reason could affirm that even supremely self-sacrificing acts will not ultimately thwart human fulfilment.

Perhaps Saint Augustine provides the best summary of this relationship between right action and human fulfilment:

When we take pity upon a man and care for him, it is for his advantage that we do it; but somehow or other our advantage follows by a sort of natural consequence, for God does not leave the mercy we show to him who needs it to go without reward.¹⁶⁴

In fact, O'Donovan draws on Augustine's later work to give expression to a much more theological account of the form of argument that has just been made on the basis of Grisez's theory. O'Donovan argues that, because of the orderedness of creation, a person's proper love of God, neighbour and the material world is actually drawn from him by the value he recognises in creation. While a person might recognise the value that love of a particular object - be it God, a neighbour, or the material world - brings into his own life, he does not begin by loving the particular object in order to bring

163 Grisez, *Living*, p.407. Grisez argues that lying and other deliberate deceptions are always contrary to good practical reason because they involve an expression of something which is 'at odds with one's inner self and [which] attempt[s] to lead others to accept it' (*ibid.*, p.405). This has the effect both of harming self-integration by dividing the inner and outer self and of 'attacking the real community that truthful communication would foster' (*ibid.*).

164 Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, translated by Shaw, J.F., in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 1st Series, 2nd Vol., Charles Scribner's Sons, London, 1887 (Reprinted, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1992), Book I, Chapter 32, p.532. For an extremely good treatment of Augustine's very complex understanding of the relationship between love of self, neighbour and God, which a single quotation (such as this) risks seriously misrepresenting, see O'Donovan, *Self-Love*, *passim*, and O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, pp.234-236.

that value into his life.¹⁶⁵ This should be neither surprising nor disturbing, O'Donovan argues, because

if an object is good, I, the subject, am involved with that object; it is good also *for me*, by virtue of the fact that I am part of the world in which and for which it exists as a good.¹⁶⁶

O'Donovan then puts a question which could usefully be put to Meilaender: 'Why should I be so troubled by the "for me" ... ?'¹⁶⁷ The answer, O'Donovan suggests, is that, '[a]t the heart of my anxiety is the voluntarist supposition that my good is something which I create or evoke for myself'.¹⁶⁸ His response to this presumption - which also captures the essence of the reply to those who might fear that even a properly formed virtue ethics might be a form of moral self-indulgence - is that, if 'I' have such anxiety about the good that comes from righteous action, then

I have not understood the *objectivity* of my good, given to me in the order of the universe as a reality which I can only acknowledge and welcome.¹⁶⁹

5.4.4 The Possible Basis of a Compatible Account of Character

From these discussions, it appears that the move by Hauerwas and other virtue theorists to give character an epistemological priority is a wrong turn in the attempt to ensure that moral deliberation takes account of the concerns raised by an awareness of the importance of character for moral theory. Hauerwas' and Grisez's diverging approaches at this important point mean that no reconciliation, in any strong sense, is

165 O'Donovan, *Resurrection*, pp.234-236. O'Donovan also argues that such an account of the relationship between the moral order and the self means that it is inappropriate to use the language of a conflict of demands between self, neighbour and God because 'God's claim embraces the whole of our duty, ordering the other claims [including God's own claims which arise from his personal relationship with people] before us as they ought to be ordered' (*ibid.*, p.233). Once this is realised, O'Donovan suggests, the real inadequacy of a 'quandary ethics' which fails to place morality within the context of the Christian world view becomes particularly apparent because it begins from the false perspective of seeking to arbitrate between the conflicting demands of God, neighbour and self, rather than by recognising that these claims are in fact ordered by God (*ibid.*, pp.233-234).

166 *Ibid.*, p.250.

167 *Ibid.*

168 *Ibid.*

169 *Ibid.*

possible between their approaches to moral deliberation. The way forward for an ethic of character appears, instead, to lie in recognising that, while the turn Hauerwas took was a wrong one, his central and most carefully worked out concerns about character appear capable of being sustained by an account of ethics based on Grisez's analysis of practical reason. In order to establish the viability of such a move, it will be necessary to consider the remaining two questions concerning the relationship between Hauerwas' theory of character and virtue and Grisez's natural law analysis. First, does Grisez's natural law theory include an account of moral deliberation in which reason and emotion are understood as complementary forces; and, secondly, in this theory, is an integral relationship between good intentions and the emotions appropriate to those intentions considered to be a constituent element of virtue?

5.5 The Place of the Emotions in Moral Deliberation

In turning to consider these two questions regarding the emotions, it will be recalled that Hauerwas, standing against a history which has tended to see the passions as the animal, the evil and the feminine,¹⁷⁰ has built a positive account of the passions upon two observations: first, that reason and the passions should not be seen as inherently opposing forces, such that the passions 'do not so much need control as they need direction';¹⁷¹ and, secondly, that emotions appropriate to good intentions are a constituent element of virtue.¹⁷²

Before proceeding to compare this account with that offered by Grisez, some terminological clarification is necessary. The question of what is an emotion is, of course, a highly controverted one in both philosophy¹⁷³ and psychology.¹⁷⁴ In offering this clarification, an essentially cognitive account of the emotions - i.e., one

170 For a critique of this history, see Solomon, R., *The Passions: The Myth and Nature of Human Emotion*, Anchor, Garden City, N.Y., 1976, especially, pp.9-12, 129-149.

171 Hauerwas, *Community*, p.124.

172 See s.5.2.

173 For a valuable survey of this controversy which focuses primarily upon its philosophical dimensions, see Calhoun, C. and Solomon, R.C. (eds), *What is an Emotion?*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1984.

174 For a substantive and well balanced survey of this question in modern psychology, see Strongman, K.T., *The Psychology of Emotion*, 3rd edition, John Wiley and Sons, Chichester, 1987.

in which the emotions are understood as, at least in part, to be shaped by thought processes¹⁷⁵ - will be employed because both Hauerwas and Grisez implicitly rely upon such an account. While it is not the purpose of this chapter to defend the account of the emotions upon which they rely, in the closing section it will be suggested that essentially cognitive theory of emotion is, in fact, both philosophically coherent and well supported by the results of experimental psychology. As to the terminological clarification itself, Hauerwas phrases his discussion in the language of 'the passions', although he is prepared to accept the word 'emotions' as synonymous.¹⁷⁶ In the following discussion, this more moderate language of emotion will be preferred, in an attempt to break the association between all of a person's non-rational sentient experiences or feelings and the passions, owing to the tendency of the passions to be understood as non-rational motivations of such strength as to be barely controllable. The passions are, on this account, simply emotions of a particular strength. A further distinction will be made later in the discussion¹⁷⁷ between *sensations*, which are mental experiences with a primarily neurophysiological explanation, such as pain or hunger, and *emotions*, which are feelings dependent, in part, on a person's beliefs, such as shame or guilt. Feelings will be used as the generic term to cover both emotions and sensations.

Hauerwas has assumed that modern natural law theory - as one of the standard accounts of moral rationality - does not and cannot take into consideration those dimensions of human nature other than reason. Nevertheless, it should be recalled that one of Hauerwas' starting points for his discussion of the place of emotions in moral theory is Aquinas' *Summa Theologiæ* and Aquinas, for all that he might have to say about virtue, is nothing if not a natural law theorist. It should, therefore, perhaps be less than surprising to find that Grisez, who also takes St Thomas as a starting-point, has a well developed and rich account of the place of emotions in moral theory. There is, of course, no doubt that Grisez places considerable emphasis on reason. Indeed, he

175 For a fuller description of this type of theory of the emotions, see s.5.5.4.

176 Hauerwas, *Community*, p.125.

177 See s.5.5.4.

acknowledges that the emphasis on rationality in his theory could give the impression that it involved a dualist understanding of human nature.¹⁷⁸ Yet such an impression, he argues, would be a false one because '[a]ll distinctions are made, for analytic purposes, among the dynamic aspects of one reality, the acting person, who alone is said to imagine, understand, feel, and will'.¹⁷⁹ It is to the place of these other dimensions of the person and their relation to reason in Grisez's theory to which it is now necessary to turn. Before doing so, it is worth noting the irony, in one of Grisez's few comments on Hauerwas' work, of his observation, while he considers Hauerwas' general account of character in *Character and the Christian Life* to be very similar to his own, he is critical of Hauerwas' theory for not having any account of the relationship between reason and the other dimensions of the person.¹⁸⁰

5.5.1 The Relationship Between Reason and Emotions

Grisez's analysis of the relationship between reason and emotions¹⁸¹ begins by distinguishing the nature of the ends towards which each is directed.¹⁸² In his account, reason provides the motivation for seeking intelligible goods, for example, knowledge and friendship. However, what reason seeks is the good of knowledge - not the particular knowledge itself - because it is the good *per se* which provides a reason for action and thus the rational motivation for action. Emotions or feelings, on the other hand, provide a motivation for the actual end of an action, be it an object (such as knowing about modern art) or a state of being (such as friendship with a

178 Grisez, 'Practical Principles', p.100.

179 *Ibid.* This claim is consistent with other accounts of the human person which Grisez gives: for example, see, Grisez, *Deterrence*, p.308; Grisez, *Principles*, p.119. It is worth noting that Grisez expresses his own related concern about reason being wrongly emphasised in moral theory. He argues that theories which place a primacy on rationality (understood here as the ability to reason), such as Aristotle's, ignore the reality that human fulfilment is to be found in the pursuit of a whole range of goods (which cannot simply be reduced to an exercise of reason) and not just in an attempt to order life rationally or to pursue knowledge (Grisez, *Principles*, p.126; see also, Grisez, 'Man', *passim*).

180 Grisez, *Principles*, p.71.

181 A term which he uses to account for all other motivational forces found in humans, other than reason.

182 The following account of Grisez's motivational theory is largely drawn from Grisez, 'Practical Principles', pp.104-105, 122-125, supplemented by Grisez's less philosophical account in *Principles*, pp.119-120, 190-191, 413-416.

particular neighbour).¹⁸³ Grisez argues that these concrete and imaginable aspects of a purpose (insofar as they are concrete or imaginable) will be the object(s) of a feeling(s) which will provide the motivation for the particular object or state of being. In other words, a proposal to pursue friendship with a neighbour will involve both a rational motivation (that such an activity would be the pursuit of the good of friendship) and an emotional motivation (for example, love for that particular neighbour). Grisez argues that this role of feelings, in presenting the concrete objects for choice, is often overlooked because,

One becomes aware of them only when they are unusual enough in their strength or some other respect to call attention to themselves by their physiological consequences. The ordinary desire to eat or drink is not noticed as an emotion; the craving of a person dying of hunger and thirst is noticed.¹⁸⁴

The integral relationship of reason and emotion in Grisez's theory should, in fact, be no surprise given his concern for character and his rich description of the human goods - a description which includes the reflexive good of harmony between the various dimensions of the self. Indeed, Grisez, for the same reason as Hauerwas,¹⁸⁵ has been at pains to emphasise the need for moral theory to take account of all the dimensions of a person:

By nature, human persons are both sentient and intelligent ... [and] [a]lthough complex, the acting person is one self. A person lives in a single world, and behavior must be adapted to all aspects of the reality of this world.¹⁸⁶

There is certainly no inherent antipathy between reason and emotion in this account. In fact, Grisez understands this relationship to be so integral that he maintains that it is not even possible for reason to direct a person's action without there also being an emotional motivation for the particular goal of that action. '[P]eople', he argues,

183 It is worth noting that some key elements of the work done in psychology by R.W. Leeper, who argues that 'emotions act as motives' (Strongman, p.42), broadly supports the philosophical analysis developed by Grisez at this point. For an account of Leeper's work see *ibid.*, pp.42-43.

184 Grisez, *Principles*, p.415.

185 See s.5.2.

186 Grisez, *Principles*, p.119.

'never do such [rationally motivated] actions without emotional motives as well'.¹⁸⁷ Grisez holds, in other words, that there will always be an emotional motivation for an action in the strong sense that the desired emotion or feeling will *always be part of the motivation* for the action. The immediate response to such an observation might be that it sounds like a descent, once again, into 'moral self-indulgence'¹⁸⁸ - people are motivated to act simply to satisfy some sentient part of their nature. The problem here is that the assumption which underlies such an observation - that all emotions are selfish - is false, as Grisez's account of martyrdom demonstrates:

a martyr has a good reason to suffer rather than be unfaithful. But in addition to the intelligible good of religious fidelity, the martyr needs motivation at the emotional level, such as affection for Jesus, attachment to others who are suffering ...¹⁸⁹

This illustration suggests that an emotional motivation need not be the satisfaction of feelings which enhance a person's self-interest or, more simply, that an emotional motivation need not be the selfish motivation of seeking some personal gain.

While it may be true that, in many cases, feelings will be part of the motivation for action, including selfless action, it would seem that there may also be some cases where practical reason alone could demand action. For example, a person could refuse either to tell a lie or to betray the location of a person to totalitarian authorities at the risk of her own death simply because she discerned that practical reason bound her to act in that way. It would be a false description of her psychology to suggest that any consideration of the emotional satisfaction that would follow from her choice was part of her motivation to act. She acted simply because she determined that reason itself bound her to act in such a way. This is not to say that emotions or anticipated emotional states would be absent in the making of such a choice. However, those emotions and feelings, both present and anticipated, are more likely to be those such as fear, abandonment and pain which will need to be overcome rather than pursued.

