

RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP: DEVELOPING THE CONCEPT OF LEADER CHARACTER FROM A
VIRTUE ETHICS PERSPECTIVE

By

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Abstract

This study of leader character located within the emerging construct of Responsible Leadership (RL) is conducted from a virtue business ethics perspective. A review of the leadership literature reveals that although there is a need for leaders of character, little is known about the concept of leader character from a research perspective. Leadership researchers note that current research methods are not satisfactory for gaining an understanding of the enigmatic nature of leader character. To address this shortcoming, this research examines the concept of leader character from a philosophical virtue ethics perspective. The emerging construct of RL is a normative theory of leadership that considers leaders' responsibilities within our global societal context and resonates with the moral and societal themes of virtue ethics. The nature of this study of leadership is from a humanities perspective that seeks to apply moral philosophy to understand the whole of leadership, and is in contrast to a social science study of leadership. The works of the moral philosophers Aristotle and Alasdair MacIntyre are interpreted by applying the method of hermeneutics in gaining an understanding of character. This virtue understanding of the concept of character, which forms the foundation of the concept of leader character, is informed by business ethics research from an Aristotelian and MacIntyrean perspective. The conceptual foundation of RL is extended by exploring leader character, which lies at its core, taking the form of a virtue model of leader character.

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List of Acronyms

AV – *After Virtue*

CMS –Critical Management Studies

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

DA - *De Anima*

EE – *Eudemian Ethics*

FA – Function Argument

GRLI – Global Responsible Leadership Initiative

MM - *Magna Moralia*

MNC – Multi-national Corporation

NE – *Nicomachean Ethics*

NGO – Non-governmental Organisation

TPBM – Take Private Business Model

UN –United Nations

RL – Responsible Leadership

Chapter One

An Introduction to the Background and Purpose of this Research

Introduction

The global challenges of scarcity of resources, climate change, and world poverty raise the issue of responsibility and sustainability, particularly for business leaders, notes Eisenbeiss (2012). How these matters are handled by leaders across the globe may become a critical success factor for long-term excellence and organisational survival (Eisenbeiss, 2012:805). This raises the question of what type of leadership is required to adequately address the issues of responsibility and sustainability facing business leaders.

A review of current models of leadership by Voegtlin et al., (2012) ranges across transformational, authentic, servant, and other approaches that address the ethical or moral challenges of leaders. It reveals conceptual constraints in adequately encompassing the causes and implications of present leadership challenges (Voegtlin et al., 2012:2). These challenges are understood to be “rooted in the economic and moral implications of globalization” (Voegtlin et al., 2012:2; Scherer and Palazzo, 2008, 2011). Globalisation is understood by Voegtlin et al., together with Scherer and Palazzo and others, as “an increased integration of value creation transcending national boundaries, [that] impedes the capability of the nation state system to moderate the outcomes of the economical, political, and social systems” (2012:2). The consequence is the emergence of governance gaps leading to the public interest not being adequately served (Chandler and Mazlish, 2005; Scherer et al., 2006; Scherer et al., 2009). Examples of such global public goods problems that remain largely unaddressed are: the enforcement of labour standards, the protection of human rights, fighting corruption, and saving the environment (Kaul et al., 2003; Voegtlin et al., 2012:2). It is acknowledged that an extended understanding of leadership is now required that will account for these challenges considering both individual actions as well as their embeddedness within organisations and societies. This poses a significant research gap (Voegtlin et al., 2012:2). Pless and Maak’s (2011) view is that responsibility is not a

feature of established leadership theories such as transformational, charismatic, authentic, or participative. They share the view of Waldman and Galvin (2008) that “it is actually this element that is at the heart of what effective leadership is all about. In a nutshell, to not be responsible is not to be effective as a leader” (Waldman and Galvin, 2008:327; Pless and Maak, 2011:3).

Responsible leadership (RL), an emerging concept, overlaps studies in leadership, ethics, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Ciulla, 2005; De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2008; Doh and Stumpf, 2005; Maak and Pless, 2006a; Maak, 2007; Waldman and Galvin, 2008; Waldman and Siegel, 2008; Voegtlin et al., 2012). RL attempts to answer the question: “who is responsible for what and toward whom in an interconnected business world” (Voegtlin et al., 2012:2). This construct considers the responsibilities leaders have in relation to various stakeholder groups who affect or are affected by the leader’s actions and who have “a stake in the purpose and vision of the leadership relationship” (Pless and Maak, 2011:4). It is regarded as a multilevel response to shortcomings in existing leadership theories and frameworks that seeks to address the social, ethical, and environmental challenges arising from our increasingly connected world. In a global stakeholder society, accountability of companies extends beyond shareholders to include stakeholders, thus covering a broader range of impacts including economic, environmental, and societal (Wade, 2006:227; Maak and Pless, 2006a:99). RL requires responsible leaders to respond to these complex challenges (Pless and Maak, 2011:4). Such an extended understanding of leadership responsibility is viewed as inherently normative (Pless and Maak, 2011:5).

Pless and Maak (2011:5) are mainly concerned with the conceptual foundations of RL and seek to contribute to fostering a better understanding of the foundations of this emerging construct. It is against this background that they pose a guiding question: “what makes a responsible leader?” (Pless and Maak, 2011:5). They support the view expressed by other leadership researchers that the moral person of good character is at the heart of the idea of a responsible leader (Maak and Pless, 2006a:105; Ciulla, 1998; Solomon, 1999; and George, 2003). Character, a concept formulated by the

ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, has raised interest among researchers in the field of ethical leadership (Hannah and Avolio, 2011; Hannah and Avolio, 2011a; Quick and Wright, 2011; Wright and Quick, 2011; Crossan et al., 2013; Seijts et al., 2015; Crossan et al., 2017; Sturm et al., 2017). Character is the critical measure of leadership excellence, notes Sankar (2003:45), and is a key aspect of the study of leadership. Hannah and Avolio (2011) believe that through character and competence, sustainable leadership performance can be fostered across contexts, cultures and challenges (2011:979). Thus they propose that both character and competence form “... the raw building blocks of effective and sustainable leadership” (2011:979).

1.1 Problem Statement

A review of the leadership literature reveals that the concept of leader character has been neglected from a research perspective (Hannah and Avolio, 2011; Hannah and Avolio, 2011a; Quick and Wright, 2011; Wright and Quick, 2011), although more recent research within the field of management is starting to emerge (Crossan et al., 2017:988).

Leadership researchers have encountered challenges in adequately defining leader character (Wright and Quick, 2011:978; Quick and Wright, 2011:984; Hannah and Avolio, 2011:979; Wright and Huang 2008:983; Wright and Goodstein, 2007; Sarros et al., 2006:683), giving some insight into the enigmatic nature of this construct. There is a need to further develop and refine the understanding of this construct and to engage in a dialogue with leadership scholars “... on examining what constitutes the leader character construct” (Hannah and Avolio, 2011:979). This lack of understanding of leader character lying at the heart of RL creates a research problem which this research aims to address. In addressing this problem I investigate the research question: what is leader character? This research question will be considered from a virtue ethics perspective.

Current research methods are not entirely satisfactory for defining the notion of leader character as a concept lying at the heart of RL (Maak and Pless, 2006a:105), and there is a need to refine the existing conceptualisations of character (Hannah and

Avolio, 2011a:989). Hannah and Avolio (2011) acknowledge that although discussions about the concept of character date back to the time of Aristotle, this is an emerging construct in the organisational and psychological sciences, with theories still underdeveloped (2011b:983). In addition, character research is predominantly undertaken from within the transformational leadership and positive psychology constructs, leading to the claim that the subject of character has been “hijacked by these fields” (Conger and Hollenbeck, 2010:312). This is evidenced in the way character is regarded as “an additional dimension of transformational leadership theory” (ibid.: 312). Research is needed to frame the concepts of character, ethos and virtue, note Hannah and Avolio (2011a). Their view is that the study of leadership should extend beyond transactional ethical behaviour into the realm of virtuous behaviour.

While acknowledging that some attempts have been made to ‘stretch’ the space through the work on extra-role or organisational citizenship behaviours (Smith et al., 1983), Hannah and Avolio (2011) “submit there still remains an extensive range of meaningful constructs that have been untapped in prior research” (2011a:991). They go on to state that the ontological basis for the concept of character requires refinement and unpacking (2011a:991). They believe that much work still needs to be done to understand how character operates within the limited theoretical space developed by current theories of ethics and leadership (2011a:991). The lack of satisfactory ways of researching the concept of leader character lying at the heart of RL, poses a second research problem which this research aims to address. This leads to the second research question: what method of researching leader character is suitable for extending the concept of such character just mentioned?

1.2 Purpose Statement

Leader character is viewed as an antecedent of RL – an individual level aspect of RL that requires further research (Voegtlin et al., 2012:12). The purpose of this research is to make a contribution to the field of RL by developing the concept of leader character, which lies at the heart of RL (Maak and Pless, 2006). Specifically, this involves applying

a philosophical virtue ethics perspective to an in-depth study of leader character so as to extend the conceptual foundations of RL. The underlying assumption throughout this research is that the concepts of character and leader character are a reference to 'good' character.

Achieving the purpose of this research will address a significant gap in the literature, in view of the need for leaders of character (Wright and Huang, 2008:981), coupled with the lack of understanding of what constitutes leader character, as identified by leadership researchers (Hannah and Avolio, 2011a:991). The concept of leader character this research seeks to develop will extend the conceptual foundation of RL, specifically its normative foundation, with this examination of the virtues of character, incorporating what it means to be a good person and a good citizen. The sustained examination of the human person within her societal context that this study provides, yields a virtue understanding of moral responsibility that can enrich the normative foundation of RL.

1.3 Literature Review

Interest in the subject of leader character, initially raised almost a decade ago, has generated debate around the concept of leader character and what constitutes leader character (Hannah and Avolio, 2011:979; Hannah and Avolio, 2011a:990; Quick and Wright, 2011:984; Wright and Quick, 2011:976; Wright and Huang, 2008:983; Crossan et al., 2013; Crossan et al., 2017). The view of Hannah and Avolio is that character-based leadership is a general construct not tied to any specific leadership style – what they refer to as agnostic - and that character may serve as an antecedent to a variety of models of exemplary leadership (2011:981). However, what distinguishes this type of leadership is: "... its fundamental adherence to a core moral framework" (Wright and Quick, 2011:976). In developing a conceptual understanding of leader character – a concept lying at the heart of RL – a review of the literature is undertaken here with the aim of revealing the nature of leader character, so as to further refine it. In addition, this literature review seeks to provide an understanding of how leader character forms part of the emerging construct of RL.

Wright and Quick (2011) note that attempts to rigorously define character have challenged generations of scholars, as indicated by Filter (1921:297), who commented on a looseness of meanings attached to character; Wright and Quick refer to this as a character definition dilemma (2011:975). Attempts to more rigorously define character have continued. In particular, more recent attempts have been made by Peterson and Seligman (2004), and Wright and Goodstein (2007), with inconclusive results leaving researchers with a lack of understanding of the concept of character. Wright and Quick (2011) refer to the combination of religious and philosophical sources influencing traditional views of character (Wright and Huang, 2008), as well as more modern, secular influences such as justice, social contract and utilitarian (Hunter, 2000; Peterson and Seligman, 2004). Common across both traditional and more secular approaches are the moral and social dimensions (Wright and Goodstein, 2007). As a consequence many scholars share the view that character is best regarded as a multidimensional construct (Wright and Huang, 2008). Hannah and Avolio share Wright and Quick's (2011) interest in further developing the notion of leader character, which they regard as an important element of the ethical aspect of leadership research. They believe that the field of leadership needs to establish a clearer starting point: "... for advancing both theory and research on what constitutes leader character" (2011:979). However, as Hannah and Avolio (2011) enter this discourse, the choice of definition they draw on differs from that used by Wright and Quick (2011), illustrating the character definition dilemma referred to by Wright and Quick (2011) above (these definitions are analysed below under the heading Defining Leader Character). This lack of a commonly accepted definition of character as well as the problems encountered by researchers spanning generations of scholarly work, highlighted as above by Wright and Quick (2011), indicate that leader character as a theoretical construct is not well understood. Hannah and Avolio (2011) are in agreement and acknowledge this construct is underdeveloped and needs to be refined and unpacked (2011a:991). There is a need to clearly establish a starting point in advancing the theory and research on leader character, note Hannah and Avolio (2011:979). Their intention is to further develop and refine the understanding of this

construct, and to engage in the dialogue, together with Wright and Quick (2011) and leadership scholars in general: "... on examining what constitutes the leader character construct" (2011:979).

In establishing a starting point to address the ontology of character as a leadership construct, Hannah and Avolio (2011) use a meta-framework that distinguishes between the *locus*, the *transmission*, and the *reception* of leadership. The value of such a framework is that it highlights the distinctions between *being* and *doing* (Quick and Wright, 2011:984). This starting point of Hannah and Avolio's (2011) forms the basis from which the conceptual framework that underpins this research will be developed.

A brief review of the history of research into the nature of the leader character construct is now provided.

1.4 Historical Overview of Research on Leader Character

The following overview provides some background to the research problem regarding the lack of understanding of leader character. Wright and Quick (2011) enter the discourse on leader character by giving an overview of the history of character-based research. As this brief overview, spanning the behavioural sciences, philosophy and religion, reveals, generations of researchers have struggled to define character – a fact which gives some insight into the enigmatic nature of this construct. Wright and Quick (2011:976) comment on the work of Filter (1921), who stated that: "The looseness of meanings attached to names of character traits demands first consideration ... [and] must be defined in order to be studied intelligently" (1921:297). In spite of his observation, Filter failed to provide a definition of character (2011:976). Wright and Quick (2011) refer to the evidence of conceptual ambiguity appearing early on in the work of organisational researchers (2011:976). Wright and Goodstein (2007) acknowledge the same problem occurring in the works of Cushing and Ruch (1927); Schwesinger (1926); and Slawson (1922). This ambiguity has persisted, leading a number of social commentators on the topic of character to pronounce that character is "dead" (Hunter, 2000 as cited in Wright and Goodstein, 2007:929). Recently more rigorous definitions have been undertaken, particularly the work of Peterson and

Seligman (2004), and Wright and Goodstein (2007). Religious and philosophical sources have influenced traditional views of character (Wright and Huang, 2008), including Aristotelian thinking as well as Judeo-Christian beliefs (*faith, hope and love/charity* as advocated by St. Paul) and Eastern philosophies such as Confucianism (as espoused in the tenets of *jen, yi, li, zhi, and xin*). Traditional definitions of character, whilst distinct, do share an important similarity in that they contain both moral and social dimensions (Wright and Goodstein, 2007). In addition, modern secular influences such as utilitarian, justice and social contract (Hunter, 2000; Wright and Goodstein, 2007) have further enriched our views on character. The moral and social dimensions of character, together with the complexity of moral goodness, lead many scholars to believe that a study of leader character should best be considered as a multidimensional construct (Wright and Huang, 2008; Peterson and Park, 2006), with the aspects of moral discipline, moral attachment, and moral autonomy being the most widely accepted (Wright and Quick, 2011:976). These concepts are explored in the following section.

1.5 Defining Leader Character

Wright and Goodstein (2007:932) define character as: “... those interpenetrable habitual qualities within individuals, and applicable to organisations that both constrain and lead them to desire and pursue personal and societal good”. In formulating this definition of character Wright and Goodstein (2007) are in agreement with Hunter (2000), who notes an element that endures over time and across cultures - that of moral discipline – which they regard as: “The most basic element of character” (2000:16). An important feature of moral discipline is that of inner restraint, defined as “an ability to inhibit oneself in one’s passions, desires, and habits within the boundaries of a moral order” (Hunter, 2000:16). Based on this, Wright and Goodstein (2007:931) conclude that a fundamental component of any classic definition of character consists of an individual being able to constrain his personal desires for the sake of the needs of the greater good of society. This view of a greater societal good is also embodied in the second dimension of character, moral attachment (Wright and Quick, 2011:976.), which is an attachment and commitment to someone or something

- often an ideal - greater than the leader herself (Wright and Goodstein, 2007). Moral autonomy, the third dimension of character, is the ability to make ethical decisions independently by exercising one's own free will. Autonomy encompasses discretion as well as skills of judgment in freely choosing to act morally (Wright and Quick, 2011:976).

According to Bass and Bass (cited in Hannah and Avolio, 2011:979) the "character of a leader involves his or her ethical and moral beliefs, intentions and behaviours" (2008:219). According to Hannah and Avolio, Bass and Bass (2008) suggest that various traits like integrity, justice and fairness are linked to leader character. Based on this, Hannah and Avolio (2011:979) identify three constituents of character:

A disposition or trait

A way of thinking guided by principles

A behaviour or action

They see the need to examine and unpack this definition as well as other similar definitions of character in order that the field of leadership can establish "a clearer starting point for advancing both theory and research on what constitutes leader character" (2011:979). The above definition of character proposed by Wright and Quick (2011:976) as well as Bass and Bass' (2008) definition provide such a starting point.

Based on Bass and Bass' (2008:219) definition: "character of a leader involves his or her ethical and moral beliefs, intentions and behaviours," Hannah and Avolio (2011) go on to define character as "a disposition or trait, a way of thinking, being guided by a set of rules or principles, and a behaviour or action" (2011:979). It is obvious that character defined in this way is located within the person with the focus exclusively on the individual, with no reference to broader societal needs, nor to the impact on society. In addition, no direct reference is made to the three dimensions of character, those of moral discipline, moral attachment and moral autonomy applied by Wright and Goodstein (2007), Wright and Huang (2008), and Wright and Quick (2011). The

suggestion by Peterson and Park (2006) and re-iterated by Wright and Huang (2008:983) that character is best considered as a multidimensional construct, is not evident in Bass and Bass' (2008) definition, nor in the one developed by Hannah and Avolio (2011). Given the history of researchers' attempts at defining character and the conceptual ambiguity that has arisen, the impression created by Hannah and Avolio (2011) is one of trying to contain character neatly within the person.

Wright and Goodstein's (2007) definition (cited in Wright and Quick, 2011:976) of character as "those interpenetrable habitual qualities within individuals, and applicable to organisations that both constrain and lead them to desire and pursue personal and societal good" (2007:932), provides an alternate view of the nature of character. This definition of character appears broader and more nuanced compared to those of Bass and Bass (2008) and Hannah and Avolio (2011), containing elements of strength and pervasiveness (interpenetrable); consistency (habitual); moral discipline (constrain[t]) in pursuing personal and a broader good (societal good); and transcending self-interest (in desiring and pursuing and societal good). Individual-based character definitions focusing on a moral component have often neglected the historical significance of the social dimension (Wright and Goodstein, 2007:931). Wright and Goodstein's (2007) broader definition of character appears to offer a richer and fuller notion of the concept of character, as evidenced by the history of research it draws on as well as the quality of the definition itself. This definition of character will be drawn on in this research in further developing the concept of leader character, which lies at the heart of RL. Although these definitions of character differ, common to the concept of character are two obvious components, those of the inner self and moral goodness.

The element of greater societal good embodied within the concept of leader character resonates with the emerging construct of RL, which as Voegtlin (2011) notes, is located within a stakeholder society (Voegtlin, 2011:58). The theory of RL is rooted within the

“context of contemporary stakeholder theory¹” (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999:200; Pless and Maak, 2011:8), indicating that leader-stakeholder relationships are inherent to the RL construct. This is in contrast to other theories of leadership that focus on a leader-subordinate relationship (Pless and Maak, 2011:6; Voegtlin, 2011:57). RL is, by definition, oriented towards the concerns of others and reflects on what leaders are responsible for, and to whom. Waldman (2011) refers to the other-regarding element that characterises the stakeholder approach and broadens its extent (2011:78). At the core of this construct then is a search to elucidate “who the ‘others’ are and what responding to their concerns entails” (Pless and Maak, 2011:4). Relational and ethical phenomena are viewed as defining features of the theory of RL by pioneers in the field, Maak and Pless (2006a), who comment that “building and cultivating ... ethically sound relations toward different stakeholders is an important responsibility of leaders in an interconnected stakeholder society” (2006a:101). Stakeholders are regarded as all those impacted by the leadership project (Pless and Maak, 2011:4). A concern for greater societal good, as encompassed in the leader character construct, is thus well aligned with the roots of the emerging construct of RL, with its emphasis on the stakeholder.

Wright and Quick (2011) note that research around defining character reveals that a core moral framework is the defining feature of character and character-based leadership (Wright and Quick, 2011:976). Similarly, a moral theme underlies the RL construct, with ethical qualities constituting a “structural element in responsible leadership research” (Pless and Maak, 2011:8). Stakeholder theory has moved from instrumental approaches such as agency theory, transaction cost, and contract theory to “ethical ways of explaining stakeholder relations” (Maak and Pless, 2006a:102; Freeman, 2004) and to a normative viewpoint (Donaldson and Preston, 1995, as cited in Maak and Pless, 2006a:102). The construct of RL which discusses “leadership in the context of contemporary stakeholder theory” (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999:200; Maak and Pless, 2006a:101; Pless and Maak, 2011:8) shares this normative orientation, and

¹ Ed Freeman is often referred to as the father of Stakeholder Theory. He integrated stakeholder theory with strategic management in his original work on the topic in 1985.

is regarded as “an inherently normative approach” to leadership (Pless and Maak, 2011:5). Within the broad normative orientation of both, leader character and RL-specific moral aspects that pertain to each construct reflect some similarities and overlaps. Moral discipline, moral attachment, and moral autonomy as explained above characterise leader character. Similarly, the concept of ethical literacy, including moral awareness (ethical reflection), moral imagination (to reconcile ethical dilemmas) (Werhane, 1999), and moral deliberation (ethical and principled decision-making), is regarded as an important feature of RL (Pless and Maak, 2011:8). This core moral theme oriented towards serving a greater societal good overlaps the constructs of leader character and RL, indicating a correlation between these theories. In this respect, leader character is viewed as forming part of the emerging construct of leader character. This core moral framework defining character and character-based leadership (Wright and Quick, 2011) resonates with the “inherently normative” aspect of RL (Maak and Pless, 2011:5).

1.6 The Nature of Leader Character

Hannah and Avolio (2011) express a desire to deepen a mutual understanding among researchers of what constitutes leader character. They begin by addressing the ontology of character as a leadership construct by using a meta-framework distinguishing between the *locus*, the *transmission*, and the *reception* of leadership. In their call to advance “a new line of research on what constitutes leader character” (2011:980), they specify the need for consensus among researchers regarding where the aspects of leader character reside i.e. in the individual (*locus*), or in their behaviour (*transmission*), or in the view of others (*reception*). This is necessary, they believe, in order to clarify the “construct blur” in the literature so that there is clarity on where the locus of a leader’s character ends and where transmission and reception begin (2011:980). What is evident from Hannah and Avolio’s (2011) approach to this task of exploring the concept of leader character is their desire for clarity. This is to be welcomed and is a positive first step in establishing the debate around leader character. However, at this early stage in the development of our understanding of this

concept, their approach does raise the question: does character lend itself to such a clear-cut separation and categorisation? Quick and Wright (2011), in commenting on this approach, acknowledge that this method highlights the distinctions between *being* and *doing* (2011:984). These points are pertinent to a discussion concerning the nature of leader character and will be addressed further on.

The view of Hannah and Avolio (2011) regarding where the aspects of leader character reside, is that the locus of leader character regards a leader's personality, values, moral reasoning and identity as constituting character, (Ibid., 2011, 1980; Eberly et al., 2010; Lord et al., 2011) , whereas transmission entails the behaviours leaders employ in the process of transmitting their leadership to others, as evidenced by their actions. Reception is how leader behaviours and actions are perceived and interpreted by those who are the targets of leadership. Hannah and Avolio (2011) make the distinction between the locus of character which forms part of the concept of character, and the transmission and reception of character which form part of character-based leadership. In their view, this distinction between leader behaviours and their locus leads to an improvement in how each is measured, as well as in how leader character can be developed. In defining the leader character construct, their approach is to consider a full leadership episode and then to separate it into distinct parts, starting with the category of locus representing an individual difference that influences and shapes, and then distinguishing it from the transmission or reception of leadership. On this basis they think it is necessary to distinguish "character" from "character-based leadership." However they note that the definition of character developed by Bass and Bass (2008:219) referred to earlier, does not make this distinction between locus and transmission; similarly, they note the definition of character drawn on by Wright and Quick (2011:976) and referred to earlier, refers to the terms "character" and "character-based" leadership seemingly interchangeably. They call for greater clarity around these distinctions as they believe this is necessary to move the discussion forward concerning what character is and how it can be measured (2011:980). A criticism of Hannah and Avolio's (2011) approach is that their

desire for an accurate measurement of character seems to be informing how they conceptualise this construct.

Distinguishing character from character-based leadership, Hannah and Avolio (2011) state that a leader's character does not necessarily translate into the actual transmission of behaviours. This assertion is problematic and needs to be challenged, as it seems inconsistent with Bass and Bass' (2008:219) definition of character that Hannah and Avolio (2011) draw on, discussed above. In commenting on Bass and Bass' (2008) definition, Hannah and Avolio (2011) make the point that "we can see that character is defined as a disposition or trait, a way of thinking, being guided by a set of rules or principles, and a behaviour or action" (2011:979). Based on this definition, behaviour is viewed as an outcome that results from a disposition and way of thinking that is guided by a set of rules. This indicates that all three of these elements of character are interconnected and follow a logical sequence, resulting in a behaviour or action. Understanding this definition surely implies that a leader's disposition and way of thinking guided by her principles, and her resulting behaviour, whilst separate, are interdependent forming part of a whole. Hannah and Avolio's (2011) contention that character does not necessarily translate into behaviours, thus appears inconsistent with the definition of Bass and Bass (2008) they are drawing on. Quick and Wright (2011) comment on Hannah and Avolio's (2011) use of a meta-framework to distinguish between the locus, transmission, and reception of leadership, acknowledging this method highlights the distinctions between *being* and *doing* (2011:984). In view of this interconnectedness of the inner self and the resulting behaviours forming a whole, it seems evident that both being and doing comprise character – the view this research takes in developing a conceptual understanding of leader character, which lies at the heart of RL.

Another reason for determining where character is located amongst locus, transmission, and reception, is to be able to accurately define and examine how it manifests in different contexts (Hannah and Avolio, 2011:980). To illustrate their point they provide examples of how Wright and Quick (2011) view character, i.e. when a

leader displays moral discipline, moral attachment, and moral autonomy and this leads to social change. This view, according to Hannah and Avolio (2011), is similar to that of Aristotle, for whom character is displayed through action arising from the choices one makes, particularly in circumstances where a choice is not obvious (Nussbaum, 1992:117). In considering some of the factors that drive exemplary leader behaviour and the links to character, Hannah and Avolio (2011) are aware that cognitive moral development on its own is insufficient for leader moral development and that moral courage, moral efficacy, and moral agency (a sense of moral psychological ownership) are all necessary components in developing *moral potency* (Hannah and Avolio, 2010, 2011). Their view is that moral potency reduces the “process loss”, in that it provides the necessary psychological resources leaders need to draw on for their conation (impetus to act) and capacity to follow through on their judgments to lead to character-based action. One example is the moral courage to overcome peer pressure (2011:981).

Previous research demonstrates that attitudes and judgments in general (Ajzen, 1991), and ethical judgments in particular (Blasi, 1980; Rest et al., 1999), are unable to predict actual ethical behaviour (Hannah and Avolio, 2011:981). This surely implies that these are insufficient for character to manifest as behaviours and reception. The Defining Issues Test, a widely used measure of cognitive moral development, reveals that the correlation between levels of moral development and actual ethical choices or behaviours, is low (Rest et al., 1999: 101). This fact, note Hannah and Avolio (2011), indicates that some “process loss” exists between the locus and transmission of ethical leader behaviour, suggesting that a leader’s actions may have no connection to his character, i.e. they are character neutral. Given the critique above regarding Bass and Bass’ (2008) definition of character that Hannah and Avolio (2011) are drawing on, this statement is also inconsistent and raises the question whether character neutral is character at all? Character negative actions arise where leader actions run counter to the leader’s character. The reasons for such actions could be either external to the leader, such as situational constraint or contingency, or internal to the leader like fatigue or distraction. Tactics used by leaders to self-justify where their acting is

inconsistent with their character range from moral disengagement (Bandura, 1999) to self-deception (Tenbrunsel and Messick, 2004). The moral aspect of character contained in Bass and Bass' (2008:219) definition is inconsistent with Hannah and Avolio's (2011) character negative categorisation as explained here, and also leads to the question: is this is character at all?

Despite these criticisms levelled against Hannah and Avolio (2011), their character neutral and character negative categorisations do allude to the influence of factors like context, the leader's personal belief system, and the leader's personal make-up and the question whether in reality a leader of character always transmits actual behaviours consistently across all situations and contexts. Hannah and Avolio (2011) use the term "process loss" (2011:981) to refer to the gap between a leader's espoused beliefs and actual transmission of behaviours. Is there then a difference between a leader of character exhibiting some process loss in certain contexts, possibly due in part to her personal make-up and belief system, and a leader displaying character neutral or character negative behaviours? There is, and this illustrates the conceptual difference between the interconnection of the inner self and behaviours allowing for some process loss on the one hand, and the separation of the inner self and behaviours where character neutral or character negative behaviours arise, on the other hand. The former case is an illustration of character comprising being and doing, exhibiting consistency between the inner self and behaviours, while allowing for some process loss due to a particular context, the leader's personal make-up and belief system. The latter case suggests no real character, as suggested above, as the gap between the inner self and the resulting behaviours indicates no or very limited connection. Leading on from this is the notion of authenticity and the link to character, encompassing behaviours.

In responding to Hannah and Avolio's (2011) stance in the dialogue on the ontology of leader character, Quick and Wright (2011) raise an important point that highlights the interconnectedness between the nature of the subject of character and how it should be defined and conceptualised. They comment on the scientific nature of Hannah and

Avolio's (2011) method of understanding and conceptualising character, which is logical, rational, and analytical. This is problematic and incomplete for Quick and Wright (2011) due to the metaphysical nature of character and leadership. This appears to limit research efforts into fully exploring the multidimensional nature of character, and Quick and Wright (2011) are aware of how Hannah and Avolio's (2011) scientific meta-framework method does not lend itself to exploring a rich and full understanding of character and its constituents. Hannah and Avolio's (2011) application of a nomothetic scientific model methodology to investigate the locus, transmission, and reception of leadership, is valuable for the leadership scientist and the study of leadership; however Quick and Wright's (2011:985) view is that it is limited when applied to the leader-in-practice, which involves learning from experience through observation, diagnosis, and interpretation (Parry, 1998). This type of leadership lends itself to artful action through its ability to assess, interpret and understand specific settings, contexts, and followers (Quick and Wright, 2011:985), which facilitates the development of character. This broadening and extending of the paradigm through which character is viewed helps to enrich the debate and move it forward. Quick and Wright's (2011:985) approach to their study of character-based leadership appears more holistic and multi-dimensional, as it builds on grounded theory and social process by incorporating both the empirical aspect of the leadership scientist perspective followed by Hannah and Avolio (2011), and that of Parry's (1998) analytical, diagnostic, and interpretative case study method reflected in the leader-in-practice perspective. The application of an integrated approach such as this appears more conducive to deepening our understanding of character to the most profound levels (Quick and Wright, 2011:984). Of particular relevance to this research is Quick and Wright's (2011:985) point that the leader-in-practice perspective has a moral component at its core. They indicate that this moral core that typifies the leader-in-practice seems to lend itself to a "science of the spirit" (Bettleheim, 1983) analysis, rather than that of the natural sciences. The emphasis in this type of approach is on the human (*la science de l'humanité*) (Simon 1999) and Simon's emphasis on the art and practice of human design makes a meaningful contribution to this discussion as

“individuals, leaders and followers alike, are moral agents with consciences and passions of their own” (Smith, 1759; Quick and Wright, 2011:985). This moral component of leader character resonates with the ethical elements of RL. The transcendent quality of character was expressed by Ralph Waldo Emerson (1904) in his reference to character as an “undemonstrable force” or what others refer to as “core eternal principles” (Quick and Wright, 2011:985). Due to the metaphysical nature of character which is more fully contained within the leader-in-practice domain, Quick and Wright’s (2011:985) view is that an inquiry beyond the nomothetic leadership scientist model is required. The metaphysical nature of character and the features that typify the leader-in-practice, like observation, diagnosis, and interpretation, are factors in reflection on the type of inquiry that is most suited to developing an understanding of leader character, which lies at the heart of RL. This point will be addressed further on.

1.6.1 Character is not Personality

After making the points explained above regarding the metaphysical nature of character and the need to move beyond a purely scientific method to fully understand this construct, Quick and Wright (2011) proceed with the dialogue regarding the constituents of character. They respond to Hannah and Avolio (2011) regarding the meta-framework and the locus of leader character by disagreeing that character is personality, and character is values. Their reasoning is based on the primary emphasis they place on the moral aspects of character (2011:985). This aligns with the definition of character they draw on from the work of Wright and Goodstein (2007:932), as discussed above, which bears a strong moral theme. Their view of character locus is more focused in scope with the moral dimensions of character at its core (2011:985). They go on to note that precisely what constitutes the locus of character has been the source of wide debate in the social sciences (Wright and Goodstein, 2007), referring to William James (1920) who had difficulty defining character, finally concluding that “character could best be considered as those particular mental and moral attitudes that leave us feeling most deeply and intensely vibrant and alive” (2011:985). James

alludes to an aspect of character that is elusive, in his reference to the inner voice that affirms: “This is the real me!” (2011:985). For Quick and Wright (2011) this reference is significant, as it indicates the need for a careful consideration of Hannah and Avolio’s (2011) meta-framework of the study of character and leadership (2011:985). While James’ reference indicates the enigmatic nature of character, it also reveals that authenticity forms part of this construct. Quick and Wright (2011) contrast the metaphysical, transcendent quality of character espoused by James (1920) and Emerson (1904), with that of the leadership scientist approach supported by Thorndike (1940), who believed the domain of character could be quantified. Extending the leadership scientist approach to its logical extreme, the psychologist Gordon Allport’s (1921) view was that all moral aspects of character should be expunged from social science discourse. “Character” according to Allport should fall only within the locus domain of “objective” traits or neuropsychic structures (2011:985). Despite Quick and Wright’s (2011) contention that character is not personality and that the moral aspect of character remains their primary emphasis (2011:985), they fail to heed Hannah and Avolio’s (2011) advice “to firmly establish where character resides among locus, transmission and reception” (2011:985). Rather than indicating indecisiveness or caution on Quick and Wright’s (2011) part, this exposes the complex multidimensional nature of this construct, and highlights the need to develop a fuller understanding of this concept. This provides a rationale for why this research should be carried out.

1.6.2 Character is not Values

Quick and Wright (2011) respond to Hannah and Avolio’s (2011) contention that the locus of leader character consists *inter alia* of values, by stating that character is not values. The concept of precisely what constitutes values has generated much debate in the social and organisational sciences (Hunter, 2000; Quick and Wright, 2011:985). The word “values” is a fairly recent development, appearing in this sense for the first time in the Oxford English Dictionary shortly before World War II (Himmelfarb, 1994; Wright and Wright, 2000). The definition of the word *values* in the social sciences varies, encompassing a judgment, preference, attitude and belief (Wright and Goodstein,

2007). There is also a variety of values locus domains including family, social, economic, personal, and sense of purpose/religion categorisations, note Quick and Wright (2011:985). They trace the confusion between character and values back to the work of Rokeach (1973), who referred to values as either modes of conduct (instrumental values) or end-states of existence (terminal values). He extended the distinction by separating instrumental values into two types, those of moral and competence, and similarly terminal values into two types, those of the personal and the social (2011:985). The moral and social values originally presented by Rokeach (1973) shared some commonality with Quick and Wright's (2011) traditional, moral-based concept of character. However, values research over the past 40 years has tended to focus on personal (eg. "a comfortable life", "inner harmony", "pleasure") and competence ("ambitious"), whilst neglecting moral ("kindness" and "honesty") and social ("social connection") aspects (Quick and Wright, 2011:986). This has led to values research being typically focused on self-interest. This, together with an apparent lack of moral standards in values-based research, has given rise to relativism – the "age of whatever" (Anderson and Pearson, 1999:453) - in organisational research, "implying that no one wants to make a judgment, impose a standard, or call conduct unacceptable" (1999:453). In contrast to this orientation, Quick and Wright (2011) respond to Hannah and Avolio (2011) by making their claim that at the core of character is a moral, selfless-interest domain locus. On this basis they maintain that character, in accordance with the way they have defined it, is *not* values² (2011:986). This is consistent with their earlier claim "Our character locus domain is more focused in scope, one which at its core encompasses the moral dimensions of character" (2011:985).

The implication of this overview of values-based research is that values do not sufficiently embody the moral standards and qualities for guiding the development of character. In contrast to values is the notion of the virtues which are regarded as essential for the development of character. A virtue is an acquired disposition that

² In addition to Rokeach's seminal work on values is the work of *inter alia* Hofstede (1980) concerning the consequences of culture on values, and Schwartz (1987, 1994), who considers whether there are universal aspects in the structure and contents of human values.

forms part of the character of a morally good human being and is evident in the person's habitual behaviour (Velasquez, 2002:110). A virtue involves a commitment to an ethical quality, such as justice (Annas, 2006:519). The development of a virtue involves the exercise of the human will (Vardy and Grosch, 1999:116). Virtues thus encompass the *character* of a person and the exercise of *human will*. Virtues are "human excellences of mind and character [that] are in a very real way necessary for our future well-being or flourishing" (Foot, 1978:164). Aristotle espouses what are known as the four cardinal virtues: courage, temperance, justice, and fortitude. Although there is no universal agreement regarding what the virtues are, common to all adherents of virtue ethics would be those general traits that "make all human activities, and harmonious human society, possible" (Solomon, 1999:33). Virtues are a key component of virtue ethics, which is the normative philosophical framework that will be applied in understanding the complex nature of character, discussed below.

A return to the above discussion revealing the disconnect between character and the actual transmission of behaviours, suggests that Hannah and Avolio's (2011) drive for a clear-cut method of measuring character seems to dominate their thinking, which could lead to a narrowing of their vision. Returning to the question they posed at the beginning of their discussion on character seems appropriate now - how should the ontological basis of leader character be defined and conceptualised? (2011:979). This is linked to one of the research questions posed above: what research method is suitable for extending the concept of leader character, which lies at the heart of RL? These questions raise awareness of the need to view this study of leader character in a manner that allows for its full exploration. So as to yield a deep and rich understanding of leader character lying at the heart of RL, account should be taken of its multidimensional nature: this is both metaphysical and transcendent, and comprises moral elements and the inner self. For these reasons it is proposed that a philosophy is a suitable lens through which the complex nature of leader character can be explored. Virtue ethics, a normative philosophical perspective dating back to the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, is concerned with the character of a person, which seems an appropriate ethical lens to apply to this study. Whereas ethical principles, the

consequences of an action, or the action itself are all external to the person, the inner self is what distinguishes virtue ethics from other ethical perspectives (Solomon, 1999:30). Sosik and Cameron (2010) acknowledge the need for a framework to understand the complex nature of character, which they view as constituted by the core moral beliefs, intentions, and predispositions of an individual (2010:251). Virtue ethics, it is believed, provides such a framework.

1.7 Virtue Ethics as a Philosophical Framework

Given that a normative orientation underpins the theoretical constructs of both leader character and RL, it follows that such an orientation should inform the development of the concept of leader character in this research. Virtue ethics, the philosophical lens through which the concept of leader character will be examined, offers a normative view of understanding the concepts of character and leader character. It is acknowledged that such a tradition of thought dating back to the ancient Greek philosophers goes to the foundation and roots upon which much of our Western thinking is based (Takala, 1998:786). The central concern of the ancient Greeks in developing the theory of virtue ethics is based on a carefully examined life rather than a theory or a deity (Devettere, 2002:11). Virtue ethics is concerned with “What is the best way to live?” rather than “What is the right thing to do?” (Russell, 2013:7). The former question requires practical reasoning about one’s life, whereas the latter question concerns ethical reasoning. Virtue ethics and its concern with the best way of living involves reflecting about the type of person one wants to be and the nature of one’s character. This form of practical reasoning leads to thinking about the virtues – defined by Russell as “the excellences of character that consist in both caring about the right sorts of things and having the wisdom and practical skills to judge and act successfully with respect to those things” (2013:7).

Solomon (2003), in his defence of virtue ethics in business, comments that this philosophical lens is: “... a major movement in business ethics” (2003:44). At its core is the concept of character encompassing virtue and integrity - a central idea of being a good person in business. He goes on to note that a critical feature of virtue ethics

established by Aristotle is that of personal responsibility for the formation and development of one's own character (2003:44). This means, according to Aristotle, that not only are people responsible for who they are, but for what they do (2003:45). This is in line with the view of character comprising both being and doing, proposed earlier in this research. The view of Knights (2009) is that virtue ethics is concerned with what we become as people rather than behaviour that follows specific rules and regulations (2009:8). Ethics is derived from the Greek word *ethikos* relating to 'ethos' or character. It can be translated as 'custom' or 'usage' referring to customary behaviour in society. Ethical behaviour is thus the behaviour that is in line with a virtuous character (Vardy and Grosch, 1999:4). Aristotle's view was that morality begins with the self and it is the intra-personal development of one's character that is important.

