

**MILITARY VIRTUE AND THE BRITISH SOLDIER
IN THE
CONTEMPORARY OPERATING ENVIRONMENT**

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SUMMARY

In this dissertation I argue that Thomas Aquinas's understanding of human nature, of human flourishing and of virtue can fill the gap, identified by Elizabeth Anscombe in 1958, between Aristotle's account of the virtuous life and contemporary sceptical moral philosophy, which is variously described as subjectivism (Lewis 1967), consequentialism (Anscombe 1958), emotivism (MacIntyre 1985), and sophistry (Pieper 1992). Furthermore, I argue that a Thomist account of the practicably lived virtuous life is both relevant and applicable to officers and soldiers serving in the British Army of today, because it offers a complete account of the human moral life, as opposed to the consequentialist, emotivist and deontological approaches to ethical judgement and reasoning currently prevalent in Western societies, which inform the worldview of both officers and soldiers. These approaches, however, offer only partial accounts of ethics based on impoverished understandings of human nature and, thus, inevitably have a detrimental effect on both the articulation of British military doctrine and on the actual moral conduct of officers and soldiers. I further argue, therefore, that the British Army needs to consciously return to the traditional Western approach to moral education based on the idea of the deliberate formation of virtuous character, which is very different from contemporary Western educational approaches, but which will better prepare British Army officers and soldiers for "the violent school of war", as Thucydides calls it.

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List of Abbreviations

ABN – Army Battle Notes.

AC – Army Code. A means of identifying Army pamphlets which do not have any other official designation within the hierarchy of British Army doctrine pamphlets.

ad – Latin *ad*, meaning ‘to’, used in Aquinas’s writings to indicate a response to a particular argument or objection raised earlier in the *quaestio* under discussion.

AD – of dates, Latin *Anno Domini* ‘N’, meaning ‘in the Nth year of our Lord’, *i.e.* the number of years since the birth of Christ.

adp. – ‘adaptation of’.

I have used this abbreviation for the texts in Old English in which I have standardised the different spelling of the various modern editions by reintroducing the Anglo-Saxon letters ‘eth’ (ð) as a medial and final ‘th’ sound; ‘thorn’ (þ) as an initial ‘th’ sound; ‘ezh’ (ȝ) where modern editions use ‘g’ or ‘y’; and ‘wynn’(ƿ) where modern editions use ‘w’.

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation.

BC – of dates, ‘Before Christ’, *i.e.* the number of years prior to the birth of Christ.

c. – Latin *circa*, meaning ‘around’, used before a date to indicate that it is approximate or uncertain.

cf. – Latin *confer*, meaning ‘compare’, used to refer the reader to a relevant citation.

COE – Contemporary Operating Environment.

comm. – ‘commentary by’.

corr. – ‘corrected’.

D&I – Diversity and Inclusion

DCDC - Development, Concepts, and Doctrine Centre. An organisation in the UK’s MOD which promulgates British military doctrine.

DCM – Distinguished Conduct Medal.

ed. – ‘editor’, ‘edited by’.

edn. – ‘edition’.

eds. – ‘editors’.

e.g. – Latin adverbial phrase *exempli gratia*, meaning ‘for example’.

& - ancient ligature for Latin *et*, meaning ‘and’.

f. – ‘and following’.

fl. – Latin *floruit*, meaning ‘he/she flourished’, *i.e.* the approximate mid-point of someone’s life, when the exact dates of their birth and death are unknown.

FCOC – Future Character of Conflict.

FM – ‘Field Manual’. The United States Army’s way of designating pamphlets delineating military doctrine.

ibid. – Latin *ibidem*, meaning ‘at the same place’.

i.e. – Latin *id est*, meaning ‘that is’.

LCL – Loeb Classical Library.

lect. – Latin *lectio*, meaning ‘reading’, used in Aquinas’s commentaries on Classical or Scriptural texts to signify his discussion of the passage read.

lect. – ‘lecture’, used when a reference is cited from having heard it in a public lecture.

L&S – Lewis, C.T. & C. Short (1879) *A Latin Dictionary*, 1980 impression. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

ll. – ‘lines’ of verse or in dramatic script.

LOAC – Law of Armed Conflict.

LSJ⁹ - Liddell, H.G. & R. Scott (1968) *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th edn., H.S. Jones (rev.); supplement by E.A. Barber and others. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

LRA – Lord’s Resistance Army, a millenarian armed group operating in Uganda, South Sudan and Chad.

LWDG - Land Warfare Development Group.

MOD – Ministry of Defence.

Nⁿ – footnote on page N.

n.d. – ‘no date’.

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation.

No. – ‘Number’.

OCT – ‘Oxford Classical Texts’, a series of critical editions of Classical texts published at the Clarendon Press by Oxford University. Its proper title is ‘*Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis*’.

op. cit. – Latin *opere citato*, meaning ‘in the work [previously] cited’.

p. – ‘page’.

pers. comm. – ‘personal communication’, whether in face-to-face conversation or by correspondence.

pp. – ‘pages’.

resp. – Latin *respondeo*, meaning ‘I answer’, used by Aquinas when he is summarising his argument against the supporting statements of the premiss under discussion.

rev. – ‘revised by’.

RMAS – Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

ROE – Rules of Engagement.

§ - ligature for ‘ss’, an abbreviation representing a numbered section or paragraph in a text.

SAS – Special Air Service Regiment

3D – Three-Dimensional.

trans. – ‘translator’ or ‘translated by’.

UK – ‘United Kingdom’.

UN – ‘United Nations’.

US / USA – ‘United States of America’.

Vol. – ‘volume’.

Vols. – ‘volumes’.

VR – ‘virtual reality’.

Abbreviations of Titles of Ancient and Medieval Texts

Ambrose

Off. – De Officiis

Aristotle

Anim. - De Anima

EE – Ethica Eudemia

EN - Ethica Nicomachea

Augustine

Civ. Dei - De Civitate Dei

Cicero

Par. Or. - De Partitione Oratoria

Rep. - De Re Publica

Off. – De Officiis

Diogenes Laërtius

Vitae - Vitae Philosophorum

Philo Judaeus

Spec. Leg. - De Specialibus Legibus

Thomas Aquinas

Princ. Nat. - De Principiis Naturae

Reg. Princ. - De Regimine Principum

ScG – Summa contra Gentiles

Sen. Eth. - Sententia Libri Ethicorum (Commentary on Aristotle's Ethica Nicomachea)

Sen. Met. – Sententia Libri Metaphysicae (Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysica)

ST – Summa Theologica.

The *Summa Theologica* is divided into three parts and a supplement. The second part is divided into two sections. Each part and section is numbered, as are the questions within each part and the articles within each question. Thus, *ST I^aII^{ae} 3.8* refers to Article 8 of Question 3 of the First Section of the Second Part of the *Summa Theologica*.

Ver. – Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate

Virt. Comm. – Quaestiones Disputatae de Virtutibus in Communi

INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation I argue that the traditional Western understanding of virtue is both relevant and applicable to today's British Army officers and soldiers. In the first chapter I analyse the place of virtue in traditional Western moral philosophy, especially as it was articulated by Thomas Aquinas. In the second chapter I propose that in the contemporary West much of this traditional moral understanding has been undermined by what I call 'sophistry'; a misuse of language and consequent manipulation of others rooted in philosophical scepticism and subjectivism. Sophistry obscures the centrality of virtue in the practicable moral life and replaces it with emotivist, deontological, and consequentialist moral ideas, based on impoverished understandings of human nature and of moral agency. In the third chapter I show how sophistry has had a deleterious effect on the British Army through confusing our understanding of the centrality of virtue in the military vocation to bear arms. In the final chapter I suggest that the British Army can counter this sophistic confusion and improve its operational effectiveness by a return to the ancient conception of moral education as the formation of virtuous character.

I have, therefore, attempted to cover a wide range of subjects in fairly short compass. This inevitably means that in some subjects I have had to give abbreviated accounts of the arguments under discussion. I argue for the continuing relevance of traditional Western moral philosophy as the central proposition of my thesis and, thus, base my argument predominantly on philosophical authorities. I have, therefore, had to be selective in the use which I make of authorities in other disciplines, specifically the modern social sciences. The worldview implicit in the modern social sciences is largely opposed to the worldview underlying traditional Western moral philosophy, and, given the constraints of the dissertation, I have chosen not to explore this opposition in detail when philosophers like Josef Pieper (1952), Alasdair MacIntyre (1985), Roger Scruton (2005), and John Gray (2004) have already done so, albeit from widely different perspectives.

My approach to the question of virtue and the British Army has naturally been informed by my own background and experiences. My father's family has a long history of military service to the Crown: my great-grandfather was awarded the DCM in the 2nd Anglo-Boer War; my grandfather served in East Africa during the First World War; and my father served in Special Forces in the Second World War. A great-uncle was killed on the Somme in 1916 and an uncle in Italy in 1944. I grew up in Rhodesia during its civil war in the 1970s and went to university in *apartheid*-era South Africa in the early 1980s. I returned to Zimbabwe in the mid-1980s at a time of inter-tribal fighting, when thousands of Ndebele were killed by Mugabe's notorious 5th Brigade, trained by

the North Koreans, and witnessed Zimbabwean security forces' violence against civilians. In 1998 I joined the British Army as a Chaplain and have deployed operationally in Mozambique, Northern Ireland, the Balkans and Afghanistan. In many ways, therefore, my whole life has been dominated by armed conflict, and I have had ample opportunity to ponder the British tradition of the vocation to bear arms and the moral character of the British soldier, as compared with the way these are realised in other nations. I have, nonetheless, chosen not to illustrate my arguments with specific examples drawn from the recent campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan: I have not the detachment necessary to judge these campaigns dispassionately and I have no desire to add to the pain of those who were wounded or who had loved ones killed in these campaigns by questioning the prudence or justness of British policy, strategy, operations or tactics.

Being raised as a 'colonial' in sub-Saharan Africa meant that I have always had a consciousness of - what might be called - 'the Western cultural tradition' as distinct from other cultures around the world. Growing up away from the European 'homelands' of the West naturally gave me an interest in, and appreciation of, this venerable cultural tradition; an appreciation which grew into love while reading Classics at university. It has been a constant source of sorrow to me, since moving to the United Kingdom, that there is such widespread ignorance of the Western cultural tradition in the very place which Solzhenitsyn (1976) called "the pearl of the West". Consequently, I have started each chapter with a quote taken from Old English texts, as a way of affirming that the Western tradition for which I argue, is not something alien or novel, but lies at the very root of our national life; half-forgotten, obscured, in part obliterated, but still the source of all that which is good and true and beautiful in the heritage bequeathed to us by our forebears.

Over the years, when I have found myself suspended between the glory and harshness of armed conflict and the love of a good and noble heritage, I take counsel from the words spoken by the learned warrior, Faramir, in J.R.R. Tolkien's book, *The Lord of the Rings*:

War must be, while we defend our lives against a destroyer who would devour all; but I do not love the bright sword for its sharpness, nor the arrow for its swiftness, nor the warrior for his glory. I love only that which they defend: the city of the Men of [the West]; and I would have her loved for her memory, her ancientry, her beauty, and her present wisdom. Not feared, save as men may fear the dignity of a man, old and wise.

THE WESTERN TRADITION OF VIRTUE

Wisdom is the highest virtue, and it has within it four other virtues: there is prudence, then temperance, third is courage, fourth justice. Wisdom makes its lovers wise and worthy and temperate and patient and just, and with every one of the good moral virtues it fills him who loves it.¹

Ælfred the Great (c. AD 880) Translation of Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiæ* 27.2.24-29.

Introduction

In 1958 Elizabeth Anscombe published a paper arguing that there is an unbridgeable gap between modern moral philosophy, which she named 'consequentialism', and Aristotle's understanding of virtue because modern philosophers have inherited from Christianity the concept of a divine moral law which ought to be obeyed, but have discarded the idea of a divine law giver, thus discarding the philosophical framework of Natural Law which makes moral obligation intelligible. Anscombe concluded, therefore, that modern moral philosophy is fundamentally flawed as it cannot bridge the gap between what a person is or does and what one ought to do as a moral agent. She claimed, therefore, that consequentialism can be distorted to argue that an intrinsically immoral act can become morally justifiable in certain circumstances; *i.e.*, that it is vulnerable to sophistic corruption, a topic we shall examine in the next chapter. She urged, therefore, that all attempts at articulating moral philosophy and all use of the language of moral obligation should be abandoned until a suitable account of human nature had been formulated:

it can be seen that philosophically there is a large gap, at present unfillable as far as we [modern moral philosophers] are concerned, which needs to be filled by an account of human nature, human action, the type of characteristic a virtue is, and above all of human 'flourishing'.

(Anscombe 1958:18).

Anscombe's argument that there is an unfillable gap between the ancient concept of virtue and modern moral philosophy notably omits any reference to the medieval synthesis of Thomas Aquinas (c. AD 1225-1274), which was the last great articulation of the Western tradition of virtue prior to the disintegration of Christendom in the Fifteenth Century. In this chapter, therefore, to fill the gaps identified by Anscombe, I present Thomist accounts of human nature, human action and flourishing, and human virtue, based on primary texts, in order to show the continuity of the Western moral tradition from Antiquity to Aquinas and to demonstrate how it provides a lens which, even now, gives clarity and coherence to a vision of the moral life.

¹ Spa spa Þisdóm is se hehsta cræft, 7 se hæfð on him feoper oðre cræftas; þara is an pærscipe, oðer zemetzung, þridde is ellen, feorðe rihtpines. Se Þisdóm zedeð his lufiendas pise 7 peorðe 7 zemetfæste 7 zedyldize 7 rihtpise, 7 ælces zodes þeapes he zefyllð þone þe hine lufað. (adp. Sedgfield 1899:62)

Thomas Aquinas

The scholastic philosophy of Aquinas, a medieval Dominican friar who entered a monastery at the age of five, might seem irrelevant or inapplicable to contemporary soldiers. For example, it has been claimed,

His scholarly and uneventful life was spent in the comparative seclusion of monastery and classroom..... Unlike many of his contemporaries, he kept aloof from the strife of a turbulent age.
(D'Entrèves 1959:vii)

This view of Aquinas's life as one of "comparative seclusion" and aloofness from conflict is, however, now generally acknowledged to be false. He was directly involved in the political and military conflicts of the 13th Century between the Papacy and Holy Roman Empire, as well as the philosophical and theological disputes of his time (Pieper 1963; Kenny 1980; Finnis 1998):

That the thirteenth century in Europe was a time of extended conflict and debate does not differentiate it from other times and places. But the character and intensity of some of its conflicts and debates are worth remarking, if only because they gave what turned out to be enduring definition to some rival and alternative modes of moral and political thought and action. So if we begin by situating the moral and social thought of Aquinas in the context of such conflicts and debates, rather than – as is usually done – by abstracting it from and ignoring those contexts, we will perhaps be better able to understand its continuing and distinctive relevance.
(MacIntyre 2006:41)

Nonetheless, the belief that Aquinas kept aloof from contemporary conflicts is not altogether surprising, as "the dealings of his era's kings, popes, and emperors leave almost no palpable trace in Thomas's writings." (Finnis 1998:3). Pieper (1999:3) has also remarked that Aquinas's writings are curiously impersonal and dispassionate, reading like the thoughts of a purely rational being. It is, perhaps, because Aquinas's work is simultaneously so wide-ranging in scope and encyclopaedic in knowledge, but also so dispassionate and disinterested in approach and logical and objective in method that it has the "continuing and distinctive relevance" ascribed to it by MacIntyre above. It is the continuing relevance to 21st-Century British soldiers of Aquinas's understanding of the practicably lived moral life which I shall examine in this dissertation.

Aquinas on Human Nature²

It appears to be a peculiarly human conundrum that each person has consciousness, an awareness of being a distinct, individual self, but a self who can only relate to the world and to

² In this section I greatly expand on information and ideas I first explored in a dissertation, 'Soul Wound and Resilience: Combat Trauma and Character in Classical Athens. What were the Effects of Combat on Aeschylus and Xenophon?', which I submitted in 2015 as part of the requirement for completing an MA in Classical Studies with the Open University.

other persons by means of the body. This conundrum is the root of the perennial ‘mind-body problem’ in philosophy (Steele 2015). The traditional Western philosophical answer to this conundrum is that humans are comprised of both matter and spirit, in that we are, or have, both a body and a soul.

These two dimensions are found inseparably in the mystery of the single human person in a way that is not clearly distinguishable: I, a self who exists only as a body but refuses to be reduced simply to body. Language and ordinary experience bear this out. We say ‘I am (some)body’ and ‘I have a body.’ My body is ‘me’ but it is ‘my’ body. Who says ‘my’ to the body?
(Sachs 1991:56)

Having agreed that humans are/have both body and soul, Western philosophers have tended to explain the connection between body and soul in one of three ways. Grossly simplifying, these three ways are: Firstly, idealism, the view posited by Plato (c. 427-348 BC), that we are spiritual souls imprisoned in material bodies, from which the immortal soul escapes at death. Second, materialism, the view that we are nothing more than a body, the material processes of which constitute all we understand by the soul and its functions, posited in the atomic theory of Democritus (*fl.* c. 430 BC) and Epicurus (341-270 BC). The third explanation is the view that we are each an integrated, irreducible unity of both body and soul, which is the view posited by Aristotle (384-322 BC) and Aquinas, who described the human being as a composite creature “composed of a spiritual and a bodily substance”³ (*ST I^a 75*), and as “a union of a soul with a body”⁴ (*ST I^a 76*). This view seems to me to best account for the fact that humans can perceive their souls as somehow distinct from their bodies, but can only actually experience their very being as lived bodily. Disembodied being is inconceivable, as becomes apparent if we try to imagine life without bodily sense perception or without a body simply to give our consciousness a sense of being-in-location. Indeed, our everyday language, experience and existence are predicated on the embodied being of the soul (Lakoff & Johnson 1999).

Aquinas’s understanding of humans as a body-soul unity is fundamental to his understanding of how we can develop a practicable moral life. Both body and soul, the material and the spiritual parts of the human organism, can be understood in terms of structure, *i.e.* the different parts of which they are composed, and function, *i.e.* how the component parts work and what they do (Steele 2015). I shall not discuss the body, but must describe the structure and functions of the soul as understood by Aquinas. Following Plato (*Timaeus* 69^c-87^b) and Aristotle (*De Anima*), Aquinas (*ST I^a 77.4*) affirmed that the human soul is comprised of three parts: (1) the sustentative

³ *de homine, qui ex spirituali et corporali substantia componitur.*

⁴ The title of *ST I^a 76* is “*De unione animae ad corpus*”

(*pars animae vegetabilis*); (2) the affective (*pars animae sensibilis*); and (3) the rational (*pars animae rationalis*). Each part has its own faculties and functions, which Aquinas described in detail in the *ST I^a* 75-90, and *I^{II}a^e* 22-48, but which I shall briefly summarise.

The 'sustentative' part of the soul, was called 'appetitive' (ἐπιθυμία) by Plato, but Aristotle argued that, as all three parts of the soul had appetites appropriate to each, this part should more properly be called 'nutritive' (θρεπτικόν) or 'vegetative' (φυτικόν), as the souls of all living organisms, including plants, share the same basic powers of sexual reproduction, assimilating nourishment, and organic growth. Following Aristotle, Aquinas variously calls this the vegetative, nutritive, or generative soul (*anima vegetativa, nutritiva, or generativa*), and affirms that it has the potential for procreation (*generatio*), nourishment (*nutritio*), and growth (*augmentum*) (*ST I^a* 78.2). This part of the soul is concerned with the faculties and appetites which sustain both the individual organism and the species, hence my naming it 'sustentative'. The sustentative faculties and appetites are expressed in and through the body, in eating and drinking, bodily growth, and sexual intercourse. It is noteworthy that a great deal of contemporary Western life is based on stimulating and gratifying the sustentative appetites. A topic to which we shall return. It is also worth noting that in the past it was believed that to live morally these sustentative faculties and appetites should be disciplined, not gratified, which has a bearing on how one approaches moral education, as we shall see later (Steele 2015).

Second, the 'affective' part of the soul, which Plato called 'spirited' (θυμός), but Aristotle 'sensitive' (αἰσθητικόν) or 'mobile' (κινητικόν), because all animals have these faculties and react to information derived from their senses by being moved to action. Again following Aristotle, Aquinas called this the sensitive or mobile soul (*anima sensitiva or motiva*). The affective part of the soul is the seat of our emotions, intuitions, imagination and instincts. As the name *pars animae sensibilis* implies, it is stimulated through sense perception of the material world (*ST I^a* 75.3). There are two basic types of senses (*ST I^a* 78.4): the five bodily senses of touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing; and the four mental senses of memory (*memoria*), imagination (*phantasia*), instinct (*vis aestimativa*), and the co-ordinating sense (*sensus communis*).

Memoria, or memory, in animals is the faculty of preserving images and information relating to these images from past perception of them, but in humans it also includes the power of recollection (*reminiscentia*); the ability to deliberately bring to mind past images, events or information. *Vis phantastica*, or the imaginative faculty, is the faculty in humans of representing in the mind an image of something which is not actually present to sense perception. It is also the faculty of creating images of things which may not really exist, such as 'winged feet', but

which may serve as metaphors of true insights which cannot be better expressed in any other way; 'he flew round the running track'. *Vis phantastica* is, thus, the faculty which imparts meaning to the disparate episodes of human life by allowing us to make sense of them.

meaning... is the antecedent condition both of truth and falsehood, whose antithesis is not error but nonsense... reason is the natural organ of truth; but imagination is the organ of meaning. Imagination, producing new metaphors or revivifying old, is not the cause of truth, but its condition.

(Lewis 1969:265)

Aristotle (*Anim.* 431^a) notes, therefore, that abstract thought is impossible without images being present to the mind⁵. *Vis aestimativa*, or the estimating or instinctive faculty, is the faculty which allows an animal to recognise intuitively what is beneficial or harmful to it and to act accordingly. In humans the *vis aestimativa* is supplemented by the *vis cogitativa*, which is the faculty enabling humans to think (*cogitare*). It is important to note that 'thinking' in this sense is more akin to our popular understanding of thinking as 'considering' or 'mulling things over' than to rational deduction or induction. The *sensus communis*, or co-ordinating sense, allows the person to collate and interpret the information received from all the other senses, both bodily and mental (Deferrari 1960; Lewis 1964:156-165; Borruso 1996:13-17).

An illustration of the function of these various faculties in an animal and a human is to think of a horse and rider in the act of riding. The horse remembers that saddle and bridle means that it will be ridden and, if it has been trained in *dressage*, it will remember that it must adopt a particular, high-stepping gait, but it will not be able to conceive why it does so, nor understand the meaning of its actions. The human rider has memories similar to those of the horse from when he was learning to ride, but by *reminiscentia* can also recall seeing other riders adopt the correct riding posture, and by the *vis phantastica* can combine the memories of his training and the recollection of other riders with mental images of how he himself must appear to onlookers while he is mounted on the prancing horse in order to imagine the total effect of stately progression achieved by these in combination. It is his imagination, therefore, which gives meaning to the various evolutions of *dressage* which would otherwise be senseless.

Our emotions (*passiones*) are an arousal reaction to the environmental stimuli received through our senses, hence in English we commonly call them 'feelings' or 'sentiments'. We react to these stimuli by feelings of desire (*passio concupiscibilis*) and feelings of irritation (*passio irascibilis*). The concupiscent feelings of desire are expressed as feelings of attraction or of aversion. The feelings of attraction are: (1) 'love' (*amor*), which is the general desire one feels for perceived goods; (2) 'desire' (*desiderium* or *concupiscentia* proper), which is the particular desire for some

⁵ διὸ οὐδέποτε νοεῖ ἄνευ φαντάσματος ἢ ψυχῆ – "for this reason the soul never thinks without an image."

immediate good; and (3) 'delight' (*delectatio*), which is the pleasure one experiences when the object of one's desire is attained. The feelings of aversion are the opposites of the feelings of attraction: (1) 'dislike' (*odium*), which is the general abhorrence one feels at perceived evils; (2) 'aversion' or 'abomination' (*fuga* or *abominatio*), which is one's withdrawal from or rejection of an immediate evil; and (3) 'sadness' or 'sorrow' (*tristitia* or *dolor*), which is the feeling one experiences when some evil is realised (Borruso 1996:32-35; Deferrari 1986:196a & 760a). The irritable feelings are the emotions aroused when the attainment of some perceived good is difficult to achieve due to various obstacles. They are: (1) 'anger' (*ira*), which is the marshalling of one's aggression to overcome an immediate obstacle obstructing one's attainment of the desired end, and which is, in this general sense, amoral; (2) 'hope' (*spes*), which is the feeling that the obstacles preventing one attaining the desired end can be overcome, even if the attainment of the end will, thus, be difficult; (3) hope's opposite, 'despair', (*desperatio*) which is the feeling that the obstacles are insurmountable; (4) 'daring' (*audacia*), which is the feeling of resolve that encourages one to attempt the attainment of the end however difficult the obstacles; and its opposite (5) 'fear' (*timor*), which is discouragement in the face of obstructions (Borruso 1986:36; Deferrari 1960:196a & 760a).

Finally, there is the 'rational' part of the soul, called νοῦς by both Plato and Aristotle, and *pars animae rationalis* by Aquinas. It is the part of the soul which is uniquely human and distinguishes us from other animals. The *pars animae rationalis* consists of our consciousness (*conscientia*), intellect (*intellectus*), reason (*ratio*), and will (*voluntas*). Consciousness is that part of the soul by which we not only know, but know that we know, and know ourselves as distinct, individual persons (Borruso 1996:16). According to Aquinas (*ST I^a 79.8*) the distinction between *intellectus* and *ratio* is that the former understands and judges the truth from self-evident first principles, such as that the sum is always greater than its parts, while the latter progresses to an understanding and judgement of the truth by deductive reasoning. In terms of moral understanding the difference between them is that the inherent natural moral law is simply understood by the intellect, while the reason works out how to apply it in each particular case (Lewis 1964:157)⁶. This is relevant to understanding Aquinas's description of the virtue of prudence. The intellect is capable of abstract understanding, and, thus, is not dependent on bodily sense organs for its functioning (*ST I^a 77.5*), but it does, then, require mental images to replace sensory data, as Aristotle says (*De Anima 431^a*).

⁶ I have previously discussed νοῦς and cited both of these references from Borruso and Lewis in my 2015 MA dissertation for the Open University.

The will is the faculty which, desiring the good, directs the person to act in order to realise the good. Hence it can misdirect the person towards subordinate goods, which, while not wrong in themselves necessarily, are always only secondary goods which should not be inordinately preferred to the ultimate good of the person. This relates to Aquinas's understanding of the virtue of temperance. The difficulty in practicable moral life of a person inordinately loving a subordinate good through disordered emotions, and of disordered will thereby directing the person astray, will be apparent. The ordering of the will, reason, and emotions, therefore, is central to moral education, as we shall see.

The interaction of all these faculties of the soul may be summarised as follows: The objectively existing reality of the material world is known to us through our bodily senses, which transmit sensations of environmental stimuli to the soul. These sensations are collated by the *sensus communis*, and the reason (*ratio*) analyses them, also calling to mind by recollection (*reminiscentia*) from the memory (*memoria*), information which is relevant to the environmental situation, as well as picturing other relevant information, which may not be actually present in the environment, by use of the imagination (*phantasia*), thus giving meaning to the world experienced through our sense perception. While thinking about this (*cogitare*), one is simultaneously feeling irritation at (*passio irascibilis*), and attraction to or aversion from (*passio concupiscibilis*) the environmental situation. These feelings may be congruent with the reality of the situation or incongruent with it; but either way, they will be generating an emotional response (*passio*), which will necessarily be irrational in the strict sense of the word, in that the intellect (*intellectus*) and reason (*ratio*) have not been involved in the arousal of these feelings. The emotions may be in conflict with the intellect and reason regarding the appropriate action to take in the situation, and it is the will (*voluntas*), independently of sense perceptions, which directs one to act in one way or another, according to what it perceives to be the truth or good in the situation, as discerned in principle by the intellect (*intellectus*) and in particular by the reason (*ratio*).

For Aquinas truth (*veritas*) is the end towards which the intellect (*intellectus*) and reason (*ratio*) are directed, just as good (*bonum*) is the end of the will (*voluntas*) and of the appetites (*appetiti*) of all parts of the soul; quoting Aristotle he notes:

And just as the good... describes order with regard to appetite, so [does] the true with regard to intellect. Whence the Philosopher says in [Book] 6 of *Metaphysics* that good and bad are in things, but true and false are in the mind.⁷
(*Ver. 1.2 resp.*)

⁷ *Et quia bonum... dicit ordinem ad appetitum, verum autem ad intellectum: inde est quod Philosophus dicit VI Metaph., quod bonum et malum sunt in rebus, verum et falsum sunt in mente.*

As is implicit in his description of humans as a body-soul composite, Aquinas, like Aristotle, affirmed the actual existence of material reality:

Note that something can have the potential to be although it may not really be, while another thing truly exists. That which has the potential to be is said to potentially be, while that which does now exist is said to actually be.⁸

(Aquinas, *Princ. Nat.* 1)⁹

If we accept that there is an existing material reality which is separate and distinct from the human mind, the question arises of how the immaterial soul can actually know material reality. The obvious answer is that we derive knowledge of material reality through our bodily sense organs. The ancient Greek Sophists, however, queried how sense perception works and some denied that our senses can tell us anything about reality. Aquinas, however, agreed with Aristotle (*Anim.* 418^af.; *Metaphysica.* 980^a-b) that material reality does actually exist and is perceptible to us through our sense organs and is, thus, knowable by us:

Now the proper object of the human intellect, which is joined to a body, is an essence or a nature existing in physical matter... Furthermore, it is evident that such a nature exists as an individual, which it cannot be apart from physical matter: just as it is evident that the nature of stone is in this specific stone... Hence the nature of stone, or of any material thing whatsoever, cannot be completely and truly known, except by being known as existing in a particular individual. Moreover, we perceive the particular individual through the senses and the imagination.¹⁰

(*ST I*^a 84.7)

Aquinas, therefore, affirmed that objective truth both exists and is knowable by humans. For him “truth is a relationship between the mind and reality: the conformity of a thought to what it is a thought about.” (Kenny 1980:6). But this basic concept has several inter-related connotations: (1) Truth-in-being (*veritas divina*), in which all things which exist do so because they are conceived in the mind of God; they derive their being true or real from God’s conception of them. (2) The truth-of-things-in-themselves (*veritas rerum*), which is derived from their truth-in-being, that is, from God’s conception of them they became things which truly exist in reality. (3) Truth-in-knowing (*veritas rationum* or *veritas intellectuum*), which is derived from the truth-of-things-in-themselves, in which our ideas and judgements about existing things conform truly to what that thing is in reality. (4) Truth-in-signifying (*veritas significationis*), which is derived

⁸ *Nota quod quoddam potest esse licet non sit, quoddam vero est. Illud quod potest esse, dicitur potentia esse; illud quod iam est, dicitur esse actu.*

⁹ Aquinas derived the distinction drawn between *potentia* and *actus* in the quote above from Aristotle, who used the terms δύναμις and ἐντελέχεια which were translated into Latin as *potentia* and *actus* respectively (cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysica* 1017^b and *Anim.* 417^{ff.}). Somewhat oversimplifying, it may be said that *potentia* is the latent power in a thing to become, to be or to do, while *actus* is the state of having realised whatever becoming, being or doing is proper to a thing (cf. the full definitions in Deferrari 1960).

¹⁰ *Intellectus autem humani, qui est coniunctus corpori, proprium obiectum est quidditas sive natura in materia corporali existens... De ratione autem huius naturae est quod in aliquot individuo existat, quod non est absque materia corporali: sicut de ratione naturae lapidis est quod sit in hoc lapide... Unde natura lapidis, vel cuiuscumque materialis rei, cognosci non potest complete et vere, nisi secundum quod cognoscitur ut in particulari existens. Particulare autem apprehendimus per sensum et imaginationem.*

from our truth-in-knowing, in which the means by which we signify an existing thing conforms truly to what that thing really is (*Ver.* 1.1-4; McKeon 1931:504; Deferrari 1960:1075b-1078a). The importance of truth-in-signifying is made clear in Aquinas's affirmation that human language, which underlies all thought, dialogue, debate and teaching, is central in the pursuit of truth: "Hence, just as a wise man is to ponder truth, especially concerning the first principle, and disseminate it to others, so, too, he is to oppose contrary falsehood."¹¹ (*ScG* 1.1)

Aquinas, however, does not just affirm that truth exists and, therefore, that we can simply know it and disseminate it; he acknowledges that knowledge and truth are not necessarily easy to arrive at and that there may be occasions when the conformity of thought to reality is uncertain or unattainable. He thus conceives a range of ways in which the human mind may relate to reality in affirming truth: 'conjecture' (*suspicio*) is affirmation that something is true on the basis of pure guesswork, where there is no knowledge of reality; 'opinion' or 'supposition' (*opinio*) is affirmation that something is true where there is not complete certainty about reality; 'doubt' (*dubitatio*) is hesitation to affirm a truth where there is not complete certainty about reality; 'knowledge' (*scientia*) is affirmation of a truth arrived at by deductive reasoning from experience (*experimentum*) or the first principles of reality (*principia prima*); 'understanding' (*intellectus*) is affirmation of truth on the basis of discernment of the self-evident first principles of reality; and 'belief' (*fides*) is affirmation of a truth on the basis of authoritative testimony about reality (Kenny 1980:64-65; Deferrari 1960).

It is worth stressing that *fides* does not imply affirming something as true in the face of the evidence or when there is no evidence to support the affirmation, as some modern atheists would try to define religious belief. Instead, it is affirming something as true on the basis of trusting someone else's authority (*auctoritas*). For example, in this chapter I have confidently given information about Aquinas's life, but I do not know that this information is true on the basis of my own experience, instead, I have trusted the authority of historians, so my affirmations are examples of *fides*. Hence, for the Scholastic philosophers of the Middle Ages there was no such thing as 'blind faith' opposed to reason; Bonaventura (AD 1221-1274), for example, affirmed "the necessity to grasp by reason, *per rationem*, what has been believed on authority, in so far as that is possible," (Pieper 1961:38). Likewise, Aquinas, while distinguishing between the credence to be given to human and divine *auctoritas*, acknowledged that the weakest form of argument is that based on human authority (*ST I^a* 1.8)¹².

¹¹ *Unde sicut sapientis est veritatem praecipue de primo principio meditari et de aliis disserere, ita eius est falsitatem contrariam impugnare.*

¹² *Nam, licet locus ab auctoritate quae fundatur super ratione humana sit infirmissimus, locus tamen ab auctoritate quae fundatur super revelatione divina est efficacissimus.*

One final point needs to be made about human nature: Aquinas (*Reg. Princ.* 1), like Aristotle (*Politica* 1253^a), affirmed that humans are social and political animals which live in organised communities and that all theories of ethics are integral to theories about the organisation and functioning of the ideal human society. Hence, for Aquinas all discussions of ethics are based on the assumptions that the individual human agent is acting as part of a wider community and that judgement about the morality or otherwise of his actions, therefore, is never made simply with regard to the effect of his actions on himself, but also with regard to the effect of his actions on the community as a whole. There can, therefore, be no such thing as private morality, just as there can be no such thing as a private law, because all persons are subject to the natural moral law.