187 Grisez, 'Practical Principles', p.104.

188 See s.5.4.3.

189 Grisez, *Principles*, p.119.

Nevertheless, although it would appear that every moral decision need not necessarily be associated with positive feelings, it is possible in theory for any particular decision to be associated with positive feelings. The reason for this, though Grisez does not make it explicit, is that pursuit of any of the basic goods will be accompanied, at least to some degree, by positive feelings, albeit that these positive feelings may be overwhelmed, at times, by negative feelings from other sources. Most obviously, the state of 'harmony' - which is what all the reflexive basic goods are directed towards achieving in various forms - will be knowable by the feelings which accompany its realisation, whether this is the harmony between friends or between different dimensions of the self. This will similarly be the case with the substantive goods, for health has positive feelings associated with it and the pursuit of knowledge and excellence in skills of work and leisure will be accompanied by feelings of satisfaction. What is more, in the case of any decision it will always be possible for a person to pursue harmony between her choices and her judgements - a harmony Grisez describes in the language of feelings as the 'peace of conscience'.¹⁹⁰ It would appear, therefore, that Grisez's claim - that all actions *will* involve emotional motives - can be maintained in the weaker sense that all actions *could* involve emotional motives.

From the discussion so far, it should be clear that, despite this last qualification, the emotions play a central and positive role in Grisez's account of moral deliberation. The emotions are capable of orienting the individual towards goals in which fulfilment can be sought and they are an integral part of the realisation of the goals through which a person pursues her fulfilment. There are even situations in which Grisez considers it appropriate for emotions to guide reason. These will be situations in which a person faces two or more options, all of which appear to be good, and has found no reason to prefer one to the others. In these cases, Grisez proposes that a process of discernment is necessary, whereby an individual seeks 'to determine how well possibilities otherwise judged good comport with the rest of one's individual

190 Grisez, 'Principles', p.108.

personality'.¹⁹¹ This means that a person needs to discern which option harmonises better with all the other dimensions of his being, including his emotions. In discerning such an option, a person comes to know which choice would better promote the unity of the self and, in so doing, finds a reason to prefer that option.¹⁹²

This very positive account of the emotions in Grisez's analysis would be unbalanced if the relationship between the emotions and moral wrongdoing were not also identified. This relationship arises when a feeling proposes a goal (consistent with the pursuit of some good), with an attendant benefit which can only be achieved by some means not consistent with practical reason.¹⁹³ A student, for example, might be prompted by a desire for the feelings of honour associated with being dux of the class (which has an attendant benefit of the gaining of much knowledge) but can only achieve this goal by mis-shelving the few available set texts in different parts of the law library in order to deny other students access to them. This certainly violates the principles required to pursue the good of living in harmony with others. In situations like this, while rationality might bring harmony between an individual's feelings and choice, this alone does not make the act morally justified because other elements of the choice remain less than reasonable.

In developing this whole account of the place of the emotions in the process of moral decision-making, Grisez demonstrates a clear awareness of the tradition - to which Hauerwas objects - of seeing the emotions in simply negative terms, observing that, according to a 'classic explanation of temptation ... emotion and intelligible good compete to shape behaviour'.¹⁹⁴ Grisez's response to this tradition indicates the general balance which his theory seeks to obtain against that account: '[i]f temptation begins from emotion, so does interest in every morally acceptable possibility'.¹⁹⁵ Such an explicit awareness of the alternative to which his response is being made

191 Grisez, *Living*, p.292.

192 This feature of Grisez's theory will be returned to in more detail in s.5.5.2.

193 Grisez, 'Principles', pp.123-125.

194 Grisez, *Principles*, p.190.

195 *Ibid.*; although only in the qualified sense just argued for.

should help to reassure Hauerwas that Grisez's account of the integral place of the emotions in natural law theory does indeed satisfy Hauerwas' demand that reason and the emotions should be seen as related, and not as necessarily opposed forces, in the process of decision-making. The difference between their accounts is that Grisez provides a much more detailed account of the functions which they actually perform, whereas Hauerwas is content simply to say that the emotions need control so that they might become 'movements of the sensitive appetite'.¹⁹⁶

5.5.2 The Place of the Emotions in Virtuous Character

From this account of the place of the emotions in moral deliberation, it is possible to turn to Hauerwas' argument that an integral relationship between good intentions and the emotions appropriate to those intentions is a constituent element of virtue itself. As emerged earlier, Hauerwas does not provide a systematic account of this relationship, beyond making the claim that true virtue requires emotions appropriate to right intentions.¹⁹⁷ In order to understand how Grisez's analysis relates to Hauerwas' concerns, it is necessary to try to give Hauerwas' position a little more substance. This can probably be achieved by considering an article by Walter Schaller, the very title of which defines Hauerwas' concerns rather well: 'Are Virtues No More than Dispositions to Obey Moral Rules?'¹⁹⁸

Helpfully, Schaller sets out what he considers to be the 'standard account' of the relationship between moral rules and virtues:

- (1) moral rules require persons to perform or omit certain actions (act-types), and these actions can be performed by persons who lack no less than by those who possess various virtues ... One's motives in obeying the rule are irrelevant to whether one has fulfilled its requirements;
- (2) the moral virtues are, fundamentally and essentially, dispositions to obey the moral rules, i.e., to perform or omit certain actions ...
- (3) the moral virtues have only instrumental or derivative value: individuals who possess the virtues are more likely to do what is right -

196 Hauerwas, *Community*, p.124.

197 See s.3.1.

198 Schaller, W.E., 'Are Virtues No More Than Dispositions to Obey Moral Rules?', *Philosophia*, 20 (1990), 195-207.

i.e., to obey the moral rule ... Certain dispositions or character traits are *virtues*, therefore, just because they motivate right conduct, and others are *vices* because they motivate wrong actions.¹⁹⁹

After making an argument, which is not relevant for present purposes, about the impossibility of defining certain duties (such as beneficence) and therefore certain virtues, Schaller reaches the crucial point in his argument. Considering the virtue of gratitude, he observes that,

what constitutes an act of gratitude is the motive from which it is done (along with the beliefs and attitudes of the agent). In order to perform an act of gratitude one must *be* grateful ... Duty cannot serve as a substitute or back-up motive without altering the nature of the action being performed ... [therefore,] this virtue is not simply a disposition to obey a moral rule for action. It consists rather in having certain beliefs, feelings, and attitudes toward, and about, one's benefactors (and, of course, in acting in appropriate ways).²⁰⁰

Schaller's concluding point can be extended to include those standard accounts where what is required is not simply right action but right intention as well, so that *virtue consists in emotions and beliefs appropriate to right actions and intentions*. In exploring this claim, it is worth observing that consideration of what amounts to an appropriate emotion needs to look both to the content of the emotions, which is Schaller's concern, and also to their strength.²⁰¹ So, for example, while tears and great hugs would be an appropriate response of parents to someone who had saved their child's life, it would be inappropriate to accompany the gratitude associated with borrowing a saucepan from a neighbour for the evening. Similarly, and more commonly, explosive anger is not the appropriate response to a minor offence. It should also be noted that in Schaller's observation 'beliefs' have slipped into a discussion which was primarily focused on emotions. Beliefs appear to have been included because they will also affect the way in which a person approaches an action.

199 *Ibid.*, p.196.

200 *Ibid.*, pp.200-201.

201 For this point I am indebted to an observation made by Reed in, Reed, C.D.C., 'Review of, Sherman Nancy, *The Fabric of Character: Aristotle's Theory of Virtue*', *Ethics*, 100 (1990), 894-895, p.894.

In Schaller's example, therefore, a person would not be virtuous if, while she acted with gratitude towards a benefactor, she did not believe that person was, in fact, a benefactor but rather was someone who had a duty to give her what she had received. Indeed, in the concluding section of this chapter, in which the nature of the emotions will be further explored, it will be suggested that there is an integral relationship between a person's beliefs and emotions so that, unless a person believes the benefit she has gained has come from a benefactor, she will not actually have the emotion of gratitude.²⁰² This argument will add weight to the notion that appropriate beliefs are an integral part of virtue.

Where, then, does Grisez's system stand in relation to Schaller's 'standard account'? A response to this question needs to begin with Grisez's account of character because his understanding of virtue emerges from that account.²⁰³ The concept of 'character', Grisez argues, gives expression to the totality of the dimensions of the person as they relate to the way in which a person makes choices.²⁰⁴ These dimensions, in Grisez's account, include a person's existential dimension (her capacity to make free choices), as well as 'a natural bodily dimension [which includes the emotions], an intellectual dimension, and a cultural, behavioural dimension'.²⁰⁵ Grisez draws these elements into his definition of a 'good person's character' as 'his or her whole self integrated around a set of upright commitments'.²⁰⁶ In short, the central feature of a good person's character will be that the different dimensions of her being which are related to decision-making will be integrated with one another in consistently directing her towards the good which it is open to her to pursue. It is the features of an individual's personality which give rise to this integration, which Grisez then identifies as a virtue when he observes that,

Virtues are character traits, which organize the various aspects of the complex human personality. The ordering of these aspects establishes

202 See s.5.5.4.

203 Grisez, *Principles*, pp.58-59.

204 *Ibid.*, p.59.

205 *Ibid.*

206 *Ibid.*, p.629.

some form of harmony among feeling, judgement, choice, performance.²⁰⁷

Hence, a virtue in Grisez's account could be described as a disposition which orders an aspect of a person's choosing so that all the elements which are involved in that choosing - intentions, emotions, beliefs and actions - are consistently in harmony with one another and with a person's prior moral commitments.²⁰⁸

How, then, does this understanding of the virtues relate to moral rules in Grisez's analysis? In answering this question, it will be recalled that within Grisez's scheme the primary moral principles or rules are the modes of responsibility which specify the first principle of morality.²⁰⁹ All of these modes of responsibility²¹⁰ are specified as prohibitions against different forms of emotion preventing the coherent pursuit of basic goods. The fourth mode, for example, specifies that, '[o]ne should not act out of an *emotional aversion except as part* of one's avoidance of some intelligible evil other than the inner tension experienced in avoiding that aversion'.²¹¹ As with his discussions of all the modes, having described how the fourth mode is violated, Grisez proceeds immediately to state that, '[t]he virtuous disposition corresponding to this mode is signified by many uses of words like "courage," "mettle," "fortitude" [etc.]'.²¹² Although Grisez does not describe the exact relationship between these virtues and the prohibitions from which they arise, he does address the nature of this relationship more generally when he asks rhetorically, 'How are the modes of

207 Grisez, 'Practical Principles', p.129.

208 It should be observed that Grisez distinguishes between dispositions and habits, observing that, 'Because of the dynamic character of goodness, dispositions defined in terms of it do not lead to habits - that is, to repetitive patterns of behavior of the same sort. Rather, a virtue will dispose one to a constantly changing pattern of behavior, whose only regular feature will be that it realizes potentialities in any given instance in a way consistent with the openness and growth which defines goodness. (Grisez, *Principles*, pp.192-193.)

209 See s.3.2.4.

210 See Appendix A for a list of the modes of responsibility.

211 Grisez, *Principles*, p.210; emphasis mine.

212 *Ibid.*, p.211.

responsibility related to the virtues?’²¹³ In his answer, Grisez argues that,

Commitments establish one’s existential identity; a whole personality integrated with a morally good self is virtuous. Since such a personality is formed by choices which are in accord with the first principle of morality and the modes of responsibility, the virtues embody the modes.²¹⁴

The only further explanation which Grisez offers as to how the making of choices consistent with the modes of responsibility leads to the formation of virtues is found in ‘Practical Principles, Moral Truth and Ultimate Ends’, where he observes that, ‘[i]n carrying out such morally good choices, other aspects of the personality will gradually be drawn into line ... In this way, virtues are acquired.’²¹⁵ The problem is that this will not necessarily always be the case - a person could comply with the modes of responsibility in a form which did not involve the integration of the other dimensions of his being. Grisez himself makes this clear in his discussion of temptation:

We know from experience that will and emotions do not directly interact: We can feel strong emotion yet will contrary to it ... Nor does the will directly affect the emotions. We cannot change our feelings simply by choice; affection cannot be elicited or sadness banished at will.²¹⁶

He also makes a similar observation in *Living a Christian Life*:

feelings are not directly within one’s power. Sometimes one cannot help experiencing feelings of anger and even hatred of friends and loved ones. In such cases, the genuineness of love is what one wills, chooses, and does despite the feelings.²¹⁷

In other words, a person could obey the modes of responsibility and have emotions that were distinctly unintegrated with that choice. In relation to any of the modes of

213 *Ibid.*, pp.192-194.

214 *Ibid.*, p.192.

215 Grisez, ‘Practical Principles’, p.131.

216 Grisez, *Principles*, p.413.

217 Grisez, *Living*, p.138.

responsibility, it would be possible not to choose in accord with the 'bad' emotion but still maintain that emotion. The fifth mode provides a good illustration: 'One should not, in response to *different feelings toward different persons*, willingly proceed with a preference for anyone unless the preference is required by intelligible goods themselves'.²¹⁸ A white person, for example, who does not discriminate against black people but feels repugnance when thinking about them, obeys this mode of responsibility but could hardly be said to possess some related virtue such as 'neighbourly love'. Grisez's analysis suggests that the white person's choices and actions not to discriminate could be good without being virtuous. Hence, given that none of the modes positively require that a person seek to integrate the different dimensions of his being, it would be possible for a person consistently to make choices in accord with the modes of responsibility without developing virtue. If being virtuous requires more than adhering to the modes of responsibility, then they cannot simply be said, as Grisez claims, to 'embody the virtues'.²¹⁹ This raises the question, what is required for a good choice - one made in accordance with the modes - to be virtuous?²²⁰ On the basis of the analysis developed so far, in order for a good choice to be virtuous, the intention involved in choosing in accordance with the modes would need to be integrated with the other dimensions of a person's being, particularly with his emotions. It is just this type of integration which is involved in the pursuit of the basic good of self-integration - which, more fully, is the pursuit of 'harmony among all the parts of a person which can be engaged in freely chosen action'.²²¹ Self-integration is pursued when a person seeks to harmonise the emotions which present possibilities for action with the actual moral possibilities for action, so that he will not experience an inner struggle between the two sets of possibilities. In the case of the white racist, self-integration will occur when he is able to move from negative emotions which suggest that he engage in discrimination to emotions which suggest that he act fairly towards all people. Self-integration emerges

218 *Ibid.*, p.211.