The philosophical perspective of virtue ethics accommodates the view that being and doing comprise character. Two significant advocates of this view are the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle and the modern moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre. The study of the nature of character consisting of the inner self and moral goodness lends itself to a philosophical perspective like that of virtue ethics that accommodates being and doing, as expressed by Anscombe:

In modern moral philosophy, argued Anscombe, the idea of the unjust man – the person – has all but disappeared, and the concern for *who* he is has been completely substituted by a detached consideration of *what* he may do. Actions have replaced persons, behaviour has been separated from people, and doing is elevated above being. Instead of concentrating on the deeply problematic issues of human flourishing, moral personality, and the complex relationship between character, identity and conduct, there has been, among moral philosophers, a preoccupation with the tedious drafting of legalistic propositions to which one ought to assent, the abstract calculation of future goals to which one may or may not subscribe, or the pedantic clarification of moral terms, explanations or arguments which one often deploys, 'it can be seen that philosophically there is a huge gap ... 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; Crisp and Slote, 1997, 43-4; Vardy and Grosch, 1999, 115).

The research questions posed at the beginning of this chapter concerning the lack of understanding of leader character from a research perspective, together with the fact that current ways of researching are not entirely satisfactory for developing the concept of leader character, lead to the question of how this research will be conducted. As there is a need to study leader character in a manner that allows for its full exploration so as to yield a deep and rich understanding of this concept, a philosophical method is proposed. This will lend itself to exploring the complex nature of leader character, which is multidimensional as well as metaphysical and transcendent, comprising moral elements and the inner self.

1.8 Research Methodology

The nature of a study of leader character from a virtue ethics perspective lends itself to being investigated from a humanities perspective. The reason for this is expressed in Ciulla’s (2008) observation that: “Leadership is a human phenomenon that is embedded in culture, which includes art, literature, religion, philosophy, language, history, and generally all those things that constitute what it means to be and to live as a human” (2008:393). As an ethical leadership scholar, Ciulla is a pioneer in her work of highlighting the need for the humanities as a way of researching leadership. This moral philosophical study seeks to investigate leadership by means of a hermeneutical method consisting of the interpretation and understanding of text (Prasad, 2002:14). The method of hermeneutics “emphasises the sociocultural and historic influences on qualitative interpretation [and] ... exposes hidden meanings” (Byrne, 2001:968). The philosophers Martin Heidegger (1889 – 1976) and Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900 – 2002) transformed the method of hermeneutics from a “narrowly defined method” to “a broad epistemology and philosophy of understanding/interpretation” (Prasad, 2002:23).

The origins of virtue ethics, as a philosophical tradition, can be traced to Plato and Aristotle. As Aristotle’s study of the nature of human good led him to develop the

virtues of character that are central to an understanding of character, his contribution is regarded as central to this study of character and leader character. Prasad (2002) notes the importance of context in the interpretation of text (2002:24) – a point that justifies the inclusion of MacIntyre in this research, as his reflections on the state of our post-modern context have a significant bearing on a contemporary understanding of leader character. The scope of this research is limited to a study of Aristotle and MacIntyre. Whilst far from exhaustive, the work of these two philosophers makes a significant contribution to the tradition of virtue ethics.

The hermeneutic method is applied in gaining an understanding of the primary and secondary texts of Aristotle and MacIntyre³. The process of interpretation involves gaining an understanding of Aristotle and MacIntyre on their own terms, which occurs in Chapters Three and Four. As the “goal of interpreting a text is to recover the author’s originally intended meaning” (Schleiermacher, 1985, as cited in Prasad, 2002:15), Chapters Three and Four seek to interpret and understand the meaning of character according to Aristotle and MacIntyre. From Gadamer’s (1975) perspective, understanding and interpretation take the form of a dialogue so that “the meaning of a text emerges through a conversation between the interpreter and the text” (1975:331; see also Palmer, 1969; Tracy, 1998; Warnke, 1987). Gadamer’s view is that such a hermeneutic conversation involves posing particular questions to the text, and determining the questions “to which the text constitutes the answers” (Bleicher, 1980:14; Palmer, 1969:200, as cited in Prasad, 2002:19). The questions posed by this research are: what is an Aristotelian understanding of character? and what is a MacIntyrean understanding of character? The former question is the subject of Chapter Three and the latter question of Chapter Four. These questions are answered against the background of the purpose of this research, which is to develop the concept of leader character located within the construct of RL. Accordingly the themes of moral responsibility and leadership feature in the background when pursuing the

³ Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* is the primary text consulted, and the secondary texts are the works of Aristotelian scholars who interpret Aristotle’s work. MacIntyre’s *After Virtue* is the primary text consulted, and secondary texts are the works of MacIntyrean scholars who interpret MacIntyre’s work.

answers to these questions. After answers to these research questions are developed in Chapters Three and Four, this research builds on the Aristotelian and MacIntyrean understanding of character. This involves a shift to the virtue business ethics literature concerning the nature of leadership in Chapter Five. This is interpreted as part of the process of developing the concept of leader character, which is completed in Chapter Six.

1.9 Overview of the Construction of the Philosophical Argument Designed to Answer the Research Question: What is Leader Character?

As the purpose of this research is to explore the nature of leader character from a virtue ethics perspective an overview of how the philosophical argument is constructed is now provided. This overview is aimed at clarifying how this research goes about answering the research question: what is leader character? This question is considered in this research from a virtue ethics perspective.

As this research locates this study of leader character within the construct of RL, an overview of the nature of this leadership construct is provided in Chapter Two. The purpose of this chapter is to indicate the suitability of RL as a construct within which to explore this study of leader character.

As this research explores the nature of leader character from a virtue ethics perspective, the method this research applies is that of a philosophical argument, which commences in Chapter Three. As Aristotle does not deal with the nature of leadership it is necessary to gain a prior understanding of the nature of character. This is the purpose of this chapter as it seeks to develop an Aristotelian understanding of character. This chapter focuses on the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, whose work is considered 'the main source of inspiration for modern virtue ethicists' (Crisp and Slote, 1997:2; Shields, 2007:403). In particular his insights regarding the virtues of character are foundational to this study of leader character from a virtue ethics perspective, and the primary source consulted is Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Leading virtue ethics scholars who interpret Aristotle's work as it relates to the virtues of character are consulted as secondary sources throughout this chapter. Aristotle's

search for the good leads him to develop the concept of character; however this is more implied than direct, leaving it to the reader to deduce this concept (Stonehouse, 2011:51). The philosophical argument developed in this chapter focuses on interpreting Aristotle's primary and secondary sources aimed at developing an Aristotelian understanding of character.

Chapter Four follows a similar structure to Chapter Three as it continues to develop the philosophical argument concerning the nature of character from a virtue ethics perspective. In this case the work of the modern virtue ethics scholar, Alasdair MacIntyre is considered. The primary source consulted in this chapter is MacIntyre's *After Virtue*, and secondary texts by leading virtue ethics scholars who interpret MacIntyre's work are also consulted in developing a philosophical argument concerning a MacIntyrean understanding of character.

The argument for the concept of leader character, understood within the emerging construct of RL, is established in Chapter Five and completed in Chapter Six. After developing an Aristotelian and a MacIntyrean understanding of character in chapters three and four, the focus in chapters five and six shifts to include leadership which moves this research closer to answering the research question: what is leader character? Business ethics scholars working in the field of virtue ethics who apply Aristotle's and MacIntyre's theories to business are the sources consulted in these two chapters.

As MacIntyre regards the prevailing social and cultural order of late modernity as an impediment to the exercise of moral agency and thus of character, the first section of this chapter considers the reasons for this by focusing on the character of the manager – an archetype MacIntyre regards as representative of the social order of emotivism. Continuing with this theme, MacIntyre's concept of moral agency matched by an understanding of moral responsibility extending beyond an individual's role, contributes to a fully developed virtue understanding of moral responsibility considered helpful to an understanding of the concept of leader character. Consistent with MacIntyre's view of the moral agent's responsibility deriving from the social

structures he or she inhabits, a case is made for the moral concept of the whole, undivided self. This morally mature self contributes to a partial understanding of the research question being pursued concerning the concept of leader character that will be developed fully in Chapter Six.

As MacIntyre's understanding of character developed in Chapter Four reveals, modern social structures have an important bearing on character. The focus of Chapter Five is on what supports the flourishing of leader character, and what detracts from the flourishing of leader character. Similarly, Aristotle's insights with regard to how social structures can aid or detract from the flourishing of character are also considered, primarily through the work of the business ethics scholar, Morrell (2010, 2012). The insights gained in this chapter regarding what aids and impedes the flourishing of leader character provide necessary material for answering the research question in Chapter Six – what is leader character?

In Chapter Six the insights of the first five chapters of this research are brought together and the focus of this chapter is on answering the research question: what is leader character? The model of leader character from a virtue ethics perspective developed in this chapter, based on an integration of chapters two through five, provides the answer to this question. The model of leader character proposed in this chapter is aimed at achieving the purpose of this research, namely to make a contribution to the field of RL by developing the concept of leader character, which lies at the heart of RL (Maak and Pless, 2006).

In answering the research question by providing the model of leader character the purpose of this research is achieved, which, as stated under heading 1. above, is to make a contribution to the field of RL by developing the concept of leader character – a concept lying at the heart of RL (Maak and Pless, 2006). How the purpose of this research is achieved is by applying a philosophical virtue ethics perspective to an in-depth study of leader character that extends the conceptual foundations of RL.

Conclusion

The question posed at the beginning of this research concerned the type of leadership required to adequately address the questions of responsibility and sustainability facing business leaders, in light of the global challenges of scarcity of resources, climate change, and world poverty (Eisenbeiss, 2012). This research proposes that RL, an emerging concept overlapping studies in leadership, ethics, and CSR (Ciulla, 2005; De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2008; Doh and Stumpf, 2005; Maak, 2007; Maak and Pless, 2006a; Voegtlin et al., 2012; Waldman and Galvin, 2008; Waldman and Siegel, 2008) is conceptually robust (Voegtlin et al., 2012:2) to address questions of responsibility and sustainability. In exploring the RL construct, leader character, an under-researched concept that is believed to be at the core of being a responsible leader (Maak and Pless, 2006) is the focus of this research.

Researchers have called for an extension of the leader character construct and for alternative ways to research leader character to advance the study of this concept (Hannah and Avolio, 2011a:990). This research aims to do this by applying a philosophical perspective with the aim of gaining a deep and rich understanding of this concept so as to further refine it. The perspective through which this research will be viewed is that of virtue ethics which is concerned with the character of a person. In developing the leader character construct it is believed that this research will add to the conceptual foundations of the emerging construct of RL.

Chapter Two

Responsible Leadership (RL)

Introduction

As an aim of this research is to extend the conceptual foundation of RL by exploring leader character which lies at its core, the purpose of this chapter is to gain an understanding of the emerging construct of RL, and to illustrate why RL is a suitable construct from which to explore the concept of leader character.

At the beginning of this research a question was posed concerning the type of leadership required to adequately address the issues of responsibility and sustainability facing business leaders. Reflecting on this question it was recognized that “having a good character and being a moral person are at the core of being a responsible leader” (Ciulla, 1998; Solomon, 1999; George, 2003). However, the problem statement in Chapter One indicated that a review of the leadership literature reveals that little is known about the concept of leader character from a research perspective (Hannah and Avolio 2011a; Hannah and Avolio 2011b; Quick and Wright 2011; Wright and Quick 2011), leading to the research question: what is leader character? In Chapter One it was noted that existing models of leadership are conceptually constrained in adequately encompassing the causes and implications of present leadership challenges, which are “rooted in the economic and moral implications of globalization” (Voegtlin et al., 2012:2). To address this problem RL was identified as the most suitable leadership construct from which to pursue an understanding of leader character. As RL is inherently normative, (Pless and Maak, 2011:5) it was recognized as an appropriate model of leadership to address the challenges of responsibility and sustainability currently facing business leaders.

This research recognises the need for conducting this study from a theoretical perspective capable of adequately addressing the nature of character given its elusive nature as an element of leadership (Gini, 2004:35), and that it is “less understood and harder to define” (Seijts, et al., 2015). As indicated in Chapter One: “there still remains

an extensive range of meaningful constructs that have been untapped in prior research” (Hannah and Avolio, 2011a:991), and the ontological basis for the concept of character requires refinement and unpacking (Ibid.). Related to this research problem is a second research question, which was posed in Chapter One: what way of researching leader character is appropriate for extending the concept of leader character, lying at the heart of RL, given its elusive nature? The moral philosophical tradition of virtue ethics with a rich understanding of character that has been applied to the study of business ethics has been selected as a suitable construct from which to investigate the concept of leader character.

Structure of the Chapter

This chapter is divided into five main sections beginning with an explanation of why a humanities perspective is applied in researching the construct of RL, and how it differs from a social science perspective. As this study of the emerging construct of RL is from a normative, humanities perspective, this research is located in the field of ethical leadership. Ciulla (2004), who researches leadership from an applied ethics philosophical perspective explains the nature of leadership, viewed from an ethical lens, in her article ‘Leadership Ethics: Mapping the Territory.’ It is necessary to explain the nature of this type of leadership so as to understand how this research is conducted, and its location within the body of leadership research. Following on from this is a descriptive account of the emerging construct of RL. Section three hones in on the aspect of RL particularly relevant to leader character – what makes a responsible leader? (Maak and Pless, 2006). The aim of this section of the chapter is to make a case for leader character lying at the core of RL (Ciulla, 1998; Solomon, 1999; George, 2003). This will feed into Chapter Six in which the concept of leader character is developed. Section four involves an analysis of the ethical bases underpinning the RL construct. Such an analysis is aimed at differentiating between the ethical base that RL draws on and a virtue understanding of ethics applied in this research. The final section of this chapter is aimed at identifying gaps in the RL construct that virtue ethics can

address so as to establish an argument for how virtue ethics can add to the emerging theory of RL, which will be completed in Chapter Six.

2.1 Researching RL from a Humanities Perspective

Ciulla (2008) distinguishes between two main perspectives in leadership studies – the social sciences and the humanities. As this research applies the moral philosophical construct of virtue ethics to the study of leader character, a humanities perspective is followed in this study of leader character located within the field of RL.

2.1.1 The Difference between a Social Science and a Humanities Perspective

Ciulla's research into ethical leadership is from a humanities perspective and she explains the difference between this view and that of social science. She comments that both views are necessary for developing our understanding of leadership, as social science tends to accumulate data by studying the parts of leadership, whilst the humanities seeks to understand the whole (2008:393). Whereas leadership research in the social sciences applies the methodology of the natural sciences to study human nature, the humanities researches human nature by drawing on subjects like history, philosophy, classics, political science, and religion to understand the "lived experience" of humanity (Dilthey, 1989, as cited in Ciulla, 2008:394). This view means that understanding leadership requires interpreting what subjects like art, literature, history, and religion can teach us about leadership. As an example the leadership scholar Adler draws on art to provide insights into what artists and great leaders have in common, which is the ability and the courage to see reality as it is. Artists develop the ability for seeing and the power of art is in enabling us to restore our ability to see. Great leaders and great artists share another ability – the courage to imagine possibility (Adler, 2011:213). A second example is that of literature applied to leadership. Isaiah Berlin's *The Hedgehog and the Fox* is applied in seeking to uncover Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy's insights into the United States president, Abraham Lincoln's impressive leadership ability (Provizer, 2008:453).

Ciulla explains that the closest approximation to a research “method” applied by scholars across the humanities is hermeneutics, involving the interpretation of texts, human events, works of art, and language, as well as interpreting the interpretations of other scholars’ work. The value of history is that it tells us about the context in which people live and leadership now is not that different from what it was in the past. Although the cultural context of authors like Plato, Tolstoy, Xenophon, or Machiavelli differs from our own, their understanding of leadership is familiar to us. Context is regarded as important by leadership scholars – a fact often ignored by empirical studies concerned with studying an aspect of leadership. In addition to providing an understanding of context, history offers an immense body of “data” and literature in the field of leadership, which is comparable to, and in some cases better than the literature spanning the past century of leadership studies (Ciulla, 2008:393–394).

The hermeneutic circle reflects the “interplay between the general context and a particular thing in that context” (Ciulla, 2008:394). Ciulla refers to the philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889 – 1976) who regards the hermeneutic circle as a description of “the *process* of learning” rather than a “method of analysis in the humanities”(2008:394.), and how “we understand the human world [is] as an interaction between how we understand ourselves and how we understand the world” (2008:394). Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900 – 2002), a student of Heidegger drew on his predecessor’s insights in developing a model of how the humanities and the social sciences should collaborate in studying leadership. Gadamer’s view is that an appreciation of the past within the larger context of humanity is necessary for understanding people today, in other words we cannot understand the present without an understanding of the past. This view is shared by Alasdair MacIntyre (2007) and is developed in Chapter Four. In this “fusion of these horizons” lies understanding, so that “we are able to interpret the past to understand the present and apply that understanding to the future” (Ciulla, 2008:394). Ciulla’s view is that leadership from a humanities perspective strives for truth and “some objective picture of reality” (Ibid.: 395), and although it does not engage in scientific truths, it aspires to a semblance of the truth. Whilst the social sciences provide explanations and descriptions of

leadership, the humanities provide an understanding of such explanations within the context of history and the ways in which aspects of the human condition are depicted by philosophers, writers, artists, and theologians (Snow, 1998:2, as cited in Ciulla, 2008:395).

The purpose of the discussion below is to position this research within the field of ethical leadership, with its normative foundation located in the humanities, to explain the nature of a humanities study of leadership, and to explain how it differs from a social science perspective, which is the dominant perspective applied by scholars in researching RL.

2.1.2 Ethical Leadership from a Humanities Perspective

This discussion aims to discuss ethical leadership from a humanities perspective, as a normative framework within which to pursue an understanding of RL. Joanne Ciulla, a pioneer in the field of ethical leadership from a humanities perspective, locates ethics in the “heart of leadership studies and not in an appendage” (2004:4). However, her analysis of leadership studies reveals little attention is paid to ethics by leadership scholars. She notes that a philosophical perspective of ethics is often ignored or rejected by leadership scholars as evidenced by Rost (1991), whose otherwise comprehensive account of the subject of leadership in his *Leadership for the Twenty-First Century*, is condemning of all ethical theories, regarding them as useless (2004:5). When scholars reject ethical writings they often reinvent familiar ethical theories and philosophical distinctions, or ignore them and proceed in an unsystematic manner. A similar example, notes Ciulla is the lack of leadership ethics research in Bass & Stogdill’s (1990) *Handbook of Leadership*, considered *the* source book of leadership. None of the 37 chapters deals with leadership ethics, which is hardly surprising notes Ciulla, as such research is in short supply. Researchers Calas and Smircich note the positivist leaning in much leadership research, particularly in business and psychology. They argue that researchers are caught up in a search for the Rosetta stone of leadership so as to break its codes, as society expects “scientific” research, leading to “scientists” dissecting leadership into smaller and smaller parts. This results in the loss

of the main code so that the parts can no longer be put together (Calas and Smircich, 1988:222–226). Such fragmentation explains why work on ethics and leadership is lacking. Another reason for this lack is that most of the leadership literature draws on the social sciences of business, political science, and psychology, with little leadership work done in the humanities. Calas and Smircich together with Rost indicate the need for a multidisciplinary approach to leadership and regard case studies, biography, and mythology as important for understanding leadership (Ciulla, 2004:6–7).

Ciulla's (2008) view is that John W Gardner (1990) and James MacGregor Burns (1978), are the two most cited and respected leadership scholars. They both take a multidisciplinary approach in their study of leadership. Gardner discusses ethics and leadership and offers good common sense in his chapter "The Moral Dimension." Ciulla notes that conceptualizing morality as a *dimension*, rather than an element or part of leadership is significant as it implies another way of viewing leadership as a whole, rather than investigating a part of it (2004:7–8). She refers to Thomas Sergiovanni's argument for "an expanded theoretical and operational foundation for leadership practice that will give balance to a full range of values and bases of authority" (Sergiovanni, 1992:xiii). He regards such an expanded foundation as the *moral dimension in leadership* (Ciulla, 2004:20).

Burns' writes as a historian, political scientist, and biographer in seeking to understand leadership as a whole rather than as a sum of small fragments. Ciulla draws on Burns' theory of transforming leadership based on a set of moral commitments, in arguing that "ethics is at the heart of leadership" (2004:8).

2.1.2.1 The Paradigm of Leadership – Is It Settled, Shifting or Shifty?

For leadership ethics research to be meaningful and of use it needs to be embedded in the study of leadership. Ciulla draws an analogy with business ethics and comments that if business ethics teaching and research ignores existing practice and research, the subject of ethics would be relegated to being an appendage, and would not form a vital part of a business school curriculum nor improve our knowledge about business (2004:8). The purpose of business ethics and leadership ethics teaching and research

should be to develop the ethical capacity of business people and leaders, as well as reconceptualise the way we think about the theoretical and practical aspects of business and leadership. For this reason “both areas of applied ethics must embed themselves into their respective fields” (2004:9).

Ciulla refers to Thomas Kuhn’s (1970) analysis in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* to understand the status of current leadership studies. One way of assessing the paradigm of leadership research is to argue that such a paradigm exists, based mainly on work done in psychology and business⁴. According to Kuhn, one way of knowing whether a paradigm is established is in the evidence of scientists enhancing their reputations through journal articles “addressed only to professional colleagues, the men whose knowledge of a shared paradigm can be assumed ...” (Kuhn, 1970:20). Prior to a paradigm being established, producing a textbook would be regarded as a new contribution to a field of study⁵. Applying Kuhn’s criteria, evidence of an established paradigm in leadership studies exists in the form of the nature of leadership articles accepted by journals, and the cross-referencing in these journals, the third edition of Bass and Stogdill’s textbook, and various leadership symposia (Ciulla, 2004:9).

Kuhn regards a paradigm as established when researchers are engaged in “normal science” and rules and definitions are rarely discussed as researchers working in that paradigm have internalized them. Kuhn remarks that “lack of a standard interpretation or of an agreed reduction to rules will not prevent a paradigm from guiding research” (1970:20). He goes on to say that as theories shift over time so does the meaning of important terms. Ciulla notes that this appears to be the case with leadership studies. Scientific progress, in Kuhn’s view, would be hindered should the meaning of terms become overly rigid (2004:9).

⁴ Ciulla acknowledges the extensive body of leadership work emanating from political science. However, its integration into the business/psychology leadership literature is limited (2004:20).

⁵ Ciulla cites the example of Hughes, R., Ginnett, R., and Curpüy, G. J. (1993) *Leadership: Enhancing the Lessons of Experience* (Ibid.: 21).

Ciulla notes that Rost (1991) is critical of some leadership research that fails to define leadership. Kuhn however thinks this unwarranted as definitions are unarticulated yet internalized by researchers working within a paradigm. Rost also regards the variety of definitions of leadership and the lack of a shared definition as obstructive to progress in the field (Rost, 1991:6-7). If Rost is correct and definitions of leadership differ radically, then leadership studies are either in a pre-paradigm phase, or a paradigm exists but it is shifting, and there is lots of debate about definitions. Ciulla proposes a third alternative, which is that a paradigm of sorts exists with researchers arguing about definitions. She refers to such a paradigm as shifty, meaning it is not trusted by scholars, in spite of them sticking to it by continuing to conduct research “in the same old ways⁶” (2004:9-10).

2.1.2.2 An Analysis of the Various Definitions of Leadership

Ciulla notes that Rost analyses 221 definitions of leadership and bemoans the lack of a common definition. However, he does not clarify what he means by a definition and at times indicates that a definition can provide both sufficient and necessary conditions for recognizing leadership. He appears interested in definitions that are accurate, precise, and concise so as to correctly label leadership when it happens or when people are engaged in it (Rost, 1991:6, cited in Ciulla, 2004:10). At other times Rost’s use of the word *definition* indicates it as a theory or even a paradigm. His view is that having a shared definition of leadership implies the existence of a “school” of leadership, and a change in definition means a “paradigm shift” (Rost, 1991:99, cited in Ciulla, 2004:10.).

Rost’s need for a common definition of leadership misses the point according to Ciulla. Sociologists or historians for example are unlikely to share exactly the same definitions of sociology or history. And the variety of definitions Rost analyses does not seem that different from one another. Ciulla examined a range of definitions of leadership that Rost regards as most representative of each era, dating back to 1920 (see Appendix 1).

⁶ Ciulla notes the leadership articles acknowledging the lack of knowledge about leadership, despite the vast amount of study in the field. In spite of this, these same scholars seem reluctant to change the way they do their research (2004:21).

In considering these definitions she considers whether they are so vastly different that there is no resemblance between them at all, and whether researchers would be “talking about different things⁷”? In addition, she considers what these definitions reveal about “different periods of history,” and what they indicate about “the place of ethics in leadership studies?” (Ciulla, 2004:11). This range of leadership definitions spanning decades reveals a common understanding of leadership as each of the definitions refers to leadership as some form of act, process, or influence that “gets people to do something” (Ciulla, 2004:11). Where the definitions differ is in their implications, particularly with regard to the leader-follower relationship. There are normative implications regarding the manner that leaders use in getting people to do things, whether by persuading, influencing, organizing, impressing, or inspiring, and the manner of leader’s decision making and whether it is authoritarian or consensual. This leads Ciulla to suggest that Rost is actually referring to theories about how people lead or should lead and the nature of the relationships between leaders and followers, which is really a reference to whether the definitions “do or don’t describe the underlying moral commitments of the leader-follower relationship⁸” (Burns, 1979:3, as cited in Ciulla, 2004:22).

The analysis of these definitions suggests that leadership is a relationship where leaders and followers engage in getting something done, leading to the question: How should this relationship be described? Considered from a democratic viewpoint the definitions that appear to be dictatorial, manipulative, and coercive are mutually unappealing and Rost (cited in Ciulla, 2004:11-12) seems to concur and objects to the authoritarian stance taken in the theories of the 1920s, 1970s, and 1980s. In contrast, the definitions from the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, as well as Rost’s definition of the 1990s are appealing as they offer a democratic, participatory and amiable view of the

⁷ “The theory of meaning ... [Ciulla has] in mind is from Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, tr. G. E. M. Anscombe, 3rd ed. (MacMillan: N.Y. 1968), 18-20, 241”. (Ciulla, 2004:21).

⁸ Burns is critical of the elitist tone of the leadership literature portraying heroic leaders, with powerless followers appearing as a “drab mass”. In contrast to the leadership literature, a populist approach is taken in the followership literature (Burns, 1979:3, as cited in Ciulla, 2004:22).

leadership relationship. In these types of relationships leaders seek to *influence*, which suggests followers can choose to voluntarily comply. A morally pleasing form of leadership valued by Rost embodies free choice and consensus and recognises the values, beliefs, and needs of followers (Ciulla, 2004:11-12).

Normative implications arise when thinking about the problem of these definitions, as social science is not value-free and a fact/value distinction alone will not increase our understanding of leadership. Voegtlin concurs with Ciulla and notes that the normative assumptions underpinning research means that it cannot be totally value free (2016:584). Ciulla thinks that leadership scholars should move away from questions concerning the definition of leadership, and rather focus on the question “what is *good* leadership?” (Ciulla, 2004:13), which encompasses morally good *and* technically good i.e. leaders should be good in both respects⁹. This discussion of definitions has exposed how fundamental ethical commitments are to defining leadership and influencing research. If leadership scholars became clear about the normative assumptions and values underlying the way they approach their research¹⁰, this would improve our understanding of the “relationship between what leadership is and what we think leadership ought to be”¹¹ (Ciulla, 2004:14), and shift the Bass/Stogdill-type paradigm.

In the above discussion of ethical leadership Ciulla has argued that ethics is at the “heart of leadership studies and not in an appendage” (2004:4). This research supports this view. Ciulla has highlighted the dearth of research from a humanities perspective, and the need for developing a deeper understanding of leadership, particularly *good* leadership. As the purpose of this research is to apply the moral philosophical tradition of virtue ethics to develop the concept of leader character, this study is located within the realm of ethical leadership, specifically RL, directed at developing an

⁹ A similar sentiment is echoed by Hannah and Avolio (2011) who propose that both character and competence form “... the raw building blocks of effective and sustainable leadership” (2011b:979).

¹⁰ Ciulla comments that journal article authors often use stipulative definitions to clarify their use of concepts in an article, and these are not to be regarded as universal definitions (2004:23).

¹¹ Being clearer about what leaders ought to be like is necessary for schools and organizations so as to better train and develop leaders (2004:14).

understanding of what good, moral leadership is. It is to the concept of RL that we now turn to gain an understanding of this normative leadership theory and its suitability for pursuing an understanding of leader character.

2.2 The Emerging Construct of RL

This exploration of leader character located within the emerging construct of RL draws on Ciulla's argument that "ethics is at the heart of leadership" (2004:8). However, whilst Ciulla builds on Burns' normative theory of transforming leadership, this study of leader character is located within the normative theory of RL, as it is deemed appropriate for addressing the challenges of responsibility and sustainability currently facing business leaders (as stated in Chapter One). The theme of societal responsibility permeating the theory of RL (Waldman, 2011:75) resonates with the concepts of citizenship and the good for society that are hallmarks of the moral philosophy of virtue ethics, providing further justification for the choice of RL as a suitable theory from which to pursue an understanding of leader character. RL as a body of work is regarded as "emergent in terms of understanding" indicating the potential for depth and complexity yet is "far from a complete theory" (Kempster and Carroll, 2016:8). Voegtlin (2016) concurs that the nature of RL research is emergent and acknowledges the work of Maak and Pless in contributing to the theory of RL (Maak, 2007; Maak and Pless, 2006a, 2009; Pless, 2007; Pless and Maak, 2011, as cited in Voegtlin, 2016:586). This provides an opportunity to contribute to an important concept in this emerging field of leadership.

2.2.1 The Birth of the RL Construct

Scholars working in the field of RL cite numerous ethical lapses and failures by business leaders as justification for their research concerning the nature and extent of leader's responsibilities, that has triggered interest in exploring the ethical dimensions of leadership (e.g., Brown and Mitchell, 2010; Brown and Trevino, 2006; Jordan et al., 2013). Examples of such lapses and failures include the economic crisis of 2008, the scandal in FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association), the Panama Papers scandals, and the deaths of Bangladeshi clothing workers from a factory collapse

(Hibbert and Cunliffe, 2015); the Alaska Exxon Valdez spill, Union Carbide's Bhopal disaster, the Nigerian and Brent Spar failures by Shell, Nike's sweatshops, and the collapse of Arthur Andersen and Enron (Pless and Maak, 2011:3); WorldCom and Parmalat (Maak and Pless, 2006:1); allegations of cost-cutting and negligence within BP that led to the worst oil spill in history (Kurtz, 2013), and the extensive brutality inflicted by dictators financed by an oil company co-operating with the French government (Shaxson, 2012:2-3). The impact of these types of disasters on the innocent and vulnerable, including the environment, can be devastating. In light of this Maak and Pless, pioneers in the field of RL, note that "*the challenge in business, is leading responsibly and with integrity*" (2006:1). However, their search of the leadership literature revealed almost nothing about *responsible* leadership, thus providing the impetus for the birth of the field of RL marked by the publication of *Responsible Leadership* (Maak and Pless, (eds.), 2006). They garnered the interest of a diverse group of scholars including psychologists, business ethicists, economists, philosophers, psychoanalysts, leadership and management scholars, and learning and development practitioners, from Europe, Asia, and North America to ensure a broad perspective (Ibid.: 2-3).

2.2.2 The Development of the RL Construct

This discussion about the development of the RL construct begins with Maak and Pless's book *Responsible Leadership*, in which they pose the following questions relevant to this research: what is RL? and what makes a responsible leader? In answering their question about what RL is (discussed under a separate heading below) they begin with an article by Ciulla 'Ethics: the heart of leadership,' indicating the centrality of ethics to their initial formulation of the concept of RL. They proceed by giving their view of a relational approach to RL, discussed under a separate heading below. This is followed by articles detailing the moral aspects of decision making, and the issue of 'Spirituality as the basis of responsible leaders and responsible companies.' The second question posed by Maak and Pless regarding what makes a responsible

leader is dealt with in the following section of this chapter in aiming to make a case for leader character lying at the heart of RL.

Waldman and Galvin (2008) consider alternative perspectives of RL, specifically economic and stakeholder perspectives, and note that understandings of this concept differ, as there are varying definitions based on differing perspectives, and the concept can be elusive (2008:328). These different perspectives are informed by a range of descriptive, normative, and paradigmatic points of view (Pless and Maak, 2011 as cited in Miska et al., 2014:350) concerning business' responsibilities and the concept of CSR¹², which has a varied history (Carroll 1999). Waldman and Galvin acknowledge that the responsibility component is missing from established leadership theories like transformational, authentic, ethical, charismatic, participative, shared, and spiritual, and that responsibility "is at the heart of what effective leadership is all about ... to not be responsible is to not be effective as a leader" (Waldman and Galvin, 2008:327). They attribute leaders' lack of responsibility to many of the corporate scandals and cite the Sarbanes-Oxley Act in the United States as a means of addressing this problem. Their view is that RL is broader, more strategic and less controversial than concepts like ethical leadership. They distinguish between ethics which could be confused with religious values and a leader's personal behaviour, and responsibility, which focuses attention toward the specific others that a leader may be responsible to. They specify that responsibility "is based on broad moral and/or legal standards, it is geared toward the specific concerns of others, an obligation to act on those standards, and to be accountable for the consequences of one's actions" (2008:328).

In 2011 Waldman reflected on the state of RL research. He noted that the concept of RL combines two distinct bodies of work: social responsibility and leadership. Whilst the social responsibility literature takes a macro approach focusing on the links between CSR practices and firm performance (e.g., Hillman and Kleim, 2001; Margolis and Walsh, 2001; Orlitzky et al. 2003; Waddock and Graves, 1997), the leadership literature is more narrowly and internally focused on individual relationships between

¹² This concept is discussed further on.

leaders and followers (Gerstner and Day, 1997), and team-oriented leadership (Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006). Waldman notes the need to bridge the conceptual gap between social responsibility and leadership and to further develop understanding of how to integrate these two concepts in a way that is coherent and beneficial, by clarifying the issues pertaining to this integration¹³ (2011:75). Waldman's first caveat to researchers is: "RL can be conceptualized and examined based upon multiple definitions and moral bases" (2011:77). He acknowledges the range of RL definitions emerging, which makes sense given the range of definitions or conceptualizations of CSR (Garriga and Melé, 2004) and stakeholder theory (Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Freeman, 1984) in the literature. According to Waldman (2011) a definition that seems commonly accepted (e.g., Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Margolis and Walsh, 2001, 2003) and consistent with both ethical and integrative theories of CSR representing normative stakeholder theory, "considers what managers *should* do in an effort to take into account the needs of stakeholders, other than shareholders, who may have legitimate interests in a firm's activities" (Waldman, 2011:77). Waldman's second caveat is: "RL may be driven by multiple ideological bases" (2011:79). In view of this he cautions researchers to be cognisant of their own ideological values; understand the potential for how those values can bias their positions; and accept that no single political or ideological stance is the "right" or "wrong" basis for RL. The third caveat is: "RL is a unique and beneficial construct within the domain of leadership theory and research" (2011: 80). Waldman's (2011) view is that the concept of RL should take its place within the domain of existing leadership theory and research, as there are overlaps between RL and transformational (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999; Waldman et al., 2006) and servant (Greenleaf, 1977) forms of leadership (2011:80).

Miska et al., (2014) seek to reconcile different views on RL and consider the extent to which stakeholders¹⁴ (i.e. those impacted by the operations of a business) other than shareholders and owners are included, and the scope of a leader's responsibility. They

¹³ Voegtlin integrates the conceptual gap between social responsibility and leadership in 2016 by applying Young's "social connection" theory (2004, 2006) discussed further on, to the question of "what makes a responsible leader?" (2016:581).

¹⁴ This concept is foundational to RL and is discussed under a separate heading below.

note three different perspectives informing views of RL: agent, stakeholder, and converging (2014:350). Waldman and Galvin (2008) make a similar distinction based on the economic perspective and the stakeholder perspective. Broadly, the agent and economic perspectives focus on the shareholder as the source of a leader's responsibilities, derived from agency-based instrumental thinking (Jensen, 2002). Friedman (1970) is a strong advocate of the view that leaders are only responsible to shareholders. In contrast, the stakeholder perspective considers "broad stakeholder networks through an ethical lens" (Miska et al., 2014:351), referred to as the "extended stakeholder view" (Frangieh and Yaacoub, 2017:283) where leaders are responsible for a wider set of stakeholders (Antunes and Franco, 2016; Maak 2007). Converging views of RL combine the agent/economic view with the stakeholder view and vary depending on the extent of stakeholder inclusion and their scopes of responsibility (Miska et al., 2014:351). Miska et al., acknowledge that given the range of theoretical and conceptual views informing the RL construct, these facets can be reconciled leading to future theory development extending beyond the current stakeholder-shareholder debate (Ibid.: 358).

RL scholars Kempster and Carroll, editors of the 2016 edition of *Responsible Leadership. Realism and romanticism*, comment on the status of RL as a perspective or lens that is incomplete and currently in progress offering another way to debate and understand leadership. They emphasise the nature of responsibility, which they regard as axiomatic to leadership, and how responsibility manifests during the practice of leading. Their focus is on understanding, explaining, generating insight, and theorising about RL with the aim of influencing responsibility in leading. They regard such pursuits as possibilities for redefining and redeveloping our ways of conceiving leadership (2016:3).

Voegtlin comments that the study of RL is "yet to be studied in sufficient depth" (2016:586), and the ethical principles and values that should underpin RL are not sufficiently explicit (Maak and Pless, 2006; Pless, 2007). Various definitions of responsibility abound (Waldman, 2011) whilst RL research does not specify the extent

of business leader's responsibility. There is a lack of knowledge about what being a responsible leader entails and the difficulties encountered by responsible leaders (Maak and Pless, 2009). An understanding of responsibility encompassing the challenges and complexities of the global business environment is needed to address the shortcomings of RL research (e.g., Scherer and Palazzo, 2007, 2011; Voegtlin et al., 2012, as cited in Voegtlin, 2016:586). The expanding scope of responsibility attributed to business leaders raises questions about "what and toward whom leaders are responsible" (Voegtlin, 2016:587).

2.2.3 A Descriptive Account of the RL Construct

The following descriptive account of RL is aimed at answering the question: what is RL?

RL draws on a variety of disciplines including psychoanalysis, developmental psychology, leadership ethics, systems theory, and stakeholder theory (Pless, 2007), and is an evolving concept located at the intersection of CSR, leadership, and ethics (Ciulla, 2004; De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2008; Maak, 2007; Maak and Pless, 2006; Waldman and Galvin, 2008; Waldman and Siegel, 2008). The centrality of ethics to the concept of RL is recognition of the normative nature of this type of leadership. The theory of RL differs from other leadership theories in that it is content-led. Whereas familiar leadership theories like authentic, situational, and transformational provide guidelines on the best ways of inspiring, motivating, and developing excellent performance in followers, the theory of RL emphasises desired outcomes "loosely brought together under the heading of CSR"(Blakeley, 2016:109-110). RL theory is concerned with improving levels of human rights, social justice, integrity, sustainability, and the re-distribution of power, and has become "inextricably entwined in the debate around corporate responsibility" (Blakeley, 2016:110). RL theory can be regarded as a response to a societal context characterized by human rights abuses, sustainability threats, increasing centralisation of power, decreasing levels of wellbeing, and "highly problematic" ethical business standards (2016:109).

Maak and Pless are aware of the *value-free* debate concerning leadership as discussed by Ciulla above. In seeking to define RL they note the need for normative

transformation (Ghoshal, 2005, as cited in Maak and Pless, 2006:1-2), which is consistent with an ethical way of researching leadership. RL represents a vision inclusive of all constituents, demonstrating an awareness of the common good that extends beyond a purely economic, positivist and self-focused outlook (Maak and Pless, 2006:1-2). The societal context of the time seemed ripe for such a vision of leadership characterized by increasing environmental, geo and socio political challenges from across the globe. This was coupled with pressure from a range of stakeholders like nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), consumers, local communities, and governments for corporations to assume their responsibility as global citizens (Maak and Pless, 2006; Voegtlin, 2012). Frangieh and Yaacoub (2017) note that with the voice of stakeholders intensifying (Husted et al, 2015) companies joined the UN Global Compact and become involved in CSR programs (Savitz and Weber, 2006) aimed at measuring their impact on the triple bottom line of the environment, society, and the economy (Witt and Stahl, 2016) expressed in the profit-people-planet framework (Elkington, 2006). Within this context businesses are expected to be mindful of, and to account for, the impact of their actions on a range of stakeholders, including the environment. Such a scenario calls for leaders with a normative perspective towards the organizations they lead, incorporating CSR, business ethics, and sustainability practices into their organizations' operations and cultures (Frangieh and Yaacoub, 2017:282).

2.2.4 The Concept of CSR

As the concept of CSR is foundational to RL (Ciulla, 2004; De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2008; Maak, 2007; Maak and Pless, 2006; Waldman and Galvin, 2008; Waldman and Siegel, 2008), it is necessary to gain an understanding of CSR to appreciate its influence on the RL construct.

The essence of CSR is a concern by the business community for society (Carroll, 1999:268). Although such concern dates back centuries, the academic development of the field of CSR can be traced to the "Father of CSR" – Howard Bowen, whose initial definition concerned businessmen's social responsibilities in referring to "the

obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society” (Bowen, 1953:6, as cited in Carroll, 1999:269). Davis (1960) was aware of the relation between business’ power and social responsibility and held that the “social responsibilities of businessmen need to be commensurate with their social power” (1960:71). As far back as 1967, Walton recognized the close links between the corporation and society and the need for top management to be cognizant of how business and society groupings “pursue their respective goals” (Walton, 1967:18). In 1979 Carroll identified four legs of CSR – economic, ethical, legal, and philanthropic, and proposed that CSR involves running an economically profitable business, that abides by the law, is ethical, and supports society (1983:604). Carroll later explained that supporting society means being a “good corporate citizen,” and that “There is a natural fit between the idea of CSR and an organisation’s stakeholders” (1991:43). In a further development, Schwartz and Carroll (2003) proposed an alternative way of thinking about CSR – a three-domain approach including economic, ethical, and legal responsibilities. The concept of corporate citizenship, which is incorporated in the RL literature (Maak and Pless, 2009), is embodied in the UN Global Compact, a global initiative aimed at providing guidelines for corporations to adhere to a “global compact of shared values and principles” and to “provide globalization a human face” (Williams, 2004:755). The principles of the Global Compact focus on labour rights, concern for the environment, human rights, and corruption. In a speech delivered in 2002 by Kofi Annan, the secretary general of the UN at the time and the initiator of the UN Global Compact, he advocated that: “It is time for the development of a new kind of business leadership. Global needs call for a revision of market capitalism and a move towards moral capitalism, a move from value to values, from shareholders to stakeholders, and from balance sheets to balanced development”.¹⁵

¹⁵ Speech made at the MIT Sloane School of Management Cambridge, Massachusetts on 14 October 2002. As cited in Global Responsible Leadership Initiative (GRLI) [no specific author stated – report said to be the ‘shared thoughts and beliefs of all founding members of the GRLI’] (2005). Globally Responsible Leadership: A call for engagement EFMD.