Since antiquity there has been a legally articulated concept of a natural moral law which was believed to be binding on all peoples, irrespective of their particular cultural, social or legal norms: "That [law] which, in fact, natural reason establishes for all men, is observed among all peoples equally and is called the law of nations, as it is used in law by all nations,"¹³ (*Institutiones Iustiniani* 1.2.1) and; "The law of nations is common to the whole human race."¹⁴ (*Institutiones Iustiniani* 1.2.2). Further on in the *Institutiones Iustiniani* (2.1.11) Natural Law (*ius naturale*) is plainly equated with the Law of Nations (*ius gentium*), which, incidentally, is not at all the same thing as contemporary International Law. Those philosophers who, like the ancient Greek Sophists, adopt a position of scepticism, however, do not agree that any such thing as a universal and unchanging natural moral law exists.

Aquinas, however, does affirm the Natural Law, but before describing this, it is necessary to give the underlying concepts regarding law in general which inform his understanding of the Natural Law. In discussing the essence of law¹⁵ Aquinas states that law is something which pertains to the reason:

Law is a certain rule and measure of acts, according to which someone is induced into acting or is deterred from acting... Now the rule and measure of human acts is the reason, which is the principle of human acts... it is, in fact, [the function] of the reason to regulate to an end, which is the first principle in acting..... Hence it remains that law is something belonging to the reason.¹⁶
(*ST I^aII^{ae}* 90.1)

¹³ *Quod vero naturalis ratio inter omnes homines constituit, id apud omnes populos peraeque custoditur vocaturque ius gentium, quasi quo iure omnes gentes utuntur.*

¹⁴ *Ius... gentium omni humano generi commune est.*

¹⁵ *essentia legis*

¹⁶ *lex quaedam regula est et mensura actuum, secundum quam inducitur aliquis ad agendum, vel ab agende retrahitur... Regula autem et mensura humanorum actuum est ratio; quae est principium actuum humanorum... rationis enim est ordinare ad finem, qui est primum principium in agendis..... Unde relinquitur quod lex sit aliquid pertinens ad rationem.*

Aquinas further affirms that the end towards which the law is regulated is always the common good¹⁷ (ST I^aII^{ae} 90.2). Hence, for Aquinas, law is essentially the regulation by reason (*ratio*) of the acts of rational creatures in order to attain the common good. It will be seen from this that, in his view, there can be no separation of law and morality; law is always fundamentally moral law and, as it is directed towards the common good, it is intimately connected with the moral virtue of justice.

According to Aquinas there are four kinds of moral law: (1) the Eternal Law (*lex aeterna*), which is the absolutely fundamental and eternal governance of the universe by the divine reason of God (ST I^aII^{ae} 91.1); (2) the Natural Law (*lex naturalis*), which “is nothing other than the participation of the Eternal Law in the rational creature.”¹⁸ (ST I^aII^{ae} 91.2); (3) Human Law (*lex humana*), which is equivalent to the Law of Nations (*ius gentium*) in the Roman Law Codes (ST I^aII^{ae} 91.3 and 95.4), thus Aquinas says that despite variations of detail in different systems of Human Law, its fundamental principles are derived from the Natural Law in the same way that, by reason, one can make true deductions in any branch of knowledge from indemonstrable first principles (ST I^aII^{ae} 91.3 and 94.4); and (4) Divine Law (*lex divina*), which God has specially revealed to humans and is found in the Bible (ST I^aII^{ae} 91.4-5).

It is well to ask what Aquinas means when he says that the Natural Law is “nothing other than the participation of the Eternal Law in the rational creature.” He starts his argument by maintaining that the Eternal Law is imprinted on all creatures and directs them towards their proper acts and ends¹⁹ (ST I^aII^{ae} 91.2). By this Aquinas means much the same thing as that which the Roman Law Codes mean when they say that Natural Right, which is the right to choose a mate, procreate and rear young, applies to all animals, not just humans²⁰ (*Institutiones Iustiniani* 1.2; Aquinas, ST I^aII^{ae} 94.2). It will be noticed that Natural Right correlates to the powers and appetites of the sustentative soul. Rational creatures, however, are more excellently imprinted with the Eternal Law because, by their greater share in God’s eternal reason, by which they are able to discriminate between good and evil, they are better able to participate in the rational regulation of their acts in order to attain the common good; in other words, they are better able to participate in the Eternal Law, and this “participation of the Eternal Law in the rational creature” is called the Natural Law (ST I^aII^{ae} 91.2).

¹⁷ *bonum commune*

¹⁸ *lex naturalis nihil aliud est quam participatio legis aeternae in rationali creatura.*

¹⁹ *ex impressione eius habent inclinationes in proprios actus et fines.*

²⁰ *Ius naturale est, quod natura omnia animalia docuit. Nam ius istud non humani generis proprium est, sed omnium animalium, quae in caelo, quae in terra, quae in mari nascuntur. – “Natural Right is that which Nature teaches to all animals. For this right is not the property solely of the human race, but of all animals, whether found in the sky or on earth or in the sea.”*

It might be wondered if the Natural Law cannot be articulated more clearly in precepts. For example, the Roman Law Codes stated: “The precepts of the law are these: to live worthily; to harm no-one; to give to everyone his due.”²¹ (*Institutiones Iustiniani* 1.1.3). These precepts, especially the last, will be relevant to our discussion of the virtue of justice, but do not constitute for Aquinas the fundamental precepts found in the Natural Law. Hence, he states: “This is, therefore, the first precept of the law; that good is to be done and pursued and evil shunned. And all the other precepts of Natural Law are founded upon this,”²² (*ST I^aII^ae* 94.2). The other precepts, which practical reason naturally grasps to be human goods²³, are listed in ascending order as, firstly, self-preservation; second, the natural right, shared with other animals, to reproduce and rear young; and third, unique to humans as rational creatures, the natural inclination of the reason to the truth and the good (*ST I^aII^ae* 94.2).

I shall not pursue Aquinas’s account of Natural Law²⁴ as I wish to focus on his understanding of the lived moral life of the human person; on virtue and vice. As noted in a recent textbook on moral theology:

Some readers may wonder at the lack of emphasis on natural law in a work meant to represent Thomistic ethics..... [A] reason for resisting natural law comes from my study of its position and role in the ethical section of the *Summa Theologiae*... Natural law is dealt with in one question only (*ST I-II*, q. 94). It is brilliant and important, but it is far removed from the section on ethical reasoning where Aquinas demonstrates how intellect, will and emotion combine to choose our actions, a description that has little or nothing to do with natural law, or law in general, for that matter.
(Westberg 2015:10-11)

Where Aquinas’s understanding of Natural law is helpful in interpreting his understanding of the human moral life, I shall elucidate the connections, but, for now, all that is necessary is to note that Aquinas affirmed that there was an innate moral law within all persons so that we all naturally desire the good and the true, but, this desire remains only a latent potential unless it is actually realised in human acts, being and flourishing.

Aquinas on Human Action and Human Flourishing

When describing human action, Aquinas first discusses what constitutes good and bad human acts in general²⁵ (*ST I^aII^ae* 18). In describing a human act as ‘good’ or ‘bad’, Aquinas is not

²¹ *Iuris praecepta sunt haec: honeste vivere, alterum non laedere, suum cuique tribuere.*

²² *Hoc est ergo primum praeceptum legis, quod bonum est faciendum et prosequendum, et malum vitandum. Et super hoc fundantur omnia alia praecepta legis naturae.*

²³ *quae ratio practica naturaliter apprehendit esse bona humana.*

²⁴ Over the last fifty-odd years there has been scholarly debate about Natural Law in Aquinas. Kerr (2002:97-113) has provided a helpful summary of this ongoing debate.

²⁵ The title of *Quaestio* 18 is “*De bonitate et malitia humanorum actuum in generali*”.

necessarily making a moral judgement; rather the judgement of goodness or badness refers to the act's efficacy, the manner in which it is done, and so forth, and also to the agent's efficiency, skill, attitude, intentions, *etc.* Aquinas says that there are four criteria in determining an act's goodness (*ST I^aII^{ae}* 18.4; *cf.* the glossaries in McKeon 1931 and Regan 2003a). All four must be present for an act to be considered good; a deficiency of even one of the elements will make the act bad. The four criteria are:

Firstly, the act simply as activity (*actio*). The actualisation of the potential to act perfects the person who acts because to be actually is better than to be potentially, so the blacksmith is perfected as a smith when he realises both his power of manufacturing (*factio*) and his learned skill (*disciplina* or *ars*) at metal-working in the actual making of ironmongery (McKeon 1931). Second, an appropriate object (*obiectum*) of the action. An object is defined as "that concerning which any power or discipline is exercised" (McKeon 1931:474). Thus a blacksmith's power of manufacturing may be exercised in making, say, a sword-blade for a warrior. The material object is the iron sword-blade itself, while the formal object consists in the blade's shape, sheen, sharpness, strength, *etc.* A good object of the blacksmith's act of manufacturing, therefore, is to make a sword-blade of the appropriate material (*e.g.* iron) rather than inappropriate material (*e.g.* tin) and of the appropriate form. The object of the action becomes bad where even one aspect of its matter or form is inappropriate: the warrior cannot use an iron implement shaped like an axe as a sword, no matter how strong or sharp the axe-head may be.

Third, the end or purpose (*finis*) of the action, *i.e.* the end for which the agent acts. The objective end for the blacksmith is to make a sword, but the subjective end may be to make money by selling it (Regan 2003a:209). Were the blacksmith to make a sword for someone who may not bear arms, such as a monk or a child, the end for which he acts would be wrong and the act, therefore, bad. The fourth and final criterion relates to the circumstances (*circumstantiae*) surrounding the act. Circumstances are accidental factors connected with a human act, but not intrinsic to the act in itself. Circumstances relate to the agent in two ways: Firstly, in regard to his general circumstances as a human being, such as his social status, trade or profession, the locality in which he lives, *etc.*; and, second, in regard to the circumstances of the particular act, such as the way in which the agent performs the act (*ST I^aII^{ae}* 7.1). Aquinas lists eight circumstances: "who, what, where, by what means, why, how, when... about what"²⁶ (*ST I^aII^{ae}* 7.3).

²⁶ Aquinas quotes Cicero: "*Quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando... circa quid.*" One is reminded of Kipling's poem: "I keep six honest serving-men | (They taught me all I knew); | Their names are What and Why and When | And How and Where and Who." (Kipling 1940:605).

Hence, in terms of general circumstances, a blacksmith is the appropriate craftsman to make a sword blade, not a goldsmith or a tinker, but the goldsmith is the proper craftsman to make jewellery and the tinker to make pots and pans. The sword blade can only properly be fashioned in a smithy with all the necessary appurtenances for heating and shaping iron: anvil; hammer; tongs; forge; etc. In terms of particular circumstances, the blacksmith may appropriately make a sword blade for a warrior to use in defence of his home or to guarantee justice, but if he knowingly makes a sword to equip a man planning murder or for a butcher who wants a cleaver, then these inappropriate circumstances make the action of manufacture a bad one.

Asking whether or not theologians should be interested in the circumstances surrounding human acts, Aquinas makes a number of very pertinent observations, which help to clarify the place of circumstances both in human life in general and specifically in the moral life:

Circumstances come under the consideration of the theologian for a threefold reason. First, because the theologian considers human acts, inasmuch as man is thereby directed to Happiness. Now, everything that is directed to an end should be proportionate to that end. But acts are made proportionate to an end by means of a certain commensurateness, which results from the due circumstances. Hence the theologian has to consider the circumstances. – Secondly, because the theologian considers human acts according as they are found to be good or evil, better or worse: and this diversity depends upon circumstances... Thirdly, because the theologian considers human acts under the aspect of merit or demerit, which is proper to human acts; and for this it is requisite that they be voluntary. Now a human act is deemed to be voluntary or involuntary, according to knowledge or ignorance of circumstances... Therefore the theologian has to consider circumstances..... The consideration of circumstances belongs to the moralist, the politician, and the orator. To the moralist, in so far as with respect to circumstances we find or lose the mean of virtue in human acts and passions. To the politician and to the orator, in so far as circumstances makes acts to be worthy of praise or blame, of excuse or indictment. In different ways, however, because where the orator persuades, the politician judges.²⁷

(ST I^aII^ae 7.2 – translation of the English Dominican Province)

²⁷ *circumstantiae pertinent ad considerationem theologi triplici ratione. Primo quidem, quia theologus considerat actus humanos secundum quod per eos homo ad beatitudinem ordinatur. Omne autem quod ordinatur ad finem, oportet esse proportionatum fini. Actus autem proportionantur fini secundum commensurationem quandam, quae fit per debitas circumstantias. Unde consideratio circumstantiarum ad theologum pertinet. Secundo, quia theologus considerat actus humanos secundum quod in eis invenitur bonum et malum, et melius et peius, et hoc diversificatur secundum circumstantias, ut infra patebit. Tertio, quia theologus considerat actus humanos secundum quod sunt meritorii vel demeritorii, quod convenit actibus humanis; ad quod requiritur quod sint voluntarii. Actus autem humanus iudicatur voluntarius vel involuntarius, secundum cognitionem vel ignorantiam circumstantiarum... Et ideo consideratio circumstantiarum pertinet ad theologum..... consideratio circumstantiarum pertinet ad moralem, et politicum, et ad rhetorem. Ad moralem quidem, prout secundum eas invenitur vel praetermittitur medium virtutis in humanis actibus et passionibus. Ad politicum autem et rhetorem, secundum quod ex circumstantiis actus redduntur laudabiles vel vituperabiles, excusabiles vel accusabiles. Diversimode tamen, nam quod rhetor persuadet, politicus diiudicat.*

These four criteria of good action are equally applicable to Aquinas's understanding of human flourishing, which is the perfection of human being and acting. For Aquinas human flourishing is predicated on the fact that humans are rational creatures, as he says, "In human acts, therefore, good and bad are determined through [their] relation with reason... Human good is to be in accordance with reason; bad, thus, is that which is contrary to reason."²⁸ (*ST I^aII^{ae}* 18.5). Human flourishing, therefore, may be said to consist in living a life in accordance with reason, in which the four criteria of good action are realised.

Firstly, one actualises one's fullest potential, *i.e.* one becomes virtuous. Aquinas (*Virt. Comm.* 9.15; 11.15) defined virtue as a person's *ultimum potentiae*. Second, one's innate powers and faculties and acquired knowledge and skills are aimed at objects appropriate to each in itself and to oneself as an individual and as a member of society; hence the appropriate objects of truly flourishing human living will vary with each individual within the general limitations imposed by human nature itself. Third, that one lives appropriately within the various circumstances surrounding one's life, including those over which one has little or no control, such as social status or wealth or innate ability or accidental disability. Finally, the end or purpose for which one lives one's life. We have already seen that the end of the human intellect is to apprehend truth and the end of the human will is to realise the good. In addition, as Aquinas makes clear (*Sent. Eth.* 1, lect. 9.2-3), the end of each practical human act is to realise the good specific to that act, so the end of war is victory, and each sub-branch of the art of war, such as weapon-handling, tactics, *etc.*, is directed towards the ultimate end of victory. This raises the question of what is the ultimate end or purpose of a truly flourishing human life. Aquinas's answer, following Aristotle, is that for humans the ultimate end has to be complete in itself and desired for its own sake, not for the sake of anything else, and that this is happiness (*felicitas* or *beatitudo*²⁹): "Hence, it remains that happiness is the most complete of goods and consequently, the best and ultimate end."³⁰ (*Sent. Eth.* 1, lect. 9.9).

To say that the end of human life is 'happiness', or 'well-being' as it might be better translated (Martin 1988), does not clarify in what this happiness consists. Aquinas, thus, goes on to demonstrate that, according to Aristotle, "happiness is activity proper to Man [performed] according to virtue in the complete life."³¹ (*Sent. Eth.* 1, lect. 10.13). Activity proper to humans

²⁸ *In actibus autem humanis, bonum et malum dicitur per comparationem ad rationem... bonum hominis est secundum rationem esse, malum autem quod est praeter rationem.*

²⁹ In his commentary on Aristotle's *Ethica Nicomachea* Aquinas uses *felicitas* to translate Aristotle's term εὐδαιμονία, in the *Summa Theologica* he tends to use *beatitudo*.

³⁰ *Unde relinquitur quod felicitas sit perfectissimum bonorum et per consequens optimus et ultimus finis.*

³¹ *Sic ergo patet, quod felicitas est operatio propria hominis secundum virtutem in vita perfecta.*

is, as we have seen, activity directed by the rational part of the soul, which is that part of the soul which is distinctively human. Hence fully human activity entails the right use of our intellect, reason and will to realise the true and the good and to act virtuously. This is the end or purpose of ordinary human action, but the ultimate end at which all human acts are directed, according to Aquinas, is to behold God: “final and complete happiness is not possible if it is not in the seeing of the Divine Being.”³² (ST I^{ae} 3.8). To realise the profundity of the Beatific Vision, see Dante Alighieri’s *Paradiso*, Canto 33.43-145. Aquinas acknowledges that a person can, nonetheless, attain a great deal of happiness simply in living the life of virtue according to reason, without achieving that blessed happiness which he says awaits the Christian.

Aquinas on Habit and Virtue in General

The final point raised by Anscombe (1958) is that it is necessary to describe virtue and its key characteristics. The English word ‘virtue’ is the anglicised form of the Latin word *virtus*, which in turn, is a translation of the Greek ἀρετή. Both *virtus* and ἀρετή have the basic meaning of ‘excellence in action’ or ‘excellence in execution’, and essentially refer to the specific excellence relevant to any particular activity. Indeed, in English we still use the word ‘virtue’ in this sense when we say, for example, that a sprinter runs fast by virtue of his acceleration or that a marathon runner wins by virtue of her stamina. Since the 5th Century BC, however, primarily due to the influence of Socrates in his conflict with the Sophists, the Greek word ἀρετή and hence its Latin equivalent *virtus*, have referred to moral excellence as well as functional excellence; *i.e.* to the distinctive excellence of being a good or complete human being, thus Aristotle said: “The excellence of man will be the disposition which makes him a good man and which allows him to make a good work of himself.”³³ (EN 1106^a24).

For Aquinas, following Aristotle, the key characteristic of virtue is that it is an intentional, willed good habit, just as a vice is an intentional, willed bad habit. He starts with a simple definition of habit (*habitus*) taken from Aristotle’s *Metaphysica* 1022^b: “Habit is said to be a disposition according to which that which is disposed is either well or ill disposed, either with regard to itself or to something else.”³⁴ (ST I^{ae} 49.1). Aquinas expands on this simple definition by explaining that there are two kinds of qualities regarding the human powers of acting; those qualities which by their very nature are part of one’s powers of acting, and those which are adventitious, being caused by something beyond one’s powers. These adventitious qualities are dispositions, to

³² *ultima et perfecta beatitudo non potest esse nisi in visione divinae essentiae.*

³³ ἡ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀρετὴ εἶη ἂν ἢ ἐξίς ἀφ’ ἧς ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος γίνεται καὶ ἀφ’ ἧς εὖ τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ἔργον ἀποδώσει.

³⁴ *habitus dicitur dispositio secundum quam bene vel male disponitur dispositum et aut secundum se aut ad aliud.*

which in general habits belong. A disposition is an adventitious quality which has multiple and variable causes. So, for example, sickness or health of body are dispositions, as they are caused by a wide variety of factors, such as diet, exercise, profession, accidental injury, age, *etc.*, change in any of which will cause the disposition to change. A habit, on the other hand, is a disposition which is difficult to change due to being more completely established in one's powers of acting as it arises from a singular or invariable or long-enduring cause (*ST I^aII^{ae} 49.2*).

Habits are qualities which can be either appropriate or inappropriate to human acts, either in their very nature as acts or in the end to which the acting is directed. If the habit is appropriate it is termed a good habit and, conversely, a bad habit is one which is inappropriate to the act in itself or the end at which the act is aimed (*ST I^aII^{ae} 49.3*). There are three conditions necessary for a thing to be disposed to an act or end: First, it must be distinct from that to which it is disposed, as potentiality is distinct from actuality. Secondly, it must be able to be actualised in several different acts or in several different ends, otherwise there is no need of habit (or free will) as it will simply actualise its potential if it is disposed only to a singular end or act. Thirdly, several factors, capable of being proportionately adjusted to each other, must concur in order to dispose it to any one of its potential ends or acts, so as to dispose it well or ill to such ends or acts. Habit is, thus, necessary for the moral life to ensure that the proportionate concurrence of these factors is well disposed to the act or end (*ST I^aII^{ae} 49.4*). Finally, habits are caused and ingrained by repeated acts: "And therefore a habit of virtue is not able to be effected by one act, but by many,"³⁵ (*ST I^aII^{ae} 51.3*), hence virtue is a habit formed by the willed repetition of acts.

Aquinas goes on to demonstrate that habits can reside in the body, the soul, the sentiments, the will, the appetites, the intellect, and in the four internal senses (*ST I^aII^{ae} 50*). This again has wide-ranging implications for both moral decision-making and moral behaviour, as habits may be expressed in practically any of a person's bodily organs, faculties, powers, or functions. Habits, as noted above, may be either good or bad: "thus acts of virtue appropriate to human nature are those which are according to reason; while acts of vice, as being against reason, are incompatible with human nature. And, so, it is manifest that habits are distinguished in kind according to the difference in good and bad."³⁶ (*ST I^aII^{ae} 54.3*). It will be seen, however, that just one bad habit in just one part of human nature may have a disproportionate effect in corrupting virtue: "Again, to do amiss is possible in many ways... but to do right is possible in only one way,

³⁵ *Et ideo habitus virtutis non potest causari per unum actum; sed per multos.*

³⁶ *sicut actus virtutum naturae humanae convenient, eo quod sunt secundum rationem; actus vero vitiorum, cum sint contra rationem, a natura humana discordant. Et, sic, manifestum est quod, secundum differentiam boni et mali, habitus specie distinguuntur.*

hence the one is easy and the other difficult.”³⁷ (Aristotle, *EN* 1106^b30); or, “By sinning, furthermore, one loses a habit of virtue: and from contrary acts virtues are generated and corrupted.”³⁸ (Aquinas, *ST I^aII^{ae}* 53.1). Good habits need to be habitually exercised in opposing vice to become fixed qualities of character, so contrary acts may in this way help to generate virtue, but good habits need to be present concurrently and proportionately in all the parts of human nature to lead to virtue, which is why the path to virtue is difficult and arduous:

Virtue, very toilsome for the race of mortals,
Most beautiful trophy in life.³⁹
(Aristotle, ‘Hymn to Virtue’ cited in Diogenes Laërtius, *Vitae* 5.1.7).

In short, Aquinas is saying that a habit is a firmly established and perduring behaviour or attitude which resides in the body and the soul and is nurtured by repeated acts. A habit which disposes the agent to act well and realise the good in accordance with reason is called a virtue, while a habit which disposes the agent to act ill and negate the good is termed a vice. C.S. Lewis describes the characteristic of virtue as a habit rather well:

There is one further point about the Virtues that ought to be noted. There is a difference between doing some particular just or temperate action and being a just or temperate man. Someone who is not a good tennis player may now and then make a good shot. What you mean by a good player is the man whose eye and muscles and nerves have been so trained by making innumerable good shots that they can now be relied on. They have a certain tone or quality which is there even when he is not playing, just as a mathematician’s mind has a certain habit and outlook which is there even when he is not doing mathematics. In the same way a man who perseveres in doing just actions gets in the end a certain quality of character. Now it is that quality rather than the particular actions which we mean when we talk of the ‘virtue’ of justice.
(Lewis 1943:14-15)

According to Aristotle (*EN* 1106^a-1109^b) the virtue of a specific human moral quality is the ‘mean’ (μέσος) between a vice of excess and a vice of deficiency, in which the lack of the quality is bad, but excess of the quality is also bad. For example, if the virtue is courage, its deficiency is cowardice, its excess is recklessness. Lack of temperance is profligacy, excess is abnegation. There are, however, difficulties with describing certain virtues as a mean between two vices, as Aristotle acknowledged (*EN* 1107^a). Thus, it is difficult to describe justice as a μέσος, if by justice we mean ‘fairness’, because unfairness – *i.e.*, a deficiency in fairness - can take a variety of forms, but it is difficult to conceive of an excess of fairness. If by justice we mean ‘law’, however, then

³⁷ ἔτι τὸ μὲν ἀμαρτάνειν πολλαχῶς ἐστίν... τὸ δὲ κατορθοῦν μοναχῶς, διὸ καὶ τὸ μὲν ῥάδιον τὸ δὲ χαλεπόν.

³⁸ *Peccando etiam aliquis habitum virtutis amittit. Et ex contrariis actibus virtutes generantur et corrumpuntur.*

³⁹ ἀρετὰ, πολύμοχθε γένει βροτεῖω, | θήραμα κάλλιστον βίω.

it is possible to describe the vice of deficiency as ‘lawlessness’ and the vice of excess as ‘legalism’, that is; rigidly applying the letter of the law without understanding its spirit.

The Roman poet, Horace (65-8 BC), praising Aristotle’s doctrine of the ‘mean’, called it *aurea mediocritas* - “the golden mean” (*Carmina* 2.10). The English word ‘mediocrity’ is derived from the Latin *mediocritas*, and it is a reflection of how much Western moral philosophy has altered since antiquity that while, in Latin, *mediocritas* had a positive moral connotation, ‘mediocrity’ has a negative connotation in contemporary English usage. Moral virtue, however, has nothing to do with mediocrity in our modern sense, but has everything to do with excellence; in fact, with realising one’s potential to become the most excellent person one can be. Hence, Aquinas’s definition of virtue as a person’s “*ultimum potentiae*,” (*Virt. Comm.* 9.15; 11.15). It is important to note at this stage that the doctrine of the mean can only be applied to the moral virtues, but not to the intellectual virtues such as prudence, because it is prudence which rationally determines the mean of the moral virtues (Westberg 2015:152), as will become clear below.

Even though it does not accurately convey Aristotle’s point that the mean and the two extremes of vice are each opposed to the other two (*EN* 1108^b10), the doctrine of the mean has been represented in tabular form since antiquity (*cf. EE* 122^b37), thus:

Emotion	Vice of Deficiency	Mean	Vice of Excess
<i>Regard for Others</i>	Lawlessness	Justice	Legalism
<i>Passio Irascibilis</i>	Cowardice	Courage	Recklessness
<i>Passio Concupiscibilis</i>	Profligacy	Temperance	Abnegation

Diagram 1. A Table of Virtues and Vices

This simple representation may be improved by making it a ‘traffic-light’ table (McCormack 2014, *pers. comm.*), thus:

Emotion	Vice of Deficiency	Mean	Vice of Excess
<i>Regard for Others</i>	Lawlessness	Justice	Legalism
<i>Passio Irascibilis</i>	Cowardice	Courage	Recklessness
<i>Passio Concupiscibilis</i>	Profligacy	Temperance	Abnegation

Diagram 2. A ‘Traffic-Light’ Table of Virtues and Vices

The advantage of representing the idea of virtue as the mean between vices of excess and deficiency in a ‘traffic-light table’ is that it emphasizes the point that there is no sudden transition from being virtuous to being vicious, but that moral behaviour falls somewhere on a spectrum and it is a matter for judgement when courage, say, has become recklessness. Indeed, Aristotle defined moral virtue (or those excellences which relate to emotions and actions), as having the right feelings or doing the right actions at the right time, for the right object, towards the right persons, for the right purpose, in the right way (*EN* 1106^b20).

Aquinas on the Four Cardinal Virtues⁴⁰

Having described habits and virtue in general, Aquinas proceeds to discuss the seven capital virtues in detail. He inherited the list of the seven capital virtues from the early Church Fathers, who, in turn, derived the four cardinal virtues of prudence (φρόνησις, *prudentia*), justice (δικαιοσύνη, *iustitia*), courage (ἀνδρεία, *fortitudo*), and temperance (σωφροσύνη, *temperantia*), and their subsidiary virtues from the Graeco-Roman philosophical schools. The three theological virtues of faith (πίστις, *fides*), hope (ἐλπίς, *spes*) and love (ἀγάπη, *caritas*) were derived from St Paul (1 Corinthians 12 & 13). I shall not discuss the three theological virtues, which belong specifically to the Christian, being infused by God (ST I^{II}ae 62.1), and are not, therefore, universal. I shall, however, examine the four cardinal virtues, as these are the ones which are ultimately derived from pagan Greek philosophy and are, thus, accessible to all humans, irrespective of whether or not they are Christians. Nonetheless, in my discussion of Aquinas's moral philosophy I shall refer to the peculiarly Christian concept of the seven 'capital vices' or 'deadly sins', because these gave Christian moral theologians and spiritual directors a more perceptive way of articulating and understanding the practicable moral life. It is worth stressing, therefore, that by contrasting each of the four cardinal virtues with those of the seven capital vices which specifically oppose its realisation, Aquinas was able to bring a more profound insight to bear on the question of the practicable moral life than Aristotle could do with a more limited understanding of vice.

Prudence

Aquinas, following Aristotle, divided the virtues into two broad types: intellectual and moral. The three cardinal moral virtues are justice, courage and temperance, and relate to one's appetites and emotions and, hence, to one's consequent behaviour. The intellectual virtues relate to one's reason and number five: three virtues of the speculative intellect – 'wisdom' (*sapiens*), 'understanding' (*intellectus*), and 'empirical knowledge' (*scientia*); and two virtues of practical intellect – 'art' (*ars*) and 'prudence' (*prudentia*). McNerny (1997:97) states:

The end of the speculative use of intellect is the perfection of thinking as such, namely, truth. When we use our mind practically, we seek a truth for the guidance of activities other than thinking, e.g., the true good that the will should seek, the good in actions that involve the emotions, the good in activities in which we relate to other people. Generally speaking, Thomas recognises two virtues of practical intellect – art and prudence. Art is correct reasoning about things to be made and aims at good in the artefact. Prudence is correct reasoning about things to be done and aims at the good of the agent as such, taken either singly (ethical prudence), as a member of a domestic community (economic prudence), or as a member of a polity (political prudence).

⁴⁰ My discussion of Aquinas's understanding of the four cardinal virtues draws heavily on the works of Josef Pieper (1955; 1957; 1960) and Silvano Borruso (1996).

It is important to note that prudence, as an intellectual virtue, is distinct from the specifically moral virtues of justice, courage, and temperance, and that the doctrine of the mean does not apply to it. As an intellectual virtue, prudence provides the necessary and essential liaison between the truth ascertained by the intellect, the good desired by the will, and the moral acts of the human agent exemplified in justice, courage and temperance:

It is certain that conformity with right reason is itself the proper end of every moral virtue..... But in what way and by which [means] Man attains the mean of reason in his deeds falls under the direction of prudence. Although to attain the mean is the end of moral virtue, yet only by the right direction of these [virtues], which are aiming towards the end, is the mean found.⁴¹
(ST II^aII^{ae} 47.7)

Prudence, therefore, may be described as the accurate perception of reality, of the actual truth of a given situation, and a judgement of how best to respond to that situation as it truly is in order to realise the good. C.S. Lewis (1943:12) says, “Prudence means practical commonsense, taking the trouble to think out what you are doing and what is likely to come of it.” But the practical common sense mentioned by Lewis is founded on insight into and understanding of objective reality: “The meaning of the virtue of prudence, however, is primarily this: that not only the end of human action but also the means for its realisation shall be in keeping with the truth of real things.” (Pieper 1960:35). In this regard, it is worthwhile remembering that prudence is applicable not just at the personal level, but in the household and in the body politic, too (ST II^aII^{ae} 50). Prudence in military affairs is one of the branches of political prudence and we shall return to this subject in the third chapter.

Pieper (1960:20-21), following Aquinas (ST II^aII^{ae} 47.6), says that prudent decision is derived from two sources: the mental faculty, called *synderesis* in Medieval Latin, of knowing the universal moral principles of the Natural Law or what might be called ‘natural conscience’; and the mental faculty of knowing how to apply the universal principles to actual, concrete, singular, specific situations – *prudentia simpliciter*. Hence, Aquinas can state, “natural conscience sets prudence in motion”⁴² (ST II^aII^{ae} 47.6).

Prudence, however, is not concerned directly with the ultimate – natural and supernatural – ends of human life, but with the means to these ends. The special nature of prudence is not presence in the mind of ‘universal principles’ (although it is necessary for those principles to be present if one is to make prudent decisions: *synderesis movet prudentiam...*). The special nature of prudence is its concern with the realm of ‘ways and means’ and down-to-earth realities.
(Pieper 1960:20-21)

⁴¹ *Dicendum quod hoc ipsum quod est conformari rationi rectae, est finis proprius cuiuslibet virtutis moralis..... Sed qualiter et per quae homo in operando attingat medium rationis, pertinet ad dispositionem prudentiae. Licet enim attingere medium sit finis virtutis moralis: tamen per rectam dispositionem eorum quae sunt ad finem, medium invenitur.*

⁴² *synderesis movet prudentiam*

As prudence entails understanding the actual reality or truth of any given situation and determining how best to realise the good in that situation, it has two aspects, the 'cognitive' and 'imperative' (Pieper 1960). The cognitive aspect entails, first, 'discernment', which is the intellectual insight into the objective reality of the world and an understanding of any specific contingent situation as it actually is, not as one wants or wishes it to be, nor an understanding clouded by personal sentiment, opinion, or ideals. Discernment, therefore, implies a still and silent receptiveness before reality on the part of the human agent. The person who is full of chatter, 'internal dialogue', and incorrect, irrelevant or incoherent information will be unable to discern truly. Secondly, it entails 'deliberation', which is the rational weighing up one's options and knowing how to respond in a morally appropriate manner given the contingencies of the particular situation. Deliberation implies also that the agent is willing to seek and receive counsel regarding the situation and the appropriate response to it. The imperative aspect entails 'decision', which is the will, on the basis of one's prior discernment and deliberation, selecting which course of action one should pursue in order to realise the good in that particular contingent situation; and 'direction', which is the will putting one's decision into immediate effect (Pieper 1960). Prudence, thus, involves the reason (*ratio*) and the will (*voluntas*) of the human agent.

As prudence is an intellectual rather than a moral virtue, it is not possible to describe it as the mean between two vices, one of excess and one of deficiency, as it is difficult to conceive what a vice of excessive prudence could be, while it is possible to conceive several vices arising from deficiencies in prudence. It will be helpful, therefore, to briefly consider the parts of imprudence, as described by Aquinas (*ST II^{ae} 53-55*) and interpreted by Pieper (1960). These various forms of imprudence are vices of deficiency relating to either the cognitive aspect or the imperative aspect of prudence. The vices of cognitive imprudence are: First, thoughtlessness, consisting of either lack of deliberation (*praecipitatio*) or lack of discernment (*inconsideratio*) leading to "blindness to the concrete realities which surround our actions." (Pieper 1960:32); secondly, irresoluteness (*inconstantia*), where deliberation reaches no resolution and so is rendered ineffective, what nowadays some might call 'analysis paralysis'; and thirdly, negligence (*negligentia*), which is carelessness or idleness in discernment or deliberation.