219 Grisez, *Principles*, p.192.

220 The implications of this possibility of that there are good choices which are not virtuous will be explored in further detail in s.5.5.3.

221 Grisez, *Principles*, p.124.

as the basic good, the pursuit of which transforms the simple pursuit of the good into the pursuit of virtue. The virtues, therefore, are known only in choices which both accord with the modes of responsibility and also embody the basic good of self-integration. It is suggested, therefore, that in order for the modes of responsibility to be fully effective in directing people towards a virtuous character, Grisez needs to specify a further mode of responsibility: 'seek to bring harmony between your sound moral choices and all the other dimensions of your being'.

Before concluding this discussion of the relationship between rules and virtues in Grisez's theory, it is important to examine a claim made by him which is liable to cause Hauerwas - and anyone who seeks to establish a simple dichotomy between all forms of deontological and virtue ethics - great surprise. In 'Practical Principles', Grisez maintains that '[i]t follows that virtues and moral judgements which attain full moral truth are mutually interdependent'.²²² In defending this claim, Grisez begins by observing that,

[w]ithout having virtues at the outset, people can proceed soundly from practical principles to judgements about what they ought to do ... [T]here are two ways in which judgements reached by sound practical reasoning can fall short of full moral truth.²²³

The first of these ways is that,

in their reflection people often fail to take into account all available options and other relevant aspects of a situation in which they make a choice. For example, if someone whose interests are at stake is overlooked, a judgement otherwise soundly made is likely to be objectively unfair.²²⁴

What Grisez does not make clear in this explanation is why a virtuous disposition should be of assistance in enabling a person to take account of 'all available options and relevant aspects of a situation'. If anything - as O'Donovan's account of the

222 Grisez, 'Practical Principles', p.131.

223 *Ibid.*, p.130.

224 *Ibid.*

problems with an epistemological priority of character suggests - quite the reverse could be the case. For example, somebody with the virtues of forbearance and forgiveness, which Grisez associates with the seventh mode of responsibility,²²⁵ might be much more ready to resign himself to the suffering of evil in the world than to engage in active steps to prevent injustice, with the result that others might also unfairly suffer from injustice. What is more, in Grisez's discussion of the relationship between virtue and moral deliberation, in the context of temptation it would appear that virtue might operate to curtail consideration of 'all available options and relevant aspects of a situation'. For he observes that,

It might be supposed that there must be something wrong in proceeding to begin deliberating about a possibility one recognizes as morally wrong to adopt ... [however,] it need not involve sin at all. This is because practical reason naturally and necessarily begins to consider the case for and against any proposal which comes to mind. True, *a person can block such consideration - but only when it comes to mind. It comes quickly to the mind of a virtuous person ...*²²⁶

A disposition which operates in this way risks blocking consideration of some apparently immoral possibility so quickly that all the relevant aspects of a situation will not actually be adequately considered. So, for example, a foreign minister's anger with a state which tested nuclear devices in a way that created a potentially very serious environmental threat to her nation's region, might lead her to desire to sink some of the nuclear power's ships guarding the testing site as an expression of that anger. An instant rejection of this option might foreclose consideration both of the possibility that environmental damage might generically be a just cause for war and of the possibility that, while war would not be justified in this instance, some form of direct action, such as sailing an unarmed ship into the test site to try to prevent the tests occurring, might be an appropriate response. This apparently virtuous disposition of quickly foreclosing on the consideration of immoral possibilities could reach the stage where it acts to silence emotions often associated with vice before they have

225 'One should not be moved by hostility to freely accept or choose the destruction, damaging, or impeding of any intelligible human good' (Grisez, *Principles*, p.215).

226 *Ibid.*, p.371; emphasis mine.

even had the chance to present some immoral course of action for choice. While such a disposition may, at times, be valuable, it could also create serious problems. A person might too quickly suppress an emotion as conducing towards some vice, whereas, in fact, it was a warning pointing to a form of disharmony which was in need of resolution. In a friendship, for example, some small act of selfishness by one friend might cause quite disproportionate anger in the other friend. If the other friend focuses simply on cooling his anger and forgiving his friend, he may not realise that these disproportionate emotions were actually pointing beyond this particular act to wider problems in the relationship.

In order to sustain Grisez's initial claim that virtue enables a people 'to take into account all available options and other relevant aspects of a situation in which they make a choice', it would appear that virtue needs to be understood as giving people the ability to reflect thoroughly upon a situation without distorting their deliberation. The possession of virtue should be of considerable assistance in enabling a person to engage in this type of thorough reflection because it should give him the capacity to engage in such reflection by giving him the confidence of being able to resist the temptation to pursue immoral possibilities in the process of considering 'all available options', including the immoral ones, and taking account of all the 'other relevant aspects of a situation', including the negative emotions which might make immoral possibilities attractive. This thorough reflection should then help to avoid the problem, to which O'Donovan points, of a person acting quickly in accordance with existing character traits. It should also provide the opportunity for virtuous emotions, such as compassion and peaceableness, to suggest possible courses of action which might not otherwise have been considered and, in so doing, point to relevant aspects of a situation which might otherwise have been overlooked.

The second reason why Grisez considers that the virtues are necessary in order to attain full moral truth is that they will be of assistance in enabling people to discern

which choice to make in situations where rational reflection is not decisive.²²⁷ These situations, which have already been briefly discussed,²²⁸ arise when, at the end of a process of rational reflection, a person is left with two or more good options. Perhaps it will be a question like, ‘Which of the many good courses available to me to study this year will I choose?’ Grisez treats these situations in some detail in *Living a Christian Life*, arguing that, where rational reflection is exhausted, the next step is to discern which choice best fits with the rest of a person’s character.²²⁹ He observes that ‘emotions, even when fully integrated with reason, do not simply echo it’ and that, as a result, the task is to determine which option would be integrated best with these emotions.²³⁰ Although, somewhat oddly,²³¹ he does not consider the role of the virtues in discerning among good options in *Living a Christian Life*, in his article ‘Practical Principles, Moral Truth and Ultimate Ends’ Grisez does observe virtues to be valuable in this task of discernment because they integrate not only reason but *all* the aspects of a person’s being.²³² Virtues, in other words, do not cease to play their integrating role simply because they have completed the task of integrating choices with reason. Rather, they continue to operate until the whole self is integrated in pursuit of the good.

5.5.3 From the Good to the Virtuous

Inevitably, at this point the question arises as to how a person can become virtuous, if, as appears to be the case, full moral truth is required in order to be virtuous but obtaining full moral truth requires a person to be virtuous in the first place. This is not simply a challenge to Grisez’s virtue analysis; it appears as a generic challenge to all virtue theories, as Gilbert Meilaender makes clear when he raises the same

227 Grisez, ‘Practical Principles’, pp.130-131.

228 See s.3.2.1.

229 Grisez, *Living*, pp.291-293.

230 *Ibid.*, p.292. See also, Grisez, *Principles*, p.668, where he observes, that ‘[b]ecause human action involves the whole person, at this point preference for one option is rightly settled by non-rational inclination’.

231 A possible explanation for this omission might be that Grisez is backing away from his interest in virtue. This explanation seems unlikely because, elsewhere in *Living*, virtue continues to be an important category. See, for example, *Living*, pp.247, 842-843.

232 Grisez, ‘Practical Principles’, p.131.

question about Hauerwas' approach.²³³ In making this challenge, Meilaender observes that Hauerwas regards virtue as being cultivated by imitating those who are virtuous and, paradigmatically, by imitating Jesus. He then recalls Hauerwas' observation that, '[n]o one can become virtuous merely by doing what virtuous people do. We can only be virtuous by doing what virtuous people do in the manner they do it'.²³⁴ The problem with this statement, Meilaender argues, is that 'we cannot do that until we *are* virtuous'.²³⁵ Meilaender is not specific as to why this is the case; presumably it is because the interior life of the virtuous person is an important part of what constitutes her as virtuous and it is just this aspect of the person to which the observer has limited access. The result, in Meilaender's view, is that,

Suddenly an unbridgeable chasm opens before us. The slow, laborious achievement of virtue requires imitation of those already virtuous, but imitation alone will never make one virtuous. We must imitate the exemplar by doing the deed in a virtuous manner. We can get to virtue only by first being virtuous! Nothing Hauerwas says really addresses this conundrum. Some Christians hold that grace justifies the sinner and provides the bridge across the chasm, but Hauerwas is reluctant to talk that way.²³⁶

Can this chasm be crossed? Despite Meilaender's objections, Hauerwas' account does provide at least a means by which the chasm might, albeit rather haphazardly, be traversed. It may be that, because the different dimensions of the person are related, when a person follows observable virtuous actions, the good of harmony between the outer and inner dimensions of a person will tend to bring about the internal harmony with these outward actions which is the hallmark of a virtuous character. Hauerwas' analysis does not, however, suggest any way in which this might occur. The epistemological priority which he gives to character seems to mean that he is unwilling (or unable) to provide an explanation of how this apparently gradual process might take place. Certainly, an interest in the gradual - in the step by step - would seem to be too atomised a form of analysis for his fully evolved ethic of character to

233 Meilaender, G., 'Virtue in Contemporary Religious Thought', in Neuhaus, 7-29, p.26.

234 *Ibid.* (quoting from Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.76).

235 Meilaender, 'Virtue', p.26.

236 *Ibid.*

employ. Ironically, therefore, it seems that Hauerwas' very desire to emphasise the importance of character is, in the end, why it so difficult for him to provide an account of how people become virtuous.

Meilaender's chasm can, however, be bridged by the virtue theory that has emerged from an analysis of Grisez's position. In this approach, virtue is cultivated by consistently choosing to pursue the good and then, where necessary, seeking to integrate into the process of choosing and pursuing the good emotions which are appropriate to the good being sought. This process of gradually arriving at the virtuous life by way of distinct individual choices with objective reference points means that, in Grisez's analysis, it is not, in fact, necessary to have full moral truth in order to become virtuous.

5.5.4 Towards a More Complete Account of the Emotions

In the discussion so far, Grisez's account of the place of the emotions in moral theory is emerging as essentially complementary to that offered by Hauerwas. Consideration of the final shape of this convergence will have to wait until the question which challenges the viability of any virtue theory is addressed: how can emotions actually be integrated with good moral choices? This question is important question, because strong claims have been made that people are incapable of exercising significant control over their emotions. Yet, on this subject, both Hauerwas and Grisez have remarkably little to say. Fortunately, a number of commentators sympathetic to Hauerwas' project have proposed developments to his theory which, if modified to allow a greater role for the individual, suggest ways in which a person may be able to integrate his feelings with the other dimensions of his being. These theories, especially as modified, and the philosophical analysis and psychological evidence which underpins them also have the additional benefit of supporting the cognitive theory of the emotions which is implicit in Hauerwas' and Grisez's work. Any consideration of their contributions necessarily requires entering into some of the disputes in psychology (and related disciplines), with the attendant risk of challenges

from those more qualified to deal with these subjects. Nevertheless, these risks will have to be taken, if the possibility of an ethic of character is to be defended.

The first commentator to help develop a more complete account of the emotions which is capable of providing guidance as to how they might be integrated with the other elements of the self is Paul Lauritzen. In an insightful article, 'Emotions and Religious Ethics',²³⁷ Lauritzen provides a valuable account of the implications of important parts of the debate in psychology surrounding the nature of emotions for various forms of religious ethics, including Hauerwas' account of virtue ethics.

In order first to understand the nature of the challenge posed by those who claim that humans have little control over their emotions to the type of ethics of character developed by Hauerwas and Grisez, it is helpful to begin with Lauritzen's account of non-cognitivist theories of emotion. These accounts, most famously articulated by William James and Carl Lange, argue that, 'an emotion is simply the feeling one has when undergoing physiological changes in response to external stimuli'.²³⁸ Lauritzen observes that, '[f]or James emotions are essentially sensations; we feel our bodies responding to certain stimuli, and this feeling is itself the emotion'.²³⁹ The attraction of this account, Lauritzen argues, is that it purports to enable the emotions to be made the subject of scientific study because it opens up the possibility of correlating external stimuli with neurophysiological responses.²⁴⁰ The problem for a theory of character is that, if emotions are simply the result of external stimuli, then the only way which a person has of controlling his emotions and seeking to integrate them with the other dimensions of his being is to seek to control the external stimuli. What is more, such an account reinstates the division between reason and emotion because they become competing forces for directing human behaviour.

237 Lauritzen, P., 'Emotions and Religious Ethics', *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, 16 (1988), 307-324.

238 *Ibid.*, p.309.

239 *Ibid.*

240 *Ibid.*, pp.310-311.

Happily for the virtue theorist, an alternative account (which Lauritzen refers to as either a 'constructivist' or 'cognitive' account) exists, according to which,

emotions are culturally mediated or constructed experiences that are shaped by, and crucially dependent upon, cultural forms of discourse such as symbols, beliefs, and judgements.²⁴¹

In explaining this notion, Lauritzen helpfully draws on Charles Taylor's observation, in *Human Agency and Language*, that shame is an emotion which arises when an individual feels that, in the eyes of his community, he has done something dishonourable. Hence, whether or not an individual feels shame depends directly upon his community's understandings honour, dignity and esteem. The story of the Fall provides, in a sense, the foundational illustration for this account of the emotions. Before eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, 'the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed' (Gen 2:25). Upon the change in their understanding of good and evil, they were ashamed of their nakedness and sought to hide it (Gen 3:7, 10-11).

Lauritzen argues that, in the light of anthropological evidence,²⁴² philosophical analysis²⁴³ and the work done in psychology,²⁴⁴ some form of essentially cognitive

241 *Ibid.*, p.308.

242 Lauritzen cites Geertz's argument in support of the importance of culture in shaping human life (Geertz, pp.33-54). More specifically, Lauritzen cites the work of Michelle Rosaldo on anger as a culturally constructed emotion (see Rosaldo, M., 'Toward an Anthropology of Self and Feeling', in Shweder, R.A. and LeVine, R.E. (eds), *Culture Theory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984, 137-157).