The development of the concept of CSR in the twenty first century remains rooted in the basic premise of business' concern for society. In 2004 Waddock comments in the context of the meaning of corporate responsibility and corporate citizenship, that CSR is generally understood as the "explicit contributions that companies make to better society" (2004:29). For large corporate companies the phenomenon of goodwill has become increasingly important, partly due to ethical failures and the subsequent loss of trust, and partly because much of the value of a company now resides in intangible assets (e.g., Galbreath, 2002; Lev and Daum, 2004; Savitz and Weber, 2006). This shift to a company's value being incorporated in intangible assets is attributed to the growing importance of corporate reputation, especially among brand-identified companies. These companies are willing to engage with stakeholders and establish different forms of partnerships, and branch into arenas not previously considered (Waddock, 2008:33).

It is clear that broader society is the background for appreciating the concept of CSR. Large multi-national corporations (MNCs) are global organisations that are a feature of current society, often wielding enormous power that have been accused of a range of social and ecological misdeeds including destroying local industries in developing countries, impeding democracy, polluting the environment, eroding national sovereignty, destroying land and forest, ignoring labour rights, encouraging excessive materialism, and ignoring matters of accountability, responsibility, sustainability, and transparency (e.g. Cavanagh et al., 2004; Derber, 2002; Korten, 1995). Structures like the UN Global Compact and the Global Reporting Initiative¹⁶ (triple-bottom line reporting) have arisen partly to address these problems that extend beyond national borders and are global in scope, and aimed at broadening wealth creation beyond maximum wealth for shareholders, with a focus on improved corporate responsibility on social, environmental, and governance matters. The global nature of MNCs means they are rootless - often not committed to a particular society. As the UN Global Compact and similar bodies are voluntary initiatives, the lack of an enforceable global governance infrastructure raises concerns about the control of MNCs, many of which

¹⁶<https://www.globalreporting.org/Pages/default.aspx>

have more resources under their control than countries (a 2000 study revealed that 51 out of 100 of the world's biggest revenue producers were companies and not countries; Anderson and Cavanagh, 2000). New forms of governance are clearly needed given that many companies now operate in the realm previously reserved for governments. This is partly due to the weakening of some governments and their failure to deal with social problems (Matten et al., 2003; Matten and Crane, 2005), contrasted with the innovation, speed, and efficiency of companies (Waddock, 2008:36).

This discussion of CSR has highlighted that the essence of CSR is a concern by the business community for society (Carroll, 1999:268), which fits with the concept of RL and its focus on the theme of societal responsibility permeating the theory of RL (Waldman, 2011:75).

2.2.5 Defining RL

Iszatt-White (2016) reflects on the core theories defining the RL construct and delineating the domain (2016:24). She acknowledges Pless's definition of RL as central to understanding this construct:

A values-based and through ethical principles-driven relationship between leaders and stakeholders who are connected through a shared sense of meaning and purpose through which they raise one another to higher levels of motivation and commitment for achieving sustainable values creation and social change (Pless 2007:438).

This definition highlights the **normative** nature of RL, its **relational** aspect, and the notion of **stakeholders** linked to a shared sense of meaning and purpose. The reference to sustainable values creation and social change points to the theme of the **purpose of business in society**.

The highlighted aspects of Pless's (2007) definition are important elements of the RL construct and are discussed below.

2.2.6 The Normative Underpinning of RL

The construct of RL is “inherently normative” (Pless and Maak, 2011:5) as indicated by stakeholder theory, which underpins RL theory and has evolved from an instrumental to an ethical view of explaining stakeholder relations (Freeman, 2004; Maak and Pless, 2006a:102) and in its normative point of view (Donaldson and Preston, 1995). RL conceives a responsible leader as one who reconciles “the idea of effectiveness with the idea of corporate responsibility by being an active citizen and promoting active citizenship inside and outside the organisation” (Pless, 2007:450). The normative orientation of RL has a vision of business as a good for society extending beyond shareholders and managers to all those stakeholders impacted by the operations of a business (Maak, 2007:331). Further weight to the normative aspect of RL is evidenced by the statement that “having a good character and being a moral person are at the core of being a responsible leader” (Ciulla, 1998; Solomon 1999; George, 2003).

The normative aspect of RL is probed in section 4 below in the analysis of stakeholder theory and CSR.

2.2.7 The Relational Aspect of RL

The recognition that responsible relationships are fundamental to leadership can be traced back to 1938 when Barnard noted that being a leader requires “a conscious, voluntary choice rooted in responsibility” (as cited in Novicevic et al., 2013:4). In making a case for the relational aspect of RL, Maak and Pless (2006) paint the picture of today’s business environment as complex, global, interconnected and uncertain, characterized by a “crisis of legitimacy” (Wheeler and Silanpää, 1997) and trust owing to a range of ethical lapses and failures (as discussed above). The notion of a global stakeholder society has taken root and the expectations are that companies are accountable for financial performance to shareholders, as well as to stakeholders for their broader economic, environmental and societal impacts (Wade, 2006:227). Acting responsibly towards all stakeholders in business, the environment, and society is vital for financial survival and long-term success in business (Freeman, 1984, 1994, 2005; Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Wheeler and Silanpää, 1997; Svendsen, 1998; Phillips,

2003; Maak and Pless, 2006). Sustainable business success requires leaders to re-establish public trust (DiPiazza and Eccles, 2002), to reclaim the “license to operate from society” (Maak and Pless, 2006:100), to earn and sustain an unblemished reputation as a “great company” (Collins, 2001) and corporate citizen, which requires leaders to walk the talk, operate with integrity, make “profits with principles” (Roddick, 1991), deliver on the “triple-bottom-line” (Elkington, 1998), and create “value for stakeholders” (Freeman, 2004:365). Within such a context leaders need to broaden their perspective from an internal shareholder perspective to a stakeholder perspective encompassing broader society. Given this scenario, effective leadership requires a “relational leadership approach based on inclusion, collaboration and co-operation with different stakeholder groups” (Wicks et al., 1994). In a stakeholder society relationships extend beyond the traditional leader and follower, and involve co-ordinating and cultivating relationships towards a range of stakeholder groups (Maak and Pless, 2006a:100).

Leaders confront a number of challenges in a global interconnected world: an *ethics* challenge involving recognising, assessing, and dealing with a range of stakeholder interests based on differing perspectives and values, and how to deal with ethical dilemmas; a *diversity* challenge requiring leaders to create a multicultural (Cox, 2001) and inclusive (Gilbert and Ivancevich, 2000; Pless and Maak, 2004) environment that values and respects all and encourages full development of potential; a *business in society* challenge involving making the business case for responsibility, earning the licence to operate, and becoming a model corporate citizen; and a *stakeholder* challenge involving creating trusting and sustainable relationships with a range of stakeholders, and regaining trust broken by corporate scandals (Pless and Maak, 2005).

Given this background, Maak and Pless (2006) claim that leadership occurs in relationships which “are the centre of leadership” (2006:39); that ethics is “at the heart of leadership” (Ciulla, 1998, 2006); and that growing “ethically sound relations

towards different stakeholders is an important responsibility of leaders in an interconnected stakeholder society” (Maak and Pless, 2006:101a).

2.2.8 Stakeholder Theory and the Concept of Stakeholders

As Pless’s (2007) definition of RL above indicates, stakeholders are an important constituent of the RL construct. This is despite the fact that stakeholder theory is aimed at the relationship between the firm and its stakeholders, and does not focus on leadership as such. RL has its roots in stakeholder theory and leadership scholars Bass and Steidlmeier discuss “leadership in the context of contemporary stakeholder theory” (1999:200). The origins of stakeholder theory can be traced to Freeman’s 1984 book *Strategic management: a stakeholder approach*. Stakeholder theory is theoretically grounded and provides a framework for deliberating and analysing matters concerning corporate responsibility and business ethics (Zakhem, Palmer, and Stoll, 2008:15). Freeman’s understanding of the term “stakeholder” includes “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives” (Zakhem, Palmer, and Stoll, 2008:18). He holds that effective management in “turbulent times” calls for stakeholders to be taken into account, owing to their impact on organizational goals and aims. Freeman refers to “managing for stakeholders” (2008:71), which is a view developed over the past three decades by scholars from diverse disciplines ranging from philosophy to finance. As businesses and the leaders who manage them, create value for employees, suppliers, customers, communities and shareholders, careful attention should be paid to how these relationships are fostered and how value is created for these stakeholders (2008:71). This gives credence to Maak and Pless’s claim that stakeholder relationships are an important responsibility of leaders in an interconnected stakeholder society (2006a:101).

In her discussion of a ‘Radical view of RL,’ Blakeley suggests the need for “changing our social construction of companies” (2016:114). Her idea seems to resonate with Freeman’s, who has foreseen the need for change yet is aware of how persistent the dominant model of the Managerial View of business is. This is the view that places

shareholders' interests above those of employees, suppliers, customers, and others, and in conflict with each other. Business is viewed as a hierarchical organisation acting in accordance with shareholders' interests. The measure of success is continually improving financial results understood as delivering value to shareholders. Such a view belies the reality of business in the twenty-first century, which is multifaceted and global and shareholder value may not reflect that dynamism. Blakeley refers to the "resilience of neoliberalism" despite growing levels of inequality, the 2008 recession, and distrust of corporate elites (2016:119). Her reference to a "sense-making paradigm" indicates a yearning for a model of business that strikes a chord with our common humanity rather than one that alienates¹⁷. In arguing against the dominant model of company structuring Freeman notes that this model is inconsistent with the law, which has evolved and now recognises the claims of suppliers, local communities, customers, and employees. He goes on to claim that the dominant model is inconsistent with basic ethics as it separates business decisions from ethical decisions (The Separation Fallacy), in spite of the fact that most, if not all business decisions have an ethical component (Freeman, 2008:73-76). Evidence of the normative orientation of Freeman's stakeholder theory is his Integration Thesis, which integrates ethics and business: "Most business decisions or sentences about business have some ethical content, or implicit ethical view. Most ethical decisions, or sentences about ethics have some business content or implicit view about business" (2008:77). It is clear stakeholder theory advocates that organisations foster the practice of ethics – another reference to the normative nature of stakeholder theory. However Moore (2017) is critical of stakeholder theory and proposes MacIntyrean virtue theory as an alternative (2017:28, 30). The nature and form of ethical organisations is a topic covered in the business ethics literature and MacIntyre's concept of a virtue extends to the organisation. This subject is expanded on in Chapter Five.

Freeman raises the notion of responsibility, which is implicit in most reasonable understandings of ethics and suggests The Responsibility Principle: "Most people, most of the time, want to, actually do, and should accept responsibility for the effects of

¹⁷ Sense-making is a strong theme in MacIntyre's moral philosophy discussed in Chapter Four.

their actions on others” (2008:77). The Responsibility Principle is clearly at odds with the Separation Fallacy, and by separating business from ethics moral responsibility for business decisions is effectively absolved. Freeman proposes a new model for business that embraces the Integration Thesis and the Responsibility Thesis, that accounts for value creation by accommodating ethics and economics and accounts for “all of the effects of business action on others” (2008.: 78). Challenging the status quo so as to fashion business in support of a more just society suggests the need for courage and judgment, both virtues that a leader of character requires. These virtues will form part of the concept of leader character developed in Chapter Six.

2.2.9. The Purpose of Business in Society

An analysis of the RL construct inevitably leads to the question of the purpose of business in society. At the heart of the normative themes of stakeholder theory and CSR underpinning the RL construct discussed above is a concern for society. Such concern acknowledges business’ responsibility to society, coupled with an awareness of the impacts of business activity on a range of stakeholders, many of whom could be vulnerable to the adverse effects of business activity. The concept of the moral purpose of business is reflected in the UN Global Compact (Williams, 2004:756) and CSR, business ethics and stakeholder scholars recognise the need for a shift from a shareholder to a stakeholder model of business (e.g., Maak, 2007; Freeman, 2008; Waddock, 2008; Waldman and Galvin, 2008; Scherer et al., 2009; Blakeley, 2016). Viewed from this perspective, the purpose of business is evolving from a purely economic model focused primarily on generating profits for shareholders, to a stakeholder model incorporating the notion of corporate citizenship recognising responsibility to society (Lawrence, 2013:3). The “disjuncture between corporate and social notions of purpose” (Kempster et al., 2011:318), highlights the difference between an instrumental view of purpose embodied in the shareholder model, with an emphasis on vision, mission, objectives, goals, and plans, and a normative view of purpose embodied within the stakeholder view. Hseih, et al., (2018) who follow a normative view, apply the concept of purpose in reflecting on what corporations ought

to do (2018:50-51). In posing the question, what is purpose, they distinguish between an Aristotelian understanding of purpose concerned with “discovering something about the nature of things,” and a constructive view supported by early modern philosophers like Spinoza and Hobbes who understood purpose as discovering something about “the ways things are perceived to be useful” (2018:52). They favour a constructivist view which reflects the reality that people disagree about the social purpose of corporations, which is concerned with the specific contribution such organisations make to “advancing societal goals” (Ibid.: 53). Kempster et al., who adopt a MacIntyrean virtue ethics understanding of purpose, question whether “purpose implies a meta level meaning to a task – something of social value” (2011:318). Two exceptions are the work of leadership scholars Greenleaf and Burns, who assume a normative ethical view of leadership. Few theories of leadership extend to the broader societal aspects of leadership (Yukl, 2006).

RL is oriented to a particular perspective of the company and its role in society, and is committed to a more just, equitable, and sustainable global society supported by specific values focused on sustainability, the redistribution of power, human rights, human flourishing, and personal transformation (Blakeley, 2016:118). In view of this and based on its CSR and stakeholder foundations and its normative orientation, RL seems to acknowledge the idea of societal purpose, although it is a fairly unexplored theme in leadership research. Kempster et al., recognize that “societal purpose in leadership practice has been generally and regrettably overlooked” (2011:320). In the context of societal purpose the virtue ethics concept of a worthy purpose guides the research of Kempster et al., (Ibid.), and similarly guides this study in extending an understanding of how societal purpose can add to leadership research - thus extending the conceptual foundation of RL. The concept of purpose is fundamental to virtue ethics and the view of Aristotle, the founder of this concept, is explored in Chapter Three. MacIntyre builds on Aristotle’s work and his understanding of purpose is discussed in Chapter Four.

The above analysis of RL has sought to consider the question posed at the beginning of this research concerning the type of leadership required to adequately address the issues of responsibility and sustainability facing business leaders. In spite of the emerging nature of the RL construct the parallels to virtue ethics and leader character seem suited to addressing the issues of responsibility and sustainability facing business leaders. The following section of the chapter is aimed at making a case for leader character lying at the core of RL.

2.3 What Makes a Responsible Leader?

As this research is aimed at developing the concept of leader character, this section of the chapter will consider what makes a responsible leader bearing in mind that “having a good character and being a moral person are at the core of being a responsible leader” (Ciulla, 1998; Solomon, 1999; George, 2003). Given the normative foundation of RL coupled with the fact that the concept of character pursued from a virtue perspective is an ethical phenomenon, this argument for leader character is from an ethical stance.

While section two of this chapter provided a theoretical understanding of the nature of the RL construct, this section considers “what sort of person should lead” (Sison, 2006:109), so as to bring RL to life and make it a reality. Sison argues from a virtue ethics perspective that our understanding of leadership will develop to the extent that we know the sort of person who should lead. The leadership literature acknowledges the need for leaders of character (e.g., Sankar, 2003; Maak and Pless, 2006; Hannah and Avolio, 2011; Seijts et al., 2015; Blakeley, 2016), and scholars are increasingly interested in the concept of leader character (e.g., Quick and Wright, 2011; Hannah and Avolio, 2011a; Sosik et al., 2012; Gentry et al., 2013; Crossan et al., 2013; Beadle et al., 2015; Seijts et al., 2015; Sison and Ferrero, 2015), yet as Chapter One indicated, little is known about this concept from a research perspective (e.g., Hannah and Avolio 2011; Quick and Wright 2011; Wright and Quick 2011). This section of the chapter makes a case for the need for leaders of character, located within the field of RL.

2.3.1 The Nature of Leadership and the Need for Leaders of Character

Due to this growing recognition among leadership scholars of the need for leaders of character, this section begins by arguing that the phenomenon of leadership itself presents unique moral challenges and this is a compelling reason for leaders to have character. Ciulla's argument about the moral challenges leaders face seems to provide credible justification for leaders of character, and links to the virtue ethics concept of character. Understanding the moral challenges unique to leaders is central to understanding the nature of leadership, and the ethical failures of leaders rather than their successes is likely to reveal greater insights into leadership. Arjoon notes that all academic studies ultimately assume a particular view of human nature. He distinguishes between a "utilitarian naturalistic humanism [with its] materialistic view of human nature" and "an Aristotelian-Thomistic natural law/virtue ethics humanism" that understands human nature as "both materialistic and spiritualistic" (2010:47). Ciulla's reference to the virtues as a way of thinking about leadership and her acknowledgement that the virtues constitute an important part of the moral philosophy landscape reveal her understanding of human nature (2001:316). She claims that our common human nature gives rise to the ethical problems leaders face as we are all carved from "the warped wood of humanity"¹⁸ which makes us imperfect (2001:313). This raises the notion of the virtues, discussed under 3.2 below. Although the same moral standards should apply to leaders and followers alike, the ethical successes and failures of leaders are more public and pronounced due to their visibility, power, role, and the impact their actions and behaviours have on others (Ibid.: 314). Power poses a distinct ethical challenge to leadership (Ibid.: 315), and trust is what unites the private and public morality of a leader. When followers lose trust in their leaders, it becomes more difficult for leaders to be effective (Ibid.: 316). In light of the question guiding this section of the chapter regarding what makes a responsible leader the notions of power and trust are important considerations and are expanded on below.

¹⁸ This quote is adapted from the philosopher Immanuel Kant: "... from such warped wood as is man made, nothing straight can be fashioned" (trans. 1983).

2.3.2 Moral Philosophy as a Guide to the Moral Challenges of Leadership

In view of our imperfect nature, Ciulla turns to a range of Eastern and Western philosophers for guidance about moral goodness, particularly concerning the nature of the leader's role and the moral challenges inherent to leadership. She notes that for centuries, self-control and self-knowledge have been recognized as centrally important in developing leaders. Ancient philosophers like Aristotle, Plato, Lao Tzu, Buddha, and Confucius highlighted self-control, self-knowledge, and good habits, as challenges for leaders, whilst self-discipline and control of ego were included by Eastern philosophers, and Confucius linked a leader's self-control with effectiveness. Self-control is classed as one of the moral virtues comprising character from a virtue ethics perspective, whilst good habits are foundational to the development of the virtues. Self-discipline is required for developing and exercising the virtues leading to self-control. Buddha, in the "First Sermon" teaches that an uncontrolled desire for things leads to personal suffering and the suffering of others; being able to control one's desires is key to ending personal and social misery. This poses an ethical challenge for leaders tempted to indulge their personal and material desires (Ciulla, 2001:316). Aristotle accounts for the key role of desires in the moral virtues. Buddhists emphasize compassion as an important virtue for balancing our desires and vices. The Dalai Lama's insights about compassion are pertinent to this discussion of the moral challenges of leadership:

When we bring up our children to have knowledge without compassion, their attitude towards others is likely to be a mixture of envy of those in positions above them, aggressive competitiveness towards their peers, and scorn for the less fortunate. This leads to a propensity toward greed, presumption, excess, and very quickly to loss of happiness (Dalai Lama, trans. 1999).

The need for compassionate leaders sensitive to the needs of others is necessary to counter the prevalence of corporate psychopaths (Boddy, 2013) occupying a disproportionate number of senior level management positions in MNCs. These leaders are politically skilled and drawn to roles with access to power and wealth.

Writing from the perspective of RL, Blakely notes the inability of these sorts of people to respect others, to exercise personal restraint, and to be compassionate towards others. Business tends to attract leaders who are self-focused and lack prosocial skills, and these are people controlling some of the world's most powerful institutions (2016:121). A partial explanation for this is the importance placed on competitive behaviour and the emphasis on success, contrasted with the lack of attention given to moral matters (Segal, Gideon, and Haberfeld, 2011). It is possible to address this blind spot according to Blakeley (2007), and the increasing focus on RL and CSR is partly accomplishing this (Blakeley, 2016:122). When leaders are concerned about the impact of their decisions on others (Murphy and Enderle, 1995) they become sensitized to others needs both within and outside the organisation (Lawton and Páez, 2015:643). This is pertinent to RL, with its emphasis on considering the interests of stakeholders and can be regarded as part of what makes a responsible leader.

2.3.2.1 The Concept of Virtue

The moral challenges leaders face raises the question of the virtues and how moral goodness is developed. The concept of virtue is central to an understanding of character and is explained here from a business ethics perspective with a focus on ethical and RL. Aristotle's concept of virtue is explored in depth in Chapter Three whilst Chapter Four details MacIntyre's account of the virtues. These two accounts of the virtues will inform the concept of leader character that will be developed in Chapter Six.

What is unique about a virtue is "that it perfects the human being as a whole" and makes a person "good as a human being" (Sison, 2006:112). Virtue is understood as "excellence of character" (Ibid.). An excellent character is developed by practicing the right habits, which in turn result from repeated virtuous actions which arise from fostering appropriate inclinations in accordance with a person's nature. Developing virtue then involves exercising virtuous actions, arising from the right habits, leading to the development of character (Ibid.). This form of moral development is on-going as Ciulla's metaphor of "the warped wood of humanity" suggests (2001:313).

The ethical leadership literature dealing with leader character can conflate the terms values and virtues, e.g., “There has also been increasing interest in leaders who demonstrate ‘character’, a notion that is rooted in the idea of universally admired values such as courage, humanity, and honesty” (Blakeley, 2016:119). Although there are overlaps between values and virtues, the virtues constitute character from a virtue ethics perspective. A social psychological definition of values is provided below followed by a brief explanation of actions, habits, and character as constituents of virtues, to clarify the difference between these concepts.

2.3.2.2 Values

“A value is an individual’s concept of a transituational goal (either terminal or instrumental) that expresses interests (individualistic, collectivist, both) concerned with a motivational domain (enjoyment power) and evaluated on a range of importance from very important to unimportant as a guiding principle in his or her life” (Schwartz and Bilsky, 1987:553). The authors theorized that values can derive from the universal human condition reflected in one or a combination of “needs (organism), social motives (interaction), and social institutional demands” (Ibid.: 551).

2.3.2.3 Actions

Actions flow from a person’s inclinations and constitute the substance upon which the moral life develops. Only voluntary actions attributing praise or blame originating from an internal feature of being human (feeling, appetite, desire, or will) are subject to moral scrutiny. Virtuous actions involving knowledge and consent performed deliberately and with intent, commit their agents. Virtue consists of good voluntary actions and the goodness arises from three sources: “the object of the action itself, the agent’s end or intention, and the circumstances in which the act is carried out” (Sison, 2006:112-113). The object of an action determines the goodness of an action and some actions like murder, theft, and lying are evaluated as evil by their object. An agent’s intention has an impact on whether an action can be judged as good or evil; a virtuous action is one “performed with a noble end” (Sison, 2006.: 113). Although favourable circumstances are unable to alter the moral nature of an action from evil to

good, circumstances can impact the extent to which actions are good or evil, either improving or worsening them. The moral goodness of voluntary actions then consists of “the integral goodness of object, intention, and circumstances” (Ibid.).

2.3.2.4 Habits

The mark that a voluntary act leaves on an agent is known as a *habit*: “a stable disposition or manner of being and doing acquired by a subject” (2006:113). The habits that constitute virtue imbue human nature with an enhanced tendency to repeat virtuous actions. As humans we have the capacity to acquire the virtues which we develop through our habits (Ibid.). In nature, capacity comes before activity, whereas activity creates the capacity for a habit. Capacity and activity are mutually reinforcing as by engaging in activity capacity develops simultaneously. Virtues and vices develop by the repetition of actions, which require practice and perseverance, and the development of good or bad habits. Aristotle notes the role of reasoning in cultivating good habits: “actions should express correct reason” (*Nicomachean Ethics*, (NE), 1103b; as cited in Sison, 2006:114), and he elaborates further about virtues: “for actions expressing virtue to be done temperately or justly [and hence well] it does not suffice that they are themselves in the right state. Rather, the agent must also be in the right state when he does them. First he must know [that he is doing virtuous actions]; second, he must decide on them, and decide on them for themselves; and third, he must also do them from a firm and unchanging state” (NE, 1105a; as cited in Sison, 2006:115). As virtues are internal to the person, virtuous actions attach to the person, likewise virtuous acts can’t be separated from virtuous habits or from the virtuous person possessing the habit (2006:115). An action is judged virtuous only if it is “performed as a virtuous person would” (Ibid.). From a virtue ethics perspective then, a virtuous person is a person of character.

2.3.2.5 Character

This description of character is brief as a detailed exposition of Aristotle’s and MacIntyre’s views is provided in Chapters Three and Four. Although the focus of this research is leader character, an understanding of character is required before being

able to develop the concept of leader character, located within the realm of RL. As Sison indicates, the concept of character is broad and multi-faceted: “An individual’s character is like a fabric composed of several strands. A person’s character could then be described as a unique mix of physiological, psychological and sociocultural elements” (2006:116). This indicates the need to specify and narrow the focus of this study. The Greek word *pathos* refers to a person’s natural temperament and “pre-moral personality,” and is distinct from the word *ethos*, which is ethical in nature and refers to the character one develops as a result of intentional and deliberate actions arising from good habits that occur over the course of a life-time of learning (Ibid.).

2.3.2.6 Moral Responsibility

For the purposes of this argument what distinguishes values and virtues is the notion of moral responsibility that is not specifically enshrined in values as it is in the case of virtues. What is evident from the above discussion of how virtue develops is the sense of moral responsibility required of agents in exercising the virtues. Moral responsibility as it pertains to virtue ethics is specific and involves applying our unique human attribute of rationality in acquiring knowledge of what we understand to be morally good, and extends to knowledge and awareness of the impacts our choices have on ourselves and others. The concept of moral responsibility is rooted in philosophy and dates back to scholastic doctrines concerning “imputability,” which in moral terms means an action originates with a person who knowingly chooses either right or wrong (Velasquez, 1983:3). Implicit to moral responsibility as it relates to the virtues is the competence of moral reasoning, also referred to as the virtue of practical reasoning, which is explored further in chapters three and four. Allied to the concept of moral responsibility related to the virtues, is the competence of “ethical intelligence” identified by Maak and Pless in their argument for responsible leaders to have good character (2006a:104-105). Ethical intelligence comprises: moral reflection, moral awareness and moral imagination - habits required for developing the virtues of character. Moral reflection is the practice of reflecting on and critically thinking about one’s moral actions and about the interests and claims of those impacted by one’s

actions – stakeholders in the case of RL. It assists in orienting one to a moral perspective and in developing one’s moral reasoning skills, and “is what makes a reflective practitioner” (Schön, 1983). Through moral awareness one is able to understand and recognize values, interests, and norms in others and in oneself and to differentiate between both. Moral imagination (Johnson, 1993; Ciulla, 1995; Werhane, 1999) is a faculty that can assist leaders in solving moral dilemmas in different ways, without having to compromise one’s integrity. Ethical intelligence is a competence responsible leaders need in their task of developing trust and fostering sustainable relationships towards a variety of stakeholders (Maak and Pless, 2006a:106). The moral responsibility clearly required of the virtues is echoed throughout the RL construct in its call for a form of leadership placing responsibility to society at its core.

2.3.2.7 Moral Maturity

This discussion of moral responsibility raises the notion of the moral maturity of leaders. The concept of RL calls for a deep sense of responsibility for leaders that embody responsibility to society, are global citizens, are aware of the impacts of their business operations on a broad range of stakeholders, and develop trusting and sustainable relationships with a diverse range of members of society. The moral maturity of leaders extends to the notion of mistaken moral beliefs in a society where people can be “systematically mistaken about the content of morality” (Price, 2005:69). He refers to a culture that can make it difficult for people to tell the difference between right and wrong. In view of a leader’s responsibilities to society, including the need for creating and maintaining an ethical culture within an organisation there is a need for a responsible leader to have moral maturity. This means a well-developed sense of morality encompassing a commitment to being “bound by morality and protected by morality” (2005:70) - in other words living the virtues (explained more fully in chapters three and four). In posing the question of what it means to be responsible, Voegtlin’s focus is on the broader social responsibility of leaders (2016:582). He draws on a particular understanding of moral responsibility proposed by Young (2004, 2006) that provides an example of the meaning of moral

maturity as it relates to responsible leaders, which will be elaborated on in section four below. The notions of power and trust highlighted above as particular moral challenges leaders face (Ciulla, 2001), require moral maturity as illustrated by the “Bathsheba syndrome” highlighting the link between success and ethical failure. The biblical story of David and Bathsheba illustrates the abuse of power by the successful leader David who abused his power for personal gain (Ludwig and Longenecker, 1993:268). The inevitable outcome of unethical leader behaviour is a breakdown of trust. Given that a leader is known “by his or her effects on followers” and that “leadership and followership are *yin* and *yang*, mutually defining” (Solomon, 2005:37), trust is essential to leadership and being a trusted leader is as necessary for leaders in general as it is for responsible leaders.

2.3.3 Wholeness of Being

Bringing this argument about what makes a responsible leader to a close is a final point concerning the wholeness of being of a leader, which seems pertinent to RL in view of the calls for a view of responsibility extending to the notions of citizenship, stakeholders, and the purpose of business in society, and linked to the concept of leader character. Researchers probing the concept of leader character understand character as “wholeness of being” (Bauman, 2013; Palanski and Yammarino, 2007; Crossan et al., 2017:990). It is proposed that such a view is compatible with a virtue ethics understanding of character. Wholeness of being is linked to the concept of integrity; however leadership researchers acknowledge the lack of agreement about this necessary attribute for leaders (Becker, 1998; Parry and Proctor-Thomson, 2002; Palanski and Yammarino, 2007:171). The meaning of integrity derives from the Latin *integer* meaning intact or whole, and of relevance here is the moral understanding referring to “a person’s uncorrupted *moral character*” (Bauman, 2013:415). Although the concept of integrity was not a virtue identified by the ancient Greeks, it was referred to by some Roman philosophers. Bauman considers this concept from an ethical leadership perspective and is interested in how the identity and deepest commitments to ethical values are foundational to a leader’s integrity (Ibid.). A view of

the concept of integrity applied to leadership is that of emotional integrity based on the connection between leadership and emotions (Solomon, 2005:28). Leadership research recognises the power of emotions as it is how leaders make others *feel* that is impactful. However, the focus here is on the emotions of a leader (rather than those of followers) and emotional integrity as a necessary component of ethical leadership. As effective leaders inspire through their emotions they are most effective when they exhibit emotional integrity (2005:29). Ethical leadership covers emotions and rationality and having the *right* emotions given the particular circumstances and people being led. Ethics in turn concerns principles based on the right sorts of emotions like justice, respect, compassion, and when required moral indignation.

The concepts of integrity and character are closely linked from a virtue ethics concept of leadership and the integrated or whole nature of character encompasses relationships and socio-political roles and extends to actual performance, as it is responsibility and action that determine one's integrity. Emotional integrity then extends beyond the integration of emotions to how those emotions are expressed in society through one's actions and refers to a grouping of emotions in balance and in harmony (Solomon, 2005:30-31). Integrity is understood as "wholeness of virtue, wholeness as a person, wholeness in the sense of being an integral part of something larger than the person – the community, the corporation, society, humanity, cosmos"(Ibid.: 31). Such an understanding not only resonates with an understanding of RL encompassing broader society, but enriches an understanding of what it means to be a responsible leader. Similarly, other aspects of emotional integrity incorporating a normative understanding of RL and leader character are the quality of relationships, self-control, self-knowledge (Ibid.: 33-35), and trust (Ibid.: 41). A virtue ethics view of the concept of wholeness of being will be explored more fully in Chapter Five.

The question of what makes a responsible leader has been considered from the vantage point that "having a good character and being a moral person are at the core of being a responsible leader" (Ciulla, 1998; Solomon, 1999; George, 2003). In arguing

for the need for leaders of character the virtues¹⁹ and their cultivation were identified as central to addressing the moral challenges of leadership, including issues of power, trust, excessive personal and material desires, and the impact of one's actions and behaviours on others. Living the virtues and being a compassionate leader sensitive to the needs of others is regarded as part of what makes a responsible leader. As actions and habits that develop virtues constitute character, it is moral responsibility and moral maturity as well as self-control that are the mark of responsible leaders. Wholeness of being incorporating integrity extending to emotional integrity, self-control, self-knowledge and trust complete this analysis of the various aspects that make a responsible leader.

In the following section an ethical analysis of the RL construct is conducted so as to establish the ethical foundation of RL and to contrast this with the virtue perspective applied in this study. In the previous section a case was made for leader character being central to RL highlighting the correlation between RL and a virtue understanding of character, thus indicating the suitability of RL for pursuing an understanding of leader character. The ethical analysis below is aimed at identifying the gaps between the current largely Kantian ethical view of RL and the virtue perspective taken in this research. These gaps will feed into Chapter Six which will show how a virtue ethics understanding of character adds to the conceptual foundation of RL.

2.4 An Analysis of the Ethical Bases Underpinning the RL Construct

As section 2 indicated, the construct of RL is normative in orientation with roots in CSR and stakeholder theory - both foundational to the RL construct. This ethical analysis of RL begins by considering the ethics underpinning stakeholder theory and CSR including a critique of the ethics underpinning these theories.

¹⁹ A case for the specific virtues that apply to responsible leaders will be argued for in Chapter Six.

2.4.1 The Ethical Basis of Stakeholder Theory

This analysis of the ethics of stakeholder theory turns to the deontological moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1785), which offers a robust argument for a normative stakeholder view (Gibson, 2000:245). Donaldson and Preston (1995) identified the normative nature of stakeholder theory by recognising the moral duties corporations have to others even when no benefit accrues to the corporation. Kant's deontological theory has a strong emphasis on a moral agent's sense of duty - *deon* is derived from the Greek for duty. Other features of Kant's ethical theory concern respecting persons, obligations to others, and the moral motives of an agent. An action is right if it complies with a relevant moral obligation. Kant believed in the equal moral worth of all, that each person has the capacity to decide right from wrong independently, and that people deserve respect and should be treated as "ends in themselves" (Gibson, 2000:248) rather as means to an end. This view of ethical behaviour means acting in a manner that we expect all to act in, thus making it a universal moral law referred to as the "categorical imperative." A deontological perspective applied to stakeholders requires treating people, whether consumers or employees, as "more than mere tools in maximising profits" (Ibid.). As stated under 2.2.1.3 above Freeman developed the concept of stakeholder theory in his book *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach* (1984). A clear Kantian influence is Freeman's reference to the right of stakeholder groups not to be treated as a means to an end, and the requirement that they participate in deciding the future direction of the organisation they have a stake in (Ibid.). The strength of deontological ethics applied to a normative view of stakeholder theory is the insight it offers about "the nature and extent of duties to those affected by the firm" (Ibid.: 255). The nature of this form of responsibility is "the deontic sense of responsibility" that is concerned with "what ought to be done but might not yet have been done" (Velasquez, 2003:532).

2.4.1.1 A Critique of Deontological Ethics

Guiding this critique of deontological ethics is the nature of RL with its societal focus. This critique is conducted with the concept of leader character in mind and is aimed at determining the moral philosophy most suited to developing a rich concept of leader character located within the field of RL.

Although the concept of individual moral responsibility is central to deontological ethics as well as to virtue ethics, the focus of deontological ethics is firmly on the “rational independent moral agent” (Painter-Morland, 2008:63). Kant’s deontology, a product of the Enlightenment, is based on the premise that individuals are capable of acting autonomously and developing their own moral directives by applying their reasoning ability. The rationality of each individual identifies the principles of morality and devises moral maxims to guide decisions and actions (2008:56). Kant regarded moral autonomy as fundamental to our humanity (2008:63). This indicates a narrow view of humanity not ideally suited to pursuing an understanding of leader character located within the framework of RL. The independence and autonomy that characterize the Kantian moral agent appear to be at odds with the societal nature of RL embracing citizenship. In view of the global challenges of scarcity of resources, climate change, and world poverty (Eisenbeiss, 2012:805) highlighted at the beginning of this research, this raises the issue of responsibility and sustainability and a collaborative approach, particularly for business leaders. This means there is a need for an ethics encompassing an understanding of the human person wedded to society. This seems lacking in deontological ethics. With regard to character representing a “wholeness of being” (Bauman, 2013; Palanski and Yammarino, 2007; Crossan et al., 2017:990), human emotions are recognized as important constituents of one’s moral being (Solomon, 2005:30), yet are not a feature of moral reasoning in a deontological understanding of ethics. Young, whose “social-connection” (2004, 2006) theory of moral responsibility is discussed below, offers a critique of Rawls’ deontological understanding of justice, which is pertinent to the “wholeness of being” concept

identified as significant to the concept of character. “Feelings, desires, and commitments do not cease to exist and motivate just because they have been excluded from the definition of moral reason. They lurk as inarticulate shadows, belying the claim to comprehensiveness of universalist reason” (Young, 1990:103, as cited in Painter-Morland, 2008:68). Aristotle recognized that human desires are central to ethics and the effective control of our desires form the basis of his theory of the virtues of character as discussed in Chapter Three. Given the power that business leaders wield, coupled with the fact that power presents one of the most challenging moral aspects of leadership (Ciulla, 2001:315), the desire for power commonly located within the emotions requires an understanding of ethics and human nature incorporating human desires and emotions.

Finally, turning to the concept of human goodness that deontological ethics is rooted in, it is “moral intent ... that makes an act good” (Painter-Morland, 2008:60). Insight into the deontological view of human goodness can be gained by considering its opposite – evil. Korsgaard holds that “According to the Formula of Humanity, coercion and deception are the most fundamental forms of wrongdoing to others – the roots of all evil” (1996:140-141, as cited in Bowie, 1999:48). Although coercion and deception are both evil concepts, they point to a limited understanding of human goodness, when viewed from the perspective of what makes a responsible leader discussed above (3). To illustrate this point Velasquez provides an example of how human good extends beyond the deontological sense of duty. A business-related example is a leader at ITT who, by Kantian accounts, demonstrated human goodness, yet failed to do so when the effects of his actions on human lives was considered from a broader perspective of human goodness. This was particularly evident regarding “those virtues that orient one to the pursuit of the basic human goods that give meaning and fulfilment to human nature: commitment to family life, sensitivity to the needs of society, appreciation of aesthetic experience, respect for the pursuit of knowledge, particularly of God” (1997:95). While the liberal ethics of Kantian deontology serve the needs of modern organisations within modern economies based on efficiency, labour

mobility, administration, hierarchy, and unrestricted consumption and technological progress, as a modern ethical theory it is unable to capture moral intuitions on some significant matters (Ibid.: 102).

2.4.2 The Ethical Basis of CSR

In contrast to the normative aspect of stakeholder theory with its Kantian moral philosophical basis, the ethics underpinning CSR varies due to the lack of a common understanding of what CSR means. Whilst adherence to legal responsibilities is basic to CSR, additional responsibilities of an ethical and philanthropic nature are expected, aimed at furthering social good (Moore, 2017:26). In analysing the ethical basis of CSR cognisance needs to be taken of the different understandings of such responsibilities, and of the variety of meanings of social good. Moore's distinction between a 'corporate' and a moral philosophical perspective in understanding the nature of the responsibilities and the form of social good underpinning CSR is helpful when evaluating its ethical basis. He notes the different starting points of each view. The corporate view looks to the corporation in deciding on practical ways for companies to respond to matters associated with their role in society and the forms of corruption likely to occur within them. This is in contrast to a moral philosophical perspective applied by business ethics, drawing on either virtue ethics, deontology, or utilitarianism²⁰ to inform understanding of the nature of company's responsibilities to society, based on an understanding of social good (Ibid.). This is consistent with the moral philosophical perspective taken in this research. Hühn (2018) does not appear to take cognisance of the business ethics view of CSR in his critique of the lack of its philosophical basis (2018:280). Moore traces the history of the ethical base of CSR from its "explicitly normative" (2017:27) deontological orientation at its genesis in the 1950's, through to its impact on businesses financial performance in the 1990's, indicating the weakening or loss of its normative basis, to its links to stakeholder

²⁰ Smith (2009) discusses the different approaches to 'normative theory' in business ethics (Moore, 2017:26).

theory arising from Freeman's suggestion that Corporate *Stakeholder* Theory provides a better understanding of CSR²¹ (2017:28).