The vices of imperative imprudence are less obvious than those of cognitive imprudence, as they are vices in which the will imprudently directs one's acts to egotistical ends. These forms of volitional imprudence can, thus, have the appearance of prudence, and, in fact, in contemporary

parlance it is usually these “vices opposed to prudence, which have a resemblance to it,”⁴³ as Aquinas calls them (*ST II^aII^{ae} 55*), which most people have in mind when they think of prudence at all. This idea of prudence implies a devious self-preservation, so that,

To the contemporary mind, then, the concept of the good excludes rather than includes prudence. Modern man cannot conceive of a good act which might not be imprudent, nor of a bad act which might not be prudent. He will often call lies and cowardice prudent, truthfulness and courageous sacrifice imprudent. Classical Christian ethics, on the contrary, maintains that a man can be prudent and good only simultaneously; that prudence is part and parcel of the definition of goodness; that there is no sort of justice or fortitude which runs counter to the virtue of prudence; and that the unjust man has been imprudent before and is imprudent at the moment he is unjust. *Omnis virtus moralis debet esse prudens* – All virtue is necessarily prudent.⁴⁴

(Pieper 1960:10-11)

Aristotle, too, affirms that all moral virtue must of necessity be prudent when he offers the following definition: “Virtue then is a habit of choosing the mean, relative to us, determined by a rational principle, as the prudent man determines it.”⁴⁵ (*EN 1106^b35 – 1107^a2*).

The vices of imperative imprudence are: Firstly, excessive consideration of the body (*prudencia carnis*), which “instead of serving the true end of all human life... is directed solely toward the goods of the body,” (Pieper 1960:33). Second, deviousness (*astutia*), the attitude of scheming dissimulation (*fraus*) and deceit (*dolus*) which motivates the person who tries to manipulate others and situations for his own ends, but as Pieper (1960:33) observes, “The meaning of the virtue of prudence, however, is primarily this: that not only the end of human action but also the means for its realisation shall be in keeping with the truth of real things.” Third, preoccupation with transient things (*sollicitudo temporalium rerum et futurorum*), which is excessive anxiety about one’s material or social goods, thus diverting one’s attention to oneself and away from being receptive to reality, which is the prerequisite of discernment of truth.

According to Aquinas the origin of the vices of cognitive imprudence arise ultimately from a single source, lust (*luxuria*), which here specifically means unchasteness or impurity of heart (*ST II^aII^{ae} 53.6*). “Thomas Aquinas discovers that these imprudences of ‘omission’ have their origin in unchastity, in that surrender to the goods of the sensual world which splits the power of decision in two.” (Pieper 1960:32). The association of sexual chasteness with clarity of perception is ancient (Aristotle, *EN 1140^b15*; Matthew 5:8), but may not command much

⁴³ *Quaestio 55* is titled, ‘*De vitiis oppositis prudentiae, quae habent similitudinem cum ipsa*’

⁴⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Virt. Comm.* 12 ad 23

⁴⁵ Ἔστιν ἄρα ἡ ἀρετὴ ἕξις προαιρετικὴ, ἐν μεσότητι οὕσα τῇ πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ὠρισμένη λόγῳ καὶ ὡς* ἂν ὀφρόνιμος ὀρίσειεν. (*I have followed Bekker’s reading of the text as ὡς rather than Bywater’s of ὦ, but the variation in reading does not change the sense of the passage that the rational principle of choosing the mean is prudence.)

support or understanding nowadays. Nonetheless, we should take seriously the possibility that such an ancient and unanimous tradition is correct, especially as contemporary Western culture is so highly sexualised that we are likely to have a blind spot in this area of moral understanding. Likewise, Aquinas ascribes the origin of the vices of imperative imprudence to a single source, avarice (*avaritia*), also known as covetousness (*ST II^aII^{ae} 55.8*).

Covetousness here means more than the disorderly love of money and property. Covetousness here means... immoderate straining for all the possessions which man thinks are needed to assure his own importance and status... Covetousness means an anxious senility, desperate self-preservation, over-riding concern for confirmation and security... the virtue of prudence is dependent upon the constant readiness to ignore the self.
(Pieper 1960:35).

Once again, this insight of Aquinas’s runs counter to much of the West’s current neoliberal economic philosophy of consumerism but requires considered appraisal precisely for that reason. We will consider these questions further in the next chapter.

From this discussion of imprudence it will be seen that a simple tabulation is inadequate to accurately represent the relationship of prudence with the variety of vices opposed to it. A better representation is that of a target, in which the ‘bull’s eye’ represents prudence and the outer rings the graduated transition into the various vices of imprudence. Indeed, Aristotle himself uses the image of aiming for a target (*EN 1106^b30*), when discussing the idea of the mean. There are two advantages in representing the relationship between the virtue of prudence and the various vices of imprudence in a ‘target chart’. First, it helps us to understand why the ancient Greeks used a term from archery, ἀμαρτία, which literally means ‘missing the mark’, to denote ‘sin’. To sin is to fail to hit the ‘bull’s eye’ and, thus, to fall into one or other of the vices associated with any particular virtue, and this image, in a way that the ‘traffic-light table’ does not, drives home the points that virtue is difficult to attain while sin is easy to fall into, but that virtue becomes easier to attain with habitual practice.



Diagram 3: A Target Chart of Prudence and the Vices of Imprudence

Secondly, this image helps us to understand the Socratic argument equating virtue with knowledge and sin with ignorance (Plato, *Protagoras; Meno; Respublica*). If we accept the two propositions that (1) prudence is knowledge of reality and knowledge of how to act appropriately in any situation on the basis of understanding the truth of that situation, and (2) that all virtue is necessarily prudent as it is based on a true perception of reality, then the way in which virtue can be described as knowledge and sin ignorance becomes clearer.

Justice

The second cardinal virtue, but the first specifically moral virtue, is justice. Aquinas defines justice as: “a habit by which someone, with firm and enduring will, renders to each individual his due.”⁴⁶ (*ST II^a II^ae 58.1*). It will be noted that this definition is derived from that of *Institutiones Iustiniani* 1.1: “Justice is the firm and enduring will to render to everyone his due,”⁴⁷ but, also, that Aquinas has modified it to stress that justice is a habit, *i.e.* a virtue. It will be noted that this definition is also completely outward looking towards other persons, a point to which we shall return below. In discussing Aquinas’s definition, Pieper (1957:11-14) acknowledges that nowadays there are very many different ways of defining justice, but claims that these can all be reduced to the simple idea that justice is the willed intent to assign to each person their rightful and proper due. He goes on, however, to note:

I have just said that the idea is an extremely simple one. But that does not imply that its meaning is easily grasped... For what, in fact, is each man’s due? And above all, what is, generally speaking, the basis for a ‘*suum*’⁴⁸? How, indeed, does anything come to belong to a person? And how does it so truly belong to him that every man and every human authority has to grant it to him and allow him to keep it?
(Pieper 1957:14-15)

Pieper (1957:15) answers his own questions by quoting Aquinas:

‘If the act of justice is to give each man his due, then the act of justice is preceded by the act whereby something becomes his due.’ [*ScG* 2.28]. This text expresses with supreme simplicity a circumstance that is utterly fundamental. Justice is something that comes second: Right comes before justice. If something is due to a man as his own, the fact of its being due to him has not come into existence through justice. ‘That act, by virtue of which something comes for the first time to be due to a man as *his*, cannot be an act of justice.’ [*ScG* 2.28].

⁴⁶ *iustitia est habitus secundum quem aliquis constanti et perpetua voluntate ius suum unicuique tribuit.*

⁴⁷ *Iustitia est constans et perpetua voluntas ius suum cuique tribuens.*

⁴⁸ *Suum* is the genitive plural of the 3rd person reflexive pronoun, and emphatically indicates something as one’s own possession, whether material, as in ‘one’s own property’, or abstract, as in ‘master of oneself’ (Lewis 1891:838b-840a). Pieper (1957:18) puts it thus: “Whatever is due to a person, the *suum*, is something that one man may demand of another as owing to him, and him only. And what *is* thus owing can just as well be a thing, perhaps a possession, as an action [such as the freedom which allows the person to carry out his own acts]... but it can also be an act performed by another, or even the cessation of such an act – anything, for instance, that might be annoying, embarrassing or compromising to a person’s good name.”

This fundamentally important point, that rendering to each person their due is predicated on each person having certain inalienable rights, is ultimately based on the Judaeo-Christian concept that humans have worth simply because they are created in the image of God (Siedentop 2014). Aquinas expresses this point by stating that a creature only has rights because it is created; the rights it enjoys arise from the act of creation by God⁴⁹ (ScG 2.28). Pieper (1957:23) explains it thus:

Man has inalienable rights because he is created a person by the act of God, that is, an act beyond all human discussion. In the ultimate analysis, then, something is inalienably due to man because he is *creatura*. Moreover, as *creatura*, man has the absolute duty to give another his due.

The key implication of this definition is that justice entails at least two parties; the just person who renders to another their due and the other person or persons to whom this due is rendered. Implicit in this, too, is the acknowledgement that the 'other' is distinct and different from the person who renders to them their due and that justice is the fulfilment of an obligation to render this due, regardless of whether the 'other' is a friend, a fellow-citizen, an alien, a competitor, or an enemy. (The acknowledgement that even an enemy has a right to be rendered his due simply because he, too, is a human person, contributed to the development of Christian just war doctrine, which will be discussed in the third chapter.) So, justice is realised in human acts irrespective of the attitude of the person who renders to the other their due:

'The other person' is not affected by my subjective disposition, by what I intend, think, feel, or will, but only by what I do. Only by an external act will the other receive what is *his*, his due..... in the realm of justice good and evil are judged purely on the basis of the deed itself, regardless of the inner disposition of the doer; the point is not how the deed accords with the doer, but rather, how it affects 'the other person'. The reverse of this statement is also valid. Not only is the act of justice an external act, but every external act belongs to the field of justice. Whatever external act a person performs, it is either just or unjust. (Pieper 1957:36)

Justice, therefore, unlike the other two moral virtues of temperance and courage, may be judged objectively by its actualisation in human deeds, whereas temperance and courage depend on a subjective disposition for their realisation. Nonetheless, the virtue of justice, as a habit of the will, entails a disposition to be just not only in external acts, but also to have an inner attitude of affirming that the other person does, indeed, have inherent dignity and worth in his own right and a confirmation, therefore, that he is entitled to that which is his due irrespective of what one thinks or feels about him. The vice which specifically hinders justice, therefore, is envy, which according to Chaucer (*The Canterbury Tales*, 'The Parson's Tale' §30), is "sorrow at

⁴⁹ *Sed per creationem res creata primo incipit aliquid suum habere.* "It is through creation that the created thing first begins to have the right to something."

another man's well-being, and joy at other men's harm."⁵⁰ While justice may be articulated in law, therefore, it "means much more than the sort of thing that goes on in law courts. It is the old name for everything we should now call 'fairness'; it includes honesty, give and take, truthfulness, keeping promises, and all that side of life," (Lewis 1943:14). This brings out an important point about justice as a virtue; it entails respect for and protection of the other person's dignity and worth. There is a distinction

between a demand of justice that is legally binding and a demand of justice that is (only) morally binding. I can be compelled to fulfil the first obligation; carrying out the second depends only on my own sense of decency. Moreover, there is a further distinction to be made between demands of justice that are only morally binding: a violation can mean that the person who commits it has done something dishonourable (if he lies, for example); but it may also mean that without being strictly dishonourable, an action has still been 'unseemly' (in that it is unkind or unfriendly, for example).
(Pieper 1957:31)

In other words, to use somewhat archaic language, justice is intimately bound up with honour. Traditionally, there were terms which aptly denoted both the forms of justice relating to honour; *religio, pietas, gratia, vindicatio, observantia*, and *veritas* (ST II^aII^{ae} 80), and the various injustices regarding dishonour which thereby shame others or injure their reputations; *contumelia, detractio, susurratio, derisio, maledictio*. Aquinas discusses these injustices in a series of five *Quaestiones* (ST II^aII^{ae} 72-76), in contrast, he devotes only two *Quaestiones* (ST II^aII^{ae} 77-78) to financial injustice, which consists of fraud - cheating people out of their money in various ways, and usury - lending money at interest. This gives an indication of the importance he attaches to delineating injustices against the honour and dignity of persons; something we hardly consider under justice nowadays. It is also noteworthy that we no longer consider usury to be a form of injustice and that our entire economic system is based on it, which is another indication of how far contemporary notions of justice and injustice differ from those of the Western moral tradition as a whole. Indeed, Pieper observes that many of the terms Aquinas uses to express forms of justice and injustice relating to honour are no longer understood and the contemporary Western understanding of the full extent of justice and injustice is, thus, diminished:

The fact that current adult speech has not maintained such a usage, that we actually do not have words for such things and many others like them, seems to me most disturbing and thought-provoking. What term shall we use to properly render *derisio*, the act that violates justice by bringing shame to another through mockery? How designate the special form of justice that goes with it and consists in sparing another man shame?
(Pieper 1957:29)

⁵⁰ *Envy... is sorwe of other mannes wele, and joye of othere mennes harm*. Chaucer is paraphrasing St Augustine, *Commentary on Psalm 104:25*.

This loss of the understanding of the inextricable link between justice and honour has very profound implications for contemporary British soldiers deploying on operations amongst nations which do still retain a culture based on the concepts of honour and shame, as will become clear in the third chapter.

Courage⁵¹

The third cardinal virtue is courage, which may be actualised either positively or negatively: Positively it entails being willing to endure harm in order to realise the good, while negatively it entails not allowing the fear of harm to prevent one from realising the good (Pieper 1955). As Aquinas put it:

it belongs to the virtue of courage to ward man's will so that it does not hold back from the good of reason through fear of bodily evil... And, therefore, it is necessary that moral courage be appointed as that which firmly fixes man's will to the good of reason in the face of the greatest evils..... Moreover, the most frightful amongst all bodily evils is death, which takes away all bodily goods.⁵²
(*ST II^aII^{ae} 123.4*)

Aquinas stresses, however, that courage is not just passive endurance, but also requires daring (*audacia*) and aggression (*ira*)⁵³ to actively realise the good (*ST II^aII^{ae} 123.3 & 10*). “Fortitude includes both kinds of courage – the kind that faces danger as well as the kind that ‘sticks it’ under pain. ‘Guts’ is perhaps the nearest modern English.” (Lewis 1943:14).

The virtue of courage, therefore, is the habit which equips one to withstand danger, fear and evil, either through patient endurance or persistent, even aggressive, opposition, in order to preserve or to realise the true, the good and the just. As Aristotle (*EN 1115^b17*) said,

The courageous man, then, is the one who endures or fears the right things for the right purpose in the right manner at the right time, and who shows confidence in a similar way. (For the courageous man feels and acts as the circumstances merit, and as principle may dictate.)⁵⁴

In other words, courage is the disposition of a rational and disciplined soul, and cannot arise simply from a spontaneous ‘fight or flight’ instinct. Implicit in this definition, however, is the recognition that courage is subordinate to both prudence and justice:

⁵¹ Much of my discussion in this section is based on Steele (2014) ‘Courage: Cardinal Virtue or Core Value?’, a paper I delivered at the 2014 Amport House Conference and was subsequently published in the 2014 *Defence Academy Yearbook*:249-255.

⁵² *ad virtutem fortitudinis pertinet ut voluntatem hominis tueatur, ne retrahatur a bono rationis propter timorem mali corporalis... Et ideo oportet quod fortitudo animi dicatur quae firmiter retinet voluntatem hominis in bono rationi contra maxima mala... Maxime autem terribile, inter omnia corporalia mala, est mors, quae tollit omnia corporalia bona.*

⁵³ *Ira* can also be translated ‘anger’ or ‘wrath’; I translate it as ‘aggression’ to distinguish its place in the virtue of courage from the vice of wrath, which is disordered *ira*.

⁵⁴ ὁ μὲν οὖν ἂ δεῖ καὶ οὗ ἔνεκα ὑπομένων καὶ φοβούμενος, καὶ ὡς δεῖ καὶ ὅτε, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ θαρρῶν, ἀνδρείος (κατ’ ἀξίαν γάρ καὶ ὡς ἂν ὁ λόγος, πάσχει καὶ πράττει ὁ ἀνδρεῖος).

Under the direction of prudence, the good of man becomes compellingly evident. Justice primarily brings about the actual realisation of this good. Fortitude, therefore, by itself, is not the primary realisation of the good. But fortitude protects this realisation or clears the road for it.
(Pieper 1955:27)

Aquinas affirmed that courage is not the first of the virtues and specifically made the point that “a man does not expose his person to mortal dangers except in order to preserve justice. And, therefore, the praise of courage depends to a certain extent on justice.”⁵⁵ (ST II^aII^{ae} 123.12.3). It must be stressed that this is not just a naïve Christian ideal, but is also the view expressed by the pagan Graeco-Roman philosophers. For example, Aristotle said, “It is for a noble end that the courageous man endures and acts in accordance with courage.”⁵⁶ (EN 1115^b22), and Cicero, discussing courage, noted:

But if the elation of soul, which is shown in danger and toil, is devoid of justice and fights not for the common weal, but for its own advantage, it is a vice; and it not only has no measure of virtue, but, rather, is monstrous and repulsive to all humaneness.⁵⁷
(Cicero, *Off.* 1.19)

This concept has far-reaching implications for military personnel, because it implies that a soldier cannot be truly courageous if fighting for an unjust cause, a topic to which we shall return in the third chapter.

Two final points need to be made about courage: Firstly, it is the virtue which specifically perfects the feelings of irritation (*passiones irascibilis*): aggression, hope, despair, daring, and fear, by disciplining them in endurance and ordering them, so that one fears or dares or hopes or hesitates ordinately in regard to the reality of the situation in which one finds oneself. The vices which specifically hinder courage, therefore, are sloth, a dispirited and uninterested lassitude, which cannot be bothered to strive to realise the good; and wrath, uncontrolled, misdirected and disordered aggression. Second, the exercise of courage is partly predicated on a healthy and ordered body and mind, as a disordered, unhealthy body and soul is considerably weakened and its ability to resist evil in the face of fear of harm or death is thereby much lessened. Hence the advice of the Roman poet, Juvenal: “You should pray for a wholesome mind in a healthy body,”⁵⁸ (*Satura* 10.356), which brings us naturally to the consideration of the fourth cardinal virtue, temperance, which “fosters the health of body and soul.” (Borruso 1996:66).

⁵⁵ *homo non exponit personam suam mortis periculis nisi propter iustitiam conservandam. Et ideo laus fortitudinis dependet quodammodo ex iustitia.*

⁵⁶ καλοῦ δὲ ἕνεκα ὁ ἀνδρεῖος ὑπομένει καὶ πράττει τὰ κατὰ τὴν ἀνδρείαν.

⁵⁷ *Sed ea animi elatio, quae cernitur in periculis et laboribus, si iustitia vacat pugnatque non pro salute communi, sed pro suis commodis, in vitio est; non modo enim id virtutis non est, sed est potius immanitatis omnem humanitatem repellentis.*

⁵⁸ *Orandum est ut sit mens sana in corpore sano.*

Temperance

Temperance is primarily concerned with realising the good for the individual person. Its meaning, however, is quite likely to be misconstrued nowadays:

Temperance is, unfortunately, one of those words that has changed its meaning. It now usually means teetotalism. But [originally]... it meant nothing of the sort. Temperance referred not specially to drink, but to all pleasures; and it meant not abstaining, but going the right length and no further..... Of course it may be the duty of a particular [person]... at a particular time, to abstain from [some good]... But the whole point is that he is abstaining, for a good reason, from something which he does *not* condemn and which he likes to see other people enjoying.
(Lewis 1943:13)

Temperance is based on self-knowledge, and is the self-disciplined ordering of one's sustentative appetites by not giving in to self-gratification or self-indulgence. It entails being self-controlled and moderate in one's enjoyment of all secondary goods, even though they are legitimate, as the inordinate pursuit of even a legitimate good is inimical to living a fully flourishing life because one becomes enslaved to bad habits and one's behaviour then becomes harmful both to oneself or the wider community. Legitimate goods are, thus, pursued ordinally, *i.e.* only in the right manner to the right degree for the right ends, which may mean abstaining from them on occasion. "The primary and essential meaning of *temperare*, therefore, is this: to dispose various parts into one unified and ordered whole." (Pieper 1955:54).

One's sustentative appetites and faculties are disciplined by the habit of temperance so that they are controlled by one's reason and will, rather than controlling one's behaviour, hence this apparently constraining discipline, far from being restrictive, results in greater freedom. Discussing Aristotle's description of σωφροσύνη, Williamson (1949:16-17), observes that it

is concerned primarily with the instincts and desires which men possess in common with animals and it is by the use of it that man shows himself a rational being, able to exercise a free choice. One who is a slave of his appetites is not free to choose the Mean in any matter.

Or, as Pieper (1955:125) more succinctly put it, "Temperance... is liberating and purifying. This above all: temperance effects purification." And this directly relates to that purity of heart and consequent clarity of vision which undergirds prudence.

The connection between purity of heart and prudence naturally raises the question of how temperance relates to the other cardinal virtues. Referring to Aquinas's discussion of this point in the *ST II^{ae}* 141.8, Pieper (1955:54-55) says,

Temperantia is distinguished from the other cardinal virtues by the fact that it refers exclusively to the active man himself. Prudence looks to all existent reality; justice to the fellow man; the man of fortitude relinquishes, in self-forgetfulness, his own possessions and his life. Temperance, on the other hand, aims at each man himself.

As temperance is the virtue which is exclusively aimed at oneself and one's consequent actions and attitudes, it will be helpful to briefly consider the various subordinate virtues of temperance and their opposing vices as discussed at some length by Aquinas (*ST II^aII^{ae} 143-169*). According to Aquinas the subordinate virtues consist in the following: shame (*verecundia*); self-control or self-restraint (*continentia*); honesty (*honestum*); purity (*castitas*); abstinence (*abstinentia*); soberness (*sobrietas*); gentleness (*clementia*); mildness (*mansuetudo*); modesty (*modestia*); humility (*humilitas*); and mental diligence (*studiositas*). The vices opposing temperance are gluttony (*gula*), drunkenness (*ebrietas*), lust (*luxuria*), profligacy (*incontinentia*), wrath (*ira*), cruelty (*crudelitas*), pride (*superbia*), and mental inquisitiveness (*curiositas*). It will be noticed from this much abbreviated list that several of the subordinate virtues of temperance and their opposing vices are ones which nowadays we would not think to be primarily or obviously connected with the faculties of the sustentative part of the soul - sexual reproduction, nutrition, and bodily augmentation - with which temperance is most closely concerned. Two of these in particular require a little further explanation: *studiositas* and *curiositas*. Perhaps the best way to explain the difference between them is to liken *studiositas* to the mental discipline which allows a person to claim acquaintance with another country and its culture only when he has spent several years studying its language and living amongst its people learning its customs and history, while *curiositas* may be likened to the person on a coach tour who spends twenty-four hours in Vienna and then claims to have 'done' Austria and subsequently feels entitled to talk 'authoritatively' about the Austrians.

The fact that we would not nowadays associate modesty, mildness or mental diligence with temperance indicates the extent to which our contemporary understanding of the unity of human nature and the place of the virtues has been impoverished. Aquinas (*ST II^aII^{ae} 141.1 ad 1*) explains that qualities such as modesty, mildness, and mental diligence are, indeed, parts of temperance because they are habits of self-control and self-discipline which are appropriate to humans specifically as rational beings.

It is certain that nature inclines each thing to that which is appropriate to it. Whence Man naturally desires pleasures that are appropriate to him. Since, truly, Man as such is rational, it follows that those pleasures are appropriate to Man which are in accordance with reason. And from these temperance does not hold him back, but rather from those which are contrary to reason. Whence it is apparent that temperance is not contrary to the inclination of human nature, but is appropriate to it. Yet it is contrary to the inclination of animal nature not subject to reason.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ *Dicendum quod natura inclinatur in id quod est conveniens unicuique. Unde homo naturaliter appetit delectationem sibi convenientem. Quia vero homo, in quantum huiusmodi, est rationalis: consequens est quod delectationes sint homini convenientes, quae sunt secundum rationem. Et ab his non retrahit temperantia: sed potius ab his quae sunt contra rationem. Unde patet quod temperantia non contrariatur inclinationi naturae humanae, sed convenit cum ea. Contrariatur tamen inclinationi naturae bestialis non subiectae rationi.*

Remarking on the fact that humans are rational creatures, requiring order and moderation mentally as well as bodily, Pieper (1955) notes that not only a person's bodily well-being but their mental health is intimately tied up with the virtues of courage and temperance because where they are absent and where the irascible and concupiscent emotions are disordered there is fertile ground for phobias, neuroses and addictions to develop. When once one sees this point, it is surprisingly self-evident, but it is not at all obvious to those of us raised with a post-Freudian understanding of the human psyche and its illnesses. Aquinas points out that this connection between temperance and mental health exists precisely because the sustentative appetites and faculties are those which actually sustain our being in the most fundamental sense. Of course, the reverse of psychological illness is the mental health and wholeness which derive from habitually exercising courage and temperance to order and discipline the voracious appetites of one's affective and sustentative being, which is why Aquinas describes the particular excellence of *temperantia* as 'serenity of soul'⁶⁰ (ST II^aII^{ae} 141.2 ad 2, cited in Pieper 1955:54).

The Hierarchy and Unity of Virtue

The question of whether all virtue is one or if there is a hierarchy of virtues goes back to Socrates (Plato, *Respublica* 445^c). Aquinas asserts that there is a hierarchy of virtue, but also that the virtues are intimately connected with each other:

Rational good, moreover, is human good... Now, prudence certainly has this good essentially, which is the perfection of reason. Justice, however, is certainly the maker of this good, in as much as it belongs to it to establish the order of reason in all human affairs. But the other virtues are the preservers of this good, in as much as they clearly moderate the emotions lest they lead Man away from the rational good. And, in the order of these [other virtues], fortitude holds the first place, because fear of the dangers of death has the greatest [negative] effect in that it makes Man turn back from the rational good. After this is placed temperance, because the pleasures of touch more than the others hinder the rational good. Now being is placed before efficacy, which, in turn, is placed before maintenance in terms of the removal of hindrances. Whence, among the cardinal virtues prudence is preeminent; justice second, fortitude third, temperance fourth, and, after these, the rest of the virtues.⁶¹

(ST II^aII^{ae} 123.12)

⁶⁰ *quies animi*

⁶¹ *Bonum autem rationis est hominis bonum... Hoc autem bonum essentialiter quidem habet prudentia, quae est perfectio rationis. Iustitia autem est huius boni factiva: inquantum scilicet ad ipsam pertinet ordinem rationis ponere in omnibus rebus humanis. Aliae autem virtutes sunt conservativae huius boni: inquantum scilicet moderantur passiones, ne abducant hominem a bono rationis. Et, in ordine harum, fortitudo tenet locum praecipuum: quia timor periculorum mortis maxime est efficax ad hoc quod hominem faciat recedere a bono rationis. Postquam ordinatur temperantia: quia etiam delectationes tactus maxime inter caetera impediunt bonum rationis. Id autem quod essentialiter dicitur potius est eo quod dicitur effective; et hoc etiam potius est eo quod dicitur conservative, secundum remotionem impedimenti. Unde, inter virtutes cardinales, est potior prudentia, secunda, iustitia; tertia, fortitudo; quarta, temperantia. Et post has, caeterae virtutes.*

On the other hand, Aquinas also asserts that “all moral virtue is necessarily prudent,”⁶² (*Virt. Comm.* 12 ad 23), implying the underlying unity of virtue. Likewise, C.S. Lewis, in talking of courage, said, “You will notice, of course, that you cannot practise any of the other virtues very long without bringing this one into play.” (Lewis 1943:14). The same might be said of temperance, which, as we saw above, by purifying the soul contributes to that clarity of vision which, alone, allows the discernment upon which prudence depends. The virtues, therefore, might be said to be one. Gilbert Meilaender (1984:26) in discussing this issue concluded with “the fundamental paradox” that:

One must do what prudence requires in order to be virtuous. But one must be virtuous in order to do what prudence requires. Put more simply: doing what is right requires being good, but we can become good only by doing what is right.

Nowadays, we find this “fundamental paradox” of the unity and hierarchy of the cardinal virtues either incomprehensible or irresolvable. Our incomprehension comes from the “unfillable gap” between the concept of virtue and contemporary moral philosophy identified by Anscombe (1958), and our inability to resolve the paradox comes from the fact that contemporary moral philosophy is dominated by deontological and consequentialist understandings of ethics. Contemporary moral philosophy focuses on interpreting human moral acts and on ways in which a person’s understanding of reality may be made to conform to subjective human values, while virtue focuses on developing human moral character by training the intellect to conform to objective reality through the intellectual virtues, and training the appetites and emotions to respond ordinally to reality by the habitual practice of the moral virtues. Without prudence it is not possible to conform the soul to objective reality, but the habitual practice of moral virtue, supports and sustains prudence. Holmer (1976:54) gives a very clear explanation of the unity in diversity of the virtues:

The complexity of the virtues becomes clear here too. To take one example, courage is not, after all has been seen with some clarity, only ‘one’ among several virtues. Rather, it is the very form itself of any and every virtue at its testing point. A person who was chaste or trustworthy only when there were no dangers or temptations involved would not miss courage very much. Add the testing context and it takes the habit of a courageous response even to keep one’s chastity.

Holmer uses courage as his example, but the same could be said of any of the cardinal virtues; they are the very form of virtue *in toto* in that aspect of human moral life which is their particular province.

Another way of understanding the unity of virtue may be to recall St. Augustine’s definition of virtue as *ordo amoris* - “the ordering of love” (*Civ. Dei* 15.22), in which every good is accorded

⁶² *Omnis virtus moralis debet esse prudens.*

just that love which is appropriate to it (Lewis 1946:15). In other words, every good is loved ordinately. Such an understanding of the moral life is predicated on absolute truth perceived by the reason through prudence, and an objective hierarchy of goods to which one's appetites are rationally ordered by justice, courage and temperance, otherwise it would not be possible for a person to love ordinately as there would be no objective way of ordering one's affections towards the appropriate goods (Steele 2014).

Conclusion

Human moral life according to Aquinas may be summarised thus: A person is a composite of body and soul. As explained above, the soul has three parts: the sustentative which consists of the powers of reproduction, nutrition and growth. The affective part is the seat of the emotions, imagination, memory, and intuition or instinct. Both the affective and sustentative parts of the soul are dependent on the bodily sense organs for perception of reality, and both aim at the perceived good as their final end. The rational part is the seat of intellect, reason, will and consciousness. The intellect and will are capable of abstraction and are, thus, not dependent on the bodily sense organs for perception of reality. The intellect and reason aim at truth, while the will and consciousness aim at the good, so an intellectual virtue, prudence, is necessary to liaise between those rational faculties aiming at truth and those rational, affective and sustentative faculties aiming at the good.

Prudence, which is the clear-sighted discernment of truth by the intellect and deliberation about it by the reason, fulfils its rôle of liaison by a decision of the will which directs the person to carry out the act appropriate to the truth of reality in the right way at the right time with the right means in order to realise the good in that specific situation. The vices which specifically blur one's perception of truth and will to the good are lust and avarice. Even though the will may direct the person to act in a certain way, this direction may be resisted by ill-disciplined emotions and imaginings, so the virtues of justice and courage are required to cultivate the appropriate response in the emotions and imagination, so that they are congruent with the truth of reality as perceived by the reason, and empowered to strive to realise the good. The vices of envy and sloth oppose the exercise of justice and courage and, so, hinder the realisation of the good by the affective faculties.

Finally, the human person, being a unity of body and soul, requires a healthy and disciplined body and mind to enable the good to be realised rather than hindered by weakened or unruly sustentative faculties. This part is empowered and disciplined by the virtue of temperance, but is harmed and distracted by the vices of pride, which is more concerned with itself than with the

good, wrath, which is uncontrolled aggression leading to ill-disciplined action, and gluttony, which simply is to harm the body through lack of self-restraint.

It might be helpful at this point to bring together the different but connected ways in which we have described virtue thus far: Firstly, as *potentia*, virtue is the latent power to attain the highest fulfilment of truly human being within a person. Second, as *actus*, virtue is that potential realised in the distinctive excellence of human being. Third, as *habitus*, virtue is habitually to live according to reason in order to perceive the truth and realise the good. Fourth, as *bonum*, virtue is the end which the person desires, but it is also the rational means to the end. Fifth, as *ordo*, virtue is the ordinate love of things, by according to each thing just that love appropriate to it. Sixth, as *mediocritas*, virtue is the mean between vices of deficiency and excess and, because humans are rational creatures, the mean is doing the right thing at the right time in the right way for the right reasons to achieve the right end. What this means practically has been very well summed up by Holmer (1976:52-53):

The virtues do not predict behaviour, nor do they formalise and standardise human beings. On the contrary, they lead to a life in which genuine individuality is encouraged. For when courageousness and fortitude become a habit – and all virtues have to be customary rather than single occurrences – the individual becomes strengthened and qualified to do all sorts of things that were otherwise inconceivable. An entire range of behaviour becomes open to such a person, and so, too, with the other virtues. They are enabling, disposing, and authorising. Such an ethically sensitized person no longer simply fulfils a rule or law, except as a part of moral pedagogy or where circumstances require it. The moral life becomes the arena where adventure, individuality, and tasks are continually brought together.

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Master: And what would you [be educated for]? **Pupils:** We would be wise. **M:** With what manner of wisdom? Will you be manifold in deceit or a thousand-form in lies; cunning in speech, clever, crafty, well-speaking and evil-thinking; given over to sweet words, nurturing deceit within, like a tombstone with a painted memorial, but full of stench inside? **P:** We would not be wise in this manner, for he is not wise who deceives himself with dissimulation. **M:** But how would you [be wise]? **P:** We would be straightforward without hypocrisy, and wise, so that we may turn away from evil and do good.⁶³

Ælfric (c. AD 980) *Colloquy* II. 252-263.

Introduction

In the first chapter I discussed the comprehensive articulation of traditional Western moral philosophy by Thomas Aquinas. For over a century, however, there has been a widely held belief that contemporary Western society has lost touch with this moral tradition and no longer has a coherent moral vision. Some commentators have expressed the belief that the West is suffering from a decline in moral understanding and behaviour, but not all agree on the precise causes of the West's moral decline, and some would deny that it is experiencing any moral decline at all. There is, nonetheless, a consensus that the concepts underlying contemporary Western morality are very different from the foundations of traditional Western morality.

The nature of the foundations which underpin the West's current moral understanding and conduct is of some importance for the British Army because it aspires to be an ethical military force conducting military operations according to internationally recognised moral and legal standards, yet it recruits its officers and soldiers from Western societies, in which nowadays a multiplicity of moral opinions are expressed, and the members of which are no longer raised in the ancient tradition of Western moral education. In this chapter, therefore, I shall briefly explore some of the assumptions which underlie the contemporary Western moral worldviews and discuss how they differ from the traditional articulation of moral philosophy described in the previous chapter. I shall argue that we in the West are, indeed, adrift from our own traditional moral foundations, and that the current popular moral worldviews of the West are permeated by the sceptical philosophical theories which are traditionally known as 'sophistry'.