243 In this regard, Lauritzen cites the work of William Lyons (Lyons, W., *Emotion*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980), to whom, he says, he owes '[t]he idea of evaluative judgement as the "linchpin" of emotions' (Lauritzen, p.322). Lauritzen also (*ibid.*, p.314) cites Solomon's *The Passions*. Solomon's position is, however, more clearly and succinctly expressed in, Solomon, R.C., 'Emotions and Choice', in Calhoun, *Emotion?*, 305-326.

244 In this regard, Lauritzen cites J.R. Averill (*Anger and Aggression*, Springer-Verlag, New York, 1982) in support of his cognitive theories. To this could be added both Schachter's ground breaking work in establishing the importance of a cognitive component in any account of the emotions (see Strongman, pp.88-93) and also R.S. Lazarus' work, which is closely related to that done by Averill (*ibid.*, pp.40-41). In criticising the parallel theories of James and Lange, Lauritzen cites the survey of evidence by George Mandler (Mandler, G., 'Emotion', in Hearst, E. (ed), *The First Century of Experimental Psychology*, Lawrence Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ., 1979, 275-321), to which W.B. Cannon's seminal critique (Cannon, W.B., *Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear and Rage*, 2nd edition, Appleton, New York, 1929) should be added.

theory provides a much more satisfactory account of the emotions.²⁴⁵ Having defended the cogency of a cognitive theory, Lauritzen then turns to consider how religious belief can transform the emotions, using the example of anger to illustrate his argument. Anger, Lauritzen suggests, is an emotion which is structured by a range of norms existing within a culture, many of which people will not necessarily be conscious of when they experience it. Lauritzen suggests that, at least in modern Western societies, two of the crucial types of moral norms which shape the emotion of anger are those which specify what constitutes harm to the person and those which licence a person to seek redress for any harm done to him.²⁴⁶ In other words, the feelings associated with anger will be shaped by a person's understanding of what constitutes a wrong for which he should seek redress. On the basis of this connection between beliefs and emotions, Lauritzen is able to make the crucial logical step: if religious beliefs about what is considered to be a wrong for which a person should seek redress change, then this person's emotional responses will also change. This change in emotion could arise because a person comes to believe that he no longer needs to serve as an agent for justice.²⁴⁷ Hence, on Lauritzen's account, when a person comes to believe that there is a God who is an agent of justice in the world his emotions will change. Whether or not Lauritzen is right about the cause of this change, what he points to is that the change will only be brought about by a significant alteration in a whole set of beliefs concerning the way in which the world is understood. This suggests that any theory of character has to have an interest in a much wider set of beliefs than just moral norms. It should have a key interest in the whole way in which a person understands reality. Once again, it becomes clear that moral theology must be epistemologically preceded by systematic theology. A person's beliefs emerge as important not simply in making moral obligations intelligible but, in the context of a theory of character, for the very fulfilling of a

245 It should also be noted that, on the basis of the evidence and analysis cited above, cognitive theories also provide a much more satisfactory account of the emotions than behavioural theories, 'which tend to view emotion as dependent on the nature of reinforcing stimuli and the complexities of classical conditioning' (Strongman, p.30). For an account of these behavioural theories see *ibid.*, pp.27-30.

246 Lauritzen, p.319.

247 *Ibid.*, p.320.

person's obligation to bring his emotions into harmony with his choices. It also becomes clear that, for a Christian theory of character, conversion (in the sense of a radical change in world view) becomes an important category.

The very word 'conversion', with its invocation of individual choice and individual transformation, marks the first point at which Lauritzen's account requires qualification. Lauritzen wants to talk about an emotion being a 'cultural artefact'²⁴⁸ and he consistently describes the emotions as 'dependent upon ... cultural forms'.²⁴⁹ In so doing, he does not allow enough room for individuals to choose sets of beliefs (with all the implications these have for their emotional lives) which are contrary to prevailing cultural norms. This is not to deny, however, that many people will simply adopt a great range of the prevailing beliefs in their culture, nor that belonging to a community which shares a person's newly adopted beliefs is not important for sustaining those beliefs and for supporting that person in living in accordance with them. The strength of Lauritzen's emphasis on community may, in fact, relate to his acceptance of one of Hauerwas' key, but false, assumptions:

it is one of Hauerwas's most astute observations in this regard that no moral theory which is dominated by a scientific ideal of objectivity can allow the emotions a significant place in the moral life.²⁵⁰

Lauritzen seems to regard the corollary of this proposition as being that any ethical theory which emphasises the importance of the emotions must avoid the 'scientific ideal of objectivity' and, consequently, seek refuge in a relativist and communitarian approach. Yet neither proposition is true. In fact, Grisez's theory demonstrates that it is possible to have an objective account of the moral life which also has a significant place for the emotions. What is more, nothing in Lauritzen's scheme prevents its essential logic from being used in the service of such an objective account of the moral life.

248 *Ibid.*, p.308.

249 *Ibid.*

250 *Ibid.*, p.317.

For all the advances brought by Lauritzen's account of the emotions, the problem still remains as to how to relate other human feelings, which he distinguishes as sensations (that is a person's neurophysiological responses, such as 'a stomach ache', 'fatigue'),²⁵¹ to the moral life. Such an account is necessary in order to understand how a person is to respond both to those feelings which are *simply* sensations (for example, pain) and to sensations insofar as they are *constituent elements* of emotions (as in the case of lust which, while conditioned by a person's understanding of physical attractiveness, also has a biological dimension).

It is at this point that it is worth returning to the work of Patricia Jung, whose criticism of Hauerwas for failing to take adequate account of the emotions appears to have alerted him to the need to find a place for them.²⁵² Jung argues that those accounts of character transformation which 'emphasize the voluntary, intentional qualities of human action',²⁵³ pay insufficient attention to the involuntary dimension of the person which affects or determines choices. She observes that,

To interpret sanctification as the transformation and reorientation of the agent's characteristic vision or value orientation is anthropologically tenuous, for it is not immediately obvious how agents can experience their bodily needs (such as hunger) which constitute part of their value orientation as transformation.²⁵⁴

This criticism could be targeted at Hauerwas, Grisez and Lauritzen, all of whom focus upon the reorientation of the agent's vision and values, while paying little attention to the integration of the experiences of sensations with moral values. This a lack of attention, Jung argues, is a serious problem because, if the involuntary dimensions of a person's character are not integrated with his moral values, they stand ready to present immoral possibilities which might have a strong emotional appeal which could radically challenge a person's value orientation.²⁵⁵ A person with little

251 *Ibid.*, p.312.

252 See s.5.2.

253 Jung, 'Sanctification', p.78.

254 *Ibid.*

255 *Ibid.*, p.81.

experience of mastering pain or even discomfort, for example, could have his moral commitments radically challenged if holding to them meant enduring pain or some form of serious discomfort.

Jung goes on to provide an account of how sensations come to present possibilities for action. Her account opens up the prospect of explaining how the involuntary bodily dimension of the person might be integrated with the more voluntary elements of the self. Jung argues that when a person experiences the sensation of some physical need,

The first function of the imagination is to clarify this lack and represent to the agent that pattern of need gratification which will ease his or her distress ... the imagination sustains the need by anticipating the pleasure that will come with gratification. This feeling, associated with the need and its imagined gratification, can be evaluated by the agent ... It is the imagination which takes the *matter* of need - its blind lack, its gratifying object, and its accompanying pleasure - and forms it into a possible motive. The imagination shapes bodily spontaneity into motives that can be controlled voluntarily.²⁵⁶

It is interesting to note that Grisez, in discussing different types of voluntariness, offers an example which both illuminates Jung's analysis and suggests that his own thought would be capable of reconciliation with the analysis proposed so far:

on a family hike, a small girl begins to tire. The parents say: "Come on, it's only a little farther, and then we'll stop and eat lunch." The child's understanding of lunch ... focuses [her] imagination, which in turn arouses desire and leads to continued behaviour: trudging along.²⁵⁷

Having identified the way in which imagination shapes the action(s) following from the experience of sensations, Jung then proceeds to argue that, while 'an organic need cannot be habituated[,] ... imagination which clarifies and sustains those needs can be

256 *Ibid.*, pp.80-81. Although Jung does not cite any work in psychology in support of her analysis, it is worth noting that M.B. Arnold's work in psychology, which stresses the importance of imagination in shaping the options which people appraise before they act, could be cited as generally supportive of her position (see Strongman, p.39).

257 Grisez, *Principles*, p.232.

reoriented by the community which nurtures it'.²⁵⁸ Here, Jung's sympathy with Hauerwas becomes apparent as she moves towards giving the community an epistemological priority, although not, it should be noted, to the same extent as does Lauritzen. In her account, it is the community's positing of alternative forms of satisfying some biological need which is the primary way by which the individual's imagination is reshaped.²⁵⁹ Interestingly, Jung's own illustrations do not sit entirely comfortably with the role which she gives to the community. Her paradigm of the imagination positing an alternative satisfaction to meet a bodily need is a hunger strike in which the imagination proposes the satisfaction which comes from witnessing to justice in place of the satisfaction of hunger.²⁶⁰ Yet, the cause of a hunger strike is likely to be a disjunction between the individual's and the community's understandings of what is required to satisfy the demands of justice. While there is no doubt that a community's vision of what fulfils bodily needs plays an important role in orienting a person's imagination, the potential role of the individual in this process should not be understated. An individual's own capacity to reorient his imagination so that it proposes moral possibilities for responding to sensations will be an important part of his ability to integrate the various dimensions of his being. This process will itself be shaped by what reason posits as the morally acceptable range of possibilities for responding to those feelings. For example, someone wrestling with adulterous feelings which are, at least in part, driven by sensations of sexual desire, does so because he recognises that marriage is the appropriate context for the realisation of the feelings associated with sexual desire. There is then a need for the use of the imagination to make this belief effective for dealing with his own situation. The person needs to reflect on the much deeper satisfaction of the feelings related to sexual desire which come from a sexual relationship with his marriage partner. This will probably involve recalling particularly vivid times of sexual satisfaction in his married relationship. If he cannot recall such periods, a much broader form of reflection is doubtless called for. Powerful paradigmatic images of the satisfaction of sexual desire within marriage

258 Jung, 'Sanctification', p.81.

259 *Ibid.*, pp.81-83.

260 *Ibid.*

will then be on hand to juxtapose with any images presented by the imagined possibilities of the satisfaction to be found in adulterous relationships. These will indeed need to be strong images because, as Jung observes, '[i]n order to take precedence over one's organically-rooted motives in such situations of aggression or privation, motives of social origin must have dramatic affective appeal for the agent'.²⁶¹ Nevertheless, there is no reason why, with careful reflection, sufficiently powerful images cannot be formed which may eventually mean that, when sexual feelings are aroused, the person will immediately think of realising them with his spouse and never get to the point of considering gratification by means of whatever is the immediate cause of arousal.

Jung's final move is to seek to enrich her description of the involuntary dimensions of the person by drawing on Paul Ricoeur's work. As Hauerwas has rightly observed, this move of Jung's contributes little to an understanding of the relationship between the voluntary and involuntary dimensions of a person's being.²⁶² Certainly, for present purposes, this is an avenue of inquiry which it is unnecessary to pursue because the work by Lauritzen and Jung provides sufficient material to enrich Hauerwas' and Grisez's accounts of the emotions and to suggest the broad outlines of the means by which the emotional and sentient aspects of the person could be integrated with her existential dimension. This basic framework will be fleshed out in the following chapter. In relation to both Lauritzen's and Jung's accounts, however, it has proved necessary to suggest the existence of a greater possibility for individuals to make choices to integrate the various dimensions of the self than either of the authors, with their focus upon community, has allowed. Nevertheless, both authors' concentration on role of the community's whole set of beliefs in shaping the moral life has served to highlight further the integral nature of the relationship between a person's moral understanding and her general perception of the nature of reality.

261 *Ibid.*, p.82.

262 Hauerwas, *Community*, p.267. Hauerwas makes this observation in relation to Jung's work on Ricoeur as it originally appeared in her doctoral thesis.

5.6 The Way Forward

At the end of this discussion of the emotions, it emerges that not only does Grisez's analysis embrace Hauerwas' concern that moral theory find an appropriate place for emotions and feelings by viewing them both as complementing reason in moral deliberation and as being integral to the definition of virtue, it also provides a more detailed account of the nature of this place than Hauerwas has so far supplied. In the light of this conclusion, it is possible to complete the account of the relationship between Hauerwas' and Grisez's theories of character and their descriptions of moral deliberation.

In this chapter, Grisez and Hauerwas have emerged as possessing both similar concerns about the importance of moral theory taking account of character, as well as essentially complementary descriptions of the way in which character is formed. The parallel nature of these accounts serves to strengthen the much more general conclusion that their two approaches to ethics share, at least at a metaethical level, a sufficiently common structure and set of concerns, such that they are best understood as complementary forms of Christian ethics. Both accounts are, in other words, fundamentally concerned to direct the whole person, in all her particularity, towards the image of wholeness displayed in the gospels and the life of the Church and to help her find and carry through that role in the realisation of the Kingdom of God which is uniquely appropriate to her.

Where the real divisions have appeared is between their accounts of the nature of the moral deliberation designed to guide a person towards her wholeness. While in the previous chapter this division manifested itself in Hauerwas' use of narrative as opposed to Grisez's application of principles and rules, in this chapter the division has emerged with Hauerwas' giving an epistemological priority to character. It is at this point that a resolution of their irreconcilable differences is required. Given the problems with giving character an epistemological priority in moral deliberation, it would appear that preserving the dichotomy between 'what should I do?' and 'what should I be?' while tackling it, as Hauerwas does, from the opposite end proves to be

an unsuccessful strategy. If first asking 'what should I do?' is unsatisfactory because it ignores or does not adequately answer the question 'what should I be?', then, similarly, asking first 'what should I be?' is unsatisfactory for failing adequately to address the question 'what should I do?' The way forward for an ethic which is attentive both to the concerns of character and to the demands of good moral deliberation lies in resolving this dichotomy. This is the advance which Grisez's account of practical reason offers. There are no longer two questions but one. To ask 'what should I do?' is also to answer the question 'what should I be?'

