CHAPTER ONE

THE FOUNDATIONAL CATEGORIES OF HAUERWAS' ETHICS

> Moralities are like languages. We are born into them
> and we must learn them if we are to communicate
> and have relationship with others. Like languages,
> moralities embody ancient and living social processes.
> We do not invent them by our individual choices.
> Instead, by learning them we take our part in a particular tradition
> which long preceded us and which will continue long after we are no longer here.[1]

Introduction

The present chapter is an attempt to understand the foundational categories - narrative and character - of Stanley Hauerwas' ethics and their roles in moral person's life. According to Hauerwas, each community has its own narrative which leads to the moral character formation of its members. Faithfulness to the truthful narrative paves the way for a well-formed character. In this way, Hauerwas would argue that narrative and character significantly contribute to ethical life. This chapter is meant as a preparatory step and foundational stone in exploring the ecclesial ethics envisioned by Hauerwas as his profound interest in Christian narrative and character was originated from the basic ethical categories of narrative and character. This necessitates it to explore in detail the role of narrative and character in ethical life, to investigate how the categories of narrative and character contribute to an adequate and integral ethical life.

Having mentioned the main thrust of the discussion of the current chapter, we divide the present chapter into eight sections. The first section of the chapter concentrates on Hauerwas' dissatisfaction with "the standard account of moral rationality."[2] Hauerwas develops the category of narrative in ethics because of his discontent with the standard account of moral rationality. The second section briefly deals with the role of narrative in ethics. By this, our concern is to understand what Hauerwas means by narrative. In the third section, we investigate how, according to Hauerwas, the category of narrative contributes to an adequate and integral ethical life. The fourth section briefly analyses the meaning of character according to Hauerwas. The fifth section explores how Hauerwas' category of character contributes to ethical life. The sixth section deals with

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[1] Jonathan Sacks, *Faith in the Future*, introd. Clifford Longley (London: Darton, 1995) 66.

[2] The standard account of moral rationality is the name that Hauerwas gives to the normative theories of ethics. Morality (moral judgements and agreements), according to this theory, is built upon universal rational principles which are applicable to all human beings by their rational nature. Once some principles are found universally true, it is also true in particular cases. So the same universal norms are valid for all situations, according to the standard account of moral rationality, and these can be applied in every particular case in morality. This theory of ethics is

the relation between self and community in character formation. The seventh section briefly concentrates on the issue of character and decision-making in Hauerwas. In the eighth and final section, we critically evaluate Hauerwas' ethics of narrative and character respectively.

1 Hauerwas' Dissatisfaction with the Standard Account of Moral Rationality

Hauerwas is dissatisfied with the standard account of morality. For, according to him, it seeks a foundation in ethics which is reliable and unchanging. For Hauerwas, ethics should be done by taking into consideration the particular histories of the communities. The narrative of the community gives its members orientation regarding who they should be(come), which according to Hauerwas is the task of ethics rather than what they should do.

The standard account of moral rationality insists that moral judgement must come into existence as a result of an impersonal rationality.[3] Moral judgement must be based on a non-personalistic attitude and as a result it includes no special argument from the agent's particular history and community identification. Rather, "the language of moral assertions is intended to be 'objective.' Moral assertions appear to refer to an external set of moral truths that are universally true."[4] The standard account of moral rationality always tries to separate moral behaviour from the discretionary and the contingent nature of the agent's beliefs, dispositions and character.[5] It seeks for certainty, which constitutes the basis of ethics in the midst of perplexities of pluralism and particularity.[6] Hauerwas and David Burrell, assessing this theory say that according to this theory, moral life must be liberated from the peculiarities of agents captured in the limit of their particular histories.[7] The standard account of moral rationality holds that there are basic moral principles and procedures to which a person is logically or conceptually committed when engaged in moral action or judgement. It assumes that objectivity in moral life will be attained only by freeing moral judgements from the subjective story of

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also known as quandary ethics, which holds that the duty of ethics is to provide a solution to every moral problem and help the moral persons arrive at moral decisions in the face of moral dilemmas.

[3] Stanley Hauerwas & David Burrell, "From System to Story: An Alternative Pattern for Rationality in Ethics," *Truthfulness and Tragedy*: *Further Investigations into Christian Ethics*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas, Richard Bondi, David Burrell (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1977) 15-39, 16. See also Sarah Conly, "The Objectivity of Morals and the Subjectivity of Agents," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (1985) 275-286, 276.

[4] Ian S. Markham, *Plurality and Christian Ethics*, New Studies in Christian Ethics 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1994) 160.

[5] Hauerwas & Burrell, "From System to Story," 16.

[6] Gerard F. Heeley, *The Ethical Methodology of Stanley Hauerwas*: *An Examination of Christian Character Ethics* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Pontificia Universitas Lateranensis, Rome, 1987) 2.

[7] Hauerwas & Burrell, "From System to Story," 17.

the agent. It is an attempt to free morality from historic communities and traditions.[8] Alasdair MacIntyre also analyses the normative theories of ethics. He says:

> Detachment from and disinterestedness towards all social particularity and positivity is thus a defining mark of morality. It follows that morality can be formulated and understood independently of any considerations, which arise from highly specific forms of social structure. Ignorance of sociology and history will not be a defect in the student of morality as such. But what then of those areas of human life in which the regulation of conduct requires the framing of rules which specify how institutionalized relationships of physicians, nurse and patient, of lawyer, client and judge, of elected public officials to civil servants and to the public? The answer according to the dominant standpoint is that the rules of morality as such have to be *applied* to this kind of socially and institutionally specific rules. The academic discipline of *ethics as such,* which enquires into the nature of morality as such, has to be supplemented by the discipline of *applied ethics*.[9]

So beyond rationality, he too emphasizes the need of taking into consideration the importance of history and the special circumstance of persons in morality.

The standard account of moral rationality seeks rationality as a trustworthy source. For it, the autonomy of life, with rational principles, forms the foundation and purpose of the moral agent. In the making of objective norms, it avoids any particular determination so that it can provide a universal and credible morality. In the words of Heeley, "the standard account advocates a rational position which establishes universal objective norms which all people are to follow regardless of particular determination by their history, culture, religious beliefs and personal experience."[10] This type of morality, in Hauerwas' view, had its foundation in the ethical thinking of Immanuel Kant.[11] Hauerwas says: "He [Kant] sought to guarantee the 'autonomy' of morality by grounding morality neither in religious or metaphysical beliefs, nor in any empirical account of humanity, but in rationality *qua* rationality."[12] According to the standard account of moral rationality, the principles of universalizability must be the norm of moral principles that everyone must admit irrespective of his/her status, distinct biographical history, or the commitments and beliefs s/he holds.[13] So this type of ethical

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[8] Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Towards a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1994) 97.

[9] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Does Applied Ethics Rest on a Mistake," *The Monist* 67, no. 4 (1984) 498-513, 499.

[10] Heeley, *The Ethical Methodology of Stanley Hauerwas*, 9.

[11] Thanks to the limitations of the space, we do not enter into a discussion regarding the sources and specific characteristics of this kind of morality. In this direction, see, Mark Johnson, *Moral Imagination: Implications of Cognitive Science for Ethics* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1993) 22-26, 81-82, 110-120, 126-146, 218-251. The name Jenson gives to the standard account of moral rationality is moral law folk theory.

[12] Stanley Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1983) 10-11. While observing that Kant approached morality in rationalistic perspective, we are aware of the recent attempts to present Kant more subtle and less formalistic showing Kant's concern for moral feeling, virtue and integrity. See, Andrew Reath, "Kant's Theory of Moral Sensibility," *Kant-Studien* 80, no. 3 (1989) 284-302, Robert Louden, "Kant's Virtue Ethics," *Philosophy* 61, no. 238 (1986) 473-489 and Henning Jensen, "Kant and Moral Integrity," *Philosophical Studies* 57, no. 2 (1989) 193-205. For this, we are indebted to Johnson, *Moral Imagination*, 66.

[13] Stanley Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue: Essays in Christian Ethical Reflection* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1989) 85.

theory strives to defend any particular judgement by appeal to universal rules or principles to which any intelligent living being coheres.[14]

Hauerwas traces the dominant characteristics of this ethical theory as follows. First, it stresses on freedom, autonomy and the choice as the essence of the moral life. Secondly, it attempts to secure a foundation for the moral life unhampered by the contingencies of our histories and communities.[15] The freedom of moral individuals is always wide-opened so that they can prevent any determination from outside. By this they can always keep their options open in moral matters. So this theory insists on a foundation avoiding historical contingencies that can promise the accessibility of such freedom for the agent. The standard account of moral rationality looks for principles that are valid for all people because of their rational nature.

The standard account of moral rationality, also known as quandary ethics, is mainly concerned with moral problems and aims at giving solutions to the particular moral problems that individuals face in daily lives. It reflects upon the problem and arrives at a solution by way of a decision. Decision-making is its prime task. Quandary ethics concerns itself only with the aspect of decision-making. For it, the ultimate relevance of ethics is the resolution of the problematic situations into which s/he falls. Here, moral decisions are deprived of any relative set of convictions but are strongly based on rationally derived principles.[16] According to M. G. Singer, the main concerns this theory entails, are how moral judgements can rationally be supported, how moral perplexities can be resolved, and how moral disputes can be rationally settled.[17] Hauerwas is not in congruence with this approach in ethics. We now examine the specific elements at stake in Hauerwas' disagreement with the standard account of moral rationality.

1. 1 Over-Concern on Rationality

The main complaint Hauerwas levels against the standard account of moral rationality is that it holds that moral judgement or even moral agreement can be achieved between people because of the universal nature of their rationality. This theory gives an impersonal interpretation of morality based on rationality, where the feelings and the history of the agent are not at all taken into consideration. The only ground of morality, according to the standard account of ethics, is rationality.[18] While maintaining the importance of reason in morality, Hauerwas would argue that ethics must take into account the particular community's culture, history and religion, which help the

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[14] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 19.

[15] Stanley Hauerwas, Richard Bondi, David Burrell (eds.), *Truthfulness and Tragedy: Further Investigations into Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1977) 7.

[16] Hauerwas & Burrell, "From System to Story," 18.

[17] Marcus G. Singer, *Generalisation in Ethics: An Essay in the Logic of Ethics, with the Rudiments of a System of Moral Philosophy* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1971) 6.

community to form its values, beliefs and convictions.[19] More than principles and rules, morality must be primarily concerned with people. But, the standard account of morality fails to achieve this, and rather addresses to the clear-cut execution and maintenance of rational principles in moral matters. When the standard account of morality insists on rationality as the foundation of morality, Hauerwas finds the very basis of rationality itself in narrative. This foundation of rationality in narrative can be seen if we look at the lives of the individuals. Individuals find the meaning of their lives within the stories that constitute their particular beliefs, attitudes and convictions of lives. It can be said that rationality develops and matures by the orientation it receives from the narratives of the community. On the insistence, given by standard account of moral rationality, of universal moral principles grounded on rationality Hauerwas says, "universal ethical principles become ethically significant only when we learn their meaning in stories. For the universal without particular (stories) is but a shadow reality."[20]

1. 2 The Language of Obligation

According to Hauerwas, the standard account of moral rationality overemphasizes the language of obligation and duty in moral life. Joseph A. Selling opines: "Moral theology is not simply about stating the good that needs to be done (obligation) and the evil that needs to be avoided (prohibition)."[21] When something becomes obligatorily applicable to specific individuals they are forced to follow it, even though they may not be in agreement with it. It may not be in conformity with their convictions and concepts of goodness. There is also the possibility of individuals doing righteous acts out of the compulsions and concerns that influence them in one way or other. The normative theories of ethics really miss something that Hauerwas considers vital to the moral life.[22] The standard account of morality disregards the importance of character and virtue in the moral formation of individuals because of its overstress on obligation. Any morality that does not take into account the importance of virtue is not founded on a moral community. Universal norms of morality always look to the obligations from the parts of the individuals, i.e., what people should do. Here, the language of obligation brings another problem, which is very serious according to Hauerwas. That is, from the perspective of the ethics of obligation there is no relevance for the question of intention, because under obligation, people are obliged to do something even though there is disagreement. In that case, the action of the agent has nothing to do with his/her character or orientation of life. So, obligation does not take into consideration the intention behind the action. Centring on the obligation will also manipulate the ethical

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[18] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 120.

[19] Heeley, *The Ethical Methodology of Stanley Hauerwas*, 3.

[20] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 115-116.

[21] Joseph A. Selling, "Proportionate Reasoning and the Concept of Ontic Evil: The Moral Theological Legacy of Louis Janssens," *Louvain Studies* 27, no. 1 (2002) 3-28, 12.

[22] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 119.

life because of its distinction of the act from the agent. Again, the result is that it pays little attention to the intention of the agent in the moral description and in the assessment of the act. But Hauerwas wants to show that "one must make reference to the agent's intention to explain why the agent acted as he did."[23] What kind of agent one should be is the prominent concern of Hauerwas. The question of 'what I ought to do' is actually about 'what I am or ought to be(come).' Hauerwas clarifies it by referring to the question of abortion in the Christian perspective and conviction. The question whether a Christian has procured an abortion or not is not just a question about an act but about what kind of person that particular Christian is going to be. People often forget that the very recounting of an act such as abortion throws light back a moral tradition with certain assumptions, for example, life is God's gift and children are important for the tradition's continuing journey.[24] So, more than the act and the language of obligation, the vision and attitudes of the person and community are important.

Concentrating on obligations and rules as morally prominent omits the fact that actions gain their intelligibility from the role they perform in a community's history and therefore, for the individuals in that community. Hauerwas affirms: "The question 'what ought I to do'? tempts us to assume that moral situations come abstracted from the kind of people and history we have come to be."[25] "When 'acts' are abstracted from that history, the moral self cannot help but appears as an unconnected series of actions lacking continuity and unity."[26] In fact, Hauerwas would argue, the language of obligation in morality is not rational in the strict sense, because the community can demand its members to behave in a particular way which the community considers important for it. So, more than the obligation, Hauerwas looks for the integrity of life.[27] This is clear from his notion of natural law. He would consider natural law as the cluster of roles, relations and actions that the agent must order and form, to have a character appropriate to the limits and possibilities of our existence.[28] Furthermore, understanding

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[23] Stanley Hauerwas, "Obligation and Virtue Once More," *Truthfulness and Tragedy*: *Further Investigations into Christian Ethics*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas, Richard Bondi, David Burrell (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1977) 40-56, 49.

[24] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 117.

[25] Stanley Hauerwas, "Casuistry as a Narrative Art," *Interpretation* 37, no. 4 (1983) 377-388, 377.

[26] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 21.

[27] Hauerwas, "Obligation and Virtue Once More," 41.

[28] Stanley Hauerwas, "Natural Law, Tragedy and Theological Ethics," *Truthfulness and Tragedy*: *Further Investigations into Christian Ethics*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas, Richard Bondi, David Burrell (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1977) 57-70, 58. See also, Peter Oches, "On Hauerwas' with the Grain of the Universe," *Modern Theology* 19, no. 1 (2003) 77-88, 79. Hauerwas' concept of natural law is remarkable since it looks for the coherence of life. Stoics see natural law as the physical and biological structures given in nature as the source of morality. According to Cicero, it is the inherent power of reason to direct action. Thomas Aquinas considers natural law as something by which human beings participate in eternal law by the use of reason. Here, it is important to see that reason, according to Aquinas also includes observation, affection, aesthetic sense, etc. It is also "do good and avoid evil." Even then rationality has a prominent role in his understanding of natural law. According to catholic understanding, natural law is reason pondering over human experience finding moral value. See, Richard M. Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith: Foundations of Catholic Morality* (New York: Paulist, 1989) 220-249. In all these

the moral project in terms of keeping rules also involves supporting to a false picture of human beings as purely rational.[29]

Another tragedy that the language of obligation in ethics brings is that it disregards the importance of religious convictions in the moral formation of individuals. Hauerwas writes:

> When ethics is identified primarily as a matter of obligation divorced from an ethics of virtue, one fails to see how religious convictions embody and order moral life. For then religious beliefs, like virtues, are relegated to the motivational or subjective side of the moral life where they can have no possible bearing on the way the moral life is conceived or lived. Hence the contemporary emphasis on the ethics of obligation has misplaced the relation of religious convictions to the moral life. And that relation represents but one aspects of the necessary integration of our beliefs and conduct, our virtues and our duties.[30]

Robin Gill also supports the idea that there is strong link between morality and faith, between morality and communities, and between communities and faith.[31]

Over-emphasizing obligations also fails to consider the description of the problem adequately. A moral problem is not a natural phenomenon bounced into the way of our lives. Rather, the very existence of morally problematic choices depends on how we describe that way to ourselves. So moral judgements will not be meaningful and adequate without the proper description and analysis of the moral problems. The important aspect here is to make sure that the description of the problem is truthful.[32]

1. 3 Failure to Account for the Agent's Perspective

In trying to form the moral life strictly on the basis of moral rationality, the setback goes to the moral agent. Here, the specific aspects of the agent's life, such as the histories, the particular life circumstances and the family are not at all accounted for. Hauerwas is of the opinion that morality cannot be understood apart from the conception of the moral agent. Actions cannot be judged apart from the character and circumstances that the agent possesses. The action contains and describes the intention of the agent.[33] MacIntyre, who was a constant influence on Hauerwas, also attacks the normative theories of ethics since they cause a separation between the agent and action. He says: "To be a moral agent is, on

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concepts of natural law Hauerwas' difference is clear because of his emphasis on the integrity of human life rather than the role of reason in natural law. Here, we observe that Hauerwas has no difficulty with John Paul II's account of natural law in the encyclical, *Veritatis Splendor*. According to Hauerwas, "[t]he crucial issues involve his [John Paul] contention that we must be well instructed to rightly know the 'law' of our being. Our problem is that most of us are now so well trained by the practices of 'freedom,' we are incapable of acknowledging the moral truths that should otherwise be available." See, Stanley Hauerwas, "*Veritatis Splendor*: A Comment," *Commonweal* 120, no. 18 (1993) 16-18, 17. Hauerwas observes that Pope's whole argument is that we have failed to live the 'law' of our being, i.e., well-lived life. (17)

[29] Edward Slingerland, "Virtue Ethics the *Analects*, and the Problem of Commensurability," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 29, no. 1 (2001) 97-120, 100.

[30] Hauerwas, "Obligation and Virtue Once More," 42.

[31] Robin Gill, "Moral Communities and Christian Ethics," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 8, no. 1 (1995) 1-13, 2. We will undertake a detailed investigation on the relation between faith and morality in the second chapter.

[32] Robert W. Jenson, "The Hauerwas Project," *Modern Theology* 8, no. 3 (1992) 285-295, 286.

this view, [standard account] precisely to be able to stand back from any and every situation in which one is involved, from any and every characteristic that one may possess, and to pass judgement on it from a purely universal and abstract point of view that is totally detached from all social particularity."[34] So this type of ethics completely disregards and ignores the social whereabouts of the moral agents. The specific conditions of the moral agents had not been captured into consideration well. Here, it is obvious that the interests of the agent are not at all looked after properly. The standard account theory makes us picture our lives as a watcher's point of view since it considers only the act, not the specific environments and the state of affairs of the agent. The peculiarity, Hauerwas brings out, is that our convictions, beliefs, hopes and circumstances are in one way or another influential on our thinking. In determining the moral good, the role of reason is not ignored but it is put into practice within the given context of a particular worldview, i.e., in the context of the history and community of the moral persons where there is no division of the agent from that constitutes his/her particularity. Contrary to this, from the point of view of the standard account, the moral agent is placed in a situation of having no relation with concrete experience.[35] Sarah Conly points out: "To view the subject as the flaccid slave of objectivity, crushed by moral imperatives for which he has no concern, is to denigrate moral agency in a way which is, happily, as unrealistic as it is unflattering."[36] This rational morality ignores the significance of the history of the agent in moral matters and, according to it, the justification of the decisions can be understood from the viewpoint of anyone, ignoring the specific moral agent.[37] It finds no faults in giving the indentation that judgement can be merited apart from the agent who finds himself/herself in the moral position. The same principles and rules are universally passed on every agent.[38] Furthermore, it is erroneous in matters of moral judgement to isolate rationality from the sensitive and the emotional aspects of the moral agent.[39] Considering universal rational principles in evaluating agents do affect the feeling and beliefs of the agent adversely.[40] Any attempt to avoid the perspective of the agent is a challenge to the very historicity of the agent. "We have character just to the extent that we can claim that our history as our own, but when our actions are separated

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[33] Hauerwas, "Obligation and Virtue Once More," 41.

[34] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1984) 45.

[35] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 39.

[36] Sarah Conly, "The Objectivity of Morals and the Subjectivity of Agents," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (1985) 275-286, 286.

[37] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 11. Here we observe the role of the thinking led by Petrus Lombardus which argued that the object (act) can be assessed without any reference to the agent. See, Louis Janssens, "Ontic Evil and Moral Evil," *Moral Norms and Catholic Tradition: Readings in Moral Theology No.1*, ed. Charles E. Curran, Richard A. McCormick (New York: Paulist, 1979) 40-93, 40.

[38] Hauerwas & Burrell, "From System to Story," 18.

[39] William J. Finan, review of *Truthfulness and Tragedy*: *Further Investigations into Christian Ethics*, by Stanley Hauerwas, Richard Bondi, David Burrell (eds.), *Thomist* 43, no. 4 (1979) 678-681, 678.

[40] Conly, "The Objectivity of Morals and the Subjectivity of Agents," 278.

form our history, when we are only the 'causes' of certain pieces of behaviour, we lose exactly what is necessary to be historic."[41] The moral agent cannot be separated from his interests, tradition, particular history and religious convictions in moral judgement. The particular history of the agent, his/her personal view, his/her character cannot be separated from the context of his/her act. Contrary to this, i.e., separating the act of the moral agent from his/her character and specific history results in what Hauerwas says as follows:

> Such an account of objectivity has the peculiar effect of alienating the moral agent from his or her projects. It requires one always to look upon one's own projects as if they were anyone's. But by constantly 'stepping back' from our projects and evaluating them from an 'objective' point of view, we rob the moral life of those characteristics from which it derives its rationale-namely, the close identification of what we ought to do with what we want to be as a concrete moral agent.[42]

Preceding the action, the basic concern must be what kind of person the individual ought to be. The standard account concerns "to free moral behaviour from the arbitrary and contingent nature of the agent's belief, dispositions and character."[43] The result is that the unity of the human life will no more be visible.[44] Therefore, the perspective of the agent is very important.

1. 4 Exclusive Concentration on Particular Decisions and Quandaries

According to Hauerwas, ethics is not merely concerned with problems. It is not the duty of ethics to give answers to the various ethical problems. He says: "Morality is not primarily concerned with quandaries or hard decisions; nor is the moral self simply the collection of such decisions."[45] "Decision is not king."[46] "The moral life does not consist just in making one right decision after another."[47] "Morally our lives are not made up just of discrete decisions or choices."[48] Viewing 'decision-making' and solving 'problems,' as the central concern of ethics, the standard account of moral rationality gives "the impression that judgement can be justified apart from the agent who finds himself/herself in the situation."[49] This approach is silent towards the formation of the moral agent. Concentrating on decision-making, the standard account of morality fails to see to the formation of the moral self. Hauerwas blames the standard account for giving a distorted account of moral

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[41] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 58.

[42] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 18.

[43] Hauerwas & Burrell, "From System to Story," 16.

[44] Alasdair MacIntyre "The Virtues, the Unity of a Human Life and the Concept of a Tradition," *Why Narratives?: Readings in Narrative Theology*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas & L. Gregory Jones (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1989) 90-112, 90.

[45] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 114.

[46] Stanley Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life: A Study in Theological Ethics* (San Antonio, TX: Trinity University, 1985) 29.

[47] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 44.

[48] Hauerwas, "Obligation and Virtue Once More," 44.

[49] Hauerwas & Burrell, "From System to Story," 18.

rationality, because according to it, the task of ethics is to derive objectively rational principles, which are free from any single set of convictions, and because it brings a discontinuity in moral life. The fact is that the decisions we make are a part of our character, and character is developed through our dispositions and beliefs.[50] "The kind of 'quandaries' we confront depends on the kind of people we are and the way we have learned to construe the world through our language, habits, and feelings."[51] So, instead of decision-making, Hauerwas gives attention to the narrative of the community which provides an orientation to its members in the moral life by inculcating convictions and character. The handling of moral problems and the decisions we make, ultimately, depend on the character we possess. For, it is the character created by the particular historical communities that constitutes the basic attitudes of our lives.[52] If we form a moral life with its foundations in character, then the question of decisions in moral dilemmas or problems are of less importance. Character itself will work as decisions in moral dilemmas. We are not concerned with just making decisions and responding to particular ethical situations. More than this, Hauerwas concentrates on character and virtues which guide the moral persons. So ultimately for Hauerwas, decisions in moral life should come from the basic question of who the agent is.[53] When the moral person makes decisions, they should be in accordance with his/her moral notions.[54] "Ethics does not finally dictate what the decision must be. Rather ethics tries to explicate what must be considered in the decision so that whatever decision he makes will have greater moral substance."[55] According to Hauerwas, morally speaking, the most important things about us are those matters about which we never have to make a decision.[56] So, Hauerwas' concern does not concentrate on moral quandaries and particular decisions.

1. 5 Discordance with Universal Moral Notions

According to Hauerwas, the standard account of morality fails to account for the significance of moral notions and how they work to provide us with skills of perception.[57] This standard account does not admit the variety of moral notions.[58] By giving the example of abortion, Hauerwas shows that there are different moral notions. Persons can be for or against abortion. The standard account fails to face the different

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[50] Hauerwas & Burrell, "From System to Story," 20.

[51] Hauerwas, "Casuistry as a Narrative Art," 378.

[52] Heeley, *The Ethical Methodology of Stanley Hauerwas*, 26.

[53] Hauerwas, "Obligation and Virtue Once More," 44.

[54] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 13.

[55] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 104.

[56] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 125.

[57] Heeley, *The Ethical Methodology of Stanley Hauerwas*, 28.

[58] Kevin J. O'Neil, *Who Should Be We? A Study of Stanley Hauerwas's Tradition-Dependent Character Ethics* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Pontificia Universitas Lateranensis, Academia Alfonsiana, Institutum Superius Theologiae Moralis, Rome, 1989) 228.

perception of this, since it believes that the solution can be reached only from a rational basis.[59] Hence, for the standard account of moral rationality, the real problem consists in different moral notions. But moral notions can be different according to the social situation.[60] It is wrong to think that there are moral notions in the world from its beginning, and all are supposed to follow that without any change. We can reach moral notions within the context of our personal and communal histories, which share our character formation. So there are no universal moral notions, but it is always particular and achieved through a process. He says:

> A community's moral prohibitions, therefore, are not so much 'derived' from basic principles as they exhibit the way the community discovers what its habits and commitment entail. You do not first have the principle 'life is sacred' and then deduce that abortion is wrong. Rather you learn about the value of life, and in particular human life that comes in the form of our children, because your community and parents acting on behalf of your community do not practice abortion. Therefore the negative prohibitions of the community though they often appear to apply to anyone because of their minimal character (e. g., do not murder) in fact gain their intelligibility from that community's more substantive and positive practices.[61]

In order to prove his position that moral notions are not dependent on universal rational principles, Hauerwas refers to Thomas Aquinas. Hauerwas says, "Aquinas never stepped to say: 'now I am going to do a little ethics.' The 'ethics' he does in the Prima-secundae and the Secunda-secundae of the *Summa Theologica* is but the continuation of his theological portrayal of God's extension of himself to man so that man might have a way to God."[62]

Moral notions are formed as a way of life. To learn moral notions is to learn how to order the world. Moral notions train our attitudes to life. It is a way of forming ourselves. Moral notions are formed by the common experience that we have in our day to day lives, and they are not the result of some abstract reasoning. Moral notions are not abstractions derived from moral absolutes, but they are rather concepts that help us to define areas of significance for our lives together. At the same time, Hauerwas does not completely disregard reason. He states, "… stories without principles will have no way of concretely specifying the actions and practices consistent with the general orientation expressed by the story."[63] There is the need of developing the thinking capacity so that it will help us to analyze the story, and thereby we come to see how they function.[64] Also, the notions that form our moral perception involve skills that require narratives, that is, accounts of their institutional contexts and purposes, which we must

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[59] Hauerwas & Burrell, "From System to Story," 22.

[60] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 25.

[61] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 119.

[62] Stanley Hauerwas, *Against Nations: War and Survival in a Liberal Society* (Minneapolis, MN: Winston, 1985) 53.

[63] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 89.

[64] Hauerwas & Burrell, "From System to Story," 22.

know if we are to employ them correctly. In other words, these notions are more like skills of perception, which we must learn how to use properly.[65] The advocates of the standard account of moral rationality try to train us to ignore the dependence of the meaning and use of notions on their narrative contexts by providing normative theories for the derivation and justification of basic moral notions. What we actually possess are various stories that provide us with the skill to use certain moral notions.

2 The Role of Narrative in Ethics

In the last section, we have seen Hauerwas' total disagreement with the standard account of moral rationality. As an alternative to the standard account of moral rationality, Hauerwas develops narrative as a method,[66] which according to him is suitable to ethics. He considers narrative important in ethics since it is able to give a connection (relation) between the past, present and future of the moral agent and thereby provide unity and coherence in his/her moral life. From the perspective of ethics, narrative throws light into the tradition and history of each and every particular moral agent and it takes into account the particular contexts and circumstances of agents in morality. So, Hauerwas believes that narrative does provide justice to the agents in morality. Now, we concentrate on narrative, so that it is hoped, an understanding of what Hauerwas means by narrative would enable us to grasp the roles of narrative in ethics better.

2. 1 The Meaning of Narrative

Narrative can be understood as an explanatory device, which provides "a connection between non-necessary and contingent events."[67] It provides a unity between the different events happening and persons interacting in between them and anyone aware

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[65] Hauerwas & Burrell, "From System to Story," 21.

[66] By this, we mean the way by which Hauerwas conceives the ethical life. For him, narrative is the best way to understand the ethical life.

[67] Stanley Hauerwas, "Story and Theology," *Truthfulness and Tragedy*: *Further Investigations into Christian Ethics*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas, Richard Bondi, David Burrell (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1977) 71-81, 75. Tyler T. Roberts also expresses this view. See, Tyler T. Roberts, "Theology and the Ascetic Imperative: Narrative and Renunciation in Taylor and Hauerwas," *Modern Theology* 9, no. 2 (1993) 181-200, 187. In fact, Hauerwas gives a very generalised description of narrative. According to Thomas W. Ogletree, "[h]e [Hauerwas] uses this category [narrative] to speak of autobiography, short story, novel, parable, the story of a people (which presumably would include historical recollections, legends, hero stories, tall tales and the likes), 'archetypal stories' or myth or exemplary stories" (e.g., the Christian story, or the story of God), and even philosophical attempts to characterise broad movements in the dominant modalities of human understanding. See, Thomas W. Ogletree, "Character and Narrative: Stanley Hauerwas' Studies of the Christian Life," *Religious Studies Review* 6, no. 1 (1980) 25-30, 28. According to George Stroup, "… narrative is used to describe and explain the location of religion in human experience and the meaning of 'faith' in relation to a person's encounter with other people and the world. The 'religious dimensions' of human experience is interpreted as having something to do with the narratives people recite about themselves or the narrative they use in order to structure and make sense out of the world. An ambiguity that often emerges in these discussions is whether narrative is the form through which one gets at that reality which is the source of religion in human experience, or whether narrative … is itself the bearer of the sacred." See, George Stroup, *The Promise of Narrative Theology* (London: SCM, 1984) 72. However, Paul Nelson speaks of the various difficulties in our conception and use of narrative. "If narrative is used to refer to 'the Christian story' or the 'Christian tradition,' its use is obfuscating. If it is used to refer to the way in which cultures shape characters, then it seems too narrow." He continues: "If narrative is used as a shorthand reference for the manifold ways cultures shape characters, then it is too board and imprecise." See, Paul Nelson, *Narrative and Morality: A Theological Inquiry* (University Park, PA: University, 1987) 149.

of it can easily understand how they fit together. By narrative, we understand how events and agents are bound together in an intelligible way. It is evident in stories and novels that there are always connections allowing the reader to ask what will be the next step.[68] So, we can say that narrative stands as a medium for the connection and intelligibility of our activity. Emmanuel Katongole gives an elaborate description of narrative. He writes:

> From a more general point of view, the category of narrative has been used, among other purposes, to explain human action, to articulate structures of human consciousness, to depict the identity of agents, to explain the strategies of reading, to justify a view of the importance of storytelling, to account for the historical developments of traditions, to provide an alternative to foundationalist and / or other scientific epistemologies, and to develop a means of imposing order on what is otherwise chaotic.[69]

Narrative also denotes a quality of being that modifies the historical determinants of persons' lives.[70] Stories (narratives) grant one with a way of being in the world[71] or of relating to the world.

In relation to ethics, Hauerwas understands narrative in the perspective of the traditions of communities helping in the moral formation of the self. "What a narrative must do is to set out the antecedent actions in such a way as to clarify how the resulting pattern becomes a tradition."[72] The important point in this tradition generated by narrative is the accessibility and the connection between the past, present and the future.[73] Treated under religious category, narrative is "a perennial category for understanding better how the grammar of religious convictions is displayed and how the self is formed by those convictions."[74] Hauerwas gives further clarity to it by displaying it under the Christian standpoint. He says: "Narrative is but a concept that helps clarify the interrelation between the various themes I have sought to develop in the attempt to give a constructive account of the Christian moral life."[75] In the Christian narrative, there is the story of God's calling of Israel and of the life of Jesus to which we are called to be faithful.[76] Hence, faithfulness to the narrative of the community contributes to the well-being of moral life. He has his own reasons to explain narrative in Christian language. He says: "To emphasize the story character of the gospel is an attempt to suggest that examining the

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[68] Hauerwas, "Story and Theology," 75.

[69] Emmanuel Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason: The Relation between Religion and Ethics in the Works of Stanley Hauerwas* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2000) 105.

[70] Victor Anderson, "The Narrative Turn in Christian Ethics: A Critical Appraisal," *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy* 19, no. 3 (1998) 293-312, 302.

[71] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 111.

[72] Hauerwas & Burrell, "From System to Story," 30.

[73] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, xxv.

[74] Hauerwas, Bondi, Burrell (eds.), *Truthfulness and Tragedy*, 8.

[75] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, xxv.

[76] Jenson, "The Hauerwas Project," 288.

truth of Christian convictions is closely akin to seeing how other kinds of stories form our life truly or falsely."[77] From the different explanations of narrative given by Hauerwas, we come to the conclusion that he thinks of narrative in relation to religious convictions and moral language[78] under the perspective of particular historical communities, which provides connectedness and integrity to the lives of moral persons. Narrative makes him/her claim his/her life as his/her own.