⁶³ *Magister:* 7 hpæt pille ze? *Discipuli:* Þyllað þesan pise. *M:* On hpilcon pisdome? Þille ze beon prættize oððe þusenthipe on leasungum, lytize on spræcum, onzælþlice, hinderzepe, þel sprecende 7 yfele þencende, spæsum pordum underðeodde, fæcn piðinnan tyddriende, spa spa berzyls metton oferzepeorke, piðinnan full stence? *D:* Þe nellað spa þesan pise, forðam he nys pis, þe mid dydrunze hyne sylfne bespicð. *M:* Ac hu pille ze? *D:* Þe þyllað beon bylepite butan licetunze, 7 pise þæt þe buzon fram yfele 7 don zoda.

(adp. Garmonsway 1947:42-43)

Sophistry

In Athens in the late 5th Century BC, an altercation occurred between Socrates (469-399 BC) and Antiphon (c. 480-411 BC), a Sophist, one of the self-appointed teachers who, claiming to teach wisdom (σοφία) and virtue (ἀρετή), charged their pupils fees. Socrates consistently opposed the Sophists, accusing them of teaching instead the art of dissimulation (Guthrie 1978). Antiphon, while acknowledging that Socrates was just, denied that he was truly wise because he did not charge fees for his teaching and, therefore, what he taught must be worthless. Antiphon, here, commits the fallacy of equivocation because a thing may have worth in ways other than monetary. It is noteworthy that in this altercation Socrates did not follow his usual practice of exposing Antiphon's fallacy by insisting on more precise definition of the terms being debated, instead he simply rebuked Antiphon by contrasting his own practice with that of the Sophists:

Antiphon, amongst us it is considered that the prime of bodily beauty and wisdom can alike be disposed of either worthily or shamefully. For if someone in his prime sells his body for money to anyone who wishes for it, we call him a prostitute. But if someone has made for himself a friend of one whom he knows to be a lover of the admirable and good, he is considered prudent. And likewise those selling wisdom for money to anyone who wishes for it, we call 'sophists' - prostitutes of wisdom. But whoever has made a friend of someone whom he knows to be naturally talented, teaching him all the good he knows, is considered to act like an admirable and good citizen. As for me, therefore, Antiphon, just as another man takes pleasure in a good horse or a hound or a bird, I take even greater pleasure in good friends, and if I know anything good, I teach it to them, and I introduce them to others from whom I believe they will derive some benefit in cultivating virtue. And the treasures of the wise men of old, which they have bequeathed in the books they have written, I open these and go through them together with my friends, and if we read anything good, we select it for ourselves. And we consider it a great gain if we, thus, become beneficial to one another.⁶⁴

(Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.6.13-14)

This short altercation highlights a perennial and fundamental conflict in human thought between those who, like Socrates, believe that humans can have objective knowledge of reality and those who, like the Sophists, are sceptical about it. A number of philosophical debates regarding language, truth and goodness, human nature, moral agency, and human community arise from this fundamental dispute. Everyone, whether or not they are aware of it, takes one side or the other in this perennial conflict, which directly affects every aspect of their lives.

⁶⁴ ὁ Ἄντιφῶν, παρ' ἡμῖν νομίζεται τὴν ὥραν καὶ τὴν σοφίαν ὁμοίως μὲν καλόν, ὁμοίως δὲ αἰσχρὸν διατίθεσθαι εἶναι. τὴν τε γὰρ ὥραν ἐὰν μὲν τις ἀργυρίου πωλῆ τῷ βουλομένῳ, πόρνον αὐτὸν ἀποκαλοῦσιν, ἐὰν δὲ τις, ὃν ἂν γνῶ καλόν τε καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἐραστὴν ὄντα, τοῦτον φίλον ἑαυτῷ ποιῆται, σώφρονα νομίζομεν: καὶ τὴν σοφίαν ὡσαύτως τοὺς μὲν ἀργυρίου τῷ βουλομένῳ πωλοῦντας σοφιστὰς ὡσπερ πόρνους ἀποκαλοῦσιν, ὅστις δὲ ὃν ἂν γνῶ εὐφυῆ ὄντα διδάσκων ὃ τι ἂν ἔχη ἀγαθὸν φίλον ποιεῖται, τοῦτον νομίζομεν, ἃ τῷ καλῷ καὶ ἀγαθῷ πολίτη προσήκει, ταῦτα ποιεῖν. ἐγὼ δ' οὖν καὶ αὐτός, ὁ Ἄντιφῶν, ὡσπερ ἄλλος τις ἢ ἵππῳ ἀγαθῷ ἢ κυνὶ ἢ ὄρνιθι ἡδεταί, οὕτω καὶ ἐτι μᾶλλον ἡδομαι φίλοις ἀγαθοῖς, καὶ ἐὰν τι ἔχω ἀγαθόν, διδάσκω, καὶ ἄλλοις συνίστημι παρ' ὧν ἂν ἡγῶμαι ὠφελήσεσθαι τι αὐτοὺς εἰς ἀρετήν: καὶ τοὺς θησαυροὺς τῶν πάλαι σοφῶν ἀνδρῶν, οὓς ἐκεῖνοι κατέλιπον ἐν βιβλίῳ γράψαντες, ἀνελίττων κοινῇ σὺν τοῖς φίλοις διέρχομαι, καὶ ἂν τι ὀρώμεν ἀγαθὸν ἐκλεγόμεθα: καὶ μέγα νομίζομεν κέρδος, ἐὰν ἀλλήλοις φίλοι γιγνώμεθα.

'Sophist' had already become a term of opprobrium in Antiquity, even though the Sophists themselves did not constitute a single school of thought and some, even, were admired by Socrates and Plato (Guthrie 1971; Kenny 2004). Nonetheless, as Guthrie (1950:66-67) notes,

[T]he Sophists shared... a common scepticism, a mistrust of the possibility of absolute knowledge..... Knowledge depends on two things: the possession of faculties capable of bringing us into touch with reality, and the existence of a stable reality to be known.

Sophistic scepticism, therefore, denies both the idea of reality itself and the idea that, even if anything is real, humans are capable of objectively knowing or communicating any truth about it. This scepticism about objective truth inevitably leads to subjectivism, relativism and, at its logical extreme, nihilism. Protagoras (c. 490-420 BC) serves as the exemplar of relativism and subjectivism with his statements: "There are two opposing arguments on every matter"; "All opinions are true;" and "Man is the measure of all things."⁶⁵ Gorgias (c. 485-380 BC) serves as the exemplar of nihilism with his threefold affirmation in his treatise *De Natura*: (1) "Nothing exists"; (2) "even if something exists, it is incomprehensible to Man"; and (3) "even if it is comprehensible, it is inexpressible and inexplicable to one's fellows."⁶⁶

Sophistic Corruption of Language

Plato, like Socrates, was implacably opposed to the Sophists because he recognised in sophistry a fundamental threat to human intellectual and social life, which was that the Sophists corrupted language and, in so doing, corrupted the very roots of human existence because verbal communication is the most basic form of inter-personal interaction, which underlies and sustains all other human interaction (Pieper 1992:7-9).

Word and language, in essence, do not constitute a specific or specialised area; they are not a particular discipline or field. No, word and language form the medium that sustains the common existence of the human spirit as such... And so, if the word becomes corrupted, human existence itself will not remain unaffected and untainted.

(Pieper 1992:15)

Pieper argues that there is sophistic corruption of language in every era, and that whenever someone adopts a sceptical view of reality they are inevitably forced to adopt a sophistic abuse of language as a consequence. The sophistic corruption of language is disastrous to human life as a whole because language serves two inextricably linked purposes. Firstly, to describe what is real, i.e., to affirm what is true: "To be true means, indeed, to be determined in speech and thought by what is real," (Pieper 1992:17), and second, to communicate this truth with others.

⁶⁵ (1) δύο λόγους εἶναι περὶ παντὸς πράγματος ἀντικειμένους ἀλλήλοις; (2) πάντα εἶναι ἀληθῆ; and (3) πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἄνθρωπος, (all cited in Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae* 9.51).

⁶⁶ (1) οὐδὲν ἔστιν; (2) εἰ καὶ ἔστιν, ἀκατάληπτον ἄνθρωπον; and (3) εἰ καὶ καταληπτόν, ἀλλὰ τοί γε ἀνέξοιστον καὶ ἀνερμήνευτον τῷ πέλας (all cited in Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* 7.65).

According to Pieper (1992) sophistic corruption of language undermines these two purposes in three ways: by distorting or denying truth and reality; by corrupting the meaning of words so that their original connotation becomes ambiguous or even meaningless; and by corrupting inter-personal communication through manipulating others and thereby denying them participation in reality and truth. Dag Hammarskjöld (1964:101) recognised this when he wrote,

Respect for the word is the first commandment in the discipline by which a man can be educated to maturity – intellectual, emotional and moral. Respect for the word – to employ it with scrupulous care and an incorruptible heart-felt love of truth – is essential if there is to be any growth in a society or in the human race. To misuse the word is to show contempt for man. It undermines the bridges and poisons the wells. It causes Man to regress down the long path of his evolution.

Pieper (1992), interpreting Plato, argued that sophistry corrupts inter-personal communication in two ways: Firstly, through ‘flattery’ (κολακεία), which is not merely sycophancy but a calculated manipulation and domination of other persons, treating them no longer as human beings, but as objects. Based on sophistic scepticism about truth, flattery is not an attempt at communication with other persons, rather it is a deliberate attempt to control their perception of truth and, therefore, their participation in reality. MacIntyre (1985:23) makes the same point in his claim that emotivism⁶⁷ - which I shall argue below is the dominant expression of sophistry in the contemporary West - undermines genuine human community by obliterating the “distinction between manipulative and non-manipulative social relations.” He goes on to say,

If emotivism is true, this distinction is illusory. For evaluative utterance can in the end have no point or use but the expression of my own feelings or attitudes and the transformation of the feelings and attitudes of others. I cannot genuinely appeal to impersonal criteria, for there are no impersonal criteria. I may think that I so appeal and others may think that I so appeal, but these thoughts will always be mistakes. The sole reality of distinctly moral discourse is the attempt of one will to align the attitudes, feelings, preference and choice of another with its own. Others are always means never ends.

(MacIntyre 1985:24)

Sophistic ‘flattery’ (κολακεία) entails the use of ‘persuasion’ (πειθώ), by which Plato meant the attempt to change the mind of other persons, not through rational argument, but through obfuscating their understanding of truth by dissimulation, what nowadays we call ‘spin’. Plato, in his depiction of the aggressive ‘*Real Politik*’ espoused by Thrasymachus (*Respublica* 343^a-345^b), portrays injustice (ἀδικία) as characterised by a blend of persuasion (πειθώ) and force (βία). Pieper argues that in sophistic ‘flattery’ and ‘persuasion’ there is always an implicit threat to

⁶⁷ Emotivism is the theory that moral judgements and acts are the expression of a person’s feelings or attitudes, not of rational judgements; hence acts and persons have no objectively true moral properties (Grenz & Smith 2003:32).

those who dissent; yet the threat is disguised, so that people are subtly intimidated into acquiescing in their own coercion and simultaneously into believing that this acquiescence is entirely reasonable because they are persuaded that what they are coerced into doing is the very thing they want to do, in any case (Pieper 1992:22-31). The widespread acceptance by the British populace of political 'spin' and other forms of psycho-political manipulation, such as so-called 'libertarian paternalism' and 'behavioural economics', by the organs of government (Thaler & Sunstein 2008; Halpern 2015), or the ongoing emotivist public campaigns surrounding the UK's 2016 referendum on EU membership, provide anecdotal evidence that sophisticated 'persuasion' is unquestioningly fully integrated into contemporary British social and political life.

The second way in which inter-personal communication is corrupted by sophistry is less obvious and, thus, more insidious: it is the seemingly negative point that to truly perceive reality and, hence, to truly *hear* the words of others and communicate with them, one must be receptive and silent. Pieper (1952:52) convincingly argues that:

silence... is the prerequisite of the apprehension of reality: only the silent hear and those who do not remain silent do not hear..... [It] is a receptive attitude of mind, a contemplative attitude, and it is not only the occasion but also the capacity for steeping oneself in the whole of creation.

In the contemporary West the obliteration of silence and, thus, of communication is seen in the encroachment of all-pervasive visual and aural stimuli, so that no area of human life, whether public or private, is free from them. Prior to the invention of the mass media, the ubiquitous projection and reach of such incessant visual and aural stimulation was inconceivable, but in the last hundred-odd years, following the invention of mass media, this intrusive stimulation has been rapidly extending its reach around the world. Nowadays, with the creation of the internet, Worldwide Web, and hand-held personal computers which are permanently connected to the Web, this inescapable visual and aural stimulation has become truly ubiquitous and global (*cf.* Kagge 2017).

Such incessant, all-pervading over-stimulation destroys silence and prevents communication in three ways: By invading every quiet space in both the home and the public square; by jading the intellectual faculties necessary for attentive contemplation while stimulating the sustentative and affective appetites which oppose it; and by implicitly denying that silence and stillness and solitude are not abnormal, but are necessary conditions for true inter-personal communication and, hence, for true human flourishing. Patrick Leigh Fermor, a self-described sceptic, related with obvious perplexity the effects he experienced in himself of taking silent retreats in Catholic monasteries in France:

I was profoundly affected by the places I have described. I am not sure what these feelings amount to..... The kindness of the monks has something to do with this. But more important was the discovery of a capacity for solitude and... for the recollectedness and clarity of spirit that accompany the silent monastic life. For, in the seclusion of a cell – an existence whose quietness is only varied by the silent meals, the solemnity of ritual and long solitary walks in the woods – the troubled waters of the mind grow still and clear, and much that is hidden away and all that clouds it floats to the surface and can be skimmed away; and after a time one reaches a state of peace that is unthought of in the ordinary world.
(Leigh Fermor 1988:7-8).

Not only do mass- and digital media invade the quiet space necessary for silence and contemplation, but they also facilitate the sophistic manipulation of whole communities by those who control the media; something we shall consider in more detail below. Arguably, the sophistic corruption of inter-personal communication is now so widespread in the contemporary West that it is no longer perceived as pathological and destructive.

Intimately connected with our inability to perceive that contemporary inter-personal communication has been undermined, is the idea that:

the language of morality is in... [a] state of grave disorder... What we possess... are the fragments of a conceptual scheme, parts which now lack those contexts from which their significance derived. We possess indeed simulacra of morality, we continue to use many of the key expressions. But we have – very largely, if not entirely – lost our comprehension, both theoretical and practical, of morality.
(MacIntyre 1985:2)

One of the causes of this disorder has been the progressive confusion and disintegration of moral vocabulary in the West over the last five hundred years. A number of scholars have traced the history of this disintegration and of the consequent changes it has effected in Western moral philosophy and moral education (Anscombe 1958, Bossy 1985, MacIntyre 1985, Painter 1999). At this point I shall not repeat their arguments, but shall simply stress the point made by MacIntyre (1985:6f.), that the final result of this disintegration of moral vocabulary and confusion of moral thought is that contemporary moral philosophy has become a jumble of different mutually contradictory and sometimes mutually incomprehensible theories, with the result that contemporary moral debate cannot ever reach a resolution. Some examples may help to illustrate the disorder of Western moral vocabulary and the way in which this sophistic corruption of language obstructs rational moral thought and debate.

In 1956 Peter Geach published a paper, 'Good and Evil', in which he discussed the impasse in the use of terms expressing moral value such as 'good', 'bad', 'right', and 'wrong' and the failure of different Twentieth Century British schools of moral philosophy to draw a clear distinction between the attributive and predicative use of words expressing moral value. Hence, while an adjective can be used attributively ("the new £5 note") or predicatively ("the £5 note is new"),

it is not logically or semantically valid to use words expressing moral value in a similar way, as one can use terms of moral value only in an attributive way, e.g. “this forged £5 note”, but not predicatively, because “this £5 note is forged” is logically or semantically invalid as the banknote is not, in fact, a real £5 note and what is actually meant is “this is a forgery of a £5 note”. Likewise, Geach argues that in moral discussion one can legitimately say “the good man” but not “the man is good”, as the predicative sense always implies some unspecified qualifying term, such as “the man is good at running”. To say “the good man” means he is morally good *simpliciter*, but to say “the man is good” means he is functionally good in some way and a functionally good man may be morally bad, as when a man is good at burglary (Geach 1956).

This understanding of good as an attribute and not a predicate implies, therefore, that there is an objective good, which, in turn, requires a re-assessment of what constitutes good human action. Hence, Geach rejected Sir David Ross’s

distinction between the Right and the Good. In Aquinas there is no such distinction. He finds it sufficient to talk of good and bad human acts. When Ross would say that there is a morally good action but not a right act, Aquinas would say that a good human intention had issued in what was, in fact, a bad action; and when Ross would say that there was a right act but not a morally good action, Aquinas would say that there was a bad human act performed in circumstances in which a similar act with a different intention would have been a good one (e.g. giving money to a beggar for the praise of men rather than for the relief of his misery).

Since the English word ‘right’ has idiomatic predilection for the definite article – we speak of *a* good chess move but of *the* right move – people who think that doing right is something other than doing good will regard virtuous behaviour as consisting, not just in doing good and eschewing evil, but in doing, on every occasion, *the* right act for the occasion. This speciously strict doctrine leads in fact to quite laxist consequences. A man who just keeps on doing good and eschewing evil, if he knows that adultery is an evil act, will decide that (as Aristotle says) there can be no deliberating when or how or with whom to commit adultery [E.N. 1107^a 16]. But a man who believes in discerning, on each occasion, *the* right act for the occasion, may well decide that on this occasion, all things considered, adultery is *the* right action.

(Geach 1956:41)

In this paper Geach succeeded in demonstrating that confusion in the use of moral vocabulary may result in the sophistic justification of immoral acts, which is precisely the point reiterated two years later by his wife, Elizabeth Anscombe (1958:19).

Implicit in the attributive use of terms of moral value, such as ‘good’, is, moreover, “at least one central functional concept, the concept of *man* understood as having an essential nature and an essential purpose or function,” (MacIntyre 1985:58). The idea that human life has an ‘end’ or ‘purpose’ is intimately connected with the imaginative concept of ‘the meaning of life’. Where there is no overarching purpose to life, it ceases to have any meaning and persons, thus, must

try to find their own meaning, or to construct it, as the existentialists claimed. MacIntyre (1985) argued that it is the loss of the traditional understanding of human nature and of persons having an ultimate end to which moral virtue directs them, as I described in the first chapter, which has resulted in the current disorder in our moral discourse and in the rise of the 'emotivist self', to whom "Moral judgements lose any clear status and the sentences which express them... lose any undebatable meaning," (MacIntyre 1985:60).

The disorder in the vocabulary of moral philosophy is also seen in the fact that since the late Middle Ages the meaning of several moral terms has changed, often almost imperceptibly, so that a word comes to have a connotation opposite to its original usage or the connotation becomes more and more restricted or generalised till it ceases to have useful meaning at all (Barfield 1954; Lewis 1960a; 2000a; Pieper 2011:9f.). In discussing the semantic range of the word 'nature', C.S. Lewis (1960a:61-2) gives an informative illustration of such a change when he draws a distinction between the meaning of Natural Law for Aquinas and its meaning for Enlightenment thinkers like Hobbes:

On the one hand, if *nature* is thought of mainly as the real (opposed to convention and legal fiction) and the laws of *nature* as those which enjoin what is really good and forbid what is really bad (as opposed to the pseudo-duties which bad governments praise and reward or the real virtues which they forbid and punish), then of course 'the law of *nature*' is conceived as an absolute moral standard against which the laws of all nations must be judged and to which they ought to conform..... This is the conception of *Natural Law* that underlies the work of Thomas Aquinas, Hooker and Grotius.

On the other hand *nature* may mean *nature (d.s.)*⁶⁸, and even with a special emphasis on the non-human parts of it... or, within man, on those motives and modes of behaviour which are least specifically human. The 'laws of *Nature*' on this view are inferred from the way in which non-human agents always behave, and human agents behave until they are trained not to. Thus what Aquinas or Hooker would call 'the law of *Nature*' now becomes in its turn the convention; it is something artificially imposed, in opposition to the true law of *nature*, the way we all spontaneously behave if we dare (or don't interfere with ourselves), the way all the other creatures behave, the way that comes 'naturally' to us. The prime law of *nature*, thus conceived, is self-preservation and self-aggrandisement, pursued by whatever trickeries or cruelties may prove to be advisable. This is Hobbes's *Natural Law*.

It is noteworthy that we find in Lewis's discussion independent echoes of the arguments Pieper had been making about virtue, Natural Law, and acquiescence in sophistic pseudo-reality.

⁶⁸ By "*nature (d.s.)*" Lewis means 'Nature' in its semantically dangerous sense; a connotation introduced by the Sophists, of "taking all the things they knew or believed in – gods, men, animals, plants, minerals, what you will – and impounding them under a single name; in fact, of regarding Everything as a thing, turning this amorphous and heterogeneous collection into an object or pseudo-object." (Lewis 1960a:35). This sense is semantically dangerous because it is the one a modern person is most likely to impose on the word 'nature', to the exclusion of other connotations in its semantic range (Lewis 1960a:37).

Another example of the disorder of the vocabulary of Western moral philosophy is that, by the late 19th Century the understanding and connotation of the word 'virtue' had so diminished, even among Catholic Neo-Thomist theologians (Pieper 2011:4), that it became replaced in moral discussion, almost without notice, by the word 'values'. 'Values' was first used as a moral term in the 1880s by Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), who wished to do away with what he saw as the "slave morality"⁶⁹ of Judaeo-Christian culture, with its emphasis on objective, universally applicable virtues which were binding on all – masters and slaves alike, and to introduce the "revaluation of all values",⁷⁰ as he put it (Himmelfarb 1994:10). Nietzsche's intent, however, was not to replace Judaeo-Christian morality with another form of morals, but "to call into question the value of morality itself." (Warburton 2001:194). He was successful in this project to undermine the already weakened Western moral tradition by transforming the meaning of the words used in moral philosophy; *i.e.* by attacking the very basis of any possible moral debate. The historian, Gertrude Himmelfarb, has described the effect of Nietzsche's transformation of our moral vocabulary and, hence, of our moral debate:

'Values' brought with it the assumptions that all moral ideas are subjective and relative, that they are mere customs and conventions, that they have a purely instrumental, utilitarian purpose, and that they are peculiar to specific individuals and societies. (And, in the current intellectual climate, to specific classes, races, and sexes.) So long as morality was couched in the language of 'virtue', it had a firm, resolute character..... Values, as we now understand that word, do not have to be virtues; they can be beliefs, opinions, attitudes, feelings, habits, conventions, preferences, prejudices, even idiosyncrasies – whatever any individual, group, or society happens to value, at any time, for whatever reason. One cannot say of virtues, as one can of values, that anyone's virtues are as good as anyone else's, or that everyone has a right to his own virtues.
(Himmelfarb 1994:11-12)

MacIntyre (1985:6f.) argues that contemporary moral discussion is interminable and disordered. One reason for this disorder is the very language of 'values' itself. Values are, as the name makes clear, based on a personal *evaluation* of morality, which leads to the disintegration of a community's moral consensus, because one's values are based on one's personal, subjective evaluations, which cannot be applied to anyone else, so values can never be universal or objective. Furthermore, anything to which a value has been subjectively ascribed can equally well be subjectively *devalued*. In other words, the language of values implicitly denies the idea that persons can know objective truth about reality and so opens the way for persons like the Sophists to claim that right is wrong and good is bad and *vice versa* as all value judgements are merely subjective.

⁶⁹ Sklavenmoral

⁷⁰ Die Umwertung aller Werte

Sophistic Scepticism about Truth and Reality

Describing Aquinas's understanding of truth as a correct relation between a real entity and the intellect of rational beings (Aquinas, *Ver.* 1), Pieper (1989:92-93) noted,

The knowing mind's 'being-in-relation' with what is real constitutes, in fact, the conceptual content of 'truth'. Truth is *conformitas*, 'being-one-form', and *adaequatio*, 'being-the-same' – both terms taken in their literal meaning – between reality and knowing... Truth is nothing else but the relation of identity between the mind and reality.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), however, in the 'Preface to the Second Edition' of *Critique of Pure Reason*, reversed the traditional understanding of truth as the conformity of human knowledge to reality by asserting that truth is the conformity of real objects to human knowledge. He claimed that we cannot truly know objects as they actually are in themselves, but that we can only know a conception of objects as shaped by the innate *a priori* principles of reason. Kant made this reversal in order to try to protect morality against the prevalent idealist philosophy of his day and to support it rationally, by setting boundaries to its claims to absolute truth; claims which could not be empirically proven. One effect of Kant's reversal of the understanding of truth, however, was to create a gap between the world of real objects and human knowledge of these objects. This opened the way for subjectivism, as human knowledge became understood to be based upon a subjective judgement. Kant himself acknowledged this in *Critique of Judgement* §1, when stating that the basis of judgements of beauty "cannot be other than subjective" (Maurer 1983:25). Later philosophers extended this subjectivity from judgements of beauty to judgements of truth, ultimately leading to contemporary emotivism:

Until modern times no thinker of the first rank ever doubted that our judgements of value were rational judgements or that what they discovered was objective. It was taken for granted that in temptation passion was opposed, not to some sentiment, but to reason... The modern view is very different. It does not believe that value judgements are really judgements at all. They are sentiments, or complexes, or attitudes, produced in a community by the pressure of its environment and its traditions, and differing from one community to another. To say that a thing is good is merely to express our feeling about it; and our feeling about it is the feeling we have been socially conditioned to have.
(Lewis 1967:73)

The effect of such subjectivism on Western moral philosophy becomes clearer in the writings of 20th-Century existentialist thinkers like Jean-Paul Sartre, who argued:

there is at least one being whose existence comes before its essence, a being which exists before it can be defined by any conception of it. That being is man... What do we mean by saying that existence precedes essence? We mean that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world – and defines himself afterwards. If man as the existentialist sees him is not definable, it is because to begin with he is nothing. He will not be anything till later, and then he will be what he makes of himself. Thus, there is no human nature, because there is no God to have a

conception of it. Man simply is..... Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself. That is the first principle of existentialism.
(Sartre 1948:28)

He, thus, explicitly rejects Aquinas's conception of truth-as-being originating in the mind of God and instead argues that if no conception of human nature exists in the mind of God (because there is no God), there can be no true conception of human nature at all. This means that 'true' human nature becomes the subjective construction of the individual, who makes of himself whatsoever he wills. Existential subjectivism means not simply that a person chooses for himself what kind of human being he will be, but that he can also choose what kind of morality he will follow. So Sartre (1948:31) asserts, "If I regard a certain course of action as good, it is only I who choose to say that it is good and not bad."

Sartre, however, goes on to make two further statements, which appear to me at least to limit his idea of subjective individual moral autonomy, if not to reveal contradictions inherent in it. Firstly, he advocates some sort of moral connection between all human beings in terms the meaning of which, I confess, I find ambiguous:

[W]hen we say that man is responsible for himself, we do not mean that he is responsible only for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men... Subjectivism means, on the one hand, the freedom of the individual subject and, on the other, that man cannot pass beyond human subjectivity. It is the latter which is the deeper meaning of existentialism. When we say that man chooses himself, we do mean that every one of us must choose himself; but by that we also mean that in choosing for himself he chooses for all men. For in effect, of all the actions a man may take in order to create himself as he wills to be, there is not one which is not creative, at the same time, of an image of man such as he believes he ought to be. To choose between this or that is at the same time to affirm the value of that which is chosen; for we are unable ever to choose the worse. What we choose is always the better; and nothing can be better for us unless it is better for all. If, moreover, existence precedes essence and we will to exist at the same time as we fashion our image, that image is valid for all and for the entire epoch in which we find ourselves.
(Sartre 1948:29)

It is not clear to me what Sartre means by saying that each individual, while being free to choose what to create of himself, is simultaneously responsible for and, in fact, chooses for all other persons, and that his self-created image is valid for all persons and for the whole era in which he lives.

Second, Sartre advocates some sort of moral obligation similar to Kant's 'categorical imperative' by stating that, even though moral choice is entirely subjective, the individual ought only to will to act in such a way that all of humanity may regulate itself by such an act (Sartre 1948:32). It is not clear whence the human individual derives the overarching moral obligation to choose to act in this way, especially as Sartre's position denies not only human nature but also the Natural

Law upon which any conception of moral obligation must rest, as Anscombe (1958) has argued. In discussing Kant and Sartre I am not attempting a refutation of their respective views, nor am I trying to offer a defence of the idea of objective truth. I merely wish to demonstrate that scepticism about knowledge of truth and reality and consequent subjectivism underpin much of Modern philosophy. As MacIntyre (1985:22) has argued, this scepticism and subjectivism, expressed as emotivism, are embodied in the contemporary Western popular worldview, so that we now live in what has been called the 'post-truth' era.

Pieper (1992) argued that by their corruption of language the Sophists deny truth in two ways: Firstly, by their scepticism, which, in denying that humans can know objective reality, denies the possibility of truth, as we have already noted. Consequent on such scepticism are the subjectivism of a Protagoras and the nihilism of a Gorgias. Humans, however, cannot practicably live in a permanent state of scepticism and subjective uncertainty about reality, so the second way in which sophists deny the truth is by the creation of pseudo-realities, a fantasy which is false but which meets the innate human need for a reality which gives context and meaning to their lives. Indeed, both Plato (*Sophista* 254a) and Aristotle (*Metaphysica* 1026b; 1064b) state that what the Sophists actually deal with is the 'non-existent' or 'the unreal' (τὸ μὴ ὄν). Sophistic obscuration of truth, therefore, brings about corruption of the imagination, which, as noted in the previous chapter, is the faculty of meaning for persons, both as individuals and parts of a community. This has profound implications for moral education, as we shall see. Pieper (1992:34-35), in his discussion of the sophistic abuse of language and power, noted,

That the existential realm of man could be taken over by pseudo-realities whose fictitious nature threatens to become indiscernible is truly a depressing thought. And yet this Platonic nightmare, I hold, possesses an alarming contemporary relevance. For the general public is being reduced to a state where people not only are unable to find out about the truth but also become unable even to *search* for the truth because they are satisfied with deception and trickery that have determined their convictions, satisfied with a fictitious reality created by design through the abuse of language. This, says Plato, is the worst thing the sophists are capable of wreaking upon mankind by their corruption of the word.
(Pieper 1992:34-35).

In the twenty-five years since the introduction of the internet and Web a number of academics have studied how the internet has rapidly changed several areas of human life, both private and social. Mark Slouka expressed concerns about the creation of digital pseudo-realities, which seamlessly merge with 'real life' so that they become indistinguishable from reality, which echo Pieper's concerns penned twenty-five years before. He identified three fundamental areas of human life which he believed are assaulted by the internet and 'virtual reality' (VR) technology: personal identity; one's sense of place; and human community. He argued that the assault on

these three is, ultimately, an assault on reality itself (Slouka 1995). Sherry Turkle (1995:9-10) agreed that the internet is modifying our whole understanding of human nature and what it means to be human. She said the internet is:

changing the way we think, the nature of our sexuality, the form of our communities, our very identities..... a nascent culture of simulation is affecting our ideas about mind, body, self, and machine..... eroding boundaries between the real and the virtual, the animate and the inanimate, the unitary and the multiple self, which is occurring both in advanced scientific fields of research and in the patterns of everyday life.

What is noteworthy is that both Turkle and Slouka were writing a mere five years after the creation of the Web. The points they made about 'virtual reality' merging into 'real life' and the way in which regular use of digital technologies changes the way humans relate to reality, are even more pertinent nowadays with, for example, the development of so-called 'augmented reality', as witnessed in 2016 by the craze around the globe that followed the digitally-generated 'spawning' of Pokémon characters which people could 'see' in real locations by means of their smart-phones. Another example is the manufacture in 2016 of a digital computerised headset "that transports you into a 3D, 360-degree, virtual world – a rich, stereoscopic and responsive environment that tricks your visual cortex into believing what it sees." (O'Grady and Law 2016a:13). It is predicted that, in addition to those sectors - pornographic, entertainment, and gaming - which already exploit VR technology to make money, there will be other users of VR technology who will utilise it beneficially: psychologists to treat mental illnesses and pressure groups to generate support by changing persons' perceptions about the world:

Charities have made VR fundraising documentaries that make viewers feel they're witnessing the action in real life. One, for example, enabled potential donors to walk around Nepal's capital, Kathmandu, just after it had suffered the recent earthquake; another gave an immersive experience of life inside a Syrian refugee camp.

(O'Grady & Law 2016a:13)

This last use of VR technology raises a question about whether the perceived need to provide potential donors with a vicarious, immersive, 'virtual' experience of a disastrous situation as a means of persuading them to give monetary support, is not, itself, symptomatic of an atrophy of imagination and empathy in Western persons who have been de-sensitized, in part, by recurrent exposure to mass media and digital technology. In the past, people needed only to be told of a disaster and their imagination visualised what this must mean for the persons caught up in the situation, *i.e.* they felt ordinate empathy for those who were suffering and, thus, responded generously. Furthermore, a vicarious 'virtual' experience of a disaster cannot ever be truly immersive or really replicate the actual experience of suffering; it cannot artificially simulate the real feelings of helplessness, fear, confusion, anger and sorrow, or even thirst and

hunger, which are the actual experience of those caught up in a disaster. Arguably, one does not need ‘virtual immersion’ in suffering, one simply needs an untarnished *vis phantastica* and *passiones* disciplined by the virtues to be able to truly empathise and respond congruently and appropriately to the reality of such a situation.