The resolution of this question also has important implications for the place of narrative in moral deliberation. In the previous chapter, it was concluded that narrative ethics could not stand alone as a form of moral deliberation. A complementary form of analysis which employed principles and rules to deal with questions beyond the reach of narrative forms of analysis and the narrative canon was required. It was the fear that Christian realism would not adequately take into account those concerns about character which a narrative theory sought to articulate which prevented its adoption as just this form of analysis. However, this chapter has, in its exploration of Grisez's treatment of character, made it clear that this fear is groundless. Finally, therefore, it can be concluded that Hauerwas' narrative account of ethics and Christian Realism are capable of functioning as mutually enriching and complementary forms of ethics.

Chapter 6

Worship as the Foundation of an Ecumenical Ethic

If narrative ethics and a Christian realist theory are indeed capable of a complementary form of operation, the question then arises as to what form this operation might take. It is in answer to this question that Hauerwas' contribution to the discussion of ethics is perhaps most important. His claim for the place of narrative and character stands as a reminder not simply that an ethic arises from a very particular set of beliefs but also that it belongs to a very particular sort of community. Any adequate understanding of ethics must, therefore, take account of those practices of the community which are integrally related to its moral life. Not to take account of such practices would, in Hauerwas' view, risk separating 'our moral notions from their narrative context'.¹ For a Christian community, that narrative context is worship, especially as it expresses itself through liturgy. Indeed, 'liturgy', Hauerwas suggests, 'is probably a much more important resource than are doctrines or creeds for helping us to hear, tell and live the story of God'.² He goes so far as to say that, '[a]s Christians, our worship is our morality'.³

What is extraordinary is the extent to which this fundamental relationship between ethics and worship has been overlooked by ethicists and liturgists alike.⁴ Without a developed account of this relationship, it has even been possible to question the

1 Hauerwas, *Truthfulness*, p.21.

2 Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.26.

3 Hauerwas, *Christendom*, p.108. The importance of this feature of Hauerwas' ethic has been little noted by most commentators on Hauerwas. A notable exception is Kenneth Carter ('The Theological Ethics of Stanley Hauerwas', *Quarterly Review*, (Winter 1986), 64-74, pp.71-73).

4 Much of the work on this subject appears in an issue of *The Journal of Religious Ethics* which was devoted to this topic (see *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, 7 (1979), 139-248). As Richard McCormick, in concluding his survey of the material which has been produced on this subject, observes, '[t]he literature on liturgy and ethics is relatively young and sparse' (McCormick, R.A., 'Notes on Moral Theology: 1980', *Theological Studies*, 42 (1981), 74-121, p.95).

philosophical coherence of its existence at all.⁵ Hauerwas, Grisez and O'Donovan, however, have all, in varying ways, pointed to the importance of this relationship for any Christian ethic. Their complementary observations about this subject make it possible to develop a more satisfactory account of this axial element of a Christian ethic. In fact, in describing this relationship between worship and ethics, many of their complementary insights into the nature and functions of a moral theory can be drawn together and the shape of the ethic arising from this discussion will represent the fundamental form of the reconciliation of Hauerwas', Grisez's and O'Donovan's approaches. In other words, *the ecumenical ethic towards which this thesis is moving will be one which describes the complementary operation of a Christian realist theory and a narrative ethic from the perspective of Christian worship*. It will be an ethic which is founded upon, shaped by and lived out through Christian worship itself.⁶

In setting out to describe this relationship between liturgy and ethics, two approaches are possible. The first is to work through the key elements of the main Christian rites and the second is to identify the general morally significant features which they contain. From the liturgist's perspective, the first approach is doubtless more satisfactory because it would preserve a strong sense of the integrity and unity of liturgy which is central to its coherence as the practice of a Christian community. Such an approach, however, would involve much repetition because many elements of

5 See Rachels, J., 'God and Human Attitudes', *Religious Studies*, 7 (1971), 325-337; and, Lombardi, J.L., 'Worship and Moral Autonomy', *Religious Studies*, 24 (1988), 101-119. While it is not the purpose of this chapter to meet these arguments directly, it will become clear that there is no radical incompatibility between worship and good moral reasoning when Christian ethics is conceived of in realist terms rather than in the voluntarist terms which frame the discussions in Rachels' and Lombardi's arguments.

6 This account will hopefully resolve the key problem which Richard McCormick has perceptively observed to exist with much of the discussion of the relationship between liturgy and ethics, especially those sections of it which have looked to Hauerwas' work for guidance:

Here I want to raise one problem ... It is clear that moral theology has a great deal to do with character and community formation, and that biblical stories through liturgy play an essential role here. It is also clear that moral theology has a great deal to do with moral deliberation and justification. But what is the relationship of these two? How do the biblical narratives as formative relate to justification in moral discourse? (McCormick, 'Notes', p.95.)

both liturgical worship and private prayer⁷ possess common moral features. There would also be some difficulties in the ecumenical context of this work due to the diverging understandings of some elements of the various rites. Consequently, the second approach will be adopted, with liturgical examples being used as illustrations of the common morally relevant features of the different elements of worship and prayer. At the same time, there is a liturgical distinction which will prove to be of particular assistance in structuring a discussion of the relationship between liturgy and ethics. This is the distinction between the liturgy of the Word and the other elements of worship and prayer. In each case, however, the discussion will be organised by the basic movement of a Christian ethic from an articulation of its realist foundations, through the depiction of the moral life to the actual transformation of the person towards that vision.

Before embarking on the discussion proper, it is worth observing that not only will the concept of narrative be useful at a metaethical level to point to worship as an often-overlooked but central feature of moral theology but it will also be of considerable assistance in describing the way in which liturgy actually transforms human lives. This should come as no surprise because liturgy is the central narrative form by which ethics is unfolded to a Christian community. What is perhaps surprising is the extent to which, in Christian reflection, narrative is so widely discussed outside its liturgical context.

6.1 From the Word to Action

In turning to the substantive analysis of the relationship between ethics and liturgy, the discussion will begin with the liturgy of the Word - the liturgical proclamation and exposition of Scripture⁸ - because it is the proclamation of the Gospel which is the

7 For the purposes of this discussion, 'worship' will be used to refer to public liturgical prayer and 'prayer' for private prayer. Obviously, there can be private prayer in the context of public worship. It should also be noted that the daily office represents an overlap of categories, being essentially private prayer which can be said in community.

8 O'Donovan expresses the concern that he is not sure whether he is 'on safe ground in declaring that preaching is a liturgical act' (O'Donovan, O., *Liturgy and Ethics*, Grove Books, Bramcote, Notts., 1993, p.7). He is, in fact, on safe ground, as Carol Norén makes clear in her excellent

epistemological foundation of a Christian ethic and the Christian life.

The liturgy of the Word begins its moral function by affirming and deepening a Christian's understanding of the Gospel's vision of reality. The narratives of the gospels play a central role in depicting that vision and providing the foundation for its exposition in sermons. The seasons of the Christian year and the lectionaries of the Church serve to expound the Gospel's vision in a systematic form so that each of the cycles of narratives receives due attention. Modern lectionaries, which have come as a response to biblical criticism's highlighting of the integrity of each gospel, ensure that the individual gospels are read separately and sequentially.⁹ In doing so, they also help to restore the narrative power of the gospels.¹⁰ The modern liturgical structure of the proclamation of the Word also places the New Testament narratives in a clear relationship to the other scriptural sources of the Old Testament, with their various literary forms, and to the Epistles, all of which contributes to building up the Christian vision of reality. In the liturgy of the Word, Scripture is not simply proclaimed in a systematic form it, is also expounded. It is in this exposition that Scripture can be located in relation to the broader theological description of reality to which it has given rise. This opportunity for exposition will enable the other forces shaping a modern theological description of reality, such as historical-critical knowledge, modern science, philosophy, encounters with other faiths and engagements with contemporary culture, to be applied in explaining the way in which Scripture illuminates reality and the way in which reality illuminates Scripture. From such a starting-point, ethics will not simply be biblical but theological.

After providing a general description of reality, the biblical narratives proclaimed in the liturgy serve to explain the very nature of morality and to offer a vision of the

treatment of the developing understanding of the relationship between preaching and liturgy within both the Catholic and Protestant churches; see Norén, C.M., 'The Word of God in Worship: Preaching in Relationship to Liturgy', in Jones, C., Wainwright, G., Yarnold, E., and Bradshaw, P. (eds), *The Study of Liturgy*, Revised Edition, SPCK, London, 1992, 31-51, especially, pp.34-42.

9 Raymond Brown, *Martin Darcy Lecture*, Oxford, 30 May 1996.

10 *Ibid.*

moral life.¹¹ Generally, as was observed in Chapter 4, stories point to the fundamental relationship between what people believe and do and who they are. Liturgy, therefore, is significant simply for making the telling of stories a defining practice of the Christian community. It is a practice which serves to sustain a Christian understanding of the person and with it a Christian understanding of the meaning of ethics itself as concerned with the transformation, sanctification or divinisation of both the individual and the community.¹² More specifically, biblical narratives offer a vision of what is involved in this process of transformation by portraying the unity of action, intention, belief and emotion which constitutes virtue. The Parable of the Prodigal Son is a good illustration. Not only does this narrative display the rightness of forgiving and the action which such forgiveness calls forth, it also reveals the place of emotion: 'while he was still far off his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him' (Lk 15:20). Narratives like this serve to teach people that virtue involves emotions consistent with right action, not a begrudging undertaking of duties. They provide paradigmatic displays of the unity of the moral life. Whatever problems may have to be overcome in moving from narratives to particular situations, these are not problems which arise in so far as narratives are teaching people the nature of the generic form of the moral life.

Following this general depiction of the nature of the moral life, a liturgical setting provides the opportunity for the relationship between this general vision of the moral life and the nature of its particular moral demands to be explored and unfolded. This liturgical starting-point is particularly significant given the argument which has been developed in previous chapters about the place of Scripture as the starting-point of moral deliberation. In Chapter 3, the logical demand that moral deliberation should

11 Philip Rossi makes a similar general point, although the primary focus of his discussion is the role of liturgy in enabling people to come to understand that the nature of their moral agency is not as wholly free autonomous agents but as free agents whose agency is shaped by being 'a response of praise to God as Creator and Lord' (Rossi, P.J., 'Narrative, Worship, and Ethics: Empowering Images for the Shape of Christian Moral Life', *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, 7 (1979), 239-248, p.239).

12 See s.4.2.

begin with the revelation in Scripture was drawn out.¹³ The nature of this demand was then clarified in Chapter 4, where it was argued the understanding of the nature and content of revelation in Scripture has developed over time and that the Church claimed to be the bearer of this deepening understanding of Scripture's meaning.¹⁴ It was then concluded that, if the Church's claim was accepted, then good practical reasoning demanded that moral deliberation should begin with its understanding. Thus, the Church's liturgical setting provides an especially appropriate context and opportunity for communicating its understanding of Scripture's truths.

Turning to the actual process of unfolding the general vision of morality by way of moral deliberation, it will be recalled that the key contribution of narrative theory to the first stage of this process was to highlight the importance of imagination for the discernment of new moral insights.¹⁵ Clearly, Scripture has a significant role to play in allowing its powerful stories, metaphors and parables to stimulate the moral imagination. A considerable advantage of the liturgical setting of Scripture is that it allows for such exercises of imagination far more readily than the cold context of academic exegesis. Liturgy also places Scripture within a framework of theological understanding which means that these exercises of the imagination are less likely to be flights of fancy and more likely to be shaped by theological sensitivities. It is the capacity of Scripture to exercise the imagination which leads O'Donovan to oppose those lectionaries which systematically edit out difficult passages which, it is feared, might 'put a strain on our moral imaginations'.¹⁶ For, 'it is precisely putting our moral imagination under strain, forcing us to come to terms with a vision that is not naturally our own, that teaches us to grow morally.'¹⁷ This observation by O'Donovan accords with the suggestion made in Chapter 4, that challenging stories

13 See s.3.3.3.

14 See s.4.3.3.

15 See s.4.3.1.

16 O'Donovan, *Liturgy*, p.12.

17 *Ibid.*

may have a particularly important role to play in stimulating the imagination to new morally relevant insights.¹⁸

In terms of unfolding the concrete content of moral meaning, O'Donovan - taking the work of Paul Ramsey as a starting-point - highlights, as the central theme of his work on liturgy and ethics, the importance of liturgy in providing the means and setting by which Christians can grow to understand the categories, concepts and processes which are involved in the task of Christian moral deliberation.¹⁹ In relation to the understanding of Christian ethical categories and concepts, however, it is Paul Ramsey who explains this essentially pedagogical function of liturgy with particular clarity. He observes that the categories and concepts used in Christian ethics, such as "covenant", love or *agape* must obviously be constantly nourished by liturgy, and the entirety of biblical narrative, or else it loses its meaning and becomes a mere "concept".²⁰ Developing Ramsey's position, O'Donovan argues that liturgy should also explain the basic functions and processes of Christian ethical thought. In order to do so, he argues, '[l]iturgy ... must follow ... [the] sequence of moral speech, from the articulation of basic categories into a moral vision, and then turning that vision in a kind of searchlight on the world'.²¹ While this claim might be true for structuring the exposition of the Word in preaching, in relation to the rest of liturgy it reverses the epistemological priority in which the Gospel's vision of reality, as it is articulated in liturgy, precedes ethics. Preaching is, however, O'Donovan's primary concern. For it is preaching which, he argues, is the moment in which the content of the basic categories of moral deliberation are unfolded because it 'has the task of structuring the way in which the people of God think about their active lives, making those lives a formed reference to God's activity'.²² Disciplined by this observation, O'Donovan suggests that preaching serves its function most effectively when it does not simply

18 See s.4.4.1.

19 O'Donovan, *Liturgy*, see especially, pp.4-11.

20 Ramsey, P., 'Liturgy and Ethics', *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, 7 (1979), 139-171, p.150, see also pp.160-162.