Here, it is important to keep in mind that though telling (truthful) stories occupies an important role in Hauerwas' account of narrative, more than that he wants to show that "rationality, methods of argument and historical explanation have … a fundamentally a narrative form."[79] According to Emmanuel Katongole, "… it [narrative] is primarily an epistemological preoccupation - that of showing how moral and religious convictions can be true or false - which forces Hauerwas to see that narrative is indispensable for understanding the moral life in general and Christian moral convictions in particular."[80] All rationality, "depends on tradition, is based upon a view of the world, a story and a way of looking at things."[81] Goh shows that in defending anything, we are in fact describing "how the argument has gone so far: rationality is a concept with a history."[82] Katongole explains Hauerwas' concept of rationality as follows:

> Rationality is the ability to deliberate, act, and give reasons for one's action and, very significantly, to order one's roles in the world. This sense of rationality, Hauerwas notes, does not commit one to specify any one 'essence,' end or purpose that dominates all others, but only that 'we must have a story that gives direction to our character.' This observation means that moral rationality cannot be isolated from the character of the agent. Such a claim involves nothing but an attempt to relocate 'rationality' from a metaphysical determination or ascription of a 'mark' 'essence' or 'nature' to within man's agency.[83]

Therefore, it is worth saying that the ability of narrative in forming the character of moral persons and offering insight into the human conditions extol narrative as a form of rationality especially appropriate to ethics.[84] In other words, since "moral agents and communities have the continuity and order that constitute them as subjects of character and reason in as much as they are narrators,"[85] narrative becomes the form of rationality appropriate to morality.

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[77] Hauerwas, "Story and Theology," 73.

[78] O'Neil, *Who Should Be We?*, 82.

[79] Hauerwas & Jones (eds.), *Why Narratives?*, 4.

[80] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 106.

[81] Hauerwas & Burrell, "From System to Story," 21. See also, Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1988) 7.

[82] Jeffrey C. K. Goh, *Christian Tradition Today: A Postliberal Vision of Church and World*, Louvain Theological & Pastoral Monographs 28 (Louvain: Peeters, 2000) 46.

[83] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 124.

[84] Hauerwas & Burrell, "From System to Story," 30.

[85] J. Wesley Robbins, "Narrative, Morality and Religion," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 8, no. 1 (1980) 161-176, 163.

2. 2 The Narrative Structure of Life

The concept of narrative can be further understood and appropriated by examining the narrative structure of life. Narratives have an important role in our lives. Stories are indispensable if we are to know ourselves. It is by narratives that we introduce ourselves. Through telling the narratives of lives, individuals are in a way interpreting their histories. Telling the stories of our lives is an effort to make intelligible to ourselves and to others, the meaning of our lives and actions.[86] "It appears that we can only come to ourselves via our own stories, via the way in which we deal with them, how we are entangled in them, how the entanglements arise, loosen or become inescapable."[87] Hannah Arendt says: "Who somebody is or was we can know only by knowing the story of which he is himself the hero - his biography, in other words; everything else we can know of him, including the work he may have left behind, tells us only what he is or was."[88] Narrative structure of our lives can be easily understood by attending to the various stories such as birth, infancy, various stages of growth, illness and the happy moments that form the individual life. Religion, culture, society, family etc. have much influence on shaping our lives. When we tell our stories in the present we reach back into the past with our memory and into the future by our anticipation. So narrative gives the connection and enables us to be in continuity with the past, present and the future actions and ourselves.[89] "When I speak of a historical narrative, I mean one, in which the later part is unintelligible until the former is supplied, and in which we have not understood the former until we see that what followed it was possible sequel to what had gone before."[90] While upholding the historical evolution of one's life, narrating the life must be done in a way that includes a basic 'attentiveness' oriented towards within. This 'attentiveness' helps individuals to find who they are, and it also opens up the way of checking self-deception.[91] Hence, "… the self is best understood as a narrative, and normatively we require a narrative that

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[86] Heeley, *The Ethical Methodology of Stanley Hauerwas*, 108. According to Paul Nelson, "[p]ersonal identity is said to be required an understanding of one's experience as a coherent story." See, Nelson, *Narrative and Morality*, 4. He continues: "Personal identity and self-understanding are held to depend upon our capacity to understand, even if only implicitly, our experience through time as a single, continuous story." (69) Moreover, Stephen Crites expresses the same view. He says: "A man's sense of his own identity seems largely determined by the kind of story which he understands himself to have been enacting through the events of his career, the story of his life." See, Stephen Crites, "Myth, Story, History," *Parable, Myth and Language*, ed. Tony Stoneburner (Cambridge: Church Society for College Work, 1968) 68, as quoted in Michael Goldberg, *Theology and Narrative: A Critical Introduction* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1982) 12.

[87] Wilhelm Schapp, *In Geschichten verstrickt: Zum Sein von Mensch und Ding*, 3ed ed. (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1985) 126-27.

[88] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1958) 286, as quoted in Hauerwas, "Story and Theology," 79.

[89] Dwight Furrow understands narrative as the description of concepts in a "temporal sequence of beginning, middle, or end." See, Dwight Furrow, *Against Theory: Continental and Analytic Challenges in Moral Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 1995) 56.

[90] Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics: A History of Moral Philosophy from the Homeric Age to the Twentieth Century* 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1998) 91.

[91] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 108. See also, Richard C. Allen, "When Narrative Fails," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 21, no. 1 (1993) 27-67, 28.

will provide the skills appropriate to the conflicting loyalties and roles we necessarily confront in our existence."[92] Again, in the ethical vision of Hauerwas, it is important to note that God, world and the self are never adequately known as separate realities but are in alliance needing specific show. This is possible only in the form of narratives of the communities originating and continuing through history.[93] After having obtained a conception of narrative very briefly through the narrative structure of life, we now concentrate in detail on how narrative helps him/her in his/her ethical life.

3 The Role of Narrative in Ethical Life

Hauerwas' understanding of ethics stands for the realisation of the particularity of all ethics.[94] In other words, each community has its own narrative, and moral life is to be formed according to the narrative each community possesses. "Ethics can only be carried out relative to a particular community's convictions."[95] Hauerwas makes this clearer. He affirms:

> All ethical reflection occurs relative to a particular time and place. Not only do ethical problems change from one time to the next, but the very nature and structure of ethics is determined by the particularities of a community's history and convictions. From this perspective, the notion of 'ethics' is misleading, since it seems to suggest that 'ethics' is an identifiable discipline that is constant across history. … ethics always requires an adjective or qualifier-such as, Jewish, Christian, Hindu, existentialist, pragmatic, utilitarian, humanist, medieval, modern-in order to denote the social and historical character of ethics as a discipline. This is not to suggest that ethics does not address an identifiable set of relatively constant questions-the nature of the good or right, freedom and the nature of human behaviour, the place and status of rules and virtues-but any response to these questions necessarily draws on the particular convictions of historic communities to whom such questions may have significantly different meanings.[96]

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[92] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 144. Kotangole explains this point. "A person's life needs an inner narrative to bind together the various contingent loyalties, roles and events that one confronts. Where such narrative fails in the life of the person, personal identity, intentional action, imagination of the future, grounding in social life, love affection, as well as the feeling for the solid presence of things is all lost." See, Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 109.

[93] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 26. Hauerwas tries to add some more clarity here. He says that since we have no story of God told from His position we must learn of God through other's stories of their relationship with Him. See, Hauerwas, Bondi, Burrell (eds.), *Truthfulness and Tragedy*, 225.

[94] Hauerwas' interest is in establishing a moral life based on Christian conviction generated by this narrative. As Christian narrative brings Christian narrative ethics, other religions too have their own ethics according to their narratives, which create some basic orientations and attitudes in the members of those communities. So Hauerwas calls for the particularities of all ethics. In this work, we keep this basic assumption of narrative (particularities of all ethics) that Hauerwas develops. We focus on how this narrative contributes to the ethical formation of individuals.

[95] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 2.

[96] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 1. But Jenson would say regarding the question whether other traditions than the Christian possess their own stories or narrative, Hauerwas is very reticent on the matter. See, Jenson, "The Hauerwas Project," 285-295. But it seems that there is not so much fact in the opinion of Jenson other than a criticism always levelled against Hauerwas. Hauerwas clearly says that moral disputes are the results of rival histories. So it is clear that there are different narratives and different ethics, according to various narratives. See, Hauerwas & Burrell, "From System to Story," 15. MacIntyre is also of the opinion that in a secularised and pluralistic context there are many different stories and as a result we have elements (fragments) from different narratives, e.g., the story of modernity, the Christian story, American story. See, MacIntyre, "How Virtues Become

So, each community possesses its own ethical way of life. Narrative ethics gives importance to tradition and "tradition could simply be defined as faithfulness to the spirit of narrative that binds and forms the community."[97] This understanding of tradition or narrative brings some serious concerns or questions such as: Can the tradition always be truthful? Is it enough for the individual to be faithful to the narrative whether this narrative is truthful or not? Is there any possibility to reconstruct or restructure the existing tradition? Can a particular narrative receive anything from another narrative? Is it possible to criticize the tradition? Which is important individuals or tradition? Of course, Hauerwas offers the possibility of restructuring and renewing of the tradition.[98]

Any community can be said to be a faithful community if it keeps the spirit of its tradition. David Tracy holds: "Each of us contributes more to the common good when we dare to undertake a journey into our own particularity … than when we attempt to homogenize all difference in favour of some lowest denominator."[99] In order to have truthfulness to morality, the community must be reminded of its tradition i.e., to enliven the conviction and the spirit of tradition, as we are not alien to it.[100] This tradition lights our path towards moral maturity. Hauerwas asserts: "Our initiation into a story as well as the ability to sustain ourselves in that depends on others who have gone before and those who continue to travel with us."[101] These people are of course part of the tradition. MacIntyre also holds that we cannot attain moral maturity apart from the tradition.[102] "A living tradition … is an historically extended, socially embodied argument, and an argument precisely in part about *the goods* which constitutes that tradition."[103] The interest for good is generated from tradition.[104] Goh writes: "Tradition is, … much like a craft, practised in a community that understands and appreciates the heritage that

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Vices: Values, Medicine, and Social Context," *Evaluation and Explanation in the Biomedical Sciences*, Philosophy and Medicine 1, ed. H. T. Englehardt & S. Spicker (Holland: Reidel Dordrecht, 1975) 97-121, 106.

[97] Heeley, *The Ethical Methodology of Stanley Hauerwas*, 134.

[98] Concerning these issues we will see in the progress of our study.

[99] David Tracy, "Defending the Public Character of Theology," *Christian Century* 98, no. 11 (1981) 350-356, 353.

[100] Goh, *Christian Tradition Today*, 24.

[101] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 45.

[102] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 119. He continues to make clear this point further. "What I am, therefore, is in key part what I inherit, a specific past that is present to some degree in my present. I find myself part of a history and that is generally to say, whether I like it or not, whether I recognise it or not, one of the bearers of a tradition. It was important when I characterised the concept of a practice to notice that practices always have histories, and that any given moment what a practice is depends on a mode of understanding it which has been transmitted often through many generations. And thus, in so far as the virtues sustain the relationship required for practices, they have to sustain relationships to the past-and to the future-as well as in the present. But the traditions through particular practices are transmitted and reshaped never exist in isolation from larger social traditions." (221)

[103] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 222, emphasis added. MacIntyre points out how the tradition functions in two ways. He writes, "A tradition is an argument extended through time in which certain fundamental agreements are defined and redefined in terms of two kinds of conflict: those with critics and enemies external to the tradition who rejects all or at least key parts of those fundamental agreements, and those internal, interpretative debates through which the meaning and rationale of the fundamental agreements come to be expressed and by whose progress a tradition is constituted." See, MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 12.

[104] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 113.

cradles the craft and ensures its continued existence. The members of that community share a common vision on the most crucial issues that concern their identity and survival as a community; they share a common *telos*. Tradition is, in a positive sense, authoritative, for it safeguards *the good and well-being of the community*."[105] Individuals' self-understanding of the good or morality is not something that is to be set apart from the influence of the tradition and the community, but individuals perceive the good which is but transmitted through tradition.[106] It is true that if we want to possess a sound character and integrity of moral life we have to be faithful to the various stages of our lives such as past, present and future (tradition) understanding through narrative. Tradition has made possible the "grasp of those future possibilities which the past has made available to the present."[107] So it is important that the moral life is based on narrative since it gives continuity in moral character, conduct development[108] and coherence to life.[109] At the same time, Hauerwas also points to the need of renewal of the language and practices of tradition. "The community is set on its way by the language and practices of tradition, but while on the way it must often subtly reform those practices and language in accordance with its new perception of truth."[110] Tradition is also considered as having an important place in determining individual identities.[111] Hence, by narrative ethics, Hauerwas shows how this ethics based on the history and tradition of the community enables the members of the community in the formation of the moral character, in the integration of the moral person's identity and in accounting for the moral growth.

Hauerwas makes the nature of narrative ethics more explicit in the context of Christian narrative ethics and thereby shows us the role of narrative in moral life. Christian narrative is constituted by God's calling of a particular community (Israel), the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the life of church. This is what the Bible narrates. The Christian community is the living example of this tradition. Christian narrative ethics exhorts its members to build their moral lives by incorporating the spirit and life-style this narrative puts forward. According to Christians, they are called to have a particular history: reflecting upon a God who gave them existence. This Christian narrative becomes fully understood only by keeping the link between the formation of the people of Israel, the task entrusted to Jesus and the continuation of these in the life of the church, as the Bible describes. Under this perspective, Christian

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[105] Goh, *Christian Tradition Today*, 61, emphasis added.

[106] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame 1990) 136-137.

[107] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 223.

[108] Heeley, *The Ethical Methodology of Stanley Hauerwas*, 105.

[109] Hauerwas & Burrell, "From System to Story," 27. See also, Daniel Callahan, "Tradition and the Moral Life," *The Hastings Centre Report* 12, no. 6 (1982) 23-30.

[110] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 63.

[111] Slingerland, "Virtue Ethics the *Analects*, and the Problem of Commensurability," 106.

morality is based on a historically identifiable community where belief in Jesus Christ and his teaching are the basis of moral truth. It is by appealing to this history, (narrative) that the Christian ethical life is established.[112]

So according to narrative ethics, the particular histories of the communities and the specific life situations of the individuals are unavoidable factors in determining ethical life. The narrative that the community provides gives birth to a specific life orientation in its members. Adherence to this narrative results in a kind of life the narrative elaborates. Ultimately, what the narrative creates is some basic convictions in the minds of its members.

We have already seen the importance of particularity, tradition and history in narrative ethics. Hauerwas opines that ethical truth and moral objectivity cannot be achieved from the perspective of an outsider (impartial spectator), but on the other hand narrative ethics tries to show that moral objectivity and truth are inseparable from the character, attitudes, orientation of the moral agent "as well as from the stories, parts, obligations and activities that bind one's historical existence."[113] Now, we shall see in detail how narrative contributes to moral truth and an integrated moral life.

3. 1 Narrative and Conviction

Contrary to the standard account of morality, Hauerwas takes a stand on an account of ethical existence and moral rationality that may help the community to form its convictions in a morally intelligible way.[114] He builds up an ethics based on religious and theological convictions. According to him, "[e]thics is not just a matter of decisions about specific actions, but a way of seeing the world that inextricably involves the understanding as formed by theological convictions."[115] So in ethics, the important factor is the convictions of the community. One's basic orientation in life gets reflected in one's way of acting. Narrative gives him/her the opportunity to be deeply rooted in the community's beliefs, relation and truthful convictions. Convictions (religious) rest on narrative for their explicitness and relevance.[116] Convictions, which are made clear and elaborated by the narrative, help him/her for a true understanding of his/her existence and himself/herself. So, narrative provides an opening towards who s/he

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[112] Anderson, "The Narrative Turn in Christian Ethics," 304.

[113] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, xii. MacIntyre also expresses this view. He says: "A proper understanding of a moral person, his or her actions cannot be understood apart from his or her intentions, beliefs and settings, which are part of his or her narrative." See, Alasdair MacIntyre, "Moral Philosophy: What Next," *Revisions: Changing Perspectives in Moral Theology*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas & Alasdair MacIntyre (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1983) 1-15, 4.

[114] Hauerwas, Bondi, Burrell (eds.), *Truthfulness and Tragedy*, 4.

[115] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 114.

[116] Goldberg, *Theology and Narrative*, 34. See also, Ricard B. Steele, "Narrative Theology and the Religious Affections," *Theology without Foundations: Religious Practice and the Future of Theological Truth*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas, Nancey Murphy, Mark Thiessen Nation (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1994) 163-179, 169-173. Speaking in a Christian context, Haers observes the significance of Christian narrative in making Christian commitment to God. See, Jacques Haers, "A Risk Observed," *Louvain Studies* 21, no. 1 (1996) 46-60.

should be(come). Hauerwas thinks that what s/he does should be done from a perspective that will contribute to his/her history as moral agents.[117] It means that his/her action should spring from the convictions inherited from the narrative tradition.

Paying attention to the narrative of the community is a way of forming the conviction of the individuals of that community. The life-style and orientation of the community originating from its narrative contain messages for its members, which help them in their moral formation. Thus, narrative becomes the source for the self to be faithful to the convictions. Moreover, moral life involves a constant conversation or contact with the narrative of the community so that the self may not be deviated from the convictions received from the narrative and thus live suitable to the convictions of the self's existence.[118] Hauerwas writes:

> Substantive narrative that promises me a way to make my self my own requires me to grow into the narrative by constantly challenging my past achievement. That is what I mean that the narrative must provide skills of discernment and distance. For it is constantly a skill to be able to describe my behaviour appropriately and to know how to 'step back' from myself so that I might better understand what I am doing. The ability to step back cannot come by trying to discover a moral perspective abstracted from all my endeavours, but rather comes through having a narrative that gives me critical purchase on my own engagements.[119]

The narrative provides the opportunity to examine whether the convictions are good or bad, and it enables him/her to discover the correct convictions if s/he has bad convictions. Hence, moral growth requires a narrative that offers the ability to perceive the ambiguity of his/her moral fulfilment and the need of continued growth.[120] Hauerwas says that what we need is "a narrative that charts a way for us to live coherently amid the diversity and conflict that circumscribe and shape our moral existence."[121] Constancy to the convictions transmitted by the narratives of the community is essential to the moral building of the individuals.

Individuals come to know that their convictions form a morality, if they lead a truthful life according to the narrative and (religious) faith of the community. In other words, "[t]he stories that comprise a living tradition, if they are serious, are meant to tell us the way things are - that is, we learn from them the conditions of truth."[122] A moral crisis has a positive value in the sense that it is an indication that the community has failed to live or is not living according to its convictions. This gives a second thought in narrative or in other words, it provides an impetus to go to the original spirit of the narrative. The

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[117] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 114.

[118] Stanley Hauerwas, "Character, Narrative, and Growth in Christian Life," *Toward Moral and Religious Maturity: The First International Conference on Moral and Religious Development*, ed. Christiane Brusselmans, Jef Bulckens, James W. Fowler (New Jersey: Silver Burdett, 1980) 441-483, 447.

[119] Hauerwas, "Character, Narrative, and Growth in Christian Life," 462.

[120] Hauerwas, "Character, Narrative, and Growth in Christian Life," 451.

[121] Hauerwas, "Character, Narrative, and Growth in Christian Life," 461.

[122] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 119.

result is the formation of the community according to the model and life orientation given by the particular God in whom the particular community has faith.[123] Thus, narrative helps him/her to animate the convictions of the community. This narrative approach saves from the 'reductionistic' mentality in moral life.[124]

3. 2 Narrative and Community

Narrative gives the community an opportunity to be reminded of its story and origin and to be formed according to the narrative. No personal narrative is possible apart from the stories, metaphors, symbols and images that we have inherited and appropriated from the communities in which we find ourselves.[125] This seems rather a challengeable point and necessarily brings the question: Can the individual have or create his/her narrative? We can notice people in history who challenged the narratives of their communities and created their own narratives, causing the communities to evaluate critically their own narratives. So individuals can create narratives or there is the possibility of personal narrative, and it can be a valid contribution to community to rectify the narrative if it has a wrong narrative. We can say that both the narratives of the individuals and communities do help each other in the moral formation.[126] When people are not part of any community, they lose the very core that enables them to relate to others both in the present and the previous generations.[127] In order to show the moral significance of the narrative of the community in the ethical formation of the individuals, Hauerwas would hold that the self is subordinate to the community for the self discovers itself through a community's narrated tradition.[128] It is through the community that the self realizes himself/herself. Hauerwas says:

> The self is fundamentally a social self. We are not individuals who come into contacts with others and then decide our various levels of social involvement. We are not 'I's' who decide to identify with certain 'we's'; we are first of all 'we's' who discover our 'I's' through learning to recognize the others as similar and different from overselves. Our individuality is possible only because we are first of all social beings. After all, the 'self' names not a thing but a relation. I know who I am only in relation to others, and indeed, who I am is a relation with others.[129]

Hauerwas stresses the importance of being in communities. It is through a community's narrative that s/he has true access and participation in the community. Narrative of the community teaches its members how to live in the world and what their way of life

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[123] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 91.

[124] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 90.

[125] Heeley, *The Ethical Methodology of Stanley Hauerwas*, 112. See also, Glen H. Stassen, "Narrative Justice as Reiteration," *Theology without Foundations: Religious Practice and the Future of Theological Truth*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas, Nancey Murphy, Mark Thiessen Nation (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1994) 201-225, 207.

[126] Concerning this, we will see in detail in the development of our work.

[127] George Stroup, "Theology of Narrative or Narrative Theology?: A Response to Why Narrative," *Theology Today* 47, no. 4 (1991) 424-432, 431.

[128] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 28.

[129] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 97.

should be. Narratives of the community will have their own influence upon the members of the community, enabling them to be formed according to the conviction and the life-style of the community. Attending to the spirit of the narrative, the community enables its members to form character and arrive at moral judgement,[130] and it helps them to order their lives according to the demands of the narrative.[131] Adhering to the narrative of the community helps him/her to be people of character. And according to Hauerwas, moral being and doing has relevance only in the context of a community.

For the true moral formation of individuals, the community has to hand over its narrative faithfully. Often and always the community has to remind its members of their narrative. Moreover, individuals must themselves be reminded of their narrative so that they can be faithful to their narratives. This is a way of giving coherence and truthfulness to the moral lives of the members of the community altogether.[132] This narration in constancy has special significance in the thinking of Hauerwas since "the objectivity of a moral argument is ultimately dependent on the shared commitment and values of the community. There is no heavenly realm of values that exists independently of their embodiment in human agents and institutions. Rather, values are shared by these men in this place in and through their common experience."[133] This shared commitment and values become the foundation for the moral life of the community. Handing over this attitude and values by way of narrative, one that is consistent and faithful, provides a moral framework for its followers.

Again, it is narrative and community that help us to avoid the extremes of universal objectivity and personal subjectivity in morality. Hauerwas points out:

> It is exactly the category of narrative that helps us to see that we are not forced to choose between some universal standpoints and the subjectivistic appeals to our own experience. For our experiences always come in the form of narratives that can be checked against themselves as well as against others' experience. I can not make my behaviour mean anything I want to mean, for I have learned to understand my life from the stories that I have learned from others.[134]

Thus, narrative and community protect against individual superiority and confer continuity in the moral life of individual moral agents.[135]

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[130] William Schweiker, "Iconoclasts, Builders, and Dramatics: The Use of Scripture in Theological Ethics," *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* (1986) 129-162, 143.

[131] O'Neil, *Who Should Be We?*, 101.

[132] O'Neil, *Who Should Be We?*, 240.

[133] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 107.

[134] Hauerwas & Burrell, "From System to Story," 21.

[135] O'Neil, *Who Should Be We?*, 239.

3. 3 Narrative and Moral Growth

Moral growth is possible only by adhering to narratives. For this, individuals must be faithful to the community's truthful narrative. The validity of the story (narrative) depends on its ability to lead one to truthful character and action. Whether we can discern the truthfulness of the story depends on how individuals find their lives lighted and bounded by the accuracy and truthfulness of its particular vision.[136] Hauerwas and Burrell give some criteria for the truthfulness of the story. According to them: "Any story which we adopt, or allow to adopt us, will have to display (1) the power to release us from destructive alternatives; (2) way of seeing through current distortions; (3) room to keep us from having to resort to violence; (4) a sense for the tragic, for how meaning transcends power."[137] The story is true if it enables one to go on.[138] Put in other words, having a true relationship with self, others, world and God according to the conviction of the community generated by narrative will help him/her for moral growth. If one is truthful to the narrative, it will of course be a help to be dispensed of his/her self-made morality that can be nothing but self-deception,[139] and this will consequently lead to his/her moral growth. Hauerwas elucidates by saying that moral growth consists in an ongoing discussion with one's story that makes him/her live suitable to the character of his/her existence.[140] At the same time, it is to be noted that humans as social beings are open to narratives other than his/her narrative. This interaction with other narrative has the tremendous possibility of purifying one's own narrative. Moreover, it is only by taking into consideration the implications of narrative that we can come to a correct judgement of the specific moral situations. Therefore, moral growth is not possible without narrative.

3. 4 Narrative and Ethical Decision-Making

How does narrative help us in ethical reflection and decision-making? Hauerwas would say that objectivity in morality is obtained by a truthful narrative of the community within a history.[141] So, objectivity in morality is never achieved ahistorically, because individuals are part of history, having narrative character. In other words, not only rational principles but also particularity, history, contingent nature, convictions etc. of the moral agent have an unavoidable role in achieving and determining objectivity in morality. The basic attitudes and convictions that one receives from the narrative turn to be a kind of reflection and decision-making in ethics. So narrative is inevitable behind decision-making, and as we have already seen, it is by narrative that our conviction is

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[136] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 149.

[137] Hauerwas & Burrell, "From System to Story," 35.

[138] Hauerwas, "Story and Theology," 80.

[139] Hauerwas, "Story and Theology," 80.

[140] Hauerwas, "Character, Narrative, and Growth in Christian Life," 447.

[141] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 96.

formed. Therefore, we would say that our convictions or character are influenced by narrative "that provides the context necessary to pose the terms of decision or to determine if a decision should be made at all."[142] Concurring with this, we can also notice the relevance of narrative in decision-making in MacIntyre also. "Man is in his actions and practice, as well as in his fictions, essentially a story-telling animal. He is not essentially, but becomes through his history, a teller of stories that aspire to truth. But the key question for men is not about their own authorship; I can only answer the question, 'what am I to do?' if I can answer the prior question, 'Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?'"[143] Narrative prevents us from inventing solutions each time we are faced with a new moral problem as we have the wisdom of our tradition enabling us to approach the problems appropriate to the current circumstances.[144] Under this perspective, we cannot approach a moral decision as an entity separate from the person. It is co-existent with the convictions or virtues[145] s/he received by attending to the narrative of the community. The decision makes itself if we know who we are and what is required of us. Decision comes as a part of the personality. It is an inner disposition of the person. Narrative helps people to be formed in such a way so that their way of life becomes a decision, and they need not make any separate decision.

3. 5 Narrative and Principles and Rules

"A rule such as 'Do not lie' does not in itself determine what counts as lying. Rules can illumine the commitment we make, but they are not enough to determine our moral practices."[146] This statement of Hauerwas clearly throws light on the fact that he does not consider principles and rules as the most important factors in moral judgement. Rather, as historically constituted beings, our narratives have a prominent role in moral formation. Narrative gives orientation in life that provides an opening in moral judgement rather than principles and rules. The laws and rules are never considered as ends in themselves or as capable of independent justification in scriptures too.[147] If we consider rules and laws as ends in themselves in moral matters, it will be an injustice done to the moral agent because the agent's historical whereabouts and circumstances are not at all properly taken into consideration. We can also notice that undue importance given to rules and obligation fails to take into account the importance of virtue in the ethical life. But, Hauerwas does not disregard the importance of rules and

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[142] Hauerwas & Burrell, "From System to Story," 20.

[143] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 216.

[144] Jill Y. Crainshaw, *Wise and Discerning Hearts: An Introduction to a Wisdom Liturgical Theology* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000) 129 as quoted in Jill Y. Crainshaw, "Embodied Remembering: Wisdom, Character, and Worship," *Character and Scripture: Moral Formation, Community and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. William P. Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2002) 363-387, 373.

[145] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 121.

[146] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 88.

[147] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 19.

principles. It is clear that moral principles are not sufficient in themselves in morality. At the same time, stories are also not sufficient if they do not generate principles that are morally significant. According to him, "[p]rinciples without stories are subject to perverse interpretation (i.e., they can be used in immoral stories), but stories without principles will have no way of concretely specifying the actions and practices consistent with the general orientation expressed by the story."[148] Therefore, principles and rules must be generated by paying due attention to the narrative of the moral self. It is also important to see that Hauerwas does not reject the importance of principles and universality in moral life. His problem is with the concept of universality and principles that do not take into account the implications of particularity and narrative tradition.[149] Orientation of the community in forming the individual gradually works in how to conduct the individual's life as well.

The narrative of the community, as we have seen, leads to the formation of certain basic convictions, and orientations and adherence to them results in the moral growth and integrity of the members of the community. In other wards, the narrative of the community leads to the moral character formation of its members. Hauerwas has always pointed out the relation between narrative and character. The formation of character is very much dependent on "a narrative that provides a sufficiently truthful account of our existence."[150] "The growth of character, and our corresponding ability to claim our actions as our own, is correlative of our being initiated into a determinative story. For it is only through a narrative which we learn to 'live into' that we acquire a character sufficient to make our history our own."[151] Moral growth consists of permanent conversation between our stories that allow us to live fittingly to the character of our

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[148] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 89. Nelson notes though MacIntyre also expresses the mutual relation between rules and stories, the priority goes to stories in moral matters. "MacIntyre seems to concur with those maintain that while stories-good stories, any way include rules, those rules have no independent, foundational status over against the stories that bear them." See, Nelson, *Narrative and Morality*, 42. He continues: "Only when rules are locked within a tradition and its narrative do they become intelligible." (42)

[149] See, Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 19, Stanley Hauerwas, "The Self as Story: Religion and Morality from the Agent's Perspective," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 1, no. 1 (1973) 73-84, 82, and Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 97-98.

[150] Hauerwas, "Character, Narrative, and Growth in Christian Life," 452. This is all the more made clear in the Christian context. Hauerwas writes: "We are 'storied people' because the God that sustains us is a "storied God" whom we come to know only by having our character formed appropriate to God's character. The formation of such character is not an isolated event but requires the existence of a corresponding society-a "storied society." See, Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 91. Samuel Wells also shows the relation between narrative and character in terms of Christian context. The community is moulded by the Christian story, and in turn it builds the character of its members. See, Samuel Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny: Theological Ethics of Stanley Hauerwas* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998) 11. He goes on: " … narrative is where Hauerwas turns when he strives to tie character to event." (41)

[151] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 151. See also, Stanley Hauerwas, "Ethics and Ascetical Theology," *Anglican Theological Review* 61, no. 1 (1979) 87-98, 96, Stanley Hauerwas, "On Witnessing Our Story: Christian Education in Liberal Societies," *Schooling Christians: "Holy Experiments" in American Education*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas & John H. Westerhoff (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1992) 214-234, 221, William Schweiker, "Images of Scripture and Contemporary Theological Ethics," *Character and Scripture: Moral Formation, Community and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. William P. Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2002) 34-52, 40 and Gilbert C. Meilaender, *The Theory and Practice of Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1984) 54-55.

existence.[152] In this context, it is important to see that the concept of character Hauerwas develops has affinity with the cultural-linguistic approach of religion developed by George Lindbeck. The cultural-linguistic approach of religion holds the view that "human persons as dependent on their linguistic and cultural environments for the formation and maintenance of their capacities, affirms the full finitude (in the sense of openness, contingency, and historicity) of human persons and of both religious and non-religious experience."[153] This is true in character formation too, since it is very much related to the narrative of the particular community to which s/he belongs. MacIntyre holds that the story of one's life is always implanted in the story of the community from which one's identity evolves.[154] According to George D. Randels Jr, "[h]istorical narrative tells us what we have been and who we are, and provides guidance regarding who we should be and what we should be. Such narrative thus connects closely to communal and individual character."[155] This, it is hoped, makes clear the mutual and logical relation and link between narrative and character. Therefore, narrative inspires and provides us an outlook to concentrate on and analyze the notion of character and its importance in ethical life in Hauerwas' perspective. This is our target in the coming sections. In our approach towards character too, the self is viewed as radically historical.[156] As it has already been mentioned in the previous pages, for Hauerwas, the whole question of ethics is not, 'what should I do?' but 'what should I be?'[157] in general and to show "how Christian convictions form lives" in particular.[158] So our main concern, in the coming pages, is to show how character contributes to the betterment of ethical life.[159] Before going in detail in this regard, in the coming section, we briefly see the meaning of character.

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[152] Hauerwas, Character, "Narrative and Growth in Christian life," 447. See also, Mark Jensen, "Some Implications of Narrative Theology for Ministry to Cancer Patients," *Journal of Pastoral Care* 38, no. 3 (1984) 216-225, 218, David Carr, "Spiritual, Moral and Heroic Virtue: Aristotelian Character in the Arthurian and grail Narratives," *Journal of Beliefs and Values* 24, no. 1 (2003) 15-26, 15, 18 and Benedict M. Guevin, "The Moral Imagination and the Shaping Power of the Parables," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 17, no. 1 (1989) 63-79, 64.

[153] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 209.

[154] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 205.

[155] George D. Randels Jr, "Cyberspace and Christian Ethics: The Virtuous and/in/ of the Virtual," *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* 20 (2000) 165-179, 169. See also, Philip S. Keane, *Christian Ethics and Imagination: A Theological Inquiry* (New York: Paulist, 1984) 71.

[156] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 34.

[157] Hauerwas himself makes this point more clear. He says: "From my perspective the former question [what should I do?] masks a deep despair about the possibility of moral growth, as it accepts us as we are. The only sign of hope such a view entertains is that we can free ourselves from who we are by making moral decisions from 'the moral point of view.' Yet the material content of the 'moral point of view' assumes the description of the 'situation' does not require reference to the self for how the description should be made. In contrast, the question 'what should I be?' demands we live hopeful lives, as it holds out the possibility that we are never 'captured' by our history, because a truer account of our self, that is, a truer narrative, can provide the means to grow so that we are not determined by past descriptions of 'situation.'" See, Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 271.

[158] Hauerwas, Bondi, Burrell (eds.), *Truthfulness and Tragedy*, 3.