The final point to make regarding the all-pervasive presence of pseudo-realities, is to recall the connection made by Aquinas between purity of heart, clarity of vision, and the virtue of prudence. Where purity of heart is corrupted by what the medieval theologians called ‘concupiscence of the eyes’ there can be no loving contemplation of truth and goodness. Rather there is the creation of an empty pseudo-reality which initially draws one away from the fullness of reality and ends up by denying one access to reality altogether. Psychologist, Philip Zimbardo, has recently studied the impact of online pornography on young men and one phrase that repeatedly occurs in the answers to the surveys he carried out is “unrealistic expectations” regarding, for example, the nature and duration of sexual intercourse and how the average human body, whether male or female, should look (Zimbardo & Coulombe 2015:99f.). The connection between concupiscence of the eyes and lust is fairly clear; what seems to be less clear to contemporary Western policy-makers is why the medieval theologians used the Latin word *luxuria* to signify lust, rather than any more specifically sexual word. Concupiscence of the eyes, the primary vehicle of stimulating sexual lust, is fundamentally about stimulating excessive desire in both the sustentative and affective appetites in general, and surrendering one’s will to *luxuria* entails surrendering to other desires, in addition to sexual lust, till one becomes enslaved to these appetites. We shall explore the relevance of this to moral education in the last chapter. A booklet on virtue, published in 1941, aptly and perceptively described the stultifying effect of the sophistic creation of pseudo-realities in which persons willingly acquiesce in their own delusion and manipulation:

The ‘concupiscence of the eyes’ reaches its utmost destructive and extirpative power at the point where it has constructed for itself a world in its own image and likeness, where it has surrounded itself with the restlessness of a ceaseless film of meaningless objects for show and with a literally deafening noise of nothing more than impressions and sensations that roar in an uninterrupted chase around every window of the senses. Behind their papery façade of ostentation lies absolute nothingness, a ‘world’ of at most one-day constructs that often become insipid after just one-quarter of an hour and are thrown out like a newspaper that has been read or a magazine that has been paged through; a world which, before the revealing gaze of a sound spirit uninfected by its contagion, shows itself to be like a metropolitan entertainment district in the harsh clarity of a winter morning: barren, bleak, and ghostly to the point of pushing one to despair. (Pieper 1991:40)

Contemporary Moral Philosophy

Connected with the disorder of contemporary moral language is the disorder in contemporary moral philosophy, which recognises four mutually contradictory approaches to ethics: emotivism; deontology; consequentialism; and so-called 'virtue ethics'. We have already discussed the traditional Western understanding of virtue in the first chapter, but it may be helpful to briefly describe these contemporary ethical approaches in order to emphasize, firstly, the diversity of contemporary ethical understanding, and second, the differences between the way in which Aquinas understood the practicable moral life and the variety of ways it has been understood in the post-Enlightenment West. 'Emotivism' is the name coined by MacIntyre (1985:11-12) for:

the doctrine that all evaluative judgements and more specifically all moral judgements are *nothing but* expressions of preference, expressions of attitude or feeling, insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character. Particular judgements may of course unite moral and factual elements... But the moral element in such a judgement is always to be sharply distinguished from the factual. Factual judgements are true or false... But moral judgements, being expressions of attitude or feeling, are neither true nor false; and agreement in moral judgement is not to be secured by any rational method, for there are none. It is to be secured, if at all, by producing certain non-rational effects on the emotions or attitudes of those who disagree with one. We use moral judgements not only to express our own feelings and attitudes, but also precisely to produce such effects in others. Emotivism is thus a theory which professes to give an account of *all* value judgements whatever.

Simplistically described, emotivism may be expressed as (a) *hedonism*, according to which moral agents may do whatever will make them 'feel good'; (b) *sentimentalism*, in which moral decision-making arises from excessive, uncontrolled emotion or sentiment; and (c) *callousness*, which is moral decision-making arising out of lack of empathy for other persons. Arguably, emotivism is the primary way in which sophistic scepticism and subjectivism are expressed in the contemporary West: "to a large extent people now think, talk and act *as if* emotivism were true, no matter what their avowed theoretical viewpoint may be. Emotivism has become embodied in our culture," (MacIntyre 1985:22). Some of the ways in which emotivism is expressed in the contemporary British Army will be explored in the next chapter.

MacIntyre (1985:28) argues that every society has its specific stock of *characters*, which are:

the moral representatives of their culture and they are so because of the way in which moral and metaphysical ideas and theories assume through them an embodied existence in the social world. *Characters* are the masks worn by moral philosophies.

A *character*, in the way in which MacIntyre (1985:27f.) uses the term⁷¹, is a person fulfilling not just any social rôle, but a very specific one in which individual personality and social rôle are

⁷¹ I follow MacIntyre's practice of italicising the word 'character' whenever it is used in the special connotation which he gives to it in his argument.

merged so that others in the society are able to recognise the *character* portrayed by the person and, thus, to interpret the actions and behaviour of the person as those of that particular *character*. From their relationship to the *character*, others are given a frame of reference by which to understand and define their own moral opinions, actions and choices. A key feature of emotivism is its moral embodiment in certain stock *characters* of contemporary Western society, such as the ‘manager’ or ‘therapist’:

In our own time emotivism is a theory embodied in *characters* who all share the emotivist view of the distinction between rational and non-rational discourse, but who represent the embodiment of that distinction in very different social contexts..... The manager represents in his *character* the obliteration of the distinction between manipulative and non-manipulative social relations, the therapist represents the same distinction in the sphere of personal life. The manager treats ends as given, as outside his scope; his concern is with technique, with effectiveness in transforming raw materials into final products, unskilled labour into skilled labour, investments into profits. The therapist also treats ends as given, as outside his scope; his concern also is with technique, with effectiveness in transforming neurotic symptoms into directed energy, maladjusted individuals into well-adjusted ones. Neither manager nor therapist, in their [respective] roles... do or are able to engage in moral debate. They are seen by themselves, and by those who see them with the same eyes as their own, as uncontested figures, who purport to restrict themselves to the realms in which rational agreement is possible – that is, of course from their point of view to the realm of fact, the realm of means, the realm of measurable effectiveness.
(MacIntyre 1985:30)

This description of the emotivist *characters* of the manager and the therapist highlights two fundamental contrasts between the contemporary Western moral worldview and that of the traditional Western understanding of the practicably lived moral life. Firstly, the contrast between Aquinas’s articulation of mental health in terms of the place of the virtues, specifically temperance, in the traditional organic conception of human nature and the end of truly human life, as described in Chapter One, and that of the contemporary emotivist therapist should be clear. Emotivism understands human nature in mechanistic terms – as we shall see - and therapy, thus, may become a means of manipulating others. Furthermore, as C.S. Lewis (1955:46) noted, if therapists have no moral inhibition from manipulating others, especially if this is justified as being for the patient’s own good, then therapeutic “treatment... need have no limit; it could go on till it had effected a cure, and those who were carrying it out would decide when *that was*.”

Second, is the contrast, which we have already noted in the altercation between Socrates and Antiphon, between the emotivist conception, embodied in the manager, that every sphere of human activity and endeavour can be reduced to meaning in terms of cost effectiveness and measured in terms of its monetary value; that ‘every man has his price’ and that ‘time is money’, which are peculiarly sophistic assertions that underlie much of current Western neo-liberal

theorising (Harvey 2005). Socrates made it very clear that there are many things in human life which are not commensurable in this way, but have an intrinsic worth in their own right. The relevance of Socrates' view for us today, in the face of the all-encompassing demands of the globalised market economy, is also obvious.

'Consequentialism' (*cf.* Frey 2013:221-237; Hooker 2013:238-260; McNaughton & Rawling 2013:287) is the term coined by Anscombe (1958) in her discussion of contemporary Western moral philosophy, and is often used as a synonym for utilitarianism. Grossly simplifying, it could be said that consequentialist moral decision-making focuses on the utility or consequences of human acts. Some consequentialists are 'monist' in that they believe there is only one criterion in deciding whether an act is good. The 18th and 19th Century Utilitarians, such as Bentham (1748-1832) and Mill (1806-1873), made this criterion 'happiness' or 'pleasure', and based moral decision-making on achieving "the greatest happiness for the greatest number," or "the least amount of suffering for the greatest number." Other consequentialists are 'pluralist' in that they believe there are several criteria which are relevant in deciding whether or not an act is good, such as how fairly distributed happiness is across the population (Hooker 2013:240*f.*). In addition, there are various ways in which one can understand what the best possible consequences of human actions might be, and for whose benefit the outcome is chosen, leading to conflicting consequentialist approaches to ethical decision-making.

On the one hand, ethical egoism asserts that achieving the well-being or the greatest amount of good for the individual person himself is the fundamental ethical principal directing how one should make moral decisions regarding the best possible outcomes of one's actions. This rather selfish approach to ethical decision-making may be ameliorated by adding the proviso that the person can do whatever action brings about the greatest good for himself so long as it doesn't harm others. Utilitarianism asserts that the benefit of the action's outcome should be of utility to the community at large, rather than simply for the personal well-being of the individual. There are two approaches to making moral decisions in utilitarianism: Act-utilitarianism approaches ethical decision-making positively by asking, "What action achieves the greatest good for the greatest number?" Rule-utilitarianism approaches ethical decision-making negatively by asking, "Is my action in accordance with the cultural or societal rules which aim to produce the greatest good for the greatest number?" (Hooker 2013:238).

Deontologists claim that the rightness of a moral act is intrinsic in the act itself, regardless of the motives or intent of the human agent and regardless of the consequences of his or her action (Grenz & Smith 2003:27). There are different views on what constitutes the foundation from

which the intrinsic rightness of an act and, therefore, from which the decision about how one ought to act are derived. This leads, as with consequentialist ethics, to a variety of deontological approaches to moral decision-making, which I have, once again, had to grossly simplify. Firstly, Divine Law theory asserts that God lays down absolute commands, such as the Ten Commandments, which direct how humans should act. Second, 'contractarianism' (Sayre-McCord 2013:332-353), or 'social contract theory' (Barker 1971) was most ably expounded by Hobbes (1588-1679), Locke (1632-1704), and Rousseau (1712-1778). They maintained that duties, such as obedience to the State, are derived from the social contract which binds the community together. In 1651 Hobbes described this social contract as "That a man be willing, when others are so too,... for Peace... to lay down his right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himselfe." (Hobbes 1909:100) In other words: "Morality consists in the set of rules, governing how people are to treat one another, that rational people will agree to accept, for their mutual benefit, on the condition that others follow those rules as well." (Rachels 1995:143). Third, 'intuitionism' asserts that humans intuitively know the intrinsic foundation of moral law, without recourse to God or social contracts. The fullest expression of intuitionism is the 'categorical imperative' of Kant articulated in 1785 in the *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (Ellington 1994:30): "Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law." In other words, humans intuitively know that we should treat others as we would wish to be treated ourselves. It is a further indication of the confusion of Western moral language that some philosophers call Kantian deontology 'intuitionism' (Sahakian & Sahakian 1966:45), while others deny this (McNaughton & Rawling 2013:288).

As already noted, Elizabeth Anscombe first articulated for Anglophone philosophers the limits of deontological and consequentialist approaches to ethics and stressed the need for a renewed understanding of virtue (Anscombe 1958). A new field of ethics, called 'Virtue Ethics', developed as a result of her challenge (Hursthouse 1999:1f.). The very coining of the term 'Virtue Ethics', however, reveals, to my mind, a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of virtue as understood by both ancient and medieval moral philosophers. The term 'Virtue Ethics' implies that virtue is just one more approach to ethical decision-making; just one more tool in an ethical 'toolkit' which also includes deontology and consequentialism, but this limited understanding of virtue fails to express the fact that the concept of virtue encapsulates the whole of the moral life, not just one possible approach to ethics. I believe that virtue, because it focuses on the *character* of the human moral agent, can incorporate deontological or consequentialist ethics because they focus, albeit in different ways, on the morality of human *decisions and acts*, which, by their very nature, are dependent on and secondary to the moral character or virtue of the

moral agent. Thus, a virtuous person will recognise deontological obligations and duties precisely because such recognition is part of the virtue of justice, and a virtuous person will consider the consequences and utility of their moral decisions precisely because such consideration is part of the virtue of prudence. I believe, therefore, that emotivism, deontology, and consequentialism are only partial or incomplete accounts of ethics, albeit in quite different ways, largely because of their focus on moral acts or decision-making rather than on the moral agent as a complete human being.

Human Nature and Moral Agency

Anscombe (1958) and MacIntyre (1985) have pointed out, regarding consequentialism and emotivism respectively, that Modern moral philosophy is disordered because its various approaches are predicated upon an impoverished view of human nature, moral maturity, and moral agency. Likewise, Pieper (1960:49-50) has pointed out the detrimental consequences of deontological casuistry, which

assumes the immaturity of human beings. Moreover, it intensifies and perpetuates this immaturity... The virtue of prudence, on the contrary – being the perfected ability to make decisions in accordance with reality – is the quintessence of ethical maturity..... it is impossible to educate a person to justice, fortitude, and temperance without first and simultaneously educating him to prudence..... The classical Christian doctrine of the pre-eminence of the virtue of prudence is essentially opposed to all falsifying, moralistic, or casuistic regimentation of the person who is called upon to make decisions. The first of the cardinal virtues is not only the quintessence of ethical maturity, but in so being is also the quintessence of moral freedom.

This is a subject to which we shall return when discussing the British Army's approach to moral education, but first I wish to discuss the ways in which scepticism affects one's understanding of human nature and moral agency.

Perhaps the clearest example of the current impoverished understanding of human nature is the mechanistic model articulated by materialist thinkers like Richard Dawkins. At the beginning of his famous book, *The Selfish Gene*, Dawkins (2006:2) notes:

The argument of this book is that we, and all other animals, are machines created by our genes [which] have survived, in some cases for millions of years, in a highly competitive world. This entitles us to expect certain qualities of our genes. I shall argue that a predominant quality to be expected in a successful gene is ruthless selfishness. This gene selfishness will usually give rise to selfishness in individual behaviour..... This brings me to the first point I want to make about what this book is not. I am not advocating a morality based on evolution.

Dawkins further qualifies his argument in the course of the book, but such a mechanistic and materialist understanding of human nature must inevitably lead to subjectivism when he tries to formulate a morality because, to the materialist

his own reason appears to him as the epiphenomenon which accompanies chemical or electrical events in a cortex which is itself the by-product of a blind evolutionary process. His own logic, hitherto the king whom events in all possible worlds must obey, becomes merely subjective. There is no reason for supposing that it yields truth.

(Lewis 1967:72)

While Dawkins denies that he is advocating a morality based on the “ruthless selfishness” of our genes, his understanding of human nature as mechanistic must logically result in a belief that humans are not truly free to make moral decisions but are, to a greater or lesser extent, constrained in their exercise of moral agency, whether by their genes or by, what he calls, “memes”, *i.e.* by the psychological influences of their cultural upbringing and social context.

Social scientists have studied the question of the extent to which one’s social and cultural context affects one’s moral decision-making. These studies include Milgram’s obedience experiment in 1961 and Zimbardo’s Stanford prison experiment in 1971. On the basis of his experiment Milgram (1974:205) concluded, “The social psychology of this century reveals a major lesson: often it is not so much the kind of person a man is as the kind of situation in which he finds himself that will determine how he will act.” This is a very sobering conclusion, as it essentially states that humans do not have true freedom to exercise moral agency, as is assumed in traditional Western moral philosophy. It is interesting, however, that very many persons, on the basis of their own personal experiences of horrendous situations, postulate a view the opposite to that of Milgram. Ingrid Betancourt, for example, who was held hostage by FARC guerrillas in the Colombian jungle for six years, noted,

When you’re chained by the neck to a tree and deprived of everything... Well, it took me several years to realise, but you still have the most important freedom of all: that is, the freedom to choose what kind of person you want to be.

(Betancourt 2010)

Milgram (1964:851), responding to early criticisms of his experiment, acknowledged that each person has a capacity for choosing his own behaviour and this was borne out by his experiment in which between a quarter and a third of the subjects chose to reject the authority figure’s commands to inflict serious harm on another person. This cannot mask the fact, however, that between three-quarters and two-thirds chose to obey the authority figure, regardless of the knowledge – so far as they knew - that by doing so they were administering a lethal voltage of electricity to another person. Perhaps this relates to the claim made by MacIntyre (1985:22), that contemporary Westerners now act as if emotivism were true, regardless of what they think they believe about their moral worldview.

Once again, I am not trying to refute the ideas of Dawkins, Zimbardo or Milgram; I am simply trying to elucidate the implicit sophistic scepticism about the knowledge of truth, reality and goodness which underlies their ideas. Such scepticism leads to a mechanistic understanding of human nature and necessarily results in a diminished view of human freedom and moral agency, which may give rise to the concomitant sophistic idea that other persons may be manipulated and even dominated; that their attitudes and behaviour may be changed to suit the wishes of those with power in society. This idea has terribly negative consequences in politics, education, economics, and in all the other social activities which are fundamental to human community:

True freedom requires both knowledge of the good and the will to choose the good when known. The denial of either is a denial of freedom, and the denial of freedom is the rejection of that moral agency in man which characterises his humanity..... The preservation of freedom demands that we recover our faith both in the ability of man to know the good and in his capacity, within the limitations of historical conditioning and the defectiveness of his will, to choose the good when known.
(Hallowell 1963:132-133)

Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to demonstrate that the abuse of language and manipulation of persons, which I have called 'sophistry', permeates and informs the worldview of the contemporary Western liberal democracies, whether it is recognised or not. There are two important detrimental consequences arising from this widespread sophistry. The first consequence is that sophistic scepticism and subjectivism deny persons contact with truth and reality. Sophistic scepticism and subjectivism, thus, oppose the intellectual virtue of prudence, which is especially important in moral perception and decision-making.

The second consequence is that sophistic subjectivism and relativism oppose the moral virtues, specifically justice, which is fundamental to all human communities and to all social, commercial and political intercourse. Sophistry, thus, fosters disordered insight and sentiment and, in so doing, denies persons the ability to feel true empathy with others. Contemporary moral education fails to cultivate trained sentiments or ordinate feelings because scepticism has undermined the concept that there is objective order in reality and relativism that there is objective good, with the consequent dominance of emotivist morality. This sceptical and subjective approach to morality combined with the lack of respect for the inherent worth and dignity of individual persons which is implicit in all sophistic manipulation, means that contemporary Westerners are often ill-equipped to respond to morally complex situations in a way that is congruent with reality. Sophistry is fundamentally opposed to the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, courage and temperance and consequently results in an obscuration of moral

reasoning and decision-making. The detrimental effect of such sophistic obscuration on the contemporary British Army will be explored in more detail in the next chapter.

Good must be against evil; youth must be against age; life must be against death; light must be against darkness; army against army, one enemy against another, foe against foe, fighting over land, working wrongdoing. Always must the wise man ponder over war in this world.⁷²

Anonymous (c. AD 800) *Anglo-Saxon Gnostic Verses 2 ll.* 50-55a.

Introduction

In the previous chapter I argued that sophistry underlies much of the contemporary Western worldview and described the way in which this obscures the intellectual virtue of prudence as well as opposing the moral virtues. In this chapter I shall examine virtue and the bearing of arms, ordering my discussion around the framework of the four cardinal virtues, and assess whether or not the traditional understanding of virtue has any relevance to today's British Army. First, however, it is necessary briefly to describe the modern concept of the profession of arms, after which we shall consider the relationship between virtue, traditional Just War doctrine and the British Armed Forces.

The Profession of Arms

General Sir John Hackett, in his 1962 Lees Knowles Lectures, noted that,

The function of the profession of arms is the ordered application of force in the resolution of a social problem... The bearing of arms among men for the purpose of fighting is found as far back as we can see... It has never ceased to display a strong element of the vocational.

(Hackett 1962:3)

Hackett emphasized that the key distinguishing feature of the profession of arms is that soldiers are authorised legitimately to bear arms and to apply force, including lethal force on occasion, on behalf of the state. This force, however, is applied in a constrained, deliberate and controlled manner, as shall be explained shortly. Hackett, moreover, introduced the concept of "the unlimited liability" of the armed forces, in that soldiers not only apply lethal force on behalf of the state, but also risk their lives in its service, and that there is, thus, an implicit contract between the state and soldiers:

The military contract demands the total and almost unconditional subordination of the interests of the individual if the interests of the group should require it. This can lead to the surrender of life itself. It not infrequently does.

(Hackett 1962:45)

Interestingly, Hackett claimed that soldiers apply force to resolve *social* problems, and, due to the destructive power of atomic weapons, rejected Clausewitz's aphorism that war is an

⁷² Ʒod sceal pið yfele; zeoƷoð sceal pið ylðo; | Lif sceal pið deaðe; leoht sceal pið þystrum; | fyrð pið fyrde, feond pið oðrum, | lað pið laðe ymb land sacan, | synne stælan. A sceal snotor hycƷean | ymb þisse porulde Ʒepinn. (adp. Hamer 2015:116)

instrument of politics⁷³ (Hackett 1962:55). This is because “we can say with equal truth – war is the bankruptcy of policy,” (General Hans von Seeckt, cited in Liddell Hart 1951:31), and a failure of policy resulting in nuclear war would be universally disastrous. Hackett, therefore, argued that, in terms of the military contract with society, the rôle of the modern military commander is not only to direct the application of force, but to contain violence, in part by restraining any imprudent political decision to apply force (Hackett 1962:57).

In the lectures Hackett affirmed that the bearing of arms is an ancient vocation with its own disciplines, its special types of knowledge and training, and its own traditions, its own norms and narratives, all of which are important in the moral education of soldiers, as we shall see in Chapter Four. Nonetheless, the ancient vocation of bearing arms on behalf of the community or the nation-state has, in the modern era, been transformed into a profession requiring technical and managerial proficiency. The changes by which the military vocation has become the profession of arms are reflected

not only in the wider sense of what is professed, but in the narrower sense of an occupation with a distinguishable corpus of specific technical knowledge and doctrine, a more or less exclusive group coherence, a complex of institutions peculiar to itself, an educational pattern adapted to its own needs, a career structure of its own and a distinct place in the society which has brought it forth. In all these respects it has strong points of resemblance to medicine and law, as well as to holy orders.
(Hackett 1962:3)

In 1960 Morris Janowitz identified five interconnected ways in which the American military had become less vocational and more professional since the end of the First World War. Firstly, the social class from which the military draws its officers changed “from a narrow, relatively high, social status base to a broader base, more representative of the population as a whole.” (Janowitz 1994:125). Second, the style of military command based on authoritative leadership changed to one based on bureaucratic management. Third, the increasing importance of technical knowledge of various kinds in the armed forces and the concomitant preponderance of technicians in positions of command, made military commanders increasingly similar in training and outlook to their civilian counterparts in management. Fourth, the consequent increasing importance to military commanders of clearly defined career stages, progress through which is judged according to their technical and managerial performance. The final change is the increasing politicisation of military officers.

The growth of the military establishment into a vast managerial enterprise with increased political responsibilities has produced a strain on traditional military self-

⁷³Der Krieg ist eine bloße Fortsetzung der Politik mit anderen Mitteln - “War is merely the continuation of policy by other means” (*Vom Kriege* 1.1.24).

images and concepts of honour... As a result, the profession... has developed a more explicit political ethos.
(Janowitz 1994:127)

The British Army has undergone very similar changes. The ancient idea of military service as a vocation, however, fosters innovative approaches to problem solving because a vocation is about being called to a way of life, not merely about technical performance. In other words, vocation relates to an ethics of being, while profession relates to an ethics of doing. There may be some link between MacIntyre's thesis that the 'manager' is one of the *characters* of modern emotivism (MacIntyre 1985:25f.) and the change brought about in modern military command from charismatic leadership to bureaucratic management. The increasing politicisation of the armed forces as a consequence of bureaucratisation is, moreover, of concern in contemporary Western liberal democracies as it may lead military commanders to regard politicians negatively or even to seek political power themselves (Janowitz 1994:127). The politicisation of the British Army, however, has not been seen in increasingly estranged relations between the military and the politicians, although relations between them have been very strained at times during the last century. Indeed, the modern British Army has successfully managed to retain its apolitical stance, even when deployed on internal security duties within the UK in Northern Ireland (John Keegan cited in Mileham 2008:44). Probably because, as Hackett (1962:48) has claimed, "in Britain... civilian control [of the military] has become by evolution pretty well complete."

At the same time that the bearing of arms in the liberal Western democracies has become professionalised and increasingly bureaucratic and technical, the nature of armed conflict has become less clear cut. The Enlightenment idea that war is armed conflict between discrete nation-states consisting of a series of combats between professional armies (Howard 1976:54f.) has proven inadequate to describe the armed conflicts of the last forty-odd years and the ambiguities of what has been called the 'Contemporary Operating Environment'.

The Contemporary Operating Environment

In 1997, General Krulak, the Commandant of the United States Marine Corps, delivered a speech in which he described what he called 'Three Block War', the new ambiguously chaotic environment in which Western soldiers had to operate:

This is the landscape upon which the 21st Century battle will be fought. It will be an asymmetrical battlefield..... In one moment in time, our service members will be feeding and clothing displaced refugees, providing humanitarian assistance. In the next moment, they will be holding two warring tribes apart – conducting peacekeeping operations – and, finally, they will be fighting a highly lethal mid-intensity battle – all on the same day... all within three city blocks."
(Krulak 1997:139)

Subsequently, the concept of the Three Block War has been superseded because it did not describe adequately enough the perceived complexity of the 21st Century battlefield (US Army FM 3-24, § 1-37; 8-4), but it was a seminal concept which laid the foundations for what Western armies call 'Stabilisation Operations' with the framework of shape-secure-develop, in which troops might well be involved in carrying out all of the functions described by Krulak and more (LWDG 2011:7). One of the ideas stressed by Krulak was that of asymmetry between combatants. Krulak does not argue that asymmetric warfare is new, but acknowledges that it is as ancient as war itself as evidenced by the annihilation in AD 9 of three Roman legions under Varus by Germanic tribesmen in the Teutobergerwald.

Mary Kaldor developed the argument that a novel form of warfare had manifested itself in the 1990s, which she called simply 'new war'. She maintained that 'new wars' have certain specific characteristics: Firstly, they are transnational, not only because the fighting may ignore international borders, but because the warring parties use decentralised worldwide networks to access funds, weapons, recruits, and mass media,

so that the distinction between internal and external, between aggression... and repression..., or even between local and global, are difficult to sustain..... in practice, the distinction between what is private and what is public, state and non-state, informal and informal, between what is done for economic or political motives, cannot easily be applied.

(Kaldor 2001:2)

The transnational character of the new wars is partly the consequence, but also the cause, of the disintegration of nation-states, in which their models and means of authority and governance, and their ability to legitimately apply force through a professional military are eroded. The exercise of authority and the application of force are consequently 'privatised' by passing into the hands of warlords, criminals, and mercenaries. One outcome of this 'privatisation' is the deliberate resort to terrorism to destabilise social, economic, and state structures (Kaldor 2001:2-8). It is noteworthy, in this regard, that the very idea of the nation-state is a modern Western concept, and that the idea of professional armed forces is predicated on the idea of the nation-state.

Second, the new wars involve the innovative use of new technologies, and conflict takes place not only in traditional ways, with armed forces in combat, but also digitally in cyberspace. Third, these wars can be understood only in the context of globalisation and the consequent myriad of state and non-state actors, such as non-governmental organisations, the media, multinational business corporations, intergovernmental organisations like the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation or the United Nations, and supra-governmental organisations like the European Union, many of which are pursuing competing agendas.

Professional armed forces are the product of the modern Western nation-state, which itself is founded on what MacIntyre (1985:36f.) called “the Enlightenment Project”. As I argued in the previous chapter, the Enlightenment Project is founded on an impoverished understanding of human nature and of what constitutes a fully flourishing human life, and much of its contemporary expression is based on a sophistic abuse of language and manipulation of others. Consequently, Western military theorists have struggled to understand and clearly define the nature of armed conflict in the contemporary world. Reflecting this lack of clarity is the analysis of what is called the Contemporary Operating Environment (COE) and the postulated Future Character of Conflict (FCOC) by the British Ministry of Defence (MOD). The MOD has not yet published a definition of the COE, but whenever it is mentioned the assumption is that it is something new and unprecedented, and that Britain’s Armed Forces will have to be flexible and agile to operate in what will be a volatile, ambiguous and rapidly changing context. In 2006, in his post-tour debrief after commanding 16 Air Assault Brigade in Afghanistan, Brigadier Ed Butler gave what is one of the clearest statements of how the COE is perceived:

We are operating in what I consider to be our new and future Contemporary Operating Environment (COE); non-linear, no boundaries, people operating in isolated groups and with all specialists forward..... ‘penny-packeted’ in old terminology. Assets normally used by Corps or Division were now being used at company level; the resource and training implications of this are immense. These small manoeuvre groups, with all these capabilities, will be as relevant to anywhere in Africa or other third world countries as they are in Afghanistan..... The historical domain of the Special Forces is now the COE of the Field Army.
(ABN-1 2007:81)

The image painted by Butler is one of small groups of British soldiers operating disparately and independently in a fluid, ill-defined battlespace, wielding and applying immense military force, and achieving strategic effect – “the historical domain of the Special Forces” – and he noted that this would require the training of the Field Army to be reviewed.

In 2010 the MOD produced a paper titled, *‘The Future Character of Conflict – The Ministry of Defence Position’*. In this paper it was postulated that, at the operational level, the battlespace in the future will be characterised by what are called ‘the five Cs’ (DCDC 2010): Firstly, it will be *congested* with multiple actors, some hostile, some friendly and some non-aligned. Second, it will be *cluttered* with material and digital infrastructure, which may have no overt military value, but can be exploited by the various actors for their own ends. Third, it will be *contested* at every level and in multiple ways by means of a hybrid combination of ‘normal’ combat tactics, asymmetric tactics, media operations, and cyberwarfare. Fourth, it will be *connected* by digital communications, mass media, globalised culture and modern transportation to the ‘global village’, and every action by Western military personnel will be very quickly broadcast to the

world in various media. Finally, the future battlespace will be *constrained* for Western troops by national policy and societal mores, the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC), and national Rules of Engagement (ROE), and Human Rights legislation against potentially unconstrained foes. Remarkably, this fifth 'C' was only added as an afterthought when an unclassified version of *Future Character of Conflict* was published in February 2010 (DCDC 2010:12ⁿ). It is also noteworthy that no mention is made of Western troops being under ethical constraint, nor is there reference to the *ius in bello* criteria of Just War doctrine, apart from a mention that the criterion of 'proportionality' may be used as an argument by adversaries to *impose* further constraints on Western armed forces! In fact, from the context it is clear that the criterion which is actually meant is that of 'discrimination', as the context is the causing of 'collateral damage' (DCDC 2010:12-13).

Ethical Confusion of the COE

The FCOC concept has tried to describe the characteristics of the fluid, ill-defined, ambiguous battlespace of the COE, in which British soldiers will face an asymmetric, hybrid threat. Yet it has failed to recognise a sixth 'c', which is fundamental to understanding the COE and to preparing British troops for operating in this ambiguous battlespace, which is that it will also be ethically *confused* at multiple levels, which will have practical moral implications for officers and soldiers alike.

There may be ethical confusion at the political and strategic level. The Government's decision to deploy troops abroad may be difficult to justify, especially if the political decision is informed by sources of intelligence which are not in the public domain. In terms of Just War Doctrine, it may be difficult to adequately explain the *ius ad bellum* criteria (legal authority, just cause, just objective, right intent, last resort, proportionate response, and fair prospect of success) to both the public and the military, especially in the new 'sceptical' post-Iraq age. The Government itself may be confused about why it is deploying troops and may, in part, be motivated by emotivism or media-generated pressure rather than prudent judgement. For example, in 2012 the USA deployed troops to Africa to hunt down Joseph Kony, the leader of the Lord's Resistance Army (Asiimwe 2012). This was largely in response to the 'Kony 2012' pressure campaign about child soldiers in Uganda by a human rights NGO called 'Invisible Children'. Concerns have been raised, however, about the NGO's apparently limited understanding of the true situation in Uganda, and its advocacy of US armed intervention (Finnegan 2012). Kony is undoubtedly a criminal and the Lord's Resistance Army has committed numerous atrocities, but it is difficult to see how this deployment could satisfy all the *ius ad bellum* criteria of Just War Doctrine, nor how it is in US national interests or in accordance with LOAC.

At the operational level, moreover, the COE will almost certainly be confused by the presence of several competing actors (terrorists, child soldiers, millenarian religious armed groups, private military and security companies, war lords, poachers, allied military and paramilitary forces, and the media) some of whom will carry out apparently irrational, random, horrific and barbaric acts (genocide, mob-lynching, slavery, human trafficking, witchcraft, enforced drug dependency, rape, cannibalism, bodily mutilation, infanticide, torture, looting, *etc.*). Faced with random horrific acts by unpredictable irrational actors, British troops may experience the feeling of a descent into the ‘heart of darkness’, the tangible presence of evil, and will seek ways both to understand it and to resist it. The relativism and emotivism of the contemporary British worldview may not prepare them for such moral anarchy nor give them any means by which to make moral judgements and decisions in the face of it. The British Army Senior Medical Officer who deployed on Op BARRAS, the UK’s intervention in Sierra Leone in 2000, noted, “When confronted with ‘the abyss’ it can paralyse one and prevent one from acting.” (Beaton 2013:lect.). Deploying Western troops to intervene in such situations raises several ethical dilemmas and questions for which the troops, arguably, are ill-prepared and untrained.

For instance, what is an ordinate ethical response by Western peace-keepers to the scene in this photograph, taken in the Central African Republic in January 2014, in which a Christian civilian, who has just participated in the lynching of Muslim civilians, cuts flesh off the leg of one and eats it?



Photograph 1. *Christian-Muslim Conflict in the Central African Republic* (© BBC 2014)

What is an appropriate ethical response if allied or partner military forces commit atrocities or act in ways utterly incompatible with current Western values, such as the practice of pederasty by some members of the Afghan security forces? What is the morally right action to take if the ROE prevent Western troops from interfering to stop atrocities or genocide, as they did in Bosnia and Rwanda in the 1990s? How do British soldiers decide between conflicting obligations when professional military discipline prevents them from doing what they judge to be morally right?

What is a proportionate and discriminating response when confronted by child soldiers, who have been reduced to their current state by abduction, systematic abuse, doping, and deliberate psychological manipulation? In terms of LOAC and the ROE, it might be legally permissible to shoot the child soldier pictured below, as, by bringing his rifle to the aim, he is a direct threat. But what is legally permissible and, even, militarily necessary, may be morally repugnant to the British soldier who shoots the child. The soldier may experience a dissonance between his act and his moral worldview, receiving what nowadays is called a 'moral wound' (Sherman 2015).



Photograph 2. A child soldier with pink teddy bear pack (© Getty Images)

The ethical confusion of the COE is not confined to military operations, but is also apparent in situations in which British soldiers go on training exercises in other parts of the world. This ethical confusion arises due to the emotivism of contemporary Western soldiers. For example, the British Army trains in East Africa several times a year. When in Kenya on a training exercise, my experience is that British soldiers very often see African tribesmen through the distorting lens of their own emotivist worldview and understand the local peasants or pastoralists simply by their own Western terms of reference. The Briton sees *per speculum in aenigmate*, seeing in the African tribesman a distorted reflection of himself with his Western moral assumptions, lifestyle and worldview. Soldiers may then react in one of two ways: they may adopt an overly sentimental attitude towards the tribesmen or they may become indifferent or even hostile towards them. Indeed, British soldiers may move from a sentimental attitude to one of unfeeling indifference and then to one of disdain and dislike during the six weeks they are on exercise in Africa. 'Andy MacNab', the *nom de plume* of a Special Air Service (SAS) trooper, has described just such an occurrence when his SAS squadron were training in Botswana in the late 1980s. The SAS troopers, feeling sorry for the dusty children who crowded round to see the novelty of British soldiers camping out in the bush, started out by giving them boiled sweets and biscuits and jam from the Army rations. Inevitably, the news spread and more and more Botswanan children would gather to ask for sweets. Pestered by repeated begging, which they themselves had caused, all sentimentality amongst the SAS troopers evaporated and they decided to get rid

of the 'pesky' children once and for all. They did this by taking blocks of hexamine, the waxy solid fuel used by the British Army for cooking in the field, chopping the blocks into little squares, coating the squares with jam, and giving these out to the children, who trustingly popped the jam-coated hexamine into their mouths only to gag on the waxy fuel (MacNab 1995:224). 'MacNab', notably, seems to feel no sense of shame at recounting this incident, nor does he acknowledge that, if a child had swallowed the hexamine, he or she would have been poisoned and fallen ill without immediate access to medical care.