Latterly, CSR has taken a more transactional and managerial and ultimately *strategic* approach to CSR notes Moore. The significance of this shift means that CSR is now "implicitly normative, based on utilitarian cost-benefit calculations" (2017:29), which correlates with a shareholder view of the organisation, structured to "obliterate responsibility" (Ibid.) due to the limited liability of shareholders lacking any obligations, responsibilities, and liabilities (Ireland, 2010:845). This appears to resonate with Hühn's (2018) assessment of the ethical basis of CSR and the lack of individual moral responsibility. CSR relies on a shared and collective concept of moral responsibility, with researchers having two different understandings of the source of this shared responsibility. The first, referred to as collective responsibility, considers the aggregate of individual's responsibilities; the second, referred to as corporate responsibility, is a view of collective responsibility separate and independent from the collective responsibility of individuals, based on the idea that the corporation itself is a moral agent. Corporate moral agency is concerned with the question of whether moral responsibility can be attributed to corporations. Moore (1999) notes that some researchers attribute moral responsibility to corporations, with the main proponent being French (1979, 1984, 1995), supported by Manning (1984), Goodpaster and Matthews (1982), Garrett (1989), Phillips, (1995), and Pfeiffer (1990) who all regard a corporation as a moral agent. However, Velasquez (1983) disagrees with French arguing that as corporations are not moral agents moral responsibility cannot be attributed them. Researchers supporting this view are Corlett (1992), McMahon (1995), and Ewin (1991). The shared understanding of moral responsibility supported by French and others is not supported by any of the three schools of moral philosophy, namely deontology, virtue ethics, and utilitarianism that rely on an individual understanding of moral responsibility (Hühn, 2018:280). What emerges from moral philosophical arguments concerning the concept of moral responsibility is that it is

²¹ Refer for example to www.corporate-ethics.org/pdf/csr.pdf, accessed 26 July 2019.

firmly rooted in the human person, originates within the person, (Velasquez, 1983:3) and is inalienable (Scharding, 2019:929).

In response to the seeming watering down of the ethical basis of CSR, Moore offers what a virtue ethicist would consider a richer foundation for evaluating the ethical base of CSR. He takes a MacIntyrean view and offers an alternate view of CSR, based on the notion of corporate character (2005, 2015), for understanding the corporation and CSR. This concept will be dealt with more fully in Chapter Five.

2.4.2.1 A View of Moral Responsibility Compatible with Virtue Ethics

As CSR lacks a concept of moral responsibility compatible with moral philosophy, (with the exception of Moore as mentioned under the previous heading) this raises the question of what concept of moral responsibility is compatible with a virtue understanding of leader character located within the construct of RL. A review of the RL literature points to Voegtlin's 2016 article: *What does it mean to be responsible? Addressing the missing responsibility dimension in ethical leadership research*. In this article Voegtlin introduces a "social connection" theory of responsibility (Young, 2004, 2006, 2011) which resonates with a virtue ethics understanding of moral responsibility, as indicated by the theme of societal justice at the heart of Young's conception of moral responsibility, and an acknowledgment of individual moral responsibility. Her underlying concern is: "how ought moral agents, whether individual or institutional, conceptualize their responsibilities in relation to global injustice?" (Young, 2006:102). Young's theory asserts that responsibility for actions can be attributed to agents even in cases where the causal link between actions and outcomes is an indirect one. She holds that those who "contribute by their actions to the structural processes that produce injustice have responsibilities to work to remedy these injustices" (Young, 2011:137). She maintains that those with the power and resources assume responsibility for redressing structural injustices (see also, Jonas, 1979). Maak and Pless (2009) have a similar argument and hold that because of the power, privilege,

and potential of business leaders to create successful change, their responsibility in engaging with environmental and social problems is extended. Many multi-national corporations (MNCs) currently exhibit such extended responsibility by assuming responsibility for their suppliers' actions, are proactive in preventing pollution by exceeding the compulsory requirements of regulators, and step in to political roles where states are unable to guarantee basic services like the provision of drinking water and education, or building infrastructure (Kaul et al., 2003; Scherer and Palazzo, 2011).

With the inclusion of Young's (2004, 2006, 2011) concept of social justice the concept of moral responsibility underpinning the RL construct has been more clearly defined by Voegtlin (2016). As social justice is a key theme of virtue ethics, the meaning of this theme as it relates to leader character located within the field of RL is developed in Chapter Six.

2.5 Gaps in the RL Construct That Virtue Ethics Can Address

This final section of the chapter turns to the gaps in the RL construct identified in the ethical analysis above that form part of the argument for how virtue ethics can extend the conceptual foundation of RL. The following aspects of virtue ethics emphasised here are considered relevant to the subject of leader character located within RL, and emerge from the above ethical analysis.

2.5.1 A Virtue Ethics Understanding of Humanity

Whereas Kant regarded moral autonomy as fundamental to our humanity (Painter-Morland, 2008:63), virtue ethics has an understanding of humanity encompassing society that correlates with the societal focus of RL. The comments of various business ethics scholars attest to the virtue ethics understanding of the individual within society, for e.g., Aristotle's ethics stipulates that what we owe ourselves cannot be separated from the communal good, and individual identity makes sense only within

membership of a political community (Price, 2007:325); our virtues - what is most excellent in us, are “defined by that larger community” meaning the greater public good and individual self-interest are one (Solomon, 2004:1023). A virtue ethics understanding of humanity consisting of the virtues extends beyond the individual committing her or him to a human community (2004.: 1026).

2.5.2 Wholeness of Being

The concept of wholeness of being identified by Bauman, 2013; Palanski and Yammarino, 2007; Crossan et al., 2017:990, as necessary for leader character, is supported by a virtue ethics understanding of the person consisting of human desires, wants and needs, as well as emotions, guided by rationality. A virtue understanding of morality seeks the proper satisfaction of such needs, wants, and desires educated through participation in social relationships, and “the human good should be identified not with the satisfaction of our untutored desires but of those desires acquired through our participation in social practices” (Knight, 2007:105). Wholeness of being can be looked upon as the unity of “right thinking and desire” (Koehn, 1995:536). What is unique about a virtue is “that it perfects the human being as a whole” and makes a person “good as a human being” (Sison, 2006:112).

2.5.3 Human Goodness

As this study of leader character located within the emerging construct of RL is focused on the good leader, it will draw on the tradition of virtue ethics with its long and rich history of reflection on the meaning of human goodness, detailed in chapters three and four. Central to virtue ethics is the human being within society with its teleological orientation towards becoming excellent human beings. This seems well-suited to exploring the nature of leader character, within the normative field of RL.

Conclusion

This chapter has established an argument for the need for leaders of character within our current societal context characterized by the global challenges of scarcity of resources, climate change, and world poverty that raise the issue of responsibility and sustainability, particularly for business leaders (Eisenbeiss, 2012:805). Consistent with the moral philosophical perspective applied in researching the concept of leader character, this research takes a humanities perspective to the study of leadership that is aimed at understanding leadership as a whole (Ciulla, 2008:393). A case has been made for locating this study of leader character within the emerging construct of RL, and the detailed description of this emerging field of leadership was aimed at exploring the suitability of RL for developing the concept of leader character. The argument for the need for leaders of character in section three of this chapter illustrated the need for the virtues of character in addressing the challenges all leaders face, particularly regarding the moral challenges and human desire for power (Ciulla, 2001:315). The concept of moral responsibility has been identified as key to a virtue understanding of leadership and Aristotelian and MacIntyrean perspectives on this theme are discussed in chapters three and four. Finally, an analysis of the normative aspect of RL considered the largely deontological ethical base of RL, and established an argument for why virtue ethics can extend the conceptual foundation of RL, which will be completed in Chapter Six.

Chapter Three

Virtue Ethics – Aristotle’s Moral Philosophy

Consistent with a humanities perspective that researches human nature by drawing on subjects like history, philosophy, classics, political science, and religion to understand the “lived experience” of humanity (Dilthey, 1989, as cited in Ciulla, 2008:394), this research applies moral philosophy to develop an understanding of the nature of leadership, in particular, leader character. As virtue ethics is the moral philosophical perspective from which the concept of leader character will be developed, this chapter considers the work of the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle.

As stated in Chapter One, the research problem which this research aims to address is the lack of understanding of leader character lying at the heart of RL. To address this problem the research question posed by this research is considered, namely: what is leader character? As a prior understanding of the virtue ethics concept of character is necessary before a full account of the concept of leader character can be developed, the emphasis in this chapter is to gain a virtue ethics understanding of the nature of character. The purpose of this chapter is thus to develop an Aristotelian understanding of character.

Introduction

Aristotle was born in 384 BCE in Macedonia in northern Greece and he arrived in Athens in 367 BCE aged 17 to study philosophy at the Academy founded by Plato. Although Aristotle spent 20 years at the Academy studying, teaching, debating, and writing, most of his work from this time has been lost and we are thus unsure of the nature of his work dating back to this period in his life (Hughes, 2013:3).

Aristotle’s philosophy was greatly influenced by Plato as well as his own interest and research into biology, particularly that of animals. Plato’s contribution to philosophy was broad-ranging and included transforming the philosophical method of Socrates and developing new theories concerning the soul, virtue, justice, and truth. Whereas

Plato followed the method of Socrates by starting his dialogues using the views of his students, Aristotle seemed to depart from this practice and took ‘received opinions’ (*endoxa*) as his starting points. He was interested in the views held by most people, which he then subjected to critical assessment, or to the thinking of earlier philosophers (Hughes, 2013:4-5). Another area where Aristotle differed from Plato was with regard to goodness. Plato regarded goodness as *univocal* – meaning “all good things are ultimately good in precisely the same way” (Shields, 2007:12); whereas Aristotle’s view was that the good is evidenced in different things in different ways (2007:12). Aristotle’s approach, like that of Plato’s, focused on knowing the “ultimate explanations of things” (Hughes, 2013:6). Where Aristotle differs from Plato is in the way he questions these ultimate explanations. Aristotle turns to nature and studies varieties of species and how they have an inbuilt propensity to seek what is good for them. This approach reveals the centrality of values to the behaviour of living organisms. Aristotle follows this method and uses his knowledge of biology in his search for the good for humans by questioning what the human function is. In his *Nicomachean Ethics (NE)*, Aristotle draws on biology, with its inbuilt values in his quest to discover the ultimate goal of human life, which he regards as the good for humans (Hughes, 2013:6).

The works of Aristotle that have survived pose several challenges to the modern reader. There is a lack of clarity concerning the dating of his texts, their authenticity, and in many cases, how appropriately the texts are constituted. In addition, Aristotle’s writing style can be extremely difficult to comprehend (Shields, 2007:22). Based on the enduring impact and authoritative influence of Aristotle’s philosophy, his *Nicomachean Ethics (NE)* has been selected as a foundational work upon which to base this study of leader character, as this work has had an “enormous influence” on the European mainstream tradition of philosophy (Hughes, 2013:232). Despite the *NE* having been written two millennia ago, it still continues to inspire philosophers currently working in the field, as evidenced by leading virtue ethics scholars who justly recognize Aristotle as ‘the main source of inspiration for modern virtue ethicists’ (Crisp and Slote, 1997:2; Shields, 2007:403).

Structure of the Chapter

The structure of this chapter is guided by the research question: what is an Aristotelian understanding of character, and traces Aristotle’s detailed argument concerning the human good, commencing with the opening lines of his *NE* and his question concerning what the ultimate purpose of human life is *NE* 1095a6-17). The chapter proceeds by tracing Aristotle’s examination of the human good and its relation to the virtues of character.

Chapter Two made the case for leaders of character, given our current societal context characterised by the global challenges of scarcity of resources, climate change, and world poverty that raise the issue of responsibility and sustainability, particularly for business leaders (Eisenbeiss, 2012:805). This provides the justification for an examination of the Aristotelian virtues of character towards the end of the chapter, particularly the virtues of justice and courage, necessary for challenging the societal and organizational structures that have contributed to this state of affairs.

To understand Aristotle’s view of character it is necessary to turn to the commencement of his argument in Book I of his *NE*, where he begins his investigation into the “ultimate goal” of human life. He is interested in whether such a goal is universal across all peoples, and if so, what it is (Pakaluk, 2005:1). In investigating this ultimate goal he poses the question “What is the Good for Man²²?” in his opening book of the *NE* (1095a6-17). This indicates that his search for the ultimate goal of human life is tied to the good for humanity. Aristotle’s search for the good leads him to develop the concept of character; however this is more implied than direct, leaving it to the reader to deduce this concept (Stonehouse, 2011:51). The explanation that follows attempts to draw out an understanding of character from Aristotle’s *NE* and is thus guided by the question: what is an Aristotelian understanding of character?

²² Whilst Aristotle’s argument focused exclusively on men, this research is inclusive of both women and men. Note that paragraph numbers for *NE* are generally given without citing the book or chapter number, as the paragraphs are numbered consecutively throughout *NE*.

3.1 Aristotle's Search for the Good for a Human Being

As a philosopher, Aristotle is interested in questioning the purpose of life. He reasons that this lies in understanding what the good for a human being is.

3.1.1 All Human Activities Aim at Some Good: Some Goods Subordinate to Others

Aristotle's understanding of character can be traced back to his search for the good for a human being where he begins his search thus: "Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim" (*NE* 1094a1). Aristotle's argument for the good develops from this initial statement and the emphasis is on how his argument relates to character²³. He follows a teleological approach in his study of the good with his use of the concept of ends. Although Aristotle regards every inquiry, action or pursuit to be aimed at an end, he differentiates among ends, with some being subordinate and pursued for the sake of other ends²⁴. As there are many actions, arts and sciences, the ends of these various activities are many. Some ends are activities, whilst others are products arising from the activities that produce them. Aristotle introduces a hierarchy of ends by specifying ends of actions and ends separate from actions which are products that are regarded by nature to be better than the activities. He ranks the ends of the master arts as higher than the subordinate ends as it is for the sake of the master arts that the subordinate ends are pursued. This concept of an end at which actions aim is explored under the heading 3.6.2, Aristotle's Concept of Ends. Initial reflections indicate that the concept of purpose is central to Aristotle's idea of the good, and to the notion of an ultimate goal of human life.

²³ This is dealt with specifically under the heading 'Aristotle's Argument for the Good and How it Relates to Character'

²⁴ We are more familiar with the term 'goal'

3.1.2 What is the Good for Humans?

Before considering the good for humans Aristotle comments that as the nature of ethics is less precise than a subject like mathematics, the level of precision expected of a study of ethics should be less exact. His view is that we should be content with a rough outline of the truth and that ethical matters are for the most part true (NE 1094b12–1095a6).

Aristotle begins his search for the good for humans in Book I of the *NE* and comments that there seems to be general agreement that the good for humans is *eudaimonia*, which is identified with living and faring well.²⁵ In this text *eudaimonia* is referred to as flourishing. However opinions differ with regard to what flourishing is with the majority holding differing views to those of the wise. For the general population flourishing seems to be something obvious like pleasure, wealth or honour, although there is a lack of consensus as to precisely what it is. Another view is that of the Platonic School which differentiates a range of goods from the one good which is good in itself and is the cause of the goodness of all other goods. Pakaluk (2005) comments that perhaps Aristotle wanted to distinguish between a mere “human good” and the *ultimate* human good, which he regarded as an end point (2005:47). In his approach to dealing with the question what is flourishing, Aristotle is mindful of the nature of his inquiry, which is ethical and concerned with values rather than simple empirical facts. He begins by stating the need to move towards first principles (*archai*) and to start from that which is familiar to us. First principles also known as fundamental truths, are self-evident as no prior justification is required or admitted (Urmson, 1988:16). So it is towards the first principles concerning the ultimate good, identified as flourishing, that Aristotle continues his investigation and begins with things evident to us.

²⁵ *Eudaimonia* is often translated as happiness even though scholars acknowledge that it does not capture the essence of the Greek term. A more satisfactory term is flourishing, which is used here (Kraut, 2002:53). Both the Greek and the English terms are used throughout this text.

3.1.3 Prominent Ways of Life - The Life of Pleasure, the Political Life and the Contemplative Life

In considering what is evident about flourishing, Aristotle's approach is to examine the most prevalent views or what seems to be arguable. He begins by considering the popular views (*endoxa*) held by the majority that the good is pleasure, honour, wealth. Kraut's view is that Aristotle's examination is thorough and considers a range of good things and the ways in which they are valuable aimed at arriving at a deep understanding of flourishing (Kraut, 2002:51). Aristotle does this by paying attention to experience and reflection, which he thinks should lead to a sense of why it is valuable. Aristotle is aware that there is a multiplicity of good things and he moves beyond merely listing these to probing why they are valuable leading to his view of what makes for a flourishing human life. It is evident that he moves from considering what is "thought" to be good (NE 1094a1) – in the opening lines of his work – to being able to explain what is actually good (Kraut, 2002:52). He believes his account must be sound at least according to an old view agreed on by philosophers, which divides goods into three classes: external, those relating to soul, and those relating to body. He notes that those relating to soul are most properly and truly goods and that psychical actions and activities are classed as relating to soul. It is correct, he thinks, that we identify the end with certain actions and activities which fall among goods of the soul and not among external goods (NE 1098b28).

Judging from the lives people lead most seem to identify flourishing with pleasure as evidenced in their love of enjoyment. He dismisses this view as unsuitable indicating he is looking for a more substantial understanding of the good, and proceeds with his investigation of the ultimate good by considering different "ways of life", by which he means lives that are consistently focused towards pursuing a single goal, whether this encompasses a single life or an entire society committed to such a "way of life". A conception of flourishing that is stable and universal is contained within such a "way of life" (Pakaluk, 2005:53-54). Aristotle distinguishes between three prominent types of life - the life of pleasure and enjoyment, the political life and the contemplative life. He

has already disregarded pleasure as a good indicating that his search is for something deeper and of greater substance. Aristotle's treatment of wealth is brief and he regards a life devoted to making money as being subject to a compulsion. He decides that as money's use is merely a means to an end, wealth is evidently not the type of good he is seeking. His view of making money as a "way of life" is in contrast to prevailing "ways of life" in our modern society²⁶.

Aristotle moves on to consider the political life with some identifying happiness with honour which is regarded as the end of political life (NE 1095b6 – 26). However, this way of life appears too superficial to Aristotle as it relies on the person bestowing honour rather than on the one receiving it. What people of practical wisdom seek is honour and the basis of such honour is virtue (*arete*). Aristotle concludes that it is virtue then that is superior to honour and which may be the end of political life. A distinction is made between "*having become a good human being*" (Pakaluk, 2005:56), and "*activity in accordance with virtue*" (Pakaluk, 2005:56). Aristotle understood the need for action in exercising the virtues, which is a recurring theme in his search for the good. This element of action contained in his idea of the ultimate good resonates with his initial thoughts concerning the good in the opening lines of Book 1: "that every action and pursuit is thought to aim at some good" (NE 1094a1 – 18). Regarding the contemplative life Aristotle's work has been interpreted in different ways by modern philosophers as he seems to affirm that theoretical contemplation (*theoria*) is the ultimate goal of life. Yet the bulk of his *NE* is concerned with ethical activity and the exercise of the virtues of character, with no evidence that this is for the sake of contemplation (Meyer, 2011:47).

By reasoning that the basis of honour is virtue, Aristotle acknowledges that the good is within one and cannot easily be taken from one - indicating something of a permanent

²⁶Making money is an important aspect, particularly of capitalist societies, and today's leaders would be naïve not to consider this as an element in a "way of life". However, given the ever-increasing levels of inequality, there is now a greater emphasis on how money is made and, in particular, whether it is made honestly and in a sustainable manner. As discussed in Chapter Five, Alasdair MacIntyre, a leading proponent of Aristotle's work, is highly critical of neo-liberal capitalism. In response, a fairer and more just form of capitalism is argued for to support the concept of leader character this research aims to develop.

and enduring nature. Aristotle's ethics, with its focus on the character and inner disposition of a person, follows a teleological approach, which is concerned with an end or purpose. Whereas ethical principles, the consequences of an action, or the action itself are all external to the person, it is what is within the person that distinguishes Aristotle's ethical tradition from other ethical traditions like deontology, with its focus on duty and obligation and that of utilitarianism, which focuses on the consequences of an action and is concerned with one's happiness (Solomon, 1999:30), and is the reason why this perspective is applied in gaining an understanding of the concept of character. "Greek philosophers conceived ethics in terms of virtuous conduct, not in terms of rules or principles of duty. They therefore presented moral theory as a theory of virtue rather than as a theory of obligation" (Beauchamp, 1982:163). The view of some contemporary philosophers is that "morality does not consist in obedience to Kant's categorical imperative; rather, it is the expression of a virtuous character internal to the person – a character needing no external rules specifying right conduct" (Beauchamp, 1982:163).

3.2 Aristotle's Own Search for the Good

Having considered the above aspects of the good Aristotle proceeds with his own search for the good and he begins by suggesting criteria he thinks the ultimate good should meet. These criteria are:

Ultimacy (NE 1097a25-34): the highest good is not sought for anything further and everything else is sought for the sake of it

Self-sufficiency (NE 1097b6-16): no further need is implied by the highest good

Preferability (NE 1097b16-20): the highest good is preferable in every case when compared individually with any other good (Pakaluk, 2005:68).

3.2.1 Ultimacy

Aristotle argues that if there is an end of all of our actions this will be the good that we achieve by action. Similarly, if there is more than one good these will be the goods

achievable by action. His concept of ends indicates a hierarchy and he comments that there is evidently more than one end, which leads to us choosing some ends (he gives the example of wealth and flutes) for the sake of something else. For this reason it seems clear that not all ends are final ends; however it is evident that the chief good is something final. He goes on to state that if there is only one final end this is what we are seeking, and if there is more than one final end, the most final of these. Aristotle differentiates between that which is worthy in itself of pursuit from that which is worthy of pursuit for the sake of something else. He regards the former as more final than the latter. Similarly he regards that which is desirable for its own sake and not for the sake of something else as more final than those things that are desirable both in themselves and for the sake of a final good. He concludes his argument with the thought that that which is always desirable in itself and never for the sake of another thing is final without qualification (NE 1097a15-34). Such a thing is flourishing as we choose it for itself and never for the sake of another thing. Aristotle differentiates between the final good, flourishing and other goods like honour, pleasure, reason and every virtue. Although we choose these for themselves we also choose them for the sake of flourishing, as we believe these will lead to flourishing; whereas flourishing is chosen for itself and not for anything other than for itself (NE 1097a34).

3.2.2 Self-sufficiency

Self-sufficiency is not concerned with what is sufficient for a person living by himself or herself, since we are born for citizenship, which occurs within the societal context of the *polis* – the Greek term for city state that has no contemporary equivalent (Morrell, 2012:38). Aristotle's understanding of a human being as *zoon politikon* is connected to his ethics as "it is through association that a human being is both part of the city, and then in turn, the city is integral to helping humans to flourish – to pursue the good life" (Ibid.). Aristotle's concept of citizenship, which forms part of his study of politics, is that good citizens are required to protect and defend the city's political system (Kraut, 2002:363), indicating the importance he attaches to society, implying that we are social beings. Self-sufficiency applies to all citizens and refers to "that which when

isolated makes life desirable and lacking in nothing” (NE 1097a34-b25). He thinks that flourishing is the most desirable of all things, not one good counted among many and it is not made more desirable by adding even the least of goods. Rather flourishing is something self-sufficient and final and is the end of action (NE 1097a34-b25).

3.2.3 Preferability

It is not clear from Aristotle’s writings whether his intention is to give three criteria that the final good should satisfy or only two, as he seems to give three but in his own summary he refers to only two (NE 1097b20-21; Pakaluk, 2005:68). The preferability criterion is this third criterion that Pakaluk (2005) is referring to as being left out of Aristotle’s summary. When compared with other goods individually, Aristotle regards flourishing (*eudaimonia*) as the highest good that is preferable to all other goods. Flourishing is seen by him to be the most preferable of all goods, even with the addition of the smallest good thing. Should any good be added to the final good this leads to an excess of goods with the greater good always being more desirable.

3.3 Aristotle’s Understanding of the Soul (*Psuchē*) and an Introduction to the Function Argument²⁷

Aristotle’s study of the soul is contained in his treatise on living beings, known by its Latin title *De Anima* (*DA*) (Shields, 2007:270). Aristotle turns to the soul in his search for the good for humans, leading him to study its nature. His investigations lead to his study concerning the function of a human being, and his discovery of the human good.

3.3.1 The Nature of the Soul

Aristotle’s search for the good stems from his search for the ultimate goal of human life as he seeks to establish what the best form of life available to humans is. He considers the essential features of human beings and reasons that what is good for human beings is determined by the nature of what human beings are (Shields, 2007:316). His investigation of the nature of human beings leads him to the soul

²⁷ These aspects are expanded upon under the heading ‘The Structure of the Human Soul’

(*psuchē*) and he takes an anthropological approach to gain understanding. His view of soul is very broad²⁸ and encompasses all living beings “capable of taking on nutrition, which he regards as ‘the first and most common capacity of soul, in virtue of which life belongs to all living things” (*DA*, 415a24-25; Shields, 2007:271), indicating that his study of the soul is not limited to humans and extends to living organisms including plants and animals. Aristotle’s interest in the soul leads him to explore the nature of living beings, and their activities, including an analysis of their main functions – perception, nutrition, and thought (Shields, 2007:270). ‘Being alive’ for Aristotle means having a soul. He reasons that we understand something once we know why it exists, and the cause of something explains ‘the why.’ His view is that if something exists *by nature* this is its cause. His approach is to search for the characteristic feature that distinguishes natural organisms from everything else (Lear, 1988:15). Whereas traditional ancient Greek thinking held soul to be a principle of living things, Aristotle expounded that soul explains the capacity for movement, and the capacity for cognition, including perception and thinking - both remarkable features of animal life²⁹ (*DA*, 1.2, 403b25–7; 111.3, 427a17-19). His definition of soul is “the form of a natural body having life potentially within it” (*DA*, 11.1, 412a20–1; Lear, 1988:96). Based on this definition Lear concludes that, “Since the form of a living body is its nature, it turns out that soul is the nature of living things: the inner principle of change and rest” (Lear, 1988:96). Aristotle’s investigations into the nature of the soul lead to his assertion that “all and only living things have a soul” (Shields, 2007:271); as he explains in *DA*: “what is ensouled is distinguished from what is unensouled by living” (*DA*, 431 a20-22; cf. *DA* 412 a13, 423a20-26; *De Partibus Animalium*³⁰ 687 a24-69a 10; *Metaphysics* 1075 a16-25).

²⁸ Aristotle’s conception of soul is much broader than later Christian and Cartesian conceptions (Shields, 2007:271)

²⁹ Aristotle’s conception of animal life encompasses all living beings, including humans

³⁰ English translation: *On the Parts of Animals*

3.3.2 Form and Matter

Aristotle's account of soul includes its relation to the body where he distinguishes between matter and form. He views an organism as a unity comprising formal and material aspects such that soul is a particular dimension of a living organism, and a living organism is an exemplar of a functioning unity (Lear, 1988:97). Aristotle's distinction between matter and form leads him to conclude that an individual organism seems dependent on its form or soul "to be the organism that it is" (Lear 1988:98). It is evident in his work concerning the soul, (*DA* 11.1, 412a8, b10-11), that he recognises a sense of soul as substance, whilst uninformed matter cannot exist independently and lacks all definition. Presence of form, essence, or soul is what provides an organism with its definition and independence. Regarding soul as substance, Aristotle regards this as the essence – 'what it is to be' – of the body (*DA*, 11.1, 412b10-11; Lear, 1988:98). The essence of something is its *logos*³¹ which is an order that is intelligible and "the mind comprehends a thing by taking on its *logos*" (*DA*, 11.1, 412b10-11; Lear, 1988:98-99).

3.3.3 The Functioning of Living Organisms

Continuing with his search for the good for humans, Aristotle next considers the functioning of living organisms and wishes to know what powers living organisms to live their lives. He proceeds by undertaking a detailed study of the soul to determine the form of a living thing. Rather than settling on a general definition of soul, Aristotle looks to the functioning of the different types of living organisms, including plants, animals, and humans and finds that what constitutes and powers soul forms a hierarchy (*DA*, 11.3, 414b25). He distinguishes between plants, animals, and humans noting that their differing capacities can be arranged hierarchically, with human souls at the top of the hierarchy possessing the capacities of rationality, perception, and nutrition, followed by animal souls with the capacities of perception and nutrition, and finally, plant souls at the bottom of the hierarchy with the capacity of nutrition

³¹ Philosophy - the rational principle expressed in words and things (Collins English Dictionary, 1979)

(Shields, 2007:272). All living things including humans, animals, and plants share the capacity for nutrition, growth and reproduction; where animals differ from plants is that they have sensation with some having the ability to move; the distinguishing characteristic feature of humans is their ability for theoretical and practical reasoning. Aristotle reasons that by investigating how these abilities function, insight into the nature of human beings would be gained. The higher faculties of soul which include the power of movement, cognition, and sensation, are particularly pertinent to the human soul (Lear, 1988: 99-100). However, the capacity for nutrition, growth, and reproduction that human souls share with animal and plant souls is also relevant to the human good and to the concept of character - the focus of this chapter. The nature of the human soul and its place in Aristotle's concept of the virtues of character is discussed further under heading 7 below.

Aristotle's broadly teleological understanding of the soul accords with the design of human nature (*De Caelo*³² 271b14; *De Partibus Animalium* 658a9, 661 b24, *De Generatione Animalium*³³ 741b-5, 744a36; *Politics*, 1256 b21). As humans, animals, and plants differ based on the different capacities of their souls, life for a human has a different meaning to life for an animal and similarly, life for a plant is different to life for a human and for an animal. This leads Shields to note that: "Each living being is a single, unified entity realizing an essence appropriate to its kind" (2007:275), and to Aristotle's assertion regarding the "non-univocity" of life (Ibid.: 274).

A feature of living beings is that they are *end-directed* and this *directionality* is evidently the core of life: a living system is an intrinsic teleological system engaged in spontaneously pursuing its good and the good of its kind. Living beings are *intrinsic* teleological systems (Shields, 2007:276).

Rather than humans being designed by a form of intentional agent, Aristotle holds that final causes occur in nature. If this is so, identifying a human function should be possible which would provide the basis for a "*functional account of human goodness*"

³² Latin title, English translation: *On the Heavens*

³³ Latin titles, English translations: *On the Parts of Animals* and *On the Generation of Animals*

(Shields, 2007:316). As goodness is judged in functional terms i.e. a good eye sees well and a bad eye sees poorly, this principle can be applied to humans if they have a function, and as a consequence “we will know their goodness when we know their function” (Shields, 2007:317). From this we can deduce that “a good human being is a human being who performs the human function well” (Ibid.). This statement is pertinent to the research question being pursued regarding an Aristotelian understanding of character as it relates to the concept of excellence or virtue which concerns human goodness and flows from Aristotle’s Function Argument (FA). The obvious question that arises here is what does performing the human function entail? This is explored below under the Function Argument. Aristotle’s approach to proving that human beings have a function arises from a “hylomorphic³⁴ analysis of human beings as substances” (Ibid.: 318). He articulates and defends this approach in his works including his *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, and *De Anima*. Central to this approach is that organisms are identified by their individual functions based on the fact that they have final causes. Aristotle’s focus on the soul leads him to reason that “the soul is not only the formal and moving cause of the body, but its final cause as well” (DA 415b8-14; Shields, 2007:276). Knowing what constitutes plant life or human life according to Aristotle’s reasoning, means we can deduce that plants and humans are structured to fulfil the functions associated with the life of a plant or the life of a human (Ibid.). It is on this basis then, that Aristotle formulates his FA and his objective is to identify the human function, previously analysed in his other works, and on this basis to identify the good which characterises what is best for human beings (Ibid.: 347).

3.3.4 The Function Argument

As Aristotle continues his search for the good he commences his FA which he approaches from his investigation into the causes of nature wherein he seeks the function (*ergon*) of living organisms. His search is practical and he includes the views of those “who have a broad experience of life and its many intrinsic goods, and are able to bring their actions in line with their reflections” (Kraut, 2002:63). He reasons that

³⁴ “The philosophical doctrine that identifies matter with the first cause of the universe” (Collins English Dictionary, 1979).

for all things that possess a function or activity, it is thought that the good and the well dwell in the function; similarly the same applies to humankind, if we have a function (NE 1097b22–1098a20). He contends that we know the function of something by knowing what is unique or characteristic (*idion*) about that thing (Shields, 2007:318). He questions whether humans are born with a function. It is evident that the various parts of the body such as the eye, hand and foot have a function; can we assume along similar lines that humans have a function apart from these? If so, what can this be? As the life of nutrition and growth is a function shared by plants, animals, and humans, and the life of perception is one that animals share with humans, what remains and is particular to humans is an active life incorporating a rational principle; “of this, one part has such a principle in the sense of being obedient to one, the other in the sense of possessing one and exercising thought” (NE 1097b25 – 1098a15)³⁵. What Aristotle is referring to here are two aspects of the soul – the rational part and the non-rational part that listens to reason³⁶. He locates his search within the person indicating that the nature of the human person, from a philosophical perspective, is the source of his investigation.

Aristotle goes on to state that he interprets ‘life of the rational element’ to mean life involving activity as this appears to be the proper sense of the term. He continues his argument by reasoning that the function of humans involves some activity which arises in the soul and is guided by reason. He has already identified the soul as the substance and essence of life and the function of humans, located within the soul, is to perform their function excellently in accordance with their characteristic nature, which is the ability for theoretical and practical reasoning. He proceeds by proposing that if a thing and a good thing have a function, with both functions being the same in kind, e.g. a violin-player and a good violin-player, and to the goodness of the function a sense of greatness is added (with the function of the violin-player being to play the violin and the function of a good violin-player to play the violin well), if this is so we can see the function of humans to be a certain kind of life consisting of an activity or actions of the

³⁵ A discussion of the nature of the soul is dealt with under the Optimal Sort of Life

³⁶ These parts of the soul will be explained in greater detail under the heading ‘The Structure of the Human Soul’

soul implying a rational principle. The function of a good person is the good and noble performance of these activities or actions of the soul, and if any action is performed well when performed according to the appropriate excellence, human good is activity of soul displaying excellence, and if there is more than one excellence, according to the best and most complete.

Aristotle's incorporation of excellence into his concept of the good arises from the meaning of the word "virtue" which is concerned with excellence and "what it is about a thing which makes it such that it perform its function well" (Pakaluk, 2005:88). The element of action, so central to Aristotle's conception of the good thus far, is strictly *human* action, notes Lawrence (2009) "*the form of life and life-activity that constitutes the function of the human in the adult perfection of its nature (tetelesmenon)*" (2009:419; NE1098a3–5). The conclusion of Aristotle's FA is that "the human function is an activity of the soul conducted in accordance with reason, that is the living of a life which is an expression of the essential nature of the human kind, namely rationality" (Shields, 2007:320). This idea of the perfection of human nature coupled with living a life which expresses humankind's essential nature appears to resonate with Aristotle's search for the ultimate goal of human life.

3.4 Aristotle's Understanding of Eudaimonia

Aristotle's question regarding the ultimate goal of human life has led him to search for the good for humans. His FA identified the soul as the source of goodness, with the distinguishing characteristic of humans being their ability for theoretical and practical reasoning. He continues his argument for the human good by moving on to consider the nature of *eudaimonia*, or human flourishing. He conceives of the good by rooting it in the essence of what it is to be human and by applying an objective approach that seeks to inquire "into those human features whose best expression yields the optimal sort of life available to us" (Shields, 2007:347). It is this optimal sort of life that Aristotle explores in his study of *eudaimonia* – human flourishing, or simply flourishing.

3.4.1 Inclusivist and Dominant-End Views of *Eudaimonia*

There is an ongoing debate among scholars centring around what pursuing something as an ultimate end involves. J.L. Ackrill (1980) argued that actions undertaken for the sake of an end need not necessarily be a means to that end. This view inspired the inclusivist school of thought which holds that intrinsically desirable things constitute happiness and are “for the sake of happiness” rather than being a means to happiness. Ackrill’s stance is that while ethical activity and contemplation both constitute happiness, ethical activity is not pursued for the sake of contemplation (1980). This view of *eudaimonia* is also referred to as secondary *eudaimonia* (Dahl, 2011:68). In contrast, the “dominant end” view supported by Kenny (1978) and Kraut (1989) is that ethical activity is for the sake of contemplation, also referred to as primary *eudaimonia* (Dahl, 2011:68). He reasons that for something to be “for the sake of” another it “must causally promote it” (Meyer, 2011: 48).

Lear (2004) takes a similar stance, although she broadens the “for-the-sake-of” relation and proposes that ethical activity is an approximation of contemplation (2011:48). She notes that “contemplation is completely final as an end whereas morally virtuous action is not” (2009:388). Meyer acknowledges Ackrill’s “for-the-sake-of” relation is a core insight, although she regards this as separate to his inclusivist view (2011:48). An inclusivist approach, which is broader and “embraces both excellence in action and contemplation” (Roche, 1988:179) appears to support this research that is concerned with an Aristotelian understanding of character. To understand Aristotle’s conception of the good, account should be taken of what he means by virtue, which develops over the course of his *NE* (Kraut, 2002:54). This is particularly relevant as the meaning of the virtues is intricately connected to the notion of character. Aristotle seems to identify flourishing most fully with virtue and he comments that virtuous activity belongs to virtue; it would seem that flourishing (*eudaimonia*) is the end of virtue and is the best of all things - exalted and existing in the realm of the supernatural and the divine (*NE* 1099b10-32).

3.5 Aristotle's Concept of Ends

Aristotle's conception of flourishing and the optimal sort of life can be traced back to the opening lines of his *NE* where he states that: "Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim" (*NE* 1094a1). He continues to reason about the good in terms of ends in his concept of flourishing, and his concept of the good as an end is a key aspect of his concept of *eudaimonia* and forms an important first step in understanding his ethical theory as a whole (Lear, 2009:388), and is explored below.

In reflecting on the question: what is the ultimate human good? it appears that the ancient Greeks understood *eudaimonia* or flourishing as an end worth pursuing and the focus of their attention turned to what flourishing consists in (Meyer, 2011:47). Aristotle also focuses on this aspect of flourishing and scholars continue to debate what it is that is involved in pursuing something as an ultimate end, identified as flourishing. He is interested in following a practical approach and determining what the best good achievable by human action is (*NE* 1096b30-5; Lear, 2009:388). He regards this feature, together with his teleological approach, as preferable to Plato's notion of the human good, as Plato did not consider this practical aspect (*NE* 1218b4-10; Lear, 2009:388). In proposing a definition of the good Aristotle reasons "goodness is what anything aims at" (*NE* 1094a1), yet his argument is not to be interpreted as a specific good at which all things aim. Rather, he is claiming that the good is what is aimed at (Pakaluk, 2005:49). Aristotle's concept of an end derives from the Greek word *telos*, meaning the end or purpose at which actions aim. His idea of an end being that at which the good aims, is a general good, rather than a moral good (Lear, 2009:389),

Aristotle develops his idea of an end in the first two chapters of his *NE* by indicating the influence that genuine ends have in guiding the activities that lead to them and in determining what is distinctive about their nature. In this sense ends provide a source of value for the activities that lead to them (Lear, 2009:389). The goal of an activity – its end – determines the nature of the activity involved in achieving the goal, as well as

the distinctive character of the activities by establishing the standards of their success. One's method of working gets its specific character from the fact that it is aimed at an outcome, for instance building a house. It is for the sake of the end or goal that the activity is worth choosing. This means that the value of activities depends on whether the ends are good and worth choosing (2009:390).

3.5.1 The Optimal Sort of Life

In pursuing the question Aristotle poses at the beginning of his search concerning what the ultimate goal of human life is, he has considered various ways of life that may lead to this ultimate goal, which he has identified as flourishing (*eudaimonia*). The optimal sort of life which is now considered is the life of *eudaimonia*. The problem Aristotle poses in sections I.1-2: "what should we place at the top of our hierarchy of ends?" (Kraut, 2002:63), provides a segue into exploring his idea of the optimal sort of life available to us. Aristotle's argument that the ultimate human good is regarded as an end point (Pakaluk, 2005:47), and his reference to the final end where he reasons that we are searching for the greatest good in life (Russell, 2013:10), lie at the heart of his concept of flourishing, which he seems to place at the top of our hierarchy of ends. Key themes of *soul*, *rationality*, *ends*, *excellence*, and *activity*, which Aristotle has drawn on in arguing for the human good, are constituents of the optimal sort of life available to us. These themes are highlighted in this discussion of the optimal sort of life, known as *eudaimonia*.

The view of Lawrence (2006) is that "*eudaimonia* must centrally be a good of soul" (2006:54). This is now explored linking it to the above-mentioned themes in considering Aristotle's view of the optimal sort of life. As Aristotle's FA established that the good for humans lies in the excellent performance of their human function, which is an activity of the soul conducted in accordance with reason, the nature of the soul and its bearing on our understanding of the optimal sort of life is considered. As previously stated under the FA what is particular to humans is an active life incorporating a rational principle: "of this, one part has such a principle in the sense of being obedient to one, the other in the sense of possessing one and exercising

thought” (NE 1097b – 1098a15). The aspect of the soul that is relevant to the research question being pursued regarding an Aristotelian understanding of character is that of being obedient to the rational part, and is referred to as the irrational part that listens to reason. It is concerned with non-rational pleasure and pain as well as desire (*De Anima* 111.7, 431a8 -14). This will be dealt with in more detail under the headings ‘The Structure of the Human Soul’ (section 6.2) and ‘Choice (*Prohairesis*)’ (section 8.1). Briefly, non-rational pleasure and pain and desire are the domain of the virtues of character, which operate in bringing about human good by bringing these non-rational pleasures and pains in line with reason.³⁷ Aristotle notes that as desires are in relation to something else they belong to some other thing. He infers that as occurs with any other relative, desire should be defined together with its correlative, which is its end or goal, which is supposed to be “best “or “ultimate” (Corcilius, 2011:119-120). To illustrate this point, take the case of appetite (*epithumia*) where the ultimate end is the abstract concept of “pleasure” rather than a concrete object. Our desires then are chosen not for themselves but for the sake of pleasure (*DA* 146b12; Corcilius,2011:120). It seems then that ultimate ends are the correlative for desires, given that pleasure is desired for itself and nothing beyond itself (Corcilius, 2011:121).