[159] In an effort of understanding how character contributes in our ethical lives, we do not disregard the possible criticism that philosophical tones are more dominant than theological in our approach to character. We do not think that strict compartmentalisation can be made between philosophy and theology. We will address this problem in the development of our work. And it is important to note here that when we deal with character it does not differ in essentials from what we understand by virtues. See, Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, xiii-xvi, David

4 The Meaning of Character

According to Hauerwas, moral character is the "form of our self-agency."[160] Moral character is the very form or epitome of one's agency.[161] As a form of our self-agency, character is not something accidental which can be set apart from what 'we really are.' It implies that character enables him/her to be a determinative moral agent. This character, as the form of our agency, is shaped (formed) through beliefs and actions.[162] Agency as the form of character means that people may be formed in line with their own longings and interests so that they may be able to obtain virtue, which in fact presupposes that the actions should have an internal connection to the agent. So the determination to act in a specific way paves the way for character and as a result it enables him/her to act in conformity with who s/he is.[163] By acting in a determinative and self-motivating way, one becomes able to give reasons to his/her actions. [164] This means that s/he acts in perfect conformity with his/her character or who s/he is. In this context, Hauerwas sees the significance of choice in character. Analyzing Aristotle's view of choice, Hauerwas says, "to choose means that we really commit or determine our self in one direction rather than another, whereas to hold an opinion does not seem to commit the self to such a degree. For this reason Aristotle says that choice is very closely related to virtue, for it is by our choices that we acquire character."[165] Therefore, character as the form of agency with the emphasis on determination and choice makes it

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Fergusson, *Community, Liberalism and Christian Ethics*, New Studies in Christian Ethics 13 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1998) 49, Rosalind Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics* (London: Oxford University, 1999) 1, Keane, *Christian Ethics and Imagination*, 71 and Russell B. Connors, Jr. & Patrick T. McCormick, *Character, Choices & Community: The Three Faces of Christian Ethics* (New York: Paulist, 1998) 25.

[160] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, xx. This is a shift from Hauerwas' original position towards character as the qualification of one's self-agency. Hauerwas' early understanding of the ethics of character was mainly overwhelmed with the moral qualification of the self through beliefs, habits, and actions. He wrote that moral character is "the qualification of man's self-agency through his beliefs, intentions, and actions, by which a man acquires a moral history befitting his nature as a self-determining being." See, Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 11. This shift, i.e., from character as the qualification of man's self-agency to character as the form of our agency, enabled him to avoid any misconception that character was something later added to the self. Katongole also opines the same. He says: "The shift is meant to avoid any impression of a self that lies beneath of beyond agency, or any conception of character as something 'added' to the self. There is no need to look behind agency for a self which character somehow projects, represents, or qualifies." See, Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 49. Hauerwas, for his ethics of character, is inspired by H. Richard Niebuhr. Hauerwas observes that Niebuhr emphasised "the 'self' as the phenomenological centre of theological ethics." See, Stanley Hauerwas, "Ethicist as Theologian," *Christian Century* 92, no. 15 (1975) 408-412, 409 and R. H. Niebuhr's, *Responsible Self: An Essay in Christina Moral Philosophy* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1963) which continues to be the prominent work that takes the 'self' seriously.

[161] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 48.

[162] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 21. By the device of moral character, Hauerwas wanted to make sure that "our lives are not constituted by decision, but rather the moral quality of our life is shaped by the ongoing orientation formed in and through the beliefs, stories and intentions." See, Hauerwas, "Ethicist as a Theologian,' 409. We will discuss this point in detail in the development of our work.

[163] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 40.

[164] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 45. The importance given to *determinism* by Hauerwas is remarkable. This is because of the fact that indeterminism will result in the separation between action and character. The use of *determinism* is not to be misunderstood. It is not a concept of self to whom things merely happen but it means 'self-determining agent.' See, Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny*, 21.

[165] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 49. For Aristotle, choice was a unique combination of reason and desire, which involve our intellectual decisions and our selves' commitment to act in terms of its desire. See, Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 55.

clear that character is not some hidden reality behind the self but "we are our character."[166] This means that the self, for its activities, does not depend on anything like hereditary make up or circumstances, but s/he is his/her activity, i.e., s/he is self-creating and self-determining.[167] We are more than what happens to us.[168] Thus, we can say, "character is *that which ensures that the self is nonetheless not lost in the fact of being determined.*"[169]

Samuel Wells tries to understand better Hauerwas' notion of character in the framework of Aristotelian causality (material, formal, efficient and final causes). Wells thinks that Hauerwas' silence in explaining character in the framework of causality may be due to the fear of overemphasizing final causality, at the cost of devaluing efficient causality. Ethics cannot concentrate first of all on final causes. Prior to that, ethics must see who is doing the act and how the community understands the act. Therefore, one cannot see that matter and form are the mere properties of things, which can be illustrated by any outward bystander. By giving priority to agent, in fact, Hauerwas is emphasizing the importance of efficient causality. Consequently, he seems to demean the significance of final causality (since decision-making is about final causality). Even though the self is not merely matter, we can notice an element of a material cause in the self according to Wells, and it is character that enables the self to be both the efficient as well as the material cause. And character is also the formal cause, as Hauerwas says, since character is "the form of our self-agency." It is only formal cause (character) that enables one not to become simply matter, and thus it helps one to be the efficient cause. In short, it is character that helps the self not to be determined by external forces. Besides, Wells attributes "active and passive aspects of our existence"[170] in efficient and material causes respectively. In short, the notion of character in Hauerwas, if it had been formulated in the Aristotelian framework of causality, would be like the following:

1. The material cause is the self, understood in a passive sense.

2. The efficient cause is the self as an agent, understood in an active sense.

3. The formal cause is the character of the agent, 'the form of our agency.'[171]

4. The final cause is not something that is to be formed individualistically, but "it is the production and maintenance of a community made up of people of character."[172]

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[166] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 39.

[167] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 26.

[168] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 18.

[169] Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny*, 21.

[170] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 116-117. Though the role of 'what happen to us' in making 'who we are' is important, one's character is uniquely his/her own. Here what we mean by 'what happens to us' are the expectation of the society, the influence of culture etc. In Wells' language, even though the outside factors are so dominant, the self is able to transform his/her fate into his/her destiny.

[171] Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny*, 26.

[172] Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny*, 27.

The efficient cause (agent) should not be detached from the final cause (community of character), and these two (efficient and final causes) should not be set apart from material and formal causes. Wells summarizes Hauerwas' argument of character in terms of causality:

> The self is not just a (passive, determined) materiel cause, or just an (indeterminate, active) efficient cause, but is enabled to be both by its character, the formal cause of its agency and the form of its material. Character is that which enables the self to be both the material cause and an efficient cause. The purpose or final cause of the self is to be in a community of character. It is when all four causes are in harmony that one can talk in terms of the 'unity' of the self.[173]

The meaning of character can be further understood by analyzing and explicating (*i*) 'what should I do?' and 'what should I be' and (*ii*) 'character trait' and 'having character.'

4. 1 What Should I Do? And What Should I Be?

Hauerwas strongly holds that moral life goes beyond the decisions and choices one makes concerning moral problems. Moral life is not merely a life that is based on clear-cut rules and regulations. Rather, moral life is to be basically evaluated on the basis of the kind of person s/he is.[174] And the persons have to acquire practices that would enable them to be 'what they should be.'[175] Hauerwas argues that it is a great mistake to separate the rightness or goodness of an act from the character of the agent.[176] According to Hauerwas, the most important question in ethics is 'who I ought to be' which takes into consideration the moral situations and history of the people.[177] Against those approaches to morality which fragment moral life into acts, circumstances and ends and also against the order of the presentation of the elements of morality in *tres fontes moralitatis* (TFM) which tends to give importance to the act, Selling argues, "[m]orality emanates from the heart, from the deepest core of *who we are and who we*

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[173] Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny*, 28. Here, the 'Community of Character' is the *church* which occupies a top-most concern in Hauerwas' ethics. In this respect, the observation of Milbank is important. According to him: "What makes an action is *not* the presence of a "human" or "cultural" motive or "internal" reason: all this is still Cartesian and Kantian. What matters is the objective surface presence of a theological ordering where intention of a goal shows up in visible structure." See, John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994) 359.

[174] Hauerwas, "The Self as Story," 74. See also, Hauerwas, "Obligation and Virtue Once More," 44 and Stanley Hauerwas & Allen Verhey, "From Conduct to Character: A Guide to Sexual Adventure," *Christian Perspective on Sexuality and Gender*, ed. Adrian Thatcher & Elizabeth Stuart (Leominster: Gracewing, 1994) 175-181, 181. All the more Hauerwas makes it clear: "The question 'What ought to be?' precedes the question 'What ought I to do." See, Hauerwas, "Casuistry as a Narrative Art," 377.

[175] Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny*, 128. See also, MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 193.

[176] Stanley Hauerwas, "Virtue and Character," *Encyclopaedia of Bioethics* 2ed, Vol. 5 (1995) 2525-2532, 2527.

[177] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 116. It is good to see the meaning of 'situation' in this context. Hauerwas says, "'situations' are not 'out there' waiting to be seen but are created by the kind of people we are.'" See, Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 116. See also, Stanley Hauerwas & Richard Bondi, "Memory, Community and the Reasons for Living," *Truthfulness and Tragedy: Further Investigations into Christian Ethics*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas, Richard Bondi, David Burrell (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1977) 101-115, 102. James F. Keenan also concurs with Hauerwas when he holds, in evaluating virtue ethics, that the primary question in ethics is 'who should I become?' which leads to the question 'how virtuous am I'? See, James F. Keenan, "Virtue Ethics," *Christian Ethics: An Introduction* ed. Bernard Hoose (London: Cassell, 1998) 84-94, 84.

wish to become."[178] For Edmund L. Pincoffs too, "[t]he primary business of ethics ought to be with qualities of character, with the virtues and the vices."[179] The ethics of character argues for the assessment of human character as "more fundamental than either the assessment of the rightness of action or the assessment of the value of the consequence of action."[180] Hauerwas gives importance to an ethics in which our actions must be the reifications of our character. Hauerwas opines that "the virtues [character] are not free from quandaries but the kind of quandaries they confront results from the kind of people they are."[181] 'Quandaries' will have sense only in relation to "convictions that tell us who we are."[182] In ethics, character is primarily concerned with the quality of the agent. So, it concerns who we should be or what kind of persons we are. It is an ethics of being. The ethics of character is primarily about the agent and only secondarily about the acts. The ethics of character is about acts insofar as our doing or not doing them is relevant to the primary question of what should I be i.e., to be a good person. Sarah Colny also favors the priority of 'what I should be' to 'what I should do.' Colny writes:

> A virtue is generally held to be a part of one's character, and thus something within the person. The possession of a virtue thus provides an internal impetus to action which is not at odds with the general orientation of the person. It may on this account be a set of virtuous desires, dispositions, and traits which generate the unifying goals that make a life integrated and meaningful. Since one is good because of good character arising within, rather than because of obedience to laws imposed from without, being good should not rend the texture of one's life.[183]

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[178] Joseph A. Selling, "The Fundamental Polarity of Moral Discourse," *Method and Catholic Moral Theology: The Ongoing Reconstruction*, ed. Todd A. Talzman (Omaka, NE: Creighton University, 1999) 21-43, 32, emphasis added. See also, James T. Bretzke, *A Morally Complex World: Engaging Contemporary Moral Theology* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2004) 66-67.

[179] Edmund L. Pincoffs, *Quandaries and Virtues* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1986) 5.

[180] David Solomon, "Internal Objections to Virtue Ethics," *Virtue Ethics: A Critical Reader*, ed. Daniel Statman (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 1997) 165-179, 166.

[181] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 169.

[182] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 4. See also, Paul Lehmann, *Ethics in a Christian Context* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963) 159. According to William Daniel, the question prior to what are we to do? is the question "*on what grounds are we to base our judgements of value and thus our moral, social and political decision-making?*" See, William Daniel, "Morality-in-the-Making: A New Look at Some Old Foundations," *Christian Century* 92, no.1 (1975) 8-12, 8.

[183] Sarah Conly, "Flourishing and Failure of the Ethics of Virtue, " *Midwest Studies in Philosophy XIII, Ethical Theory: Character and Virtue*, ed. Peter A. French, Theodore E. Uehling Jr., and Howard K. Wettstein (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame 1988) 81-96, 83-84. For Rosalind Hursthouse too, character ethics is mainly concerned with the question of 'what sort of person should I be?' rather than the question 'what should I do? See, Rosalind Hursthouse, "Normative Virtue Ethics," *How should One Live: Essays on the Virtues*, ed. Roger Crip (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996) 19-36, 19. According to Daniel Statman: "If virtue ethics [character ethics] means anything, it must mean that the clue to character is something other than acting on the basis of principles." See, Daniel Statman, "Introduction to Virtue Ethics," *Virtue Ethics: A Critical Reader*, ed. Daniel Statman (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 1997) 1-41, 10. Gary Watson opines that virtue ethics indicates "a certain moral outlook that calls for exclusive moral attention to questions about character and the quality of one's whole life." See, Gary Watson, "On the Primacy of Character," *Virtue Ethics: A Critical Reader*, ed. Daniel Statman (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 1997) 56-81, 57. For Ricoeur, character designates the set of "lasting dispositions" by which a person is recognized. See, Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. by Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) 121. Ricoeur's book *Oneself as Another* is the outcome of his Gifford lectures of 1986. This book was originally published in French (Paul Ricoeur, *Soi-meme comme un autre* (Paris: du Seuil, 1990). There is a change in Ricoeur's conception of character in his earlier works, especially in his book *Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and Involuntary*, where character for him had meant "immutability" in respect to a person's

So Hauerwas opines that the question of what I should do in fact is about what I should be. He makes this clear by referring to the question of abortion. He asks: "'Should I or should I not have an abortion?' is not just a question about an 'act' but about what kind of person I am going to be."[184] For Hauerwas, the preliminary question concerning abortion must be: "What kind of people should we be to welcome children into the world?" So the relevant moral question is not: "Is the fetus a human being with a right to life?" but "How should a Christian regard and care for the fetus as a child?"[185] In other words, what is important is not what we should do, but what is going on, or what sort of people we are becoming. When we ignore the question (what is going on and what sort of people we are becoming) we are not ready to pay attention to the task of remembering (narrative) "[t]hat we no longer consider remembering as an ethical or political task manifests our questionable assumption that ethics primarily concerns decisions…."[186] The question: "Of what stories do I find myself to be a part?' helps us to answer the question 'what should I be?"[187] In short the priority of what I should be or what I am becoming over what I should do throws light into and makes clear the meaning of character.

4. 2 "Character Trait" and "Having Character"

The meaning of character can be further clarified if we make a distinction between a "character trait" and "having character." A "character trait" generally indicates a way in which certain activities are being carried out.[188] This character trait also signifies a distinctive mark or imprint. The mode of activity (imprint) qualified here is often a negative attribute. For instance, we categorize him/her by his/her "character traits" describing him/her as childish, pessimistic, imprudent, inordinate etc.[189] Thus, it implies a person's adherence to certain style of behavior which makes him/her to act inappropriately in certain situations. From the perspective of psychology, by character we understand the temperament of the person and whether s/he is an introvert or extrovert. Referring an introvert or extrovert person, we may say 'that is his/her character.' In the ethical sense, character refers to his/her nature, from which his/her actions are issued. Unlike the previous two senses, character in this moral sense has a dynamically active connotation, for it is

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characteristics. See, Paul Ricoeur, *Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, trans. by E. V. Kohak (Evanston III: Northwestern University, 1966).

[184] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 117. Here we can notice a gradual change or shift in Hauerwas' idea of the core of ethics as 'what I should be' to 'what sort of man or woman s/he is becoming.' This is to avoid the voluntaristic implication of 'what I should be' and to assert the socio-linqustic factors of character formation as well as the fact that character formation is a process. See, Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 68. For MacIntyre too, in morality the most fundamental question is: "What sort of person am I to become?" See, Alasdair MacIntyre, "Comment on Frankfurt," *Synthese* 53 (1982) 291-294, 292 as quoted in R. Z. Friedman, "Morality and the Morally Informed Life," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy XIII, Ethical Theory: Character and Virtue*, ed. Peter A. French, Theodore E. Uehling Jr., and Howard K. Wettstein (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1988) 149-160, 150.

[185] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 198, 212.

[186] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 53.

[187] Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny*, 43.

[188] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 53.

[189] Heeley, *The Ethical Methodology of Stanley Hauerwas*, 67.

assumed that a person chooses to have a kind of character, to become a sort of person. In this ethical sense, character admits of both a descriptive and evaluative use.[190] In the descriptive sense, character refers to a person's moral faculty, which is in turn indicative of the sort of person one has become and is becoming. In this case, every one has some character. That is what we have in mind when we refer to a "person's character." In the evaluative sense, an explicit notion of the goodness or approval is implied, like when someone is referred to as a "man or woman of character."[191] It is in this evaluative sense that we understand "having character." When we say that someone has character, we are not interested attributing to him/her certain specific traits. But the point is that whatever activity s/he takes, this signifies what kind of person s/he is.[192] Character indicates the stability needed so that different virtues are acquired in an enduring way[193] and effective disposition to act in specific ways.[194] Having character also means integrity and consistency in character.[195] It means character as a way of life and character is moral strength.[196] It is the ability to claim our lives as our own. It enables a person to speak for himself/herself. By character we understand the personality or style of life.[197] The ethics of character pays great attention to the fact that "man is more than what simply happens to him."[198] Having character implies a more basic moral determination of the self. Character signifies the density of his/her life.[199]

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[190] Bernard, Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1985) 128-131, 140-145.

[191] Emmanuel Katongole, *Agent's Perspective: A Study of Stanley Hauerwas' Ethical Project* (unpublished licentiate dissertation, Faculty of Philosophy, K.U. Leuven, Leuven, 1993) 10.

[192] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 53.

[193] Hauerwas, "Virtue and Character," 2526.

[194] Jean Porter, "Virtue Ethics," *Cambridge Companion to Christian Ethics,* ed. Robin Gill (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2001) 96-109, 96.

[195] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 53. See also, Stanley Hauerwas, "Toward an Ethics of Character," *Theological Studies* 33, no. 4 (1972) 698-715. According to Connors and McCormick, "… *character is the core, unique, self-chosen and integral moral identity of a person.*" See, Connors, & McCormick, *Character, Choices & Community*, 18. Here we admit that 'integrity' can have different versions and possibilities. Etymologically the word 'integrity' comes from the Latin word '*integritas,*' which can also mean 'wholeness.' It can be argued that a terrorist who kills captives, since the government does not oblige to his/her demand, has integrity as s/he is faithful to what s/he believes. Of course, this type of understanding does not belong to our concept of integrity. According to S. L. Carter, integrity demands (*i*) discerning what is right and wrong; (*ii*) acting on the basis of what has been discerned even at the personal loss; (*iii*) publicly acknowledge that the act was due to his/her conviction of right from wrong. The first point implies that integrity cannot be implicated in immoral conduct. See, S. L. Carter, *Integrity* (New York: Basic Books, 1996) 7 as referred by John M. Doris, *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behaviour* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2002) 176.

[196] Charles T. Mathews, "Appreciating Hauerwas: One Hand Clapping," *Anglican Theological Review* 82, no. 2 (2000) 343-359, 348.

[197] George Sher, "Ethics, Character, and Action," *Social Philosophy & Policy Foundation* 15 (1988) 1-17, 3.

[198] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 54. This is also asserted by Joel Kupperman as he says that "to have character is to act in such a way that the person one is plays a major role in any explanation of one's behaviour. To have no character is to act in such a way that one's bahaviour might be viewed as (at least approximately) the product of forces acting on one." See, Joel Kupperman, *Character* (New York: Oxford University, 1991) 7.

[199] R. R. Reno, "Stanley Hauerwas," *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, ed. Peter Scott & William T. Cavanaugh (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004) 302-316, 306.

5 The Role of Character in Ethical Life

Our exploration of the meaning of character opened certain insights into how moral character enables us in our ethical life. Here in this section, we are going in detail to develop the role of character in ethical life according to Hauerwas. This is done by developing four points. They are (*i*) character as the orientation of the self, (*ii*) character as vision, (*iii*) character as virtue and (*iv*) character as the form of our agency. The moral concern that what I should be or what I am becoming is not something that can be realized all on a sudden. Rather, it is achieved through a gradual process having different dimensions. According to Hauerwas, a person's moral orientation or directionality in life is made possible by moral character. It is character above all, as directionality that determines who we are. In Hauerwas' ethical project, character and vision are not two distinct aspects of moral life, but vision and character are closely interrelated. One's moral vision regarding life has an important role in one's moral life. The interrelation between character and vision leads to certain significant questions such as: Is there a relation between vision and imagination? What is the role of each tradition in forming the vision of its members? etc. The issues of virtue are part and parcel in dealing with character. This, distinctly, leads to the doubt of what is meant by virtues: namely, cultivation of particular virtues or one's general moral stand? Coming to the concrete practical level, Hauerwas would say character is the form of our agency. This shows that character determines the quality of an act. Considering character as the form of our agency, as Hauerwas holds, the agent's perspective is to be taken as primary in morality, that is, he gives priority to person oriented morality over act oriented morality. By focusing these themes (aspects), it is hoped, we arrive at elucidating how character plays its role in the betterment of and an integrated moral life according to Hauerwas.

5. 1 Character as the Orientation of the Self

The ethics of character aims at inculcating a clear-cut orientation and attitude in moral life.[200] Hauerwas maintains that moral life is not the sum total of the separate responses that individuals make in life. We now examine how character functions as the orientation of the self. This is developed through (*i*) character and directionality in life and (*ii*) orientation: an ongoing process.

5. 1. 1 Character and Directionality in Life

Character can be understood as the particular directionality that the agent takes in life.[201] It is orientation that confers on his/her life a theme, and to be an agent at all

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[200] Lisa Sowle Cahill, "Christian Character, Biblical Community, and Human Values," *Character and Scripture: Moral Formation, Community and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. William P. Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2002) 3-17, 14.

[201] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 117. Here, we do acknowledge the roots of the orientation, the self possesses in life, is related to the narrative in which the self finds himself/herself. Hauerwas says: "The self as agent

demands directionality, which entails the growth in character and virtue.[202] "It is our character that gives orientation and direction to life."[203] "Our character is the orientation that gives unity and direction to our lives by forming our intentions into meaningful configurations determined by our dominant convictions"[204] and this directionality is created by our narratives. This directionality comes to form by organizing our desires, affections, and acts according to specific patterns.[205] "We are who we are because our actions are formed by how our attention is directed through our language and symbols."[206] This orientation enables him/her to be moved in relation to certain intentions rather than others or to take a certain specific direction in life.[207] It empowers the moral agent with the insight regarding what to do and not to do in his/her day-to-day moral life and particularly in the moral problems and situations s/he faces.[208] As a result of this directionality, one is able to find a connecting link between the various elements that contribute to one's agency and the particular acts one does, so that there will be order and coherence in one's life and eventually growth in moral life. In other words, consistency between the various intentions within one's overall orientation in life leads to coherence and growth in moral life.[209]

Character understood as orientation or directionality, which the self occupies in life, does not mean that it is something that is enforced upon the self over which s/he has no hold. But this directionality can be understood as compelling in the sense that it inspires and encourages the agent to take some specific routes in life while avoiding others.[210]

5. 1. 2 Orientation: An Ongoing Process

It is a fact that the self cannot exist apart from history and contingency.[211] We have no existence as unimpeded selves like blank sheets paper, but "we come as those who are at once gifted and burdened, freed and enslaved, enriched and impoverished, included,

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is the self that has a history that is morally significant for giving direction for new forms of action." See, Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 209. See also, Hauerwas, "The Self as Story," 76.

[202] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 74. See also, Hauerwas, "The Self as Story," 76.

[203] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 62.

[204] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 3.

[205] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 202-203. In this sense, character is related to fundamental option. The person in his self-determination and freedom decides for the fundamental option of the life, i.e., 'basic character or dominat direction of our lives'. This fundamental option gets expressed in the significant choices the person. That is, through the acts the person reinforces the fundamental direction and option of the life. So, moral action is also significant in fundamental option. See, Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith*, 109-111.

[206] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 230.

[207] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 117-119.

[208] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 74.

[209] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 120. See also, James Gustafson, "Introduction," *The Responsible Self: An Essay in Christian Moral Philosophy*, H. Richard Niebuhr (New York: Harper & Row 1963) 6-41, 16.

[210] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 123.

[211] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 30.

directed and determined by the many earlier transactions we have made in the past."[212] As a result in meeting an action, the agent does not approach it in vacuum since s/he is already rooted in a history. One has already become something through one's past agency, and through present activity the moral person secures a sort of moral history which orients or directs him/her in his/her present and future (activity) in a particular manner.[213] Hauerwas argues:

> The idea of character can provide a way of indicating how the self grows without betraying the essential stability and continuity of the self. Growth and stability when understood in this context are but two interdependent aspects of one reality. Our character grows because our present acts draw our past determinations into a new synthesis of possibilities made by the agent's vital decisions and beliefs. These possibilities do not occur *de novo* however; they arise only because the self remains qualified by its past in such a way that our history is given a definite orientation toward the present.[214]

So character provides not only the transition from the past to the present but also from the past and present to the future as well. This does not mean that we accept whatever happens in future life, but it means that one is able to (re)shape the (definite) future in an appropriate way with the orientation gained from the past and present life. So the past orientations in the individual's life not only influence his/her life at present but also influence and determine his/her life in future, thus enabling him/her to be morally good person.[215] MacIntyre also testifies, "… the commitments and responsibilities to the future springing from past episodes in which obligations were conceived and debts assumed unite the present to the past and to the future in such a way as to make of human life a unity."[216] Therefore, the link between the various stages of orientation shows that it is not given and finished once and for all but is an ongoing process.[217]

5. 2 Character as Vision

Moral life in general and moral character in particular is a matter of vision. According to Hauerwas, "[w]e are [become] as we come to see and as that seeing becomes enduring in our intentionality."[218] For the notion of moral life (character) as vision, Hauerwas is indebted to Iris Murdoch, an Irish-born novelist and philosopher.[219] For

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[212] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 156.

[213] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 50.

[214] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 220.

[215] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 125, 136. See also, Stanley Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today: Essays on Church, World and Living in Between* (Durham, NC: Labyrinth, 1988) 265.

[216] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 242.

[217] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 120-121.

[218] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 2.

[219] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, xxiii. Hauerwas admits: "Moreover, her [Murdoch] emphasis on vision as the hallmark of the moral life struck me as exactly what was missing from most accounts of the virtues... She … helped me understand how the virtues teach us to see the world without illusion or false hope." (xxiii) See also, Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 70. Brad J. Kallenburg too points out: "Murdoch's analysis of the limits of human

Murdoch, the important question in morality is not: What should I do? Rather, "How can I make myself better?"[220] In this process of bettering oneself, the role of vision is important. According to Murdoch, when we evaluate a person, we are not just concentrating on how s/he responded to a particular moral situation rather we assess him/her by considering his/her 'total vision of life.'[221]

Vision in moral life can be understood as a person's basic attitude, his/her way of seeing the world and reality which has been formed or influenced by the particular community. Hauerwas writes, "… it [vision] is a way of attending to the world. It is learning "to see" the world under the mode of the divine [good]."[222] This vision enables one to see reality (the good) without deception and illusion. It is important to note that in Hauerwas' ethical project, there is no distinction between a moral person and his/her moral vision. His/her vision and who s/he is are the same. Katongole makes it clearer as he points out that "the *virtue* of *looking* is not momentary. It is shaped by a habitual practice of attention, by which *the quality and object of one's attention themselves shape and reveal the sort of person one is, a realization that confirms that vision and formation of the character are simply two aspects of the same conception of ethics*."[223] Hence, the quality of one's vision plays a pivotal role in the making of who s/he is. Vision and character, as Katongole saw, are two dimensions of moral life and consequently not contradictory, but are two sides of the same coin.[224] Both need each other for the moral life. Grasping this point, Hauerwas strongly maintains the need of vision in moral life because "we can act only in the world we see."[225] Moral life is a way of *seeing* the world;[226] and an ongoing attempt of having correct vision in life and of world.[227] The metaphor of vision enables one to see the moral situation and reality correctly and truthfully and also to

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knowledge drove Hauerwas to construe moral life as an aesthetic mode of 'seeing.'" See, Brad Jeffrey Kallenberg, *Ethics as Grammar: Changing the Postmodern Subject* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2001) 54.

[220] Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971) 8.

[221] Iris Murdoch, "Vision and Choice in Morality," *Christian Ethics and Contemporary Philosophy*, ed. Ian T. Ramsey (London: SCM, 1966) 195-218, 202.

[222] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 45-46.

[223] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 81, emphasis added.

[224] See, Katongole, *Agent's Perspective*, 53. The way we have been arguing that the moral person and his/her vision are the same, it is hoped, enables us to understand how character works or how character can be seen as vision. Craig R. Dykstra too agrees with this point as he writes: "Action follows vision; and vision depends on character." See, Craig R. Dykstra, *Vision and Character: A Christian Educator's Alternative to Kohlberg* (New York/Ramsey: Paulist, 1975) as quoted in Gilbert C. Meilaender, *The Theory and Practice of Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1984) 93. Meilaender too holds the same opinion. He says: "Moral understanding depends on vision which depends on character; yet character can be shaped only in accord with a prior vision." See, Meilaender, *The Theory and Practice of Virtue*, 97. He continues: "Moral understanding and action depend on vision; vision depends on character; character must be shaped by those who come before us" (99). According to Bruce C. Birch & Larry L. Rasmussen, our 'being' shapes our 'seeing,' and this gives us a particular orientation in life. The result is that we concentrate only on certain concerns, activities and horizons. See, Bruce C. Birch & Larry L. Rasmussen, *Bible and Ethics in Christian Life* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing, 1976) 89.

[225] Stanley Hauerwas, "The Demand of a Truthful Story: Ethics and the Pastoral Task," *Chicago Studies* 21, no. 1 (1982) 59-71, 65. See also, Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 30 and Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny*, 116.

[226] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 29.

[227] Kallenberg, *Ethics as Grammar*, 51. See also, Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 31.

form a person making moral life not a life of radical choices.[228] One's vision is dialectically related to his/her character. According to Hauerwas, "[m]an's capacity for self-determination is dependent on his ability to envision and fix his attention on certain descriptions and form his action (and thus himself) in accordance with them. A man's character is largely the result of such sustained attention."[229] The kind of person s/he becomes is largely dependent on the kind of vision s/he has. This is also true if we put it just the other way, i.e., how one comes *to see* is an office of how one comes *to be* since one's seeing necessarily is determined by how one's basic images are manifested by the self - i.e., in one's character.[230]

Vision is crucial in illustrating 'what is going on' and in setting the platform for moral action.[231] In facing the ethical problems, moral vision enables the moral agent to respond in an ethical way. As Katongole observes, for all morally problematic questions such as: "Should I have an abortion/should an unhappy marriage be continued for the sake of the children? Should an elderly relation be sent away to a nursing home? Should this retarded child be cared for or 'be sent to sleep,?'"[232] the ethically right answer would be the "exercise of justice and realism and *really looking*."[233] So this *really looking* determines who we are or contributes to our character. Thus from viewing moral life as a life of vision, two conclusions can be drawn. (*i*) When vision becomes essential to moral life, moral life is not primarily concerned with decisions the moral person has to make in life. (*ii*) This moral vision provides the moral person the inspiration to pay attention to everyday life rather than occasional crises.[234] The role of vision understood as character or how vision contributes to our character and eventually to moral life can be better understood by analyzing the relation between vision and imagination.

5. 2. 1 Vision and Imagination

Vision and imagination are centrally related since "imagination is the active, inward assimilation of the insights of vision."[235] This embodying of wisdom of vision gained through imagination paves the way for forming one's character.[236] Vision forms one's attitude and imagination.[237] It is also important to see "vision is the result of moral

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[228] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, xii.

[229] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 58.

[230] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 2.

[231] O'Neil, *Who Should Be We?*, 240.

[232] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 81.

[233] Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, 91, emphasis added.

[234] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 47. See also, Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny*, 117.

[235] Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny*, 118.

[236] Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny*, 119.

[237] Philip J. Rossi, "Narrative, Worship and Ethics: Empowering Images or the Shape of Christian Moral Life," *Journal of Religious ethics* 7, no. 2 (1979) 239-248, 240.

imagination….”[238] Mary Elsbernd and Reimund Bieringer too argue for the importance of vision in the transformation of lives. This transformation by way of vision takes place (*i*) by engaging the imagination, (*ii*) vision opens up the ways of challenging the status quo and potential for giving alternative to the present reality, (*iii*) since all are capable of having vision, all have significant role in the transformative process and (*iv*) vision is capable of providing integration in life.[239]

Imagination is the primary medium through which we live morally.[240] Imagination, as a process of absorbing the insight of vision, offers the moral agent new opportunities of seeing and behaving. To be imaginative in moral life means to see new possibilities within a world of convictions, visions, obligations and principles.[241] Imagination in ethics is the process by which persons allow their vision to shape their moral lives.[242] Imagination as a disciplined seeing enlarges our vision and brings good results and improves the moral life.[243] “Imagination involves a ‘re-*vision*-ing’ of the basic symbols and notions within a language, [narrative tradition] which provide new and richer visions of reality, away from the world of fantasy and social convention.”[244] Subsequently, imagination as a process of enabling one to live out his/her narrative tradition strongly checks the ego’s tendency to be centered in his/her world. Hauerwas clarifies:

> Imagination is not a power that somehow exists ‘in the mind,’ but is a pointer to a community’s constant willingness to expose itself to the innovations required by its convictions…. Similarly, the world is seen differently when construed by such an imaginative community, for the world is not simply there, always ready to be known, but rather is known well only when known through the practices and habits of community constituted by a truthful story.[245]

Moreover according to Hauerwas, the virtues of hope and courage are needed in imagination since imagination creates something unexpected or disturbs our usual way of seeing.[246] For Hauerwas, as we have seen, the whole thrust of ethics rests on the

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[238] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 42.

[239] Mary Elsbernd & Reimund Bieringer, *When Love Is Not Enough: A Theo-Ethics of Justice* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2002) 155-156.

[240] Hauerwas, *Against Nations*, 59.

[241] Heeley, *The Ethical Methodology of Stanley Hauerwas*, 149.

[242] Benedict M. Guevin, “The Moral Imagination and the Shaping Power of the Parables,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 17, no. 1 (1989) 63-79, 73. See also, Daniel C. Maguire, *The Moral Choice* (New York: Doubleday, 1978) 189-217.

[243] By the notion of imagination, one may get the false impression that it is something that makes us remain in a world of fantasy. This type of thinking has no relevance in Hauerwas. When we analyse a great artwork we see the unavoidable factor of imagination together with discipline (may be of long years) in bringing it into existence. See, Stanley Hauerwas & Philip Foubert, “Disciplined Seeing: Imagination and the Moral Life,” *New Catholic World* 225, no. 1350 (1982) 250-253, 250.

[244] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 92.

[245] Stanley Hauerwas & Philip D. Kenneson, “Jesus and/as the non-violent Imagination of the Church,” *Pro Ecclesia* 1, no. 1 (1992) 76-88, 81.