It should be a source of concern for the British Army if my observation is correct that emotivist British officers and soldiers have difficulty empathising with peoples of other cultures and nations. Our current military doctrine postulates that military operations in the future will be conducted 'among the people' in a way which makes soldiers' empathy for the people, down to the lowest rank, crucial for mission success (Smith 2007). One of the points made by Butler about the COE is that small groups of soldiers under low level leadership will be expected to attain strategic effect by the way in which they apply military force. In the Western liberal democracies, however, there has been a great deal of debate and opinion expressed about how to apply force ethically and exert moral influence at the political and strategic levels in the COE, but considerably less on how this might be done practicably at the operational and tactical levels. Yet it is precisely at these lower levels that the Army anticipates strategic effect in the ambiguous, fluid nature of combat in the COE. Furthermore, as we shall see, Western soldiers often unquestioningly assume that an intervention operation abroad is morally justifiable, without really questioning this assumption or questioning how the local populace view an intervention by Western armed forces, which may be perceived as invasion not salvation.

It is arguable that the COE is not something completely new and unprecedented, but shares many features and moral ambiguities of past conflicts in which Western armed forces have been engaged, whether in the small wars and policing actions of the imperial era, or in the guerrilla operations which accompanied conventional operations in both World Wars and the Napoleonic Wars. General Rose, the UN Commander in Bosnia, speaking of peace-keeping and humanitarian interventions, stated: "Humans are humans. Battles are battles. The kinds of problems faced, particularly by junior commanders, remain the same." (Rose 2015:lect.). Western military theorists used to believe that with the West's technological superiority it could simply dominate and impose its will on other parts of the world (Kaldor 2001:161). The Commandant of France's Joint Defence College, noted, however, that

War has not changed. It is still, at heart, a political act comprising a struggle between two independent free wills. Nevertheless, we are only just getting over the idea, which has dominated for over forty years, that war is a technical

confrontation between two arsenals and that the more powerful the arsenal, the greater the chance of victory.
(Desportes 2009:175)

Constraints to the Application of Force

Clausewitz (*Vom Kriege* 1.1.3) noted that, although in theory there is no logical limit to the application of force, in fact, due to several constraining factors, one can never apply unlimited force in war simply as one desires. These constraints include: (1) the fact that force is reciprocally applied by both contending parties and one is, thus, never in total control of one's own application of force; (2) fluctuating human emotion and will to apply force; and (3) simple random chance are all unquantifiable factors which have an impact on how far one can apply force in war. The idea of the unconstrained application of extreme force is, therefore, "an abstraction" without effect in the real world, because the reciprocal use of force in war is practicably constrained by a number of inherent factors over which the contending military forces have little or no control. Subsequently he used the term "friction" to describe the constraining effect of these factors (*Vom Kriege* 1.7). The fact that war is an instrument of policy is yet another factor constraining the conduct of war and the application of force, as these must be related to the political end for which the war is being fought, and military commanders must constrain politicians, as we have noted. In effect, Clausewitz argued that the application of military force is constrained by a number of practical, political, emotional, moral, legal and, also, utterly random factors. We shall examine the moral constraints in our discussion of Just War doctrine, but first must briefly look at the legal constraints to the application of military force.

In the last hundred years there has been an increasing effort to set legal limits to the recourse to and conduct of armed conflicts. This is seen in the articulation of International Law, Law of Armed Conflict, and Rules of Engagement, which are based on a legal understanding of justice with which it becomes possible to justify military operations regardless of the morality of the *casus belli*. Both Anscombe (1958) and Geach (1956) pointed out that such sophistry was likely when relying on casuistry and utilitarian consequentialist theories of ethics. In addition, current debates within International Law about just war provide an example of the interminable philosophical debate described by MacIntyre (1985), and largely ignore how the virtue of justice, conceived as 'fairness', has shaped traditional Just War doctrine. The premiss underlying LOAC and ROE is the problematic one that war is a legally definable activity, despite the difficulties of such an approach (Paskins & Dockrill 1979:102f.).

One example of these difficulties is the concept of the Right to Self-Defence which is usually emphasised in British Army training on the ROE as a justification for a soldier to apply lethal

force when deployed on a military operation. It would seem axiomatic that an aggressor cannot claim to have acted in self-defence when attacking someone in his own home, only the person defending himself against an aggressor can do so. As almost all British military deployments this century have been interventions outside the borders of the United Kingdom, the emphasis in the ROE on self-defence ignores the question of whether in fact Britain is not actually the aggressor in the conflict. From the perspective of an Afghan peasant farmer whose livelihood is destroyed by British troops burning his cash crop of poppies, it is the British who are the aggressors. If that peasant farmer, therefore, joins with his neighbours and decides to ambush the next British troops on his lands - thereby becoming an “accidental guerrilla” fighting on the side of the Taliban (Kilcullen 2009) – it is arguable that he is the one who is acting in self-defence, not the British troops who, in response to his small arms ambush, can reply with overwhelming firepower from a variety of Offensive Support weapons systems⁷⁴, none of which is within range of the small arms being used by the ambushers. This example raises a number of questions relevant to Just War doctrine. One is whether British recourse to Offensive Support in response to a small arms ambush is a discriminating or proportionate use of force. Another is whether a legalistic emphasis on British soldiers’ right to self-defence, without reference to the morality (as opposed to the legality) of the mission, inevitably makes the British Army’s conduct of operations seem dishonourable to a populace which has a high regard for honour and, thus, a heightened consciousness of shameful conduct, but may not think in terms of the legal culpability of the contending parties according to International Law. It is necessary, therefore, to examine the traditional Western doctrine of Just War with its implicit assumptions of virtue and honour.

Traditional Just War Doctrine⁷⁵

Traditional Western Just War doctrine is that doctrine of just war developed in Europe over the last 2500 years, and, in its medieval expression, is essentially a Christian doctrine. I prefer to talk of Just War ‘doctrine’, rather than ‘theory’ or ‘convention’, as the Just War criteria were part of Christian teaching about the practicable Christian life and were not, thus, understood to be an abstract theoretical or legal debate, which is how much current discussion of Just War seems to be carried out. It is noteworthy that implicit in all ancient and medieval articulations of Just War

⁷⁴ Offensive Support is the term for weapons such as mortars, artillery, 227-mm GPS-guided rockets (which have a range of over 30 km), and the weapons of attack helicopters and ground-attack aircraft.

⁷⁵ In the discussion of Just War, I have collated several sources (Bellamy 2006; Biggar 2013; Burke 2015; Coates 1997; Elstain 2003; Frowe 2016; Gastinaeu 2015; Guthrie & Quinlan 2007; Lee 2012; Lucas 2016; Moseley 2006; Paskins & Dockrill 1979; Primoratz 2015; Reed 2004; Walzer 2006). In my discussion of Just War I have tried to articulate the criteria as they are generally expressed in current discussions, but have explained where I differ from current interpretations of them.

doctrine is the traditional concept of virtue. It is equally noteworthy, however, that very few of the studies of Just War written in recent years approach the subject with reference to virtue⁷⁶.

As we have noted, military force is applied in war in a controlled and deliberate manner because it is constrained, in part, by the moral conditions necessary to wage a just war. According to the classic Western formulation of just war, these moral conditions are concerned with two main aspects of warfare: *ius ad bellum* – the recourse to war must be just; and *ius in bello* – the conduct of military operations in the war must be just. In this context the word ‘just’ (*ius*) refers to the basic idea of ‘fairness’ or ‘rightness’, not exclusively to ‘just’ as a concept in law (*lex*). ‘Just’ here means that which is morally binding, not only that which is legally binding. The idea of *ius* as ‘rightness’ can, however, lead to confusion with the idea of ‘righteousness’ or ‘holiness’ and, so, to the idea that Just War is equivalent to righteous or holy war (Draper 1979:136). They are not the same. It is outside the scope of this chapter to discuss righteous or holy war, although where relevant, I shall refer to the Biblical conception of holy war. As Biggar (2013:3) notes:

By ‘just war’ I do not refer to war that is simply or perfectly just; and I certainly do not refer to a war that is holy. ‘Just’ here means ‘justified’ – on balance and all things considered. No human action or enterprise is pure or unblemished; but that is not to say that no human action can ever be right. No war waged by human beings will ever be simply just; but that is not to say that no war can ever be justified.

The *ius ad bellum* criteria seek to ensure that the recourse to war is just or, in other words, that the war is waged for just or right reasons. It is worth stressing that the *ius ad bellum* criteria were first articulated for the guidance of the political governors of sovereign states, and it was not envisaged that they should be debated by private citizens (Lewis 2000b). They apply, therefore, at the political and strategic levels of war, rather than the operational and tactical. The *ius ad bellum* criteria are:

1. The war must be waged only as a *last resort*; all other reasonable means of securing the objective of the war, such as diplomatic negotiation or international arbitration, must have been tried and shown to have failed before war can be legitimately declared (Cicero, *Off.* 1.11; Onasander, *Strategicus* 4.2).
2. The war must be officially *declared by a legitimate authority* (Plato, *Leges* 955^{b-c}; Cicero, *Rep.* 3.23; Aquinas, *ST* 2^a2^{ae} 40.1). This authority may be either the government of the polity, recognised as such by its citizens, or a leader whose authority is based on popular support or

⁷⁶ Studies of the rôle of virtue in Just War are Davis (1992), Toner (2000), and Webster & Cole (2004). Studies of the rôle of virtue in the profession of arms include Olsthoorn (2011), Robinson (2006), and Sherman (2005). My approach is rather different from these. I have addressed the limitations of a Stoic approach to military virtue, as advocated by Sherman, elsewhere (Steele 2015).

acclaim. In either case, war ought not to be declared for the private good of any individual or party, but in the common interest of all members of the polity.

3. The war must be waged for *a just cause*, such as self-defence, defence of the defenceless, the redress of past or current injustices, or the pre-emption of an attack by hostile forces (Cicero, *Rep.* 3.23; Onasander, *Strategicus* 4.1; Ambrose, *Off.* 1.27.129; Aquinas, *ST* 2^a2^{ae} 40.1 & 40.4).

4. The war must have a *reasonable prospect of ultimate success in securing the objective* (cf. Luke 14:31-32). This is not the mercenary idea that one only fights if one is sure to win. It requires the prudential calculation that the available means are sufficient to secure the objective of the war, and also that the benefits to the polity gained from attaining the war's objective are greater than the inevitable evils experienced by the polity consequent to the waging of the war.

5. The recourse to war must be *proportionate* to the provocation received from the enemy. This criterion is subordinate to the criteria of last resort, just cause, and reasonable prospect of ultimate success, as it stipulates that a polity, accepting that war will bring inevitable evils in its train, does not go to war against another polity over minor disagreements and grievances, but only when recourse to military force is the most appropriate or only option available.

6. The war must be waged for *a just objective*. The end of the war must be limited and primarily aimed at bringing about a just peace; not at totally destroying, ruining, or humiliating the enemy (Plato, *Respublica* 471^{a-c}; Aristotle, *EN* 1177^b; *Politica* 1334^a; Cicero, *Off.* 1.11; Onasander, *Strategicus* 4.3; Aquinas, *ST* II^{ae} 40.1). This criterion is sometimes referred to as that of *right intention* and may be confused with that of right intent, which deals with one's *attitude* towards the prosecution of the war, while right intention deals with the *end* for which one is waging war. Hence, I prefer the term 'just objective' rather than 'right intention'. It will be apparent that this criterion addresses the same concerns as the *ius ex bello* and *ius post bellum* considerations of how one achieves a just cessation of hostilities and a just peace once hostilities have ended. Some academics claim that these considerations have been ignored in the past (Baker 2015:128), and propose, therefore, that we need to create a new list of *ius ex bello* and *ius post bellum* criteria (Mileham 2016). I agree with Biggar (2013:3) "that these are already implicit in the *ad bellum* requirement of right intention, [so] I do not accept the proposal."

7. The war must be waged with *right intent*. The motives for waging war must be consonant with the just cause, just objective and just means. The desire for revenge, power, or to inflict harm, etc. are not right intent (Aristotle, *EN* 1177^b; *Politica* 1334^a; Cicero, *Off.* 1.12; Ambrose, *Off.* 1.28.138).

The *ius in bello* criteria seek to ensure that the conduct of military operations in the war is just or, in other words, that the war is waged by *just or right means*.

1. The force used to wage war must be *discriminate*. When armed force is applied the soldier must draw a distinction between military and non-military targets. Only military targets, *i.e.* the enemy's armed forces, military equipment, and trade or industry supporting their war effort may be legitimately attacked or targeted. This means that none of the following may be targeted or attacked: neutral nationals, non-combatants, the enemy nation's natural resources, culture, social structures, trade or economy, except where these are clearly crucial to sustaining the enemy's ability to wage war. Plato (*Respublica* 468^a-471^c) in discussing justice in his ideal state has a digression on the discriminating use of military force. He says that, as his state's citizens will be Greeks, they will be both "good and tractable"⁷⁷ (Plato, *Respublica* 470^e), *i.e.* that in implicit contrast to the non-Greek barbarians, they will have that nobility of character summed up in the Greek ideal of *καλοκάγαθία*. We shall return to this ideal when we discuss moral education. In war between Greeks, therefore, there should be firstly, no enslavement of the defeated, as this may weaken the Greek states when facing a barbarian foe. Second, the victors in battle should not plunder the dead, except to take their armour, as some men use this as an excuse to avoid combat. Third, no arms taken from defeated Greeks should be offered as trophies in the temples as this may prolong ill-feeling between previously antagonistic Greek states. Plato (*Respublica* 471^{a-c}) affirms of the citizens of his state,

being Greeks they will not devastate Greece, nor burn homesteads, nor agree that the whole populace of any city, men, women, and children, are all their enemies, but that only a few are ever their enemies, those who are blameworthy for the conflict. And for all of these reasons they will be unwilling to lay waste the land, as many are their friends, or to demolish their homesteads; but will prosecute the conflict only until the blameworthy are compelled by the suffering of the blameless to do right... our citizens ought to behave towards their [Greek] opponents in this way; and towards barbarians as the Greeks now behave towards one another.⁷⁸

This last sentence is a tacit acknowledgement that Plato's delineation of humane discrimination in war between Greeks is entirely hypothetical and, also, that even hypothetically he does not extend such discrimination to barbarian foes. In reality, the various Greek states did to each other all the things which Plato would forbid, and there is no evidence that Plato's ideal was

⁷⁷ ἀγαθοί τε καὶ ἡμεροὶ

⁷⁸ οὐδ' ἄρα τὴν Ἑλλάδα Ἕλληνας ὄντες κερουῖσιν, οὐδὲ οἰκήσεις ἐμπρήσουσιν, οὐδὲ ὁμολογήσουσιν ἐν ἐκάστη πόλει πάντας ἐχθροὺς αὐτοῖς εἶναι, καὶ ἄνδρας καὶ γυναῖκας καὶ παῖδας, ἀλλ' ὀλίγους αἰεὶ ἐχθροὺς τοὺς αἰτίους τῆς διαφορᾶς. καὶ διὰ ταῦτα πάντα οὔτε τὴν γῆν ἐθελήσουσιν κεῖρειν αὐτῶν, ὡς φίλων τῶν πολλῶν, οὔτε οἰκίας ἀνατρέπειν, ἀλλὰ μέχρι τούτου ποιήσονται τὴν διαφορὰν, μέχρι οὔ ἂν οἱ αἴτιοι ἀναγκασθῶσιν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀναιτίων ἀλγούντων δοῦναι δίκην... οὕτω δεῖν πρὸς τοὺς ἐναντίους τοὺς ἡμετέρους πολίτας προσφέρεσθαι: πρὸς δὲ τοὺς βαρβάρους, ὡς νῦν οἱ Ἕλληνας πρὸς ἀλλήλους.

ever practised by any Greek state. Nonetheless, Plato is describing how Greek combatants with nobility (*καλοκάγαθία*) and virtue (*ἀρετή*) *ought* to behave.

2. The force used to wage war must be *proportionate* to the objective. The political objective, which is to bring about a just peace, cannot justify any means; the military means, therefore, must be in concordance with the just objective. This criterion is usually interpreted to mean that the military force used should be the minimum necessary to successfully achieve the objective as quickly and with the least amount of damage and fewest casualties as possible to all belligerents. St. Ambrose (339-397) discusses proportionality in war, although he does not use this term, using illustrations drawn from the Old Testament. In his discussion he indicates that, in certain circumstances, it might be proportionate to annihilate the enemy, as Moses did to the Midianites, “since on more ferocious enemies and on the faithless and on those who greatly offend, fiercer retribution is returned.”⁷⁹ (Ambrose, *Off.* 1.29.139). This calls to mind, not only the Old Testament injunctions to utterly destroy the various Canaanite communities which practised abominable religious rites, including child sacrifice (Deuteronomy 20:10-18; 1 Samuel 15), but also the constant refrain used by the Elder Cato (234–149 BC) in speeches he made before the Roman Senate: “Carthage must be destroyed.”⁸⁰ Before concluding that these are actually examples of a disproportionate use of military force, it is worth recalling that Carthage was a colony established in North Africa by the Canaanites⁸¹, and that the Romans found Carthaginian practices equally as abhorrent as did the Israelites. It is no coincidence that the Israelites and Romans both felt similarly about the need to annihilate such an abominable culture. This is not to argue that such annihilation was, in fact, just or right, but to remind us that the proportionate use of force may, on occasion, actually mean applying the maximum amount of force available to destroy a great evil. As Biggar (2013:7) notes:

This is the dilemma: on the one hand going to war causes terrible evils, but on the other hand not going to war permits them. Whichever horn one chooses to sit on, the sitting should not be comfortable. Allowing evils to happen is not necessarily innocent, any more than actually causing them is necessarily culpable. Omission and commission are equally obliged to give an account of themselves. Both stand in need of moral justification.

3. Individuals are *responsible* for their own conduct in military operations. The individual combatant is accountable for how he or she personally applies force in war. The argument that an individual was merely following orders when he or she applied force indiscriminately or disproportionately was emphatically rejected in 1945 by the International Military Tribunal,

⁷⁹ *siquidem vehementioribus hostibus et infidis et his qui amplius laeserint vehementior refertur ultio.*

⁸⁰ Often quoted as, “*Carthago delenda est*”, in fact his words are recorded periphrastically rather than quoted directly (Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* 49; Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 15.23; Plutarch, *Cato Maior* 26-27).

⁸¹ The Canaanites were known as the Phoenicians by the Greeks, whence the Roman term ‘Punic’ for the inhabitants of Carthage.

which was established by the Allies to try German political and military leaders for crimes committed during the Second World War (Levinson 1974, Russell 1954, Wasserstrom 1974). The criterion of personal responsibility acknowledges that soldiers, whether regular or irregular, are part of a hierarchical fighting force, in which they may be subordinate to or in command of others, but expects that, as part of such a fighting force which is subject to the customary rules of war, now articulated as LOAC, individuals remain responsible for their own actions, and are required to reject unlawful orders. Personal responsibility relates to proportionality and discrimination in terms of the choice of types of weapons systems employed in combat, and some weapons, such as toxic chemicals or land mines, are banned under various international conventions as being too indiscriminate, while the use of others, such as biological weapons, is considered disproportionate as well. While the principle of personal responsibility was first legally articulated by the Charter of the International Military Tribunal in 1945 (Wasserstrom 1974:135-137), it is implicit in Aquinas's discussion of whether or not it is permissible for clergy to fight in war, or for combatants to deceive their enemies by stratagems, or to fight on holy feast days (*ST II^aII^{ae} 40.2-4*). The use of stratagems and *ruses du guerre* may also be considered under the three criteria of personal responsibility, proportionality and discrimination. It is considered irresponsible, for example, to fight in civilian clothing as a *franc tireur*, in part because to do so hinders the enemy's ability to discriminate between combatants and non-combatants, but in part, too, because it is considered dishonourable to do so. According to Aquinas (*ST II^aII^{ae} 40.3*), however, it is not dishonourable to deceive one's enemy by masking one's intentions or to take them by surprise, such as in an ambush, but it would be reprehensible to deliberately mislead the enemy by an active lie, such as drawing an enemy into an ambush by raising a white flag and pretending to surrender.

It will be seen that to exercise the criteria of discrimination, proportionality and personal responsibility under the pressure of combat is no simple matter. In antiquity and the Middle Ages these *ius in bello* criteria were not articulated as distinctly they are now are, but were assumed because they were implicit in the intellectual virtue of prudence and the moral virtues of courage and temperance. These virtues enabled the realisation of the just conduct of war by equipping the individual warrior to fight justly in combat.

Prudence

In the first chapter I mentioned that the virtue of prudence provides the necessary and essential liaison between the truth ascertained by the intellect, the good desired by the will, and the moral acts of the human moral agent exemplified in justice, courage and temperance. Prudence is,

however, not simply applicable to an individual, but also to the family household and to the state:

Prudence is correct reasoning about things to be done and aims at the good of the agent as such, taken either singly (ethical prudence), as a member of a domestic community (economic prudence), or as a member of a polity (political prudence). (McInerney 1997:97)

Prudence in military policy, strategy and doctrine is one aspect of political prudence. When the government decides to deploy the nation's armed forces on a military operation, therefore, military prudence may be said to provide the necessary and essential liaison between the (true) understanding of the operational context ascertained by the nation's intelligence agencies, the (good) political outcome of the military deployment desired by the government, and the (moral) actions of the deployed armed forces, (exemplified in justice, courage and temperance). I have argued that sophistry clouds prudence; *i.e.* moral discernment, deliberation and decision-making. Prudence also can be deliberately denied by the various forms of imprudence discussed in the first chapter. The bracketed terms in the sentence above indicate, therefore, those aspects where political - and, hence, military - prudence can be vitiated, either through the deliberate immoral choice of policy-makers or through the clouding of their prudential judgement by sophistry.

Hence, if the understanding of the context in the theatre of operations is false, whether because the government policy-makers and military strategists ignore, deliberately distort or misunderstand the intelligence reports they receive, then the *casus belli* justifying the deployment of a military force will be false and, hence, unjust. Arguably, this was the case when the Blair government decided to invade Iraq in 2003. If the outcome desired by either the government policy-makers or military strategists is bad, whether because the desired end is incorrectly judged to be a real good or is knowingly falsely portrayed as a good, but actually effects real harm in the theatre of operations, or is for the ultimate benefit of only a few of the parties involved, then the deployment of armed forces will be wrong and unjust. In these ways, therefore, prudential political and military judgement are intimately related to the *ius ad bellum* criteria of traditional Western Just War doctrine. If political and military moral discernment, deliberation and decision-making are vitiated in any of these ways or the ends of policy and strategy are thus wrongful, it will become very difficult, if not impossible, for the deployed military personnel to act at the operational, tactical or personal level in a way that can be unambiguously recognised as honourable or virtuous. Implicit in this discussion about imprudent and, thus, unjust use of military force, however, is the recognition that there are occasions when prudence and justice indicate that the recourse to armed conflict or war is justified, and that the deployment of military force can, therefore, be virtuous and honourable.

It is precisely because prudence is an intellectual virtue which gives understanding and directs moral decision-making in contingent situations that it cannot be reduced to a set of rules and principles or be made prescriptive according to a person's office, rank or responsibility. Therefore, the question, "What does prudence look like for a Brigadier, and how does it differ from prudence for a Private soldier?" (Totten 2016: pers. com.) reveals a misconception of what prudence actually is. As Pieper (1960:22) says,

Prudence, however, is not only cognition, not only knowing what is what. The prime thing is that this knowledge of reality must be transformed into the prudent decision which takes effect directly in its execution. Prudence is immediately directed toward concrete realisation; hence the difference between knowledge as viewed by moral science, including 'casuistic' moral science, and knowledge as viewed by prudence. It is important not to mistake these two forms of ethical knowledge for one another.

This distinction is important and Pieper discusses it at some length. It is especially important in the Army where the approach to moral decision-making is heavily rule-based. The Army adopts this approach because it desires certainty in decision-making and security for the decision-makers (Mileham 2008:50). Yet this craving for security and certainty is based on a false, indeed imprudent, understanding of the reality of contingent situations:

At this point the element of uncertainty and risk in every moral decision comes to light. In the decisions of prudence, which by the very nature of prudence are concerned with things concrete, contingent, and future (*singularia, contingentia, futura*), there cannot be that certainty which is possible in a theoretical conclusion..... Man, then, when he comes to a decision, cannot ever be sufficiently prescient nor can he wait until logic affords him absolute certainty... The prudent man does not expect certainty where it cannot exist, nor on the other hand does he deceive himself by false certainties.
(Pieper 1960:30-31)

Courage⁸²

In the first chapter we noted that the virtue of courage equips a person to withstand danger, fear and evil, through patient endurance or persistent opposition, in order to preserve or to realise the true, the good, and the just. We also noted, however, that according to the traditional Western moral philosophy of virtue, courage is subordinate to both prudence and justice, and that the display of courage in an imprudent or unjust conflict may be vicious. As Ambrose said, "Courage without justice is a means of evil,"⁸³ (*Off.* 1.35.176), and Aquinas affirmed that the praise of courage depends upon justice (*ST II^{ae}* 123.12). The implication of this is that a soldier

⁸² My discussion of courage in the context of Just War is based on my essay found at Steele (2014).

⁸³ *fortitudo sine iustitia iniquitatis materia est.*

can only truly display courage if engaged in a Just War and that acts of bravery in an unjust war are not, in fact, courageous at all.

This implication is contested by contemporary persons for several reasons. The first objection is, as we have noted in discussing the *ius ad bellum* criteria, that the justice or injustice of deploying military force is a political decision in which the rank and file soldier and, indeed, most officers, have no say at all. Military personnel, thus, are not directly involved in the decision to engage in armed conflict, and should not, therefore, be held accountable for it. Due to this consideration Walzer (2006:34f.) postulated the concept of the 'moral equality' of combatants, in which, soldiers are not morally blameworthy if their conduct in war is in accordance with the *ius in bello* criteria of proportionality, discrimination and responsibility. By implication, then, there is no reason to question their ability to display true courage or any other virtue, even if they are fighting in an unjust war, contrary to the traditional opinion expressed by Aristotle, Cicero, Ambrose and Aquinas. The unanswerable reply to Walzer's concept of 'moral equality' of combatants is given by Manfred Rommel, the son of Field-Marshal Erwin Rommel, the German commander who was put to death by the Nazis after he was implicated in the plot to assassinate Hitler in July 1944,

all secondary virtues such as bravery, discipline, loyalty and perseverance only have validity so long as they are used in a good cause. When a positive cause becomes negative, these virtues become questionable. The German army had to experience this bitter truth during Hitler's régime.
(Rommel 1990:viii).

A similar refutation of Walzer's concept is given by McMahan (2009:6), who denies the 'moral equality' of combatants, arguing that it is simply impossible for soldiers to fulfil the *ius in bello* criteria if they fight in an unjust war, because they

cannot satisfy the constraints of *jus in bello*, even in principle, when those constraints are properly understood... it is morally wrong to fight in a war that is unjust because it lacks a just cause.

A third objection to the concept that courage is dependent on justice is based on the emotivist idea, made popular by the mass media, that all British soldiers who have deployed on military operations are 'heroes', so that the word now means much the same as 'veteran' (Steele 2014). This 'sentimentalisation' of moral terms is, in fact, a symptom of emotivism; an example of the sophistic manipulation of language and the 'Nietzschean' devaluation of moral virtue. For example, in current English usage there is a wide variety of terms which are used, more or less, as synonyms for courage, such as bravery, gallantry, fortitude, valour, daring, etc. Formerly, however, these terms had rather distinct connotations; courage meant to be emboldened in heart, bravery meant ostentatiousness, gallantry was gaudy display, and so on. The 'Nietzschean'

devaluation of the idea of courage is seen when, by conflating the meaning of all these words, they end up with the same basic connotation and persons lose the “ability in common parlance to make, for example, a clear, succinct distinction between the man who has true fortitude and the one who is all bravado,” (Steele 2014:249).

There is no easy resolution to this conundrum. The courageous man, according to Aristotle (*EN* 1115^b17), is “the one who endures or fears the right things for the right purpose in the right manner at the right time, and who shows confidence in a similar way. For the courageous man feels and acts as the circumstances merit, and as principle may dictate.”⁸⁴ In other words, “The courageous man is the one who, in the face of any specific danger, fears - and loves - ordinally because, through prudence, he understands the reality of the immediate circumstances, and, through justice, knows how to respond appropriately, despite the danger, to secure the good in those particular circumstances..... In short, only the morally virtuous can be truly courageous, because only they can respond ordinally in the face of evil, danger and injustice.” (Steele 2014:255).

This may seem a stern doctrine, but it has the support of Lord Moran, who served as a Regimental Medical Officer during the First World War. Noticing that some soldiers were better able than others to endure the demands of trench warfare, Moran made a study of courage in war and concluded:

I contend that fortitude in war has its roots in morality; that [military] selection is a search for character, and that war itself is but one more test – the supreme and final test if you will – of character. Courage can be judged from danger only if the social significance and meaning of courage is known to us, namely that a man of character in peace becomes a man of courage in war. He cannot be selfish in peace and yet be unselfish in war. Character as Aristotle taught is a habit, the daily choice of right instead of wrong; it is a moral quality which grows to maturity in peace and is not suddenly developed on the outbreak of war. For war, in spite of much that we have heard to the contrary, has no power to transform, it merely exaggerates the good and evil that are in us, till it is plain for all to read; it cannot change, it exposes. Man’s fate in battle is worked out before war begins. For his acts in war are dictated not by courage, nor by fear, but by conscience, of which war is the final test.

(Moran 1945:170)

It is noteworthy that Moran refers back to Aristotle’s teaching on the importance of habit in forming virtue. He explains Aristotle’s view by weaving habit, moral agency and moral rectitude together when he says that “Character... is a habit, the daily choice of right instead of wrong.” He, thus, explicitly links moral rectitude to courage, which most contemporary soldiers would

⁸⁴ ὁ μὲν οὖν ἃ δεῖ καὶ οὗ ἔνεκα ὑπομένων καὶ φοβούμενος, καὶ ὡς δεῖ καὶ ὅτε, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ θαρρῶν, ἀνδρείος (κατ’ ἀξίαν γάρ καὶ ὡς ἂν ὁ λόγος, πάσχει καὶ πράττει ὁ ἀνδρείος).

think are unrelated to each other. We shall return to this topic when we consider moral education in the next chapter.

Temperance

Temperance is the cardinal virtue which is aimed exclusively at the moral agent himself (Pieper 1955:55). It will be recalled that temperance is self-disciplined moderation in the enjoyment of legitimate goods in order that one does not become the slave of self-destructive behaviour and attitudes. It might seem that such self-discipline is only tangentially relevant to the soldier deployed on military operations. It is helpful to recall, therefore, that the concepts of honour and shame occupy a place in the traditional Western understanding of the virtue of temperance. These concepts are difficult for contemporary persons to understand because modern moral ideas are often framed in terms of the psychological language of 'self-actualisation' and 'repression', and the legal language of 'guilt' and 'innocence'. The traditional concept of honour, however, remains very important for military personnel. Not only because the profession of arms is one which is thought by its practitioners to be an honourable one, nor because it is one of the areas of public service which is still given actual symbols of honour in medals and through the national system of honours and awards. Honour is important for Western soldiers because it is a concept which still has relevance for the people of many polities and ethnic groups around the world and it is precisely amongst these people that the British Army is likely to be deployed on military operations in the COE. The honourable conduct of soldiers, therefore, becomes vital to achieving the operational or tactical mission, and to achieving the political and strategic objective for which the government decided to deploy the armed forces in the first place.

Furthermore, a consideration of the subordinate parts of temperance shows that many of them facilitate the soldier in justly conducting 'war amongst the people'. *Studiositas* enables a person to learn to truly understand others and to know their customs and worldview. *Honestum* makes one frank, open, credible, impartial and trustworthy in the face of conflicting opinions and when endowed with authority or power over others. The qualities of a merciful person: gentleness (*clementia*); mildness (*mansuetudo*); modesty (*modestia*); and humility (*humilitas*) enable the soldier to retain that *quies animi* in the face of turmoil, provocation, aggression, faction and discord, which Aquinas says is the especial characteristic of the temperate person (ST II^a II^ae 141.2 ad 2).

It may be wondered how this relates to the soldier deployed on demanding military operations or in the midst of combat. The opinion of Field-Marshal Sir William Slim (1957:51-53), describing the qualities of the good soldier, may help give an answer:

Any soldier who has courage, endurance, skill at arms, adaptability and discipline, will be a very efficient soldier but he will not be the British soldier, for he has something more. It may seem strange to talk of gentleness as a soldierly quality, but it is – and he has it. Time and again the British soldier has combined real toughness in hardship and battle with gentleness to the weak, the defeated, the unhappy... The British soldier is, bless him, a grim fighter but a bad hater..... Many countries produce fine soldiers, whose achievements rival those of our own. It is in character that the British soldier shows beyond others the marks of greatness. Courage, endurance, skill, adaptability, discipline they may have, but none blends these qualities together as he does with this leaven of gentleness and humour.

Sir John Fortescue in his monumental study, *A History of the British Army*, makes the same claim: “The British Army will be remembered best not for its countless deeds of daring and invincible stubbornness in battle, but for its lenience in conquest and its gentleness in domination,” (cited in Hutchinson 1945:16). These are apt descriptions of the place and importance for the contemporary soldier of the *quies animi* which arises from the virtue of *temperantia*, with its subordinate virtues of *honestum*, *clementia*, *mansuetudo*, *humilitas* and *modestia*. For this reason, therefore, I must disagree with the argument that “a certain kind of callousness is a military virtue” in officers (Biggar 2013:148; cf. pp. 116-119). This may be no more than a semantic disagreement, however, if by ‘callousness’ Biggar means that an officer, in ordering his men to fight knowing that some casualties will occur, is directed more by his prudential judgement and determined will than by his natural emotions at the thought of losing men under his command. Biggar’s discussion on love in war (2013:61f.) indicates that this might be the case and balances his statements regarding the necessity for callousness.

Honour⁸⁵

I have already mentioned the importance of honour and its contrary, shame, in the contemporary military operations amongst peoples which retain a sense of honour and shame. In the contemporary Western worldview, however, death is widely viewed as the greatest evil which can befall a person. This is not surprising if one has a purely materialist understanding of human nature, and is sceptical about truth and reality, and, therefore, about ultimate meaning and purpose. As war is an activity which involves the killing of humans, it is often perceived as the greatest social evil that can occur. Very many modern studies of war, therefore, stress the horrors and evils of war, while only a few, such as Marlantes (2012), acknowledge that there is another side to war and combat. What is paradoxical about combat is that, in addition to being frightening, confusing, lonely and loud (even in ancient times, cf. Xenophon, *Agésilas* 2.12.14), it is also the opposite: it can be exhilarating, as the enemy or fear are overcome; ordered, as the

⁸⁵ In this section I have used some observations I made about honour and shame in 2011 on an internet-based course on Greek Mythology offered by Oxford University Department of Continuing Education.

disorientation and confusion are mastered and the plan or manoeuvre comes together and 'runs like clockwork'; bonding, as the combatant shares this unique experience with his comrades in arms, and comes to love them in an unconditional way, despite their weaknesses and character flaws (Biggar 2013:61f.). Battle shows some men at their best, and they are, therefore, justly honoured; hence the dictum: "Man's fate in battle is worked out before war begins. For his acts in war are dictated not by courage, nor by fear, but by conscience, of which war is the final test." (Moran 1945:170).