How does the non-rational part of the soul that is concerned with pleasures and pains listen to reason, and how is the rational part of the soul a good of soul? Aristotle’s concept of excellence linked to his FA discussed earlier applies here as it refers to human good being an activity of soul displaying excellence. His incorporation of excellence into his concept of the good arises from the word “virtue” which is concerned with excellence and what makes it perform its function well (Pakaluk, 2005:88). Aristotle regards the virtues (excellences) of character, which arise from the non-rational part of the soul that listens to reason as necessary to “make us feel pleasure and pain about the right things” (*NE* 1121a3;Corcilius, 2011:127).

³⁷ Aristotle’s reference to “pleasure and pain” is a reference to non-rational pleasures and pains exclusively (*NE* 1105b23;Corcilius, 2011:128)

As indicated above, Aristotle identifies our uniquely human characteristic of rationality located within the soul in his search for the good. He distinguishes two forms of rationality: practical and theoretical and it is practical rationality (*phronesis*) that is particularly pertinent to this study of character as this is one of the forms of reasoning that is required in developing the virtues of character³⁸. The non-rational part of the soul is the source of appetite and desire and is regarded as non-rational by Aristotle as it may either oppose reason or “respond to reason and be integrated into its practical plans in a well-ordered life” (Shields, 2007:324). His view is supported by practical life examples of those who exercise control over their impulses and desires and those who habitually succumb to their desires and later regret the fact that they did (*Eudemian Ethics* (*EE*) 1102a28-1103a3). This indicates how this part of the soul can either be in conflict or in harmony (2007:324). Living an optimal sort of life obviously requires living in harmony with one’s appetites and desires and requires the exercise of practical rationality involved in listening to this non-rational part of the soul. This human capacity for practical reasoning involves thinking intelligently about our actions and “acting with emotions that can be intelligently trained” (Russell, 2013:13). Such a way of living is characteristically human and is a rational way of living in wisdom as well as in emotion (*Ibid.*). Practical reasoning then is our “function” and our distinctive mode of life, and Aristotle argues that it is necessary for living a fully human life and for giving our nature its distinctively human feel (2013:13). Living such a life is what constitutes an optimal sort of life – *eudaimonia*.

This discussion of *eudaimonia* concludes with these thoughts, which provide an overview of the nature of this concept: “The happy life is, for Aristotle, one in which man deeply fulfills his nature” (Lear, 1988:156), and “The end of human life is for man to realize his form to the fullest possible extent – and this Aristotle has identified with the chief good for man” (1988:163).

³⁸ The other part occurs in the non-rational part of the soul that listens to reason and is referred to as deliberative desire (*prohairesis*)

3.6 Aristotle's Argument for the Good and how it relates to Character

Book II of Aristotle's *NE* is an introduction to his concept of character, in particular excellence of character³⁹ (*NE* 1103a4-5). The word for character in Greek is *ēthos*, and our English terms 'ethical' and 'ethics' are derived from this. The plural of character is *ethe* and the Latin translation is '*mores*', from which 'moral' and 'morality' originate (Broadie and Rowe, 2002:295).

To understand Aristotle's concept of character that is central to this research and is the focus of this chapter, it is necessary to explore how his notion of

the good relates to character. We know that his search for the good has led him to reflect on the function of a human being resulting in the development of his FA. This is based on the idea that if we know the function of a human being human goodness is excellent human functioning. We also know that the concept of excellence is linked to the word virtue and, in particular, it is concerned with performing a function well (Pakaluk, 2005:88). Aristotle's FA identifies rationality as the unique feature of human beings based on the idea that we know the function of something by knowing what is unique or characteristic (*idion*) about that thing (Shields, 2007:318). Excellent human functioning therefore involves engaging our unique human characteristic of rationality. We know that the soul which is the nature of living things is where Aristotle locates his search for the good. Performing our human function well – human goodness – therefore involves the excellent use of our rationality located in the soul. A key text in the *NE* gives an indication of Aristotle's reasoning in this regard:

a human being's function we posit as being a kind of life, and this life as being activity of soul and actions accompanied by reason, and it belongs to a good man to perform these well and finely, and each thing is completed well when it possesses its proper excellence: if all this is so, the human good turns out to be activity of soul in accordance with excellence (*NE* 1098a8 -17; Broadie and Rowe, 2002:102).

³⁹ Also known as virtues of character

An analysis of this excerpt aims to trace Aristotle's argument to show the link between the good and his concept of character:

- a) a human being's function as being a kind of life" (*NE* 1098a8 -17;Broadie and Rowe, 2002:102) indicates something that is distinguishable and identifiable about a particular way of life.
- b) "this life as being activity of soul and actions accompanied by reason" (*NE* 1098a8 -17;Broadie and Rowe, 2002:102) indicates soul as the source of activity; actions accompanied by reason indicate actions of a specific kind; there is a link between actions of soul, already identified as the source, and actions accompanied by reason indicating a unity between actions of the soul on the one hand, and actions of a specific kind on the other. In other words, actions of a certain kind originate in the soul and are viewed by Aristotle as one with the soul. There is a seamless continuity from the origin of an action in the soul to its fulfilment. This idea lies at the heart of his notion of a virtue of character.
- c) "It belongs to a good man to perform these well and finely" (*NE* 1098a8 -17;Broadie and Rowe, 2002:102) - belongs to a good man indicates a sense of fit or appropriateness linked to the good person; to perform these well and finely⁴⁰ indicates a specific quality of goodness in action.
- d) "Each thing is completed well when it possesses its proper excellence" (*NE* 1098a 8 -17;Broadie and Rowe, 2002:102) indicates the achievement of an end or goal dependent on the possession of a specific good that is suited for some purpose; excellence used in this sense can be linked to the word virtue which is concerned with performing a function well (Pakaluk, 2005:88).
- e) "If all of this is so, the human good turns out to be activity of soul in accordance with excellence" (*NE* 1098a8- 17;Broadie and Rowe, 2002:102). Aristotle's conclusion that regards the human good as activity of soul in accordance with excellence, lies at the heart of his argument regarding character, as activity of soul

⁴⁰ A reference to the "*kalon*", the Greek word for fine or noble, which will be discussed further on

in accordance with excellence is his reference to the virtues of character that lead to human goodness.

The above analysis, which serves as an introduction to the virtues of character, aims to illustrate the link between the good and character, by providing an overview of Aristotle's reasoning regarding the virtues as necessary for our becoming good human beings. This leads to the question what is a virtue? This will be dealt with next as it necessary to be clear about what Aristotle means by a virtue contributing "toward someone's being a good human being" (Pakaluk, 2005:87). Following on from this an in-depth exploration of how and why a virtue contributes to making someone a good human being will be conducted. The research question posed at the beginning of this research, namely what is an Aristotelian understanding of character, provides the focus of this exploration.

3.6.1 What is a Virtue?

The concept of a virtue derives from the philosophical usage of this term in Plato and Aristotle's time, where " (1) to say a quality of a given kind of thing is an 'excellence' (*arete*, often translated as virtue) is to say that in having it, the thing is *good* (*agathon*) of its kind; and (2) to say it is good of its kind is to say it is in a state or condition to perform its characteristic function *well* (*eu*)" (NE 1106a15-24 and Plato, *Republic* 1, 352e – 353d; Broadie and Rowe, 2002:277). The first point is a reference to an excellence or virtue, the possession of which makes a particular thing good. Applied to a human being, a virtue is something possessed by a person that enables a person to become good. The second point derives from Aristotle's FA, and applying this to a human being, a good human being in the possession of the virtues is in a state or condition to perform her characteristic function well. Based on Aristotle's reasoning here, he attributes an ability⁴¹ to the virtues, to enable us to become good. To understand this ability of a virtue it is necessary to turn to the soul, the location of the virtues, where Aristotle distinguishes between intellectual virtues and character-related virtues. He defines "the good for man in terms of excellent activity of the soul"

⁴¹ Such an ability is a disposition and will be dealt with later

(NE 1098a17-17;Broadie and Rowe, 2002:261), and it is to the soul that we now turn to consider what Aristotle means by “excellent activity of soul”.

3.6.2 The Structure of the Human Soul

An appreciation of the structure of the soul is the starting point in understanding how the virtues enable us to become good, and how they enable us to perform our characteristic function well. Aristotle considers different “parts of the soul” and he reasons that, consistent with nature where plants exhibit “nutritive activity” which involves the absorption of nourishment, growth and decay, the human soul has a nutritive part which also exhibits the natural functions of nourishment, growth and decay. When the physical body functions well this part of the soul works well and therefore has its own “virtue” (Pakaluk, 2005:91). However the goodness of this part of the soul does not contribute to someone being a good person. It is obvious that the good functioning of a body cannot contribute to someone being a good person as indicated by someone with excellent lung function who is a criminal. This part of the soul then is not of any use in understanding the goodness *of a human being* (Pakaluk, 2005:91). Aristotle next considers thinking ability which is unique to humans and regards this as attributable to a particular part of the human soul. Aristotle views the thinking part of the human soul as contributing to human goodness. He looks upon this good as “thinking-related virtue” (*dianoetike arete*, NE 1103a5, 15) or “intellectual virtue”. The type of goodness Aristotle attributes to thinking is “good judgment”, “insight”, “understanding”, “intellectual depth”, and a type of “wisdom” (NE 1103a 5-6);Pakaluk, 2005:92).

Following on from this Aristotle considers yet another part of the soul which he regards as the part that contributes to our goodness or badness as human beings. He refers to this part as the part that does not have “reason” yet has an ability to “listen” and “respond” to reason (NE 1102b 31, 1103a3). This part of the soul can be regarded as the “animal side” of human nature as it is concerned with the appetites for food, drink, and sex. It is also concerned with “how someone experiences emotions, or perceives things, or the manner in which his body comes into play in an action”

(Pakaluk, 2005:93), as these are all aspects of human nature that are relevant to whether someone is a good or bad person. However, not all aspects of these parts of human nature are relevant to human goodness, for example how quickly or slowly we move are of no consequence to our goodness or badness as human beings. Aristotle therefore claims that some parts of our “animal side” are relevant to our goodness or badness, while other parts are not. To the extent that our ability to perceive, to feel emotions and to move are capable of “listening” and “responding to” reason, then these types of activity differ from other types of animal activity.

Aristotle regards this part of the soul as relevant to the goodness or badness of a human being and he likens it to listening and responding to a father (*NE* 1102b32, 1103a3) and how a child obeys her parents in spite of not fully understanding the reasons for their instructions. This part of our soul represents that part of our nature that exists separately from the part that “has reason”, and can be compared to an immature child who is yet to reach the “age of reason” (Pakaluk, 2005:93). Why does Aristotle regard this part of the soul as relevant to the goodness or badness of a person? To illustrate his point he uses the example of someone struggling with self-control and who *thinks* she should act in a particular way and therefore has a *desire* to so act. However, in spite of her reason and desire being aligned to act in one way, strong impulses draw her to do something else, resulting in her either failing to do what she desires, or succeeding, but with difficulty. The thinking and desiring stem from the same aspect of her soul, while her contrary impulses are regarded as another manifestation of that same aspect. The contrary impulses that are opposed to what she thinks and desires could have been weaker or may not have existed at all in another person or in different circumstances, indicating that this aspect is persuadable by reason. When a person lacks self-control by finding it difficult to act as he thinks and desires, such a person demonstrates a lack of goodness; whereas a person who demonstrates self-control by acting in a way that is consistent with what he thinks and desires and has no contrary impulses drawing him in another direction is regarded as a good human being. Aristotle regards that part of a person that can be persuaded and is

submissive to reason as “a good that contributes to human goodness, and thus the goodness of this part is a part of human virtue⁴²” (Pakaluk, 2005:94).

The following table illustrates the three different parts of the soul and the human virtues that correspond to each part of the soul, as explained above.

Table 1:

<u>Part of the Human Soul</u>	<u>Part of Human Virtue</u>
The nutritive part that does not have reason and which cannot listen to or respond to reason	None
The part that has reason	Thinking-related or “intellectual virtue”
The part that does not have reason but can “listen to” and “respond to” reason	Character-related virtue
	(Pakaluk, 2005:94)

The above analysis of Aristotle’s structure of the human soul and its division into parts provides a framework and an introduction to the character-related virtues. This section began with the questions of how the exercise of a virtue can enable a person to become good, how a virtue can enable us to perform our characteristic function well, and what Aristotle means by “excellent activity of soul” (*NE* 1098a16-17; Broadie and Rowe, 202:102). These questions have not been fully addressed here and will be

⁴² Aristotle’s view of moral excellence described here was a commonly held Greek view prevalent in his time, and differs from a generally regarded view today that someone struggling against contrary impulses yet who does what is right is regarded as morally good (Pakaluk, 2005:94).

explored in greater depth under the headings that follow dealing with character-related virtues.

3.7 Character-Related Virtues

In pursuing Aristotle's claim that the virtues of character enable us to become good, this section begins by asking how the virtues of character originate. An obvious place to start in answering this question is to revert to how Aristotle understood the concept of virtue within the context of the ancient Greek society in which he lived. Under a previous heading above titled "What is a Virtue?", it was established that the possession of a virtue, which is a reference to excellence, makes a particular thing good. Applying this statement to a human being, a virtue is something possessed by a person that enables a person to become good.

3.7.1 The Origin of a Character-Related Virtue and How One Comes to Possess a Virtue

Aristotle begins this part of his investigation by reasoning about the ways that things can originate: nature, human deliberated desire, necessity and chance (Pakaluk, 2005:96). He considers these against the backdrop of his search for the ultimate goal of human life, which he pursues by searching for the good for humans. He decides that character-related virtues, concerned with the good for human beings must originate from human deliberated desire. This suggests that choice is involved in exercising the virtues, as well as activity or action, which resonates with Aristotle's view regarding human good which he regards as "activity of soul in accordance with excellence" (*NE* 1098a8-17; Broadie and Rowe, 2002:102). The character-related virtues are located in the part of the soul that does not have reason but can listen and respond to reason, indicating that an active response may be required in exercising these virtues. This is in harmony with Aristotle's idea that character-related virtues originate through deliberated desire. The virtues of character do not arise by nature, however Aristotle does acknowledge that the nature of human beings does facilitate the development of

character-related virtues as indicated by his statement: “Although we are naturally equipped to acquire the virtues, they attain full development in us through training” (NE 1103a25-26; Pakaluk, 2005:97).

The question being pursued here is how the virtues of character enable us to become good. The analysis of character-related virtues conducted thus far has established that these virtues are located in the part of the soul that does not have reason but can listen and respond to reason. This part of a person that can be persuaded and is submissive to reason is “a good that contributes to human goodness, and thus the goodness of this part is a part of human virtue” (Pakaluk, 2005:94). This part of a person is the “animal side” that is relevant to our goodness or badness and includes aspects of our ability to perceive, to feel emotions and to move that are capable of “listening” and “responding to” reason. Emotions are forms of moral response that establish “what is morally relevant and, in some cases, what is required” (Sherman, 1989:2). Perception, as a way of seeing is a capacity to discern the relevant moral particulars of a situation, and the act of moral perception is part of “expressing virtue and part of the morally appropriate response” (Sherman, 1989:3). This capacity of being able to see or read a moral situation and knowing how to discern moral particulars is a mark of virtue, according to Aristotle (Ibid.: 4). The origin of character-related virtue then can be traced to the emotions and to perception. As character-related virtue involves our deliberative capacities in deciding how to act, we express our character in what we *see* as well as in what we *do* (Ibid.).

3.7.2 What is a Virtue? The Definition of Character-Related Virtue - Its Genus

In defining a character-related virtue Aristotle takes a logical approach in formulating a good definition. He begins by considering what is the general class or *genus* that a thing belongs to. Next he considers the sub-class or *species* that is a part of that general class and what its distinguishing *property* is. Aristotle begins to define the *genus* or general class of a character-related virtue by claiming that emotional

responses, capacities and states or dispositions⁴³ arise in the soul (*NE* 1105b20). He also contends that thoughts, beliefs, and rational acts, such as acts of wishing or consenting may also be found in the soul. He hones in on the part of the soul that does not have reason but is capable of listening and responding to reason and observes that: we have the potential to have a response, which is a “capacity” in the soul; alternatively we can actually have a response, which is an actual “emotional response”; or we can have a response in a certain way, which is a “state” or disposition (*hexis*) and this is what Aristotle regards a virtue to be. This reasoning is in keeping with his claim thus far about the nature of a virtue which is concerned with the *manner* in which one acts (Pakaluk, 2005:105-106). He defines a virtue thus: a “state” or “disposition” “is that by which we are disposed to respond with an emotion or action well or badly” (*NE* 1105b25-28;Pakaluk, 2005:106;Broadie and Rowe, 2002:115). He provides an example of how one is disposed to the emotion of anger. Being disposed to anger in an intermediate way means we are well disposed, whereas anger that is either intensely felt or weakly felt indicates being badly disposed (*NE* 1105b25-28). The Greek term for state or disposition is *hexis*, which translates as “a having”. Aristotle’s use of the term state translates the term *hexis*, which is broader than our current understanding of the word state or disposition. Aristotle draws on three important connotations of the word *hexis* which the word state lacks:

1. “*hexis*” can mean having a *firm grip* on something signifying stability; or it can signify permanence – “an enduring and deeply rooted quality of a thing rather than one that is transient and superficial” (Pakaluk, 2005:107)
2. “*hexis*” can also mean *possession* which can be contrasted with *use*. Aristotle draws on this contrast in making the distinction between the possession of a virtue and its actualization. A virtue is actualized and “put to use” when an action characteristic of that virtue is performed
3. another connotation of “*hexis*” is a persistent orientation, which can be passive or active; a passive orientation involves responding to certain stimuli or circumstances in

⁴³ Some scholars refer to a disposition and others to a state. Both terms are used throughout this research

certain ways; alternatively, a “*hexis*” can have an active orientation that is aimed at realizing a certain result irrespective of circumstances (Pakaluk, 2005:106)

Aristotle regards each of these three senses of *hexis* as typifying a character-related virtue: it is a stable, enduring, and deeply-rooted trait developed through practice; it is possessed and may be actualized; it is a persistent orientation and can be likened to a skill in that it aims at a definite goal in a disciplined manner (Pakaluk, 2005:106-107).

At this point Aristotle offers a definition of character-related virtue: “a habitual disposition connected with decision, lying in a mean relative to us, a mean which is determined by reason as the person of practical wisdom would determine it” (*NE* 1106b36-1107a; Hughes, 2013:52). Developing a habitual disposition can be viewed as a non-cognitive process based on Aristotle’s comments at the end of Book I and the start of Book II of the *NE* that “virtuous character is acquired through habituation (*ex’ethous*) of the non-rational part (*to alogon*) of the soul” (Sherman, 1989:162). The virtues of character are states of character that are forms of choice, perception, and affect (Ibid.: 5), and the habituation of these character states is dealt with further on under a separate heading.

The concepts of “intermediate position” and “practical wisdom” in Aristotle’s definition of a character-related virtue lead to an examination of the next level of Aristotle’s definition of a character-related virtue, its species, discussed below.

3.7.3 The Definition of Virtue of Character – Its Species (The Doctrine of the Mean)

In keeping with Aristotle’s logical approach he moves onto what the distinguishing property or species of a virtue of character is. In doing so he acknowledges that both a virtue and a vice are states or dispositions (*hexeis*), and that what distinguishes a virtue of character is that it is goal-directed (*stochastike*, *NE* 1106b 28) aimed at a mark which is an intermediate point lying between two extremes. This claim is referred to as The Doctrine of the Mean (Pakaluk, 2005:108). This doctrine appears to be concerned with states and emotions and actions arising from these emotions. A virtue as a state or disposition is in an intermediate position between two other states or dispositions – a

vice of excess and one of deficiency. Aristotle regards an emotion correctly felt and an action correctly performed as necessary elements of a character-related virtue, lying in an intermediate position between a vice of excess and a vice of deficiency. This is a continuation of Aristotle's earlier comments that the acquisition of character-related virtue involves bringing one's emotions in line with reason, which is a reference to the part of the soul that does not have reason but is capable of listening and responding to reason. Similarly, the virtues of character bring reason in line with the emotions and with the body, indicating "that one cannot be good without practical wisdom nor wise without virtue" (Sherman, 1989:158; NE1144b30-3). The intermediate point Aristotle is referring to in his Doctrine of the Mean seems to be what Aristotle means by being disposed to respond with an emotion well in his definition of the *genus* of a virtue of character.

Why does Aristotle regard an intermediate point as the distinguishing property of a character-related virtue? A virtue, as an excellence refers to the good which lies between a vice of excess and a vice of deficiency. Aristotle's view is that "excess and deficiency destroy good quality, while intermediacy preserves it ... and if excellence is more precise and better than any expertise, just as nature is, it will be effective at hitting upon what is intermediate" (NE 1106b12-19; Broadie and Rowe, 2002:117). Under the heading titled "The Acquisition of Character-Related Virtue", it was noted that Aristotle regards striking a balance between extremes as necessary for the performance of actions particular to character-related virtue. This balance is required in achieving the distinguishing property of a character-related virtue – the intermediate point – which Aristotle seems to liken to a "beauty of the soul, involving suitable proportion" (Pakaluk, 2005:108). There appears to be a harmony between a state or disposition and the actions or emotions arising from that state or disposition; a proportion in the soul leads to proportionate actions and emotions, and similarly a disproportion in the soul leads to disproportionate actions and emotions (Pakaluk, 2005:108). The excess, deficiency, and the intermediate that Aristotle refers to here,

concern emotions and actions.⁴⁴ Whilst Aristotle provides a broad overview of the nature of the actions and emotions that virtues of character deal with, he appears to be aware that the circumstances of individual lives vary and his reference to these virtues as relative to us is an acknowledgement of the unique particulars of each of our lives.

Aristotle's explanation of a character-related virtue in his introduction to *The Doctrine of the Mean* states: "Every virtue, as regards that of which it is a virtue, brings that thing into a good condition and renders its work good" (*NE* 1106a15-16; Pakaluk, 2005:108). Applying this statement to a human being, how does a virtue bring a human being into a good condition and render its work good? Aristotle states that: "with the excellences⁴⁵ and the bad states we are said, not to be moved, but to be in a certain condition" (*NE* 1106a6-7; Broadie and Rowe, 2002:116). As the distinguishing property of a character-related virtue is the intermediate, in choosing this position we are well disposed to actions and emotions arising from such a disposition, which brings us into a good condition. This condition enables us to perform our human function well. Aristotle is referring to the virtues of character, also referred to as excellences of character, as these are concerned with emotions and actions dealing with the intermediate. (*NE* 1106b12-19; Broadie and Rowe, 2002:117).

We are now in a position to state that a virtue of character makes us good by placing us in a state or disposition that enables us to respond with an emotion or action well by choosing an intermediate point between a vice of excess and a vice of deficiency. When we respond in this manner, our disposition is such that it brings us into a good condition, and being in such a condition means that we are enabled to perform our human function well. Aristotle sets a high standard for excellence of character as evidenced in his explanation: "but to be affected when one should, at the things one should, in relation to the people one should, for the reasons one should, in the way one should, is both intermediate and best, which is what belongs to excellence" (*NE*

⁴⁴ The detail of these emotions and actions will be dealt with under the individual virtues of character

⁴⁵ Also referred to as virtues; the terms excellences and virtues are used interchangeably

1106b21-23;Broadie and Rowe, 2002:117). Aristotle acknowledges the difficulty of achieving the good or excellence as there is only one way of hitting the intermediate, while one can be drawn to badness in either of two ways – excess and deficiency. He notes that intermediacy and excellence belong together (*NE* 1106b31-34;Broadie and Rowe, 2002:117).

3.7.4 The Acquisition of the Virtues of Character

Aristotle's approach in the *NE* is practical and differs from the Socratic view, with its focus on the acquisition of knowledge. He remarks that: "The point of what we're doing here is not simply to see what's true, as in other discussions. Our goal is not to know the definition of virtue, but to become good" (*NE* 1103b26-31;Pakaluk, 2005:96), which involves acting well. Consistent with this view, Aristotle proceeds with his argument for the good by making five practical observations in *NE* Book II, chapters 1–4 about how character-related virtue is acquired. He comments that the way knowledge and skill is acquired differs from the way character-related virtue is acquired (Pakaluk, 2005:98 – 99).

1. *"We acquire a character-related virtue by performing actions similar to those of people who have that virtue"* (*NE* 1103a31-b6;Pakaluk, 2005:99).

The practical nature of character-related virtue is highlighted by Aristotle with his focus on practice, and he gives examples of people learning a skill like building houses or playing the lyre. When acquiring these types of skills people are guided by an expert and undertake them even though they are not yet proficient. With practice however, they become increasingly competent and consistent in the performance of their skill (Pakaluk, 2005:99). Practice then, is key to acquiring character-related virtue.

2. *"We acquire a character-related virtue not by performing certain kinds of actions, but by performing them in a certain way"* (*NE* 1103b6-21;Pakaluk, 2005:99)

Aristotle is interested in how certain kinds of actions are performed and in the quality of such performance. This qualitative aspect is in accord with the meaning of the word virtue which, as stated previously, is concerned with excellence. The implications of

this for character-related virtues are twofold. Firstly, with regard to performance, an action can be performed poorly or well and accordingly we can expect that for each character-related virtue there is a category or “domain” of action in which one acquires a particular virtue when one performs actions well or excellently. Such “domains” differentiate virtues. Aristotle gives an example of some of these domains: “it’s by our carrying out exchanges of goods with others that some of us become just, others unjust; it’s by what we do when threatened by dangers, and by our developing habits of being afraid or feeling confident, that some of us become courageous and others cowards” (NE 1103b14-16). Secondly, we can anticipate that in performing actions of this kind we can be wrong in two different ways. As success relates to the manner in which an action is performed, manner suggests degree which in turn suggests achieving a balance and being able to adjust one’s actions correctly. As indicated by this description, character-related virtue requires a specific kind of attention to how one performs the types of actions related to these virtues (Pakaluk, 2005:100-101).

3. *“Acting well in a domain involves, initially at least, the avoidance of contrary extremes”* (NE 1104a11-27;Pakaluk, 2005:100).

This is in keeping with Aristotle’s previous idea of striking a balance in how one performs actions particular to character-related virtue⁴⁶. What Aristotle intends by this statement is that there are two conditions that are contrary to any character-related virtue, which are settled and determinate – a reference to Aristotle’s Doctrine of the Mean, discussed above. Ethics is not an exact science and this is reflected here in the flexibility that is required in modulating behaviour (2005:101).

4. *“There is a kind of momentum in action: to the extent that someone acts well or poorly in a domain, to that extent he becomes more disposed to act in that way”* (NE 1104a27-b3;Pakaluk, 2005:101). Aristotle introduces the term “disposition” or “habit” in relation to the way a character-related virtue is developed (NE 1103b20-22;Pakaluk, 2005:102). This seems consistent with his view that the virtues of character are

⁴⁶ These types of actions will be discussed at greater length further on

acquired through practice. The implications of this principle are that a person who is active in a domain in which a character-related virtue is operative has a tendency to develop either a virtue corresponding to that domain or one of its contrary vices. As mediocrity is not easily sustainable a person will either tend towards virtue or one of two vices operating on opposite sides of that virtue. Virtues and vices are stable, once developed so that once a person possesses a virtue and has established habits that reinforce that virtue, it is difficult to act contrary to such habits. The same principle applies to vices (NE 1100b 12-16; NE8 1156b 12)(Pakaluk, 2005:102).

5. *“When someone regularly performs actions similar to those of people who have a virtue, and if he actually likes acting in that way, we can be assured that he indeed has that virtue”* (1104b 3-9)(Pakaluk, 2005:102). Aristotle refers to “The pleasure or pain that is a side-effect of action” as an indication of a person’s character. He gives two examples to illustrate his point. The first concerns the virtue of self-mastery. In the case of a person denying herself bodily pleasures, should she be pleased to do this she exhibits self-mastery; on the other hand if she is pained at denying herself bodily pleasures Aristotle regards her as self-indulgent. The second example is of someone remaining firm in the face of being frightened. If he is not distressed and is pleased to do this, he is courageous; whereas should he be distressed, he is regarded as a coward (1104b 3-8)(Pakaluk, 2005:102). This explanation of how character-related virtues are acquired indicates their practical nature, as well as the complexity of these virtues, extending over a range of various aspects of life from the **practice** required in developing a skill, and the focus on the **quality** of action, as well as the necessity of **balance** between two extremes, and the role of **disposition** or habit, to the **emotions** involving pleasure and pain in exercising the virtues. These aspects can be regarded as necessary for the development of character-related virtues.

3.7.5 The Habituation of Character by Generating and Cultivating the Virtues

The virtues of character as emotional, perceptive, and deliberative capacities are cultivated through the process of habituation (Sherman, 1989:158). Cultivating these capacities involves practice leading to the development of “fine discrimination” and

the pleasure arising from such “increasingly fine powers of discernment” (Sherman, 1989:160). The reference to fine is an indication of a particular type of sensitivity associated with virtue that involves practice. The formation of character involves developing habits that train the desires (i.e. emotions, appetites, and feelings) arising in the non-rational part of the soul to listen to reason. Aristotle says such listening of the non-rational part can be viewed as partaking of reason in a certain manner (*NE* 1102b14, 1102b26-1103a3; cf. 1098a4), as it is controlled, shaped, and persuaded by the rational part (Sherman, 1989:162-163), suggesting the nuanced nature of character-related virtue. The capacity of perception seems to straddle both the non-rational desiderative classification of virtue and its rational counterpart. Similarly with desire (*orexis*) which is a more complex concept than the separation of the soul into rational and non-rational parts suggests. Desire as a rational wish or *boulesis* is a distinctive feature of the rational part that engages the capacity of revision and reflection. Aristotle does not assign emotions and appetites to the rational part of the soul, even though these desires are constituted of cognitive elements. The formation of character through habituation is far from a linear process and the blurred nature of the clarifications pertaining to desires, perception, and reason, gives some indication of the nature of the process of habituation of character (Sherman, 1989: 163).

Sherman approaches the question of how character is habituated by considering virtue generally⁴⁷ as a complex group of perceptual, affective, and deliberative capacities offering suggestions of how these are cultivated (1989:166). Aristotle’s view of virtue as a form of conduct and affect means that both feeling and judgment must be correct. Cultivating the perceptual, affective, and deliberative capacities in accordance with the correct feeling and judgment required of the virtues involves learning to moderate desires and direct them towards good objects. The cognitive or intentional aspect of emotion envisaged by Aristotle indicates that the education of emotions occurs partly through “their constitutive beliefs and perceptions” (Sherman, 1989:166-167). Feeling emotions like pity, goodwill, anger, compassion, or fear appropriately involves developing dispositional capacities including the capacity of perception so that one

⁴⁷ Rather than focusing on specific virtues

learns how to discern the context within which such responses arise. Achieving the mean as the appropriate emotional response expected of virtue requires the appropriate degree and nuance of emotional reaction, informed by critical judgment. To develop the dispositions of the virtues of character so that one feels, sees, and responds in the right way requires a form of development and training by those experienced in living the virtues. Sherman argues that Aristotle's view that the child is undeveloped relative to the "fully developed individual ... who is in authority over him" (NE 1260a32-3; Sherman, 1989:161) suggests the viability of a developmental model aimed at developing full humanity towards an end. Those in authority referred to by Aristotle are generally parents training their children as children lack the capacity for deliberation involved in choice (*prohairesis*) and action (*praxis*) that ethically mature adults possess (NE 1111a25-6, 1111b8-9, 1240b31-4). Generating and cultivating the virtues requires parents and others in authority acting as role models to guide and facilitate the habituation of character.

The capacity of perception involves "a discerning of the particulars, a reading of the situation in terms of salient considerations" (Sherman, 1989:168). Perception is a particular moral sensitivity to a situation, referred to as "fine discrimination" above, involving non-procedural reasoning, where one figures out by 'improvising' (NE 1106b15) by staying close to and "affected by the concrete details" (Sherman, 1989:168). This suggests that perception is developed by experience and practice, which is consistent with the nature of the virtues of character. Perception and emotion are interconnected as what we see by perceiving shapes and refines how and what we feel, so too, emotions influence how and what we see. The ongoing refinement involved in developing the capacity of perception is training in seeing and feeling that influences the way we perceive situations (Ibid.: 172). Being able to discriminate finely alludes to the deliberative capacity that together with emotion and perception constitute the capacities involved in the process of habituation of character. Such discrimination is necessary for feeling the right pleasures and pains as virtuous activity takes account of the passions and engages the proper sentiments and feelings, as well as the proper beliefs and actions (Ibid.: 173-174).

3.7.6 Desire as a Constituent of the Virtues of Character

Aristotle is interested in the desire of a person performing actions “similar to those of people who have a virtue” (NE 1104b3-9; Pakaluk, 2005:102). Such desire should be “pure” in the sense that one’s emotions should be fully in tune with one’s desire with no divided emotions. The mark of a person who possesses a character-related virtue is pleasure in performing the relevant action itself, which is an indication of the full development of the particular character-related virtue (Pakaluk, 2005:103). Aristotle seems to be reasoning that the desire or intent of a person is reflected in the action. A character-related virtue seems to exhibit a consistency between the desire or intent of a person and the corresponding action that is a result of that desire. In assessing the action of a virtuous person then, the motivation for such action seems to be regarded as part of the action, or as previously stated there is a seamless continuity from the origin of an action in the soul to its fulfilment.

3.7.7 Emotions as a Constituent of the Virtues of Character

In addition to the pleasure and pain that Aristotle associates with the development of a character-related virtue, he describes feelings of “liking” or “disliking” and “satisfaction” or “dissatisfaction” associated with these kinds of actions. These subjective states are included in the Greek concepts of “pleasure” and “pain” and Aristotle views character-related virtue as dealing with all of these emotions (NE 1104b9; Pakaluk, 2005:103). He regards a person of excellence as one “who behaves well in relation to pleasure and pain” (NE 1105a12-13; Broadie and Rowe, 2002:114). By associating emotions with character-related virtues, Aristotle introduces a subjective element which concerns the pursuit or avoidance of actions and feelings, which form part of his concept of a character-related virtue. Aristotle regards this subjective element of a character-related virtue as being subject to discipline so that “one’s subjective responses come into a good alignment with what one objectively ought to do” (Pakaluk, 2005:103). The effect of exerting this type of discipline over

one's emotions leads to one liking what one ought to and disliking what one ought⁴⁸ not to. What Aristotle seems to have in mind is the learnt ability to manage or control one's emotions and to bring them in line with the objective dictates of reason. This seems to be in accordance with the character-related virtues occurring in the part of the soul that does not have reason but is capable of listening and responding to reason, and to exercising deliberated desire, which is required for the acquisition of these virtues. Aristotle likens this process to the way one moves from a subjective frame of mind to developing an objective understanding: "That's how the process of learning occurs in everyone, through things that are less knowable by nature, to things that are more knowable by nature. This is our task; just as, when it comes to action, our task is to start from things that are good for the individual, to make it so that things that are generally good are good for him" (*Metaphysics*, 1029b3-7; Pakaluk, 2005:103-104). It would appear that Aristotle's reference here to action and the good, which occur in the part of the soul that does not have reason but can listen and respond to reason, by bringing the subjective aspect of one's emotions in line with the objectivity of reason, is what he means by "excellent activity of soul" (*NE* 1098a16-17; Broadie and Rowe, 2002:102).

3.7.8 Classification of Character-Related Virtues

After defining a virtue of character Aristotle moves on to classify these virtues. He associates important human motives and goods with virtues and identifies two vices that correspond with each virtue, one dealing with excess and one dealing with deficiency (Pakaluk, 2005:113).

⁴⁸ Ought in the sense used here refers to what is conducive to the good life rather than an absolute imperative

The following table illustrates this classification:

Table 2: Classification of the Virtues of Character

(Pakaluk, 2005:114)

<u>Field</u>	<u>Mean (Virtues)</u>	<u>Excess</u>	<u>Deficiency</u>
Fear	courage	cowardice	<unnamed>
Boldness	courage	rashness	cowardice
Felt desire	self-mastery	self-indulgence	insensibility
Wealth as a good	generosity	dissoluteness	stinginess
Wealth as a good- large-scale use	magnificence	pomposity	shabbiness
Honour as a good- large-scale honour	magnanimity	self-inflatedness	small-mindedness
Honour as a good	<unnamed>	over-ambitiousness	unambitiousness
Anger	mildness	irascibility	spiritlessness
Sociability – truth	“truthfulness”	posturing	self-depreciation
Sociability – humour	wittiness	buffoonery	boorishness
Sociability – enjoyment	“friendliness”	obsequiousness	contentiousness morose bearing
Shame	having a sense of shame	nervousness	shamelessness
[feelings of vengeance]	righteous indignation	envy	exulting in wickedness

There seems to be a lack of clarity about the principle on which Aristotle selects the above list and it may not be exhaustive. One view is that Aristotle is working with an idea of a “basic good” with each good defining a domain of a virtue. For example, there are basic goods involving life like personal security and the chance of being harmed (courage), and goods like physical sustenance and pleasure (self-mastery). Then there are basic goods associated with society like wealth (generosity, magnificence), and honour (magnanimity, measured ambition). There are also goods arising from friendships occurring in society like a good reputation (sense of shame), good conversation (truthfulness, friendliness, wit), and sympathy (righteous indignation). The motives and impulses that desire these goods are harmonised by the dispositions that characterise these character-related virtues (Pakaluk, 2005:114-115).

Aristotle’s reasoning that there are two vices associated with each virtue, is a departure from the philosophical tradition of his time, which understood that only one vice is attached to each virtue. His recognition of two vices seems to be attributable to his deep insight into human behaviour. The differences between a vice and a virtue can be subtle and can often fail to recognize these subtleties, for example rashness can appear to be the same as courage as the enemy is confronted in the case of the vice and the virtue. And there can be a lack of awareness with regard to the other vice as one can naturally incline to one vice so that the other vice is not considered. Aristotle notes that a person may for example occupy an extreme position yet regard that as the intermediate. In so doing, the virtue as the true intermediate is incorrectly regarded as the opposite extreme, for example, the timid looks upon the actions and choices of the truly courageous as rash, while the rash sees the courageous as timid and cowardly (Pakaluk, 2005:115-116). Aristotle’s advice to counter this is by paying attention to what pleases and displeases us: “In all matters the greatest diligence has to be exercised in relation to what is pleasant for us and the pleasure we feel” (*NE* 1109b7-8;Pakaluk, 2005:116), and “By simply dismissing the pleasure we’ll be less likely to go wrong” (*NE* 1109b11-12;Pakaluk, 2005:116). This is a reference to a previous point under the heading “The Acquisition of Character-Related Virtue” that a person of excellence or virtue is one “who behaves well in relation to pleasure and

pain” (NE 1105a12-13;Broadie and Rowe, 2002:114). This is surely what Aristotle means by “excellence of soul” (NE 1098a16-17;Broadie and Rowe, 2002:102) and a reference to a previous point made that Aristotle regards the subjective element of a character-related virtue as being subject to discipline so that “one’s subjective responses come into a good alignment with what objectively ought to do” (Pakaluk, 2005:103).

3.8 Actions as Signs of Character

The first part of this chapter dealt with how the virtues of character enable us to become good and how they enable us to perform our human function well, including Aristotle’s definition of a virtue of character. His next step is a discussion of human action as a reflection of one’s underlying character and how inferences about a person’s character can be made from her or his actions. It is necessary to return to Aristotle’s definition of character-related virtue, as the aspects of *prohairesis* or choice, and *prohairesis* or practical wisdom, included in his definition are relevant to a discussion concerning a person’s actions reflective of their character, and require further explanation. Two different translations of Aristotle’s definition of character-related virtue are considered here. Hughes translates Aristotle’s definition of a character-related virtue as “a habitual disposition connected with decision, lying in a mean relative to us, a mean which is determined by reason as the person of practical wisdom would determine it” (2013:52). This is contrasted with Pakaluk’s translation “virtue is a state involving deliberate purpose, which occupies an intermediate position, as that is determined by reason and as someone with practical wisdom would determine it” (2005:105). It seems that Hughes’s translation is better suited to an explanation of Aristotle’s reference to *prohairesis* or “choice” in human action that is operative in the exercise of character-related virtue when the subjective parts of one’s soul are brought into line with reason.

3.8.1 Choice (*Prohairesis*) as an Element of Action

In considering the relevance of choice to this discussion concerning actions as signs of character, it is useful to recap that a virtue of character is a disposition to choose the

intermediate in actions and emotions. An act must be freely chosen and not forced, and the agent must act knowingly in the awareness of what he or she is doing. This is in keeping with Aristotle's concept of a virtue of character arising from decision in Hughes's translation above where conscious choice is required in aiming at, and hitting the intermediate mark. Such an act, freely chosen and knowingly performed, is *hekōn*, understood as having an aim and initiating action that will achieve this aim – “of its own accord”(Pakaluk, 2005:120-121).

In this section consideration is given to the types of actions that are indicative of a person's character. It has already been established that such action must be freely chosen and knowingly performed and done freely and of its own accord (Pakaluk, 2005:120). Aristotle notes that the agent's “choice” or *prohairesis* is key in assessing and discerning character and is the “most distinctive mark of virtue” (Pakaluk, 2005:130). *Prohairesis* has been translated variously and has several meanings i.e. “choice”, “decision”, “intention”, or “deliberate purpose” (2005:130). Based on what we know so far about a character-related virtue, these various meanings offer an indication of what Aristotle had in mind with his concept of *prohairesis*. The following account of *prohairesis* provides more detail about this concept: “(1) it essentially involves reason; (2) it is a kind of power; (3) it is a kind of power which can vary in effectiveness; (4) it involves acting with a view to “all things considered” and (5) it takes as its object something which is viewed as good on reasoned grounds” (Pakaluk, 2005:132).