[246] Hauerwas & Foubert, “Disciplined Seeing,” 251. This point is further clarified as he continues: “Often those who have acquired the skills of their specific craft fail to bring new insight to their work not because they lack talent, but because they lack hope and courage. Artists must have a profound confidence that their efforts to stretch their craft

question of what we should be (what we are becoming), or more precisely, on the question of what we do should be in accordance with who we are and for this imagination is needed.[247] If people are ready to receive the assistance of imagination in their moral building they will realize that what is important is not merely making moral decisions but a way of seeing things. Any ethical system that does not approach moral principles without imagination makes the interpretation of moral principles sterile and fixed in a minimalistic vision. Imagination not only helps us to have insights of vision, but also improves our vision. Richard Kearney also supports this idea. According to him, "[i]magination plays a pivotal role in providing us with ethical *vision* in that it enables us to see essential connections between our actions and their ends *qua* good and evil."[248]

Hauerwas also develops imagination as an instrument that helps human beings to be faithful to their convictions and character. Imagination is not flight from convictions but a way of being faithful to convictions. The use of imagination to test whether one remains faithful or not to the convictions of the community to which s/he belongs is known as casuistry.[249] Hauerwas explains casuistry as "the mode of reflection a community employs to test imaginatively the often unnoticed and unacknowledged implications of its narrative commitments."[250] In other words, "[c]asuistry is the mode of wisdom developed by a community to test past innovations as well as anticipate future challenges."[251] It is a way by which a community makes sure the practices which it cherishes are in tune with its basic orientation and conviction.[252] That is, it consists in reflecting imaginatively on the question whether people are faithfully living the implications of their narrative commitment.

Imagination can also render a plan to reach out to the virtuous lives of the community and can have its bearing on the lives of its members i.e., contributing to their character, because our moral convictions depend on the experience and insight of the people (narrative tradition).[253] William C. Spohn asserts the role of imagination in moral life as

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will broaden the vision and enlarge the lives of others." (251) He goes on: "The task of imagining, of skilful revisioning, must be thoroughly disciplined by the virtues of hope and courage if it is to be sustained." (251)

[247] Heeley, *The Ethical Methodology of Stanley Hauerwas*, 182.

[248] Richard Kearney, *Poetics of Modernity: Towards a Hermeneutic Imagination* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities, 1995) 103.

[249] Here, it is good to have some clarity of the notion of casuistry. In the language of Hauerwas, casuistry cannot be limited simply to concentration of "cases" or situations of moral problems. Rather, it calls for the need of testing our way of life in an imaginative way in the background of the narrative of the community so that we can improve our moral life if we have gone away from the truthful narratives of the community. See, Stanley Hauerwas, *In Good Company: The Church as Polis* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1995) 170.

[250] Hauerwas, "Casuistry as a Narrative Art," 381.

[251] Hauerwas, *In Good Company*, 181.

[252] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 120.

[253] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 133. Hauerwas explains also how imagination works in Christian context. The virtues of the Christian community have their roots upon a God who had been manifested by the stories of Israel, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. When an individual looks imaginatively to the virtuous persons of his community living in faithfulness to the narrative, there is the possibility that s/he gets an inspiration to live that

he writes, "Jesus of Nazareth lived a particular human life that has universal meaning; the analogical *imagination* recognizes how to be faithful to Jesus in ever new situations."[254] In this sense imagination enables people to go back to the original narrative of the community, leading to moral life. So imagination is really a challenge that helps and makes us be faithful in our ethical lives.[255] Thus, imagination (casuistry) always makes us connected with our narrative so that we can make sure that what we do is in line with narrative[256] and forms a good character. Consequently, vision and imagination by mutually collaborating contribute to moral character and its betterment.

5. 2. 2 Vision and Moral Particularity

Hauerwas' concept of moral life (character) as vision stresses particularity within the moral life, or in other words, our vision is formed by particular narrative tradition.[257] "Vision is a *learned* skill that is acquired through participation in the social-linguistic practices of a way of life."[258] The importance given to particularity within the moral life makes us all the more aware that moral life is not based on universally accepted rational principles that can be applied in every particular case undergone by individuals. Rather, it involves an understanding of the particular individual in his/her vision formed in his/her particular narrative contexts and situations.[259] Moral particularity understood as the moral life emerging from a particular community works as the authority in forming

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narrative faithfully, which is the original and truthful narrative of the community. There is also the need of testing virtuous lives, which are the inspiration for the other members of the community for imagination, against the life of Jesus so that those individuals can be sure that they are having a truthful imagination.

[254] William C. Spohn, *Go and Do Likewise*: *Jesus and Ethics* (New York: Continuum, 1999) 186.

[255] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 121.

[256] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 130. See also, Guevin, "The Moral Imagination and the Shaping Power of the Parables," 64. Kearney's idea of imagination goes in line with the thinking of Hauerwas. According to Kearney, imagination helps "to realise our debt to the historical past; to cultivate a notion of self-identity; and to persuade and evaluate our action." See, Kearney, *Poetics of Modernity*, 92. Moreover he continues that "narrative imagination provides us with figural reconstruction of the past that enables us to see and hear things long since gone. On the other, it stands-in-for, by standing for, these things as events that actually happened. Here we encounter the right of the past, as it once was, to incite and rectify, our narrative retellings of history. We recall our debt to those who have lived, suffered and died."(95) He further notes that imagination helps us to relate with others by creating an 'enlarged mentality,' and this makes to imagine the self in the place of other (106), and "this ethical imagination finally resists using narrative in a totalling manner. It obviates the temptation of *grand narrative* by retrieving and projecting 'Fragmentary narratives' whose very incompleteness serves as a critical reminder of their own *narrative origins*." (208) Robert W. Wall points out another benefit of imagination as he says, "it is true that the imagination of the moral agent enables a keener perception of moral dilemmas." See, Robert W. Wall, review of *Christian Ethics & Imagination: A Theological Inquiry* by Philip S. Keane, *Theology Today* 42 (1986) 401-404, 402.

[257] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 71. See also, Meilaender, *The Theory and Practice of Virtue*, 69, Marcia Y. Riggs, "Character Education and Moral Education for Liberation," *Character and Scripture: Moral Formation, Community and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. William P. Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2002) 410-422, 414.

[258] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, xii.

[259] Stanley Hauerwas, "Learning to See Red Wheelbarrows: On Vision and Relativism," *Journal of American Academy of Religion* 45, no. 2 (1977) 225, 644-55, 225. Here we notice the crucial difference between Murdoch and Hauerwas in the process of obtaining vision. While for Murdoch, vision is attained by a sort of mystic and individualistic effort, the role of particular narrative tradition is unavoidable in Hauerwas. Here Hauerwas' point of argument is that self-deception that obscures vision can only be overcome by "being made part of a community with practices that offer the transformation and reordering of our lives and relationships." See, Stanley Hauerwas, *Wilderness Wanderings: Probing Twentieth-Century Theology and Philosophy* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1997) 165.

its members' authority. Thus, the notion of moral particularity in the formation of vision is synonymous with the notion of authority in the making of vision according to Hauerwas. In other words, tradition becomes the authority in forming the vision.[260] This concept of authority does not involve any kind of authoritarianism. But it is a process of initiation and training into a certain form of vision so that it may contribute to the betterment of moral life. Here, the moral person may face the problem or objection since s/he is initiated into a particular narrative that s/he may not be able to develop his/her own narrative or language by which s/he envisions the world. However, this objection is groundless since "truthful languages are those that help one to grasp that has been so determined, but still give one the critical skill to challenge the boundaries of that language. Such truthful languages are not 'ready-made,' but are the result of a communal and individual struggle against conventional forms of consolation by constant re-appropriation of the language."[261] Hence the possibility of room for critical approach to moral particularity and authority opens the door for personal narratives and saves the vision of the community from self-deception, which in turn keeps away the individual's vision from distortion. Therefore, the quality of one's vision depends on the type of person one has become through the narrative.[262] Put otherwise, moral particularity or authority plays the pivotal role in determining the quality of one's vision.

5. 2. 3 Vision and Moral Training

In order to have correct vision in moral life, one is to be trained and disciplined to see by the central metaphors and symbols that constitute community's character and conviction.[263] By mentioning clearly defined types of training needed for certain specific types of jobs, Hauerwas shows the importance of moral training in vision. This training in vision is like the work of a carpenter who needs such training in his work or like the training needed for a medical doctor.[264] It is like the training needed for a good bricklayer.[265] It is also similar to the training needed for the scholar in organizing a community in the university.[266] What is important in this training is the socio-linguistic

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[260] Stanley Hauerwas, *After Christendom?: How the Church is to behave if Freedom, Justice, and a Christian Nation are Bad Ideas* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1991) 102.

[261] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 103.

[262] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 58. According to Murdoch, " … personal fantasy, the tissue of self-aggrandising and consoling wishes and dreams which prevents one from seeing what is there outside one" is the real enemy of the lack of clarity in vision. See, Murdoch, *Sovereignty of Good*, 64. As a result moral life consists in unselfing through moral particularity.

[263] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 2. See also, Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 30, Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 233, Hauerwas, "The Demand of a Truthful Story," 65-66.

[264] Stanley Hauerwas, "Medicine as a Tragic Profession," *Truthfulness and Tragedy*: *Further Investigations into Christian Ethics*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas, Richard Bondi, David Burrell (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1977) 184-202.

[265] Hauerwas, *After Christendom*, 93-112.

[266] Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today*, 237-252.

context of the training in vision. In Murdoch's terminology, this discipline and training needed for vision is known as attention, and she affirms that the moral person's ability to act to a great extent depends upon "the quality of our habitual objects of attention."[267] Katongole too affirms that "the *virtue* of looking is not momentary. It is shaped by a habitual practice of attention. ... the work of attention continuously goes on and imperceptibly builds up structure of value around us and forms us into particular and distinctive sort of individuals."[268] The training, in this regard, cannot be set apart from the "kind of people we are, and the way we have learned to construe the world through the *language*, habits and feeling."[269]

When priority is given to the formation of character in moral life, if the moral life has as its goal the formation of the self or character, the training of one's vision to see reality correctly is important since we can act only in the world we see. This moral training necessary for acquiring a correct vision also points to the fact that moral life is an ongoing life[270] and even enlarges and elucidates our vision of life and reality.[271] It also enables the moral person to free his/her vision from neurotic self-centeredness.[272] Further, as Richard H. Niebuhr opines, we can understand ethics as a response in which the prior question is not 'what should I do?' but rather, "what is going on?" It is only by understanding what is going on that one can respond fittingly.[273] So if one is able to see correctly what is going on, then one can act well morally, doing justice to one's moral character.

5. 3 Character as Virtue

Hauerwas connects Aristotle's notion of ἕξις (*hexis*) with character. He interprets ἕξις as the "habitual dispositions constitutive of the virtues."[274] But Aristotalian notion of ἕξις is slightly different from that of Hauerwas. Aristotle interprets the noun ἕξις as the substantive of the verb ἔχειν which has wider semantic scope in its general sense.[275]

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[267] Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, 56. Following Murdoch, Hauerwas also agrees on this point. See also, Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 81. It is obvious that regarding the notion of 'attention,' Murdoch is influenced by Simone Weil. Murdoch says that attention is "the characteristic and proper mark of the active moral agent." See, Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, 34. See also, Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 41.

[268] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 81.

[269] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom,* 117. While explaining the importance of training, Arne Rasmusson affirms the significance of saints in moral life. Persons can train their moral vision after the example of saints. See, Arne Rasmusson, "Ecclesiology and Ethics: The Difficulties of Ecclesial Moral Reflection," *The Ecumenical Review* 52, no. 2 (2000) 180-194 186.

[270] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 42.

[271] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 44. By showing the importance of vision in moral life, Hauerwas is really attacking those ethical systems that concentrate primarily on decisions and choices.

[272] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 102.

[273] Niebuhr, *Responsible Self*, 63.

[274] Hauerwas, "Virtue and Character," 2526.

[275] The verb ἔχειν can have the following meaning: (*i*) to possess something, (*ii*) to have dominion over something, (*iii*) to continue in static state. See, Henry G. Liddel & Robert Scott, "ἔχειν," *Greek-English Lexicon* (1968) 749-751 and Herman Hanse, "ἔχειν," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 2 (1964) 816-832, 816-817.

ἕξις is one of the ten categories of Aristotle.[276] He writes in *Metaphysics*, τὸ ἔχειν λέγεται πολλαχῶς ἕνα μὲν τρόπον τὸ ἄγειν κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ φύσιν ἤ κατὰ τήν αὐτοῦ ὁρμήν. According to this statement, the verb ἔχειν from which ἕξις is derived, means to treat according to one's own nature or impulse.[277] Moreover, ἕξις denotes the firmly fixed mastery of the mind, obtained by repeated and habitual actions. Once attained it remains within the person ever present at least in its potential form. The term ἕξις is usually translated to the Latin equivalent *habēre*.[278] Thus, we can observe that Aristotalian ἕξις stands for habit or the state of mind attained through repeated action. It can be any habit, i.e., need not necessarily be always virtues. Hauerwas interprets ἕξις exclusively in the sense of virtues that are attained through habitual actions. However, Hauerwas' interpretation of ἕξις cannot be completely ruled out, because Aristotalian understanding of ἕξις is also used to denote the relationship of man with God and fellow beings.[279]

Based on his modified notion of the Aristotalian ἕξις, Hauerwas argues that character suggests the stability needed for the acquisition of different virtues in an enduring way.[280] Following this argument we subsequently come without any ambiguity to see that character contributes to moral life by way of the following and practising of virtues in the sense that character provides the necessary condition for the attainment of virtues. Virtues are dimensions of character.[281] Because of the close interconnectedness between character and virtue, Robert C. Roberts writes, "[i]f we have a good understanding of what a virtue is, then to study character just *is* to study the virtues, and to study the virtues is to study character."[282] There is no unanimous and unambiguous moral definition on virtues. The most important fact that various definitions of virtue bring to our attention is that any account of virtue is tradition-dependent.[283] The Greek term

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[276] Aristoteles, *Aristotle's Metaphysics* I, ed. W. D. Ross (Oxford: Clarendon, 1924) Δ. 23, 1023ᵃ 8, 13, 17, 23. It is a fact that Aristotle does not stress on the number of the categories and he even allows categories to overlap. See, Alan Lacey, "Categories," *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (1995) 125-126.

[277] Aristoteles, *Aristotle's Metaphysics* I, 338.

[278] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Martin Ostwald (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1975) 308-309.

[279] Liddel & Scott, "ἔχειν," 749-751 and Hanse, "ἔχειν" 816-817.

[280] Hauerwas, "Virtue and Character," 2526.

[281] Robert C. Roberts, "Character Ethics and Moral Wisdom," *Faith and Philosophy* 15, no. 4 (1998) 478-499, 483. Fergusson would say that moral character is moulded by the development of virtues. See, Fergusson, *Community, Liberalism and Christian Ethics*, 51.

[282] Roberts, "Character Ethics and Moral Wisdom," 483.

[283] For a short analysis of the various definitions on virtue, see, Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 112. We do accept and agree on the different notions and meanings of virtue. These different notions of virtue make us come to an understanding that any account of virtue is dependent on its context. And any account of virtue would take into consideration the particular tradition and history of the community. See, Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 112. MacIntyre too affirms that there are different and even rival understandings of virtues. He clarifies: "Virtue is a quality which enables an individual to discharge his/her social role (Homer); a virtue is a quality which enables an individual to move towards the achievement of the specifically human *telos* (τέλος), whether natural and supernatural (Aristotle, the New Testament and Aquinas); a virtue is a quality which has utility in achieving earthly and heavenly success (Franklin)." See, MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 185. Here we observe that after MacIntyre's *After*

ἀρετή (*aretê*), used for virtue, means that which enables a thing to carry out its function well.[284] Virtue, in its broadest sense, means that which makes capable something to perform its function well.[285] Hauerwas depends on the Aristotelian notion of virtue and views (understands) virtue only within the context of a community. When we consider character under human category, we can understand virtue as that which enables human beings to perform their function well.

5. 3. 1 Virtuous Life: More than Embodying Particular Virtues

When we consider character as virtue, it does not mean character as the mere cultivation of specific individual virtues in life, but rather as Hauerwas points out, "[v]irtue seems to denote a general stance of the self that has more remote normative significance than do the individual virtues."[286] Virtues are skills that enable him/her to live faithfully according to the narrative of the community.[287] By the notion of a virtuous person or a person of character, we understand that it "describes a self formed in a more fundamental and substantive manner than the individual virtues seem to denote."[288] "… if we consider the notion of *character* in relation to the virtues, we see that it directs us not to any particular virtues, but rather to the integrity of the self over time."[289] David Fergusson holds the view that every particular account of virtues is to be connected to the idea that how the life acquires meaning and shape.[290] Conly too affirms: "What seems to be needed, more than the cultivation of any particular disposition, is a kind of general disposition, is a kind of general stability of character."[291] Hauerwas sees this same understanding in Thomas Aquinas too as Hauerwas evaluates: "Aquinas … maintains that if anyone has 'perfect moral virtue' - that is, a 'habit that inclines us to do a good deed well' - then they have all the virtue. He thus assumes that perfect moral virtue necessarily provides a unity to the self, since there is no possibility of the virtues

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Virtue he has turned from Aristotelianism to Thomism. See, Fergusson, *Community, Liberalism and Christian Ethics*, 109-137.

[284] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 112. In the Homeric poems, the word ἀρετή is used for the excellence of any kind. See, MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 122.

[285] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* 1106a15-20, 41.

[286] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 112. See also, Peter Sedgwick, "The Compulsion to be Good: Aquinas on the Formation of Human Character," *Theology* 91, no. 741 (1988) 194-201, 195. Writing on Hauerwas, Reno writes, "Virtue denotes the qualities of character that establish continuity and integrity in lives changing for the better." See, R. R. Reno, "Stanley Hauerwas," *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, ed. Peter Scott & William T. Cavanaugh (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004) 302-316, 305.

[287] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 115.

[288] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 112. Here, we do not think that a virtuous person has all the individual virtues (or we do not hold that a virtuous person does not have the unity of all the virtues), but again we affirm as virtue the general moral stand of the person.

[289] Stanley Hauerwas & Charles Pinches, *Christians among Virtues: Theological Conversation with Ancient and Modern Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1997) 137. See also, Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 12-13.

[290] Fergusson, *Community, Liberalism and Christian Ethics*, 113.

[291] Conly, "Flourishing and Failure of the Ethics of Virtue," 93.

conflicting."[292] For James Griffin as well, virtues are right dispositions that contributes to moral character and thus eventually to moral life.[293] Consequently more than the acquisition of particular virtues, what is more importantly and significantly meant by 'virtue' is a moral stand of the self, to hold one's own life as his/her own. Moreover, if ethical analysis is focused on individual virtues, it will not clarify how a trait that is designed for a particular kind of life-situation can have implications for our attitudes and behavior in other kinds of situation.[294]

5. 3. 2 Virtue and Practice

Virtues as the general moral stand of the person are developed only when virtues are practiced in a community[295] equipping one to receive the good internal to practices.[296] Virtues are like skills requiring constant practice.[297] "The concept of virtue is integrally related to the social concept of a practice."[298] Virtue can be seen as "trained interests and commitments for a way of life."[299] One becomes virtuous by performing virtuous activities.[300] Gilbert C. Meilaender too stresses the importance of practice in virtues as he observes: "Our being is shaped by our doing."[301] "To say that one has character is to

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[292] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 142. Aquinas mentions the unity of the virtues when he deals with cardinal virtues. See, Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 61, 4, Virtue (Summa Theologiae, 23) trans. W. D. Hughes (Cambridge: Black Friars, 1969) 125-129.

[293] James Griffin, "Virtue Ethics and Environs," *Social Philosophy & Policy Foundation* 15 (1998) 56-70, 61. For Meilaender too, virtues are dispositions to act in specific ways. See, Meilaender, *The Theory and Practice of Virtue*, 7. For Thomas W. Ogletree, "[v]irtue consists in patterns of behaviour, dispositions and attitudes, and excellence of character that incline me and enable me to promote … good." See, Thomas W. Ogletree, "Values, Obligations, and Virtues: Approaches to Bio-Medical Ethics," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 4, no. 1 (1976) 105-130, 113. According to Lee H. Yearley, "[a] virtue is a disposition to act, desire, and feel that involves the exercise of judgement and leads to a recognisable human excellence, an instance of human flourishing." See, Lee H. Yearley, "Recent Works on Virtue," *Religious Studies Review* 16 no. 1 (1990) 1-9, 2.

[294] Kupperman, *Character*, 107.

[295] Hauerwas & Pinches, *Christians among the Virtues*, xi. By making a shift from a more individualistic account of character to a stronger communitarian dimension, Hauerwas all the more stresses the indispensable role of community (for the development of character) for the practice of virtues. Hauerwas writes: "Though I have stressed the relational character of the self, this is not sufficient to indicate the centrality of a *particular community* … for the development [and the practice of the virtues] of the kind of character required for Christians." See, Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, xxxi, emphasis added. See, also, MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 126-127.

[296] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Theology, Ethics, and the Ethics of Medicine and Health Care: Comments on Papers by Novak, Mouw, Roach, Cahill, and Hartt," *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 4, no. 4 (1979) 435-446, 437. The good that we aim by being virtuous in Aristotelian terms is known as εὐδαιμονια (*eudaimonia*), which can be translated as blessedness, happiness and prosperity. See, MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 148. But interpreting *The Nicomachean Ethics* I, 4, 1095a 19 and X, 7, 1177a 11 Gerard J. Hughes views eudaimonia as the 'fulfilled life' and 'living a worthwhile life.' See, Gerard J. Hughes, *Aristotle on Ethics*, Routledge Philosophy Guidebooks (London: Routledge, 2001) 22-23, 184.

[297] Hauerwas, *Community of Character*, 115.

[298] Fergusson, *Community, Liberalism and Christian Ethics*, 52.

[299] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 40.

[300] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1105b5-11, 39-40. See also, Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 48.

[301] Meilaender, *The Theory and Practice of Virtue*, 104-105. He continues: "Our virtues … can be developed over time through habitual behaviour. They provide the self with certain continuity even in the midst of its growth and development. They suggest when relatively well developed, a kind of self-mastery, a moral agent upon whom we may rely, who can be depended upon to display the virtues in his behaviour. From these perspective a certain confidence in moral education-that attempt to shape being by doing-is warranted." (119)

say that he has acquired certain types of habits called virtues."[302] One can be virtuous only by "doing what virtuous people do in the manner that they do it. Therefore one can only learn how to be virtuous, to be like Jesus, by learning from others how that is done. To be like Jesus requires that I become part of a community that practices virtues, not that I copy his life point by point."[303] Drawing on Aristotle, MacIntyre also emphasizes the need for practice in acquiring the virtues of character.[304] It can be said that character enables one to recognize the good, and virtues are the keys to achieve that good by the practice of virtue.[305] "… knowing the constitutive practices of Christianity tells us a great deal about how Christians ought to live."[306] MacIntyre, who was an eye-opener[307] to Hauerwas in many occasions, has made more clear what Hauerwas wanted to say concerning the concept of the practice of virtue. By the practice of virtue MacIntyre understands:

> … any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.[308]

Fergusson too opines, "[v]irtues are integrally related to practices in that they are those acquired qualities which enable us to achieve those goods which are constitutive of practices."[309] Hence, a practice consists of compliance to discipline leading to standards of excellence and realization of goods.[310] In this process of practice, the awareness of one's own performance as inadequate urges one to accept the authority of those practices accepted as the best that is at present existing and thus enables one to obtain the good internal to the practice. This does not limit one to be in touch with the present practitioners. Rather, there

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[302] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 68.

[303] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 76. In this context, see also, Stanley Hauerwas & William H. Willimon (eds.), *Where Resident Aliens Live: Exercises for Christian Practice* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1996) 59-118 and Stanley Hauerwas & William H. Willimon, *The Truth about God: Ten Commandments in Christian Life* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1999) 13.

[304] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 154. For the practice of virtues, φρονέσις (*phronesis* = practical reasoning) is necessary, and we here do not disregard that practical intelligence demands the knowledge of good. See, Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1144a35, 170.

[305] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues*, Paul Carus Lectures 20 (London: Duckworth, 1999) 92.

[306] Brand J. Kallenberg, "The Master Argument of MacIntyre's *After Virtue,*" *Virtue and Practice in Christian Tradition*, ed. Nancey Murphy, Brand J. Kallenberg, and Mark Thiessen Nation (Harrisburg: Trinity International, 1997) 7-29, 22.

[307] We have already noted MacIntyre's influence on Hauerwas. Hauerwas admits that MacIntyre could help him to clarify certain ideas in which he struggled. See, Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, xx.

[308] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 187, gives some examples of 'practice:' The game of football and chess, farming, painting, music etc. By the practice in chess one may obtain goods specific to play chess such as "analytical skill, strategic imagination and competitive intensity and a new set of reasons" needed to surpass in the game of chess. See, MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 188.

[309] Fergusson, *Community, Liberalism and Christian Ethics*, 113.

[310] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 190.

is the need of relationship in every practice, not only with the present practitioners, but also with its past as well as future generations. MacIntyre writes:

> … practices always have histories and that at any given moment what a practice is depends on a mode of understanding it which has been transmitted often through many generations. And thus insofar as the virtues sustain the relationships required for practices, they have to sustain relationships to the past-and to the future-as well as in the present. But the traditions through which particular practices are transmitted and reshaped never exist in isolation for larger social traditions.[311]

Consequently, by engaging through these historically constituted traditions' practices, individuals achieve the good particular to each tradition. In other words, these practices play a significant role in making us who we are. It makes us claim our life as our own.[312] As a result it leads to happiness in life.[313] Hauerwas affirms this as he says: "They [virtues] are for him [Aristotle] a set of excellence by which we become capable of making our way; they are those capacities that provide a stability of the self such that happiness can accompany our lives. This happiness, as we have stressed, is not the *result* of virtuous activities but is to be found within their practice, as done by the person of virtue."[314] Therefore, character as providing the stability for obtaining various virtues, and by practicing these virtues enable one to an integrated ethical life.

5. 4 Character as the Form of Our Agency

According to Hauerwas' ethical point of view, it is important to see the relation between the agent and his/her action so that we may be able to do justice to the agent, to see the intentions and circumstances under which s/he did the particular act. Keeping this internal relation between the agent and his/her actions, what is all the more important is how the agent forms himself/herself so that we are able to see the quality of his/her action. This aspect of the quality of the action stresses the point that our readiness to assess an act makes no sense unless we first engage in a certain way of life i.e., in character.[315] It implies that character determines the quality of our action, and one's action in turn reveals the sort of person one is.[316] Hauerwas says that character is the source of our agency, i.e.,

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[311] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 221.

[312] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 134.

[313] Aristotle says that "happiness … requires completeness in virtues as well as a complete life time." See, Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1100a 5, 23. Moreover it is to be made clear that to be virtuous is a long process and this virtue can be acquired only in the context of a community. Here, it is clear that virtues are indispensable for the attainment of happiness in life, according to Aristotle. Here we referred to Aristotle's concept of happiness only in the sense of showing that how virtue (character) is important in moral life. See, Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1100b15-20, 25. Analysing the concept of happiness in Aristotle, Hauerwas and Pinches opine that virtues are not the means of happiness rather they are the form of happiness. See, Hauerwas & Pinches, *Christians among the Virtues*, 17.

[314] Hauerwas & Pinches, *Christians among the Virtues*, 20. It is to be noted that for Aristotle, virtue is secondary to the good life for man. See, MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 186.

[315] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 61. See also, Kyle D. Fedler, *Exploring Christian Ethics: Biblical Foundations for Morality* (Luoisville, KY: Westminster, 2006) 37-38.

[316] Joseph Dunne, *Back to the Rough Ground: Phronesis and Techne in Modern Philosophy and in Aristotle* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1993) 263.

our capability to act with integrity.[317] Concurrently, Richard M. Gula opines, "… actions are always expressions of a person."[318] Katongole affirms this as well. "… the action one performs and indeed the very way one describes an action, is intimately bound up with the sort of person the agent is."[319] In forming and determining his/her action, the agent forms himself/herself as well.[320] When we engage in an action in one way or other it signifies our character. By action we are forming ourselves.[321] Agency is that which names our ability to inhabit our character.[322] So Hauerwas sees agency as compatible with the notion of character. He writes: "Our character is not merely the result of our choices, but rather the form of our agency takes through our beliefs and intentions."[323] In other words, being agents involve the fact that "we have the power to be one thing rather than another, in short, to be persons of character."[324] This is exactly the same when MacIntyre says, "The self inhibits a character whose unity is given as the unity of a character."[325]

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[317] Stanley Hauerwas, "Agency: Going Forward by Looking Back," *Christian Ethics: Problems and Prospects*, ed. Lisa Sowle Cahill & James F. Childress (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim 1996) 1985-195, 187.

[318] Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith*, 7. See also, Charles E. Curran, "Method in Moral Theology: An Overview From an American Perspective," *Introduction to Christian Ethics: A Reader*, ed. Ronald P. Hamel & Kenneth R. Himes (New York: Paulist, 1989) 90-105, 98, Colin Gunton, "The Church as a School of Virtue? Human Freedom in Trinitarian Frame Work," *Faithfulness and Fortitude: In Conversation with the Theological Ethics of Stanley Hauerwas*, ed. Mark Thiessen Nation & Samuel Wells (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000) 211-231, 219, E. Clinton Gardner, "Character, Virtue, and Responsibility," *Encounter* 44, no. 4 (1983) 315-339, 322 and John Emeka Anosike, *Formation of Conscience: A Moral Theological Problem A Study in the Context of Karl Heinz Peschke's Christian Ethics* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000) 206. Hermann Fränkel wrote: "A man and his actions become identical, and he makes himself completely and adequately comprehend in them; he has no hidden depths … in [the epics] factual report of what men do and say, everything that men are, is expressed, because they are no more than what they do and say and suffer." See, Hermann Fränkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy*, trans. M. Hadas & J. Willis (1975) 79 as quoted in MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 122. MacIntyre does not give the publishing place and company of this book.

[319] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 30.

[320] James Gustafson, *Can Ethics be Christian?* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1975) 1-24.

[321] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 116.

[322] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 40.

[323] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 39. See also, Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 21. As noted earlier, the description of character as the form of our agency is in fact a shift from Hauerwas' early understanding of character as the qualification of our self-agency. The problem with this (character as the qualification of our self-agency) understanding of character was that it gave the impression that character is an exterior expression of some deeper reality, the "self." This error occurred because Hauerwas tried to defend a concept of agency in terms of an analysis of action in and of itself, which presupposes that an action in itself is coherent. Because of this concept of character, Hauerwas was criticised. See, Richard Bondi, "The Elements of Character," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 12, no. 2 (1984) 201-218, 204. It was MacIntyre who helped Hauerwas to overcome this false notion of character with his notion of an "intelligible action." MacIntyre argues: "The concept of an intelligible action is a more fundamental concept than that of an action as such. Unintelligible actions are failed candidates for the status of intelligible action; and to lump unintelligible actions and intelligible actions together in a single class of actions and then to characterise action in terms of what items of both sets have in common is to make the mistake of ignoring this. It is also to neglect the central importance of the concept of intelligibility." See, MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 209. This in fact was an eye-opener to Hauerwas, and he rectifies his early understanding of character acknowledging that we cannot defend the idea of "agency in terms of an analysis of action in and for itself" and notes that "character is not so much the qualification but the form our agency." See, Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, xx and Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 38. Katongole too affirms this understanding of character as he observes that "… there can be no self that stands behind agency in order to externally "cause," "own," or "control" its activities as if it were an external agent.'" See, Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 64. See also, Bondi, "Elements of Character," 204. Here, we observe that Smith failed to notice the shift from character as the qualification of our agency to character as the form of our agency in Hauerwas. See, R. Scott Smith, *Virtue Ethics and Moral Knowledge: Philosophy of Language after MacIntyre and Hauerwas* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003) 71.

[324] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 41.

[325] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 217.

Character as the form of our agency also affirms that we are responsible for what we are and what we did.[326] It means that the direct responsibility of what the agent did goes to him/her.[327] The character occupies an irreducible role in determining the quality of the act and the act in return reveals who the person is. This shows the circularity (internal relation) between agency and character.

5. 4. 1 Circularity between Agency (Character) and Action

Hauerwas argues for the inevitable inseparability between the self and his/her actions. For this, Hauerwas is influenced by the Aristotelian notion of circularity between an agent and his/her actions. According to Aristotle, the agent must have three characteristics for his/her act to be virtuous. "First of all, he must know what he is doing, secondly he must choose to act the way he does, and he must choose it for its own sake; and in the third place, the act must spring from a firm and unchangeable character."[328] In the third aspect, we can find the circularity between agent and his/her actions. Aristotle explains that for an act to be virtuous, it should come from a virtuous character (agent), and the latter is possible only by repeatedly doing virtuous acts.[329] For example, one becomes just by discharging just acts, but to do just acts one needs to be just.[330]

When character is understood as the form of our agency, the self or the agent cannot be considered to be external to his/her actions.[331] The agent and his/her actions are always internally related. "Agents form actions, and actions form agents."[332] Lisa Sowle Cahill opines that unlike the early accent of the evaluation of individual acts, catholic moral theology too at present agrees that acts have an intrinsic moral character only within the intentions and life orientations of the agent.[333] Regarding this circularity between character and action Katongole writes:

> The self cannot remain unaffected by what it does, since it cannot stand outside its action and 'cause' them like one atomistic event causing another. Rather, in forming action, the agent forms himself. He develops a lasting disposition (character). Action is thus an agent-related concept. This internal connection between agency and action makes it impossible both to separate the self from his/her agency and to understand action without reference to the agent.[334]

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[326] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 38.

[327] E. Clinton Gardner, "Character, Virtue, and Responsibility," 317.

[328] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* 1105a26-32, 39.

[329] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* 1105a26-35, 39.

[330] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* 1105b5-9, 39.

[331] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 34.

[332] Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny*, 20. Robert Audi opines that actions are important, since it is that with which we understand the values and commitment of the person. See, Robert Audi, "Responsible Action and Virtuous Character," *Ethics* 101 (1991) 304-324.

[333] Cahill, "Christian Character, Biblical Community, and Human Values," 3.

[334] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 41.

So what a person does is inseparable from his/her agency. For an agent, there is no need to postulate a 'cause' for his/her act. The relation between agent and his/her action is not causal but necessary.[335] Hauerwas holds that we need not look after the causes of the action we perform, since we are self-determining agents. "To be a man is to have power of efficient causation. The self does not cause its activities or have its experiences; it simply is its activities as well as its experiences. I *am* rather than *have* … my activities."[336] People are at the mercy of outside forces when they allow themselves for it.[337] Thus, action, Hauerwas argues, is internally pointed to the agent, since s/he has the ability to produce what s/he intends i.e., in line with his/her intentionality.[338] "Action is an agent-dependent concept and must, therefore, bear an essential relation to the agent's intentionality."[339] According to John Dewey, "[t]he key to a correct theory of morality is recognition of the *essential unity of the self and its acts,* if the latter have any moral significance. While errors in theory arise as soon as the self and acts (and their consequence) are separated from each other, and moral worth is attributed to one more than to the other."[340] "… it is through action that we commit ourselves to being one way rather than another."[341]

The circularity between agent and his/her actions can be better understood by the distinction Aristotle makes between πρᾶξις (*praxis*-acting) and ποιέσις (*poiesis*-making).[342] It is clear that in *praxis* the agent is deeply involved in his/her actions while in *poiesis* (e.g., making a shoe) the maker is external to the productive course. By fully

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[335] Hauerwas, "The Self as Story," 79.