21 O'Donovan, *Liturgy*, p.6.

22 *Ibid.*, p.7.

make a point about living a Christian life but traces that proposition from Scripture, so that a congregation will take with them not simply the proposition but also an understanding of the path or process which leads to it.²³ Given the earlier discussions of the limitations as well as the advantages of the scriptural canon as a source for moral reflection,²⁴ it is in the process of tracing a proposition from Scripture that the analogical limits of narrative can be explored and that moral insights from beyond the narrative canon can be introduced. In the latter case, it should always be possible to establish some relationship between the canon and the new insights because, at the very least, the truthfulness of such insights will depend on their consistency with the general understandings which arise from the Gospel's vision of reality and the human condition. In such cases, the starting point for preaching will be the scriptural foundations of those dimensions of the vision which are most significant in shaping a person's capacity to recognise the 'new' insight.

While Hauerwas would probably be in substantial agreement with O'Donovan's description of the process of unfolding moral truth in terms of the focusing of moral vision, his primary vehicle for moving between Scripture and particular moral demands is narrative itself. Although Hauerwas' central reason for using narratives to unfold moral truth is his belief in the narrative character of moral convictions, it is also, in part, because of their power to communicate.²⁵ This function of narrative is worthy of some consideration because, if narratives are a particularly effective form of communication, they may prove to be an essential operational feature of a form of ethics which seeks to transform people's lives. In an essay on the concept of honour,

23 *Ibid.*, p.8.

24 See ss.4.3.2-4.3.3.

25 It is worth noting that, early in the recent discussion of the relationship between liturgy and ethics, it was Paul Ramsey who highlighted the effectiveness of the biblical narrative's capacity to communicate through liturgy:

Far more than any argument, it was surely the power of the Nativity Stories and their place in ritual and celebration and song that tempered the conscience of the West to its audacious effort to wipe out the practice of abortion and infanticide. As the hold of the stories over the minds and imaginations of millions upon millions of men and women recedes, it is clear that both abortion and infanticide are becoming "thinkable" again as permissible practices, even good. (Ramsey, 'Liturgy', p.162.)

Hauerwas highlights one of the key features of narrative which makes it such an effective form of communication:

"If you had to choose between recommending Barth or [Trollope's] *Dr Wortle's School* to a young person beginning to think about honour, which would you recommend?" I think that most of us would recommend Trollope for the very good reason that Trollope's people are real.²⁶

At one level then, narratives provide visions of the moral life *as actually lived*, thereby enabling listeners and readers more easily to relate the moral truth embodied in the narrative to their own lives.²⁷ However, as the discussion of the historically contingent quality of some narratives has highlighted,²⁸ narratives will not always function in this way. Biblical stories may, at times, appear remote from the lives of some modern people - although perhaps no more so than the characters of Victorian England in Trollope's novels. This presents a particular challenge for Hauerwas because the crucial part of the normative Christian narrative canon - the biblical stories - may lack some of the power which made approaching it as a narrative an attractive notion in the first place.

Hauerwas' sermons in *Unleashing the Scripture* provide a valuable insight into how this problem might be tackled. His key strategy is to employ stories to interpret stories. His reason for doing so seems to be to make the biblical stories he is preaching about appear more real. The form which these stories about stories take is a testament to the value of the narrative imagination in communicating truth, for they range from family anecdotes,²⁹ through the recounting of episodes from recent novels³⁰ and films,³¹ to the telling of stories about actual lives - his own³² and

26 Hauerwas, *Dispatches*, p.77.

27 Richard Bondi makes a similar point when he observes that, '[s]tories touch the heart because they, like it, are composed of memory and imagination and a yearning for union, in stories expressed as the movement toward a point of understanding' (Bondi, 'Character', p.214).

28 See s.4.4.2.

29 Hauerwas, *Scripture*, p.47.

30 For example, Anne Tyler's *Saint Maybe*, quoted by Hauerwas in *Scripture*, pp.68-69.

31 For example, George Lucas' *Star Wars*, quoted by Hauerwas in *Scripture*, p.99. As was noted earlier (in s.4.3.1), before widespread literacy the visual arts functioned as a form of narrative.

others³³ - and to the retelling of biblical stories in contemporary idiom.³⁴ The stories, on the whole, are not told as though they carried an independent moral meaning, but rather as a type of retelling of biblical stories with characters and settings that resonate with the lives of those listening. By telling these stories in the context of a sermon, Hauerwas invites the listener to invest the truth made 'real' by the contemporary story with the authority of the biblical story. None of Hauerwas' retellings, therefore, appear as replacements for the biblical story, nor as attempts exhaustively to convey the moral meaning of the biblical story. However much Hauerwas' moral analysis might stand in need of refinement in order to produce greater analytical precision, such refinement must allow room for his use of narratives to enable the Gospel to meet people in the particularity of their lives and to give them a transforming vision of the wholeness of life which it offers. Preaching, it appears, may be just the context for this use of narratives.

At this point, it is worth noting, not least because of its ecumenical significance, that some of Hauerwas' stories about stories are drawn from accounts of the lives of the saints. He calls, for example, upon the life of St. Thomas More, as depicted in Robert Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons*, as an illustration of the importance of hope as the foundation of the capacity of truth to transcend power.³⁵ Indeed, Hauerwas observes generally that '[o]ne role of the saints is to present us with a wider array of ethical possibilities than we would have had if left to our own devices'.³⁶ As explorations of what it means to live a life formed by the Gospel, the lives of the saints are a rich source of narratives for moral reflection.³⁷ Grisez, in fact, captures

Perhaps, in the increasingly post-literate age, the visual image, albeit of the moving variety, is once again playing that role. The weekly stories of America's much 'loved' Simpson family may be the Golden Legend of the 1990s.

32 Hauerwas, *Scripture*, pp.105-106.

33 *Ibid.*, pp.50-51.

34 *Ibid.*, p.51.

35 Hauerwas, *Existence*, pp.199-219.

36 Hauerwas, S. and Willimon, W.H., *Resident Aliens*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1989, p.102. See also, Hauerwas, *Kingdom*, p.71.

37 See, for example, Wilken, R., 'The Lives of the Saints and the Pursuit of Virtue', *First Things*, 8 (1990), 45-51.

their significance in an observation which Hauerwas could almost have made:

The Church canonizes saints partly in order to propose them as models. Their lives and writing are a storehouse of case studies of people not so different from us who - despite their errors, sins, and failures - on the whole splendidly followed Jesus. Studying the saints and looking to the example of holy people today often help one learn how to do specific things necessary to find moral truth ...³⁸

The celebration of saints' days, if they bring people to a greater awareness of these lives, would, at least from the perspective of moral growth, seem to have much to recommend it.

Lest Hauerwas' enthusiasm for the reworkings of biblical narratives be carried too far, it is worth observing that, while there is no doubting the value of such a move, one of the features of biblical stories which may be particularly valuable is their very distinctness from people's contemporary and daily situation. Such distinctness requires people to exercise their imagination and to gain the capacity sympathetically to identify and understand people very different from themselves in circumstances very different from their own. This capacity enhances a person's ability to understand the content of moral demands such as 'love your neighbour as your self' (Mk 12:31). The more clearly the neighbour and his circumstances can be imagined and empathised with, the more effectively they can be loved both as a matter of reason and emotion. In a television age which demands less and less of the imagination, there may be considerable value in calling people to seek to bridge the gap of history with their own imaginations.

For all the effectiveness of narratives in making the abstract concrete and in stimulating the imagination, the obvious should not be overlooked: good stories are memorable. The Parable of the Good Samaritan will always be more memorable than

38 Grisez, *Living*, p.252. See also, Grisez, *Principles*, p.665. Susan Wolf has sought to challenge the notion of saints as moral models in Wolf, S., 'Moral Saints', *Journal of Philosophy*, 79 (1982), 419-439. For a very effective reply to Wolf see Robert Adams, 'Saints', *Journal of Philosophy*, 81 (1984), 392-401.

an elaborate propositional definition as to who is a person's neighbour. The very form of the synoptic gospels - as collections of stories and parables which, although including a good number of propositional teachings, are organised around the defining story of the Passion narrative - bears witness to the significance of the memorable in communicating truth. Although not narrative in form, most of the propositional teachings of Jesus that are recorded have memorable forms built on sharp contrasts or carefully balanced repetitions. Presenting moral truth in memorable forms has a distinct value because, if it is to be useful in actually guiding people's lives, it must be re-memorable.

Having unfolded the meaning of the moral life, the liturgy of the Word plays a role in transforming people towards that vision of the moral life. At a communal level, the liturgy of the Word functions by drawing the gathered community's moral understanding towards a common vision. As it does so, the community will be increasingly capable of supporting its individual members as they seek to live by that vision. It was for this reason that Hauerwas argued that the Church's hermeneutic should be preferred to those of fundamentalism or biblical criticism. Only the Church's understanding could function to shape a community capable of supporting one another in living according to that vision.³⁹ Liturgy, in other words, is the hermeneutic mooring of a Christian ethic - it is the practice which ties the Church's moral vision to the community which it transforms.

At an individual level, the scriptural narratives proclaimed in the liturgy of the Word operate to shape the moral life by helping people to cultivate the emotions that are appropriate to moral action. Narratives, by displaying characters in concrete situations, enable readers and listeners imaginatively to identify with them. Identification with the characters and the challenges they face will often lead to emotional responses like compassion, indignation, joy, etc. In reading the book of Exodus, it is easy to feel the joy of liberation as Moses and the Israelites sing to the

39 See s.4.1.1.

Lord after having escaped through the Red Sea (Ex 15:1-18). Equally, it is possible to feel something of Moses' anger and frustration when, after all these trials, he comes down from Mount Sinai to find the people of Israel worshipping a golden calf (Ex 32). Clearly, it is not the simple evocation of emotion that is valuable, rather it is the narrative's capacity to reveal the appropriateness of those emotions. In the story of Moses coming down from the mountain, righteous anger at idolatry becomes the cause of sinfulness when it 'burned hot' and led Moses to disrespect God by throwing down the tablets and breaking them (Ex 32:19). Stories like these can function to teach people the appropriateness of emotional responses to situations. People are able to experience the emotional responses generated by a situation in a less intense form and with enough personal distance such that they can be guided by the narrative as to how to respond to those feelings. In this way, narratives function as a kind of moral vaccine: by mimicking real challenges they train a person how to respond.

The analogy of a vaccine is, however, inadequate in that it suggests that emotions are always negative forces to be checked and guarded against. Emotions - as has become clear - can also be very positive forces which impel people towards the good.⁴⁰ In this sense, narratives may function as moral steroids. Listening to the stories of Jesus' overwhelming compassion - in healing the unclean and the outcast and in mixing with sinners in order to save them - may well serve to broaden the category of people for whom compassion is felt. Part of the power of the Parable of the Good Samaritan is that it invites the listener, like the Samaritan, to be 'moved with pity' to help the man 'who fell into the hands of the robbers' (Lk 10:33, 30). Such stories can serve to encourage people to be open to the emotions of care and compassion and to understand that the appropriate response to them is action.

This transforming power of narratives suggests that the telling and retelling of morally significant narratives should be an important part of the lives of individuals and communities seeking to live the good life. While this operation of narratives could

40 See s.5.5.1.

occur outside the worshipping life of the Church, a liturgical setting can serve to heighten their transforming power, both by adding a sense of drama to them as they are proclaimed and by focusing a particular intensity of attention on the process of telling and listening. The liturgical introduction and conclusion to the reading of Scripture may help to open the listener to an awareness that a transforming experience is involved in the proclamation of the Word. The Uniting Church of Australia's responsorial introduction and conclusion to the reading of Scripture provides a particularly good illustration of such a liturgical setting. Based upon Psalm 115, the readings are introduced with 'Your Word, O Lord, is a lamp to my feet *and a light to my path*'; they are concluded with 'May your word live in us *and bear much fruit to your glory*'.⁴¹

Clearly then, the liturgical proclamation of the Word emerges as a defining form which affirms and deepens the world view from which Christian ethics arises; it shapes a person's understanding of the moral life; and, to a lesser extent, is a means by which her life is actually transformed.

6.2 From Worship to Action

While the liturgy of the Word is of considerable importance in shaping the form of a Christian ethic, the rest of liturgy should not be overlooked. For the gathering together, the administration of the sacraments and the sending forth of the people all function morally in similar and complementary ways to that of the liturgy of the Word, as, indeed, do prayer and meditation. Before proceeding any further with this discussion, it is necessary to heed Margaret Farley's warning that if liturgy is to have any effective ethical function there must not be a disjunction between Christian moral beliefs and liturgical worship such that those participating are alienated from it. For as she observes,

As long as the community of the church is divided by such things as racism, sexism, or classism; as long as worship reminds persons of that kind of division; as long as the structure of the church itself, and its

41 From the prayer book of the Uniting Church in Australia, *Uniting in Worship*, Joint Board of Christian Education, Melbourne, 1988, p.86.

worship, is not harmonized with its own best insights regarding justice and love, its liturgical life is wounded and dying. "I hear that when you gather for a meeting there are divisions among you" (1 *Corinthians* 11:18).⁴²

On the presumption that serious attention is paid to these issues, it is worth beginning the exploration of the moral operation of the rest of liturgy by observing that the affirmation and deepening of a Christian vision of reality is not just a key feature of the proclamation of the Word but a defining quality of *all* Christian worship.⁴³ The whole of Christian liturgy is infused with theological affirmations which are often formulated in the words of Scripture. The briefest of reflections upon some of the theological affirmations involved in the liturgy of a eucharistic service highlights this point.⁴⁴ In the modern Western tradition, these services begin with the gathering of the people in which the theological reality of the Church is affirmed. God's love and his role as creator are affirmed in prayers of adoration, the human condition is acknowledged in prayers of confession and God's grace is proclaimed in the declaration of forgiveness. The defining heart of the Christian faith is then affirmed in the saying of the creed, humanity's relationship to the goods of creation is set out in the words and actions of the offertory prayer, the acceptability of all to God is expressed in the giving of the peace, and the providential nature of God is attested to by prayers of intercession. Next, the origin and nature of the eucharist is set out in the eucharistic prayer. Finally, in the sending forth of the people the relationship between all of these affirmations and the Christian life is explicitly identified as the community is called to live out the Gospel. The Church of England's *Book of Common Prayer* makes this call particularly clear:

Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage, hold fast to that which is good; render to no man evil for evil; strengthen the

42 Farley, M.A., 'Beyond the Formal Principle: A Reply to Ramsey and Saliers', *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 7 (1979), 191-202, p.195.