I believe, therefore, that it is a skewed understanding of the nature of both war and death which leads Robinson (2006) to denigrate the importance and rôle of honour in ennobling war and the warlike character. At the end of his study of honour and the conduct of war he states:

The only possible conclusion one can draw from these facts is that... war is a ridiculous activity. The main reason why it continues to happen in the Western world is that many continue to believe that their honour is linked to their willingness to fight.
(Robinson 2006:191)

This is a damning conclusion, but one which, I believe, cannot be supported. In the context of the contemporary Western emotivist worldview it is culturally comfortable to make generalisations about the horrors of war and also to assert that men go to war simply for honour – a denigrated concept nowadays - and, therefore, that "they are in effect fighting for the sake of fighting" (Robinson 2006:190). Men go to war, not only for honour, but for a variety of reasons, and, while it may be true that some enjoy fighting for its own sake, there is no evidence that this is what motivates the majority of combatants. In fact, it is extremely difficult to understand what motivates individuals to volunteer to go to war and, even more, what motivates them in combat, as the motivations of soldiers' hearts are obscure even to the soldiers themselves (von Schell 1933:9). I think, therefore, that Robinson's conclusion more accurately reflects the denigration of the concept of honour and nobility in the contemporary West than a true judgement of what motivates men to fight. General Hackett (1962:46) makes the interesting observation that:

War does not ennoble. Kant's view that war has made more bad people than it has destroyed is probably nearer the mark. But the interesting thing is that although war most certainly does not ennoble, the preparation of men to fight in it almost certainly can and very often does.

This is a topic to which we shall return when we discuss character formation in the next chapter. Honour is not a straightforward concept, even for those who believe in it. The ancient Greek poet, Ibycus (*fl.* 550 BC), composed verse on Homeric themes and characters. In one poem he says, "*I fear that I shall earn honour from men by some sin against the gods.*"⁸⁶ The reverse side

⁸⁶ δέδοικα μή τι πὰρ θεοῖς ἀμβλακῶν τιμὰν πρὸς ἀνθρώπων ἀμείψω (cited in Plutarch, *Quaestionum Convivialum* 748^c, 9.15.2)

of honour (τιμή) for the Greeks, therefore, was an equally developed sense of shame (αἰδώς), which prevented them from falling into the sin of overweening arrogance (ὑβρις). Αἰδώς was the regard the Homeric man had for others' opinion of his excellence or virtue (ἀρετή), which was expressed in his respect for justice (δίκη) as prescribed by customary norms (θέμις) and law (νόμος), his reverence (σέβας) for the gods, the nation, the elders, and his parents, and the consequent sense of shame and remorse he felt if he violated any of these. Intimately connected with αἰδώς was νέμεσις, the righteous indignation that one man felt at another's wrong-doing (Murray 1934:83f.). It is this idea of honour and shame, combined with a belief in objective truth and goodness and beauty, which allowed a man to honour one who fell in combat:

When a Roman father told his son that it was a sweet and seemly thing to die for his country, he believed what he said. He was communicating to the son an emotion which he himself shared and which he believed to be in accord with the value which his judgement discerned in noble death. He was giving the boy the best he had, giving of his spirit to humanize him as he had given of his body to beget him. (Lewis 1946:19)

Conclusion

All of the virtues are important for the soldier involved with military operations, whether advising the government on policy, or at the strategic, operational or tactical levels; and whether engaged in combat, or in a humanitarian intervention, or in peace-keeping, or in all three at once in some form of Krulak's 'three-block war':

It is quite clear, then, that these and all the other virtues are closely related to one another. For courage, the virtue which leads people to protect their country from barbarians in time of war, or which in peacetime makes them defend the weak or protect their friends from robbers, is also full of justice. Then again, in order to know how best to defend people and help them, and to be able to seize the right opportunities of time and place, prudence and moderation are called for. And temperance, for its part, would never know what due measure was were it not for prudence; and it is only thanks to justice that we are able to identify an opportunity, or to repay someone with the appropriate measure. And in every one of these things, greatness of spirit is necessary too, as is a certain mental, not to say physical, courage, to enable a person to carry out his wishes.⁸⁷ (Ambrose, *Off.* 1.27.129. trans. Davidson)

Moral virtue is distorted through disordered and undisciplined sustentative and affective appetites. Emotivism, *i.e.* disordered and incongruous sentiment, is shown in the human agent being either inappropriately sentimental (the vice of excess) or unfeeling (the vice of deficiency). I have argued in Chapter Two that sophistry opposes the prudential realisation of the moral

⁸⁷ *Liquet igitur et has et reliquas cognatas sibi esse virtutes siquidem et fortitudo, quae vel in bello tuetur a barbaris patriam vel domi defendit infirmos vel a latronibus socios plena iustitiae sit; et scire quo consilio defendat atque adiuvet, captare etiam temporum et locorum opportunitates, prudentiae ac modestiae sit; et temperantia ipsa sine prudentia modum scire non possit; opportunitatem noscere et secundum mensuram reddere, sit iustitiae; et in omnibus istis magnanimitas necessaria sit et quaedam fortitudo mentis plerumque et corporis, ut quis quod velit implere possit.*

virtues. In the profession of arms this opposition specifically applies to justice - *i.e.* the willed intent which accords to each individual person their rightful due, and to temperance – *i.e.* the self-control and self-knowledge which leads to gentleness and kindness, qualities not unrelated to nobility of soul. This injustice and intemperance are often realised in practice at the personal and tactical levels as a lack of appropriate empathy for others. This lack of appropriate empathy becomes important in the context of British military doctrine regarding the COE, the ‘strategic corporal’, and ‘war among the people’, as it hinders the Army’s operational effectiveness. As Hackett (1962:45-46) noted:

The military virtues are not in a class apart; ‘they are virtues which are virtues in every walk of life... none the less virtues for being... set in blood and iron.’ They include such qualities as courage, fortitude and loyalty. What is important about such qualities as these... is that they acquire in the military context, in addition to their moral significance, a functional significance as well. The essential function of an armed force is to fight in battle. Given equally advanced military techniques a force in which the qualities I have mentioned are more highly developed will usually defeat a stronger force in which they are less. Thus while you may indeed hope to meet these virtues in every walk of life and a good deal of educational effort is spent on developing them as being generally desirable, in the profession of arms they are functionally indispensable. The training, group organisations, the whole pattern of the professional man at arms is designed in a deliberate effort to foster them, not just because they are morally desirable in themselves, but because they contribute to military efficiency.

In effect, Hackett is saying that the British Army ought not to strive to develop virtue in its soldiers because this will make them more excellent soldiers, but because they become more excellent soldiers by being more excellent persons in their own right. This is the rôle of moral education, to which we now turn.

MORAL EDUCATION

And I would let it be known to you that very often it has come to my mind what learned men there were formerly throughout the English nation... and what glad times there were then throughout the English nation..... and how they prospered both in warfare and in wisdom.....

and how men from abroad sought wisdom and learning here in this land..... Think what punishments came upon us in this world when we neither loved learning ourselves nor allowed it to other men. We all loved the reputation for being Christian, but very few the moral virtues.⁸⁸

Ælfred the Great (c. AD 880) 'Preface' to the translation of Gregory the Great's *Pastoralia*.

Introduction

In antiquity it was believed that the purpose of education (*παιδεία*, *disciplina*) was the formation of good character by teaching the young to live well as complete persons (Jaeger 1945:xxii-xxiii), *i.e.* its purpose was moral and aimed at equipping the young to lead fully flourishing lives. Nowadays it is often claimed that the purpose of education is to train the young to work within 'useful' sectors such as the natural sciences and the economy. Educational theory in the past recognised a distinction between the *artes liberales*, which, as knowledge worthy of free and rational persons, were pursued simply for their own sakes, and the *artes serviles*, which were pursued for the sake of something other than themselves, as, for example, knowledge of medicine is pursued for the sake of health⁸⁹ (Pieper 1952:44), as Aquinas noted, "only those arts which are ordered to knowing are called liberal arts, those which are certainly ordered to some utility attained by action are called mechanical or servile."⁹⁰ (*Sen. Met.* 1.3.8).

In this chapter I suggest that moral education is peculiarly vulnerable to sophistic corruption precisely because it is primarily delivered by means of words and requires pupils to be receptive to their teachers. To support this claim, I shall describe the traditional Western approach to moral education, based on the idea of the formation of virtuous character, in part through education in the *artes liberales*. I shall argue that sophistic corruption of education in the contemporary Western liberal democracies is seen in the change in emphasis in curricula from teaching the *artes liberales* to teaching the *artes serviles*; a change which, in part, has led to confusion and ignorance amongst teachers regarding specifically *moral* education. Finally, I shall explore how this traditional approach might yet be practicably applicable to the contemporary British Army.

Traditional Western Moral Education

During the crisis of the Second World War, when British policy-makers were much exercised by educational reform in order to create 'a land fit for heroes' after the war's end (Lester Smith

⁸⁸ 7 þe cyðan hate þæt me com spiðe oft on zemynd, hpelce piotan zio pæron zeond Anzelycynn... 7 hu zesæliglica tida þa pæron zeond Anzelycynn..... 7 hu him þa speop æzðer ze mid piðe ze mid piðdome..... 7 hu man utanbordes piðdom 7 lare hieder on lond sohte..... 7eðenc hpelc pitu us þa becomon for þisse porulde, þa þa þe hit nohpæðer ne selfe ne lufedon ne eac oðrum monnum ne lifdon lærdan: þone naman anne þe hæfdon lufedon þætte þe Cristene pæron, 7 spiðe feape þa þeapas. (adp. Sweet 1871:2-4)

⁸⁹ See, for example, Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* 3.4.2f. and Aristotle, *Politica* 1278^a8.

⁹⁰ *illae solae artes liberales dicuntur, quae ad sciendum ordinantur: illae vero quae ordinantur ad aliquam utilitatem per actionem habendam, dicuntur mechanicae sive serviles.*

1949:122f.), Sir Richard Livingstone stressed the importance of the ancient Greek conception of a liberal education. His argument is worth quoting at some length:

To understand [liberal education], we must imagine ourselves in the Greek world where the great distinction was between free men and slaves, and a liberal education was the education fitted to a free citizen... But though slavery has gone, the ideal of the free man's education is not antiquated. Here, as so often, the Greeks saw to the heart of the matter and put their fingers on an essential distinction..... they held that the free man, the real man, the complete man, must be something more than a mere breadwinner, and must have something besides the knowledge necessary to earn his living. He must have also the education which will give him the chance of developing the gifts and faculties of human nature and becoming a full human being. They saw clearly... that a man might be a doctor or a lawyer or a shopkeeper or an artisan or a clerk, but that he was also a man, and that education should recognise this and help each individual to become, so far as his capacities allowed, what a man ought to be. That was the meaning of a liberal education, and that was its aim – the making of men; and clearly it is different from a technical education which simply enables us to earn our bread, but does not make us complete human beings.

And what is a complete human being? Again I shall take the Greek answer to this question. Human beings have bodies, minds and characters. Each of these is capable of what the Greeks called 'virtue' (ἀρετή) or what we might call 'excellence'. The virtue or excellence of the body is health and fitness and strength...; the excellence of the mind is to know and to understand and to think...; the excellence of the character lies in the great virtues. This unity of the body, mind and character is man: man's aim, besides earning his living, is to make the most of all three, to have as good a mind, body and character as possible; and a liberal education, a free man's education, is to help him to this.

(Livingstone 1941:68-69)

As Livingstone makes clear, knowledge of various practical matters was incorporated in a liberal education, partly because it was recognised that it was an important aid in inculcating those habits of diligence which contributed to virtuous character:

Moreover, certain other habits of the soul are, as it were, 'mulched' and prepared for virtue by the right studies and practical arts, such as, in personal affairs, the study of literature, or harmonics and sound [in music], or geometry, or astronomy, or riding, or hunting, or weapon-handling; and, in public affairs, the more willing study of some other kinds of virtue, especially religious observance or service in the affairs of the gods, or being especially and notably diligent about parents or friends or hospitality. And this indeed [sums up] the virtues.⁹¹

(Cicero, *Par. Or.* 23.80)

The Greeks, too, argued that a liberal education consisted of μουσική, 'the liberal arts', γυμνασία, 'bodily training', and practical knowledge (Plato, *Respublica* 376^{ef.}; Aristotle, *Politica* 1336^{bf.}; Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*). It was the combination of these which helped to form nobility of

⁹¹ *Sunt autem alii quidam animi habitus ad virtutem quasi praeculti et praeperati rectis studiis et artibus, ut in suis rebus studia litterarum, ut numerorum ac sonorum, ut mensurae, ut siderum, ut equorum, ut venandi, ut armorum; in communibus propensiora studia in aliquo genere virtutis praecipue colendo aut divinis rebus deserviendo aut parentibus, amicis, hospitibus praecipue atque insigniter diligendis. Atque haec quidem virtutum.*

character (καλοκάγαθία) by developing virtue (ἀρετή). The word καλοκάγαθία, literally means being both 'admirable' (καλός) and 'good' (ἀγαθός), which was achieved by educating the young person to feel ordinate love for that which is truly admirable and good, and ordinate loathing for that which is truly execrable and bad (Lewis 1946:15-16; Livingstone 1943:91). For the ancients, therefore, liberal education aimed at the formation of virtuous and noble character in the young person. Its purpose, as Cicero (*Off.* 2.5.18) claimed, was to form the requisite virtues which would discipline the sustentative appetites and inspire love of goodness in the affective sentiments, while directing the intellect to truth and the will to right action (Steele 2015). Granting that this view of moral education is correct, the key question then becomes *how* one achieves this purpose. In traditional Western education this was done by a threefold method (Bassham 2008:249): (1) instructing the mind in objective truth by rational knowledge of first principles and material reality which lays the foundation for recognising the Natural Moral Law and spiritual reality; (2) inculcating habits of excellence by the repetition of functionally good acts which, practised in everyday activities, lays the foundation for developing virtuous habits by the repetition of morally good acts; and (3) inspiring love of goodness by the remembrance and imitation of good examples which lay the foundation of personal virtuous action.

Aquinas (*Ver.* 11.1 *ad* 6) stressed that the teacher does not simply transfer knowledge to the pupil. The pupil needs to receive the knowledge and make it his own. Hence, Aquinas - himself an experienced teacher (Kenny 1980:3f.) - stated that all pupils must start learning by simply believing what they are taught by the teacher (*ST II²II^{ae}* 2.3), *i.e.* by trusting his *auctoritas*. All education, therefore, requires co-operation between teacher and pupil, and this is implicit in the threefold method. The teacher explains the subject and exemplifies it in person, while the pupil initially imitates the teacher and aspires to live up to his example, growing to moral maturity by habitual practice and increasing knowledge till good and noble character becomes realised in him.⁹²

Plato (*Meno* 82bf.) argued that moral education is founded in part upon teaching arithmetical subjects in which personal opinion is of no consequence in arriving at the correct answer to a calculation. Meilaender (1984:57) has suggested that Plato insisted that all who entered the

⁹² In addition, Aquinas (*Sent. Eth.* 6, lect. 7) points out that all education, including moral education, must be grounded in a knowledge of the *trivium*, the basic "tools of learning" (Sayers 1948). The trivium consists of: Grammar, the study of language, by which one learns how to use words correctly to express one's thoughts and, by enabling one to read, makes the *artes liberales* accessible; Dialectic, the study of thinking, by which one learns how to reason correctly and make valid arguments; and Rhetoric, the study of communication, by which one learns how to speak well and present arguments persuasively in order to communicate one's thoughts to others (Joseph & McGlinn 2002:3). All subsequent education in the *artes liberales* is predicated on the assumption that the pupil has mastered these basic tools of learning. Due to constraints of space, I shall not discuss them in any detail in this dissertation.

Academy should have a knowledge of geometry⁹³ precisely because the proofs of geometry taught the pupil that there are certain fields of knowledge in which there are objective truths; that two plus two will always equal four, no matter what the pupil's opinion may be, thereby fostering in the pupil the disinterested desire for truth. Arithmetical studies, along with dialectic, constituted the foundations of educating the intellect and reason in rational thought. Another effect of instructing pupils in objective truth, however, is that it prepares them to recognise

that certain objective moral values and fundamental moral principles are evident to every rational creature... On this view, *instruction* plays a crucial role in moral education by helping to bring latent moral principles to full consciousness in young minds, by reminding... people of important ethical truths, by correcting false moral opinions that can arise from corrupting social influences or wilful moral blindness, and by helping us to correctly apply general moral principles to complex concrete situations.

(Bassham 2008:251)

Both Plato (*Leges* 792^e) and Aristotle (*EE* 1220^a39) asserted that the inculcation of habitual practice is fundamental to the formation of virtuous character. Aquinas agreed that habitual practice brought incipient virtue to its perfection:

Habits of virtue, before their completion, pre-exist in us in certain natural inclinations which are the beginnings of virtue, but afterwards, by the practice of works they are brought to their proper completion. Likewise, the same is said of the acquisition of rational knowledge; that certain seeds of rational knowledge pre-exist in us, that is to say, the first conceptions of the intellect.⁹⁴

(*Ver.* 11.1 *resp.*)

For the ancient Greeks one key method of inculcating habitual good practice was through bodily training (γυμνασία), which was considered a basic part of education (Aristotle, *Politica* 1337^bf.) and focussed on training the body for both athletic contests and war (Plato, *Respublica* 403-412; Lucian, *Anacharsis* 15.30)⁹⁵. This training entailed both bodily exercise and a controlled diet (Aristotle, *Politica* 1339^a; Philostratus, *Gymnasticus* 54). The bodily exercise, especially for wrestling, “was taught progressively as a sort of drill. First boys were taught to perform the separate movements or figures (σχήματα), then to combine them.” (Gardiner 1967:91). In other words, the boys were drilled in basic skills and then repeated them till they became automatic. The inculcation of good habits requires, therefore, the imposition of discipline by the teacher in which the pupils are drilled in the basics of “the right studies and practical arts”, mentioned by

⁹³ A late tradition states that inscribed above the entrance to the Academy were the words, ἀγεωμέτρητος μηδεὶς εἰσὶτω - ‘None ignorant of geometry shall enter.’ (LSJ⁹:8b).

⁹⁴ *virtutum habitus ante earum consummationem praeexistunt in nobis in quibusdam naturalibus inclinationibus, quae sunt quaedam virtutum inchoationes, sed postea per exercitium operum adducuntur in debitam consummationem. Similiter etiam dicendum est de scientiae acquisitione; quod praeexistunt in nobis quaedam scientiarum semina, scilicet primae conceptiones intellectus.*

⁹⁵ See also Plato, *Leges* 795^d, 830^{c-d}, 833^{a-b} and Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.12.1-5.

Cicero, and are taught thereby the importance of doing the small things consistently well. Bassham (2008:252) explains the relevance of this to moral education:

Virtues play a crucial role in the moral life. In early moral education, they enable children to do what is right long before they understand *why* it is right. As we become older, we acquire, through consistent performance or practice, virtues that... enable us to do what we ought to do easily, readily and largely unthinkingly.

As Aquinas observed, “from the multiplication of its acts, the habit grows”⁹⁶ (*ST I^aII^{ae} 52.3*). The repetition of drills necessary to acquire good habits, however, may be off-putting to the young. Moreover, the imposition of discipline is not sufficient in itself to inspire the young to embrace the tedium of regular repetition in order to acquire those habits which are the seedbed of virtuous character. The pupils, therefore, require an imaginative engagement with the repeated drill which helps to impart deeper meaning to those daily disciplines of learning to live well, to which subject we now turn.

The ancient Greeks recognised that each part of the human soul - sustentative, affective, and intellectual – contributes to our moral judgement and decision-making and, thus, each needs to be subject to moral education, but they particularly stressed the importance of educating the affective part of the soul. Both Plato (*Leges* 653; *Respublica* 402^a; *Meno*) and Aristotle (*EN* 1104^a) argued that our sentiments or emotions can be either congruent or incongruent with the objective reality of the world around us as revealed by our senses, and that our feelings of desire and irritation, therefore, need to be educated to respond appropriately to the various stimuli in the environment (Lewis 1946:15f.). This idea underlies the ancient and medieval approach to moral education and character formation. Commenting on Augustine’s definition of virtue as “the ordering of love,”⁹⁷ Aquinas said, “virtue is called the order or ordering of love, as it is to that end that virtue exists; for love is ordered in us by virtue.”⁹⁸ (*ST I^aII^{ae} 55.1 ad 4*). If one’s loves and emotions, however, are not ordered properly then one’s moral life will also become disordered. “Moral virtue prevents disordered emotion from leading to inappropriate action” (Kenny 1980:21).⁹⁹

We have already noted that, for the Greeks, the key method by which the emotions were morally educated was through μουσική. Μουσική was so called because it constituted the province of the nine Muses, the daughters of the goddess Mnemosyne (Μνημοσύνη), whose

⁹⁶ *multiplicatis actibus, crescit habitus*

⁹⁷ *ordo amoris (Civ. Dei 15.22).*

⁹⁸ *virtus dicitur ordo vel ordinatio amoris, sicut id ad quod est virtus: per virtutem enim ordinatur amor in nobis.*

⁹⁹ *virtus passiones inordinatas superat; moderatas autem producit... passiones inordinatae inducunt ad peccandum; non autem si sint moderatae. “virtue overcomes inordinate emotions; indeed, it produces regulated ones... inordinate emotions lead to sin; not, however, if they have been regulated.” (Aquinas, ST I^aII^{ae} 59.5 ad 1-2).*

name, significantly, means 'remembrance' (Pieper 1990:59). Μουσική comprised, not only music, but all those subjects which later came to be called the *artes liberales*. It entailed, however, not simply studying the *artes liberales*, the province of the Muses, but also being inspired by these goddesses, through the remembrance of ancient wisdom and of past great and noble deeds and words, to develop a truly free and noble character. In antiquity the truth that μουσική was central to moral education was recognised by all those societies influenced by Hellenism, especially the Romans,¹⁰⁰ but perhaps the best evidence for this recognition is the fact that the idea was endorsed by Jewish writers, even though the Jews opposed much of Hellenistic culture and resisted attempts to Hellenize them. Hence, Philo, a Jewish philosopher of the First Century AD, stated, that the soul is trained "through literature, arithmetic, geometry, and the liberal arts (μουσική), and philosophy as a whole."¹⁰¹ (Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 2.229-230).

A.N. Whitehead observed, "Moral education is impossible without the habitual vision of greatness," (cited in Livingstone 1943:50). This habitual vision of greatness is presented to pupils through μουσική in two ways: by inculcating reverence for the community's traditional customs and ancient laws; and by bringing to remembrance (μνημοσύνη¹⁰²) its traditional stories and myths, its past history and achievements, its famous heroes and infamous villains. Moral education, therefore, entails two kinds of instruction: rational (λόγος, *ratio*), which is aimed at imparting a vision of truth, *i.e.* it educates the reason so that one's ideas about reality conform to it as it actually is; and imaginative (μῦθος, *fabula*), which is aimed at imparting a vision of goodness, *i.e.* it educates the sentiments and imagination so that one desires the good and aspires to it. It imparts a vision of one's community which is based on the community's stories passed down by long tradition. This vision is to be realised in one's own attitudes and actions. "Myth and heroic poetry are the nation's inexhaustible treasure of great examples: from them it derives its ideals and its standards for daily life," (Jaeger 1945:41). The way in which this is done is through the integration of one's personal story with that of the community, so that one's sentiments are educated through a multi-layered, imaginatively engaging story which allows one to find meaning in one's own life by situating it in the larger, equally meaningful, life of one's family, one's community, and one's nation. This vision of past greatness inspires the young to imitate the example of their forebears: "As Plato notes in the *Symposium*, good ethical role models not only provide patterns of embodied excellence for us to emulate, but also inspire, encourage and sometimes shame us into virtuous behaviour." (Bassham 2008:251). The moral

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* 1.10 for the argument that history provides moral instruction.

¹⁰¹ διά τε γραμμάτων καὶ ἀριθμῶν γεωμετρίας τε καὶ μουσικῆς καὶ τῆς συμπάσης φιλοσοφίας.

¹⁰² Remember that Μνημοσύνη was the mother of the Muses.

dangers to a community or nation of the sophistic creation of pseudo-realities, which corrupt the imagination of its people, should now become more apparent.

I have claimed that inculcating reverence (σέβας, *veneratio*) for the community's traditional norms is one means of educating the affective part of the soul to desire the good and strive for it. Norms (ἤθηα, *mores*), in the sense in which I am using the word, consist of the community's customary usage (θέμις, *consuetudo*) and day-to-day practice (ἔθος, *habitus*). *Pietas*, or piety, is dutiful conduct carried out in conformity with the customary norms and laws of one's community due to the feelings of reverence one has for them and for the community itself (L&S 1980:1374c-1375a). Its nearest Greek equivalent is εὐσέβεια. It is worth noting that ἤθηα, which I have translated 'norms', is the plural of ἦθος, which may be translated into English as 'character' (e.g. Plato, *Phaedrus* 243^c), but can also mean 'norm' or 'custom' (LSJ⁹:766b), as can its cognate ἔθος, which can also mean 'habit'. In translating from the Greek philosophers it is not always easy to determine which connotation is to be preferred. Likewise, Aquinas sometimes uses the three Latin terms (*mos, consuetudo, habitus*) synonymously (Deferrari 1960). In the very words used to describe moral character, therefore, there is already implicit an indissoluble connection between customary norms, normative morality and normal or habitual practice.¹⁰³

As we have noted, one of the ways in which reverence for tradition can be inculcated is through the telling of the community's old stories or 'myths'. MacIntyre (1985:216) argued that

Mythology, in its original sense, is at the heart of things... And so too of course is that moral tradition from heroic society to its medieval heirs according to which the telling of stories has a key part in educating us into the virtues.

This is because humans are story-telling animals, so persons derive their sense of how they should act in any given situation by correctly identifying, firstly, the kind of story in which they are caught up, and, second, the particular rôle they are playing in that particular story. This is done through hearing and learning the community's stories, in which the different situations, and the appropriate responses to those situations by the different characters of the community, are recounted (MacIntyre 1985:216). It is through hearing "the myths we live by" that we learn how to interpret the imaginative symbols by which we explain and give meaning to the world around us and describe how we should live rightly in it (Midgley 2004). It is worth stressing that by 'myth' we do not imply that the story is untrue, we mean a story which conveys a deep truth, but one which cannot always be adequately expressed in a less imaginatively inspiring way.

when I use *myth*... I refer to the universal instinct of any human group, large or small, to invest, almost always unconsciously, certain stories or events or places or

¹⁰³ ἢ δ' ἠθικὴ ἐξ ἔθους περιγίνεται, ὅθεν καὶ τοῦνομα ἔσχηκε μικρὸν παρεκκλίνον ἀπὸ τοῦ ἔθους. – "'morals' arise from customary 'mores', hence the name has but a small deviation from 'mores'." (Aristotle, *EN* 1103^a17)

persons, real or fictional, with an uncommon significance; to turn them into instinctive centres of reference... the story becomes a communal possession, the agreed and classic embodiment of some way of thinking or feeling.
(Tillyard 1961:10)

It might be wondered how the pagan idea of immersing the pupil in history and myth relates to the moral philosophy of Aquinas described in my first chapter. One answer is that Christians inherited a moral tradition, not only from Classical culture, but also from the Hebrew Bible, which gives a vision of a universal history under God's overarching moral governance for the whole of humanity, not just for a single nation, from Creation through to its final consummation at the Day of Doom (Butterfield 1949; Pieper 1969; Meeks 1993). The stories of past heroes and of one's community or nation are given greater moral depth by being fitted into this universal history, which confirms both the Natural Moral Law and God's Divine Law, as well as teaching that obedience and conformity to God's moral laws are not simply one's duty, but one's delight.

Josef Pieper (1969:40f.) explains that theologians with this universal understanding of history challenge two different forms of historicism; the first is the belief that human history is a record of the ineluctable march of human 'progress' from worse to better. The second is "the despairing concept of historical absurdity... which asserts the absolute meaninglessness of the historical process." Pieper notes that one's conception of human nature, of how it is integral to the whole natural order and what this indicates about both the ultimate meaning of everyday human acts and the ultimate future of humanity itself, can either lead one to ennobling hope or nihilistic despair. If one believes that human existence and, therefore, life itself are ultimately meaningless, then it is impossible to have any true hope in the face of present suffering and sorrow or in a future which inevitably culminates in non-existence. Hope, however, gives one the ennobling vision that what one does in the everyday world of the here-and-now, does ultimately matter, and this vision inspires one to strive to do well, to be better, to achieve the fullest potential of which one is capable,¹⁰⁴ because every individual thing within the created order, from bread and wine to wood and stone, not to mention each individual human person, made in God's Own image, becomes charged with profound meaning, even if one cannot fully grasp that meaning in the contingent workaday world of the present. Merely living in such a world as, according to the universal conception of history, this one is, requires a person to act and be in a way that is concordant with its majesty and mystery; and when he sees this 'vision of greatness', he cannot do otherwise than be ennobled in character and live in the hope of the fulfilment of his own redeemed nature (Tolkien 1946:61-63).

¹⁰⁴ Recall that this is Aquinas's definition of virtue (*Virt. Comm.* 9.15).

It is noteworthy that the traditional method of moral education does not entail the intellectual study of moral philosophy, but emphasizes imaginative immersion in stories of the community.

Mere instruction in morality is not sufficient to nurture the virtues. It might even backfire, especially when the presentation is heavily exhortative and the pupil's will is coerced. Instead, a compelling vision of the goodness of goodness itself needs to be presented in a way that is attractive and stirs the imagination. A good moral education addresses both the cognitive and affective dimensions of human nature. Stories are an irreplaceable medium for this kind of moral education – that is, the education of character.
(Guroian 1998:20)

Responding to recommendations that schools should approach moral education by lessons in moral philosophy, Mary Warnock (1979:79) remarked that such lessons would not change the moral behaviour of school pupils, because a “man (or a child) may be knowledgeable, rational, logical and astute, yet not morally good. For to be morally good is to have a certain sort of character, not a certain sort of ability, nor a certain sort of knowledge.” Warnock stressed that the formation of character entailed presenting pupils with a vision of goodness which inspired them to emulate those who exemplify goodness themselves. “In the end, though these are harsh words, a child develops a good character largely by following a good example. This is the only way that virtue can be ‘taught’,” (Warnock 1979:83). Moral education is practical, not theoretical. In fact, theoretical teaching of moral philosophy is rightly viewed with some misgiving, especially as it is peculiarly vulnerable to sophistic corruption.

Sophistic Corruption of Education

in his March 2016 Budget speech, George Osborne, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, said he wanted mathematics to become a compulsory subject for all school pupils till the age of eighteen, in order “to boost the country's productivity” (O'Grady & Law 2016b:23). According to Ball (2008:1),

Education has become a major political issue, a major focus of media attention and the recipient of a constant stream of initiatives and interventions from government... Education is now seen as a crucial factor in ensuring economic productivity and competitiveness in the context of ‘informational capitalism’. In other words, education policy is increasingly thought about and made within the context of the ‘pressures’ and requirements of globalisation.

Such proposals to increase the proportion of the school curriculum given over to the *artes serviles* are not new in British politics. In 1916 in a parliamentary speech regarding educational reform, Viscount Haldane advocated the introduction of more training in the natural sciences and technology on the grounds that it was “necessary to train the future generation of industrial experts to retain the position of this country in the markets and factories of the world” (Haldane 1916:20), and “to preserve our great industrial and commercial position.” (Haldane 1916:17).

He did not deny the importance of the *artes liberales* in the school curriculum, but the educational reform he proposed was focussed exclusively on the *artes serviles*. Haldane (1916:74-75) concluded his speech by stating,

If money is spent on these things it will come back, not ten times or a hundred times, but a thousand times. It is all vital to us. The old order is passing away, and we are face to face with a new order. Our old methods will not avail us any longer. That is why one hopes that the Government will take the field in preparing the nation for the struggle which lies before us as soon as this war is over – a struggle not less deadly and not less terrible, because, as I have said, it will not be obvious and it will be slow.

Since 1916 Parliament has passed 36 Education Acts and published a host of policy Papers and proposals (Gillard 2011). Yet it is remarkable that, despite repeated educational reform along the lines Haldane suggested, in the last hundred years Britain has notably failed to retain her pre-eminent position in the world. There are very many reasons for this failure and some have no connection whatsoever with education (Halsey 1981:123-124). It could be argued, however, that educational reform over the last century, with its increased emphasis on utilitarian subjects and the concomitant rejection of the traditional Western understanding of the fundamentally moral purpose of education, has materially contributed to the UK's loss of stature in the world. When policy-makers primarily see pupils as a means of national economic production, they necessarily no longer see them as human persons, each with a unique character to be nurtured. Policy-makers no longer perceive the purpose of education to be teaching the young to live a fully flourishing life by means of the *artes liberales*, but, instead, see it as teaching the *artes serviles* so that the young can fulfil utilitarian rôles which support national economic goals. Political statements about improving education for the young, thus, seem to be no more than sophistry. Discussing the language of government educational policy, Ball (2008:5) notes:

policy discourses work to privilege certain ideas and topics and speakers and exclude others. Policy discourses also organise their own specific rationalities, making particular sets of ideas obvious, common sense and 'true'. Discourses mobilise truth claims and constitute rather than simply reflect social reality..... Policies are very specific and practical regimes of truth and value and the ways in which policies are spoken and spoken about, their vocabularies, are part of the creation of their conditions of acceptance and enactment. They construct the inevitable and the necessary.

Ball's meaning is clear: contemporary British educational policy-makers manipulate pupils and parents and deny them contact with reality by the sophistic abuse of language and power.

In his advocacy of the *artes serviles* Haldane does not seem to have wondered whether or not they really ought to be emphasized over the *artes liberales* as he proposed, given that Britain had actually reached its pre-eminent position in industry, trade, and empire with an educational system which focussed almost exclusively on the *artes liberales*, and which emphasized the

moral worth of this type of education, while retaining an aristocratic disregard for utilitarian training (Lester Smith 1949:87ff.). In his speech, Haldane (1916:65-66), made only one short comment on moral education, in which, notably, he confused it with religious education. His neglect of moral education appears to arise from a lack of recognition that it provided the unifying purpose of traditional Western liberal education and that preservation of national economic productivity could never be an adequate substitute as a unifying purpose for modern education.