[336] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 26-27.

[337] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 55. Here, Hauerwas does not deny that we are destined and influenced in our lives by our particular culture, community, biographical and psychological hereditary, social environment that contribute to the character situations. However, the important point is that "we are also agents who have the capacity to give that destiny a form appropriate to our character," though we may take the various descriptions the community offers. See, Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 57, 59, 60. See also, Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 115.

[338] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 65, 87, 95-97. See also, Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 55-62. Here it is to be noted that the relation between one's intentionality and action is not causal. Katongole clarifies: "What must be given up once the intentional structure of action is noted is the very language of 'cause' in relation to action. Accordingly, the agent's "volitions, motives, intentions, reasons do not cause or move men to act, but men acting embody them." But neither do one's 'reasons' merely provide an explanatory context for one's action. The agent's 'reasons' are essential to the actual formation of one's action, as they inform (*in-form*) and influence (*flow into*) what one does." See, Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 43-44. Inside quote is from Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 21.

[339] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 44.

[340] John Dewey, *Theory of the Moral Life* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1967) 150-51, as quoted in Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 81.

[341] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 207.

[342] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1140a2-5, 151. We can understand better the meaning of πρᾶξις and ποιέσις in relation to the concepts of φρονέσις (practical reasoning) and τεχνη (productive reasoning). Φρονέσις has to do with action (πρᾶξις) and τεχνη has to do with production (ποιέσις). The relation between τεχνη and φρονέσις is that of external and internal. See, Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1140b1-4, 153. See also, Kallenburg, *Ethics as Grammar*, 162, and Mathew Illathuparampil, *The Meaning of Making: The Role of Moral Imagination in Dealing with the Ethical Ambiguities of Technology* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Theology, K. U. Leuven, Leuven, 2002) 19. Techne needs only "bare knowledge" while φρονέσις has "to do to the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right aim, and in the right way, *that* is not for every one, nor is it easy." See, Dunne, *Back to the Rough Ground*, 247. See also, Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1109a28-29, 50. Moreover, φρονέσις signifies "the contingent character of the moral life, the fact that situations and circumstances not only vary but are also important for accurately discerning the moral quality of any event." See, Stanley Hauerwas & Paul Wadell, review of *After Virtue*: *A Study in Moral Theory*, by Alasdair MacIntyre, *Thomist* 46, no. 1 (1982) 313-322, 317.

immersing in his/her *praxis* (acting) the agent forms not only the act but also makes known who s/he is, and at the same time by his/her activity the agent is forming (character) himself/herself into a specific type of person. So, acting thus comprises "a flowing-out and a flowing –back into the sort of person the agent is."[343] The agent (person) himself/herself is revealed through his/her acts. Simultaneously, his/her acting reveals what kind of person s/he is going to be. This shows the inevitable circularity between agent and his/her actions.

5. 4. 2 The Primacy of the Agent's Perspective

As we have already seen earlier (section 1. 3), agent's perspective is significant in evaluating his/her actions. For Hauerwas, ethical discussion begins with the agent. He writes, "… action is ultimately an agent-dependent concept because we are self-moving agents who can directly form our actions through our intentions."[344] Action gains its intelligibility from the intention of the agent.[345] The agent alone is able to provide the descriptions of the act or s/he alone is able to describe the exact intentions with which s/he has performed the act. "What the action is, or even that it is an action, can only be determined by the fact that the agent was acting under one description rather than another."[346] To separate and assess the act apart from the agent's perspective is wrong, and it is doing injustice to the agent.[347] Evaluating Aquinas' view of human act, Louis Janssens opines that the starting point for understanding human action is the person. "Thomas' view centers on the agent and that *ipso facto* the end of the agent is the fundamental element of the structure of the human act."[348] Consequently, the morality of acts cannot be properly evaluated without considering the agent.[349] MacIntyre too holds that agent's act cannot be adequately characterized apart from his/her intentionality, and the agent's intentions cannot be characterized independently of the contexts in which the intentions are expressed if they are to be intelligible.[350] The person (agent) is to be integrally and adequately considered.[351] In evaluating the moral

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[343] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 49.

[344] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 90. For Hauerwas, the agent's intention includes his/her beliefs, motives, reasons, etc. i.e., a description of the act from the agent's perspective. See, Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 61, 95-97, Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 55-62 and Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny*, 20. To remove intentions (agent's beliefs, motives, and reasons) from action is to make the action unintelligible. Moreover, we also notice "the function of the notion of person as the ultimate criterion for defining all subsequent ethical concepts…." in personalist ethicists. See, Joseph Selling, "Is a Personalist Ethic Necessarily Anthropocentric?," *Ethical Perspectives* 6, no. 1 (1999) 60-66, 60.

[345] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 28. See also, Stanley Hauerwas, "Virtue, Description and Friendship: A Thought Experiment in Catholic Moral Theology," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (1997) 170-184, 176.

[346] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 96.

[347] Stanley Hauerwas, "Virtue and Character," 2527. See also, O'Neil, *Who Should Be We?*, 144.

[348] Janssens, "Ontic Evil and Moral Evil," 44.

[349] Janssens, "Ontic Evil and Moral Evil," 49.

[350] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 206. See also, Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith*, 267.

[351] Louis Janssens, "Artificial Insemination: Ethical Considerations," *Louvain Studies* 8 no.1 (1980) 3-29, 15. Janssens gives eight aspects of considering the human person adequately such as: (*i*) The human person is a subject not an object as the things of the world. (*ii*) The person is a subject in corporeality (*GS* 14). (*iii*) Our body forms not

person (agent), Selling also argues for the necessity of taking into account the intention and the unique characteristics of the agent.[352] The necessity of giving priority to the agent's perspective in evaluating the act is that if the one who judges the agent does not know the agent in his hopes, needs and personal possibilities, then the one who is judging does not know what he is judging.[353] "Human act do not 'exist' as objects that can be judged without any reference to the persons who perform them."[354] Consequently, it is very important to understand the intention of the agent so that we may be well able to have the proper glimpse of agent's act.[355] In other words, the observer can never, with appropriate firmness and precision, say what the agent has done or what are the intentions and circumstances under which the agent has done the particular act.[356] The observer is unable to read the mind of the agent as the agent understands himself. When there exists some doubts as to what the agent has done and why s/he has acted in a particular way, we ask only the agent for clarification and not the observer. Hence, the agent's perspective for his/her act is to be accepted as primary (final).[357] Michael Slote also speaks of the importance of the perspective of the agent in morality.[358] The significance of the agent's perspective can be made all the more clear by evaluating acts such as abortion. The observer may find this act of abortion as 'evil' and therefore 'sin.' But the person who opts for abortion may have her own circumstances and proportionate reasons for the act. The observer may not be able to grasp the intentions and circumstances of the person deciding for an abortion. Besides, the primacy of the agent's perspective in evaluating his/her act, the understanding of the relation between agency and its proper narrative context is a must in order to judge an act and to make it intelligible.

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only a part of the subject who we are, but also as corporeal, a part of the material world. (*iv*) Human persons are essentially directed toward each other. (*v*) Human persons are not only essentially social beings because they are open to each other in the I-Thou relationship, but also because they need to live in social groups and thus in appropriate structures and institutions. (*vi*) Created in the image of God, the human person is called to know and worship Him (*GS* 12, 34) and to glorify Him in all his attitudes and activities. (*GS*, 34, 36, 38) (*vii*) Human person is a historical being (historicity). (*viii*) All human persons are fundamentally equal, but at the same time each is originality. See, Janssens, "Artificial Insemination," 5-12. Joseph Selling too stresses these aspects but in a different order. He places subjectivity in the sixth place. It is to be noted that there is no hierarchy of dimensions in these eight aspects. See, Joseph Selling, "The Human Person," *Christian Ethics: An Introduction*, ed. Bernard Hoose (London: Cassell, 1998) 95-109, 99-108.

[352] Selling, "The Human Person," 96.

[353] Daniel Maguire, "Ethics: How to Do It," *Introduction to Christian Ethics: A Reader*, ed. Ronald P. Hamel & Kenneth R. Himes (New York: Paulist, 1989) 533-550, 536.

[354] Selling, "Proportionate Reasoning and the Concept of Ontic Evil," 20.

[355] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 97.

[356] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 89. Vernon J. Bourke opines that an ideal observer or impartial spectator "enables one to get out of the egocentric predicament in making moral decisions and to think calmly and objectively about … problems." See, Vernon J. Bourke, "The Ethical Role of Impartial Observer," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 6 no. 2 (1978) 279-290, 280. Another point he observes is that if there exists a dispute between two persons and a solution is not possible by themselves, the role of the impartial spectator is significant. (288)

[357] Hauerwas observes that in Aristotle's ethical perspective too, it is not the observer who decides whether the agent's act was good or bad. See, Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 37, 96. See also, Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 57.

[358] Michael Slote, "From Morality to Virtue," *Virtue Ethics: A Critical Reader*, ed. Daniel Statman (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 1997) 128-144, 129-130.

5. 4. 3 Agency and Narrative

Agency is context-narrative dependent and actions are to be evaluated in their historical context. MacIntyre affirms:

> … in successfully identifying and understanding what someone else is doing we always move towards placing a particular episode in the context of a set of narrative histories, histories both of the individuals concerned and of the settings in which they act and suffer. It is now becoming clear that we render the actions of others intelligible in this way because action itself has a basically historical character. It is because we all live out narratives in our lives and because we understand our lives in terms of the narratives that we live out that the form of narrative is appropriate for understanding the actions of others.[359]

This account of intelligible action makes us aware that the proper understanding of one's action can be attained only when that act is situated and seen in one's narrative context.[360] An act becomes intelligible only when we place it in the narrative context. If we want to obtain a proper understanding of what one does, we have to see the proper narrative context of the person in which s/he has been brought up and the narrative context in which the act is performed.[361] The action gets its proper meaning only when placed within its proper narrative context. "Narrative history of a certain kind turns out to be the basic and essential genre for the characterization of human action."[362] To understand an action, Rcoeur says, questions such as "what?" "why?" "who?" "how?" "with whom?" "against whom?" are very much significant. Action is always mediated by a network of interactions.[363] When one comes to the understanding of this historical character of the action, one will no longer hold that one's act is external to one. Rather, one realizes one's act as one's thanks to one's ability to "fit" the act into one's narrative. It shows, without doubt, agency is very much related to narrative.[364] Commenting on MacIntyre, Smith writes, "the action's settings, and even its history, are essential if we are to make intelligible the story of an individual who intentionally acts in certain ways."[365] And there exists no disagreement "between claims of agency and our sociality, since the extent and power of any agency depends exactly on the adequacy of the description we learn from our communities [narratives]."[366] Bondi too affirms: "When I talk about my character, I am talking about more than the history of my reasonable choices or to the degree to which the direction of those choices conforms to a truthful story. I must also

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[359] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 211-212. See also, Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 35 and Cahill, "Christian Character, Biblical Community, and Human Values," 6.

[360] Hauerwas, "Agency," 187.

[361] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 211. See also, Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. I, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin & David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1984) 52-87.

[362] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 208.

[363] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. I, 55-58.

[364] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 42. See also, Dunne, *Back to the Rough Ground*, 263 and Fergusson, *Community, Liberalism and Christian Ethics*, 51.

[365] Smith, *Virtue Ethics and Moral Knowledge*, 55.

[366] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 43.

speak of my existence as one of much less control and far more ambiguity…. this 'capacity of intentional action' is very much related to intersubjective dimensions and explanation."[367]

So one's character or agency is dependent on or is the result of the narrative in which one is brought up. "To be virtuous is … to allow one's life to be determined by a narrative in which virtue [character] is displayed."[368] Agency is the ability to be relative to a truthful narrative.[369] "… the self that gives rise to agency is fundamentally a social self, not separable from its social and cultural environment … we are selves only because another self was first presented to us."[370] The agent is free to act or to form his/her action and character according to the story and narrative in which s/he finds himself/herself.[371] So character as the form of our agency requires us to live according to the narratives of the communities. This is very important because the moral future of the community is significantly dependent on the moral character of its members.[372] This does not claim the prominence of a community's narrative or denying the individual's narratives. Rather, both are complimentary as "the individual narrative is shaped, checked and many times challenged by social narratives. But the latter too, develops through individual narrative that confirms or challenges it."[373] This analysis, we think, makes clear the need for seeing and evaluating the act of the agent in his/her particular perspective and narrative tradition.

As we could find, the previous section was an attempt to explore the role of character in ethical life and our investigation showed the various ways by which character enables us in our moral life. In dealing with character, we cannot leave unnoticed certain issues inherent in the very description of character, of which character formation and decision making deserve prominent concerns. The very issue of character formation leads to questions such as: What is the role of the individual in his/her character formation? What is the role of the community in the character formation of its members? In what ways does the self with its own particular history correspond with the history of the community? How far are we free and responsible in our character formation? What is the relation between character and freedom? etc. Therefore, in the coming section, we examine these issues that are very much related to character.

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[367] Bondi, "The Elements of Character," 204-205.

[368] Fergusson, *Community, Liberalism and Christian Ethics*, 55.

[369] Hauerwas, "Agency," 191.

[370] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 33.

[371] Katongole, *Agent's Perspective*, 16.

[372] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 116-17.

[373] Katongole, *Agent's Perspective*, 17.

6 Character and Community

Character formation, according to Hauerwas, has two dimensions. They are (*i*) agent and character formation and (*ii*) community and character formation. Emphasis on both the agent and the community sometimes creates a sort of doubt or crisis regarding who is responsible for the formation of character, whether agent or community or both. Character formation and freedom are very much interrelated in Hauerwas. The following discussions will address these aspects.

6. 1 Agent and Character Formation

The primary ethical question 'what should I be' shows the role of individuals in his/her character formation.[374] It is a fact that Hauerwas does not reduce the role of individuals in his/her character formation, as he says that "[i]t is by choice, as Aristotle correctly saw, that we determine who we are by electing to act one way rather than another."[375] Agents become who they are because they act in some ways rather than others. The communitarian nature of human beings does not in any way compel them to act in a particular way, but as Katongole describes, the community "gives the unique intentionality by way of this [its] interactive extent."[376] Community-factors do not deprive the agent of his/her history. Moreover, when we are asked "what we are doing, it is our description as agent that must be accepted as final."[377] But this priority of the agent's perspective in assessing his/her action has the potential danger of voluntaristic solipsism leading the agent to do whatever s/he likes or to explain his/her action in anyway,[378] which in turn create the impression that character formation is an entirely individualistic affair. Hauerwas is aware of this danger and affirms his stand as he writes:

> The affirmation of man's privileged access to his action is not a crude sophism, because action and agency by their very nature are socially dependent. One is not an agent in a vacuum, just as one cannot act in a vacuum. There are no pure agents or pure acts, but only this agent and act in this particular place and time. In emphasizing man's agency I

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[374] We have already analysed what is meant by 'what I should be.' See section 4. 1 What Should I Do? And What Should I Be?

[375] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 112.

[376] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 46. Michele Moody-Adams also agrees that social interactions provide certain intentions and orientations in life. He writes: "It is only because social interaction helps to shape a character that human beings are capable of choice at all. For the formative experiences that tend to produce a certain kind of character also provide the parameters within which we can make meaningful choices." See, Michele Moody-Adams, "On the Old Saw That Character is Destiny," *Identity, Character, and Morality: Essays in Moral Psychology*, ed. Owen Flanagan & Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (London: The MIT, 1990) 111-132, 127.

[377] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 96.

[378] Hauerwas is very well aware of this objection raised by Powell Betty with regard to giving the priority to the perspectives of the agent in assessing the agent and his/her actions. See, Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 89-97. Katongole also notices this. See, Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 45.

have not tried to deny the essential sociality of his nature, *but I have tried to deny that men are necessarily determined by their societies in the strong sense of the term.*[379]

This makes clear that Hauerwas does not envision character formation in which individuals are devoid of their roles and are merely determined by outside forces. And at the same time, he opens up the influence of the community's perspectives in one's character formation. So "[t]he fact that action is inherently agent-dependent does not exclude its social and public dimension."[380] Moreover, it also belongs to the duty of the community to make known its members and aware of what kind of character into which they are being formed.[381]

6. 2 Community and Character Formation

The shift in Hauerwas' ethical thinking from 'what I should be' to 'what sort of people we are becoming' in a given social-linguistic context or practice[382] was thanks to Hauerwas' awareness of the significance of community in individuals' lives. This shift emphasizes the unavoidable role of the community in individuals' character formation and character formation as an ongoing process. The tendency to avoid community in character formation is an "attempt to live *sui generis*, to live as if we are or can be the authors of our own stories."[383] To live *sui generis* is modernity's project of avoiding the role of the community in its members' character formation as Larry L. Rasmussen affirms:

> The ascendancy of individualism and other workings of capitalist markets mean a concomitant erosion and displacement of community values that have staying power. Social process in the grip of maximally deregulated corporate capitalism yields less and less community participation in character formation and grant more and more spiritual-moral influence to media and markets. The erosion of settled and intact community (which is not, I hasten to add, a synonym of just or good community) means the progressive removal of moral formation from face-to-face relationships and its reinstatement in other, less direct and less accountable arenas of human interaction. Since I find media-and market-driven mythmaking and value spiritually and morally deceptive and shallow, if not corrupting, I am concerned ('Under the false tinsel is real tinsel,' to recall H. L. Mencken). Rampant global materialism intent on creating human

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[379] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 103, emphasis added. Hauerwas adds: "My emphasis on character does not deny the basic dependence of the agent's determination upon society, but I think it indicates a change in the kind of the society today to which the self is related. What has changed, to put it in the terminology I am using, is that society provides even a greater multiplicity of descriptions men have available through which they may form themselves. As our society become more differentiated, the more the assumption of who we are becomes a problem for us. In one respect our social context is forcing us as never before to become free and to take responsibility for our character. Put in some what different way this is to recognise that identity is the individual counterpart to integration in the social system." See, Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 103, footnote, n. 25.

[380] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 101.

[381] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 232.

[382] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 68.

[383] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 31, 47. See also, Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation* (New York: Scribner, 1964) 178-179.

beings as individual consumer is, in any case, hardly a force for community character with a sense for the numinous and transcendentally moral![384]

Contrary to modernity's project and total self-determination, Hauerwas advocates the existence and need of a 'community of character' in character formation.[385] Hauerwas insisted that character formation is not something that takes place in privacy[386] without any relation to the community. But behind the formation of character, the role of the 'storied community'[387] is unavoidable as "our individuality is socially constituted and socially situated."[388] Selling also opines that one does not evolve "'self' in a vacuum, for each self is cultural, historical, situated in terms of its relation with other selves, with the world at large and with the transcendent."[389] "Character is self in relation."[390] So, we have to see the communitarian aspect of the agent. Hauerwas says, "[m]y act is not something I cause, as though it were external to me, but it is mine because I am able to 'fit' it into my ongoing story. My power as an agent is therefore relative to the power of my descriptive ability [i.e., the ability to say, 'I did it']. *Yet that very ability is fundamentally a social skill*, for we learn to describe through appropriating the narratives of the communities in which we find ourselves."[391] "To be a moral self means to be an inheritor of a language of a people."[392] It is this same communal existence that enables us to be virtuous.[393] A person alone can never pursue the practice

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[384] Larry L. Rasmussen, "Sightings of Primal Visions: Community and Ecology," *Character and Scripture: Moral Formation, Community and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. William P. Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2002) 389-409, 389-390.

[385] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 67. Hauerwas explains the formation of character with the help of the metaphor of "journey." In "journey" two ideas can be traced. It does away with the idea of self-sufficiency, and it also shows the ongoing aspect of character formation. See, Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, xxvii-xxviii. See also, Hauerwas & Pinches, *Christians among Virtues*, 17-30.

[386] Hauerwas & Pinches, *Christians among the Virtues*, 31, 33. See also, Kallenberg, *Ethics as Grammar*, 237 and Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, 360.

[387] Richard Bondi also agrees with the shift from the importance given to the self to the importance given to the storied community in Hauerwas. It is the story of the community that gives direction to the self in choosing. See, Bondi, "The Elements of Character," 203, 212. Protestant theologians highlighted the significance of community in character formation. For them, character is faith-based nature of Christian life that takes place in the community. See, Cahill, "Christian Character, Biblical Community, and Human Values," 3, 10. For Larry L. Rasmussen also, character formation takes place in the community. But this community includes the interconnectedness of the socio-communal, biophysical, and geo-planetary realms as the impact of human activities affect on all these levels. This enlarged vision of the community enables him/her to be responsible to all levels that include community. See, Rasmussen, "Sightings of Primal Visions: Community and Ecology," 390.

[388] Robert C. Solomon, "Corporate Roles, Personal Virtues: An Aristotelian Approach to Virtue Ethics," *Virtue Ethics: A Critical Reader*, ed. Daniel Statman (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 1997) 205-226, 214.

[389] Selling, "The Human Person," 105.

[390] Bondi, "The Elements of Character," 214. See also, Gloria H Albrecht, "Myself and Other Characters: A Feminist Liberationist Critique of Hauerwas's Ethics of Christian Character," *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* (1992) 97-144, 98.

[391] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 42, emphasis added. Hauerwas also deals with the role of family, the basic unit of every society, and the church in the formation of character. When Hauerwas deals with community, what he means is church. See, Stanley Hauerwas, "The Family as a School for Character," *Religious Education* 80, no. 2 (1985) 272-285, 272-274, 280-281.

[392] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 33.

[393] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 116. See also, Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 231. Daniel Statman also emphasises the significance of communities in forming the meaning and identity of individuals and insists that being part of a community is a must for success in life. See, Daniel Statman, "Introduction to Virtue Ethics," *Virtue Ethics: A Critical Reader*, ed. Daniel Statman (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 1997) 1-41, 25. Alasdair MacIntyre as well opines that those around us are very important to reinforce our moral force and assist in curing our moral weakness. "It is in general only within a community that individuals become capable of morality

of virtues on a qua individual level.[394] In other words, the practices and habits of a well-formed community lead to the character formation of its members.[395] Moreover, the individual receives from the community a certain type of understanding by which s/he comes to know whether s/he is forming a correct character or whether it is in line with the tradition of his/her community.[396]

Gilbert C. Meilaender also emphasizes the significance of the community in the character formation of its members as he observes:

> Successful moral education requires a community which does not hesitate to inculcate virtue in the young, which does not settle for the discordant opinions of alternative visions of the good, which worries about what the stories of its poets teach. In short, there can be little serious moral education in a community which seeks only to be what we have come to call 'liberal.'... Communities which seek simply to remain 'open' and do not inculcate virtuous habits of behavior will utterly fail at the task of moral education. Communities which do not permit the virtues they inculcate to be transcended by what is good will ultimately cut themselves off from the very source which inspired their efforts to shape character. Perhaps communities which seek seriously to inculcate virtue while also gathering regularly to confess their failures and recommit themselves to what is good are the best we can mange.[397]

Thomas Aquinas opines that every person belongs to a community, and what each person is and has as well belongs to the community, just as the parts belong to the whole.[398] Peter Sedgwick testifies to this point by noticing that, for Aquinas, the character of the individual is considerably shaped by the community to which s/he belongs.[399] The role of the community, especially in character formation, is relevant in the context of modernity's threats. Alasdair MacIntyre points out: "What matters … is the construction of local forms

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and are sustained in their morality." See, Alasdair MacIntyre, "Is Patriotism a Virtue?," The Lindley Lecture, 1984 (Lawrence, Kan., 1984) 10 as quoted in Lawrence Blum, "Community and Virtue," *How Should One Live?: Essays on the Virtues*, ed. Roger Crisp (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996) 231-250, 232. Here, Lawrence Blum makes it clear that he is not asserting that one must have a backing community in order to adjoin in noteworthy virtue. The many examples of rescuers during the Holocaust who were relatively separated from their communities, relying on the assistance only of their families and in some cases working independently even of them, testify to the contrary. However, it is fair to say that such virtuous activities are much more likely in the context of supporting communities than in the lack of them. This echoes MacIntyre's point: "Of course lonely moral heroism is sometimes required and sometimes achieved. But we must not treat this exceptional type of case as if it were typical." see, Blum, "Community and Virtue," 243. Quote is from MacIntyre, "Is Patriotism a Virtue?," 10.

[394] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 220.

[395] Samuel Wells, "The Disarming Virtue of Stanley Hauerwas,'' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 52, no. 1 (1999) 82-88, 82. See also, Rasmussen, "Sightings of Primal Visions: Community and Ecology," 389.

[396] Stanley Hauerwas, "Agency: Going Forward by Looking Back," *Christian Ethics: Problems and Prospects*, ed. Lisa Sowle Cahill & James F. Childress (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim, 1996) 185-195, 189. See also, Harold Alderman, "By Virtue of a Virtue," *Virtue Ethics: A Critical Reader*, ed. Daniel Statman (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 1997) 145-164, 153.

[397] Meilaender, *The Theory and Practice of Virtue*, 72.

[398] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* I-II, 96, 4, Law and Political Theory (Summa Theologiae, 28) trans. Thomas Gilby (Cambridge: Blackfriars, 1966) 131.

[399] Peter Sedgwick, "The Compulsion to be Good: Aquinas on the Formation of Human Character," *Theology* 91, no. 741 (1988) 194-201, 194. According to Amelie O. Rorty, "[t]he assurance of a person's virtues cannot occur in a social or political vacuum." See, Amelie O. Rorty, "Virtues and Their Vicissitudes," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy XIII, Ethical Theory: Character and Virtue*, ed. Peter A. French, Theodore E. Uehling Jr., and Howard K. Wettstein (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1988) 136-147, 144.

of community within which the civility and the intellectual and moral life could be sustained through the new dark ages which are already upon us."[400]

6. 2. 1 Models of Virtuous Life and Character Formation

From his concept of community and its influence in forming the character of the individual, Hauerwas infers that "our character is a gift from others."[401] This is because of those people who give certain models and perspectives to other individuals in their lives. In this context, Hauerwas speaks of the significance of saints in the moral life.[402] The well-lived lives with which the individuals meet frequently come as a gift in their character formation. Others can give us 'witness' in our character formation. In this sense, Hauerwas calls for the "imaginative testing of our habits of life against the well-lived and virtuous lives of others."[403] The lives of the people living faithful to their narratives enable us to challenge our lives, and this makes us deeply commit ourselves to our narrative and thereby to the lives according to the narrative's ethical implications. By testing our lives against the virtuous lives of the members of the community, we come to know what kinds of situations we have to avoid and foresee so that we can transform ourselves after the model of these virtuous lives.[404] These virtuous lives make him/her aware of his/her limitations of character, and consequently they challenge him/her to renew his/her character. Virtuous lives enable the individuals to come out of their self-deception and the so-called 'achievements' and give new orientations in their

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[400] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 263.

[401] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 45.

[402] Stanley Hauerwas & William H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1989) 98-103.

[403] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 121. Hauerwas sees the significance of virtuous lives even in the attempt to know what the scripture really is and means. According to him, people will be able to know truthfully what scripture means only by referring to the lives of the saints who could live according to the demands of the Bible. (70) By the word 'saints,' Hauerwas does not mean those officially canonised by 'Roman Catholic Church,' but all those who have witnessed to the scripture. See, Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament; Community, Cross, New Creation: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997) 254-255. For the importance of 'saints' in individual's moral growth, see also, Stanley Hauerwas, "Ethics and Ascetical Theology," *Anglican Theological Review* 61, no. 1 (1979) 87-98, 98. See also, Hauerwas & Pinches, *Christians among the Virtues*, 124 and Robert M. Adams, "Saints," *The Virtues: Contemporary Essays on Moral Character*, ed. Robert B. Kruschwitz & Robert C. Roberts (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1987) 153-160.

[404] Hauerwas, "Casuistry as a Narrative Art," 381. This view can also be seen in James Wm. MacClendon. According to him, "[i]n or near the community there appear from time to time singular or striking lives, the lives of persons who embody the convictions of the community but in a new way. … Such lives by their very attractiveness or beauty, may serve as data for the Christian thinker, enabling him more truly to reflect upon the tension between what is and what ought to be believed and lived all." See, James Wm. MacClendon, *Biography as Theology: How Life Stories Can Remake Today's Theology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1974) 178. He continues that "…. we return from lives we have examined to our own lives; the examiners become the examined, and our claim on our "saints" becomes their many-sided claim upon us." (201) Further more: "Telling the stories of saints and heroes is a universal feature of religious life. Insight into a personality of a great teacher and a narrative that gives the full context of the teaching lend a note of authenticity to the records of instruction. … Always, however, the biographical details remind us that saints and heroes are real people whose teaching we repeat and whose lives we honour. Their stories provide glimpses of personal integrity or inner peace and wisdom or commitment to a cause. Their stories invite us to enter the structures of faith that supported their lives." See, James W. Fowler *et al.* (eds.), *Trajectories in Faith: Five Life Stories* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1980) 9.

lives.[405] This understanding of character formation as gift shakes the prospective self-projecting dimension of character formation but stresses a retrospective admission of what each person has become.[406] Moreover, continuous and ongoing contact with virtuous lives (lives faithful to narrative) of the community enables a person to expand his/her moral vision, which naturally results in his/her acquisition of and living out virtuous convictions.[407] We study what the ethical life is by following others.[408]

6. 3 Character and Responsibility

We have seen that self-sufficiency cannot be totally attributed to the development and growth in one's character formation. This leads to the crucial question of who is responsible for one's character formation. It is not difficult to see character formation as the responsibility of the agent.[409] That is why Hauerwas held that one is called a man or woman of character when s/he has the ability to make his/her action his/her own, or able to hold responsibility for his/her life.[410] However, having realized the role of narrative and community in character formation, Hauerwas moves to an understanding of responsibility of character formation that is tradition-dependent.[411] Hauerwas writes:

> … we become who we are through the embodiment of the story in the communities in which we are born. What is crucial is not that we find some way to free ourselves from such a stories of community, but that the story which grasps us through our community is true. And 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*. That does not mean that there will ever be a point at which I can say 'I am now what I have made myself,' for the story must help me see that claiming myself as my own is not the same as claiming that I have made or chosen what I am. Rather it

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[405] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 45. Harold Alderman and T. H. Irwin both argue for the need of appropriate imitation of the character of paradigmatic individuals of the society, which contribute to the ethical life. See, Harold Alderman, "By Virtue of a Virtue," 152 and T. H. Irwin, "The Virtues: Theory and Common Sense in Greek Philosophy," *How Should One Live?: Essays on the Virtues*, ed. Roger Crisp (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996) 37-55, 38. See also, Slingerland, "Virtue Ethics the *Analects*, and the Problem of Commensurability," 106.

[406] Hauerwas, "Agency," 185. See also, Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 59. Here, we think that it is good to mention the Aristotelian insight into character as luck (in the sense of having good tradition and narrative). See, Hauerwas & Pinches, *Christians among the Virtues*, 181. However, Hauerwas criticises Aristotle in this respect. Hauerwas says that Aristotle's "account of the high-minded man who is always ready to give but not receive, who wants his friends near him when he has benefited from good fortune but not bad, still manifest the desire to give an account of the moral life that is impervious to fortune." See, Stanley Hauerwas "Can Aristotle Be a Liberal? Nussbaum on Luck," *Soundings* 72, no. 4 (1989) 675-691.

[407] See, Heeley, *The Ethical Methodology of Stanley Hauerwas*, 176.

[408] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 131.

[409] This was Hauerwas' understanding of character, especially in his earlier works but later we see that he shifts to view the concept of responsibility for character as tradition-dependent. See, Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 61. But, Joel Kupperman holds that people are responsible for their character. See, Kupperman, *Character*, 63.

[410] For this view, Hauerwas finds its source in Aristotle. Because of this responsibility of the self for character formation, Hauerwas acknowledges Aristotle's doubts whether a morally weak person can be said to be even acting since s/he has no moral power to make actions his/her own. See, Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 140. However, the Aristotelian notion of choice, with which Hauerwas argues for self's responsibility in his/her character formation, "presupposes a wider context of settled habits and socially integrated goals." So the social (narrative) wider context exerts its influence on the self. See, Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 64-67.

[411] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 61.

means I am able to recognize myself in the story that I have learned to make my own.[412]

So it is the narrative of the community that gives a person the necessary background and *skill to take responsibility for his/her character.* In a way, the narrative of the community challenges the person and the person in return appropriates the convictions of the narrative which in fact make him/her responsible for his/her character, providing the link "for the agent to be uniquely that agent."[413] Therefore, in Hauerwas' perspective the responsibility of the agent in forming his/her character is a tradition-dependent responsibility.

6. 4 Character and Freedom

According to Hauerwas, character formation and freedom are very much related. Freedom is not the right to do anything as one pleases and likes, or it is not the state of life in which one has complete control of one's life.[414] Hauerwas' view of freedom differs from what most people would consider: It is the right of having a choice in a given situation that provides us freedom. Hauerwas criticizes modernity's false idea of freedom. According to modernity, freedom consists extremely in one's ability to choose. No one has any story except the one s/he chooses,[415] and thus it denies any responsibility to anything that s/he has not freely chosen. Liberal societies make freedom of choice a necessity, and they consider the destiny of each individual to depend on making his/her free choices. Hauerwas opines that the unrestricted freedom from the restraints of the community is a fundamentally flawed conception. He argues that the very assumption that freedom is the achievement of the person is nothing but sin. Namely, it is an indication that we conceive ourselves as our own creators.[416] From a theological perspective, this understanding of freedom is considered as idolatry since it views individual choices and autonomy of actions as absolute, and it neither provides characters and habits essential to uphold the individual's ideal nor can it train his/her desires or direct his/her attention toward leading to a moral being.[417] Therefore,

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[412] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 148-49, emphasis added.

[413] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 135. A person of character, no doubt, will act only in a responsible way. See, Charles Villa-Vicencio, "Ethics of Responsibility," *Doing Ethics in Context: South African Perspective*, Theology and Praxis 2. ed. Charles Villa-Vicencio & John W. De Gruchy (New York: Orbis Books, 1994) 75-88, 86.

[414] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 43.

[415] Stanley Hauerwas, "Knowing How to Go on When You Do Not Know Where You Are: A Response to John Cobb, Jr.," *Theology Today* 54, no. 4 (1995) 563-569, 564. Hauerwas radically opposes a concept freedom which attempts to save people from their historical particularity and narrative. See, Hauerwas, *Against Nations*, 18. Hauerwas contends that modernity's freedom paves the path of power struggle and self-interest, and the result is that a human relation becomes "forms of manipulation to maintain dominance." See, Stanley Hauerwas, *Suffering Presence: Theological Reflections on Medicine, the Mentally Handicapped and the Church* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark 1988) 56 and Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 84.

[416] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 47.

[417] Anderson, "Narrative Turn in Christian Ethics," 303.