43 Grisez observes generally that '[t]he liturgy ... teaches morality through the choice of readings, the prayers supplied by the Church, and so on' (Grisez, *Fulfillment*, p.319).

44 An excellent and succinct account of the relationship between the main elements of worship and the theological realities which they affirm is provided in Gribben, R., *A Guide to Uniting in Worship*, The Joint Board of Christian Education, Melbourne, 1990, pp.43-77.

fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honour all men; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit ...⁴⁵

As a participant in the liturgy, an individual is called to make and involve himself in all of these affirmations whether made by him, the choir or the person leading worship. There will be a significant value, especially in the modern Western world, in at least some of these affirmations being formulated in terms of the Church's liturgical tradition. The appropriate use of formulations, such as *Kyrie Eleison* in the prayers of confession, the *Gloria*, the *Te Deum*, the *Sanctus*, the *Benedictus* and the *Agnus Dei*, may serve to remind people that they belong to a tradition.⁴⁶ They will be a reminder to people that they belong to a community with a vision of reality - a world view - which is not simply the product of some modern autonomous will but which represents the evolving attempt of a historic community to understand reality as a whole in the light of a critical and unique divine disclosure.

Although the focus of the discussion so far has been upon the words of liturgy, it should also be emphasised that the sacramental moments in which spiritual realities are given material expression are important in affirming the Christian vision of reality because they enable people to perceive and participate materially in otherwise invisible aspects of that vision.⁴⁷ Not surprisingly, this is an aspect of the relationship between liturgy and ethics which Grisez seeks to highlight. In highlighting the importance of this relationship, Grisez first observes that '[p]eople cannot live a Christian life consistently unless they enjoy doing so, and no one will enjoy living the Christian life without nurturing hope [in God's role in realising the Kingdom]'.⁴⁸ This

45 Church of England, *Book of Common Prayer* (with Additions and Deviations Proposed in 1928), Oxford University Press, London, 1928.

46 See also Rossi, who argues that the Church's 'living heritage' of communal worship serves as a corrective to the view that people live 'in essential and irremediable isolation from history, from community, and ... from God' (Rossi, p.245 and p.244).

47 It is not intended here to draw a hard and fast line between Word and Sacrament for, as Carol Norén observes, preaching (and for that matter any public prayer) can be sacramental 'in that through the proclamation of the word God not only disclosed himself, but also effects a change in the recipient' (Norén, p.42).

48 Grisez, *Living*, p.87.

hope will be nurtured by participation in the Sacrament of the eucharist:

Since the Eucharist makes the kingdom present and provides a foretaste of it, devout participation in the Eucharist especially intensifies hope. Intense hope gives Christian life a characteristic balance of tranquillity and energy.⁴⁹

In addition to liturgical worship, with its dimensions of both Word and Sacrament, private prayer and meditation upon sources of Christian understanding can be very important for deepening a Christian vision of reality because they provide the opportunity by which a person can find ways of understanding how this vision makes sense in her particular situation. Daily prayer and meditation are crucial means of keeping these beliefs at the forefront of a person's reflective life because these practices invite people to understand what it means to uphold their beliefs in the face of both the challenges and the mundanities of daily life. Grisez particularly emphasises this feature of daily prayer and meditation in a continuation of his argument for the importance of Christians sustaining the hope (or, more generally, their vision of reality) which enables them to live a Christian life. He observes that,

Hope [or a Christian vision of reality] easily is weakened by forgetfulness of these truths [about the nature of God and his relationship to creation] and failure to give them explicit, real, and heartfelt assent ... To prevent this, one not only should use the short formulae of acts of hope, but should meditate on relevant passages of Scripture and the lives of the saints, and often engage in informal individual and communal meditation on the relevant truths of faith.⁵⁰

Grisez goes on to argue that intercessory prayers play a special role in sustaining a Christian vision of reality because 'prayers of petition serve to spell out hope in detail, and to place the particular cares of one's life and times in the context of God's all-embracing plan and ultimate purpose'.⁵¹ In other words, prayers of petition focus a person's mind upon, first, the fact that the Kingdom is, in part, realised in history, secondly, upon what this realisation involves and, thirdly, upon God's role in this

49 *Ibid.*

50 *Ibid.*, p.88.

51 *Ibid.*

process. This process of reflection will assist a person to approach life as a cooperative participation with God in the task of realising the Kingdom.

At this point, it is appropriate to turn from the role of liturgy in sustaining a general Christian vision of reality to its function of articulating the nature of the moral life which arises from that vision. While the liturgy of the Word is central to the task of depicting the nature of the moral life, the other elements of liturgical worship will also often serve an important, if less dramatic, catechetical function. They perform this function by enriching people's moral understanding of the nature and implications of the particular acts in which they are participating. O'Donovan draws attention to this catechetical role of liturgy with his suggestion that the making of commitments, such as marriage and baptism, provides an appropriate moment for the expression of a full and accurate account of the moral categories which are related to those commitments and the way in which they should shape the lives of those making them.⁵² He considers, for example, that the declaration of the purposes of marriage in the Church of England's *Alternative Service Book* is 'a memorable piece of marriage catechetics'.⁵³ In a very similar vein, Vigen Guroian, an Orthodox ethicist who has written insightfully on the relationship between ethics and liturgy, observes of baptism that,

The Eastern rite of baptism abound with Scriptural narrative and imagery, setting the Christian *kerygma* in such a context of activity and symbolism that there is no doubt as to what sort of people Christians ought to be and by what standards Christians are to engage the world. Most importantly these baptismal rites keep in clear perspective the fact that Christian ethics is a discipline of discipleship for the Kingdom.⁵⁴

This catechetical function of liturgy can also operate in a reflexive form, as

52 O'Donovan, *Liturgy*, pp.9-11.

53 *Ibid.*, p.11. O'Donovan does note, however, that this statement overlooks the third purpose of marriage as a remedy against sin which he suggests could, helpfully, have been positively formulated as 'the power of marriage to provide a sanctifying and disciplining structure for individual holiness' (*ibid.*). See also Ramsey ('Liturgy', pp.152-160) on the morally rich liturgies for marriage and remarriage in the Eastern Orthodox Church.

54 Guroian, 'Worship', p.336.

O'Donovan observes when he points out that the writing of intercessions can provide a valuable opportunity for the exercise of practical ethical reflection because it requires people to clarify all the issues which are involved with the concerns of their prayer.⁵⁵

Having provided the setting in which a Christian's world view is deepened and a vision of the moral life is depicted, the worshipful, sacramental and prayerful life then provides an important form for transforming the moral life towards that vision.⁵⁶ This transformation begins with the very act of worship or prayer itself. For prayer, Hauerwas suggests, requires that a person learn to be humble:

To learn to pray means we must acquire humility not as something we try to do, but as commensurate with the practice of prayer. In short, we do not believe, become humble, and then learn to pray but in learning to pray we humbly discover that we cannot do other than believe in God.⁵⁷

Once involved in the Christian tradition of worship and prayer, a person participates in a series of inter-related practices which provide the opportunity for making character-forming choices and commitments. Grisez highlights this function of worship and prayer when he observes that '[a]cts of prayer are human acts by which one fulfils and determines oneself'.⁵⁸ To begin with, it is worship which provides the setting for the life-transforming commitments of baptism, confirmation, marriage and ordination.⁵⁹ What is more, worship not only provides the setting for the making of

55 O'Donovan, *Liturgy*, pp.14-15.

56 D.E. Saliers, in an article which draws on the early work of Hauerwas, argues that participation in liturgy forms Christian affections and virtue (Saliers, D.E., 'Liturgy and Ethics: Some New Beginnings', *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 7 (1979), 173-189). However, as Margaret Farley as rightly observes, albeit with a small measure of over-generalisation, 'though the assertion of the internal connection between liturgy and the development of Christian character or virtue seems to me to be accurate, and a necessary insight, Saliers does not go on to specify how the human spirit may be touched and awakened and formed by participation in liturgical prayer' (Farley, p.192).

57 Hauerwas, *Christendom*, p.108. David Tripp has also suggested that the very 'open admission of social and personal need' in prayer is part of what 'is required for any move toward fuller health' (Tripp, D.H., 'Liturgy and Pastoral Service', in Jones *et al.*, 565-590, p.584).

58 Grisez, *Principles*, p.708.

59 It may be that there is a need within the Church explicitly to recognise liturgically other commitments, especially vocational commitments of various forms, which people make within the context of their Christian belief and which are supported by Christian affirmations. The Iona

these commitments, it also enables the beliefs which make sense of, and support, them to be made fully present, both to the person(s) making those commitments and to the community which will affirm and support a person or couple in keeping them. One of the central phrases of the Roman rite of confirmation usefully highlights this integral relationship, in this case between the commitments embodied in the choice to be confirmed and a belief in the Holy Spirit:

The promised strength of the Holy Spirit which you are to receive will make you more like Christ and help you to be a witness to his suffering, death and resurrection. It will strengthen you to be an active member of the Church and to build up the Body of Christ in faith and love.⁶⁰

In this proclamation, the commitments to live a Christ-like life, to witness to the Gospel and to build up the Church are set in the context of a belief in the support of the Holy Spirit which makes choosing these challenging commitments more intelligible. This dimension of the relationship between liturgy and ethics in which life-transforming commitments are made is very effectively summarised by Vigen Guroian when, in writing about the Armenian baptismal rite, he places it in its proper sacramental context:

[t]he actions and words of this rite bestow upon persons (ontologically) and call them (ethically) to a certain disposition of character which, if they consciously strive to cultivate it within themselves, mark them off radically from the selfishness, pride, vengefulness, will to power, and violence of this fallen world ...⁶¹

Having made these commitments worshipfully, prayer then provides a central opportunity for the making of those individual moral choices which help to fulfil these general commitments. Of particular importance for the realisation of all

community has developed a liturgy for what they call 'An Act of Commitment Service' which represents the application of this notion to commitments made to living a more fully Christian life following a period of retreat; see, *The Iona Community Worship Book*, Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow, 1991, pp.44-45. The Methodist tradition of an annual covenant service, whereby the members of the congregation renew their covenant to make God's will their will, also includes a vocational dimension which could likewise be made more prominent to help fulfil this function of worship.

60 *The Sunday Missal* (New Edition), Collins, London, 1984, pp.309-310.

61 Guroian, 'Worship', p.343.

commitments - especially the very general commitments of baptism - will be personal prayers of confession⁶² and the Sacrament of reconciliation (or penance, as Grisez prefers to call it). In fact, Grisez regards the Sacrament of penance as so central to the formation of character that he even goes so far as to claim that it is 'a principle of the whole of a Christian life'.⁶³ In these prayerful choices, a person confesses a particular act(s) as wrong, seeks forgiveness for having committed it and for the harm which has flowed from it, and then makes the choice not to do the wrong again. By placing these choices within a prayerful and/or sacramental context, the nature of wrongful choices and their remedy is fully recognised. All the effects of such choices are identified - the harm done to others, the impact on the self and the alienation from the divine which flows from wrongdoing. Importantly, the primary means by which a person is reconciled with others and with God is also recognised in the request for forgiveness. Finally, the means by which wrongful choices are to be avoided in future is identified by the individual seeking the strength to live rightly by placing himself within the love of God that is offered in the blessing of the penitent. In a move which Hauerwas would applaud, Grisez also observes that the Sacrament of reconciliation highlights the fact that the 'Christian life is not a lonely struggle for sanctity which concerns only oneself' but is an essentially communal task in which the Church supports its members in their quest to live the Christian life, in this case by its ordained ministers administering the Sacrament of reconciliation.⁶⁴

In the unfolding of commitments through individual choices, prayers of intercession are moments worthy of particular note because they are an important part of what is involved in the over-arching Christian commitment to participate in the realisation of God's Kingdom. A choice to pray for the needs of a person or a community is a choice to care for them - perhaps by the only means available. As with any other

62 These forms of prayer and Sacrament should be distinguished from the liturgical act of confession in Western eucharistic services. The latter is essentially a theological affirmation of people's estrangement from God and their need to be reconciled by his forgiveness.