We know that character-related virtue deals with the part of the soul that does not have reason but can listen and respond to reason, so *prohairesis* is this type of reason which is concerned with bringing the non-rational parts of one's soul in line with reason. When, and the extent to which this is achieved must surely be the power that is referred to in the above account of *prohairesis* that can vary in effectiveness. Deliberating before acting is implied in “all things considered” (Pakaluk, 2005:132), and taking “as its object something which is viewed as good on reasoned grounds” (2005:132), indicates the purpose of one's acting is the good, and the aim or target of

one's acting is the good. The purpose and the aim of this acting is guided by reason, and is evidenced by a disposition that aims at the intermediate in emotions, desires and actions concerning pleasure and pain, which is the good aimed at by the virtues of character. This account seems to infer that the consistent and effective engagement of *prohairesis*, which involves a disposition to choose by allowing the desires of the non-rational part of the soul to be guided by reason, followed by action, indicates character and should surely lead to its growth and development. The kind of reasoning concerning the good to pursue that *prohairesis* deals with, is practical in nature, focused on actions that are within one's power to perform (Pakaluk, 2005:133), and it is this practical aspect of *prohairesis* that deliberation deals with, which is the subject to which we now turn.

3.8.2 Deliberation Involved in Choice (*Prohairesis*)

In light of this practical nature of *prohairesis* and the subject matter that it deals with, things deliberated about “hold typically” (Pakaluk, 2005:137), leaving some room for deliberation; while things that are random in nature do not lend themselves to be intelligently deliberated about. Aristotle specifies that deliberation deals with: “things in which it is unclear how they will turn out” (2005:137) (leaving room for our practical reasoning to work things out); and “things that lack well-defined parameters” (2005:137) (so that we are unable to directly apply something previously settled) (*NE* 1112b8-10;Pakaluk, 2005:137). Aristotle regards deliberation as “the principal manifestation of the practical effectiveness of intelligence” (Pakaluk, 2005:137) requiring the exercise of one's “own intelligence in practical matters” (2005:137), which is what one does in exercising *prohairesis* when deliberating about the good to follow when confronting the pleasure and pain that presents itself in the ordinary, yet varied circumstances of individual lives. Or, as succinctly expressed by Aristotle: “taking the goal as given, they investigate how and through what things it will come to be” (*NE* 1112b11-16, Pakaluk,2005:137).

Deliberation is also referred to as “deliberative desire” or “thinking desire” (*NE* 1139a23, b4) and when we judge by deliberation we make a decision based on

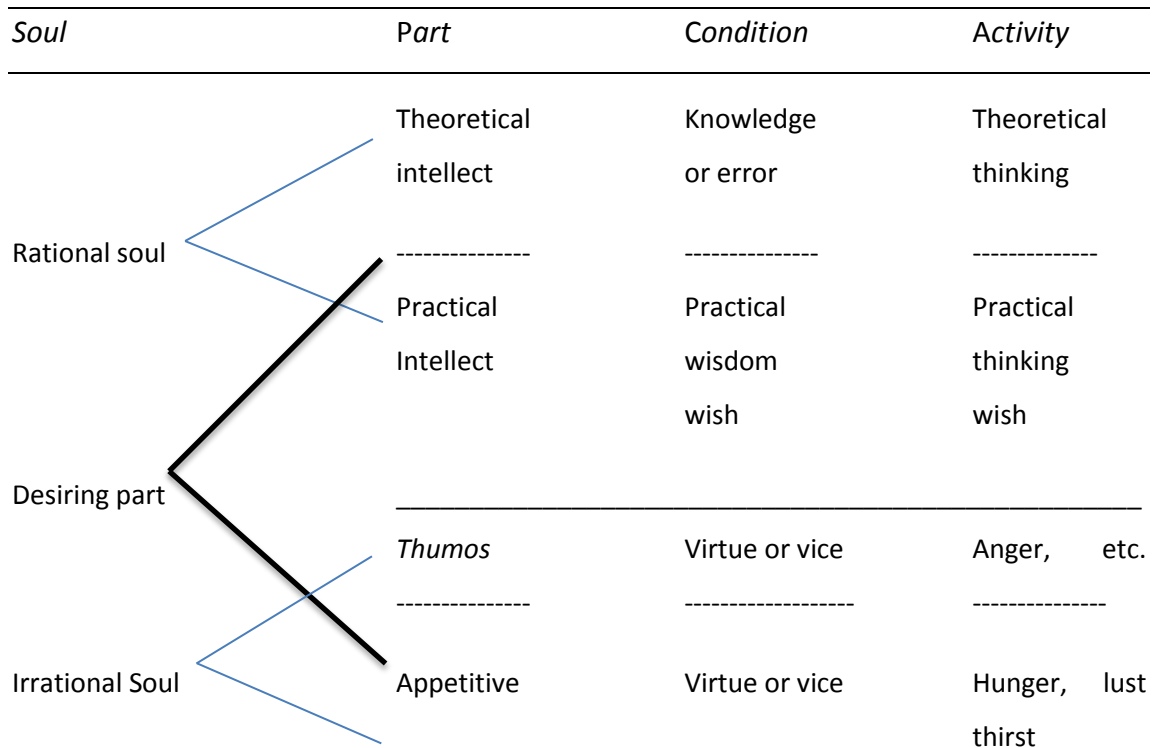
“rational wish”⁴⁹ (NE 1113a11-12; Irwin, 1980, 128). What does Aristotle mean by rational wish or desire? This applies to a virtue of character, and is the result of deliberating about “what would be best to do in the light of all [a person’s] aims” (1980:128). This is the desire occurring in the “deliberative part of the soul” (DA 4326b5-6, EE 1223a27-28; Irwin, 1980:129), and can be referred to in Table 3 as the desiring part of the soul, occurring in the sub-part titled ‘Practical Intellect’ which involves practical thinking, encompassing deliberation. The aim of such desire and deliberation in the person of character is the good, manifested in action. The reference to all a person’s aims is a reference to the good a person desires which is goal-directed and aimed at flourishing (*eudaimonia*) as the ultimate end (Irwin, 1980:128). The object of rational desire is *eudaimonia* (NE 1111b26-30) as the reason it is pursued is because it is the final end and includes “everything that we have reason to choose for itself; when we understand this we have a rational desire for happiness” (Irwin, 1980:129).

⁴⁹ The terms desire and wish are used interchangeably

The following diagram illustrates where choice (*prohairesis*) occurs in the soul in the exercise of the virtues of character:

Table 3: Aristotle's Understanding of Desire and Virtue in the Soul

<i>Soul</i>	<i>Part</i>	<i>Condition</i>	<i>Activity</i>
Rational soul	Theoretical intellect	Knowledge or error	Theoretical thinking
	-----	-----	-----
Desiring part	Practical Intellect	Practical wisdom wish	Practical thinking wish
	-----	-----	-----
Irrational Soul	<i>Thumos</i>	Virtue or vice	Anger, etc.
	-----	-----	-----
	Appetitive	Virtue or vice	Hunger, lust thirst



(Heinaman, 2009:487)

A virtue of character displays a unity within the soul between an appetite and a desire. In addition, the practical intellect “consists in a dispositional desire” (Heinaman, 2009:486) which results from a belief that a thing is good. So this belief that something is good is the cause of desire. Such belief concerning a good occurs as a state of the practical intellect as illustrated above. This desire caused by the belief that something is good is rational desire and is also a state of the practical intellect (Heinaman, 2009:486). Although this desire arises in the appetitive or spirited (*thumos*) part of the soul, it is regarded as rational, as it “listens and responds” to the rational part of the soul – the practical intellect. Choice (*prohairesis*) occurs as a result of a habituated disposition to choose guided by the practical intellect and evidenced in the unity

between an appetite and a desire, resulting in action. The virtues of character are illustrated in the above diagram represented by the dark line, indicating that the desiring part extends from the rational soul to the irrational soul, as explained by Heinaman:

all virtues are by definition states of the practical intellect – rational desires, wishes – which are caused by another state of the practical intellect: a belief that something is good. Some virtues such as temperance are also states of an irrational part of the soul but others such as justice are states solely of the practical intellect (2009;486).

The Greek term *hekōn* introduces the concept of responsibility⁵⁰ that is pertinent to this research located in the field of RL, as well as the concepts of praiseworthiness and blameworthiness. Aristotle is interested in ascertaining the conditions under which one can be blamed or praised for one's character or for one's actions. The term *hekōn* and its contrary, *akōn* is used to refer to persons, whilst the term *hekousion* and its contrary *akousion* refers to actions (Hughes, 2013:118). *Hekousion* can be translated as voluntary or willingly and Aristotle specifies the conditions under which actions are considered involuntary:

1. an action arising from compulsion
2. an action arising from ignorance

3.8.3 Compulsion and its Relation to Action

Aristotle regards an action as performed under compulsion if its origin is outside the agent where the agent has no control over her actions as in the case of a storm blowing a sailor off course. Such a situation is not an action at all in Aristotle's view, as the desires and choices of the person are not accounted for, which means the person's character cannot be expressed. This is because "the cause of what happens comes from outside, and the agent contributes nothing" (Hughes, 2013:119). However, when a person acts from a compulsion like anger or desire occurring within herself, the cause of the action arises from within the person and the action is regarded as willingly

⁵⁰ Responsibility for one's character is discussed further on

performed (NE 1109b9-17). As all actions involve desires, the influence of a desire in acting is a condition of acting willingly. Aristotle deals with examples of people acting under threatening conditions like satisfying unreasonable demands from a criminal so as to save one's family, or throwing cargo overboard to save a ship, and ultimately the lives of passengers on board. Actions such as these that originate in the agent are

"... then, done willingly, even though when described without qualification they might be said to be done unwillingly, since nobody would choose any such thing for its own sake" (I NE 1109a9-19; Hughes, 2013:122). Aristotle recognises that a person in such circumstances behaves in a way that he would not normally if the threat were not present, and that the reasons for so acting need to be taken into account when considering how the agent acted (Hughes, 2013:122).

3.8.4 Ignorance and its Relation to Action

Aristotle considers the case of an agent acting in ignorance who later, once becoming aware of all the facts, regrets what he did. These types of actions are not regarded by Aristotle as performed willingly (I NE 1110b18), and if the agent later regrets his actions they are considered to be performed unwillingly (NE 1111a19-21; Hughes, 2013:124). As "the agent's desires and thoughts at the time of acting" (2001:124) are key in defining actions, an agent is regarded as not performing an action that he did not know he was performing as he was ignorant of the facts at the time of acting, and so performed different actions. Aristotle distinguishes actions performed *because of* ignorance from those performed *in* ignorance, where the latter can be explained by for example, rage, wickedness or drunkenness (2001:126).

Choice in this context is also referred to as voluntariness (*to hekousion*) and Aristotle regards it as relevant to the virtues of character: "... since virtue concerns feelings and actions ... praise and blame are for what is voluntary" (NE 1109b30-35; Meyer, 2006:137). This notion of voluntariness is regarded as "a necessary condition of praiseworthiness and blameworthiness" (Meyer, 2006:137), and is an introduction to the concept of responsibility for our actions and our character, and is pertinent to this research located in the field of RL.

An excerpt from Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics* (*EE*) illustrates the link between voluntariness, responsibility and character:

Since virtue and vice and their products are praiseworthy and blameworthy (for one is blamed and praised ... because of those things for which we are ourselves responsible) it is clear that virtue and vice concern those actions for which one is oneself responsible [*aitios*] and the origin [*arche*]. So we must identify the sorts of actions for which a person is himself responsible and the origin. Now we all agree that he is responsible for his voluntary actions ... that he is not responsible for his involuntary ones (*EE* 1223a9-18; 1228a9-17; *Magna Moralia*⁵¹(*MM*) 1186b34-1187a4, 1187a19-21; Meyer, 2006:138).

Such acting involves having a purpose and initiating action focused on achieving this purpose. This principle applies both to rational and non-rational animals; however, where rational animals apply deliberation and seek counsel, non-rational animals rely on instinct to achieve their aims. The type of human action then in exercising character-related virtue is purposeful and willed or *hekousion* (Pakaluk, 2005:121). How do we judge when the human action that distinguishes character-related virtue is purposeful and willed or *hekousin*? Aristotle provides the specifics of such action:

- a) a goal representative of a good sought by the agent is developed
- b) with this goal in mind consideration is given to the type of action that will fulfil this goal
- c) a choice is made to advance or achieve this goal

Such human reasoning is sensitive to goods, showing an ordering or hierarchy of goods. It is this sensitivity and ordering of goods in actions chosen that indicates good or bad character (Pakaluk, 2005:122). In performing such action "of our own accord" Aristotle regards us as being responsible for such action as well as responsible for the type of character we develop as a result of such action.

⁵¹ Known by its Latin title; English translation: *Great Ethics*

3.8.5 Responsibility for Actions and the Voluntary

The concept of responsibility, as it relates to the virtues of character, arises indirectly when Aristotle considers how to establish whether a person is virtuous. As virtue elicits praise he reasons that only an action performed voluntarily is subject to praise and blame (*NE* 1109b30-34). Aristotle assumes that the conditions for moral assessment are praise, blame, reward, and punishment and only persons responsible for their actions can be regarded as eligible for moral scrutiny (Irwin, 1980:118).

Voluntary action originates “in” the agent; alternately it can be expressed as the agent causing an action (Heinaman, 2009:484). Aristotle’s view is that voluntary actions “that “originate” in the agent are “up to him to do or not to do” ” (*NE* 1110a15-18; 1113b20-21; 1114a18-19; *EE* II.6.1223a2-9; cf. *MM* I.9.1187a7-24; Meyer, 2006:138). Agents performing these types of actions are “in control (*kurios*) of their actions” (*NE* 1114a2-3; *EE* II.6.1223a6-7) they are responsible (*aitioi*) for them: “A person is responsible [*aitios*] for those things that are up to him to do or not to do, and if he is responsible [*aitios*] for them, then they are up to him” (*EE* II.6.1223a7-9; cf. 1223a15-18; Meyer, 2006:138). A voluntary action originating in the agent is consistent with Aristotle’s concept a virtue of character originating in the soul of the person. A virtue of character arises in the part of the soul that does not have reason but can listen and respond to reason and deals with bringing emotions including pleasures and pains, in line with reason. There appears to be symmetry between this part of the soul and a voluntary action, which, as an aspect of a virtue of character⁵², occurs when a person is in control of her actions (Meyer, 2006:138) and is responsible for her actions (Ibid., 2006:138) – actions which are concerned with appetites and desires. The concept of voluntary seems to extend beyond that that of actions to include states of character, and Aristotle reasons that both are “up to us and voluntary” (*NE* 1114b28-9; cf. 1114a4-31; Meyer, 2006:138). As Aristotle holds that “a person is responsible [*aitios*] for those things that are up to him” (*EE* II.6.1223a7-9; cf. 1223a15-18;

⁵² Although voluntary action extends to vice, the focus here is on voluntary action as it applies to virtue

Meyer,2006:138), this raises the concept of responsibility for one's character, a topic to which we now turn.

3.8.6 Responsibility for Character

Aristotle argues "that we are responsible for becoming the sorts of people that we are" (Meyer, 2006:153). He draws on his outline of character formation in *NE Book II* that we become courageous by performing courageous actions, prudent by performing prudent actions (*NE* 1114a4-6). Added to this is the awareness that our actions are character-forming and that by doing them, we will become courageous or cowardly or just or unjust. By performing character-forming actions in the knowledge of what we are doing, Aristotle argues we "voluntarily become the sorts of people we are" (Meyer, 2006:155), and he concludes that: "If someone knowingly ... does the sorts of things that make him unjust, then he is unjust voluntarily" (*NE* 1114a12-13; Meyer,2006:155).

Aristotle's account of responsibility for one's character is thus based on an ethical knowledge and an ethical awareness of what one is doing, including one's desires and one's actions, and this correlates with his notion of deliberated desire involving practical intellect as a necessary part of a virtue of character. Meyer (2006) notes the need for being cognisant of Aristotle's social context, in which he assumes his audience has a sound understanding of ethics (*NE* 1.4.1095b4-6) and to whom he poses the practical question: "what must we do to become good?" (*NE*1103b27-9;2006:155). The practical nature of Aristotle's concept of responsibility for character is evident in his view that: "We become good ... by engaging actively in the practical world where it is up to us to act in accordance with the standards we have learned from our upbringing" (Meyer, 2006:156). It seems evident that Aristotle assumed parents applied high moral standards in raising their children. This may not apply, particularly in current society, and even in those cases when it does, responsibility for character involving choice surely implies a responsibility to question the standards we have inherited.

3.9 Practical Wisdom (*Phronesis*)

The above discussion dealt with the aspect of reason concerning deliberated desire (*prohairesis*) incorporated in Aristotle's definition of a virtue of character. This discussion deals with another aspect of reason incorporated in this definition, that of practical wisdom (*phronesis*), "... as that is determined by reason and as someone with **practical wisdom** would determine it" (NE 1106b36-1107a2; Pakaluk, 2005:105). Aristotle classifies practical wisdom as an intellectual virtue as it arises in the part of the soul that has reason, and is illustrated in Table 3 as "Practical Intellect". This is in contrast to the other form of reason applying to a virtue of character, a disposition to choose (*prohairesis*) which arises in the part of the soul that does not have reason, but that can listen and respond to reason. Why does Aristotle distinguish between these two types of reason in his definition of a virtue of character? The following explanation is aimed at explaining: 1) what practical wisdom (*phronesis*) is; 2) how it differs from a disposition to desire (*prohairesis*); and 3) why both forms of reason are necessary for the exercise of character-related virtue.

3.9.1 What is Practical Wisdom (*Phronesis*)?

Practical wisdom occurs in the rational soul and is classified as an intellectual virtue (Hughes, 2013:86). It is concerned with effective decision making in the realm of morality and involves "good moral judgement" (Hughes, 2013:84, 87). The meaning of *phronēsis* is not settled in Greek and has various English translations such as "practical wisdom", "wisdom", and "intelligence". Aristotle views "sound reason" (*orthos logos*) as necessary for the type of ethical reasoning required of character-related virtue. He regards *orthos logos* as the virtue of *phronēsis* (NE 1144b28) as evidenced by the way he uses the terms "as sound reason indicates", and "as a person with *phronēsis* indicates", interchangeably (NE 1107a1; Pakaluk, 2005:214-215). This illustrates the practical nature of the form of reason and is what Aristotle regards as "distinctive of good administration" (Pakaluk, 2005:215). Aristotle's emphasis is on the type of reason relevant to character-related virtue involving deliberation and action. He regards this type of reasoning as a form of "good sense" – *phronesis* ("administrative ability",

“practical wisdom”, “intelligence and foresight in action” (NE 1144b27-28; Pakaluk, 2005:214), and “it may be defined as that virtue which deals with what is good and bad generally for human beings” (NE 1140b5-7; Pakaluk, 2005:214). Aristotle treats “sound reason” as a thinking-related virtue and he begins his study of this virtue by identifying the work that characterises the part of the soul that has reason (Pakaluk, 2005:216). He decides that it is to discover the truth which can involve “to see or to contemplate” (*theorein*) (Ibid., 2005:216-217). It can also involve particular acts that lead to true assertions or denials. Seeing or asserting the truth then is the characteristic work of this part of the soul and when this virtue works well it always arrives at the truth (Ibid., 2005:217).

In the rational soul Aristotle distinguishes between a part of the soul that ascertains the truth in a theoretical way, and between a part that applies practical reason in searching for what is true. Truth can be regarded as compatible between “what the soul says and how the world is” (Pakaluk, 2005:219). Truth arrived at using theoretical reasoning refers to things: “the basic causes of which cannot be otherwise” (Ibid., 2005:218). With regard to this type of truth the soul reliably arrives at the truth by “coming into correspondence with the world” (Ibid., 2005:219). In contrast, truth resulting from practical reason leads the world to come “into correspondence with the soul” (2005:219). With regard to the thinking part of the soul there are two different ways of arriving at the truth reflected in two different parts of the soul – theoretical and practical reason. Two principal virtues arise in this part of the soul – one dealing with assertion and denial (theoretical reason), and one dealing with pursuit and avoidance that also applies to action⁵³ (practical wisdom). Theoretical reason can be regarded as the more passive of these two types of reason as “if the world is as it says, then what it says is true” (Ibid., 2005:219). Practical reason on the other hand requires an intervention as it “attains the truth through making what it regards as good actually come to exist” (Ibid., 2005:220). Practical reason then, ascertains the truth by “regarding something as “to be pursued”, and then pursuing it, consistently so” (Ibid.,

⁵³ This refers to the pleasure and pain that the virtues of character pursue or avoid in striving for the intermediate

2005:220). The practical aspect of this type of reasoning requires pursuit and successful achievement and goes beyond merely thinking about what it regards as good. The pursuit and successful achievement of practical reasoning refers primarily to action (Ibid., 2005:221). This is in keeping with a feature of character-related virtue established earlier on, that reason leading to action lies at the heart of Aristotle's concept of character-related virtue.

Practical wisdom is referred to as a form of 'seeing' or 'moral perception' (Hughes, 2013:98,100). Aristotle clarifies the type of perception that practical wisdom is concerned with. It differs from scientific knowledge, and is contrasted with insight (*nous*), which deals with definitions (NE 1142a2; Hughes,2013:99). Perception involves 'seeing as' which requires neither proof nor argument, rather "one simply notices what it is" (Ibid., 2013:100). Whereas the nature of science deals with facts which are largely unchanging, the practical universals that are the concern of the moral virtues are flexible and less precise, occurring as they do in the varied circumstances of everyday lives. The practical nature of practical wisdom means that both experience and understanding are drawn on when confronting the everyday and varied situations that life poses. Practical wisdom requires an ability to assess individual situations correctly, and to do so one draws on one's understanding of previous experiences where similar situations were faced. Practical wisdom develops as one's understanding of each particular situation one faces is enhanced (Hughes, 2013:102). Aristotle also refers to practical wisdom as a state of mind: "So it appears that in order to be good one has to act in a certain state [of mind], I mean by choosing and doing so for the sake of the actions concerned" (NE 1114a13-19;Hughes, 2013:99). As the point of moral virtue is to realize the human good, the state of mind of the person with practical wisdom is oriented towards how to bring this good about.

3.9.2 What Does Good Moral Judgement Consist of?

As wisdom forms part of the definition of a virtue of character, we know that this type of judgement involves the moral virtues. This indicates that a form of co-operation between the practical intellect located in the rational soul, and the desiring part

located in the irrational part of the soul capable of listening to reason is necessary for the exercise of character-related virtue. Whereas the focus of *prohairesis* (choice) is deliberated desire, the focus of *phronesis* (practical wisdom) is *orthos logos* – right reason or correct thinking (Hughes, 2013:87). There is an interdependency between these two types of reason as: “Both thinking must be true and desire right if the choice is to be good so that reason affirms just what desire pursues” (NE 1139a21-26; Hughes 2013:104). It is this true thinking referred to here, working in conjunction with deliberated desire that practical wisdom is concerned with and that leads to good moral judgement. As practical wisdom is concerned with the choices we make about the good in the everyday circumstances of our lives, it can be viewed as making good use of the practical part of our rational soul in thinking about how to live a life that is morally admirable (Hughes, 2013:86).

3.9.3 How Practical Wisdom Differs From Deliberated Desire

Deliberated desire controls emotional responses arising in the spirited (*thumos*) or appetitive parts of the soul, while the task of practical wisdom is ‘seeing’ things from a moral perspective by applying moral judgement. While an “appropriate emotional response” which is the domain of deliberated desire is required for the exercise of moral virtue, the understanding that practical wisdom is concerned with, also forms a necessary part of moral virtue (Hughes, 2013:98). Aristotle expresses the difference between these two forms of rationality as well as their complementarity:

What affirmation and negation are to thinking, so pursuit and avoidance are to desire. Now moral virtue is a habitual state connected with choice and choice is a deliberated desire. Hence both the thinking must be true and the desire right if the choice is to be good, so that reason affirms just what desire pursues (1139a21-26)(Hughes, 2013:104).

3.9.4 Why Both Forms of Reason are Necessary for the Exercise of Character-Related Virtue

The virtuous inclinations that are the purview of deliberated desire may require further refinement, which practical wisdom provides in the way it applies judgement

to specific situations. Considering that the part of the soul where emotions arise is irrational, Aristotle's concept of practical wisdom arising in the rational part of the soul, acting as it does to refine the operation of deliberated desire, indicates the harmony that exists in the soul when these two interrelated powers work in unison. Character-related virtue is the manifestation of this co-operative relationship occurring in the soul.

Practical wisdom, being an element of a virtue of character, involves living a certain type of life aimed at the human good, which involves understanding that one's actions make sense from the perspective of a flourishing⁵⁴ life (Hughes, 2013:90). This type of wisdom can be regarded as the wisdom involved in a "way of living a particular kind of life thoughtfully" (Hughes, 2013:93), which is a reference to the quality of what one is doing in living one's life (2013:93). This suggests that ethical awareness appears to be necessary for the person of character living the virtues. Such ethical awareness, it is argued, is necessary for the leader of character exercising practical wisdom (*phronesis*) in deliberating about her or his desires (*prohairesis*).

3.10 Kalon and the Virtues of Character

Aristotle raises the notion of *kalon*, as this has a bearing on the action that is typical of character-related virtue. Although Aristotle does not discuss what he means by the *kalon* directly, the literal translation of the word is "beautiful". Used in the context of the virtues of character the *kalon* is what is "noble, admirable, and pleasing to consider in action" (Pakaluk, 2005:153). The aim of the virtues of character is thus what is *kalon*. By considering an action admirable this could evoke admiration in the person deliberating over the action. It has an attraction that draws someone to it, and can be juxtaposed against its opposite *aischron*, which is "ugly", "disgraceful", or "shameful" (Ibid., 2005:153). It is not difficult for the average person to identify the *kalon* in action. The same applies to the *aischron*. This seems to be in keeping with Aristotle's view that "an action's being *kalon* is a distinct ground for evaluating it, which has priority over whether it is pleasant or materially advantageous" (Ibid., 2005:154). In

⁵⁴ Hughes (2013) uses the term fulfilled in referring to *eudaimonia*

contrast to Aristotle's societal context of ancient Greece, our current pluralistic society informed by a range of varying moral perspectives embodying moral relativism, makes identifying and finding common agreement regarding the nobility of an action or its counterpart, more complex. This is consistent with the fact that the types of virtues and vices that Aristotle could assume his audience would recognise differ from the understanding of virtues and vices prevailing in today's society (Hughes, 2013:333).

Now that it has been established how a virtue of character makes us good, it is necessary to turn to the individual virtues of character that are relevant to this research concerning leader character. In light of the nature of the emerging construct of RL as discussed in Chapter Two, the virtues of justice and courage seem particularly pertinent to leader character and are discussed below.

3.11 The Virtue of Justice

3.11.1 Broad Overview of the Nature of Justice

Central to Aristotle's concept of the virtue of justice is the political society (*polis*) within which citizens live and exercise this virtue in their dealings with one another. A characteristic of the just person is participation, as a citizen, in the ordinary civic life of the community (Kraut, 2002:175). Aristotle's work, *The Politics*, informs his understanding of justice in his *NE* as indicated by the type of questions he poses: "What is it to be a good citizen?"⁵⁵ What are the different kinds of constitution? How do those that are well governed differ from the rest?" (Kraut, 2002:186). Aristotle's conception of justice thus incorporates the political themes of good citizenship and good governance. By emphasising the political community (*polis*) within which individuals live, interact with one another, and exercise the virtues, he is acknowledging our communitarian nature as human beings living within the *polis* – "the most complete and important kind of human community" (Schofield, 2006:308). The orientation of Aristotle's *Politics* and *NE* is largely political and social (Ibid., 2006:311), as reflected in W.D. Ross's (1925) translation of a phrase in the *NE* "man is

⁵⁵ This question is relevant to the concept of leader character and will be explored further on

born for citizenship” (NE 1097b11). Given the location of this study within the field of RL, this statement seems apt and is a theme that will be pursued further on in this study.

The virtue of justice differs from the other virtues of character in that it places the political community (*polis*) within which individuals live, interact with one another, and exercise the virtues, at its core⁵⁶. This is in keeping with the value Aristotle attaches to citizenship and it appears that it should be reflected in the concept of RL, given the breadth and depth of global and national challenges currently facing today’s leaders. Aristotle’s portrayal of ethical life is imbued with social aspects concerning the customs, norms, laws, and rules of one’s political community. A common feature shared among the virtues of character is the relationship that exists between the parts of the soul. However the virtue of justice is broader in scope and extends beyond this relationship to include “a relationship among separate human beings” (Kraut, 2002:101).

In developing his concept of justice against the background of political society (*polis*) Aristotle distinguishes between general justice (broad) and particular justice (narrow)⁵⁷. General justice is “co-extensive with the other excellences” (Broadie and Rowe, 2002:335) and is concerned with lawfulness, which, as Kraut (2002) acknowledges, is a common characteristic of all justice (Ibid., 2002:103). In contrast, particular justice is concerned with the equal and particular injustice with the unequal (Broadie and Rowe, 2002:335). In Greek, the term law (*nomos*) is broader than our understanding of legislation and includes norms and customs, as well as the unwritten rules of a community, which can extend to conduct and ways of doing things that are regarded by a community as fitting, proper, and customary. The existence of a *nomos* is dependent on a group of people recognizing and observing it. This means that acting unjustly in terms of general justice goes beyond merely violating written laws and

⁵⁶ A major flaw in an aspect of Aristotle’s concept of political community is the people he excludes from such community and from citizenship, i.e. women, slaves, royal subjects, and barbarians (Morrell, 2012:3).

⁵⁷ Some scholars use the terms general and particular justice, whereas others like Kraut (2002:102) prefer the terms broad and narrow justice.

includes transgressing a broader set of rules and norms that govern, and are accepted by, the members of that community (Kraut, 2002:105). This broader sense of justice is how Aristotle views lawfulness, which he regards as the whole of justice. Particular justice, dealing with equality, is one element of this whole (*NE* 1130b10-14; Kraut, 2002:103). The virtue of lawfulness involves more than merely abiding by the law and like “any real virtue is a difficult achievement that requires practical wisdom” (*NE* 1144b30-2; Kraut, 2002:107)⁵⁸.

Being a just person is demanding, as indicated by a remark Aristotle makes towards the end of *NE* V.1: “whoever is just in the broad sense of the word will possess every other ethical virtue as well” (*NE* 1129b25-1130a10;Kraut, 2002:107). This commits Aristotle to hold that the person who is just in the broad sense is just in the narrow sense as well and is both a lawful and equal person (Kraut, 2002:107). However, his concept of the good citizen participating in society by establishing, monitoring, and accepting the customs, norms and rules of society appears to provide a strong bulwark against unjust law; this is indeed what occurred in South Africa building up to and culminating in the establishment of a constitutional democracy in 1994. These examples demonstrate that this is what justice in the broad sense would be concerned with. It would appear that a vital role of the good citizen is participation in society to protect, defend, and advance the cause of justice. For Aristotle, justice involves more than passively following rules. The just person participates in the community by applying practical wisdom in bringing his intellectual and emotional skills to bear on the matters confronting the well-being of its members. This includes working within and contributing to an orderly and stable system of norms and customs, underpinned by a coherent legal code that is respected and adhered to (Kraut, 2002:106).

Justice in the narrow sense, referred to as particular justice, is concerned with equality, in particular with distributive and corrective justice. With regard to distributive justice

⁵⁸ An obvious and valid criticism of Aristotle’s position that “all of justice is lawfulness” (Kraut, 2002:103) is the possibility and existence of unjust laws. The South African apartheid laws are an example. However, Aristotle’s reference to “ ‘everything lawful is *in a way just*’ is so qualified in order to make room for the point that existing laws can also contain considerable injustice” (Kraut, 2002:115).

within the political realm, some of the most serious questions concern the division of power and honour among citizens (*NE* 1131a27-9; Kraut, 2002:146); whereas corrective justice concerns the rectification of wrongs. Such wrongs can occur either voluntarily where transactions are entered into between parties, or involuntarily in transactions where one party is the victim of an injustice e.g. adultery, theft, or fraud. Aristotle regards citizens as equal before the law, so the purpose of corrective justice is to restore the imbalance caused by the unjust act and return both parties to a position of equality (*NE* 1132a24-7). His underlying approach is the well-being of those in a community, which can only be achieved if all members regard one another as equals, despite there being differences like wealth, education and power between them (Kraut, 2002:149). Alternatively, these types of differences occurring among citizens, based on merit, are the concern of distributive justice, which compares the merit of potential recipients of justice.

For Aristotle the principal question of justice is: who should have power? He reflects on this question and considers various criteria of merit yet does not resolve this matter in the *NE* but does so in Book III of the *Politics*. The underlying factor among competing criteria is “what it is for citizens to live well” (Kraut, 2002:147). This raises Aristotle’s concept of flourishing (*eudaimonia*) and is what living the virtues of character entails i.e. “the point of the good life is the living of it” (Hughes, 2013:89). He regards the ultimate goal of the community to be that of creating and sustaining the conditions that facilitate all citizens fully exercising their intellectual, emotional and social powers – what he regards as “fully realized human beings⁵⁹” (Kraut, 2002:147), who are most suited to making wise judgments which involves “the full exercise of the intellectual, emotional, and social powers of all citizens” (Ibid., 2002:147). Although merit is the basis on which distributive questions should be resolved, the nature of the merit should be considered in light of the common good of the whole community. When an institution distributes goods the requirements of justice are twofold. Firstly, that contributions are made to the common good and secondly, that distributions are made

⁵⁹ Excluded from this category are slaves and women – reflective of the type of society that existed in ancient Greece.

according to the appropriate criterion of merit, with the common good that is to be achieved, in mind. The goal of justice is not served where the well-being of the community is undermined (Kraut, 2002:147). Reverting to Aristotle's primary concern of justice regarding who should have power, it should surely be those who are capable of meeting these criteria, which indicates that a sufficient level of ethical development and maturity is required, as argued for in Chapter Two.

Aristotle refers to justice in its broad sense as the whole of virtue. What he seems to mean is that justice involves each of the other virtues, as just acts require the exercise of courage, or self-mastery, or wisdom, or a combination of all three. Additionally, when each of these virtues is exercised with the good of the political community as an end, an act of justice occurs simultaneously (Kraut, 2002:119). Each of the other ethical virtues is defined narrowly because each deals with only one or two of the emotions, whereas justice requires mastery over the range of one's emotions in dealing with members of one's community (Ibid.: 120). Building on the above point concerning the need for ethical development and maturity of those in power, the ability to master the range of human emotions in exercising justice would seem to be an essential element of ethical development and maturity. By implication, if one exercises justice it follows that the other virtues are exercised as well. This leads to the rather obvious conclusion that ethical development and maturity involve the exercise of all the virtues.

3.11.2 What Kind of Person is the Just Person?

Aristotle considers the psychological makeup of both the just and the unjust person. The psychological state of the just person is not a unitary one involving a single emotional condition; rather, justice in its broad sense involves the exercise of a range of emotions, like temperance when facing pleasure, or courage when faced by a fearful situation. The unitary aspect of justice lies in one's interactions with others while working for the common good of the community. There is a range of diverse motives driving the unjust person, including lappetite, love of money, fear, and excessive anger. The unjust person is captive to these extreme states with their corresponding

deficiencies, while the just person has learned how to overcome them (Kraut, 2002:122). Injustice in the narrow sense is characterised by greed and inequality (*NE* 1129a32-3). The unjust person strives for more, specifically “more of the goods on which good and bad fortune rest” (*NE* 1129b2-3; Kraut, 2002:136). The Greek term for ‘having more’ is *pleonexia* and Aristotle’s view is that the motive for such desires is the belief that more goods will lead to a better life. Such belief drives the unjust person to act for the sake of profit (*kerdos*) or gain as he attempts to increase his portion of things such as money, honour, and safety (*NE*1130b2), deriving pleasure from such gain (b4). The motive driving the unjust person acting in this way is not necessarily limited to greed for money and may arise from a desire for a larger share of honour or safety than is due him, for example a person claiming an honour he knows he is not deserving of exhibits greed for honour; a soldier, who without fear, deserts his post during war, is greedy for safety. These types of actions may extend to disrespecting the law in which case the impact of a person’s actions extends across the spectrum of broad and narrow injustice (Kraut, 2002:136-137).

Although greed is generally understood as a desire for more, it can occur that the unjust person acting in the narrow sense may desire less of something. Pertinent to this study⁶⁰ is the case where less blame is sought leading to the unjust person wrongly passing blame from himself or herself onto another, which may involve avoiding responsibilities, which could result in a shift of burdens onto others (Kraut, 2002:137). The psychological state of the just person, characterised by a learned ability to be free from the extreme states of greed, appetite, fear and anger – in other words a balanced state arising from a desire for the good seems congruent with Aristotle’s notion of a virtue bringing a thing into a good condition *NE*1106a 15-16; Pakaluk, 2005:108). Such a balanced psychological state, in contrast to the extreme states that the unjust person is captive to, contributes to emotional maturity, which appears to form part of an Aristotelian understanding of ethical maturity. Just actions then, spring from a balanced psychological state with the just person having learned to overcome the

⁶⁰ Located within the field of RL

extreme states that characterise the unjust person. This learned ability obviously involves conscious choice, and a desire - the desire of the just person to consciously choose the good.

Aristotle provides an example to distinguish between injustice and one of the other vices – intemperance. Suppose someone plans an adulterous act with profit driving him rather than the pleasure of physical desire. Such an act is characteristic of injustice. However, where pleasure is the motivation for the act, resulting in the possibility of financial loss, the person is driven by an irrational desire rather than the type of deliberated desire characteristic of virtue. Such an act characterises the vice of intemperance (NE 1130a24-8). Pleasure is derived in both of these cases. For the unjust person the pleasure lies in profit, and for the intemperate pleasure comes from the senses (NE 1130b4; Kraut, 2002:136).

The term *pleonexia* refers to “the emotional state that makes someone an unjust person in the narrow sense” (Kraut, 2002:160). By contrast, the just person does not possess this emotion. An analysis of *pleonexia* seems to reveal Aristotle’s tacit assumption that the desire to have more is “*at the expense of others*” (Kraut, 2002:138). The desire of the unjust person to have more of a good extends to his indifference to the suffering of others impacted by his greed and this is a distinct vice in Kraut’s (2002) view. Part of the pleasure of his gain is that others are losing as he gains, indicating his insensitivity to others. An emotional disorder typifies such an attitude which is separate from an inordinate love of the goods of money, honour or safety (NE 1130b4; Kraut, 2002:138). The psychological state of the unjust person seems to be characterised by an unhealthy focus on the self to the exclusion, and at the cost of others, and stands in contrast to the generous, fair-minded attitude of the just person acting in the interests of the broader community. It is fairly self-evident that the psychological state of the unjust person is indicative of immature and limited emotional development which may be characterized by narcissistic, egotistical behaviour. Aristotle’s awareness of the need for mastering the range of human emotions (and their impact on the self and others), way before the development of the

field of psychology, appears to exhibit a deep insight into human behaviour. Ethical maturity, from an Aristotelian perspective, seems to include emotional maturity – a healthy emotional state where one is capable of controlling one’s emotions and appetites⁶¹. In addition, the capacity to think beyond oneself in considering the needs of others as well as the impact of one’s actions and decisions on others would also be necessary, particularly for the responsible leader.

Continuing the theme of ethical maturity, Aristotle’s approach in dealing with the unjust person is that punishment should be aimed at moral development, situating it in the “context of moral education and the formation of moral virtue” (Hughes, 2013:102)

Virtues are concerned with what someone does and what is done to them, and everything one does or suffers is accompanied by pleasure or pain, which is why virtue is tied up with pleasures and pains. Punishments, too, confirm the point, for they are types of cure, and cures work by being opposites (*NE* 1104b13-18).

Although the discussion thus far has focused on the narrow aspect of injustice, because of the nature of the vice of *pleonexia* and how it impacts others and society by infringing on commonly held laws, customs and practices, it can also be regarded as part of injustice in a broader sense (Kraut, 2002:138). The unjust person holds the law and those who respect the law with contempt and enjoys being able to get the upper hand with law-abiding citizens whom he looks down upon as foolish. The source of his injustice is his perceived superiority over others and the resulting satisfaction his gloating brings him, coupled with his pleasure at gaining money, honour or safety (Kraut, 2002:139). Another consequence of the vice of *pleonexia* is that it can seriously threaten the egalitarianism underpinning the legal system as crimes committed involve more than gaining an advantage for oneself and are intended to gain unfairly at another’s expense. In Chapter Two, the vice of greed (*pleonexia*) was identified as a challenge facing leaders and a case was made for the need for leaders to possess the

⁶¹ Although emotional maturity is an important aspect of the just person’s makeup, it cannot supersede a false perspective of the world supported by misguided theories of justice, which could lead to large scale injustice (Kraut, 2002:145).

virtues to guard against the prevalence of this vice in business. In these types of acts where the unjust person is pleased at having made another suffer, he does not view his victim as his equal. This type of injustice is what it means to be an unequal person and is a threat to the equality of citizens. Such actions are aimed at undermining the good of others and by implication the common good (Kraut, 2002:150). This discussion highlights the importance of ethical awareness and the virtue of justice as necessary for the leader of character.