Hauerwas is vehemently opposed to this prospective approach in moral life as this prospective approach holds the view that our freedom comes only as each new 'choice' gives us a new possibility. To this Hauerwas disagrees, since what we did in the past would have been done in a different perspective if we had known what we know now. So, ethics must be oriented towards a retrospective approach, so that we can make our own what we did and what happened to us.[418]

Contrary to modernity's view on freedom, Hauerwas holds that freedom follows from a well-formed character.[419] He asserts that freedom comes by way of appropriating and integrating one's past.[420] In other words, it is the courage and the ability to respond to a truthful narrative, that enables him/her to claim his/her life as his/her own, that give him/her freedom.[421] Freedom "is possible and meaningful only when it is correlated with convictions about the kind of people we ought to be, as well as the kind of institutions we ought to support."[422] Hauerwas elucidates this through the example of non-violence. "For example, the refusal to use violence for resolving disputes, or perhaps better, the attempt to avoid persistent violent situations, becomes for some so routine they never think about it. It is simply 'who they are.' But the formation of that habit does not make it any less, but all the more, a resource of and for their freedom."[423] From a Christian perspective, true freedom comes from depending on and trusting God who wills the good of all[424] and from forming our lives according to the will of God.[425] In this view, the goodness of a person is a determining factor in an individual's grasp of freedom. "We become free only as we acquired the moral capacity to guide our lives. To lack such a capacity was to be subject to the undisciplined desires and choices of the immature. Thus freedom did not reside in making choices but in being the kind of

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[418] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 271. See also, Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 43.

[419] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 49. See also, Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 37, 117, Colin Gunton, "The Church as a School of Virtue?: Human Freedom in Trinitarian Frame Work," *Faithfulness and Fortitude: In Conversation with the Theological Ethics of Stanley Hauerwas*, ed. Mark Thiessen Nation & Samuel Wells (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000) 211-231, 213-214, Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason* 41 and E. Clinton Gardner, "Character, Virtue, and Responsibility," *Encounter* 44, no. 4 (1983) 315-339, 323. Moreover, in Christian terms, Hauerwas would explain freedom as the ability of the self to see the world as redeemed by Jesus Christ. See, Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 67.

[420] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 6-10, 37-49, See also, Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 40, 64, 253, and Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 115, 130, and 147.

[421] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 43. See also, Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 3, 144 and 147, Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 68 and Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny*, 26. Gerald Dworkin also agrees on this point. He argues that "it is only through a more adequate understanding of the notions such as tradition, authority, commitment, and loyalty, and of the forms of human community in which these have their roots, that we shall be able to develop a conception of autonomy free from paradox and worthy of admiration." See, Gerald Dworkin, "Moral Autonomy," *Morals, Science and Sociality*, ed. H. Tristram Engelhardt & Daniel Callahan (Hastings on Hudson, NY: Hastings Centre, 1978) 170 as quoted in Stanley Hauerwas, *Hauerwas Reader*, ed. John Berkman & Michael Cartwright (Durham, NC: Duke University, 2001) 224.

[422] Hauerwas, *Suffering Presence*, 14.

[423] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 43.

[424] Hauerwas, *Hauerwas Reader*, 224, 225.

[425] Hauerwas holds that true freedom comes from truthful service to God. See, Stanley Hauerwas, "*Veritatis Splendor*: A Comment," *Commonweal* 120, no. 18 (1993) 16-18, 17.

person for whom certain options simply were not open…. Only the virtuous person could be free, insofar as freedom was not so much a status as a skill."[426] So, only a good person can really be a free man.[427] This character also provides certain outlines regarding what one will be in future, and the freedom one attains in the future will also be in line with the character.[428]

After having seen the various issues related to character formation, the following section concentrates on character and decision-making. Since the ethics of character, according to Hauerwas, is mainly concerned with 'what I should be' or 'what I am becoming' and not on 'what I should do,' the question of decision-making is problematic in Hauerwas. The question of 'what I should be' may even give the impression that there is no need of any decision-making at all in ethical life.

7 Character and Decision-Making

Decision-making is one of the significant concerns in morality and moral life. Common ordinary people always ask what decisions they have to take in the face of moral dilemmas and crises. Here in this section on character and decision-making, we examine Hauerwas' stand on decision-making in moral life. We make this analysis by bringing forth two elements (*i*) decision streams from character and (*ii*) decision: not the paradigmatic centre of moral life.

7. 1 Decision Streams from Character

Hauerwas speaks of the necessity of character behind our decisions.[429] It is character that supplies the condition of the action by which one may go on to fulfil what is in fact the right thing to do.[430] "As persons of character we do not confront situations as mud puddles into which we have to step; rather the kind of 'situations' we confront and how we understand them are a function of the kind of people we are."[431] Good decisions are

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[426] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 8. See also, Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 115. Andreas Esheté's view on freedom also goes in line with Hauerwas' view. For Esheté, freedom consists in the ability of self-mastery. The cultivation and maintenance of virtues, which are for the good of the agent and that of others, makes one really free in the sense of self-mastery. See, Andreas Esheté, "Character, Virtue and Freedom," *Philosophy* 57 (1982) 495-513, 511.

[427] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 37. See also, Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 65. Hauerwas argues that the true freedom coming from the goodness of the person makes him/her able to serve others. Hauerwas points out when we lose sight of this aspect of freedom, freedom turns into a means to dominate others. See, Stanley Hauerwas, "Some Theological Reflections on Gutiérrez's Use of 'Liberation' as a Theological Concept," *Modern Theology* 3, no. 1 (1986) 67-76, 70, 75. See also, Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 44 and Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 130.

[428] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 49.

[429] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 121. See also the section, 1. 4 exclusive concentration on particular decisions and quandaries.

[430] Hauerwas & Burrell, "From System to Story," 20. Bruce C. Birch & Larry L. Rasmussen opine that character is "the chief architect of our decisions and actions. It fashions the self's moral landscape." See, Bruce C. Birch & Larry L. Rasmussen, *Bible and Ethics in Christian Life* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing, 1976) 93. According to William Daniel, "[m]oral judging and decision-making can only occur … by means of the given "raw materials" of already established moral order." See, William Daniel, "Morality-in-the-Making: A New Look at Some Old Foundations," *Christian Century* 92, no. 1 (1975) 8-12, 10.

[431] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 114-115.

embodied only in a good life.[432] According to MacClendon, character is the first step in making responsible decisions.[433] Character renders the context in which one is first inclined to ask, "what is the right thing to do?" "To articulate … convictions [character] as norms would entail requiring decision-makers to ask how a decision is related to the convictions of an organization [a person]. Does this decision reflect the essential beliefs that go to the core of the identity of this person or group?"[434] Richard M. Gula as well agrees that "character predisposes us to choose in certain ways, even though it does not predetermine every choice."[435] "The choice [decision] is not made by a will operating in a vacuum but by someone who is the sort of the person…"[436] Charles E. Curran also opines that there are certain values and truth working in moral choices.[437] Decision-making originates from the person (character) and should be based in the person. Further, decisions are to be linked with the basic orientation of the person.[438]

Life in conformity with character is never compelled or forced to take any decision but itself takes decision.[439] In order to show the importance of character in decision-making, Hauerwas says that morally the most important things about us are those matters about which we never have to make a 'decision.'[440] To reach such a stage, it is important not to separate "situation" and "cases" from their narrative context. So if formed according to the dictates of the narratives of each community (either Christian or non-Christian community), which help people to form character, they come to know that there is no such pure thing as "decision-making." But decision-making takes place on the realization of who each person is or what kind of person s/he is.[441] "… the kind

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[432] Wells, "The Disarming Virtue of Stanley Hauerwas,'' 82.

[433] MacClendon, *Biography as Theology*, 30.

[434] James A. Donahue, "The Use of Virtue and Character in Applied Ethics," *Horizons* 17, no. 2 (1990) 228-243, 241. By identity, it is meant "the indispensable horizon or foundation out of which we reflect and evaluates as persons." See, Charles Taylor, "What is Human Agency?," *The Self: Psychological and Philosophical Issues*, ed. Theodore Mischel (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977) 103-135, 124-125.

[435] Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith*, 139.

[436] Rowan Williams, "On Making Moral Decisions," *Anglican Theological Review* 81, no. 2 (1999) 295-308, 296.

[437] Charles E. Curran, *New Perspectives in Moral Theology* (Norte Dame, IN: University of Norte Dame, 1974) 47-86. Iris Murdoch asks: "We do continually have to make choices – but why should we blot out as irrelevant the different background of these choices:…" See, Murdoch, "Vision and Choice in Morality," 209.

[438] Charles E. Curran, "Horizons of Fundamental Moral Theology," *Horizons* 10, no. 1 (1983) 86-110, 96.

[439] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 168-169.

[440] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 125. See also, Rasmusson, "Ecclesiology and Ethics," 185.

[441] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 129. MacClendon's view also supports Hauerwas' position as he says: "Moral decisions cannot be seen merely as the isolated acts of a natural (or rational, or society-regarding, or obedient) will; they must as well be seen as the display of character with its virtues and vices, or as the unfolding of an integral vision, or as participation in practices whose goals are the good that the practices evoke-in a word, as element of an ongoing narrative in whose episodes the moral agent is a character, and against whose setting the values of these decisions are weighed." See, James Wm. McClendon, Jr. "Narrative Ethics and Christian Ethics," *Faith and Philosophy* 3, no. 4 (1986) 383-396, 384. Heeley observes that the decisions we make are accurately present to us because of who we have allowed ourselves to become by way of past decisions. These choices originate not from elsewhere but are based on our histories and on the communities to which we belong. The decisions we embody are much related to the values assimilated from our community (ies). See, Heeley, *The Ethical Methodology of Stanley Hauerwas*, 86-87. See also, Gunton, "The Church as a School of Virtue?," 220. Here, we do affirm the role of the person and his/her community (narrative) in the decision making process. This is exactly the same when Patricia B.

of decisions we confront … is a function of the kind of character we have."[442] According to Hauerwas, "[t]hose committed to living faithfully [virtuously] do not have to decide constantly whether to be faithful [virtuous] or not. They simply are faithful [virtuous]."[443] This does not mean that virtuous persons do not make any decisions "but they are viewed as dependent on a more profound moral reality. Thus persons of character or virtue may, from the perspective of others, make what appear to have been momentous and even heroic decisions, but feel that in their own lives they 'had no choice' if they were to continue to be faithful to their characters."[444] Hauerwas makes this point clear by referring to the life of Thomas More. He (More) did not choose to die at the hands of King Henry. He did everything he could do to avoid Henry putting him to death. But he could not accept the oath of succession, and as a result he had to die. He did not understand that he had thereby made a "decision" needing justification. He simply did what he had to do.[445] Hauerwas thus emphasizes that character has an important role in decision-making.

The priority of character in Hauerwas' ethics of character does not deny decisions in ethical life. In whatever situations and narratives one may find himself/herself, there will be occasions s/he has to make decisions. What Hauerwas affirms is that the decision that the person takes must be in a way doing justice to the character of the person.[446] "The kind of decision we confront, indeed the very way we describe a situation, is a function of the character we have."[447] Decisions are the "parts" that are suitable to "whole" (character). So before making the decision, the prior question is to be whether the "parts" (decision) really fit into the "whole."[448] Hauerwas holds: "The very description of the 'problem and dilemma' gains its intelligibility in terms of the kind of character we do or should possess as communities and individuals."[449] This emphasis on character and virtue helps us to give importance and to see seriously the subjective account in decision.[450] So

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Jung argues that decision-making process includes both "the agent's conscious initiative and her [or his] organic heritage." See, Patricia B. Jung, "Sanctification: An Interpretation in the Light of Embodiment," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 11, no. 1 (1983) 75-95, 92.

[442] Hauerwas & Burrell, "From System to Story," 20.

[443] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 129. Sharing the experience of a virtuous man who takes decision without 'deciding' further strengthens Hauerwas' argument that virtuous life itself takes decision. (130)

[444] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 114.

[445] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 129. Wells referring to the villagers of Le Chambon in France shows that decision becomes taken for granted in a character based community. For the details, see Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny*, 136-137.

[446] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 122.

[447] Hauerwas & Burrell, "From System to Story," 20. To this John Emeka Anosike also agrees, as he writes: "The kind of choices we make, follow from the kind of character we have. Character gives rise to choice. Choices in turn confirm or qualify character, for choices are self-determining. In choosing to adapt one or another course of action, we make ourselves into certain sort of person." See, John Emeka Anosike, *Formation of Conscience: A Moral Theological Problem A Study in the Context of Karl Heinz Peschke's Christian Ethics* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000) 202-203.

[448] Donahue, "The Use of Virtue and Character in Applied Ethics," 239.

[449] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, xxiii.

[450] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 122.

what is wanted for Hauerwas, is the quality of our decision. The question of the quality of our decision leads to the question of how far we are virtuous. Concerning the significance of character in decision-making Hauerwas says:

> There is nothing about an emphasis on narrative and the virtues that in itself denies that we must still make decisions or that we are often rightly required to justify why we have acted as we have. However, it is true that those decisions do not have the same status they assume in ethics that ignore the significance of the virtues. For at least part of the intention of an ethics of virtue is to free us from the assumption of the felt 'necessities' and 'givens' we too often accept as part of our decisions.[451]

What is important for Hauerwas is not the decision but the kind of persons we become through the decisions.[452] While maintaining the prominence of character in decision-making, Hauerwas does not have any blind impression that character gives insight in each and every individual situation to do the right moral act. But he strongly affirms that it is character that enables him/her to take particular types of choices and decisions in individual situations of moral crises and dilemmas.

7. 2 Decision: Not the Paradigmatic Centre of Ethics

According to Hauerwas, moral life is not primarily focused on decisions and choices that we have to take in the face of ethical problems and dilemmas. "Morality is not primarily concerned with quandaries or hard decisions; nor is the moral self simply the collection of such decisions."[453] To this Selling adds as well, as he holds in evaluating *Veritatis Splendor*[454] that moral life is more than following the rules and 'keeping your nose clean.'[455] "Decisions are what we make when everything else has been lost."[456] Selling opines that it is a rare case where decision-making turns to 'conscious' when his/her moral retort is not spontaneous.[457] Hauerwas cannot see moral life as a life of decisions, which finds its reasonableness in universally acceptable principles and rules. But on the contrary, it is based on a seeing which has its roots in stories and in certain theological or religious convictions.[458] It is this seeing and vision that enables him/her to act rightly.[459] "The moral life is … not just the life of decision but the life of vision – that is, it involves how we see the world. Such 'seeing' does not come from just

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[451] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 123.

[452] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 8.

[453] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 114. See also, Meilaender, *The Theory and Practice of Virtue*, 83-84, Mark T. Lilla, "Ethos ,'Ethics,' and Public Service," *The Public Interest* 63 (1981) 4 as referred in Meilaender, *The Theory and Practice of Virtue*, 75.

[454] John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993).

[455] Joseph A. Selling, "*Veritatis Splendor* and the Sources of Morality," *Louvain Studies* 19, no. 1 (1994) 3-17, 9.

[456] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 122. This is a quote Hauerwas takes from Iris Murdoch's, *The Sovereignty of Good*. But the page number is not mentioned.

[457] Joseph Selling, "Is a Personalist Ethic Necessarily Anthropocentric?," *Ethical Perspectives* 6, no. 1 (1999) 60-66, 65. n. 3.

[458] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 69, 114.

perceiving 'facts,' rather we must learn how the world is to be properly 'seen' or better known. Such learning takes place by learning the language that intends the world and our behaviour as it ought to be that the good might be achieved."[460] Concurring with this, Edmund Pincoffs also agrees as he evaluates Aristotle's primary concern in ethics, particularly concerning the best kind of individual life and the kind of character the individual lives.[461] So "[e]thics does not finally dictate what the decision must be. Rather ethics tries to explicate what must be considered in the decision so that whatever decision he makes will have greater moral substance."[462] According to Johan Verstraeten, "[m]orality is not only a question of separate decisions and isolated actions, but is *in the first place* a continuous realization of a fundamental ethical purpose in the life that finds its meaning in a meta-ethical or religious fundamental option."[463]

Though Catholic moral theology concentrated more on acts before Second Vatican Council, its emphasis has been shifted in the post-conciliar era to the moral person and his/her moral character.[464] This shift is very well outlined by Richard Gula:

> Morality is often associated exclusively with behavior guided by rules…. While we are certainly called to do what is right as Christians, we are first of all called to be loving persons in the imitation of Christ…. Morality, then, has a great interest in the interiority of the person, or *the person's character*…. Here is where we locate the classical idea of the virtues – the personal qualities disposing us to act in certain ways.[465]

From the viewpoint of virtues, decisions are morally secondary. An ethic of virtue refuses to consider decisions as the "paradigmatic centre of moral reflection."[466] The primary concerns of ethical life, Hauerwas holds, are the kind of person s/he is (their character and virtues), the kind of belief s/he holds and the way s/he forms a coherent

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[459] Jonathan R. Wilson, "From Theology of Culture to Theological Ethics," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 23, no. 1 (1995) 156.

[460] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 20.

[461] Edmund Pincoffs, "Quandary Ethics," *Revisions: Changing Perspectives in Moral Theology*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas & Alasdair MacIntyre (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1983) 92-111, 94.

[462] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 104, See also, Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 113 and William C. Spohn, "What Are They Saying about Scripture and Ethics?," *Introduction to Christian Ethics: A Reader*, ed. Ronald P. Hamel & Kenneth R. Himes (New York: Paulist, 1989) 313-321, 314-315. Those who give importance to character rather than decisions in morality are insistent not to do what others are 'obliged' to do. See, Pincoffs, "Quandary Ethics," 104.

[463] Johan Verstraeten, "Narrativity and Hermeneutics in Applied Ethics: Some Introductory Considerations," *Ethical Perspectives* 1, no. 2 (1994) 51-56, 54, emphasis added.

[464] Cahill, "Christian Character, Biblical Community, and Human Values," 4-5. Unfortunately, in the encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, person (intention) gets only third place after act and circumstances. See, John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 71-83, 108-127. For a critical reading of this aspect of *Veritatis Splendor*, see, Selling, "*Veritatis Splendor* and the Sources of Morality," 3-17, 5-17 and Joseph A. Selling, "The Context and the Argument of *Veritatis Splendor*," *The Splendor of Accuracy: An Examination of the Assertions made by Veritatis Splendor*, ed. Joseph A. Selling & Jan Jans (Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing, 1994) 11-70, 40-70. Selling argues for the order of the elements of morality beginning from intention, circumstances and act. See, Joseph A. Selling, "The Fundamental Polarity of Moral Discourse," *Method and Catholic Moral Theology: The Ongoing Reconstruction*, ed. Todd A. Talzman (Omaka, NE: Creighton University, 1999) 21-43, 30-33, 37.

[465] Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith*, 7.

[466] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 114.

life.[467] The reason for the decisions not being the paradigmatic centre of moral life is the consequence of the approach of those ethics which ignore the fact that decisions have a history. The history of the decision involves the life of the person deciding and also the life of the community in which that person lives.[468] This importance given to the history of the person and to his/her community does not hold that "ethics is unconcerned with decisions or with principles which can guide decisions. But it is to say that decisions and principles for making them grow out of a history, or as Hauerwas would put it, a narrative, which is more about what kind of people we are than about particular acts."[469] In other words, the narratives in which s/he finds himself/herself give birth to his/her moral notions. So, before making decision there is the existence of moral notions. Without the precedence of moral notions, there is nothing to decide.[470] So, it is important to consider our moral notions as a way of life, such that our decisions become part of our being.[471] Moral notions enable or inform us in how to order the world.[472] And we come to know that behind every decision the underlying point or question is "what kind of person will I be?"[473] In other words, actions stream from the character.[474] Therefore, the important questions in character ethics are: 'What would make my life go well'? and 'how should I live'? These questions point to what makes life flourishing where disposition and emotions have an important place.[475] Hauerwas emphasises that character is not shaped by decision, even though decision may verify or make known character.

8 Critical Evaluation of Hauerwas' Ethics of Narrative and Character

So far we tried to understand the foundational categories of Hauerwas' ethics and its role in ethical life. Hauerwas' categories of narrative and character are commendable and meritorious in many respects in ethics. Narrative is significant for its ability to give unity in moral life, and it recreates interest in the convictions (character) of the individuals and community. However, the ability of narrative to provide coherence in life is challenged in the presence of traumatic bodily experiences of rape, shock, strong depression, undue interference into the freedom of individuals etc.[476] If the unity that

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[467] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 62, 69.

[468] Stephen S. Bilynskyj, "Character Ethics and the Ethics of Virtue," *The Covenant Quarterly* (1987) 125-134, 130. (from, http://www.efn.org/~ssb/papers/virtue.htm, access on 14. 02. 2003)

[469] Bilynskyj, "Character Ethics and the Ethics of Virtue," 130.

[470] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 12-13.

[471] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 18.

[472] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 19.

[473] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 7-8. What we want to emphasise is that a person of good character will not have any difficulty to make decisions in any conflicting situation. See, Pincoffs, "Quandary Ethics," 107.

[474] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 117. See also, Meilaender, *The Theory and Practice of Virtue*, 5.

[475] James Griffin, "Virtue Ethics and Environs," *Social Philosophy & Policy Foundation* 15 (1998) 56-70, 64.

[476] Lois McNay, "Communitarians and Feminists: The Case of Narrative Identity," *Literature and Theology* 16, no. 1 (2002) 81-95, 86.

narrative provides breaks down in a particular stage of life, then it is difficult to retain the unity. There is also the possibility for the unity to be an artificial one. There are also other questions that Hauerwas' narrative ethics (narrative in ethics) raises. The most significant contribution of Hauerwas to the ethical world is nothing but the recreation of interests in moral character and thus character ethics. For him, the most important question in ethics is 'what should I be' or what sort of person we are becoming. Nevertheless, character ethics' sharing less on intra-human level, i.e., having less of a stake in the good of other people, is questionable. The deficiency of character ethics is not limited to this alone. Therefore, in this section, we feel obliged to take up the challenge: namely, to look into some of the predominant problems and possible objections we find in Hauerwas' ethics of narrative and character.

8. 1 A Critical Appraisal of Hauerwas' Narrative Ethics

We now deal with certain problems (questions) that Hauerwas' narrative ethics brings. Many ethicists and theologians have challenged Hauerwas' narrative ethics from different perspectives. For the sake of clarity and brevity, we shall make our evaluation by focusing mainly on five areas: (*i*) The question of narrative as a form of rationality; (*ii*) the problem of relativism in morality; (*iii*) the problem of self-justification of the narrative; (*iv*) the question of opening hermeneutical enclosure: the promise of Ricoeur; and (*v*) moral person or community superiority/important and the question of identity?

8. 1. 1 The Question of Narrative as a Form of Rationality

Gloria H. Albrecht criticizes Hauerwas' diminished interest in the role of rationality in morality. "In response to the differences raised by a radical notion of human historicity, Hauerwas has used the language of historicism to reinsert a claim to unchanging truth. He replaces rational man and ahistorical reason with Christian man and a master narrative."[477] Though critics' attack on Hauerwas' less interest of rationality in morality is commendable, it lacks significance since they fail to understand Hauerwas properly. Traditions are not in opposition with reason but are in fact the bearers of reason.[478] "… stories can do the work of argument … 'narrating' exactly because narration is the 'science' of the particular, 'is a more basic category than either explanation or understanding.'"[479] Toulmin wrote: "The exercise of rational judgement is itself an activity carried out in a particular context and essentially depends on it: the arguments we encounter are set out at a given time and in a given situation, and when we come to assess them they have to be judged against this background."[480] Commenting on

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[477] Gloria H. Albrecht, "Myself and Other Characters: A Feminist Liberationist Critique of Hauerwas's Ethics of Christian Character," *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* (1992) 97-114, 111.

[478] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 26.

[479] Stanley Hauerwas, *With the Grain of the Universe: The Church's Witness and Natural Theology* (London: SCM, 2001) 206.

[480] Stephen Toulmin, *The Use of Argument* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1958) 183.

MacIntyre, Rolando shows how the tradition is 'rational' and 'argument.' We consider it relevant to quote him at length.

> … tradition is actually an *argument* about the goods or morality (tradition-constituted) upheld by a given community according to its own rationality which, at the same time, shapes (tradition-constitutive) its form of life within the complex network of social relation for over a long period of time. What goes with this presupposition is the fact that tradition and reason are not to be understood as opposed to each other, but are, in fact, one in their concrete historical and social embodiment and expressions. Particular modes of life and thought, moral values and political institutions, rational inquiry and social praxis, language and customs, and the whole gamut of structures and systems of existence, survival and growth of a community are concrete embodiments of the tradition-constituted and tradition-constitutive rationality. Ethical rationality, or any rationality for that matter, can only make sense and have meaning as it finds itself at home within its particular embodiment in a living tradition.[481]

So tradition-dependent approach in morality cannot be and need not be labelled as 'irrational.' It is in fact the tradition that provides its members with necessary resources for rational pursuit. This makes him/her for rational evaluations and conclusions.[482] "Only within a community with shared beliefs about goods and shared dispositions educated in accordance with those beliefs, both rooted in shared practices, can practical reasoning-giving be an ordered, teachable activity with standards of success and failure."[483] Moreover, by constant fidelity to the narrative, the community is able to attain a sort of 'universalization' in morality. Life orientation and conviction itself become a form of universalization of rationality in morality. In this sense, we can say that particularity is not just particularity but moral particularity.[484] Attentiveness to narrative forms a critical aspect of narrative. Any adequate tradition "must accept *creative tension* to be a permanent feature of its way of life."[485] This creative tension allows the particular not to go through mere routine without reflection. It is a possibility of challenging narratives not to be in self-deception. According to Katongole, "… the dialectical interaction between the particulars and traditioned horizons exerts a pressure towards universalization which helps to make both the concrete particulars and the traditioned horizons more objective and more truthful particulars."[486] So attentiveness to creative tension and other narratives and cultures help each and every narrative to forming its narrative as a form of rationality.

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[481] Rolando A. Tuazon, *Narrative Ethics of Liberation: Exploring the Role and Interplay of Tradition, Story, and the 'Other' in Ethical Practice and Reflection* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Theology, K.U. Leuven, Leuven, 2006) 44-45.

[482] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 367. Here, we are indebted to Tuazon, *Narrative Ethics of Liberation*, 45.

[483] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Moral Arguments and Social Contexts," *The Journal of Philosophy* LXXX (1983) 591.

[484] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 148.

[485] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 63.

[486] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 153.

Therefore, in ethics any theory, if it is to develop an account of rationality that does justice to the practical, historical and social nature of moral life, must take the narrative form. Using the category of narrative, Hauerwas' whole aim is to establish that narrative is a form of rationality appropriate to morality. As MacIntyre wrote, "There is no standing ground, no place for enquiry, no way to engage in the practices of advancing, evaluating, accepting, and rejecting reasoned arguments apart from that which is provided by some particular tradition or another."[487] MacIntyre observes some dimensions in any appreciation of rationality. It is essentially historical, contingent, particular, narrative.[488] "… the standards of rational justification themselves emerge from and are part of a history in which they are vindicated by the way in which they transcend the limitations of and provide remedies for their predecessors within the history of history of that same tradition."[489] "Human Rationality has a history, and that its history is the criticism both in life and thought of the limitations of each of its specific historical forms."[490] The narrative becomes a form of rationality by the community's ongoing contact, interpretation and creative tension (circularity within the narrative) of the narrative, which also leads to self-criticism. In partaking in the dialectical process of probing, refining and questioning the narrative, the members are able to keep the vitality of the narrative. By relating one's narrative to other narratives, self-deception and self-justification can be well checked. "'Reason' is not committed to the idea that there is only one way to be rational - the variety of our rational activities is only limited by the language of our communities."[491] Moreover, Hauerwas asserts, "[t]he unity and consistency of a 'way of life' cannot be derived from abstractly posited 'rationality,' but rather is learned 'from observation, direct experience, and from psychology and history.' … our ability to offer public reasons for our behaviour is fundamental to moral life. But it is not clear that such reasons only work within the context of an abstractly constructed ethics of obligation."[492] Verstraeten rightly pointed that out moral reasoning becomes abstract and meaningless apart from its narrative contexts.[493] As MacIntyre observes that there is "only the practical-rationality-of-this-or-that-tradition."[494]

8. 1. 2 The Problem of Relativism in Morality

Hauerwas' insistence on the narrative-dependent quality of rationality leads to the charges of relativism in morality, which maintains difference in morality in

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[487] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 350.

[488] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 8-10. Here, we are indebted to Tuazon, *Narrative Ethics of Liberation*, 45-46.

[489] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 7.

[490] MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics*, 203.

[491] Hauerwas, "Natural Law, Tragedy and Theological Ethics," 65.

[492] Hauerwas, "Obligation and Virtue Once More," 52.

[493] Verstraeten, "Narrativity and Hermeneutics in Applied Ethics," 53. See also, MacnItyre, *After Virtue*, 148.

communities. If objectivity in morality is relative to a particular narrative, it causes the absence of a common ground for moral objectivity. Robert N. Richardson remarks that "the rational choices only lie within, never between the various stories and their conceptual world … Rationality and rational discussions are limited by Hauerwas to discourse within a community of shared, story-based convictions."[495] If a particular community's narrative tells them that they are the people called to be a group of killers, J. Wesley Robbins says that nobody can blame them according to the view of Hauerwas. Robbins criticizes Hauerwas saying that according to the understanding of Hauerwas' morality, one would be "forced to admit, however reluctantly, that morally speaking, i.e., in terms of what their vision calls for them, their actions are appropriate; they have done nothing wrong."[496] But Hauerwas denies that there is anything in his "analysis of the significance of vision to suggest that persons are accountable 'only for their vision calls for them.'"[497]

Relativism is the mark of the time. Against the charges of relativism Hauerwas argues that our given historical nature, cultures, languages and communities are different facts (aspects) of relativism. George Lindbeck points out that each community has its own way of encountering and approaching oneself, fellow men and the universe.[498] MacIntyre too affirms this as he writes that "there is no other way to engage with the formulation, elaboration, rational justification, and criticism of accounts of practical rationality and justice expect within some one particular tradition in conversation, cooperation and conflict with those who inhibit the same tradition."[499] Gerard J. Hughes opines that to the degree "pluralism is defensible, it … does not suffice to exclude a strong version of ethical relativism which maintains that different moral codes are simply non-comparable."[500] According to Kallenberg, to transcend one's particularity is an illusion. Being so, there is no point arguing for criteria to decide between rival traditions. So he argues that the charge of relativism is being transcended.[501] MacIntyre writes: "For if there is multiplicity of rival traditions, each of its own characteristic modes of rational justification internal to it, then that fact entails that no one tradition can offer those

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[494] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 346.

[495] Robert Neville Richardson, *Christian Community and Ethics: Critical Reflections on the Nature and Function of Church in the Ethics of Stanley Hauerwas* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Natal, South Africa, 1986) 375, as quoted in O'Neil, *Who Should Be We?*, 306.

[496] J. Wesley Robbins, "On the Role of Vision in Morality," *Journal of American Academy of Religion* 45, no. 2 (1977) 623-642, 635. See also, Luis J. Pojman, *Ethics: Discovering Rights and Wrongs*, 2nd ed. (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing, 1990) 23.

[497] Hauerwas, "Learning to See Red Wheelbarrows: On Vision and Relativism," 650.

[498] George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Post-Liberal Age* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1984) 40. According to Nation, "… the true response to relativism today is the living of the convictions we claim are true." See, Mark Thiessen Nation, "Living in Another World as One Responses to Relativism," *Theology without Foundations: Religious Practice and the Future of Theological Truth*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas, Nancey Murphy, Mark Thiessen Nation (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1994) 229-244, 238.

[499] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 350.

[500] Gerard J. Hughes, *Aristotle on Ethics*, Routledge Philosophy Guidebooks (London: Routledge, 2001) 218.

[501] Kallenberg, *Ethics as Grammar*, 227.

outside it good reasons for excluding the theses of its rivals. Yet if this is so, no one tradition is entitled to arrogate to itself an exclusive title; no one tradition can deny legitimacy to its rivals."[502] Accepting the fact of relativism involves realising that "[w]hat we require … is not an argument that provides an *a priori* defeat of relativism, but an interpretation of and the corresponding skills to live in a world where others exist who do not share my moral history."[503] Hauerwas develops relativism in a balanced way as a 'witness' which implies the assertion of the hermeneutical significance of the presence of the other.[504] Witness includes first listening what others have to say.[505] In this sense, witness paves also the way for self-criticism and the improvement of one's religious traditions. "Witness as the form of contact between historically constituted traditions, affirms the realisation that no one tradition is in possession of the truth. If this is the nature of truth then it makes contact between traditions necessarily hermeneutical."[506] This confrontation between historically constituted forms of truths is an explicatory dialogue, capable of generating critical focus by which truth is dialectically recognised, revised or extended.[507] Here, the importance is to see who the others are without attempting to reduce the others to an extension of one's self-understanding. Witness of the other causes self-criticism and improvement of the tradition.

8. 1. 3 The Problem of Self-Justification of the Narrative

The basic assumption of Hauerwas' narrative ethics (category of narrative in ethics), that language and meaning are internally related to the world, faces the criticism of self-justification, although Katongole tries to save Hauerwas by way of 'witness' providing opening to the narrative. According to Hauerwas, integrity in moral life can be achieved only if the individuals are faithful to the convictions of the narrative of the community. This will lead to the inevitable question whether the community alone can determine the truthfulness of narrative and, if so, will it not lead to self-justification of the narrative? Other possible questions would be: Is there not the possibility for the whole community to be self-deceptive or to be in the wrong narrative? Doesn't Hauerwas promote an 'imposing' nature of the narrative? Isn't Hauerwas' notion of narrative another version of the standard account of moral rationality? Questions such as these would compel each narrative to (re)examine itself, and the result is the opening to other narratives for

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[502] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 352.

[503] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 104.

[504] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 172. This point can be seen in Wells too. See, Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny*, 82. Hauerwas has not developed this concept of 'witness' sufficiently.

[505] Stanley Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them in Truth: Holiness Exemplified* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998) 189.

[506] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 172.