63 Grisez, *Principles*, p.771. Also, see more generally, *ibid.*, pp.771-774, and Grisez, *Living*, pp.209-216.

64 Grisez, *Principles*, p.773.

choice, it will shape a person's character. In so shaping a person's character, it will also prepare them for practical action should the occasion arise because, as O'Donovan observes, '[c]ommitting ourselves to pray for things is surely at the heart of committing ourselves to act'.⁶⁵

Once character forming choices and commitments are made, worship and prayer then facilitate the individual in seeking to bring a unity between these choices and commitments and the rest of her being. Worship and prayer are able to perform this function by helping to form the beliefs which shape the emotions appropriate to the intention involved in making both choices and commitments.⁶⁶ At a general level, participation in liturgy and personal prayer and reflection operates to integrate Christian beliefs about the nature of reality into a person's general vision of reality and her experiences of life. The more these beliefs become integrated into a person's understanding, the greater will be their effect on transforming her emotions. In the Western world, where many Christians probably live outside a community which affirms a Christian vision of reality, the Church's liturgical life will be a very important focus for affirming that vision. This role of prayer in recasting the beliefs which transform a person provides at least a partial explanation for Grisez's observation that, '[p]rayer brings God's revelation to bear upon all one's thinking and even upon the non-intellectual process and the subconscious'.⁶⁷ In the case of specific decisions, the statement of general beliefs made when various commitments are undertaken in a liturgical context helps to complete those commitments by aiding the integration of those emotions appropriate to the choices being made. At confirmation in mainstream Western rites, for example, the traditional invocation of the sevenfold graces of the Holy Spirit as enumerated in Isaiah 11:2 may aid in bringing forth the emotions of trust and courage which are appropriate to the commitments being made.

65 O'Donovan, *Liturgy*, p.14.

66 It is worth noting that Grisez suggests that emotions can be transformed by faith, although he provides few details of the nature of this process (*Living*, pp.278-279, 281). The present account could usefully complement these brief observations.

67 Grisez, *Principles*, p.705.

The opportunity for the bringing of unity to a person's being through prayer also extends beyond the emotions to dealing with the temptations generated by sensations. Here it is necessary to recall Patricia Jung's essential insight that the imagination operates to shape the possibilities for moral choice by positing the means of satisfying various sensation-driven desires.⁶⁸ The task of moral reflection, therefore, is to equip the individual with an imagination which posits morally acceptable means by which such desires can be satisfied. Within a person's prayer life, the appropriate opportunity for the development of these particular imaginative resources may well be in the context of a prayer of confession - though not necessarily as part of it because no sin may have occurred. Prayers of confession will be times when a person is reflecting on the moral quality of his recent behaviour. This sort of reflection is liable to lead to the recalling not just of sins but also of temptations to sin. Once this has occurred, sins can be confessed and images to counter temptations meditated upon. This is the moment when, for example, the tiredness which a person finds results in his being unpleasant to those around him might be reflected upon and images of the satisfaction coming from being peaceable meditated upon to replace the images of the satisfaction arising from sharp responses to minor provocations.

Prayer not only provides the opportunity to seek to reshape problematic imaginative responses but also to sustain and develop the positive dimensions of a person's moral imagination. It is here that prayers of thanksgiving will play a significant role because they are a regular opportunity for a person imaginatively to recall the satisfaction brought by the good in which she has participated. The more carefully a person reflects on all the different aspects of the good in which she has participated, the more the satisfaction brought by the good will be understood and appreciated. In this respect, a person with a rich theory of the good, such as Grisez or O'Donovan provide, will be much more alive to the reality of the good than those with a more denuded account, especially if, as is the case with Grisez's and O'Donovan's accounts, many of these goods will be realised in the apparent mundanities of daily

life. It is also worth recalling that the realisation of basic goods will bring both human fulfilment and the various forms of emotional satisfaction appropriate to the realisation of these goods.⁶⁹ For example, a person recalling the kindness of a friend will remember the emotions associated with the harmony between people which she experiences in this friendship and the emotion of gratitude with which she responded to that kindness. By reflecting upon both of these dimensions of the realisation of the good, a person will be aided in understanding the way in which the pursuit of the good involves the whole self.

Beyond prayer, traditional devotional disciplines can also play an important role in helping a person to cultivate the imaginative resources which provide her with the knowledge of her power to master sensations. The discipline of fasting, for example, is one way of acquiring such resources. Through the practice of fasting, the individual comes to know of her capacity to resist satisfying the sensation of hunger by the obvious means of eating. More significantly, she comes to know that denying the satisfaction of a particular sensation can be the worthwhile price of realising some other good, perhaps, in this case of fasting, harmony with God through adherence to religious practice. The individual may well be able to generalise these experiences so that when faced with other sensations, for example fatigue, she will be confident of her capacity to endure them and will know that the satisfaction which will result - for example, from producing work for some deadline - will be worth the discomfort. Practices which help control the emotions need not, however, be restricted to traditional forms. Jung, for example, has noted that '[e]xercise epitomizes the ability of all forms of habitual, physical activity to numb progressively the irritation and potentially incapacitating power of emotions'.⁷⁰ It may be that, within a modern lifestyle which has embraced the health-related aspects of exercise, it could also be treated as a form of spiritual exercise. This would indeed be muscular Christianity! At the same time, it is important to recognise that, from the perspective of moral

69 See s.5.5.2.

70 Jung, 'Sanctification', p.85.

improvement, all of these ascetic practices are not ends in themselves, for there is no delighting in the discomfort.

The final dimension of the relationship between prayer and the moral life is that prayer is part of the pursuit of harmony with that greater-than-human source of meaning and value which Christians know as God - as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. '[P]rayer', as Grisez observes, 'is necessary for our side of the relationship of revelation and faith'.⁷¹ For a Christian, this means that participation in prayer is an integral part of the call to human wholeness. Hauerwas goes even further, arguing that '[w]orship, at least for Christians, is the activity to which all our skills are ordered. That is why there can be no separation of Christian morality from Christian worship'.⁷² Worship, in other words, is not just one activity among many, rather it is the activity in which humans look for the completion of all that they are. Put simply, the God who is approached in worship is the God who is recognised both as the origin and the fulfilment of the life of faith, which, for the Christian, is nothing less than the moral life itself.

6.3 An Ecumenical Ethic as the Common Task of the Church

From this discussion of the relationship between worship and ethics, it emerges that liturgy and private prayer play a defining role in a Christian community in affirming and deepening the world view from which Christian ethics arises, in enriching a person's understanding of the moral life and, finally, in actually transforming it towards the image of human wholeness which is presented in the gospels and the life of the Church. This liturgical framework is not simply the appropriate perspective from which to view the complementary operation of Hauerwas' narrative ethic and a Christian realist ethic, it is the perspective from which it *must* be viewed if the last of the general tensions between these two approaches is to be resolved satisfactorily. Before the introduction of this liturgical perspective, although the fundamental

71 Grisez, *Principles*, p.707. See, for example, Lk 18:1: 'Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart'.

72 Hauerwas, *Christendom*, p.108.

tensions as to the nature of moral truth and the place of character in moral analysis had been resolved, the tension between narrative and rules as potentially conflicting forms of moral analysis would appear to have been settled in favour of principles and rules, to the neglect of Hauerwas' insistence on the centrality of narrative. However, with the recognition of worship as *the* central practice of the Christian community, it should be possible to accommodate the claims of both narrative and propositional forms of ethics. In the liturgy of the Word, the narratives of the community are *first* proclaimed in a context which respects the integrity of their narrative form. With the simplest of introductions, from a position sometimes symbolically at the heart of the gathering and from a book which is treated with reverence, the biblical narratives are simply read. The power they have *as narratives* is left uninterpreted. After that, in a liturgically appropriate sermon of the kind which O'Donovan suggests should be normative,⁷³ the story is explained, quite possibly with the help of further narratives, and related to other propositional claims which might bear upon it. This means that narratives are able to stand simply as narratives, witnessing to the community's vision of reality and its general moral values. In the light of such a vision, propositions can then be employed to articulate or enrich that understanding with concepts and knowledge not contained in the canonical narratives, while principles and rules can be used to specify what it means, in concrete terms and in the face of challenging questions, to live in accordance with those values. The rest of worship comes as an affirmation of, and response to, this understanding of reality which arises from the liturgical proclamation of the Gospel. If the integrity of the liturgy is respected, it will discipline the theologian and ethicist to ensure both that the fundamental narrative form of the community's beliefs is respected and that ethics is done theologically. In this sense, the theology and ethics of the Church should have a liturgical or worshipful form. This liturgical perspective on theology and ethics will almost necessarily ensure that the central claim of narrative theology, at least of the variety to which Hauerwas subscribes, is respected:

73 For a similar affirmation by a leading liturgist see White, J.F., *Introduction to Christian Worship*, Revised Edition, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1990, pp.157-158.

that whenever the theologian makes propositional statements she must consciously and continuously strive to keep those statements in intimate contact with the narratives which gave rise to those convictions, within which they gain their sense and meaning, and from which they have been abstracted.⁷⁴

The form of liturgy, therefore, is not simply the way in which Christian ethics should be unfolded to a community, it is the form of Christian moral reasoning itself. Once the task of Christian moral reasoning is set in this liturgical context, it becomes clear that it is a task which belongs to the Church because, for Christians, worship is a communal activity. If the Christian vision of reality and its moral implications are to be articulated communally, they will have to be determined communally. It is at this point that an ecumenical dialogue about ethics reaches the limits of its discussion. To go further would be to plunge into the depths of ecclesiological disagreement from which little progress is likely to be made. These disagreements about the nature of the Church and its authority can, however, be set to one side when it is recognised that - whoever is discerning the Church's moral vision and with whatever authority they believe they are doing it - the task itself is a common one. The whole discussion of this thesis has been an attempt to make progress on the project of determining the essential structure of this common task in the hope that Christians may, at the very least, come to be united in and by a common form of life.

74 Goldberg, p.35. Goldberg's emphasis has been removed.

Appendix A

Comparison of Grisez's and Finnis' Accounts of the Basic Principles of Practical Reasonableness

Grisez's Modes of Responsibility

The first mode is, '*One should not be deterred by felt inertia from acting for intelligible goods*' (Principles, p.205).

The second mode is, '*One should not be pressed by enthusiasm or impatience to act individualistically for intelligible goods*' (p.206).

The third mode is, '*One should not choose to satisfy an emotional desire except as part of one's pursuit and/or attainment of an intelligible good other than the satisfaction of desire itself*' (p.208).

The fourth mode is, '*One should not choose to act out of an emotional aversion except as part of one's avoidance of some intelligible evil other than the inner tension experienced in enduring that aversion*' (p.210).

The fifth mode is, '*One should not, in response to different feelings toward different persons, willingly proceed with a preference for anyone unless the*

Finnis' Basic Requirements of Practical Reasonableness

'(5) [P]ursue one's general commitments with creativity and do not abandon them lightly' (All these requirements are listed in *Fundamentals*, p.75).¹

'(2) [D]o not leave out of account, or arbitrarily exaggerate, any of the basic human goods'.²

'(1) [H]ave a harmonious set of orientations, purposes and commitments'. More simply, one should have a coherent life plan'.³ Also the following principles:

'(4) [D]o not attribute to any particular project the overriding and unconditional significance which only a basic human good and a general commitment can claim'.⁴

'(8) [F]oster the common good of your communities'.⁵

'(9) [D]o not act contrary to your conscience, i.e. against your best judgement about the implications for your actions of these requirements or practical reasonableness and the moral principles they generate'.⁶ Also principles: (1), (2), (5), (8).

'(5) [P]ursue one's general commitments with creativity and do not abandon them lightly'.⁷ Also principles: (1) and (9).

'(3) Do not leave out of account, or arbitrarily discount or exaggerate the goodness of other people's participation in human goods'.⁸

preference is required by intelligible goods themselves' (p.211).

The sixth mode is, '*One should not choose on the basis of emotions which bear upon empirical aspects of intelligible goods (or bads) in a way which interferes with a more perfect sharing in the good or avoidance of the bad*' (p.214).

The seventh mode is, '*One should not be moved by hostility to freely accept or choose the destruction, damaging, or impeding of an intelligible human good*' (p.215).

The eighth mode is, '*One should not be moved by a stronger desire for one instance of an intelligible good to act for it by choosing to destroy, damage, or impede some other instance of an intelligible good*' (p.216).

Endnote:

* As Finnis notes, Grisez's modes of responsibility are conceived as requirements necessary 'for securing reasonableness against the distortions introduced into choice by the demands of emotion, feeling and the like' (Finnis, *Fundamentals*, p.76).

'(6) [D]o not waste your opportunities by needlessly inefficient methods, and do not overlook the foreseeable bad consequences of your choices'.⁹

'(7) [D]o not choose directly against any basic human good'.¹⁰

'(7) [D]o not choose directly against any basic human good'.

Endnotes:

Conditions of Human Life and Dimensions of Human Nature to which Finnis' Basic Requirements of Practical Reasonableness Respond

- 1 Responds to: (i) the condition that human life is limited by finite amounts of time and personal energy; (ii) the condition that human life is subject to changing circumstances, including the possibility of unpredictable (highly) disruptive events; and, (iii) that each person is unique in terms of her skills, capacities and circumstances.
- 2 Responds to the facts which arise from human nature: (i) that there are a range of incommensurably valuable goods which humans can pursue; and, (ii) that each person is unique in terms of her skills, capacities and circumstances.

- 3 Responds to: (i) the condition that human life is limited by finite amounts of time and personal energy; (ii) the condition that human life is subject to changing circumstances, including the possibility of unpredictable (highly) disruptive events; and, (iii) that each person is unique in terms of her skills, capacities and circumstances.
- 4 Responds to: (i) the condition that human life is limited by finite amounts of time and personal energy; (ii) the condition that human life is subject to changing circumstances, including the possibility of unpredictable (highly) disruptive events; and, (iii) that each person is unique in terms of her skills, capacities and circumstances.
- 5 Responds to the condition of human life that the realisation of many worthwhile goals will require co-operation between people.
- 6 Responds to the fact of human nature that it is possible to pursue harmony between different dimensions of the person, in this case, between outward action, reason and feelings.
- 7 Responds to: (i) the condition that human life is limited by finite amounts of time and personal energy; (ii) the condition that human life is subject to changing circumstances, including the possibility of unpredictable (highly) disruptive events; and, (iii) that each person is unique in terms of her skills, capacities and circumstances.
- 8 Responds to the fact that all humans share a common nature.
- 9 Responds to the condition of human life that material resources are limited and that different instantiations of human goods are incommensurable.
- 10 Arises from the very nature of practical reason itself, which is to direct people toward integral human fulfilment.

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