3.12 The Virtue of Courage

The first of the virtues of character discussed by Aristotle is courage. The ancient city state (*polis*) of Aristotle's time was often at war and the role of soldier was significant in this society. It is not difficult to see why courage was the mark of the good soldier – an indication of how he fared in battle. As the English word courage is not a good reflection of the Greek term, this could explain Aristotle's view that "standard cases of bravery⁶² are displayed only in warfare and in the face of death" (NE 1115a33-35; Urmson, 1988:63). Use of the term courage in situations other than war would be an extension of this term. Given the difference in contexts and societies, our understanding of courage is broader than that of Aristotle's time. Concepts like women displaying courage when facing adversity, and moral courage, would not have featured in ancient Greek times (Urmson, 1988:63-64). This research will argue that moral courage is necessary for leaders as citizens who have a role to play in building just societies and this form of courage, although not acknowledged by Aristotle given his context, should form a necessary part of the virtue of courage and of the concept of leader character.

Between the feelings of fear and confidence lies the mean of courage. Aristotle acknowledges that fear is a very real human emotion and he takes account of this in this virtue. Consistent with the mean state that a virtue of character occupies, he holds

⁶² Urmson (1988) uses the term 'bravery' whilst most other scholars seem to prefer the term 'courage'

that courage concerns “feeling the right amount of fear” (Pakaluk, 2005:160 and feeling the appropriate amount of fear, rather than having no feeling of fear at all.

What distinguishes courage as a virtue of character is that it involves the emotions of fear and confidence. This means it cannot lie in a mean as in the case of the other virtues, which involve only one emotion, as fear and confidence are two opposing emotions and lie at the opposite ends of a spectrum, and it is difficult to find a median between the two (Pears, 1980:171). Aristotle’s account of courage also differs from the other virtues of character, where he holds that excellence of character involves being pleased to perform excellent actions. Exercising courage may involve facing suffering and possibly death. Aristotle acknowledges this and comments that “not all excellent activity is pleasant” (*NE* 1117b15-16; Urmson, 1988:66). Although a brave person may find an action difficult, he will nevertheless be prepared to willingly accept the pain encountered, as the goal is pleasant, and his desire is to act with honour (Urmson, 1988:66).

While Aristotle discusses the nature of the emotion fear in the *NE* (1115a7-b6), he does not do so in the case of confidence, which leaves a significant gap in his account of courage (Young, 2009:442). In the *NE* courage is associated with three vices, all seemingly involving excess. This differs from the norm of two vices – one of excess and one of deficiency. An excess of confidence is referred to as the vice of rashness and likewise excessive fear is the vice of cowardice. In spite of the excess, both of these vices are treated as vices of deficiency. It seems fairly obvious that excessive fear is regarded as a deficiency of courage; however as rashness occurs on the opposite side of the mean of courage it would seem that it should be classed as an excess. Yet the following excerpt from the *NE* indicates that it is also a deficiency:

Most rash people are rash-cowards (*thrasudeiloi*). For though they are full of cheer in these circumstances [viz., circumstances in which they can imitate courageous people], they do not stand firm against frightening things. (*NE* 1115b32-3; Young, 2009:444).

As both fear and confidence “can vary independently of one another, the *NE* raises a question about the unity of courage as it conceives of that virtue” (Young, 2009:443). It

appears that there are *two* mean states associated with courage; one is related to fear and can be referred to as *fortitude* and the other is related to confidence⁶³ and can be called *discretion*. It is unclear why Aristotle did not treat these two apparently mean states as two separate virtues as Ross (1925:206) thinks he should have (Young, 2009:443). Pears (1980) is critical of Ross's theory, that of the structure of the scales of feeling concerning fear and confidence. He argues that both of these emotions display a common desire, albeit in varying degrees, for risk or danger. Where the rash person desires too much risk, the coward desires too little. It is this desire for risk or danger shared by both fear and confidence that permits Ross's two scales to be collapsed into a single scale, and likewise his two virtues should form a single virtue of courage (Pears, 1980:177).

3.13 The Virtue of Self-Control

As with the virtue of courage, self-control seems to be another virtue that differs from Aristotle's general concept of a virtue. Although self-control refers specifically to the virtue of temperance or self-mastery⁶⁴, it is clear that it is analogous to the other virtues as well (NE1148b9-14; Young, 2009:444). The temperate person has mastery over her desires as evidenced by the way the desiring part of the soul unifies deliberate desire and practical wisdom. Such a person is pleased to perform a particular action characteristic of temperance. In contrast, the person who lacks self-control does not have mastery over her desires and there is a lack of unity between the desiring part of the soul and practical wisdom, with self-control and desire being at odds. The person acting out of self-control does not then act in accord with desire which is inconsistent with Aristotelian virtue. Aristotelian courage seems anomalous to the other virtues of character as it appears more like self-control than it does self-mastery. Aristotle acknowledges that the courageous person feels fear when facing fearful things like death (NE 1115a24-35; Young, 2009:444), or other fearful things. Based on this he remarks thus: "He then who endures and fears what he should and why he should, and as he should and when he should, and feels cheer similarly, is

⁶³ Young (2009) uses the term 'cheer'

⁶⁴ Both terms are used interchangeably

courageous” (Ibid., 2009:444). Aristotle’s acknowledgement that fear is felt by the courageous when loss of life is imminent seems to indicate that “courage is displayed only by agents who succeed in over-coming a desire to act in other than a courageous way. And in this critical respect, courage seems to be more like self-control than like temperance, more a form of self-control than a genuine Aristotelian virtue”(2009:444).

We now turn to the focus of this study concerning the research question posed in the introduction: what is an Aristotelian understanding of character?

3.14 An Aristotelian Understanding of Character

The *NE* is the source that has been drawn on in this study to gain an Aristotelian understanding of character. Aristotle poses two pivotal questions at the start of the work that have a bearing on his understanding of character. To recap, Aristotle asks what the ultimate goal of human life is, and closely connected to this, what the good for a human being is. In answering these questions, Aristotle begins by seeking the good for a human being and applies his knowledge of biology to search for the human function, as knowledge of this function would provide the basis for a “functional account of human goodness” (Shields, 2007:316). His observation that living species have an inbuilt propensity to seek what is good for them is the basis on which he develops his thesis regarding the good for humans. He reasons that “a good human being is a human being who performs the human function well” (Shields, 2007:317). He locates his search for the good in the soul (*psuchē*), the source of life of living organisms, and identifies rationality located in the human soul as the characteristic feature unique to humans, based on his reasoning that we know the function of something by knowing what is unique or characteristic (*idion*) about that thing (Shields, 2007:318). Aristotle proceeds with his search for the human good by reasoning that the function of a human being is an activity of soul following or implying a rational principle. By continuing to search for the good for a human being, Aristotle seems to reason that this will provide insight into his main question concerning the ultimate goal of human life.

Aristotle develops his FA in his search for the human good by considering how humans can perform their function well. He introduces the concept of excellence which derives from the word “virtue” and “what it is about a thing which makes it such that it perform[s] its function well” (Pakaluk, 2005:88). Aristotle develops the concept of a virtue which forms the basis of his claim that the virtues are the acquired character traits and dispositions of someone who has learned to act well. He concludes his FA thus: “the human function is an activity of the soul conducted in accordance with reason, that is the living of a life which is an expression of the essential nature of the human kind, namely rationality” (Shields, 2007:320).

With the above as background we can now proceed to answer the research question posed concerning an Aristotelian understanding of character.

Firstly, Aristotle’s approach in understanding character is from a moral philosophical perspective. His concept of character is thus a moral concept, concerned with the good for a human being, rooted in “a theory of how human beings are by nature constituted” (Hughes, 2013:116). Central to Aristotle’s understanding of character is his concept of the virtues of character, which concern excellence of soul. This research has followed Aristotle’s argument to illustrate how the virtues enable us to become good human beings. We know from Aristotle’s concept of moral goodness centred around humankind’s unique attribute of rationality that our nature enables us to desire, to seek, and to know the good and to act in accordance with these elements. Such desiring, seeking, knowing, and acting involves choice, effort, and human deliberated desire. As human nature consists of *inter alia*, desires, emotions, and passions, that are located in the irrational part of the soul and can lead us away from the good, we need to be trained to learn to avoid pleasures and pains so that we learn to bring our desires into alignment with the good.

An Aristotelian understanding of character then, is a desire for the good, which is characterised by a harmony between desires, passions, and emotions occurring in the non-rational part of the soul that listens and responds to the rational part of the soul. The person of character likes acting in this way and has no contrary desires pulling her

in an opposing direction. The exercise of a virtue of character involving such harmony in the soul therefore requires an ability to discern right from wrong, referred to previously as ethical awareness. The process involved in exercising a virtue as illustrated in table 3, where the irrational soul that is capable of listening to reason and is brought into alignment by the desiring part of the soul, obviously requires a particular consciousness and awareness of what one is doing. A particular type of moral sensitivity, referred to as moral perception, involved in the exercise of virtue, informs this understanding of character. To be able to choose the good, knowledge of what constitutes the good and how it can be differentiated from the bad, is required. Exercising the desiring part of the soul in executing a virtue of character therefore involves choice, which touches on the notion of freedom and being free to choose consistent with deliberated desire, followed by action.

Aristotle's understanding of character then, is a person who applies practical wisdom in deliberating about her desires and is capable of making well-informed choices for the good, in the awareness of what she is doing, followed by action that reflects such choices. Such consciousness and freely chosen action guided by deliberated desire, requires discipline in bringing one's emotions, passions, and desires in line with reason that is directed towards the goal of achieving the good. The concept of freedom discussed in the context of character raises the notion of responsibility, particularly moral responsibility. It seems evident that if we have an awareness of the good, and access to knowledge of the good, we have a responsibility to act for the good and to develop into people of character.

The conscious and freely chosen action guided by deliberated desire that is purposeful and goal-directed, characterises the person of character, and highlights the growth and maturity that is involved in developing into a person of character. Aristotle's notion of character is thus not static; rather, it develops and grows with practice⁶⁵, and it seems that the virtuous actions exhibited by people whose characters are well established, would serve to motivate those whose characters are not yet well-developed. Consider

⁶⁵ As described under the heading 'The Acquisition of the Virtues of Character'

the case of a young parent who desires to choose the good in the way she parents her young child, yet is unsure of how to choose to act with regard to disciplining her child. If she regards her parents as role models for good parenting she is likely to be motivated by the example they set, and to try to emulate their choices and actions. Aristotle is not prescriptive about how growth and maturity occurs in people of character, which seems to involve a searching for the good, and which surely forms part of the deliberation involved in exercising a virtue of character.

The following discussion highlights the themes contained in Aristotle's definition of a virtue of character. Aristotle's concept of a virtue arises from the term excellence and applied to his concept of character refers specifically to excellence of human functioning. This raises the aspect of quality that is fundamental to Aristotle's understanding of character. The quality of how we as humans function, using our unique characteristic of rationality, referred to as activity of soul, is how we evaluate a person's character. The criterion for judging the goodness of a person and their character is based on "qualities of mind and character, rather than health and strength of body" (Broadie and Rowe, 2002:293). These qualities of mind and character referred to by Broadie and Rowe (2002) are intertwined, as we know that particular qualities of mind are required for quality of character to be realised. In Aristotle's quest to know the function of a human being, his philosophy reveals the richness of the tools we have at our disposal to fulfil our function excellently. His expose of the complexity of human rationality and how well we use this unique faculty, must surely be what Broadie and Rowe (2002) refer as qualities of mind and character.

Qualities of mind refer to the way we develop and utilize our unique attribute of rationality in choosing and acting for the good. Such rational choice is an expression of a person's "*preferential choice (prohairesis)*" (NE 1111b6-8; Lawrence, 2009:419). The soul, as the source of life, is the location of our rationality and includes desires, appetites, and emotions, as well as our faculty of thinking, which involves theoretical as well as practical reasoning, including deliberation which is exercised in choosing the good. This means that the full spectrum of our selves is accounted for in the various

parts of our soul that operate in harmony when we function excellently. Such harmony requires that one's choices are aligned to one's desires, appetites, and thoughts, and emanating from this unity of the different parts of the soul are actions aimed at the human good. These types of actions are valued by people of character, being actions that they are fully committed to and reflective of who they are – “as realizing their selves, their values and character” (*NE* 1139a18-20; Lawrence, 2009:419).

The concept of a disposition or state forms part of Aristotle's understanding of character. We have a disposition to respond in a certain way and “we are disposed to respond with an emotion well or badly” (*NE* 1105b25-27; Pakaluk, 2005:106; Broadie and Rowe, 2002:115). It is a disposition of character that enables us to respond with an emotion well, meaning we are disposed to choose the intermediate and to avoid the extremes of excess and deficiency. A disposition that enables the exercise of the virtues of character is a stable, enduring and deeply-rooted trait developed through practice. It is a persistent orientation and can be likened to a skill in that it aims at a definite goal in a disciplined manner (Pakaluk, 2005:106), and it is “firm and not easily changed” (Lawrence, 2009:422). The nature of a disposition of character indicates something solid, dependable, and reliable that is not easily swayed. Aiming at a definite goal in a disciplined manner is the goal of the human good, which requires discipline in controlling one's passions, emotions, and actions. Keeping the goal in mind can act as a motivating force for the individuals and those admiring of their choices and actions. The goal-directed nature of a virtue of character derived from Aristotle's teleological concept of human good, as well as the elements of discipline and deliberated desire that are involved in developing character indicates the type of resolve and focus that typify a disposition of character. Believing in what one is doing and remaining steadfast indicates that the enduring nature of such a disposition is a trait that seems to characterise a person of character.

An Aristotelian understanding of character in its reference to the intermediate involves balance, and is a reference to a virtue of character which lies between two vices. The choice and action emanating from the soul when exercising a virtue, involves choosing

the intermediate, which lies in a mean between an excess and a deficiency – both vices. Choosing virtue over vice requires striking a balance between these extremes and Aristotle likens this balance to a “beauty of the soul, involving suitable proportion” (Pakaluk, 2005:108). Managing one’s desires, impulses and emotions requires discipline so that excess and deficiency can be avoided. In addition, the balance of emotions and desires required of the person of character are surely necessary deterrents in fighting the excesses of greed and corruption that appear to pervade many societies.

Aristotle’s detailed study of decision making involving the different types of rationality and his treatment of voluntary and involuntary actions provides a thorough analysis and understanding of moral responsibility, which is relevant to this research located in the field of RL. Aristotle understands character as social in nature emphasising the city state (*polis*) as the broader societal context within which citizens live and the virtues of character are exercised. Aristotle’s virtue of justice highlights the role of the citizen in developing just societies. Kraut (2002), who takes a keen interest in the political aspect of Aristotle’s ethics, poses the question: “what is it for citizens to live well” (Kraut, 2002:147). It seems that Aristotle’s vision of the person of character is someone whose responsibility extends to building and developing societies where citizens can live well and flourish.

The admirable, fine, and noble at which virtuous actions aim can be regarded as the hallmarks of the person of character.

Conclusion

The beginning of this chapter posed the research question: what is an Aristotelian understanding of character? To answer this question it was necessary to turn to Aristotle’s argument in his *NE* regarding the ultimate goal of human life and his search to understand what the good for a human being is. To understand Aristotle’s search for this human good, the chapter has traced his reasoning leading to his discovery that it is the virtues of character that constitute the good for a human being. Aristotle’s

search for the good for humans leads him to conclude that our inbuilt human function is to develop, over the course of a lifetime, into people of character.

This detailed examination of Aristotle's virtues of character provides a background to an examination of the virtues of character from MacIntyre's perspective in the following chapter. Themes from the Aristotelian understanding of character developed in this chapter pertinent to the concept of leader character that will be developed in Chapters Five and Six, are the virtues of justice, courage, and practical wisdom, as well as the themes of good citizenship and the type of moral perception involved in exercising a virtue.

Aristotle's search for the good which leads him to consider the function of a human being reveals that excellent human functioning is our ultimate goal in life. The pursuit of such excellence considered in the light of human good appears to indicate that Aristotle's *NE* highlights human potential – particularly to function excellently and to realise our capacity for human goodness.

Chapter Four

Virtue Ethics from the Perspective of Alasdair MacIntyre

Introduction

A leading proponent of virtue ethics in our current age is Alasdair MacIntyre, and his seminal work *After Virtue (AV)* (2007)⁶⁶ is the focus of this chapter. As stated in Chapter One, the research problem which this research aims to address is the lack of understanding of leader character lying at the heart of RL. To address this problem the research question posed by this research is considered, namely: what is leader character? As a prior understanding of the virtue ethics concept of character is necessary before a full account of the concept of leader character can be developed, the emphasis of this chapter is to gain a virtue ethics understanding of the nature of character. The purpose of this chapter is thus to develop a MacIntyrean understanding of character.

The virtue understanding of character developed in Chapter Three based on the work of Aristotle, and the understanding of character to be developed in this chapter based on the work of MacIntyre will contribute to the development of the concept of leader character in Chapters Five and Six so as to answer the research question: what is leader character? As this research is located in the field of RL the theme of responsibility as it relates to the virtues, is also explored. *AV* is extensive in the breadth of Western intellectual and political history it covers and in its specializations spanning history, metaphysics, anthropology, ethics, politics, and the social sciences. The history of the philosophical literature with which *AV* deals extends back 2,500 years and differs from conventional accounts of history (Lutz, 2012:7-8). MacIntyre formulates an ethics based on human nature encompassing biological, historical, and social nature and develops an historical “account of rationality in inquiry” (Murphy, 2003:7). This is the philosophical method of enquiry based on his work in the philosophy of social sciences that he applies in *AV* (Lutz, 2012:2-3).

⁶⁶ The first edition of *AV* was published in 1981, with a second publication in 1984, and a third in 2007.

According to MacIntyre our prevailing moral paradigms are incapable of rationality and intelligibility (Horton and Mendus, 1994:3). In response to this state of affairs he sets himself the task in *AV* to develop an “adequate morality” (Murphy, 2003:7) underpinned by a “conception of rationality” (2003:7), that is robust enough to accommodate such a morality. MacIntyre turns to virtue theory and traces the development of the virtues from their origin in heroic society, through to Aristotle, whom he regards as the “apex of the virtue tradition” (Kallenberg, 2011:34). In seeking to rejuvenate the tradition of Aristotle in *AV*, MacIntyre identifies four obstacles (to be elaborated on later) in Aristotle’s ethics that need to be overcome if he is to succeed (Ibid.). In addressing these obstacles MacIntyre contributes to the virtue tradition by analysing the core concepts of virtue, practice, institution, internal and external goods, the narrative unity of a whole human life, and tradition (Ibid.: 36). These concepts, which are defined and understood in terms of each other, form the focus of this chapter and will inform a MacIntyrean understanding of character.

MacIntyre constructs his argument in *AV* from a moral philosophical perspective. This perspective is Socratic, which understands the tasks of the philosopher as the pursuit of wisdom and the cultivation of the virtues required in striving for excellence both as a human being and in one’s social roles (Beabout, 2013:22). This approach to moral philosophy, common to Aristotle and Plato, is partly concerned with clarifying how “ideas could be socially embodied” (Ibid.: 51). MacIntyre’s thinking, particularly in the early part of his career, was shaped by Marx, who had a concern for the practical nature of philosophy and how it could be applied in real-life social practices (Ibid.: 48). It is from this moral philosophical perspective with its concern for society that MacIntyre commences his critique of modern and postmodern society.

The first part of *AV* is an assessment of society, in which MacIntyre identifies the philosophical problem. He applies his philosophical method to assess society, to identify the causes and to highlight the flaws and gaps as he sees them. The breadth of his philosophical method enables him to reflect on the consequences of his

assessment, which he regards as the loss of the virtue tradition. The solution he offers in the second part of *AV* is a retrieval of the virtue tradition.

Structure of the Chapter

The overall purpose of the chapter is to develop a MacIntyrean understanding of character. To this end the chapter is divided into five main sections, beginning with a description of MacIntyre's understanding of moral enquiry, which provides the background to his method of philosophical enquiry. He applies this method in assessing the state of our modern and post-modern society and in proposing an antidote. The second part of the chapter is an overview of MacIntyre's assessment of the current state of modern moral philosophy and its impact on modern and post-modern society, and why he repudiates it. The history of the virtues which date back to ancient times in the third part of this chapter provides the background for understanding MacIntyre's contribution to the virtues. MacIntyre's argument for the tradition of the virtues within our current context of modernity and post-modernity in the fourth part of the chapter can be regarded as a response to the conceptual framework of modern moral philosophy. The fifth part of the chapter culminates in an exploration of MacIntyre's understanding of character. The underlying theme of responsibility, specifically moral responsibility, and how it can be interpreted against the backdrop of the history of the virtue tradition will be emphasised during the course of this chapter. The relevance of moral responsibility to this study is that a virtue-based conception of character is a moral concept. Character, formed by developing the virtues of character requires responsibility in *inter alia* the exercise of practical intelligence, choice, knowledge of the good, and the education of the will.

4.1 MacIntyre's Conception of Moral Enquiry

As MacIntyre's view of the nature of moral enquiry informs his philosophical method, some background regarding his conception of moral enquiry will enhance an understanding of his method, as well as his overall argument as to why he repudiates modern moral philosophy and is supportive of reviving the virtue ethics tradition.

MacIntyre's understanding of moral enquiry is broader than conventional understandings of moral philosophy and "extends to historical, literary, anthropological, and sociological questions" (1990:3). This indicates the breadth of MacIntyre's enquiry as he searches to understand the good for humans. He regards the philosophical theorist's role as that of an enquiry into the good specific to human beings, which in turn should lead each individual to enquire: "what is *my* good as a human being?" (Ibid.: 128). As stated in the introduction above, MacIntyre seeks to develop an "adequate morality" underpinned by a "conception of rationality" (Murphy, 2003:7). In doing so he takes an Aristotelian approach in providing what he regards as an adequate account of the good for human beings. His understanding of moral enquiry, shared by those supportive of Socrates through to Aquinas, is aspirational as it seeks to answer the question: 'What is the good and the best, both for human beings in general and for this specific kind of human being in these particular circumstances here and now?' (MacIntyre, 1990:63). He places great store on intelligibility in philosophical enquiry and his aim is to develop an intelligible account of the good. The search for the good and the best for humans in general, as well as for humans in the particular circumstances of their individual lives, lies at the heart of MacIntyre's work. This search leads MacIntyre to the virtues, which constitute character - the focus of this chapter in developing a MacIntyrean understanding of character.

4.1.1 Encyclopaedist and Genealogist Conceptions of Moral Enquiry

In his work 1990 work, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry. Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition*, MacIntyre argues for tradition as a way of conceiving moral enquiry. He dismisses the encyclopaedist and genealogy forms of moral enquiry, which share a common conception of the history of philosophy dating from Socrates through to the nineteenth century. The encyclopaedist views history as the "progress of reason" and regards the forms of "reasoning and practices of rational enquiry" (MacIntyre, 1990:58), developed by Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle as limited and improved upon by their successors, namely Descartes, Kant, and the post-Kantians.

Rational enquiry and moral progress is viewed by the encyclopaedists as “a unified history of progress” (Ibid.), originating with ancient Greek thinkers and progressing with the thought of nineteenth century philosophers. Modern philosophy and science have developed from this view of moral enquiry. Although the genealogist and encyclopaedist share the view of a unified history of rational enquiry and moral progress, the genealogist regards this unified history as “a history of distorting and repressing function” (Ibid.: 58). The philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, expressing a genealogist view, claimed that “morality is only a mask for the will to power” (Lutz, 2012:1). In contrast to the encyclopaedist and genealogist views is the tradition conception of moral enquiry, which MacIntyre argues for.

4.1.1.1 The Tradition Conception of Moral Enquiry

This form of moral enquiry differs from that of the encyclopaedist and the genealogist in its understanding of the history of philosophy, as well as in its nature and scope. The significance of history to the various forms of moral enquiry is that each view is characterized from its own understanding of history (MacIntyre, 1990:3). Crucial to the tradition-constituted view of philosophy is the seismic split that occurred in the history of philosophy during the eighteenth century, which the encyclopaedists and genealogists have not accounted for. This split has reverberated through the academic discipline of philosophy to the extent that modern liberal philosophy supported by the encyclopaedists and genealogists, and Aristotelian virtue philosophy supported by the traditionalists, are regarded as incommensurable and untranslatable (Ibid.: 4). The nineteenth century French philosopher of the Enlightenment, Descartes introduced the notion of reason as independent of any ties to moral and religious communities. Such a view of rationality advocated by the encyclopaedist is that objectivity is free of any commitments to these communities, and that reason is “impersonal, impartial, disinterested, uniting, and universal” (Ibid.: 59). The genealogist however, rejects the idea of reason as disinterested and universal, regarding it as “the unwitting representative of particular interests, masking their drive to power by its false pretensions to neutrality and disinterestedness” (Ibid.). MacIntyre notes that these

alternate views of rationality held by the encyclopaedist and the genealogist are framed as exclusive and exhaustive.

MacIntyre looks beyond these alternatives and holds that for reason to “move towards being genuinely universal and impersonal” (MacIntyre, 1990:59-60) it can be neither neutral nor disinterested. Rather it requires allegiance to and belief in a particular type of moral community, which he regards as the condition for authentic rational enquiry, particularly theological and moral enquiry (Ibid.). Such a view of moral enquiry originated with Plato, the initiator of the philosophical tradition and is contained in his works in the *Gorgias* and in the *Republic*. These works maintain that the process of participating in rational enquiry using the dialectic method requires the prior possession and recognition of certain moral virtues, which are necessary for the progress of such enquiry. Such commitment to the identification and practice of the virtues required for moral enquiry is a theme common to Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates, and their view is that the nature of such commitment influences the quality and conclusions of this form of moral enquiry (Ibid.: 60). Plato’s *Gorgias* and the *Republic* reveal that the person involved in moral enquiry must learn how to become “a particular kind of person if he or she is to move towards a knowledge of the truth about his or her good and about *the* human good” (Ibid.: 61). An Aristotelian view of the process of commitment and involvement in becoming such a person requires being an apprentice to a craft, a *technē*, which in this case is the craft of philosophical enquiry. Aristotle located the good within a *technē* (*NE V11 1152b 19*), which produces a particular capacity (*1153a 23*) in those involved in its practice, only if true reasoning is applied (*V1 1160a 20-21*), which requires the intellectual and moral virtues (Ibid.).

This overview of the tradition-constituted conception of moral enquiry reveals a number of features that MacIntyre draws on and develops in establishing “an adequate morality” underpinned by a “conception of rationality” (Murphy, 2003:7). These features are included in MacIntyre’s philosophical method, discussed below, and form an important part of his argument for the virtue tradition: individual engagement in the process of moral enquiry requiring commitment to the virtues, leading to

personal transformation; the importance of history in understanding moral philosophy; the commitment to moral authority which requires taking an evaluative stance; and an emphasis on the nature of rationality required for moral enquiry.

4.1.2 MacIntyre's Philosophical Method

The origins of MacIntyre's method can be traced to an essay he wrote in 1977 titled "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science". After readings and discussions with the philosophers of science, Imre Lakatos (1922-1974) and Thomas Kuhn (1922-1996), MacIntyre's understanding of what constitutes progress in philosophy was transformed, leading to his development of a new philosophical method (Lutz, 2012:5). This method which synthesizes Lakatos's and Kuhn's theories offers "a new account of philosophical progress" (Ibid.: 6). MacIntyre's observation "of his dependence on the uncritical notion of progress implicit in most analytic philosophy" (Zoll, 2011:104) led him to develop a conception of progress referred to as "Narrative-Historicist" - 'narrative' in how it accounts for epistemological progress, and 'historicist' in its "method of enquiry" (2011:104).

4.1.2.1 A Narrative-Historicist Conception of Philosophical Progress

MacIntyre's "Narrative-Historicist" conception of philosophical progress stems from his reflections about the philosophy of science and his desire to resolve the controversies between Lakatos and Kuhn. To this end MacIntyre seeks to reformulate the problem of "rationality in the history of science" (Zoll, 2011:106), by addressing those aspects of Lakatos's and Kuhn's positions he regards as irrational. He draws on a historicist model of enquiry to identify the conflicting theories and their explanations of progress in science. His historical method provides an appreciation of context, which enables him to understand what needs to be retained from each position and what discarded. What MacIntyre retains from Kuhn's position, which is of significance to this study, is the tradition-constituted nature of scientific reasoning, derived from the scientist Michael Polanyi. A shortcoming in Kuhn's work MacIntyre wishes to address is the *rationality* of the process within Kuhn's view of scientific change. An aspect of Lakatos's work that MacIntyre subscribes to is the turn to history to understand how

science proceeds. However, MacIntyre disagrees with Lakatos in regarding historical reason as subordinate to scientific reason (Ibid.: 107). Progress in science, claims MacIntyre, “consists in the reconstruction of an intelligible, coherent and continuous narrative about scientific activity” (Ibid.: 106). This too seems to be his aspiration for moral philosophy forming the rationale for his method.

4.1.2.2 A Historicist Grounding for Enquiry in Moral Philosophy

MacIntyre notes that Descartes’s attempt to remove history from his understanding of the world provides an illustration of the unwitting extent to which history influences our thought. Descartes disregards the role of *tradition* in enquiry assuming that knowledge can be distinguished from belief, and replaces it with his method of fundamental doubt which permits him to look beyond the confines of history to a world as it really is free from the interpretations of a historical narrative that shapes his identity. He regards history as providing only an interpretation of reality in contrast to his method which provides “a final truth about reality” (Zoll, 2011:105). However MacIntyre’s insights reveal history’s pervasiveness that Descartes seemed unaware of. Firstly, the mind is influenced by history and is not fully independent. Descartes’ doubts develop out of a particular language that shapes the way he thinks and how he perceives the world. Secondly, his understanding of knowledge and truth and his means of justifying it arise within the context of a particular intellectual and social tradition – that of Plato and Augustine.

4.1.2.3 The Narrative Form of Epistemological Progress

MacIntyre reasons that as “knowledge has a *narrative* form” (Zoll, 2011:104), epistemological progress in science as well as philosophy should be located within the narrative form. Narrative is the means through which “we make sense of our world” (Lutz, 2012:5) and includes *inter alia* scientific theory, history, doctrine, autobiography, and myth. When any of these narratives no longer make sense and we discover that what we believed about our relationships and ourselves, the structure of the world, our history, or the nature of God, was false we may face uncertainty and confusion leading to an epistemological crisis (Ibid.). MacIntyre advises that resolving such crises

involves constructing new narratives so that one understands how such beliefs could intelligibly have been held *and* how one could have been so misled by them. The initial narrative that provided meaning and an ordering of experiences becomes the subject of an enlarged narrative, once this is constructed (MacIntyre, 2006:5). The process of enduring an epistemological crisis requires an acknowledgment of one's previous failure and being able to enlarge one's narrative post such a crisis. As epistemological crises do recur, being open to experiencing further crises in the future is necessary, as one's enlarged narrative at any stage is only a "best account so far" (Ibid.: 6) and can itself be reinterpreted again in the future with a more accurate narrative or theory. This indicates that making sense of the narrative of one's life involves openness to ongoing change and personal transformation and being prepared to face the truth of what is actually happening. There seems to be a resonance between the personal transformation experience arising out of an epistemological crisis that MacIntyre's philosophical method accounts for, and the personal transformation experienced by the person engaged in tradition-constituted moral enquiry, accounted for by Plato in his works the *Gorgias* and the *Republic*, as discussed above.

4.1.2.4 Epistemological Crises and the Progress of Philosophy

As MacIntyre is unable to find an account of an epistemological crisis in academic philosophy, he turns to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1603) which illustrates the nature of such a crisis. Hamlet is confronted with notions of intelligibility, rationality, and truth concerning the narrative of the kingdom of Denmark and his family, as he is forced to re-evaluate the assumptions he previously held about his role and place in society and the impacts on his relationships. He is faced with reconstructing the narrative of his life by re-interpreting past events in light of the fresh insights he has gained from responses to his probing (MacIntyre, 2006:5). In contrast to *Hamlet*, MacIntyre draws on Jane Austen's novel *Emma* (1815) to illustrate what has occurred with much of academic philosophy. As Hamlet grappled with making sense of the narrative of his life and how to interpret his experiences, he remained open to greater clarification in the future. Emma on the other hand, by replacing error with truth, was closed to further

clarification (Lutz, 2012:6). MacIntyre's use of narrative to explain philosophical progress deviates from conventional methods used by academic philosophy: "the history of epistemology, like the history of ethics itself, is usually written as though it were not a moral narrative, that is in fact, as if it were not a narrative" (MacIntyre, 2006:6). In addition to MacIntyre's use of narrative in his philosophical method, it forms a key component of his contribution to virtue theory, and will be elaborated on further in section four of this chapter.

4.1.3 The Evaluative Nature of Moral Enquiry

MacIntyre makes the observation that the vantage point from which he views history and sociology is, and must be, distinctively evaluative (MacIntyre, 1981:vii). By this he means that we need standards to "evaluate our moral arguments" (Horton and Mendus, 1994:7). Whereas MacIntyre holds that moral values are evaluative in nature, analytic philosophy, specifically emotivism (see further below) holds that moral values are merely matters of preference (Kallenberg, 2011:26). The distinctively evaluative stance is a theme that runs through *AV* and provides a rationale for his philosophical method, which defines his work beginning with *AV* and continues in his later works⁶⁷ and is a departure from the form of enquiry undertaken by analytic philosophy (Zoll, 2011:104).

4.1.4 History and Philosophical Enquiry

Historical interpretation forms part of MacIntyre's philosophical enquiry and is evident in *AV* in his study of the history of the virtues dating back to the Heroic Age. Martinich (2009), in commenting on Skinner's (1969) article "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas", holds that to establish the meaning of a historical text and what an author meant when writing it, it is necessary to understand the author's context (2009:225). This is what MacIntyre does and his rationale for pursuing the relation

⁶⁷ MacIntyre, A. *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (1988) Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame Press; *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry. Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (1990) Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press; and *Dependent Rational Animals. Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* (1999a) Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Carus Publishing Company.

between history and philosophy is that: “moral concepts change as social life changes ... Moral concepts are embodied in and are partially constitutive of forms of social life” (MacIntyre, 1966:1;Graham, 2003:11). The interconnectedness of history and philosophy is further illustrated in MacIntyre’s comment that:

philosophical inquiry itself plays a part in changing moral concepts. For to analyse a concept philosophically may often be to assist in its transformation ... The moral concepts which are available for analysis to the philosophers of one age may sometimes be what they are partly because of the discussions by philosophers of a previous age. A history which takes this point seriously, which is concerned with the role of philosophy in relation to actual conduct, cannot be philosophically neutral (MacIntyre, 1966:2-3).

This is the stance that MacIntyre assumes in his treatment of the virtues further on as he aims to develop a perspective on the history of the virtues by considering the social context in which they arose. This is consistent with his conception of the good as embedded in the social (Horton and Mendus, 1994:7), and forms an essential part of his argument for the tradition of the virtues, which forms an important part of *AV*, as well as his later work *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (1990).

Graham’s (2003) view is that although he is not clear on how history and philosophy are interconnected, he does however concede that moral philosophy must take heed of the course of social history in pursuing its own ends, and that philosophical inquiry and the investigation of ideas can affect the course of social history. He notes that “the adequacy of philosophical thought is itself a product of history” (2003:12). The combination of these elements form the foundation and distinguishing mark of MacIntyre’s philosophy that span over four decades (Ibid.).

As the purpose of this chapter is directed towards gaining a MacIntyrean understanding of character, it is useful now to briefly reflect on how MacIntyre’s approach to moral enquiry leading to the development of his philosophical method influences his concept of the virtues, and thus of character. Central to MacIntyre’s moral enquiry and his philosophical method is intelligibility which seems to stem from

his commitment to the Aristotelian tradition with its emphasis on, *inter alia*, *telos*, function, excellence and rationality in conceiving of the human good on the one hand, and his insight into the nature of Enlightenment thinking and its impact on our current moral paradigms and our societal context on the other hand. Enlightenment thinking has influenced moral philosophy to the extent that it is unintelligible, in MacIntyre's view, and he appears to be at pains to maintain as well as differentiate the form of intelligibility that characterises the Aristotelian tradition from that of moral philosophy derived from the Enlightenment. A MacIntyrean understanding of character then incorporates the breadth of MacIntyre's moral enquiry encompassing "historical, literary, anthropological, and sociological questions" (MacIntyre, 1990:3) in his search for a rich understanding of the human good. The interconnectedness of history and philosophy that he applies in his method means that the long history of the virtue tradition with its intellectual depth is preserved, and this has a bearing on a MacIntyrean understanding of character, as will be explored during the course of this chapter.

4.2 MacIntyre's Assessment of the Current State of Modern Moral Philosophy

The first part of *AV* can be regarded as an assessment and repudiation of modern moral philosophy, including a reflection of its impact on late modern society. This section of the chapter considers MacIntyre's assessment of modern moral philosophy and how it has impacted our society and investigates the reasons for his repudiation of this discipline. He applies his philosophical method which is informed by a tradition-constituted view of moral enquiry to this critique, which can be understood against the background of his desire to develop, as already noted, "an adequate morality" underpinned by a robust "conception of rationality" (Murphy, 2003:7).

4.2.1 MacIntyre's Aristotelian Approach in Assessing Modern Moral Philosophy

MacIntyre undertakes his assessment of modern moral philosophy from an Aristotelian perspective. Lutz's (2012) summary of what he regards as *the* moral question Aristotle answers in the *NE*: "How can I become the kind of a person who has the practical wisdom to recognize what is good and best to do and who also has the

moral freedom to act on that judgment?” (2012:46), provides a useful starting point in this MacIntyrean assessment of modern moral philosophy. Aristotelian ethics understood in this way “is about developing a rich, natural understanding of living well” (2012:46). This rich understanding of Aristotelian morality was lost sight of during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by some Christian theologians⁶⁸ whose emphasis on “obedience to divine law” (Ibid.) impacted moral philosophy so that obedience and sin became the focus, as evidenced in Peter Abelard’s *Ethics* (1971). Lutz (2012) comments on the effect of this change:

The reduction of morality to consent to obey impoverishes ethics and opens the door to the rejection of nature as a source of moral norms. Morality as a rich understanding of living well is replaced by morality as a meeting of two wills, and all other factors begin to fall into the periphery (2012:46-47).

This conception of moral philosophy emphasizing obedience and sin was supported by the Stoic tradition and it was this form of morality unable to conceive of an end or goal beyond obeying moral norms that influenced the Enlightenment thinkers, in the eighteenth century. A significant consequence of this form of moral philosophy was the loss of the concept of *telos*, so central to Aristotelianism, in which a teleological view of moral excellence is regarded “as the perfection of the rational and appetitive powers of the free human agent” (Lutz, 2012:47; AV, 2007:168-9). This is the ultimate human good Aristotle refers to in his *NE* and is the ultimate purpose of human life. The combination of the loss of teleology, coupled with a focus on law and a lack of acknowledgement of the private self, arising from the rejection of Aristotelian moral philosophy led to an unintelligible conception of morality and moral action, as moral action lacking a conception of *telos* cannot be regarded as human action.

The concept of teleology is inherent to human action, as our actions are purposeful, for example when an action is not understood it is considered normal to pose questions like “what are you doing?” or “why are you doing that?” (Lutz, 2012:49). MacIntyre’s claim that modern moral philosophy is unintelligible arises from his

⁶⁸ A notable exception is the theologian and philosopher Thomas Aquinas.

Aristotelian belief that our human needs and desires deriving from our nature, comprising our rational and appetitive faculties, provide the purpose or *telos* for our actions. Where such needs and desires are not accounted for in a conception of morality, as occurred with the Christian theologians Luther, Calvin, and Jansen, and later with the Enlightenment philosophers Kant and Mill, there is no basis on which to draw intelligible conclusions about social practices and individual needs. This, together with the lack of an end in the pursuit of morality, as well as emotivism, a feature of late modernity, form the basis of MacIntyre's claim concerning the unintelligibility of modern moral philosophy.

4.2.2 Emotivism

The concept of emotivism arose with the rejection of an evaluative stance by modern moral philosophy, which occurred when Descartes introduced the notion of reason as independent of any ties to moral and religious communities. MacIntyre explains it as: "the doctrine that all evaluative judgments and more specifically all moral judgments are *nothing but* expressions of preference, expressions of attitude or feeling ..." (AV, 2007:11-12). This concept of morality amounts to a tool for manipulation as it involves "the attempt of one will to align the attitudes, feelings, preference and choices of another with its own" (Ibid.: 23-24). Others are used as means to achieve one's own goals. Moral judgments, according to emotivism, are based on the subjective choice of an individual's emotions, preferences, and attitudes and thus lack a rational basis making it impossible to settle moral disputes rationally. This means the theory of emotivism, based purely on preferences, cannot claim truth value as a moral theory (Kallenberg, 2011:22). It follows that the emotivist self, independent of any form of moral authority lacks the guidance of *telos*, and "a view of human life as ordered to a given end" (AV, 2007:34).

4.2.3 The Enlightenment Project and Why it Had to Fail

A defining feature of modern moral philosophy is the "series of failed attempts to provide *rational* justification of morality for a culture that had philosophy as its central social activity" (Kallenberg, 2011:24). This eighteenth century culture is known as the

Enlightenment. A range of moral philosophers including Denis Diderot (1713-84), David Hume (1711-76), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), and Søren Kierkegaard (1813-55) tried to justify morality based on various criteria including human desire, passion, reason, and the plane of one's existence. Each philosopher used his own criteria for justifying his conclusions, which meant that one philosopher judged by the criteria of another philosopher was unjustified and unintelligible in his conclusions. These competing conceptions led to the failure of the Enlightenment attempt to provide a rational justification of morality (Ibid.: 25).