[507] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 172.

inspiration and correction. Something need not be true since it is said by the tradition.[508] Franklin I. Gamwell argues: "A claim is never valid simply because someone or some group says that it is. In this sense any claim is open to question, and, therefore, no particular expression or tradition or institution can be authoritative in a heterogamous sense, no matter how pervasive adherence to it has been or how long it has endured."[509] So, each community must wilfully be ready to open itself to other narratives so that each of them can prevent possible self-deception.[510] MacIntyre also pinpoints that narrative needs an evaluative setting[511] and the possibility of a rational comparison between traditions.[512] It is an occasion to re-consider and re-think the narrative according to the new perception of truth or reality. The openness and ongoing conversation with other narratives provide not only the opportunity to understand other narratives but also to receive the good element of other narratives.[513] As Hans-Georg Gadamer observes, "the historical life of a tradition depends on constantly new assimilation and interpretation."[514] There may be elements in other narratives that can be helpful in the formation of moral life. It is a fact that communities can possess wrong or bad narratives. The best example is the extermination of the Jews under the leadership of Hitler, which resulted from a wrong narrative. So the tendency of self-justification of the community is to be checked by relating one's narrative to other narratives so that the community can make sure that it is a truthful narrative. According to Gustafson, "in the absence of an 'external justification' one would have to give up the evaluative categories of truth and falsity and even the very notion of objectivity"[515] and, for William J. Meyer, convictions generated by narratives require some metaphysical reasons (convictions) other than the mere appeal to tradition or narrative of the community for justification.[516] Johan De Tavernier in line with this 'external justification' argues for the need of theologians to be open minded towards others

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[508] Franklin I. Gamwell, *The Divine Good: Modern Moral Theory and the Necessity of God* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Collins, 1990) 3-5 as refereed in William J. Meyer, "On Keeping Theological Ethics Theological: An Alternative to Hauerwas's Diagnosis and Prescriptions," *The Annual Society of the Christian Ethics* 19 (1999) 21-45, 28.

[509] Gamwell, *The Divine Good*, 4.

[510] Terrence P. Reynolds, "A Conversation Worth Having: Hauerwas and Gustafson on Substance in Theological Ethics," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 28, no. 3 (2000) 395-421, 408.

[511] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative and the Philosophy of Science," *The Monist* 60, no. 4 (1977) 453-472, 456.

[512] MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, 359. Here, we consider it to be significant to observe Katongole's observation on MacIntyre's view on incommensurability. "MacIntyre's argument for incommensurability cannot be seen as a strategy for isolationist 'cocooning' or for a xenophobic Puritanism. Rather, it is the reminder of the absence of a 'neutral' and high ground on which a normative engagement with the 'Other' takes place." See, Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 188.

[513] For an elaboration of the effects of genuine conversations, see, David Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity: Hermeneutics, Religion, Hope* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1987) 16-19.

[514] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Garrett Barden & John Cumming (London: Sheed & Ward, 1975) 358.

[515] James Gustafson, "The Sectarian Temptation," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 40 (June 5-8, 1985) 83-94, 93.

[516] Meyer, "On Keeping Theological Ethics Theological," 38.

especially to scientists and politicians lest the religion be privatised and be limited to certain sectors of life.[517] Contact with other narratives is a possibility for receiving rational foundation for the narrative by way of discussion and evaluation giving way for justifying one's own narrative.

Hauerwas' insistence on the narrative of the community in the moral formation of the individuals raises another question: What is the role of "the various dynamics which makes up human sociality - particularly the intersubjective constitution of selfhood as it interacts with basic instinctual energies, with specific patterns of social organization, and with a shared culture? Beliefs and convictions are a feature of the common culture, but they are effective in shaping lives only by way of the social processes which mediate, confirm, modify and reinforce them in human life."[518] Hauerwas is less impressed with the want for a society to share a vision of the good than with the distinctiveness of the Christian church's ethics.[519] There is of course the need for appreciating the virtues of the other narratives. So other narratives are possibilities to evaluate any narrative.

8. 1. 4 The Question of Opening Hermeneutical Enclosure: The Promise of Ricoeur

The previous point (8. 1. 3) brought to light the need of opening the tradition to others. As pointed, this enables it to overcome the criticism of the self-justification and saves it from ideological leap into self-deception. Now, we intend to give more clarity to this by concentrating on the important contribution of Paul Ricoeur in this respect.[520] The grounding principles of Hauerwasian ethical and theological thought that language and meaning are internally related to the world and any understanding of rationality is tradition-dependent has the potential danger that the tradition and consequently its narrative can be used to safeguard certain ideological interests of the tradition. The possible danger of historicity and historical consciousness in its manifold ways such as self-justification, promotion of self-interests, imposing of the narrative, etc. are to be checked by what Ricoeur calls critical consciousness. This makes a hermeneutics as 'critical hermeneutics.' This critical hermeneutics points to both the inevitability of historicity of tradition and its critique. Ricoeur writes:

> The gesture of hermeneutics is a humble one of acknowledging the historical conditions
> to which all human understanding is subsumed in the reign of finitude; that of the
> critique of ideology is a proud gesture of defiance directed against the distortions of

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[517] Johan De Tavernier, "Eschatology and Social Ethics," trans. Annemie Marivoet & Vincent Sansone, *Personalist Morals: Essays in Honor of Professor Louis Janssens*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 83, ed. Joseph A. Selling *et al* (Leuven: Leuven University, 1988) 279-300, 280, 283.

[518] Thomas W. Ogletree, "Character and Narrative: Stanley Hauerwas' Studies of the Christian Life," *Religious Studies Review* 6, no. 1 (1980) 25-30, 26.

[519] Barbour, "The Virtues in a Pluralistic Context," 176. For Hauerwas' decreased interest in other communities and society, see the section 8. 2. 4 Character Formation: A Process by Individuals, Community and Society?

[520] Jean Paul Gustave Ricoeur (1913-2005) is widely recognized now as one of the most influential thinkers of our time. He has made original and lasting contributions to phenomenology, hermeneutics, narrative theory and ideological critique in human sciences.

human communication. By the first, I place myself in the historical process to which I know that I belong; by second, I oppose the present state of falsified human communication with the idea of an essentially political freedom of speech, guided by the limiting idea of unrestricted and unconstrained communication.[521]

This points out that Ricoeur affirms the need of both the hermeneutics of tradition and hermeneutics of critical consciousness. By the interplay and creative tension of both the vitality of the tradition can be kept. Critical reflection on hermeneutics of tradition is able to give opening to the tradition in the sense that it enables the tradition to keep some sort of distance with itself (distanciation). The critical reflection on hermeneutics is able to pinpoint the *interests* of the particular tradition and narrative. Critical consciousness plays a major role in the creative renewal of any narrative tradition[522] and to get rid of from one's own preoccupation and the conditioning of the tradition. To make this hermeneutic opening, Ricoeur speaks of threefold mimesis. He calls *Mimesis* I as 'pre-figuration.' It is the perception of one's story with its pre-understanding. *Mimesis* II is 'configuration.' It is the process of ordering the various life experiences into an ordered plot. *Mimesis* III is the interaction of the world of the self with the world of the other. It is actually here that a new world is being emerged.[523] That is, the creative interplay between the hermeneutics of tradition and critical consciousness (ideology critique) help to "'refigure' (mimesis III) the 'configuration' (mimesis II) of the narrative structure (mimesis I) of our lives by opening it up to new possibilities or new visions for a new world."[524]

8. 1. 5 Moral Person or Community Superior/Important and the Question of Identity?

Since, according to Hauerwas, narrative plays a key role in the moral building of individuals, it is naturally assumed that narrative makes its adherents think in line with the narrative which one particular community has. Then what about the relevance of what we call: the initiative and freedom of the individual? Does the importance of narrative reduce the autonomy and freedom of the moral agent? Can individuals not have a morality of their own apart from the narratives of their communities? Can there be conflict between individual narratives and the narrative of the community and the possible opening up of a new community? Do physical and psychological factors have roles in his/her moral life? Can s/he create or adopt new stories? Is it enough to think only in line with the narrative of the community? Is narrative static? Is narrative oppressive, blocking the growth of individuals? In history, it is not difficult to see individuals who created their own narratives, which in fact paved the way to purify and

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[521] Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation*. Edited, introduction and translation by John B. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1981) 87.

[522] Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, 87-100.

[523] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. I, 54-82.

re-construct the narratives of their communities.[525] According to Paul Nelson, a narrative presupposes agency as a dialectical relation between intention and circumstances.[526] In this case, there is little fear to think that a narrative will endanger the freedom and autonomy of individuals in morality. He continues, "[w]ho they are and what happens to them form an ongoing system of interactions that allow the characters a measure of freedom in that they are neither determined entirely nor prevented from having their own intentions."[527] Moreover, even though we are influenced by the narrative in morality, "we may pick and choose from a variety of stories or we may dispense with stories altogether, relying instead on our commitment to certain moral principles."[528] According to Gene Outka, "… narrative do not embrace us so tightly that we cannot withhold our assent from the roles they bequeath to us. While we cannot escape coming to terms with the stories of our childhood, family and tradition, we can decline to identify with all or part of this heritage."[529] David Fergusson points out, "… individual and social goods are correlative, and that individuals cannot prosper except within a net work of social environments…. The communitarian perspective is against neither rights nor individuals."[530] So, we hold that narrative of the community does not in any way threaten the autonomy of the moral persons. At the same time, the role of community in moral formation of the individuals is to be held in prominence. The narrative of the community is of significance since it helps us to check or avoid possible self-deception. Children should be brought up by the narratives of their parents/family or community, which inculcate basic convictions or orientations in moral life in their childhood itself. "As humans we are both individual and communal, and we need to take both of these dimensions of our humanity seriously."[531]

So it can be seen that both the individual and the community have significant place in his/her moral fulfilment and integrity. Neither is being reduced at the expense of the other. Put differently, the question of identity or who, individual or community superior/important is can be answered only by interaction and interplay of both individual and community. Here, we now try to give more clarity to what we have been arguing by the help of Ricoeur. For him, the question of personal identity can be better understood in relation to what he calls "the narrative identity." To understand this

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[524] Tuazon, *Narrative Ethics of Liberation*, 390. Our exposition of Ricoeur is inspired by Tuazon, *Narrative Ethics of Liberation*, 384-390. We hope to achieve more clarity on Ricoeur's idea in dealing the next point.

[525] The lives of Jesus Christ and St. Paul can be regarded as the best examples who created their own narratives, which really contributed to the good of the community. Here, we make clear that in referring to St Paul, we mean his conversion from Saul to Paul, thus creating his own narrative. We have some reservations with his views on woman, authority etc.

[526] Nelson, *Narrative and Morality*, 34.

[527] Nelson, *Narrative and Morality*, 35.

[528] Nelson, *Narrative and Morality*, 35.

[529] Gene Outka, "Character, Vision and Narrative," *Religious Studies Review* 6, no. 2 (1980) 110-118, 117.

[530] Fergusson, *Community, Liberalism and Christian Ethics*, 150.

[531] Connors, & McCormick, *Character, Choices & Community*, 58.

narrative identity, it is important to understand what Ricoeur calls '*ipse*' and '*idem*' identity. The latter term, which, Ricoeur refers to: "identity as *sameness* (Latin *idem*, German *Gleichheit*, French *mêmeté*)," while, the former term, refers to: "identity as *selfhood* (Latin *ipse*, German *Selbstheit*, French *ipséité*)."[532] So, the '*idem*-identity' tends to emphasize *sameness* and corresponds to "*numerical* identity." But the *ipse*-identity is concerned with "articulating the experience of the self in time" and therefore there is some similarity between *ipse*-identity and *qualitative* identity.[533] From these '*ipse*' and '*idem*,' Ricoeur opts for personal identity as requiring the concept of *ipse*-identity. Ricoeur's affinity to '*ipse*' consists in the fact that if any progress is to be made with respect to the problem of personal identity, then, the self is to be approached from a temporal point of view. Ricoeur sees the self as temporal through and through; for he states: "in many narratives the self seeks its identity on the scale of an entire life…"[534] Now, one of the problems connected with personal identity from a temporal point of view is the question of identifying self as *being the same* over a period of time. Further he suggests that, in order to posit identity, one needs a third category, namely, "uninterrupted continuity"[535] which would postulate a relationship between present and past. After having treated the concept of identity in terms of 'sameness,' Ricoeur summarizes the problem of personal identity in the following statement: "The entire problematic of personal identity will revolve around this search for a relational invariant, giving it the strong signification of permanence in time"[536] So, Ricoeur, at this juncture, tries to bring together the '*idem*' and '*ipse*.' He writes: "… one cannot think the *idem* of the person through without considering the *ipse*, even when one entirely covers over the other."[537] Now he brings narrative identity to balance '*idem*' and '*ipse*.' He states: "we will not be surprised to see narrative identity oscillate between two limits: a lower limit, where permanence in time expresses the confusion of *idem* and *ipse*, and an upper limit, where the *ipse* poses the question of identity without the aid and support of the *idem*."[538]

According to Ricoeur, a narrative can link the past with a future by giving a sense of continuity to an ever-changing story of the self. He claims that narrative has this potentiality, because it is uniquely qualified to express the ongoing dialectic of selfhood and sameness. The way in which narrative identity is initially expressed is through

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[532] Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 116.

[533] Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 116.

[534] Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 115.

[535] Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 117.

[536] Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 118.

[537] Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 121.

[538] Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 124.

fictional narratives. Fictional narratives disclose character through 'emplotment.'[539] Ricoeur says that "there is a kind of discordant concordance"[540] which is conveyed through narrative. According to Ricoeur, narratives link events together by giving account of the intentions of the actors so that the character appears to have certain chronology. "Narratives make sense out of self-identity in the context of time."[541] Ricoeur says that narratives account for action. But they do so in complex ways. In the dialectic between plot and character narrative resolves the potential contradiction between the two by "granting to the character an initiative… and by assigning to the narrative as such the power of determining the beginning, the middle and the end of action."[542] Ricoeur further speculates that this dialectic between action and character produces dialectic internal to the character. On the one hand, the character draws his/her "singularity" from the "unity of life" which is, in turn, consider as "a temporal totality, which itself is singular and distinguished from all others. This is the concordance side of the dialectic between concordance and discordance. On the other hand, 'following the line of discordance, this temporal totality is threatened by the disruptive effect of the unforeseeable events that punctuate it."[543]

Ricoeur's effort to reconceive the dialectic of discordance and concordance on a higher level as the dialectic between selfhood and sameness can be articulated as a set of 'imaginative variations' entertained by the narrative.[544] For Ricoeur, this is the very point of narrative because it does not seek to conceal this dialectic but rather seeks out the contradictions. He writes: "In this sense, literature proves to consist in a vast

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[539] Ricoeur first time uses this term emplotment and gives a thorough analysis in his book *Time and Narrative*, especially in I & II volumes. See, Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. I, and Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. II, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1985). Ricoeur takes this term from Aristotle. Aristotle in *Poetics* defines emplotment as "the organization (*systasis*-this is the root of the term system and according to Ricoeur, it is equivalent to the Greek term *synthesis*) of events." Emplotment is used by Aristotle to be a complement to the verb composes and poetics is itself defined as the art of emplotment or composing plots. Thus, in Aristotle emplotment stands for a verbal composition, organizing disparate events into the unity of composition. Poetics as the particular kind of composing or organizing, which creates a unified plot from what would otherwise be thought of as disconnected events. See, Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. by James Hutton (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982) 50a15. When Ricoeur uses the term emplotment, he emphasizes both the functional dimension of emplotment, namely, the organization of events and the imitation of action. Hence, Ricoeur uses emplotment as referring to "a creative synthesis of events in a manner that imitates the actions of events." See, Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. I, 33-34.

[540] Ricoeur's use of 'discordant concordance' is connected with his understanding of mediating function of emplotment. In *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur distinguishes three ways in which emplotment serves a mediating function. First, plots mediate between events. Emplotment transforms what otherwise might be considered as mere isolated events into a story. Second, Emplotment configures "the what" of a story, including its agents, goals, motivations, circumstances, chance, events, and actions into a unified whole. It is in the creation of such a complex plot, what Ricoeur refers to it 'concordant discordance' arises. Third, emplotment "grasps together" events in a Kantian sense, creating a meaningful order of temporality that are otherwise a mere sequence of events. See, Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. I, 59-64. An excellent analysis of Ricoeur's understanding is given in Olav Bryant Smith, *Myths of the Self Narrative Identity and Postmodern Metaphysics* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004) 146-151.

[541] David Rasmussen, "Rethinking Subjectivity: Narrative Identity and the Self," Paul Ricoeur, *The Hermeneutics of Action*, ed. Paul Ricoeur (London: Sage Publications, 1996) 159-172, 165.

[542] Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 147.

[543] Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 147.

[544] Rasmussen, "Rethinking Subjectivity: Narrative Identity and the Self," 165.

laboratory for thought experiments in which the resources of variation encompassed by narrative identity are put to the test of narration."[545] Ricoeur suggests that the reflection on the 'imaginative variations' between selfhood and sameness can be used as a clue to the distinction between literary and technological forms of narrative. Ricoeur, making use of his hermeneutic background highlights this distinction in order to claim his point that "a person is not an entity distinct from his or her experiences." [546]

Now, Ricoeur is concerned with the problem in moving from fictional narrative to narrative of life. He asks: "how do the thought experiments occasioned by fiction… contribute to self-examination in real life?"[547] He then raises the following questions: (*i*) In my "life story," am I the author or the narrator or the character or all of the preceding three combined? (*ii*) Beginnings in fiction are clear; however, they are not so in real life. Furthermore, in real life, "endings are not neat and pat," there can be several endings. Thus, what happens to the notion of a unified life? (*iii*) "Can one then still speak of the narrative unity of life," if one's life history is in tension with any others', like, friends, parents, colleagues? (*iv*) In our self-understanding, anticipation of and projects relative to the future play a large role. If one's life story is open-ended in this fashion, how comparable is it to fictional narrative?[548] And what is curious and strange is that Ricoeur seems to take the position that narrative identity offers no advantage and thus the narrative self is 'stripped bare' in favour of ethical primacy, as he says: "a fact that should make it clear to us that the issue here is the ethical primacy of the other than the self over the self."[549]

So the exposition of Ricoeur's narrative theory reveals that the self's identity is constituted by an inextricable tie between a selfsameness and a selfhood or *ipseity*. Thus, through the synthetic view of personal identity he is able to bring together the understanding that personal identity as agential and at the same time he sees this identity as essentially consists in the narrative unity of the actions of a rational and moral agent who is embedded in a social and historical tradition. Hence, the dialectic of the self demands other than self and selfhood implies otherness to an intimate degree, for, "the shortest route from self to self is through the other." Thus, through a combination of phenomenological and hermeneutic approach, Ricoeur opens up a new realm in the understanding of the self through the narrative identity.

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[545] Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 148.

[546] Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 147.

[547] Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 159. Prior to this point Ricoeur distinguishes three levels of meaning that can be discovered in the actions of a life. First, practice, which has to do with long action chains that can be found in the professions, arts and games. The second is called "life plans," that is, those vast practical units that make up professional life, family life, leisure time, and so forth." The third is referring to MacIntyre's "the narrative unity of life" in which the first two levels are unified through commitment to ideals and a life project. See, Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 153-158

[548] Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 158-161. See also, Ronald G. Alexander, *The Self, Supervenience and Personal Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997) 120.

[549] Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 168.

Thus, we have seen the possible objections and questions towards Hauerwas' narrative ethics (category of narrative in ethics) and some possible responses to those objections. The criticism that narrative faces is in fact the best reminder to avoid the possible dangers.

8. 2 A Critical Appraisal of Hauerwas' Character Ethics

After having evaluated Hauerwas' narrative ethics, now we try to evaluate Hauerwas' character ethics. Objections and questions have been raised against Hauerwas' character ethics from various levels and perspectives. Character ethics' inclination to self-centredness and its inability to provide guidance for making decisive moral decisions and inefficiency in handling moral problems have been questioned by many ethicists and theologians. There are also other areas related to character ethics that are to be evaluated. Here, we evaluate Hauerwas' character ethics mainly focusing on six points. They are (*i*) over concentration on self-centredness, (*ii*) unavoidable place of 'decision' in moral life, (*iii*) circularity between agency (character) and action is not always inevitable, (*iv*) character formation: a process of individuals, community and society?, (*v*) lack of sufficient attention to the role of emotion in character, and (*vi*) failure to combine adequately the various disciplines in dealing with character.

8. 2. 1 Over Concentration on Self-Centredness

Hauerwas' character ethics bends to self-centredness. In the process of holding one's life as one's own or becoming a person of a particular kind or changing the character from 'the way it is' to 'the way it ought to be,' the moral agent keeps his/her character as his/her supreme concern. This self-centeredness is a serious objection that the ethics of character is often faced with since it gives too much attention to the agent.[550] Ivar Asheim criticizes Hauerwas' ethics of character due to the danger of ethical narcissism, as the person's intentionality is aimed at himself/herself and his/her realisation.[551] This self-centerdness in moral life advocated by character ethics is really a limit especially when we take into consideration the danger of liberal society.[552] Hauerwas' criticism of modernity is in fact also applicable to his own ethics of character,[553] as it has the danger of concentrating only on his/her character formation and moral up-building.[554] S/he may

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[550] Solomon, "Internal Objections to Virtue Ethics," 169.

[551] Ivar Asheim, "Lutherische Tugendethik," *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 40 (1998) 239-260. See also, Colin Gunton, "The Church as a School of Virtue? Human Freedom in Trinitarian Frame Work," *Faithfulness and Fortitude: In Conversation with the Theological Ethics of Stanley Hauerwas*, ed. Mark Thiessen Nation & Samuel Wells (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000) 211-231, 226. The individualistic cast made by character ethics is also questioned by Donahue. See, Donahue, "The Use of Virtue and Character in Applied Ethics," 231.

[552] Donahue, "The Use of Virtue and Character in Applied Ethics," 231.

[553] Hauerwas contends that modernity's freedom is for self-interest. See, Hauerwas, *Suffering Presence*, 56 and Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 84.

[554] Meilaender, *The Theory and Practice of Virtue*, 14.

make use of all possible ways that contribute to his/her character. This leads him/her to be less concerned about his/her fellow beings and God.[555] Meilaender questions: "If virtue fulfils, how could morality require self-sacrifice? If morality may require of us a seemingly ultimate sacrifice what's the good of it?"[556] Consequently, the idea of human flourishing may induce one to be always involved in one's own affairs. The undue importance for the self-centredness of the agent (character) fails to take into account the needs, wants and desires of others in a morally sufficient manner.[557] Indeed, Meilaender says, "[p]erhaps a moral notion like duty serves better than virtue to focus our attention on the needs of others."[558] David Solomon argues that if someone thinks that ethical reflection, in practice, is to include a concern for the other, character ethics fails to fulfil this requisite.[559] However, it can be argued that if s/he concentrates on himself/herself and thereby attains a well-formed character, then s/he automatically concentrates on the need of others and thus moves from self-centredness to other-centredness. This can be possible but need not be the same in the practical realm, and we cannot close the possibility of people becoming more and more ego-centric and self-centred especially in today's liberal and consumer contexts and influences. Moreover, one need not have concern for the character of his/her neighbour as s/he has for his/her own self. Consequently, the ethics of character is to go beyond the self to the other (groups).[560]

Therefore, Hauerwas' ethics of character would have been more enriched if he could go to the real care and responsibility of the other and other community while concentrating one's (one's community's) character formation and moral flourishing. Here, we find the ethical insight of Emmanuel Levinas relevant. According to Levinas, ethics should go beyond responsibility in first person to responsibility in the second and the third persons.[561] Responsibility in the first person is a stage where one is concerned only with his/her 'attempt-at-being.' S/he does not care or bother for the other but rather acts self-centred. Levinas does not find this responsibility at the level of first person wrong. What Levinas argues is that one should not limit this responsibility to oneself, rather one

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[555] Meilaender, *The Theory and Practice of Virtue*, 16, 36.

[556] Meilaender, *The Theory and Practice of Virtue*, 41.

[557] Solomon, "Internal Objections to Virtue Ethics," 169.

[558] Meilaender, *The Theory and Practice of Virtue*, 13.

[559] Solomon, "Internal Objections to Virtue Ethics," 169.

[560] James A. Donahue, "Religious Institutions as Moral Agents," *Issues in Labour-Management Dialogue: Church Perspective* (St. Louis: Catholic Health Association of the United States, 1982) as referred in Donahue, "The Use of Virtue and Character in Applied Ethics," 231.

[561] Emmanuel Lévinas' concepts of responsibility in the three levels, that is, in the first, second and third persons, can be found mainly in Emmanuel Lévinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, Martinus Nijhoff Philosophy Texts 3 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981). We will try to develop these concepts in the coming pages. Here, we do not disregard the life of Jesus Christ who gave himself for the well-being of other and others. We also recognise the influence rendered by Roger Burggraeve, *The Wisdom of Love in the Service of Love: Emmanuel Levinas on Justice, Peace and Human Rights* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University, 2002) 85-191 in our exposition of Lévinas' concepts of responsibility in the second and third levels.

should extend it to second and third parties.[562] As a social being one should experience a "de-centring" of one's own egocentric orientation to life. If a community plays a significant role in the fulfilment of one's life, one has the duty, in return, to take up the care of fellow humans, respecting and promoting their dignity and well-being. Thomas Ogletree opines: "The degree to which a person is able to transcend his self-absorption and focus in a giving way upon others and their needs is an important index of moral maturity."[563] According to Levinas, the other is 'superior' to oneself and is a teacher who discloses his/her irreducible alterity and is also lord and master, who from a moral prominence inspires one with awe, questioning and laying hold of one entirely.[564] Levinas holds that this responsibility for the other starts with negativity. The ethical movement towards the other begins from a shame over oneself and self-questioning. This shameful situation makes one really question what one is really doing. Is one concerned only with one's own interests, happiness, future etc.? Does one kill the other simply by being?[565] Here the face of the other challenges one (first person) in the level of first person morality.[566] This discomfort paves the way for the positive ethical responsibility in the second person i.e., "having the Other in one's skin."[567] This is exactly the love of neighbour who emerges before one unannounced.[568] Personalist ethicists rightly pointed out that a person is always 'a person-in-relation' and 'a person-in-community.'[569] For Levinas, "[t]he subjectivity of a subject is responsibility of

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[562] Within the limited scope of our study we do not go into detail on responsibility in the first person. The responsibility to the 'self' and to the 'other' in the language of Abeysekara can be put 'identity for and against itself.' See, Ananda Abeysekara, "Identity for and against Itself: Religion, Criticism, and Pluralization," *Journal of American Academy of Religion* 72, no. 4 (2004) 973-1001, 976-978.

[563] Ogletree, "Values, Obligations, and Virtues: Approaches to Bio-Medical Ethics," 115.

[564] Emmanuel Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, Duquesne Studies 24 (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University, 1969) 100-101.

[565] Emmanuel Lévinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo*, trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University, 1985) 120-121.

[566] Lévinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, 109.

[567] Lévinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, 115.

[568] Paul Moyaert, *De Mateloosheid van het Christendom: Over Naastenliefde, Betekenisincarnatie en Mystieke Liefde*, Filosofische Diagnosen (Nijmegen, SUN, 1998), 17-18, as referred Roger Burggraeve, "To Love Other-Wise: Essays on Biblical Thinking," Class notes on Ethics, KU Leuven, 2001, 1-253, 90. The parable of Good Samaritan (Lk: 10, 30-37) where the Good Samaritan, unlike the other two, priest and levite, dedicates himself for the cause of the other, is a concrete example of responsibility in the second person. The Good Samaritan could go beyond his attempt-at-being to the service of the face of the other. He was open for 'being touched' and for 'being able to be moved' by the fate of the very concrete person. He could realise the vulnerable situation of the wounded person and accept the care of the person as his duty. For this exposition, we depend on Burggraeve, "To Love Other-Wise," 73-101. In face to face love, we see the trace of God. See, Marie L. Baird, "Eric Voegelin's Vision of Personalsim and Emmanuel Levinas' Ethics of Responsibility: Towards a Post-Holocaust Spiritual Theology," *The Journal of Religion* 79, no. 3 (1999) 385-403, 402.

[569] Janssens, "Artificial Insemination: Ethical Considerations," 8-9, Selling, "The Human Person," 95-109 and Selling, "The Fundamental Polarity of Moral Discourse," 21-43, 41, n. 31. According to Paul Schotsmans, " … to be human is to be rich in unicity and originality, but at the same time, originality is an empty concept if it does not include openness toward the other and if it does not involve cooperation with others for the expansion of a community in solidarity." See, Paul Schotsmans, "In Virto Fertilization and Ethics," *Bioethics in a European Perspective,* ed. H. A. M. J. Ten Have & B. Gordijn (Netherlands: Kluwer Academic publishers, 2001) 295-308, 297. He observes: "As humans, we essentially stand in an open relation, involved with the reality in which we live, with other humans to whom we owe our existence and who continue to surround us, and ultimately with God." See, Paul Schotsmans, "Personalism in Medical Ethics," *Ethical Perspectives*, 6 (1999) 10-19, 16. So for human beings

being-in-question in the form of the total exposure to offence in the cheek offered to the smiter."[570] "I am responsible for the other without waiting for reciprocity, were I to die for it. Reciprocity is *his* affair."[571] There can be occasions where one is unable to do anything to reduce the suffering of the other but one's tenderness, love and nearness with the sufferer implicitly saying that 'I am with you' is itself is a form of taking responsibility for the other.[572]

One should not think that one's ethical duty stops at the care of the other. Like the other, the 'others' (also future generations or "not yet born") too come within the horizon of one's care and responsibility. Third parties are those to whom the first person stands not in direct eye to eye relation, like to the second person, but instead in a relation to someone aside or indirectly present, as the third person as 'that one there,' or 'over there.[573] "[T]he epiphany of the face qua face opens up humanity. … the presence of the face, the infinity of the other, is a destituteness, a presence of the third party (that is, of the whole of humanity which looks at us) and a command that commands commanding."[574] "The Other is from the first the brother of all other men."[575] "The third party is other than the neighbour, but also another neighbour, and also a neighbour of the other, and not simply his fellow."[576] The absence of the third person does not in any way excuse one from the responsibility for him/her. S/he is responsible for the distant other as s/he is for the one close to him/her at this moment - just as responsible for the future others as for those already present.[577] Levinas holds, "[i]n the proximity of the other, all the others than the other obsess me…."[578] In this third person responsibility we can find the traces of universal responsibility.[579] Although human beings were created last, they were the first to be called for responsibility.[580] According to Jean Greisch, without the fear (responsibility) for coming generations, the total and

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it is impossible to live in isolation since his or her integral development is possible only in relationality and in a solidary responsibility and thus achieve the good and fullness of human being.

[570] Lévinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, 111.

[571] Lévinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 98.

[572] Lévinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 118-119.

[573] Lévinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, 17.

[574] Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 213.

[575] Lévinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, 158.

[576] Lévinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, 157.

[577] Lévinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, 160.

[578] Lévinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, 158.

[579] Lévinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, 17. This can be illustrated by the story of Abraham and Sarah (Genesis12: 1-20). Abraham is called by God for future generations, i.e., an unforeseeable heteronomy to uncontrollable heteronomy. He has to forsake everything he had for a nomadic life for a specific land. In addition, because of Sarah's responsibility to the future generation [Abraham's descendants], she reveals her true status to Pharaoh as the wife of Abraham to make possible the people of God, according to the interpretation of *midrash*. For this exposition we depend on Burgrraeve, "To Love Other-Wise," 102-124.

[580] Roger Burggraeve, "Responsibility Precedes Freedom: In Search of a Biblical-Philosophical Foundation of a Personalistic Love Ethic," trans. Vincent Sansone, *Personalist Morals: Essays in Honor of Professor Louis Janssens*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 83, ed. Joseph A. Selling *et al* (Leuven: Leuven University, 1988) 108-132, 111-112.

complete goodness of the one-for-the-other can return against itself, which expresses a form of evil as the inverse side of goodness.[581] Great care is to be taken so that the effect of one's action is not destructive to the future generation. This shows that responsibility has to do more with 'personal and contextual presence in human/worldly reality.'[582]

Our aim in this exposition of Levinas' ethical perspectives of the responsibility in the second and third persons has had the purpose of pointing out the possible enrichment of Hauerwas' character ethics, which is often criticised for its self-centredness and ethical narcissism.

Now what would be our position on this critique of over-concentration on self-centeredness in Hauerwas? We have no impression that the 'self' in Hauerwas is concerned only with his/her well-being. Hauerwas accepts that the self is historical and find himself/herself in the narrative settings. So Hauerwas is concerned with *the self of the particular community and the particular community and its selves*. Therefore, there is really the need of going to the other and other communities and to care for their needs as Levinas' ethical thinking argues.

8. 2. 2 The Unavoidable Place of 'Decision' in Moral Life

It is significant to note that Hauerwas has played a decisive role in the revival and of taking seriously moral character in today's ethical world. Hauerwas has always emphasised the significance of character behind one's decision-making. The kind of decision one takes in life, Hauerwas holds, depends on what sort of person (character) one is or who one is. Decisions are made out of the character that has been formed by the ongoing story of a life within a particular community. Hauerwas argues that for every decision there is a history. Evaluating virtue (character) ethics, Solomon notes that character is the primary focus of moral evaluation, and in moral life the focal point is on the whole life of the person, i.e., the search of the excellence of the person. Hence, moral life is not encountering with moral dilemmas or moral uncertainty,[583] a line in tune with Hauerwas.

We do not deny the role of character in decision-making. But it is a fact that we find people in difficult situations with a number of choices in which they may not be sure what to do or decide.[584] Character ethics is unable to provide precision in morally

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[581] Jean Greisch, "Otherness: An Ethical Category," *Matter of Breath: Foundations for Professional Ethics*, ed. Guillaume De Stexhe & Johan Verstraeten (Leuven: Peeters, 2000) 171-196, 192-194.

[582] Denis Müller, "Bonhoeffer's Ethic of Responsibility and Its Meaning for Today," *Theology* Vol. C, no. 794 (1997) 108-117, 112. Müller makes this assertion while dealing with Bonhoeffer's ethic of responsibility. For him, the source responsibility is the presence of deeper freedom, i.e., his conception of responsibility is theological.

[583] Solomon, "Internal Objections to Virtue Ethics," 174. However, Solomon does not say that one will never face moral dilemmas and uncertainty in life. (174)

[584] John C. Bennett, "John C. Bennett on Stanley Hauerwas," *Review of Books and Religion* 10, no. 3 (1981) 1-2 as referred in Heeley, *The Ethical Methodology of Stanley Hauerwas*, 260.

conflicting situations.[585] Richard A. McCormick accuses that by emphasizing character, Hauerwas is reluctant to engage "in moral justification with regard to concrete moral problems."[586] Robert B. Louden opines that people have always expected from ethics something about what they ought to do (decide) and here character ethics is unable to do anything in this direction. Thus, character ethics is weak in applied ethics.[587] Solomon also called attention to the inability of character (virtue) ethics in concrete action guidance in morally conflicting situations.[588] Here, as we already highlighted, Hauerwas would say that character gives direction to what is to be done or to be decided. But a significant question arises about those who (especially children) have not yet developed the needed moral insight (character) and sensitivity.[589] Can we deny the possible change of (people's) character?[590] If practice is needed for virtues, Louden argues, the possibility of the loss of the acquired virtue is high in non-practice. Moreover, the interests and tastes of a person can vary. As a result, the aspects of our character can also change.[591] In this perspective, we cannot always hold that in morality the answer to the question what we ought to do (decide) comes from the character, since the very quality of the character can be challenged thanks to the altering interests and aspirations of the person. Consequently, there is the need of certain rules that might help him/her to take an appropriate decision in the moments of difficult moral situations.