The educational problem facing the United Kingdom in 1916 was very like that facing Athens in the Fifth Century BC: How to make the change from aristocracy to democracy with minimal internal disruption to the state while retaining pre-eminence amongst other nations. As we have seen, the Athenian solution to this educational problem was to idealise *καλοκάγαθία*, the traditional virtues of the aristocrat (Aristotle, *EE* 1248^b10), and to seek to impart this ideal of nobility of character to the citizenry at large (Jaeger 1945:417-418). The solution adopted in Britain appears to have been the opposite: it has been to disenchant and dishonour the ideal of the gentleman (Scruton 2000) and to promote egalitarianism and uniformity. The Athenians appealed to *καλοκάγαθία* and aimed to raise the aspirations of the citizens to that of achieving their highest ideal. They based their moral education on a national narrative which offered heartening exemplars, fired the imagination, and imparted meaning to the young, *e.g.* Pericles' Funeral Oration (Thucydides, *Historiae* 2.35ff.) Contemporary Britons appeal to 'fairness' and 'inclusion' and strive to keep all equal so that none should feel excluded or disadvantaged (Marwick 1990:236). Arguably, the predominant current national narrative is one of debunking past achievements and heroes and disenchanting past ideals, so that it is doubtful whether modern British youths have any coherent national vision of moral goodness to which to aspire.¹⁰⁵

Roger Scruton (2000:245-246) observed:

Pondering... the history of modern Europe since the French Revolution, I find myself confirmed in the desire to praise the English for the virtues they once displayed... This does not alter the fact that these virtues are rapidly disappearing. Having been famous for their stoicism, their decorum, their honesty, their gentleness and their sexual puritanism, the English now subsist in a society in which these qualities are no longer honoured... England is no longer a gentle country, and the old courtesies and decencies are disappearing..... None of that should surprise us. The loss of traditional virtue and local identity has occurred throughout Europe and its diaspora. England was part of Christendom, one branch of a spiritual tree which was struck by enlightenment and died. The global economy, the democratisation of taste, the sexual revolution, pop culture and television have worked to erase the

¹⁰⁵ Cf. two films released in 2017: *Churchill*, written by Alex von Tunzelmann, in which Churchill is portrayed as vacillating and cowardly and is accused of treachery, and *Dunkirk*, written by Christopher Nolan, in which the context of the battle and the evacuation is never explained and the main British soldier-character is portrayed as conniving and cowardly.

sense of spiritual identity in every place where piety shored up the old forms of knowledge and local custom fortified the moral sense.

Haldane was correct in foretelling that a deadly struggle, slow and hidden, lay ahead of Britain in the 20th Century. He was wrong, however, to see it solely in terms of material prosperity. The real struggle has been spiritual. It has been over whether the British would remain true to the Western tradition of moral virtue and nobility of character or whether they would succumb to what I have described as 'sophistry'. In both states a tremendous and prolonged war against totalitarian enemies – the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC) for Athens, and the two World Wars (AD 1914-1945) for Britain – brought about national exhaustion and loss of empire. Athens, however, continued to blossom culturally during the Peloponnesian War, despite sustaining more casualties in proportion to population than did Britain in the 20th Century, and recovered from the war remarkably quickly (Kagan 2005:486). The moral and cultural resilience of Athens is evidenced by her incredible productivity in the liberal arts; architecture, drama, history and philosophy, so that she is still regarded as the highest example of Western civilisation over two thousand years later (Cartledge 2009:112). It is notable that Britain has not shown a similar resilience, but has manifested, instead, a decline in rationality and morality, which has been particularly precipitous since the end of the Second World War. In a BBC broadcast, titled *Warning to the Western World*, Alexander Solzhenitsyn observed:

Britain – the kernel of the western world as we have already called it – has experienced this sapping of its strength and will to an even greater degree, perhaps, than any other country... Contemporary society in Britain is living on self-deception and illusions both in the world of politics and in the world of ideas..... we have become hopelessly enmeshed in our slavish worship of all that is pleasant, all that is comfortable, all that is material – we worship things, we worship products. (Solzhenitsyn 1976:44).

This decline in rationality and morality is exemplified in the four main objections of contemporary educationalists to traditional Western moral education. The first objection is "fear of indoctrination, of extreme pressure on children, of arbitrary rules and equally capricious punishments" (Warnock 1979:76). The second is that the advocacy of traditional Western ethics and moral education is inappropriate in the contemporary pluralist, multicultural, and inclusive UK (*ibid.*). The third objection argues that any history celebrating specifically British achievements will entail a return to what has been called "the Whig interpretation of history" (Butterfield 1973), and that this approach to historiography is now thoroughly discredited because it is predicated on false assumptions about both the present and the past. The fourth objection comes from post-modern historians who are deeply sceptical about the possibility of discovering any objective historical truth at all and who argue that historiography is simply the artificial 'construction' of a 'narrative' by various vested interests in the present (Jenkins 1991).

I shall address each of these objections in turn, except the last. I regard the post-modern attitude to historiography as a particularly self-defeating example of sophistic scepticism because, if our knowledge of the past is simply an untrue, artificial 'construct' by present-day vested interests, then the post-modern interpretation of both history and historiography are themselves untrue 'constructs'. Both historiography and the study of history, therefore, become meaningless, and, to paraphrase what Aquinas said of the Sophists (*Sen. Met. 4, lect. 12.9*), it is not surprising that post-modern historians should be grieved by the fact that, if it is not possible to discover the truth, their study is vain.¹⁰⁶

The first objection, that the traditional Western approach to moral education is essentially the same as indoctrination, is the most serious objection of the four and I shall, therefore, deal with it at greater length than the others in order to clearly delineate the difference between indoctrination and moral education. In his Riddell Memorial Lectures, delivered at Durham University in 1943, C.S. Lewis addressed just this issue, arguing that it was not the traditional approach to moral education which was indoctrination, but rather the sophistic manipulation of children seen in modern educational practices. As his argument is very closely presented, I shall quote it at some length. Lewis argued that, unless educators believed in objective truth and an objective Natural Moral Law which was understood to be binding on all persons, there was nothing to stop the educators from indoctrinating their pupils and manipulating them in any way the educators, or the policy- and opinion-makers in society, saw fit. He contrasted this with the ancient idea of moral education:

Until quite modern times all teachers and even all men believed the universe to be such that certain emotional reactions on our part could be either congruous or incongruous to it – believed, in fact, that objects did not merely receive, but could *merit*, our approval or disapproval, our reverence, or our contempt... believed inanimate nature to be such that certain responses could be more 'just' or 'ordinate' or 'appropriate' to it than others..... St. Augustine defines virtue as *ordo amoris*, the ordinate condition of the affections in which every object is accorded that kind and degree of love which is appropriate to it. Aristotle says that the aim of education is to make the pupil like and dislike what he ought. When the age for reflective thought comes, the pupil who has been thus trained in 'ordinate affections' or 'just sentiments' will easily find the first principles in Ethics: but to the corrupt man they will never be visible at all and he can make no progress in that science. Plato before him had said the same.

(Lewis 1946:15-16)

It will be seen that Lewis's description of the traditional approach to moral education as being the transmission of ordinate sentiments regarding the objective truth of reality accords with an Aristotelian or Thomist account of reality, truth, and human nature, but that it is opposed to the

¹⁰⁶ Cf., also, the refutation of modernist and post-modernist historiography in Clark 2004.

views of the Sophists and their modern successors. Lewis argued that traditional moral education was based on the concept that objective truth about reality is knowable by humans and that our emotional responses to what we thus know of reality can either be in accordance with its objective truth or discordant with it. In this regard our emotions

can be in harmony with reason (when we feel liking for what ought to be approved) or out of harmony with reason (when we perceive that liking is due but cannot feel it). No emotion is, in itself, a judgement: in that sense all emotions and sentiments are alogical. But they can be reasonable or unreasonable as they conform to Reason or fail to conform.

(Lewis 1946:18)

Sophistic scepticism about the possibility of objective knowledge of reality, if true, would mean that there is no truth with which our emotions can ever be in accordance. "On this view, the world of facts, without one trace of value, and the world of feelings without one trace of truth or falsehood, justice or injustice, confront one another, and no *rapprochement* is possible." (Lewis 1946:18). Lewis argued that the effect on moral education of such sophistic scepticism is that those who advocate it,

if they are logical, must regard all sentiments as equally non-rational, as mere mists between us and the real objects. As a result, they must either decide to remove all sentiments, as far as possible, from the pupil's mind: or else to encourage some sentiments for reasons that have nothing to do with their intrinsic 'justness' or 'ordinancy'. The latter course involves them in the questionable process of creating in others by 'suggestion' or incantation a mirage which their own reason has successfully dissipated..... If they embark on this course the difference between the old and the new education will be an important one. Where the old initiated, the new merely 'conditions'. The old dealt with its pupils as grown birds deal with young birds when they teach them to fly: the new deals with them more as the poultry-keeper deals with young birds – making them thus or thus for purposes of which the birds know nothing. In a word, the old was a kind of propagation – men transmitting manhood to men: the new is merely propaganda.

(Lewis 1946:18-20)

Unlike propaganda, moral education is deeply concerned with the truth and goodness of both its message and means of delivery. St Augustine, in discussing the *artes liberales*, affirmed that "we have deduced that education, unless it teaches truth, cannot be education."¹⁰⁷ (*Soliloquia* 2.11.20). For Plato, too, μουσική was predicated on imparting truth. Hence his much debated insistence that the poets, the story-tellers who recount the human knowledge and wisdom learned in the past, should be censored and, if they teach falsehood or a debased morality, should be banished from his ideal state (Plato, *Respublica* 603^b-608^b).¹⁰⁸ All this may seem rather remote from the moral education of contemporary officers and soldiers in the British Army, but it is, in fact, very pertinent. The Army is increasingly adopting an educational approach of trying

¹⁰⁷ *conlegimus disciplinam, nisi vera doceat, disciplinam esse non posse.*

¹⁰⁸ For a fuller explanation of Plato's case against the poets and artists see Nettleship (1935), Jaeger (1945), & Murdoch (1999).

to “improve behaviours” by enforcing “attitudes” that are considered “appropriate” by “wider society”, although there is no clear definition of what is meant by any of these terms, and no thought about who determines what is or is not “appropriate”.¹⁰⁹ Such an approach is very different from that of inspiring persons with that ennobling ‘vision of greatness’ which enables them to fully develop their own individual potential and grow in moral maturity.

The second objection to traditional Western moral education is that it is inappropriate in the contemporary pluralist and relativist UK. In the mid-2000s the John Templeton Foundation sponsored *Learning for Life*, a study in the UK which, through a survey of just over 73,000 persons, assessed (1) the moral values of young Britons aged 3 to 25 and how these changed as persons aged; (2) different approaches to moral education; and (3) the rôle of family, schooling, religion, society, and government in developing an individual’s sense of morality. In 2010 James Arthur, the principal researcher, published an ‘executive summary’ of the conclusions reached in the study. Arthur (2010:21) noted, “All reports suggest that young people are interested in their own character, and are concerned with enhancing the good aspects of their characters.” He also noted, however, that in the contemporary UK this concern of young people with the development of their own moral character is no longer nurtured and guided by teachers or others in positions of influence in society.

Arthur (2010:2-7) discusses several reasons for the hesitancy many British educationalists feel in providing unambiguous guidance in moral education: Firstly, teaching moral education is hindered by the fact, already noted, that the language and terms of contemporary moral philosophy are themselves confused and ambiguous. Second, teachers “often themselves appear to lack any clear conception of what values are, which values are to be promoted, as well as any knowledge of how.” (Arthur 2010:4). Third, the belief that in the modern UK, a pluralist, multicultural society with relative values and varying accounts of morality, it is wrong to teach traditional Western moral values to children and that they should be allowed to develop their own, what in the US is sometimes called “values clarification” (Sandin 1992:56f.). Fourth, the concomitant belief that “anyone who expresses moral approval or disapproval is in fact expressing only his own personal taste, but expressing it in a bogus, misleadingly authoritative

¹⁰⁹ I cannot provide a written reference for this assertion, but it is based on my experience of working in Army Headquarters throughout 2017 and sitting on numerous working groups aimed at “improving behaviours” or enforcing “appropriate behaviours” which are Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) compliant. For example, it is now a mandatory part of all officers’ and soldiers’ annual reports, that a comment must be made by their superior regarding how far they have “furthered D&I” in the Army, even though some protected characteristics under D&I regulations are likely to be in opposition to each other, e.g. religious belief and questions of sexuality. The fact that behaviour has become a plural noun – “behaviours” – is itself telling of the mechanistic model of human nature underlying this approach.

form.” (Warnock 1979:85). Fifth, the idea that in a pluralist liberal democracy, the government has no place in drafting a moral education syllabus which will, thereby, promote a particular view of morality. Finally, “a growing ‘moral correctness’ mind-set in education, insofar as teachers will often refuse to pronounce things to be ‘immoral’ for fear of being branded judgemental or discriminatory.” (Arthur 2010:7).

There are, however, a number of counter-arguments to this prevailing relativist approach to moral education. The first is that it is false to assert that any society or any individual can simply choose their own moral values *ex nihilo*, as if there were no pre-existing, socially recognised normative morality (Lewis 1946:31-35). Warnock (1979:84) has trenchantly stated that the “notion that there are *no* shared values, no basis for a common morality, is totally misconceived, and extremely damaging.” She then goes on to rebut the concomitant idea that expressions of moral approbation or disapprobation are no more than expressions of personal, idiosyncratic opinion, as morality only ever occurs in the context of a community of persons living together. “It is an attempt to ensure that people living alongside one another are better off as a whole than they would be if no moral constraints existed. To act in the consciousness of such constraints is to act morally.” (Warnock 1979:85). Her rebuttal of the idea that morality is simply based on personal opinion reinforces the point made by Aquinas and MacIntyre (1985), on different grounds, that there can never be such a thing as private morality. Thirdly, the idea that Government has no place in promoting morality in schools ignores “the fact that government action, and in fact all public policy, is ultimately concerned with, and informed by, questions of how we should live our lives and of the type of citizens we should be,” (Arthur 2010:4). Finally, the fear teachers have of appearing judgemental and intolerant if they express moral views ignores that fact that students encounter real moral issues in their everyday lives and that “Teachers are perceived to be moral authorities by their pupils, whatever they themselves may think about their teaching,” (Arthur 2010:7). Even refusing to make a moral judgement entails taking a stand on a moral issue which will be communicated to the student, albeit without formal instruction. It was precisely this covert moral education which C.S. Lewis challenged in his 1943 Riddell Lectures at Durham.

The third objection to traditional Western moral education, and particularly to immersing the young in the stories of their community’s past, is that such a retelling of past events is likely to be false and biased. In 1931 Herbert Butterfield published a seminal text on historiography titled, *The Whig Interpretation of History*, in which he criticised any philosophy of history which was expressly teleological, such as Marxist historicism or, in England, the form of historicism which interpreted the past as an inevitable forward march of progress toward modern liberalism and

which, therefore, judged the acts and persons of the past with continual reference to the present, in which they were categorised in terms of how far they were progressive or obscurantist (Butterfield 1973:16-17). It was this English historicism which he labelled 'the whig interpretation of history' and proceeded to demonstrate that it was, in fact, based on flawed historical reasoning, which tended

to emphasise certain principles of progress in the past and to produce a story which is the ratification if not the glorification of the present. This whig version of the course of history is not... a problem in the philosophy of history, but rather... an aspect of the psychology of historians.
(Butterfield 1973:9)

Butterfield stressed that the flawed reasoning which he was criticising was particularly likely to occur in any attempt to abridge history, partly because such abridgement necessitates the selection of persons or ideas of the past from the perspective of those which are salient in the present, combined with an interpretation of past events which seeks to explain the present, so that it becomes almost natural for the historian to validate the *faits accomplis* of the present by a skewed interpretation of past events as being the result of an inevitable historical process and of the fixed purpose of past persons, as if they had anticipated the present. Butterfield (1973:20-22) argued that a better historical method is simply to study the past for its own sake and inherent interest, *i.e.* as one of the *artes liberales*, and to acknowledge that there is no overarching plan of inevitable progress towards modern liberalism in history, which is actually the confused and unpredictable process of changeable and clashing human wills, imperfect knowledge at the time, and happenstance. The historicism criticised by Butterfield is prone to make historical interpretations which are narrowly ideological or jingoistic. It is obvious that military history is peculiarly vulnerable to such a jingoistic bias. Butterfield was right to criticise 'the whig interpretation of history', but, in his critique he also inadvertently undermined the fact that, on the whole, Britain has indeed been a bastion of liberty in modern times.

Butterfield's criticism of this peculiarly British form of historicism potentially undermines the case for a moral education in the UK based on presenting an inspiring vision of goodness rooted in the great persons and deeds of British history. He also, however, provides us with the answer to his criticism that the whig interpretation of history entails an abridgement of British history which illegitimately emphasises the part and rôle of liberalism in British history. Different from, but closely attached to the idea of Britain as the bearer of the liberal ideal, is the idea of Britain as a bastion of liberty. This idea is perhaps best summarised in the words of William Pitt the Younger, uttered at the height of the Napoleonic Wars, "England has saved herself by her exertions, and will, as I trust, save Europe by her example" (Coupland 1915:351). The idea of

Britain as a bulwark of freedom was implicitly attacked by Butterfield in 1931 in *The Whig Interpretation of History*. It is, however, one of the foundational 'myths we live by' in the UK (Tillyard 1961:108f.), and it is one which has inspired generations of British soldiers on active service. During the Second World War when British liberal democracy and ideals were under grave threat, Butterfield wrote another short book titled, *The Englishman and his History*, in which he recanted of his earlier critique of whig historiography:

Those who, perhaps in the misguided austerity of youth, wish to drive out that whig interpretation, (that particular thesis which controls our abridgment of English history,) are sweeping a room which humanly speaking cannot long remain empty... We, on the other hand, will not dream of wishing it away, but will rejoice in an interpretation of the past which has grown up with us, has grown up with the history itself, and has helped to make the history..... Therefore... we will celebrate this whig history of ours with a robust but regulated pride; observing the part which an interpretation of history has played in building up the centuries and creating the England that we know.
(Butterfield 1944:3-4).

The strength of the whig interpretation of history, which Butterfield belatedly recognised, was that it made the traditions of the nation accessible to the present generation. Butterfield acknowledged that, while the method of 'whiggish' historical interpretation is flawed, that does not make the story of the nation which the whig historians recounted false. Their understanding of the process of historical change may be wrong, but their understanding of what it is important to bring to constant remembrance in the face of that historical change is right. It is this right remembrance of "the habitual vision of greatness" of our own national past which is of use in moral education. There has, however, been a reaction to the telling of this vision of greatness amongst contemporary educationalists, for whom it smacks of jingoistic 'patriotism', which is seen as being wholly negative. But jingoism and patriotism are not the same thing, and patriotism – love of one's homeland – is both natural and just.

C.S. Lewis has described how patriotism contributes to the moral education of the individual. It is rooted, firstly, in piety; a love of home and of the way of life lived there, but it is also rooted in:

a particular attitude to our country's past. I mean that past as it lives in popular imagination; the great deeds of our ancestors... This past is felt both to impose an obligation and to hold out an assurance; we must not fall below the standards our fathers set us, and because we are their sons there is good hope we shall not. This feeling has not quite such good credentials as the sheer love of home. The actual history of every country is full of shabby and even shameful things... But who can condemn what clearly makes many people, at many important moments, behave so much better than they could have done without its help? I think it is possible to be strengthened by the image of the past without being either deceived or puffed up. The image becomes dangerous in the precise degree to which it is mistaken, or

substituted, for serious and systematic historical study. The stories are best when they are handed on and accepted as stories. I do not mean by this that they should be handed on as mere fictions (some of them are after all true). But the emphasis should be on the tale as such, on the picture which fires the imagination, the example which strengthens the will.

(Lewis 1960b:35-36)

This brings us back to the traditional Western approach to moral education and character formation, based on instructing in objective truth and, thus, the Natural Moral Law, inculcating virtuous habits, and inspiring love of goodness through remembrance and emulation of past exemplars. None of these can happen, however, where teachers do not themselves know what truth or goodness or virtue are, which is arguably the current position in British education. As mentioned in the first chapter, Aquinas added depth to the Graeco-Roman understanding of moral psychology by demonstrating how the seven capital vices (pride, envy, wrath, sloth, avarice, gluttony, and lust) specifically oppose the cardinal virtues and deform moral character. Consideration of the seven capital vices will reveal that they are essentially disordered expressions of our appetites for the good. Further consideration will reveal how frequently and extensively the capital vices are appealed to or stimulated in the contemporary UK through advertising, films, television, the internet and other media, something which was alluded to in the second chapter. Contemporary British society has inverted the traditional understanding of virtues as good habits and positively advocates the seven capital vices as essential to the good life. Indeed, some modern psychologists even argue that ‘a little bit of sin’ is good for one (Laham 2012), which reveals a basic misunderstanding of the traditional view of sins as *enslaving* bad habits which destroy the freedom and well-being of the person who is so enslaved. It is, however, important to note that, contrary to this contemporary inversion of traditional morality and the concomitant loss of virtue in modern British society, the British armed forces have, until recently, retained the traditional approach to moral education predicated on the idea of virtuous character formation (Robinson 2008:5-7).

British Army Ethics Training

On 3rd April 2000, the British Army first formally articulated its ‘core values’ (Evans 2000), issuing two different pamphlets, one for soldiers and one for commanders, but both titled *Values and Standards of the British Army*. In his foreword to the commanders’ edition, General Sir Roger Wheeler, Chief of the General Staff, wrote that the pamphlet was “a simple statement of the values that have traditionally sustained us, and the standards of conduct expected of us.” (AC-63813, 2000:i). Interestingly, he reframed this idea of traditional values in his foreword to the soldiers’ edition; “The values and standards that are set out in this booklet are those which experience has shown are vital for success on operations,” (AC-63812, 2000:1). One reason,

perhaps, why General Sir Roger's foreword in the soldiers' edition did not refer to the Army's newly articulated values as "traditional" is expressed in the claim that

The breakdown of traditional values and respect for authority among potential recruits has forced the Army to produce its first moral code... Army chiefs no longer feel that they can take for granted that young men and women coming into the forces from different parts of a rapidly changing society will understand the ethos that governs the Service on and off duty.
(Evans 2000)

Stephen Deakin, who teaches at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, has addressed this issue in a discussion of the British Army's approach to officer training through the 20th-Century. He noted that the emphasis is "on individual good character... The ideal is that of the gentleman... who has a sure, but unarticulated, grasp of decent behaviour and right and wrong." (Deakin 2008:19). According to Deakin, when faced with the changes in British society's moral understanding brought about by secularisation and pluralism in the late 20th-Century, the Army focussed on articulating its 'ethos' rather than on trying to teach 'ethics'.

This appeal to ethos is both clever and revealing. The study of ethics often involves abstract and applied thought about complex problems informed by the world's great thinkers. The appeal to ethos neatly sidesteps this. It promotes and reinforces an ideal British Army way of life and in so doing seems to avoid much ethical discussion. It is not prescriptive in a legalistic sense and this appeal to the spirit of its community fits the pragmatic British military culture with its shared implicit understandings. Ethos appears at first glance to be neutral, yet it carries within it all the characteristics of the British Army. It is a strong socialising device. It communicates that this is the way that the British Army military community does things. It says to all soldiers: accept the principles of our military community..... it is clear that the term captures the practice of hundreds of years. Soldiers have always been educated in the British military ethos... The educational model used has been a time-honoured, 'hear, see, do' one, where one military generation passes on its ethics to the next.
(Deakin 2008:20-21)

In effect, what Deakin has described is the traditional Western approach to moral education as applied in practice by the British Army in the last two centuries: The development of latent virtues and nobility of character in Officer Cadets by instruction in military doctrine and norms, inculcation of basic drills and discipline, and inspiration by immersing them in the military community, providing exemplars of good practice in their instructors, and remembering the histories and heroes who have gone before. But it was not just the officers who displayed a gentlemanly nobility of character. As we have seen above, Field-Marshal Slim and Sir John Fortescue claimed that the British soldier also displayed a gentleness of character which set him apart amongst the martial races of the world. Having had personal experience of both the British Army and other nation's military forces, I would claim that a residue of this quality of gentleness

still resides in the British soldier. Deakin acknowledges, however, that the traditional approach to moral education which fostered this gentility of character has been undermined in the contemporary UK because British policy-makers now promote moral relativism, with its emphasis on egalitarianism and pluralist inclusion, and deprecate the idea of forming excellent moral character. He concludes:

The need to write formal codes of ethics as in the Values and Standards booklet is the sign of the passing of an age when people knew what a British officer stood for. He was a gentleman; a Christian English gentleman, who... could be relied upon to do the right thing and to know what ordinary decent correct behaviour was without even thinking about it very much.
(Deakin 2008:26)

In addition to its past efforts to develop virtuous character in its personnel, as described by Deakin, the British Army has also relied on a deontological approach by trying to ensure correct moral and legal conduct from soldiers through the sanction of Military Law, Standing Orders, and Rules of Engagement. Likewise, the Service Test applies a utilitarian consequentialist approach to moral behaviour (Todd 2015:pers. comm.). Deontological and consequentialist approaches are necessary, but they offer the British Army only partial answers to developing mature moral character: "The Service Test is utilitarian and the utilitarianism ethic often does not work in a military community. It is not the ethic of a virtuous person desiring to do good in every circumstance." (Deakin 2008:24). It is also important to distinguish between everyday regulations necessary for the smooth running of an institution, such as the correct way to wear a uniform, and specifically moral rules. Making this distinction clear is especially important if soldiers are being disciplined for a breach of regulations, so that they do not confuse adherence to the regulations with being morally virtuous (Warnock 1979:81).

Rather paradoxically, and largely because of the confusion and ambiguity of contemporary Western moral vocabulary and understanding, the assumption is that good moral behaviour can be taught simply by rational exposition; that one need only instruct the intellect with an understanding of moral philosophy and the person will behave well. Currently in the British Army this is attempted through one mandatory 40-minute session a year, in which the soldiers' understanding of the Army's Values is validated by completing a short questionnaire. In a perceptive article titled, 'Values are not learnt through teaching', Roger Scruton discussed this very question when, in 2006, the Government announced plans to teach British core values in schools to help combat Islamism in the UK. Scruton (2006) stated,

The Government conceives of values as a kind of knowledge, to be put up on the blackboard and discussed by the class. But values are matters of practice, not of theory. They are not so much taught as imparted. You learn them by immersion, by joining with your contemporaries in team spirit, competition, and adventure.

In fact, as already stressed, moral education needs to focus on imaginative inspiration, not simply rational instruction, because

no [intellectual] justification of virtue will enable a man to be virtuous. Without the aid of trained emotions the intellect is powerless against the animal organism... In battle it is not syllogisms that will keep the reluctant nerves and muscles to their post in the third hour of the bombardment. The crudest sentimentalism... about a flag or a country or a regiment will be of more use. We were told it all long ago by Plato... Reason in man must rule the mere appetites by means of... emotions organised by trained habit into stable sentiments. [They] are the indispensable liaison officers between cerebral man and visceral man.
(Lewis 1946:20-21)

The aim of moral education in the military, therefore, is to aid soldiers in realising their full potential as rational moral agents, not creatures driven by their appetites and desires, both as individual persons and as members of the community of those called to bear arms, through the threefold method of traditional character formation. Firstly, by *instruction*, by teaching that there are objective truths in certain fields of knowledge, irrespective of personal opinion. In the British Army this is done through instruction in military doctrine and the art of war, in which the application may vary but the underlying principles remain the same and are changeless:

These common-sense precepts, or principles [of war], are easy enough to learn and grasp: but they are [not] a complete set of rules for success in war... Sometimes even they are divergent, in that one can only be fully observed at the expense of another. Their application to the situations and problems of the battle-field, which are never twice the same, needs constant practice and study.
(Wavell 1948:154)

Second, by *inculcation*, by teaching drills and Standard Operating Procedures, such as marching, weapon-handling, or infantry section drills. Field-Marshal Wavell (1945:45f.) has described this well:

To say that a good soldier must have discipline is no more than to say he must have learnt his trade well... Discipline is teaching which makes a man do something which he would not, unless he had learned it was the right, the proper, and the expedient thing to do. At its best, it is instilled and maintained by pride in oneself, in one's unit, in one's profession; only at its worst by a fear of punishment. The military manifestations of discipline are many and various..... the mechanical side of discipline [entails] learning by practice to do something so automatically that it becomes natural even in moments of stress. It is essential both to warfare and to orderly efficient civil life.

But in the British Army these "mechanical" drills are also imbued with meaning by the inculcation of reverence for traditional norms: one 'bulls' one's boots so as to parade the Regimental Colours with due piety and to march well to the music of the Regimental Marches, just as one's predecessors did under Wellington and Marlborough centuries ago. It is through this consistent practice, imbued with profound meaning by the imagination, that imposed

discipline becomes daily habit and daily habit becomes a fixed disposition of character. This disposition of character is, as Wavell said, “essential to warfare”.

Third, by *inspiration*, by presenting worthy rôle models in the soldier’s instructors and chain of command, and by bringing to constant remembrance the Army’s history and its past heroes. The British Army used to be very good at such inspiration: through the immersion of the soldier in his regiment; the assertion that the regiment is second to none; and the re-telling of stories from regimental history, till the regimental ethos was thoroughly imbued. An understanding of the nation’s history, of which military history is but a part, and of the traditions of the Army as part of the venerable traditions of the nation, are fundamental to presenting “the habitual vision of greatness” described by Whitehead. A vision which inspires the love of goodness and the desire to emulate one’s forebears. Roger Scruton (2006), remembering his own schooling, noted:

History was our history. It recounted battles that we had fought or lost; it dwelt on our achievements and our shortcomings (though the latter were strictly rationed). Literature was our literature, and all our activities were marked by the same proprietary feeling: we were being brought up as British, by authority figures infused with a love of the country that we shared.

The British Army has several different types of history: of its campaigns around the Empire against a very diverse range of foes; of its individual regiments and corps; of its part in major European conflicts; of its relationship with wider British society; and in the memoirs of individual officers and soldiers. Each of these types of history is also a rich store of ‘myth’, as are the novels, the verse, the films, the regimental bands and marches, the village war memorials and the fading regimental Colours hanging in cathedrals and churches across the country. All tell the story of the British soldier, albeit in very different ways, and all contribute to the myths by which, in the past, the British Army has lived and fought, and by which, I suggest, it should once again be morally educated in the future.

Conclusion

It is a moot point whether or not it is possible, even in an institution as traditional and venerable as the British Army, to reinstate an approach to moral education which is predicated on celebrating the noble, the good, the pre-eminent in its history, in a nation in which the celebration of its past glories has been challenged by a sceptical post-modern and pluralist historiography; an interpretation which denigrates, debunks or dismisses past excellences of British character, achievement and endeavour. It is my belief, however, that if the Army does not return to the traditional Western method of character formation by inculcation, instruction, imitation, and inspiration, then the nation will become defenceless against all manner of

enemies, because “war”, as Thucydides (*Historiae* 3.82) tells us, “is a violent teacher,”¹¹⁰ and only those who are immersed in the nation’s traditions of the honourable Vocation of bearing Arms will be able to endure the harsh education given in the stern school of war:

War is a special activity, different and separate from any other pursued by man... An army’s military qualities are based on the individual who is steeped in the spirit and essence of this activity; who trains the capacities it demands, rouses them, and makes them his own; who applies his intelligence in every detail; who gains ease and confidence through practice, and who completely immerses his personality in the appointed task.

(Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, 3.1)

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation I have made several connected arguments: Firstly, that modern Western moral philosophy is impoverished and this impoverishment derives from the philosophical

¹¹⁰ ὁ δὲ πόλεμος... βίαιος διδάσκαλος.

scepticism about knowledge, truth, and reality traditionally known as 'sophistry'. In modern times the inevitable effects of sophistic scepticism in contemporary Western societies have been variously described as 'subjectivism' (Lewis 1967), 'consequentialism' (Anscombe 1958), and 'emotivism' (MacIntyre 1985). British military personnel are recruited from societies which are permeated by such sophistry, so it is not surprising that in recent times both the articulation of British military ethics and the conduct of British officers and soldiers have been shaped by emotivist, subjectivist and consequentialist ideas.

Anscombe (1958) identified that the sceptical impoverishment of modern moral philosophy mentioned above is seen in its inability to give a coherent account of human nature, action, flourishing, and virtue. My second argument, therefore, is that a coherent account of these things is precisely what is given by the traditional Western moral philosophy of virtue, especially as articulated by Thomas Aquinas. Not only is a Thomist account coherent, but it also provides a comprehensive and convincing account of the practicably lived moral life, which, because it is based on a common sense understanding of human nature and human flourishing, is understandable by and applicable to officers and soldiers currently serving in the British Army. The Army, however, relies predominantly on deontological and consequentialist approaches to ethics which, while necessary, are inadequate because they are based on an impoverished understanding of human nature and human moral agency. In fact, the British Army's reliance on consequentialism and deontology as the main approaches to moral judgement and decision-making in its moral education may even keep its officers and soldiers in a state of moral immaturity.

My third argument, therefore, is that the Army's ethics should be re-grounded in the traditional Western understanding of virtue and that the Army's moral education should, thus, return to the traditional focus on the formation of virtuous character in which, as Cicero (*Off.* 2.5.18) said, the student grows to moral maturity by developing the habits of virtue which discipline the sustentative appetites, inspire love of goodness in the affective sentiments, and direct the intellect to truth and the will to right action. Virtuous character is formed through the threefold method of: (1) Informing the reason and intellect of officers and soldiers by rational discourse and instruction in the indemonstrable first principles of ethics and Natural Law; (2) Transforming the affective sentiments and firing the imagination of officers and soldiers with an inspiring vision of what it means to serve in the British Army and to be an excellent soldier by imaginative discourse which immerses the officers and soldiers in the traditions – the stories and customs – of the regiment to which they belong and by offering past and present rôle models worthy of imitation; and (3) Reforming and disciplining the sustentative faculties and appetites by the

inculcation of habits of virtue, so that officers and soldiers can realise their innate potential to become the most excellent persons they can be, both as soldiers and as human beings.

This last argument may sound impracticable, but the British Army already has most of the means for this type of moral education in place. All that is required is a slight readjustment in emphasis of some of its already extant training. Nonetheless, it must be stressed that the key element to the traditional Western approach to moral education is to inspire in persons the love of truth and goodness for their own sakes, to inspire them to want to do what is right, and thereby to help them to grow to moral maturity as free moral agents. The desire to do what is right and to will the good can be encouraged and facilitated by the Army, but it is ultimately up to the individual officer or soldier to cultivate the habits of preferring the good and choosing the right, till they become innate, so that under pressure in the midst of combat he or she can instantly discern and decide what is the morally right course of action to take.

In the late 1600s in the aftermath of the British Civil Wars between Parliamentarians and Royalists, a professional Army was first introduced into Britain, but was used as a means of political and religious oppression under the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. It was a time not unlike today; when the old established certainties of many folk were overthrown and traditional moral understanding was challenged by the first stirrings of the Enlightenment. In this dark period Sir Thomas Browne gave some sage advice, which is still pertinent today:

Live by old Ethicks and the classical Rules of Honesty. Put no new names or notions upon Authentic Virtues and Vices. Think not that Morality is Ambulatory; that Vices in one age are not Vices in another; or that Virtues, which are under the everlasting Seal of right Reason, may be Stamped by Opinion. And therefore, though vicious times invert the opinion of things, and set up new Ethicks against Virtue, yet hold thou unto old Morality; and rather than follow a multitude to do evil, stand like Pompey's Pillar conspicuous by thyself, and single in Integrity. And since the worst of times afford imitable Examples of Virtue; since no Deluge of Vice is like to be so general, but more than eight will escape; Eye well those Heroes who have held their Heads above Water, who have touched Pitch, and not been defiled, and in the common Contagion have remained uncorrupted.

(*Christian Morals*, Part 1, §12)

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