What Hauerwas fears is that emphasis on decisions will suggest a hard and fast distinction between the act and the agent.[592] Concentrating on decision-making, he holds, leads to the abandoning the integrity of one's convictions.[593] But Paul Nelson cannot agree to this fear, as he asks why we can't attend to character and also to decision. Nelson makes clear that the decision or action need not be based on the Kantian concept of universal rational principles applicable to all human beings. Rather, Nelson argues for the formulation of certain rules and principles that can be helpful for the individuals for decision-making in certain specific morally problematic situations,

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[585] Kai Neilsen, "Critique of Pure Virtue: Animadversions on a Virtue-Based Ethic," *Virtue and Medicine*: *Explorations in the Character of Medicine*, Philosophy and Medicine 17, ed. Earl E. Shelp (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1985) 133-150.

[586] McCormick, "Notes on Moral Theology 1980," 91.

[587] Robert B. Louden, "Some Vices of Virtue Ethics," *Virtue Ethics: A Critical Reader*, ed., Daniel Statman (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 1997) 180-193, 183. David L. Norton also observes that certain ethical theories maintain the need of rules that will help in decision-making so that we can overcome the conflicting situation. See, David L. Norton, "Moral Minimalism and the Development of Moral Character," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy XIII, Ethical Theory: Character and Virtue*, ed. Peter A. French, Theodore E. Uehling Jr., and Howard K. Wettstein (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1988) 180-195, 181.

[588] Solomon, "Internal Objections to Virtue Ethics," 169.

[589] Louden, "Some Vices of Virtue Ethics," 184.

[590] Louden, "Some Vices of Virtue Ethics," 185.

[591] Louden, "Some Vices of Virtue Ethics," 186.

[592] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, xxiii-xxiv. See also, Wells, *Transforming Fate into Destiny*, 17.

[593] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 4. Joel Kupperman holds that if we concentrate too much on decision-making we make ethics work only when some input is registered and as a result moral decision procedure is applied. See, Kupperman, *Character*, 72.

and these rules should be based on the conviction (character) obtained by the narrative.[594]

Hauerwas has also argued that decision is not the paradigmatic centre of moral life. We agree that Hauerwas' arguments are sound here. It is significant to note that Hauerwas does not concentrate on universal rational principles in decision-making and thus takes seriously the intentions and circumstances, in which the person did the specific act, of the person concerned in deciding the rightness or wrongness of the act. An outside observer may judge a particular act of the agent as wrong. This need not be a correct judgement however. The observer may be unaware of the particular 'circumstances' under which the agent did the particular act. These circumstances include the agent's mental state, environments, etc. and the questions such as: where, when, mode of acting, why, what, what about, who and by what aids.[595] Richard M. Gula calls these questions as "reality-revealing questions."[596] The importance of circumstances cannot be disregarded in morality.[597] "… ethical decisions always involve factual circumstances…"[598] Hauerwas also agrees to the point that character cannot give direction in each and every individual situation to do the right act. Nevertheless, we have certain reservations with Hauerwas' stand that decision is secondary in ethics. Hauerwas has argued that character is the form of our agency. It means, as we have seen, character is not something that lies behind us. We are our character. There is no distinction between the person and his/her character. If this argument of Hauerwas is sound, there is no need to consider decision as something secondary to character (in ethics). Since it is the agent who decides, there cannot be a separation between agent and his/her decision. If so, how can the decision be secondary to character? There cannot be a separate realm of decision apart from the agent. Prominence given to the character (agent) by Hauerwas is shaky since character is made known only by the doing and the decision of the agent.[599] Moreover, there are occasions where we are concerned only with decisions in moral life. In case of the unavoidable death either of a mother or of her child in order to save the life of either, the primary and only task is 'to take a decision.' So when viewed from the perspectives of particular circumstances, character cannot be in the primary place in morality. In other words, there are occasions in moral life where character has no role to play. At the same time we make clear that

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[594] Nelson, *Narrative and Morality*, 115.

[595] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 7, 3, Psychology of Human Acts (Summa Theologiae, 17) trans. Thomas Gilby (Cambridge: Black Friars, 1970) 41-43.

[596] Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith*, 267. See also, Selling, "The Fundamental Polarity of Moral Discourse," 40, n. 25.

[597] Morton White, *What is and What Ought to be Done: An Essay on Ethics and Epistemology* (New York: Oxford University, 1981) 33. Daniel Maguire observes: "Action considered by itself aside from its circumstances has no moral dimension." See, Daniel Maguire, "Ethics: How to Do It," *Introduction to Christian Ethics: A Reader*, ed. Ronald P. Hamel & Kenneth R. Himes (New York: Paulist, 1989) 533-550. 535.

[598] "Telling Points from Books," *The Expository Times* 111, no. 9 (2000) 289-292, 289.

[599] Donahue, "The Use of Virtue and Character in Applied Ethics," 234.

what we pointed out is an exceptional case and we have no such impression that in general decisions occupy a prominent place in moral life. And we agree with Hauerwas that the person is to possess a well-formed character so that the decision s/he makes will be of moral quality. Character and decision are integral parts of the moral life.[600]

8. 2. 3 Circularity between Agency (Character) and Action Is Not Always Inevitable

Hauerwas has argued for the circularity between character and action.[601] We cannot always understand 'what s/he is' by the act s/he does. At least in certain circumstances where the person acts contrary to his/her internal dispositions, it is objectionable what Hauerwas says that there is inseparability between the person and the act. Kallenberg questions Hauerwas' understanding of agency in terms of action *qua* action. He holds, "… the internality of the relation between character and agency weakens the sense in which each 'qualifies' the other…"[602] Virtuous indications are no guarantee that the person's inner being is virtuous. Persons can appear as virtuous, by ensuring that they act in certain ways, with certain hidden agendas without being really virtuous.[603] Consequently, we cannot affirm that an agent (character) can be evaluated by the actions s/he performs.[604] So the relationship between character and conduct is not always a necessary one.[605] From the fact that we are unable to assess the interior aspects of the agent, it can be argued that the ethics of character considers only the style of the person not the content,[606]for people can easily pretend that they are virtuous. Thomas Aquinas has brought into our attention that man is unable to judge the interior movements of another person but only those observable exterior acts.[607] Kant pointed out that the real morality of actions, even that of our own conduct, remains totally concealed from us.[608] Tom L. Beauchamp and James F. Childress opine: "It is doubtful that character ethics can adequately explain and justify assertions of the rightness or wrongness of specific actions. It is unacceptable to claim that if persons display a virtuous character, their acts are therefore morally acceptable… Defenders of character

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[600] Donahue, "The Use of Virtue and Character in Applied Ethics," 234.

[601] See the section 5. 4. 1 Circularity between Agency (Character) and Action of the present chapter.

[602] Kallenberg, *Ethics as Grammar*, 73-74.

[603] Rosalind Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics* (London: Oxford University, 1999) 11. Hursthouse hopes to overcome this problem by the possession of virtues rather than by being inclined to act in certain ways. (11) So, the problem of doing good actions without being a good person can be overcome only by being virtuous.

[604] Louden, "Some Vices of Virtue Ethics," 187.

[605] Louden, "Some Vices of Virtue Ethics," 186.

[606] Louden, "Some Vices of Virtue Ethics," 189.

[607] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* I-II, 91, 4, Law and Political Theory (Summa Theologiae, 28) trans. Thomas Gilby (Cambridge: Black Friars, 1966) 29-33.

[608] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* trans. F. Max Müller (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1966) *A552* = B580, 377.

ethics cannot plausibly maintain that just actions consist only in what just … persons do."[609]

Louis Janssens consistently insisted, "Not any kind of exterior action … can become the materiel element of a morally good end."[610] Only actions that are adequately proportionate to the intention of the person can become the materiel element of a morally good end.[611] Janssens asserts:

> To give an act the character of moral goodness, it is … not enough that the end of the subject is morally good, the act is good only when the exterior act (material element, means) is proportionated to the end (formal element) *according to reason*, when there is no contradiction of the means and the end in the whole of the act on the level of reason (secundum rei veritatem). Only then is the undivided and composite action morally good, because the means share in the moral goodness of the end within the totality of the act.[612]

To this point McCormick also agrees as he says, "… the *finis operis* or meaning of an action is not derived simply from its external effect but is really that aspect of the act which is willed."[613] George Sher holds: "The concepts of action and character are not symmetrically related; for while the concept of character does presuppose that of action, the converse presupposition does not hold."[614] Consequently, an act can be understood as moral only when there exists no "intrinsic contradiction between the means and the end" in the whole of the act.[615]

Hauerwas is right in identifying the action with the person only in so far as the person has attained a well-formed character. But during the formation of the character, the act can be separated from the person. Otherwise, we must be forced to identify a person who performed evil with the evil done. For example, if a person has killed someone, of course, the act s/he performed is evil. But at the same time it will be unjust to identify the person with evil. This example shows that there are instances of moral occasions in which the act is to be differentiated from the person, as far as the person has not attained a well-formed character.

In identifying act with the person, one can seriously doubt the influence of St. Paul's notion of the "justification of the righteous" on Hauerwas. For Paul, with regard to righteous person there is inseparability between the act and the person. The righteous can perform only righteous acts because of the fact of being justified by the faith in

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[609] Tom L. Beauchamp & James F. Childress, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University, 1994) 68-69.

[610] Janssens, "Ontic Evil and Moral Evil," 52.

[611] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* I-II, 6, 2, Psychology of Human Act (Summa Theologiae, 17) trans. Thomas Gilby (Cambridge: Black Friars, 1970) 11-13.

[612] Janssens, "Ontic Evil and Moral Evil," 55.

[613] Richard A. McCormick, "Ambiguity in Moral Choice," *Doing Evil to Achieve Good*: *Moral Choice in Conflict Situations*, ed. Richard A. McCormick & Paul Ramsey (Chicago: Loyola University, 1978) 7-53, 10.

[614] George Sher, "Ethics, Character, and Action," *Social Philosophy & Policy Foundation* 15 (1998) 1-17, 5.

[615] Janssens, "Ontic Evil and Moral Evil," 71.

Christ. Of course, we agree with Paul and Hauerwas that with regard to "righteous" (Paul) or well-formed character (Hauerwas) there is inseparability between the person and act. But as far as one is on the way to becoming righteous, there is no identification of the person and the act. Therefore, circularity between agency (character) and action is not always inevitably inseparable.

8. 2. 4 Character Formation: A Process of Individual, Community and Society?

On the issue of character formation, as we have seen, Hauerwas in fact takes a double stand – a moderate stand. Hauerwas emphasised the role of both individual and the community in the character formation of individual. Gene Outka questions this approach of Hauerwas, viewing it as a reed-like approach.[616] Hauerwas is well aware of the (creative) tension between agency and the community (narrative). Hauerwas writes: "Our agency is actually our ability to be able to interpret and understand our dependency [on narrative] and through understanding integrate our dependency into a more determinate character."[617] Everyone is found himself/herself in a narrative. This narrative sets its influence on the individual. This does not mean that s/he blindly follows what the narrative says. Neither is s/he at the mercy of the community, nor does s/he allow himself/herself to be shaped by the community. S/he has the ability to transform fate into destiny. S/he can incorporate that narrative and can form his/her character, though the narrative influences him/her strongly. Moreover, Hauerwas' proposal to take measures so that the agent may not be reduced to a mere social 'me'[618] irritates Outka. He criticises Hauerwas by asking what measures the agent 'I' must take so that s/he may not be dissolved to a mere social 'me.' He asks: "… where the line between agency and sociality are to be drawn."[619] Outka's problem is that if someone received in his/her childhood much negative judgement, his/her life would largely be dependent on others.[620] Here, we observe what Outka pays attention to is relevant but it is an exceptional case. It is a fact that there is an ongoing (creative) tension in Hauerwas between agent and narrative (community) especially on the issue of character formation. We can observe that Hauerwas' understanding of character formation, as a combined process of individuals and community, is an attempt to overcome the tension between the agent and narrative. Consequently, individual and the community both take part in the character formation of individual.

Hauerwas has always paid attention to the particularity of the community and pointed out that the character formation of the individual takes place in 'a community of

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[616] Outka, "Character, Vision and Narrative," 112.

[617] Stanley Hauerwas, "Letter to Gene Outka," 17, March 1980. Hauerwas opines, "… we can never remove our dependency, but we can integrate our dependency into a more determinative character." See, Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 257.

[618] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 103.

[619] Outka, "Character, Vision and Narrative," 111.

[620] Outka, "Character, Vision and Narrative," 112.

character' in which s/he finds himself/herself. This would invoke a number of questions in character formation. Does one's character formation take place only within one's own community? Can or where must we draw the boundaries of a community?[621] Do the educational, political, business etc. communities have any influence on the character formation of the individual? Have other communities not any role at all in the character formation of a specific community? Is not an individual able to improve his/her character when s/he encounters individuals of better character in other communities? Does the society, beyond community, have any part in the character formation of the members of a particular community?[622] We think these are the questions to be considered with due weight (by Hauerwas as well). No community lives in isolation.[623] In today's pluralistic context, one is not confined to one's own community alone but is rather open to other communities too. According to Wayne A. Meeks, moral development depends on social location and historical and cultural influences of other worlds rather than one's own community.[624] The good character-elements of other communities can influence and play a vital role in the character formation of a member of a particular community. This may even lead to a total abandoning of one's own narrative and an embracing of a newly invented narrative that one finds useful for a better character formation. Moreover, the influence of society in the character formation of a member of a particular community should be taken into account with due seriousness. The very practical experience of the individual testifies to it. People from Eastern societies now living in the West are considerably influenced by Western society. This influence somehow affects their character formation also. "The individual cannot be a true self in isolation. Nor can he live within the confines of the community which 'nature' establishes in the minimal cohesion of family and herd. His freedom transcends those limits of nature and therefore makes larger and larger social units both possible and necessary."[625] The influence of one society may enable the members of other societies

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[621] According to Fergusson, "[i]t is never clear where one tradition breaks off and another begins, and in contemporary debate all traditions incorporate variations which are in part the result of influences from without." See, Fergusson, *Community, Liberalism and Christian Ethics*, 123. Here, we observe that Hauerwas held the view that character formation is not the result of only one narrative. He mentions this aspect of character formation in an article written in 1980. See, Stanley Hauerwas, "Character, Narrative, and Growth in Christian Life," *Toward Moral and Religious Maturity: The First International Conference on Moral and Religious Development*, ed. Christiane Brusselmans, Jef Bulckens, James W. Fowler (New Jersey: Silver Burdett, 1980) 441-483, 447. However, we cannot notice further development in his later works on the role of other narratives than the narrative in which one find oneself in character formation.

[622] It is to be proved whether Hauerwas is aware of the distinction between community and society in the character formation of the individuals. There are expressions in his writings, though not large in number, where Hauerwas uses community and society identically. See especially, Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 102-106. See also, Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 42-43, 124, Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 59-60 and Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 111-112, 119. For a detailed understanding of the distinction between community and society, see, Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*, ed. José Harris, trans. Margaret Hollis (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2001).

[623] Cahill, "Christian Character, Biblical Community, and Human Values," 4.

[624] Wayne A. Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986) 12-14.

[625] Judith Vaughan, *Sociality, Ethics and Social Change: A Critical Appraisal of Reinhold Niebuhr's Ethics in the Light of Rosemary Radford Ruether's Works* (New York: University Press of America, 1983) 21. Barry Arnold observes, "[t]he social context, the social interaction provides the arena within which the human being grows and

to be critical towards some of the conservative attitudes of their societies. This opens new outlets and can re-vision their moral life. Lisa Sowle Cahill pointed out: "Plurality, dialogue, and practice are … essential in generating self-criticism and constant reformation of our moral [character formation] standards."[626] Therefore, the importance of the influence of other communities and societies, apart from one's community, cannot be devalued in the character formation of a member of a particular community.

8. 2. 5 Lack of Sufficient Attention to the Role of Emotions in Character

Hauerwas has often been criticised for his accounts of character being highly intellectualistic, disregarding the role of emotions in character formation.[627] In '*Character and Christian Life: A Study in Theological Ethics*' Hauerwas emphasised the role of the intellect to a large degree in character formation. He stressed the distinction between "what I do and what happens to me."[628] We agree that what Hauerwas aimed at is the agent's perspective in the determination of the action. This resulted in the failure to see that the voluntary and involuntary aspects of choice complement each other and character formation is not solely an affair of the intellect or a deliberate process. Character formation includes the internalising and familiarising (habituating) of various voluntary and involuntary patterns.[629] Since character development involves moulding (shaping) the whole person, the issue of the formation of the affections and passions cannot be avoided in dealing with character formation.[630] It may not be difficult to see that Hauerwas' description of character is "fully conscious and rational about his beliefs, convictions and intentions, but neither attentive to the vibrant energy of affections nor prey to the disruptive force of passion."[631] Richard Bondi argues that if character can be understood as self in relation, then it has to take into account the feelings (emotions) of individuals, as they (feelings) are the "most telling features of personal and social relations."[632] He notes: "The moral significance of feelings… appears in how they reveal the attachments and obsessions, priorities and habits of engagement, inclinations, desires and dead spots of our creatively existence."[633] Consequently, he affirms the need for the cultivation of affections and the

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functions productively and purposefully, obviating the modern meaninglessness associated with individualism." See, Barry Arnold, *The Pursuit of Virtue: The Union of Moral Psychology and Ethics*, American University Studies, Series V Philosophy, Vol. 68 (New York: Peter Lang, 1989) 34.

[626] Cahill, "Christian Character, Biblical Community, and Human Values," 16.

[627] Bondi, "The Elements of Character," 206-207. See also, Katongole, *Agent's Perspective*, 28, 122, Ogletree, "Character and Narrative," 25 and Jung, "Sanctification," 78. Hauerwas himself agrees to this point. See, Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 267.

[628] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 84. In another way it can be understood as human act and act of human.

[629] Jung, "Sanctification," 78-79.

[630] O'Neil, *Who Should Be We?*, 292.

[631] Katongole, *The Agent's Perspective*, 28.

[632] Bondi, "Elements of Character," 206.

[633] Bondi, "Elements of Character," 206.

discipline of passions so that a well-formed character can be achieved.[634] To this he writes:

> Character must be formed by affective participation in the practices of good life and by an evocation of its liberating force against those passions which subverts it. Liberation from disruptive passions is one of the aims of a practical theological ethics of character; along with the affirmation of deep feelings focused by the cultivation of the affections. Our involvement with affections and passions will have a marked effect on the enterprise of character formation, for no formation is complete which fails to evoke and interpret this element of our existence and our character.[635]

Indirectly, Hauerwas has pointed out that character enables one to have order in oneself (to hold one's life as one's own) which is an indication of the training of emotions. Later, in his two significant works,[636] he rectifies the over-intellectualistic description of character and incorporates the importance of emotions in the character formation. He held that emotions are signs to make us aware of who we are.[637] According to Hauerwas, "[t]o be a person of virtue [character] … involves acquiring the linguistic, emotional and rational skills that give us the strength to make our decisions and our life our own."[638] "We are … quite right to think that questions of feeling are central for determining what I ought to do and since they are signals that help remind us what kind of people we are."[639] The sustained habits that shape emotions and passions, teach us to feel one way or another.[640] The ability to have character is "not just intellectual."[641] Hauerwas observes, "… it is our nature, particularly in the form of our desires, that forces us to be moral. Lust, for example, certainly can be chaotic, but it can also set us on a way of life that makes us care about something. It is therefore a precious resource which we cannot do without."[642] However, when compared with the role given to reason by Hauerwas, we can seriously doubt that the role assigned to the emotions in the formation of character is insufficient.

Many scholars have asserted the role of emotion in character. According to Aristotle, virtue (character) is a habit associated with choice and choice is conscious desire.[643] Gerard J. Hughes affirms, "… it … seems to me that he [Aristotle] *defines* virtue

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[634] According to Bondi, "[a]*ffections* refers to those feelings which nurture, focus, express, or are consonant with deeply held apprehensions of the good life. *Passions* are those feelings which disrupt our apprehension of goodness and which, were we habitually to act on them, would be destructive of self and others and subversive of the character we seek to form." See, Bondi, "Elements of Character," 207.

[635] Bondi, "Elements of Character," 207.

[636] They are *A Community of Character* and *Peaceable Kingdom*. See also, Hauerwas, "New Introduction," *Character and Christian Life.*

[637] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 266-67.

[638] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 115.

[639] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 117.

[640] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 117.

[641] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 43.

[642] Hauerwas, *Peaceable Kingdom*, 157, footnote n. 1

[643] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1139a 22-23, 148.

[character] in terms of emotional response rather than in terms of the action to which such emotional responses typically lead."[644] Character (virtues) can be understood as having "a certain pattern of emotional response."[645] Judith Barad asserts: "[v]irtues [character] require appropriate emotions as instruments in the exercise of their activity."[646] Training in emotions enables one "to respond emotionally with ever greater accuracy."[647] Hughes explains the identity of a virtuous character (person) as,

> The virtuous character is one with balanced emotional dispositions. Such a person will depend emotionally to situations in just the appropriate way; she will be just as angry as the case demands, just as afraid as the danger threatening suggests she should be; she will feel inclined to be generous just when to be so would not be wasteful and so on. In responding in this way, she makes it easy for herself to choose to act rightly, since she will feel inclined to do just that.[648]

James T. Laney observes: "Character includes the feelings and emotions of the self, its moral sensibilities, and its capacity for moral discernment as well as its capacity for abstract moral analysis and deliberation."[649] For Robert C. Roberts, "[v]irtues are not just dispositions to actions. They are determinations of our emotions, passions, desires, and concerns. They are patterns of saliency, attention, perception and judgement."[650] William C. Spohn affirms the affective side of the agent in the moral character (formation).[651] He in general criticizes the negligence of the role of emotions in moral life. He observes that the attempt by narrative and biblical theologians to make an alternative pattern to Kantian ethics of principles has not cautiously worked out how convictions, narratives, and metaphors shape emotions. Generally the catholic approach in dealing with virtues puts aside Christian experience for the sake of philosophical analysis.[652]

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[644] Hughes, *Aristotle on Ethics*, 70. David Carr also evaluates Aristotle's view here in the same line. He writes: "… according to Aristotle, moral responses need to be proportioned to specific circumstances of personal or interpersonal engagement, and moral development is therefore a matter of the gradual refinement of human sensitivity to the particular case." See, David Carr, "Spiritual, Moral and Heroic Virtue: Aristotelian Character in the Arthurian and Grail Narratives," *Journal of Beliefs and Values* 24, no. 1 (2003) 15-26, 17.

[645] Hughes, *Aristotle on Ethics*, 58.

[646] Judith Barad, "Aquinas on the Role of Emotion in Moral Judgement and Activity," *Thomist* 55, no. 1 (1991) 397-413, 410. She points out the example of pity and boldness, which can subserve the virtues of mercy and courage, respectively, in the process of formation of these virtues (character). She points out other examples also: for instance, physical desires are presupposed in every act of temperance, just as boldness presupposes fear of one's own realities. (410)

[647] Hughes, *Aristotle on Ethics*, 75.

[648] Hughes, *Aristotle on Ethics*, 67.

[649] James T. Laney, "Characterisation and Moral Judgements," *The Journal of Religion* 55, no. 4 (1975) 405-441, 408.

[650] Robert C. Roberts, "Virtues and Rules," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 51, no. 2 (1991) 325-343, 329.

[651] William C. Spohn, "Passion and Principles," *Theological Studies* 52, no. 1 (1991) 69-87, 69.

[652] Spohn, "Passion and Principles," 85.

Paul Lewis alleges that Hauerwas views reason and emotions as two separate entities, and emotion is to be shaped by reason.[653] This criticism of Lewis seems to have little relevance. This can be proved from Hauerwas' analysis of Aristotle's concept of choice (*proairesis*). Hauerwas explains Aristotle's concept of choice as a unique combination of reason and desire, comprising not only our intellectual decisions but also our self's pledge to act in terms of its desire.[654] Aristotle held, "… choice is either intelligence motivated by desire or desire operating through thought, and it is as a combination of these two that man is the starting point of action."[655] Thus, it can be noted that Hauerwas gives undue importance neither to reasons nor to emotions. Here Hauerwas does not fall into either this or that danger. What is crucial in moral life, as Katongole observed is not "whether reason or emotion is more central, but the type of reason that informs the moral life in general, and self-agency in particular."[656]

8. 2. 6 Failure to Combine Adequately the Various Disciplines in Dealing with Character

Through the analysis of Hauerwas' explication of how character enables us in our moral life, one may find that his approach is more philosophical than theological. Hauerwas has his own reasons for this as he writes:

> [F]irst of all I do not think in terms of clearly delineated disciplines, one called "philosophy," the other "theology." I did not write '*Character and the Christian Life*' thinking that a certain amount of space should be given to what philosophers might have had or have to say about these issues. I simply do not think that clear lines can be drawn between what philosophers and theologians do. Too often, it seems we are concerned with the same set of issues and require quite similar conceptual skills to explore how and what we should think. Both philosophy and theology are activities that come in many shapes and sizes. As such each may well lead its practitioners into areas they had not anticipated. I, therefore, was drawn into issues such as the nature of agency, the primacy of agent's perspective, intentionality and causality because I found I could not avoid them if I was to develop an adequate account of character.[657]

Analysing Karl Barth's ethics, David Fergusson points out the interests of theological ethics in philosophy. He writes: "Theological ethics is … interested in philosophical representation of human thought, affection and agency. … Theological ethics can 'comprehend,' 'absorb,' and 'annex' claims that are made by philosophical ethics."[658] Hauerwas' interest in the agent's perspective and the formation of the self is specifically a theological one. The philosophical categories Hauerwas uses help him to explain

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[653] Paul Lewis, "The Springs of Motion: Jonathan Edwards on Emotions, Character and Agency," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 22, no. 2 (1994) 275-291, 289.

[654] Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 55.

[655] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1139b1-5, 149. See also, Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, 47.

[656] Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, 56.

[657] Hauerwas, *Hauerwas Reader*, 80-81. See also, Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, xviii-xix. Peter Ochs as well affirms the relation and mutual co-existence between philosophy and theology. See, Oches, "On Hauerwas' with the Grain of the Universe," 82-83.

[658] Fergusson, *Community, Liberalism and Christian Ethics*, 27.

Christian convictions more intelligibly.[659] His engagement in philosophical discussion is thanks to his awareness that "Christian moral experience cannot be articulated without explicating the philosophical presuppositions involved, such as the nature of the agency, sociality, intentionality, the meaning of the self and the general nature of moral experience."[660] Hauerwas is of the opinion that philosophy may be helpful to make known the "the truthfulness of theological claims."[661]

But Hauerwas has not well incorporated the assistance of human sciences in dealing with character.[662] The role of psychological, sociological and anthropological studies cannot be ignored in the understanding of the person and thus his/her character.[663] Selling rightly pointed out that a person cannot adequately be considered without his/her multidimensionality.[664] According to Ogletree, "[t]he intersubjective constitution of selfhood as it interacts with basic instinctual energies, with specific patterns of social organisation, and with a shared culture … "[665] plays a decisive role in character formation. Interaction with human sciences helps us well in our ethical reflection.[666] The role of social sciences cannot be ignored for an adequate '*understanding of the circumstances*' of a moral problem and handling it well.[667] Character can be affected because of social norms, one's social class, and family relations, and the way one spends one's time.[668] A person is always a person-in-relation physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially and spiritually.

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[659] Ogletree, "Character and Narrative," 25.

[660] Katongole, *The Agent's Perspective*, 7-8.

[661] Hauerwas, *With the Grain of the Universe*, 37.

[662] Hauerwas himself agrees he lacks the needed attention to the psychological and sociological factors that are behind character formation. See, Hauerwas, *Character and Christian Life*, xxvi. We observe this is maybe thanks to his style -repetitive and unsystematic. Max L. Stackhouse accuses that Hauerwas is much repetitive and unsystematic. See Max L. Stackhouse "In the Company of Hauerwas," http:// home.apu.edu / ~CTRF/ articles/ 1997_articles/ stackhouse.html (access 12. 4. 2003). If he had been systematic, he could have assimilated other disciplines in dealing with the notion of character. Katongole also observes Hauerwas' unsystematic style of writings and categories Hauerwas' writing style as edifying, which keeps space open to receive new things. See, Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, ix, xv and 261, footnote n. 5.

[663] James Gustafson, "The Relationship of Empirical Science to Moral Thought," *Introduction to Christian Ethics: A Reader*, ed. Ronald P. Hamel & Kenneth R. Himes (New York: Paulist, 1989) 428-438, 429. Selling points out how Louis Janssens' perspective on morality integrated and combined disciplines such as theology, philosophy and the social sciences. See, Selling, "Proportionate Reasoning and the Concept of Ontic Evil," 10. Lisa Sowle Chaill speaks of significance of the empirical sciences such as psychology, sociology, anthropology and physiology for the descriptive account of human experience. See, Lisa Sowle Chaill, "Moral Methodology: A Case Study," *Introduction to Christian Ethics: A Reader*, ed. Ronald P. Hamel & Kenneth R. Himes (New York: Paulist, 1989) 551-562, 553.

[664] Selling, "The Human Person," 97.

[665] Ogletree, "Character and Narrative," 26.

[666] John M. Doris, *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behaviour* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2002) 2.

[667] Gustafson, "The Relationship of Empirical Science to Moral Thought," 431.

[668] Kupperman, *Character*, 56.

Conclusion

In this chapter, our concern was to consider critically how Hauerwas' ethical categories of narrative and character contribute to a meaningful and an integral ethical life. To this purpose, we began our investigation with Hauerwas' disagreement with the standard account of moral rationality. This standard account of moral rationality was in fact a great impetus for Hauerwas to develop narrative as a methodological device in ethics. According to him, the standard account of morality does injustice to the moral agent since it pays no attention to the particularity, historical and contingent nature of the agent in morality and since it gives undue concern on rationality in evaluating the moral person and his/her acts. For the standard account, morality is to be based on universal rational principles. In such a moral system, as Hauerwas rightly saw, the setback goes to the moral agent. In fact, narrative ethics is an alternative pattern for moral rationality. Hauerwas together with many other ethicists argue that the very concept of rationality is tradition-narrative dependent. Narrative itself is a form of rationality giving objectivity and truthfulness in morality since all rationality "depends on tradition, is based upon a view of the world, a story and a way of looking at things."[669] One receives the art and skill of evaluation and reasoning from a specific tradition to which s/he belongs. Narrative ethics aims at creating unity and integrity in moral life by providing basic ethical convictions and orientations. It does justice to the moral agent by taking into consideration the particularities and the various life circumstances of the moral agent in evaluating his/her moral act.

Narrative of the community plays an important role for moral character. Character is that which enables the person to act in a specific way by which the person is able to claim his/her life as his/her own. Character is concerned with what sort of people we are going to be(come). It is character that makes us who we are. Character viewed from the perspective of vision, and vice versa, Hauerwas argues, makes us who we are. It is by *really looking* that we are who we are or what we are becoming. The uniqueness that Hauerwas brings in the understanding of vision is the particularity of vision. This vision enables the person to solve the moral problems that s/he confronts. Hauerwas talks about virtue as the general moral stand of the person (character). This throws light into an outstanding conception of virtue more than the inculcating of particular virtues in life. Being virtuous is impossible without the practice of virtues. Character as the form of our agency indicates that we act as who we are, an assertion of the need of the assessment of the person prior to the evaluation of his/her act. The circularity (the

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[669] Hauerwas & Burrell, "From System to Story," 21. According to Lindbeck, "reasonableness in religion and theology, as in other domains, has something of that aesthetic character, that quality of unformalizable skills, which we usually associate with the artist or the linguistically competent…. Intelligibility comes from skill, not theory, and credibility comes from good performance, not adherence to independently formulated criteria." See, Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, 130-131.

internal relation) between the person and his/her act deserves special attention. The agent's perspective occupies the highest concern in judging his/her act. An action becomes intelligible only when treated in its narrative history. The agency has close affinity with the narrative (tradition) in fostering character and thus actualizing the act in a specific way (character) derived from the narrative.

Hauerwas affirms the intimate relation, mutual complimentarity and inseparability between self and community for the character formation of the members of the community.[670] Even though the influence of community is significant on the self, the self does not receive anything from the community without reflection.[671] As a self-determining being, the role of agent in his/her character formation is unavoidable. With the same weight or in some higher degree, the role of community in the character formation of individuals is emphasized by Hauerwas, since the virtues that form the agent are intimately tied up with his/her community.[672] So character formation is tradition dependent in which both individual and community have their respective roles. Thus, there is reciprocity (interaction and interconnectedness) between the individual and his/her community, since the community shapes his/her character and s/he in return contributes to the character of the community.[673] Virtuous persons vitally inspire and challenge others for a well-formed character that is faithful to the narrative traditions. Our examination on character and decision-making has convinced us of Hauerwas' emphasis on character in decision-making. Character models the self's moral landscape. The very question "what should I do?" is meaningful only in the light of the prior question "what should I be(come)?" and so Hauerwas does not give primary concern to decision-making in ethics but to character. It is also important to note that Hauerwas does not deny decisions in moral life, but his emphasis is who we will be by the decision we take in life.

Critically evaluating Hauerwas' narrative ethics, we observed that narrative is a form of rationality, his conception of narrative does not promote moral relativism as against the accusations of the critics of Hauerwas, personal identity is both agential and narrative, and the tendency to self-justification of the narrative and hermeneutical enclosure in Hauerwas is to be checked and hence to be overcome by the opening of the narrative to other narratives for which we suggested the promises of Ricoeur for making a hermeneutics a 'critical hermeneutics.' Our critical reading of Hauerwas' character ethics reveals: Firstly, the accusation that character ethics is self-centred can be overcome if it goes beyond the concerns of the particular community and its selves to

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[670] Bondi, "The Elements of Character," 214.

[671] Birch & Rasmussen, *Bible and Ethics in Christian Life*, 85.

[672] Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*, 6.

[673] Neville Richardson, "Ethics of Character and Community," *Doing Ethics in Context: South African Perspective*, Theology and Praxis 2. ed. Charles Villa-Vicencio & John W. De Gruchy (New York: Orbis, 1994) 89-101, 93. See also, Birch & Rasmussen, *Bible and Ethics in Christian Life*, 86.

the concerns of the other and others (Levinas). Secondly, though we accept Hauerwas' point of the significance of the character in making decisions in moral life, apart from Hauerwas we argued for the unavoidable place of decisions and rules in moral life based on the convictions of the narrative because of the inability of the character ethics to give precision in morally conflicting situations and because of the possibility of the change of the quality of the character of the moral person cannot be disclosed. Thirdly, as against Hauerwas' position of the circularity between the agent and his/her act, we argued that this is possible only after the agent has acquired a well-formed character. Fourthly, Hauerwas has to take into account the role of other communities and society in the character formation of the self of a particular community. Fifthly, the place of emotion cannot be devalued in character formation. Finally, Hauerwas has failed to see the insights of the human sciences in understanding human person, his/her character formation, and his/her moral problems. The criticism made against Hauerwas does not mean that his ethics of narrative and character are pointless. What we aimed is the possible enrichment of Hauerwas' ethics of narrative and character.