The reason why the Enlightenment Project *had* to fail, according to MacIntyre, was the removal of the ancient Greek concept of teleology, meaning purpose or end. For example a question of human morality that asks what human life is for is teleological as it seeks to know the purpose of life. The form of moral reasoning that philosophers like Aristotle applied, consisted of three terms. The first was human nature in its untutored form is seriously in need of moral guidance. The second was a conception of human nature as fulfilling its purpose or *telos*. The third lay in moral imperatives consisting of guidelines of how to move from the state of untutored human nature toward human nature having actualised its *telos*. Moral precepts as understood by ancient Greek philosophers were conceived from a teleological perspective, with a specific focus on the purpose of human life. Enlightenment thinkers abandoned this notion of the purpose of human life and regarded humans as "autonomous individuals." This meant the loss of morality's central concept of *telos*. The implications of this loss meant that moral precepts could only be derived from human nature in its *untutored* form, itself in need of moral guidance, which is in contrast to the guiding principles of morality (Kallenberg, 2011:26).

The consequences of the doomed Enlightenment Project were serious. The loss of the concept of *telos* in its role in moral triangulation meant that the factual nature of moral value judgments was lost, resulting in a set of "factless" values so that appealing to facts to settle disagreements about values was no longer possible. In such a state of affairs the theory of emotivism, which holds that moral values are merely matters of

preference, flourished. Late modernity, what MacIntyre has called “the culture of emotivism” is an essentially manipulative culture. It does not seek the truth about morality because it has systematically cut itself off from the intellectual resources required to express moral truth, much less to seek it. Consequently moral modern discourse ceases to be anything but a manipulative tool” (Lutz, 2012:49-50).

Another consequence of the Enlightenment Project’s failure was that moral reasoning lacking a *telos* paved the way for others to propose rival moral theories like those of utilitarianism, and Kant’s deontological theory. The moral philosophy of utilitarianism offers a “ghostly substitute” as it seeks the “*greatest good for the greatest number*” yet is unable to define “good” (Kallenberg, 2011:26-27). The origins of deontology lie with the German philosopher Kant, who, aware of the lack of a guiding moral authority for the Enlightenment’s autonomous moral agent, sought to offer “rational” justification for moral guidance lacking its former teleological grounding. Kant and subsequent philosophers, unable to provide rational moral guidance to support their theory, have borrowed undefined terms like *justice* and *rights*, which MacIntyre is critical of as he holds that only tradition gives meaning to concepts like *justice*, *telos*, and *good*. Modern debates over these terms are best understood as “a series of fragmented survivals from an older past and that the insoluble problems which they have generated for modern moral theories will remain insoluble until this is well understood” (MacIntyre, 2007:111).

Due to MacIntyre’s place in history, together with the breadth and depth of his knowledge he is in the position of being able to look back over history and to reflect on the effects and impact Enlightenment philosophy has had on our moral paradigms and ultimately on society. From his understanding of Aristotelian philosophy he gives an account of this moral reflection in the first part of *AV*. His view is that modern moral philosophy, characterised by its break from the Aristotelian tradition during the Enlightenment, is impoverished as it lacks a rich understanding of ethics. The initial cause of this break can be traced back to the twelfth century when the theological

tradition of Christianity reflected in Peter Abelard's *Ethics* (1971) focussing on sin and obedience to divine law impacted conceptions of moral philosophy.

Of what relevance does MacIntyre's assessment of modern moral philosophy have to the purpose of this research concerned with developing a MacIntyrean understanding of character? The form of moral philosophy supporting a MacIntyrean understanding of character is at odds with modern moral philosophy, which pervades our current society and ways of thinking about moral matters. To understand character from a MacIntyrean perspective then means having a critical awareness of this pervasive influence and being prepared to view character from another perspective i.e. that of virtue ethics, which recognises the value of *telos*, and internal goods, and its impact on our understanding of the human good which considers the purpose of human life. Understanding the significance of the loss of *telos* and its impact on current moral thinking and on society is thus necessary in understanding character from a MacIntyrean perspective.

4.3 The History of the Virtues

The history of the virtues can be understood against the background of the nature and purpose of MacIntyre's philosophical method. The examination of the history of the virtues in this section highlights those enduring aspects of the virtues that form part of this rich tradition that MacIntyre upholds and that moral philosophers continue to debate. Although his account of the history of the virtues illustrates a diverse range of understandings, MacIntyre seeks to "provide the tradition of which I have written the history with its conceptual unity" (2007:186). It is this unity that provides the foundation for his contribution to the virtues consisting of practices, narrative, and tradition explored in section 4 of this chapter. An argument of this research is that the theme of moral responsibility is integral to exercising the virtues and hence forms part of a MacIntyrean understanding of character and is discussed below.

The purpose of this history can be regarded as MacIntyre making a case for Aristotelian morality that ought not to have been cast aside, as occurred during the

Enlightenment. In support of his case “he must first demonstrate the strength of this moral tradition from its origin in Homeric literature to its full-blown Aristotelian Thomistic form of the late Middle Ages” (Kallenberg, 2011:28). To this end MacIntyre applies his method of a historical “account of rationality in inquiry”(Murphy, 2003:7) in considering how the virtues were understood and practiced in the heroic societies of Homer’s Greece, Iceland and Ireland; in the Athenian society of Plato and Socrates; by Aristotle; and in medieval times where he emphasises Aquinas’s contribution. His is a study in *metaethics* – “an exploration into the conditions (or conditioners) of human ethical thought” (Kallenberg, 2011:23).

The perspective MacIntyre brings is his philosophical-historical method of enquiry, together with his lived experience of both modernity and post-modernity. Born into the age of modernity in 1929, MacIntyre has experienced and reflected on its impact on philosophical thinking. During his long life he has also lived through the age of post-modernity and continues to engage in and contribute to post-modernity’s impact on philosophical thought. His 2017 publication of *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity* is a case in point. The early influences on MacIntyre’s life are those of Protestantism and the ancient Greek writings of Homer and Aeschylus that MacIntyre was introduced to through the archaeologist and historian R.G. Collingwood. Another significant influence is the Communist, George Thomson whose work drew on Greek sources (Knight, 2007:110). MacIntyre spent part of his childhood in rural Ulster and this different cultural experience enabled him to inhabit a “boundary situation between conflicting conceptual schemes” (MacIntyre, 1990:114). Early influences on MacIntyre’s life were the social theories of Marx, and later influences were those of Plato, Aristotle, and the medieval philosopher and theologian, Aquinas (MacIntyre, 1998:256).

4.3.1 The Virtues in Heroic Societies

MacIntyre begins his historical analysis of the virtues by noting that story telling⁶⁹ was the main medium of moral education in the classical cultures of Greek, medieval or Renaissance times, which all shared a similar structure of moral thinking and action. Greek and Christian cultures contained biblical stories as well as stories deriving from and describing their own heroic age which had disappeared. These stories provided the moral background to debates conducted in classical societies, as well as the intrinsic concepts and beliefs which influenced the moral landscape of that time. An understanding of heroic society thus forms part of an understanding of classical society and the societies which succeed it (MacIntyre, 2007:121).

A key feature of the heroic societies whether of Homer's ancient Greece, Iceland, or Ireland, was the pre-determined role and status of each individual which existed within a well-defined and tightly structured system of roles and statuses. The household and kinship were the main structures defining such societies and a man's identity was determined by his role in these structures so that understanding who he was meant knowing his role in these structures. Arising from the prescribed set of duties and privileges allocated to specific roles and statuses were clearly understood actions which defined men in heroic society⁷⁰. This could have been the origin of the concept of moral responsibility. The link between duties and privileges and clearly understood actions has a bearing on the Aristotelian concept of moral responsibility that Jacobs (2001) supports and will become clearer further on.

MacIntyre highlights the point that the virtues of heroic societies developed within a particular context and social structure. He goes on to make the crucial point that "morality and social structure are in fact one and the same in heroic society. There is only one set of social bonds. Morality as something distinct does not yet exist.

⁶⁹ Also referred to as narrative, which forms an important part of MacIntyre's argument discussed further on in, support of the tradition of the virtues.

⁷⁰ MacIntyre's specific reference to men reflects the structure of heroic society where the role of women was confined to housekeeping and bearing and raising children - a status regarded as inferior to that of men.

Evaluative questions *are* questions of social fact” (MacIntyre, 2007:123), indicating there was no room for debate or different interpretations of morality.

The members of heroic society understood what good conduct was within the framework of their particular society. The structure of heroic society with its fixed roles can be regarded as accommodating a common understanding of the good. What MacIntyre is illustrating here is the importance of context to understanding the virtues⁷¹. Part of the context for understanding the virtues is that of community, as virtue was understood and exercised within and for the benefit of a community, and evaluated by members of that same community. “Morality has a social dimension” (Kallenberg, 2011:28), and modernity has largely lost the significance of community as the arena for the exercise of the virtues. Returning to the focus of this chapter concerning a MacIntyrean understanding of character, aspects of the virtues in heroic societies that MacIntyre retains are the notion of story-telling or narrative; that virtues develop within a particular context and social structure; and that community is necessary for the exercise of virtue.

4.3.1.1 An Understanding of Accountability and Responsibility in Heroic Society

So firmly fixed was the place of the individual in heroic society that should he have tried to retract from his allotted role, it would seem as if he were trying to disappear. Identity in heroic society emanated from one’s role which raised the notion of accountability, as a person occupying a role had to account for the actions required of such a role. Such accountability extended over the course of one’s life terminating only at death. What accountability specified was to whom, for whom, and with whom one must do as one ought, and one was accountable to one’s local community (MacIntyre, 2007:126).

⁷¹ “... our moral discourse, which uses terms like *good*, and *justice*, and *duty*, has been robbed of the context that makes it intelligible” (Kallenberg, 2011:22).

The notion of accountability, incorporated in the concept of responsibility⁷², and recognised as contributing to the good of heroic society indicates a link to virtue. Contained within the structures of heroic society in the form of pre-determined and specific roles then, were the concepts of accountability and responsibility for one's actions, and to others. It has been established that the concept of accountability arose from one's role in heroic society which determined what one ought to do. In addition, the characters in the *Iliad* understood the purpose of observing the rules and honouring the precepts of their societies, and it was only within these frameworks that purposes were understood and choices were made (2007:126). Although there was no choice of role, nor no choice of the accountability that a specific role carried, there was an understanding of why rules should be followed and the precepts of society should be honoured, as well as why purposes could be understood and choices made. This indicates knowledge of the good as well as a sense of rationality and purpose (*telos*) about the good, and a freedom to choose the good, which are elements of a virtue. Being virtuous in heroic society meant being responsible for knowing the good and for choosing the good. Jacobs (2001) acknowledges that "the adult is responsible for her conception of good and for enacting it" (2001:21). The concept of moral responsibility and its role in the exercise of virtue was incorporated in the structures of heroic society and seemed to be understood.

MacIntyre notes the significance of heroic society for moral culture, drawing on his recurring theme of how history has shaped the tradition of the virtues. He is critical of the way Nietzsche tried to divorce himself from his past and is of the view that we cannot escape from how the past has shaped us, including the formative stages in our personal histories. MacIntyre argues thus: "If this is so, then even heroic society is still inescapably a part of us all, and we are narrating a history that is peculiarly *our own history* when we recount its past in the formation of our moral culture" (MacIntyre, 2007:130). This sentiment surely applies too to the impact modern moral philosophy stemming from the Enlightenment has had on the development of moral culture,

⁷² A dictionary definition of accountable is: "responsible to someone or for some action; answerable; able to be explained," Collins English Dictionary, 1979.

which would account for the fragmented morality that MacIntyre describes in *AV* (*Ibid.*: 2).

4.3.2 The Virtues at Athens

In conceiving of a virtue it mattered greatly that the city-state, particularly the Athenian democracy, replaced the kinship group as the main moral community (MacIntyre, 2007:32). The emergence of the city-state or *polis* in Athens ushered in a change in the moral landscape. Although this was a time of crisis for the moral tradition of the virtues as morality had changed shape, it was a time of growth. The changes in society were reflected in a wider application of the concept of a virtue. There was a shift from virtue being confined to the well-defined social roles of heroic society, to virtues understood as qualities applying to human life generally. What constituted a virtue in Athenian society became subject to debate (Kallenberg, 2011:29-30). This is consistent with the nature of a democratic society and such debate continues to engage philosophy scholars today being a feature of a tradition of thought in good order. The various forms of democracy existing in current society surely provide an arena for debate - referred to as dialectic - about the meaning of the virtues and their place in post-modern society. It is suggested that facilitating and engaging in such debate is a necessary responsibility for leaders and will be elaborated on in Chapter Five.

What was common to the concept of virtue across both heroic and Athenian society was the essentially social nature of the virtues, which were exercised within a community context. Just as “the virtue tradition sees morality as inextricably enmeshed in the life of the *polis*” (MacIntyre, 2007:35), so too was it enmeshed within the tightly structured and clearly-defined system of roles and statuses of heroic society. MacIntyre maintains this theme of the social and communitarian nature of the virtues in his work, which he regards as an important aspect of the tradition of the virtues.

4.3.2.1 The Changing Social Context of the Classical Virtues

It is significant that debate around what was owed to a man depending on his role in society arose in Athens, rather than in another *polis* like Thebes or Corinth, or in a barbarian context. What distinguished a good man was his standing in relationship to others and poets and philosophers alike regarded Athenian society as the model of how human life ought to be. This claim highlights an important difference between Homeric and Athenian society. We are already familiar with the point that the standards available to the Homeric citizen were contained within the structures of his own community and he was unable to access any external view.

However the situation facing the Athenian was more complex. He was enabled, through his understanding of the virtues and the standards these provided, to question the life of his community as well as the justice of its policies and practices. This represented a significant shift from heroic society. He also recognized that being part of the Athenian community enabled this understanding. The attributes of the city were that of guardian, parent, and teacher, so it was inevitable that its citizens questioned aspects of its life. Membership of the community at Athens thus meant that being a good man was linked to being a good citizen – referred to as *politikon zoôn* (MacIntyre, 2007:133). This ability to question aspects of society and one's role in it seems to be linked to a broadening of one's role in society extending to citizenship. The shift from what was owed to a king to what was owed to a citizen indicates that Athenians had a duty to one another and this is consistent with the shift to a democratic society.

The concepts of democracy and citizenship originating in ancient Greek society are central to the domain of politics which informs MacIntyre's contribution to the tradition of the virtues. The Aristotelian notion of *politikon zoôn* (Ibid.: 150) has a bearing on the focus of this chapter concerning a MacIntyrean understanding of character, as MacIntyre retains Aristotle's rationale that the virtues are exercised within the context of an individual life as well as within that of the city and the

“individual is indeed intelligible only as a *politikon zoôn*” (Ibid.). The broadening of the Athenian concept of virtue occurring within a democratic context is reflected in the changing and more nuanced nature of moral responsibility attached to the virtues, as virtue extending to citizenship and the good citizen enabled one to question the meaning of the virtues within the context of one’s community life. It is suggested that the concepts of the good person and the good citizen and their ability to question the virtues within a democratic society are relevant to the research question concerning a MacIntyrean understanding of character.

4.3.2.2 The Changing Nature of the Virtues

As previously noted the prevailing background in ancient Greece was one of moral disagreement so that one virtue could have alternative interpretations. Whereas in heroic society evaluative questions were questions of social fact (MacIntyre, 2007:123), what is evident from the differing understandings of the Athenian virtues is that evaluative questions, which were subject to debate, had become more nuanced. MacIntyre’s attention to context and his illustration of how these societies differed from one another is evident here in his description of the changing nature of the virtues⁷³. Context is relevant to the virtues as it makes actions understandable when they are put into a context and contexts that provide meaning to human action are *stories* or *narratives* (Kallenberg, 2011:38). In providing the contexts of both heroic and Athenian society, MacIntyre is interested in the meaning of actions, an agent’s intentions, and the social and cultural background which can make sense of these intentions, and how an intended action can be understood as a response to a past situation (Rudd, 2007:62). These are all elements of a virtue that MacIntyre retains in his contribution to the virtue tradition discussed in the following section of this chapter that have a bearing on a MacIntyrean understanding of character.

⁷³ This is in contrast to Enlightenment thinking which completely disregarded social and historical context (Horton and Mendus, 1994:3).

4.3.3 Platonic and Sophoclean Conceptions of the Virtues

Plato, Aristotle's teacher, laid the foundations for Aristotle's contribution to the virtues. Plato's inspiration seemed to derive from his thoughts about an "ideal" world, and his focus was on "true" virtue, which he regarded as the path to a happy (*eudaimonic*) or flourishing life. He held that arising from such a happy life would be "the satisfaction of having lived in accordance with one's true nature" (Kallenberg, 2011:30), which he regarded as human nature consisting of three parts. Representing the highest part of human nature was the intellectual part, in which the virtue of wisdom was most closely aligned to the realm of the Ideal. Beneath this lay the motivational or high-spirited part that drew on the virtue of courage. The lowest part of human nature, the desiring part, required the control of the virtue of prudence. All three of these virtues required to be in proper order with one another, requiring a fourth virtue – justice – to maintain this order. These virtues were referred to as *cardinal* (from Latin *cardo* meaning "door hinge") as they were the "qualities upon which the truly happy life hangs" (2011:30). Plato's view was that society should reflect this ordering of the virtues with the place of the philosopher-king as ruler assuming the highest place, and exercising the virtue of wisdom to contemplate truth. Next in this social stratum were the warriors who were required to display the virtue of courage, and lastly, the citizens of the working class exercising the virtue of prudence. Plato, who seemed resistant to change, believed that this hierarchy should be maintained (Ibid.: 48).

In contrast to Plato's idealised view of the virtues, were the tragic Sophoclean dramatists who captured the ethical conflicts that real life poses. With regard to these contrasting views of the virtues, MacIntyre highlights the notion of the narrative form that Sophocles ascribed to. This belief is echoed by Anne Righter (1962) who describes Shakespeare as portraying human life in dramatic narratives. This theme of MacIntyre drawing on Shakespeare's use of dramatic narrative to illustrate a philosophical point is familiar, as explained above under heading 1.2.4 in the discussion of MacIntyre's method and how he draws on *Hamlet* to illustrate the nature of philosophy's

epistemological crisis. The form of dramatic narrative used by Shakespeare is a particular type of dramatic narrative. MacIntyre argues that different understandings of the virtues, for example those of the heroic era and of Sophoclean times, represent different narrative forms depending on which captures features of human life and agency, most accurately (MacIntyre, 2007:143 -144).

This leads to his hypothesis: “that generally to adopt a stance on the virtues will be to adopt a stance on the narrative character of human life” (2007:144), which illustrates the internal connection between the concepts of narrative and virtue, and how MacIntyre conceives of moral goodness within the narrative of a life. The concept of narrative has its origins in the form of story-telling applied in heroic society as the medium of moral education which the classical cultures of Greek, medieval or Renaissance times inherited as they shared a similar structure of moral thinking and action. Consistent with MacIntyre’s view of the narrative of an actual life forming an important part of an understanding of moral goodness, the Sophoclean narrative supports this view. In contrast Plato’s idealised view of life is not supportive of this understanding of moral goodness.

4.3.4 Aristotle’s Account of the Virtues

From MacIntyre’s account of the virtues detailed above, the origin and development of the virtues has been traced back to the heroic times of Homer, Iceland, and Ireland, through to the Greek city state at the time of Plato and Sophocles. This ushers in Aristotle, who MacIntyre regards as the greatest representative of a long tradition. Whilst the concept of a tradition is central to MacIntyre’s argument in *AV*, it had no place in the work of Aristotle. Despite Aristotle recognizing his predecessors and acknowledging their work, it seems that he regarded his contribution to the virtues as final and once completed saw no value in holding on to his predecessors’ work. MacIntyre argues that Aristotle’s approach excludes the idea of a tradition of thought which sees value in how the past can make the present understandable, often with a call to respond by correcting and transcending the errors of the past, where possible,

and in a way that future generations in turn may be able to respond to and correct (MacIntyre, 2007:146).

In spite of Aristotle's stance regarding a tradition his work forms an important component of the history of knowledge that constitutes the virtue ethics tradition. MacIntyre regards a tradition as a repository of knowledge consisting of theories and beliefs that make sense only when understood as part of a historical series. MacIntyre defines tradition as "an historically extended, socially embodied argument, and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute the tradition" (2007:222). His understanding of tradition follows on from his treatment of narrative as he regards historical extension and narrative extension as one. Traditions are lived in community which gives them their "socially embodied" nature. The goods that constitute a tradition have a long history of debate and are "necessarily long-standing arguments" (Kallenberg, 2011:41). It is possible for a tradition to degenerate through a lack of progress. On the other hand progress indicates a tradition in good order (MacIntyre, 2007:146). It seems that MacIntyre's reflection on the long history of virtue ethics as contained in his comprehensive account of the virtues in *AV* has contributed to keeping this tradition alive, and possibly even flourishing as evidenced in the widespread application of virtue ethics to business ethics, which will be discussed in Chapter Five.

MacIntyre's view is that Aristotle lacked a sense of the historical,⁷⁴ which prevented him from any appreciation of how his thought formed part of a tradition. As a result his contribution to narrative was also limited and meant that centuries later Aquinas - a historical scholar and theologian - inherited the task of integrating Aristotle's virtues with forms of narrative present in the work of tragic and epic writers. Although Aristotle's thesis of the virtues defines the classical tradition as a rational tradition of moral thought, some key questions pertaining to the classical tradition remain unanswered by Aristotle. The nature of his thought is such that scholars have been

⁷⁴ This also applies to other Greek thinkers of the time

debating the content of his work and continue to do so, offering various interpretations, but with no settled outcome (MacIntyre, 2007:147).

4.3.4.1 Practical Intelligence (*Phronesis*)

The intellectual virtue *phronesis* - the ability to exercise judgment is a key virtue and is essential to exercising the virtues of character. There is an interdependence between the virtue of practical intelligence, *phronesis*, and the virtues of character. Although the former is acquired through theoretical instruction and the latter through practice and practical experience, each is dependent on the other and cannot be separated. Practical intelligence transforms a natural disposition into a virtue of character; however virtues of character must exist for practical intelligence to bring the virtues of character to fruition. This is enabled when practical intelligence chooses the genuine good for humans as an end. Excellence of character on Aristotle's view then requires the application of intelligence, as well as knowledge of the good (MacIntyre, 2007:154). To understand character from a MacIntyrean perspective then is to acknowledge the correlative relationship between *phronesis* and the virtues of character. It seems fairly clear that in exercising moral responsibility *phronesis* would be essential in applying rationality in knowing and understanding the good, and in directing passions and desires in accordance with such good.

MacIntyre highlights the theme of community running through Aristotle's work and how the goodness of an individual is measured within the context of a community which has the common aim of realising the human good. Aristotle's idea of the *polis* was that there should be broad consensus among citizens of what goods and virtues would consist of. He envisaged a common acceptance and pursuit of the good would unite citizens around their shared purpose, which concerned humankind's good encompassing the whole of life (2007:155-156). MacIntyre observes that the shared common project that was characteristic of the Athenian political and moral unity which was a feature of ancient and medieval forms of Aristotelian community has no place in the modern liberal individualist view of the world (Ibid.: 156). MacIntyre acknowledges the fair criticism levelled against Aristotle for presenting too simple and too unified a

view of the human good, which is actually full of complexity. Aristotle's idealised picture of moral coherence and unity which he inherited from Plato, did not seem to reflect the reality of the ancient world where values were diverse and conflict rather than unity between goods and the virtues prevailed. In contrast the tragic Homeric writers with their insight into the human condition acknowledged tragic conflict as part of the reality of life.

This was borne out of the methods used to ascertain truth, where Plato and Aristotle followed a theoretical approach and Socrates took to arguing dialectically, which had been regarded as the way to truth (Ibid.: 157). For Aristotle the nature of the divine was impersonal and constant and had a place in his theory of the virtues with metaphysical contemplation and *eudaimonia* providing the ultimate human *telos* (Ibid.: 158). MacIntyre refers to the unsettled and on-going debate concerning *eudaimonia* and the "tension between Aristotle's view of man as essentially political and his view of man as essentially metaphysical" (Ibid.: 158). The stance taken in this research, as explained in Chapter Two, is that of humankind as essentially political as this seems more aligned to the purpose of this research in developing the concept of the character of a leader operating in society.

4.3.4.2 Freedom in Exercising the Virtues

The notion of liberty is relevant to Aristotle's account of the virtues situated within the political context of the *polis* and given the importance he attached to the place of the citizen in moral life. Freedom was a feature of relationships of members belonging to the political community who ruled and were ruled over, so that the free self was "simultaneously political subject and political sovereign" (MacIntyre, 2007:159). The notion of the free self within a democracy raises the issue of moral responsibility that such freedom to exercise the virtues brings and suggests that this freedom entails a duty to be a good citizen. This links to the role of the *polis* as the social and political context conceived of by the ancient Greeks for the exercise of virtue and evidenced by MacIntyre's comment that membership of the community at Athens meant that being a good man was linked to being a good citizen (Ibid.: 133).

The concept that human beings have responsibilities has a long history dating back millennia (Küng, 1997:99). Reason, as a defining characteristic of humans initially identified by the ancient Greeks, is engaged whenever one takes responsibility for one's thoughts and actions. Together with reason, human passions and desires *may* co-operate with reason in assuming responsibility. When this occurs decisions are made out of a sense of freedom and in accordance with reason. The concept of duty linked to that of responsibility "exerts a moral compulsion" (Ibid.: 100) that is rational extending beyond technical and economic imperatives to the ethical, "prompting and compelling human beings to moral action" (Ibid.). Aristotle's recognition of freedom in exercising the virtues, a development from heroic society where no such freedom existed, has links to the concept of moral responsibility and, it is argued, forms part of an understanding of character, whether Aristotelian or MacIntyrean.

4.3.5 The Stoics' Theory of the Virtues

MacIntyre suggests that the virtues and the law should inform the moral life of a community focused on a shared good – its purpose. Where such a community disappeared, as happened with the Stoics, and the nature of their political life changed with the replacement of the city-state by the Macedonian kingdom, coherence between the virtues and the law disappeared too. When a community breaks down the consequence for the moral order is the disappearance of a "genuine shared common good" (MacIntyre, 2007:170), leaving only individual private goods which may well clash with the good that others are pursuing, while moral law requirements could conflict with the private goods of individuals. As AV is a reflection of the impact of the loss of a "genuine shared common good" (Ibid: 170.) on late modern society, understanding character from a MacIntyrean perspective then would include a conception of such a shared good which would bear the hallmarks of MacIntyre's philosophy – teleological, intelligible, incorporating his notions of practice and narrative, mindful of history and tradition, and a sense of community within its societal context. The idea of a "genuine shared common good" (Ibid.) is of relevance to this research and will be reflected on in Chapter Six.

A view shared by the ancient world characterised by the *polis* as conceived by Aristotle, understood human law as derived from divine law and the virtue of justice should be reflected in the institutions of law so that law and morality is unified. This view differs from modern liberal society which separates law and morality and has no conception of *the* human good, only a private good (MacIntyre, 2007: 170.). The question of *the* human good is a subject MacIntyre is concerned about and argues for in *AV* in developing the tradition of the virtues.

The community and the roles of individuals which bound them to their communities formed part of the human good, whether in ancient, medieval, or premodern societies – an aspect that modern and postmodern societies have disregarded. MacIntyre comments that “it is always as part of an ordered community that I have to seek the human good” (2007: 173), which is echoed in Aristotle’s concept of the correlative nature of the good person *and* the good citizen. MacIntyre goes on to state that “The individual carries his communal roles with him as part of the definition of his self” (Ibid.: 173). Moral responsibility in these societies arose within the structure of a community which provided the context for achieving the human good and the means through which the individual defined himself. Late modernity has lost this communal sense of self and the community as the forum for seeking the good. In view of our current global context characterized by challenges of a global nature consisting of, *inter alia* rising inequality and the threats posed by climate change, it seems pertinent to pose the question of whether a retrieval of these communal notions is possible. Seeking the human good within a community from the perspective of a good person *and* a good citizen then would form part of a MacIntyrean understanding of character. What such seeking for the good entails will be explored in Chapter Six in developing the concept of leader character.

4.3.6 The Notion of Life as a “Quest”

An Aristotelian understanding of the virtues was largely lacking in European medieval thought⁷⁵ until Christian virtues were adopted, which led to a transformation in how the virtues were understood. The notion of the *telos* was also modified, a change that MacIntyre notes brought two benefits. The first was that *eudaimonia*⁷⁶ was universal and available to all people irrespective of the external circumstances of their lives as the focus of virtue shifted “from earthly success to moral goodness” (Lutz, 2012:116). The second was that the medieval understanding of virtue, with an awareness of its history, could provide a “stance on the narrative character of human life” (MacIntyre, 2007:144). In other words, it is the context and history of the story of a human life that provides the meaning of moral goodness and of how the virtues are to be practiced. MacIntyre argues that a particular understanding of the virtues is linked to a particular understanding of the narrative structure of a human life.

A central feature of the high medieval system was the theme of life as journey or “quest”, which resembled Aristotle’s notion of the *telos*, yet differed from it in important ways (2007:174-175). Firstly, medieval understandings of this end (*telos*), incorporating Christian values like charity and forgiveness, meant that a life largely lacking in virtue could be redeemed. In contrast, an Aristotelian view conceived of the *telos* of human life as a specific *kind of life* where the *telos* is a reflection of how our life as a whole is constructed and encompasses a range of human excellences⁷⁷ to be achieved at relevant stages that constitute the good life viewed in its totality (Ibid.: 175). Secondly, the medieval view of human life as a quest acknowledged evil in its various forms as a force to be faced and conquered, with the role of the virtues being

⁷⁵ An exception is the theologian and philosopher Aquinas who is not representative of the general medieval understanding of the theory and practice of the virtues. MacIntyre views him as “a highly deviant medieval figure” (Ibid., 2007:178), and regards him as the interpreter *par excellence* of Aristotle’s *NE*.

⁷⁶ *Eudaimonia*, an ancient Greek concept, can be understood as “life lived ... towards one overall purpose” (Moore, 2017:41).

⁷⁷ These excellences include contemplation. JL Ackrill (1974:16–18) suggests that contemplation forms part of “an account of the good life as a whole” (2007:175).

“those qualities which enable men to survive evils on their historical journey” (2007:176).

This differs from an Aristotelian view which regarded vice as a failure to be virtuous and did not seem to account for *positive evil* (Ibid.: 175). Facing and overcoming evil in its various forms is a necessary part of the notion of the quest or journey of human life. Embodied in the narrative structure of human life lies the task of appropriating the human good in line with the particular aspirations of a group of individuals for example the citizens of Rome. Achieving the human good for a community involves a journey beset with various inner and outer evils. Through the exercise of the virtues such good can be accomplished by overcoming evil, thereby completing the journey. The medieval world can be viewed as not only expanding Aristotle’s account of the virtues, but as one in which the connection between the narrative aspect of human life and the nature of evil in the form of vices, is brought into consciousness (Ibid.: 178). The narrative that gives meaning to our journey or quest to live a good life requires us to “develop an account of the good life and a way to evaluate our progress toward that goal” (Lutz, 2012:111). It is the virtues that enable the living of such a good life. Considering the research question regarding a MacIntyrean understanding of character then is to acknowledge the need for the virtues in overcoming evil in one’s particular quest or journey of life. The challenge for each individual in facing and confronting the evil that inevitably confronts one along this journey is in exercising moral responsibility and choosing virtue over vice.

4. 3.7 Summary of Main Points Relating to a MacIntyrean Understanding of Character

This section of the chapter dealing with the history of the virtues has focused on MacIntyre’s insights with regard to those enduring aspects of the virtues that he retains in developing his contribution to the virtue tradition. From these insights inferences have been made concerning his understanding of character, and of the nature of moral responsibility as it relates to the virtues, which are summarised here and have a bearing on the following section of the chapter.

The main points regarding aspects of the virtues in heroic societies that MacIntyre retains are the notion of story-telling or narrative; that virtues develop within a particular context and social structure; and that community is necessary for the exercise of virtue. The concept of moral responsibility and its role in the exercise of virtue was incorporated in the structures of heroic society and was commonly understood, suggesting this could have been the origin of this concept. Aspects of Aristotle's virtues that MacIntyre retains relevant to an understanding of character are that the virtues encompass both the good person *and* the good citizen and are exercised within the context of an individual life as well as within that of the city arising from the notion of *politikon zoôn* (MacIntyre, 2007:150). Moral responsibility attached to the virtues in a democratic society had become more nuanced as virtue extending to citizenship and the good citizen enabled one to question the meaning of the virtues within the context of one's community life. Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* as necessary for exercising the virtues of character impacts a MacIntyrean understanding of character. Its role in the exercise of moral responsibility is in applying rationality in knowing and understanding the good, and in directing passions and desires in accordance with such good. Aristotle's recognition of freedom in exercising the virtues is linked to the concept of moral responsibility and forms part of a MacIntyrean understanding of character. A conception of a "genuine shared common good" (Ibid.: 170), which late modern society has lost, forms part of a MacIntyrean understanding of character; so too does a search for the human good within a community from the perspective of a good person *and* a good citizen; as well as an acknowledgment of the need for the virtues in overcoming evil in one's particular quest or journey of life, involving the exercise of moral responsibility in choosing virtue over vice.

This detailed history of the virtues concludes the third part of this chapter and forms the foundation for understanding the following section, which examines MacIntyre's unique insights and contribution to the virtue tradition.

4.4 MacIntyre's Conception of the Virtues

In response to his critique of the impact of Enlightenment thinking on modern moral philosophy and more broadly on society, MacIntyre proposes a conception of the virtues that adds to and extends the rich tradition of the virtues. However there are a number of obstacles that he needs to overcome if he is to succeed in “rejuvenating the Aristotelian tradition” (Kallenberg, 2011:34).

Although MacIntyre has the highest regard for Aristotle's work, to progress he needs to confront the following obstacles. Firstly, Aristotle's concept of *telos* is based on his “metaphysical biology” that all humans share the same essence which is our theoretical and practical rationality. Actualising both forms of reason provides the *telos* of human life. Where contemplation is the purpose of theoretical reason, life in the *polis* is the purpose of practical reason. The problem for Aristotle was in reconciling these two different forms of rationality - a problem for which he provided no answer. To overcome this obstacle MacIntyre's challenge is to replace Aristotle's concept of the human form of rationality with another view of the *telos* of human life. He does this in the form of traditions which are capable of answering this question.

Secondly, in the ancient Greek tradition of the virtues the *polis* assumed a central and inextricable place in their concept of morality. What can replace this political form of life that no longer exists and bears no relevance to our modern context? Can Aristotle's account of the virtues survive the loss of such a central feature?

Thirdly, the unity of the virtues is a belief of Plato's upheld by Aristotle. Yet such a view cannot account for the occurrence of tragedy in life and cannot merely be attributed to character flaws in individuals or political arrangements that are unintelligent (MacIntyre, 2007:157). The unity of the virtues thesis does not seem to reflect reality given the conflicts that occur in the moral life. In addition to these three obstacles which are internal to Aristotle's concept of the virtues, is a fourth external obstacle. How can the diversity in the range of the virtues from Homer through to Aristotle and Aquinas and beyond be reconciled and brought into a single tradition? The challenge

MacIntyre faces is in maintaining continuity across such disparate accounts in developing “a single, unified tradition” (Kallenberg, 2011:35).

MacIntyre addresses these challenges in the second part of *AV* in his discussion of the concepts of a practice, the narrative unity of a whole human life, and tradition, by drawing on reflections of historical understandings of excellence in arguing for a unified concept of the virtues (Lutz, 2012:155). These concepts, which form the basis of his contribution to the virtues, are discussed below.

After MacIntyre’s extensive study of the history of the virtues he commences his contribution to this tradition by asking whether, with such differences and incompatibilities in conceptions of the virtues, it is possible for there to be any unity in the concept or in its history. Consider the range from Homer, through Sophocles, and Aristotle, to the New Testament and the medieval thinkers, whose understandings differ in so many ways. In spite of this, MacIntyre is of the view that a core conception of the virtues is possible (2007:181), and it appears that his quest is to build on this existing tradition of thought by developing such a core concept.

4.4.1 The Concept of a Practice

In tackling his task of developing a core conception of the virtues MacIntyre begins with his concept of a practice rooted in the ancient Greek notion of excellence.

4.4.1.1 Human Action

MacIntyre develops his concept of a virtue in the second part of *AV* informed by his belief that deliberate and free human action is the principal concern of moral philosophy. His interest is excellence pursued by rational human agents and the impact our actions and choices have on our effectiveness as such agents. This is consistent with the Aristotelian tradition of human action being the subject of moral philosophy (Lutz, 2012:148 – 9). This notion of action then is foundational to MacIntyre’s concept of a practice, as it is to human life in general with its orientation to the activity of work. What then is the nature of human action considered from a MacIntyrean perspective?

Aristotle's notion of freedom in exercising the virtues informs MacIntyre's view that human action is deliberate and free, which implies choice leading to the questions of how we choose to act and what constitutes morally good action? Consistent with the virtue tradition, our choices to act should involve applying our unique human attribute of rationality. This means acquiring knowledge of the good extending to knowledge of the impacts our choices will have on ourselves and others. This type of knowledge requires that we understand our actions and includes awareness of how our actions impact ourselves and others. Such deliberate, free action implies responsibility – to make responsible choices in acting informed by our knowledge of what constitutes morally good action. This suggests that we have a responsibility to become excellent human beings. From a MacIntyrean perspective what constitutes morally good action is the exercise of the virtues within the concepts of practices, a whole human life, and traditions, which are elaborated on below.

4.4.1.2 Internal and External Means to Ends

In introducing his concept of a practice MacIntyre makes the distinction between the social context of Homeric society where virtues were attached to social roles, and that of ancient Greece during Aristotle's time where virtues were attached to the human person. MacIntyre draws on a key element of Aristotle's concept of the virtues, that of the *telos* of the human species "which determines what human qualities are virtues" (2007:184). Aristotle held that humans are teleological beings and that our ultimate end or *telos* is the human good which is attained through acquiring and exercising the virtues. Although the virtues are a means to the end of our achieving our human good, they are internal to the person, and "internal to a given end when the end cannot be adequately characterized independently of a characterization of the means" (Ibid.). The means of exercising the virtues occurs within the person, in contrast to the means of acquiring external goods which are external to the person.

Although it was Aquinas and not Aristotle who distinguished between external and internal means to an end, this distinction is necessary if one is to understand Aristotle's intentions. The format of Aristotle's virtues followed a particular "logical

and conceptual structure” (MacIntyre, 2007:184), and this was maintained in the virtues of the New Testament, with the addition of the supernatural element. *The good for humans* became more than a natural good, with the supernatural redeeming and completing nature. In exercising Christian virtues, the means to the end “which is human incorporation in the divine kingdom of the age to come” (Ibid.) is internal, as it is with Aristotle’s virtues. The replication of Aristotle’s concept of the virtues in those of the New Testament meant that Aquinas was able to integrate Aristotelian and Christian virtues. A feature common to both forms of virtue is that “the concept of *the good life for man* is prior to the concept of a virtue in just the way in which on the Homeric account the concept of a social role was prior” (Ibid.). The concept of a virtue, which is secondary in both cases, is the means to achieving the end or *telos* which is our ultimate good.

4.4.1.3 Creating the Conceptual Unity of a Virtue

After having made the important distinction between internal and external means and the ends they serve, MacIntyre moves on to address an obstacle highlighted above, that of being able to formulate a core concept of the virtues from the range of disparate historical accounts mentioned above. MacIntyre holds that in doing so he can provide “conceptual unity” (2007:186) to the tradition of which he has written its history. Common to the concept of a virtue throughout history is the prior existence of a social and moral context in terms of which virtues were defined and understood. For example the Homeric virtues arose from the *social role*, whereas Aristotelian virtues developed from the notion of “*the good life for man* conceived as the *telos* of human action” (Ibid.). The social and moral context against which the virtues in ancient Greece were understood was the *polis*.

In developing his account of the virtues, MacIntyre seeks to remain consistent to the way virtues have developed through history originating in heroic society, by providing the social and moral context against which the concept of a virtue is made intelligible. In the first half of *AV* he describes the social and moral context of late modernity as

largely hostile to a conception of the virtues; and it appears that his contribution to the virtues is at least partly a response to this state of affairs.

4.4.1.4 MacIntyre's Definition of a Practice

MacIntyre introduces the concept of a practice by drawing on Aristotle's reference to the excellence of human activity and the types of examples used to explain a well-defined human practice like geometry or playing a musical instrument. MacIntyre argues that a specific type of practice provides the means for the virtues to be displayed. So too, it is through practices that MacIntyre proposes his initial primary yet incomplete definition of a core concept of the virtues. He adds two caveats, however. The first is that the exercise of the virtues is not limited to the specific practices he outlines, and the second is his usage of 'practice' is specifically defined and does not accord with the ordinary and current use of the term (2007:187).

MacIntyre defines a practice as:

Any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended (2007:187)

MacIntyre's definition indicates that he embeds a practice within society requiring community engagement in the form of co-operation. The understanding that community is necessary for the exercise of virtue originated in heroic society and has persisted through to pre-modern understandings. MacIntyre's reference to internal goods and to standards of excellence acknowledges the theme of human action central to the Aristotelian tradition. This, together with his reference to conceptions of ends and goods involving our reasoning ability forms part of our journey in discovering our human good leading to the achievement of our *telos*. Our current context constituted of an ever-increasing range and complexity of practices within which the virtues are

located and exercised, is the social and moral context MacIntyre provides for his concept of a virtue as a practice to replace the ancient Greek concept of a *polis*.

MacIntyre's concept of a practice derives from the distinction between internal and external means to an end, explained above, and made explicit by Aquinas. It is in the actual experience of participating in a specific type of activity that one develops the internal goods necessary for acquiring the virtues. MacIntyre gives examples of the types of internal good necessary for developing the practice of playing chess: engaging in and developing a specific type of analytical skill, becoming strategically imaginative and intensely competitive, developing one's reasoning ability not only for winning but for aiming to excel in ways demanded by the game of chess. The internal good specific to the practice of chess cannot be developed then except through the practice of participating in the activity of chess, which leads to experience, and through applying one's mind to developing the skills required which characterise the practice of chess (MacIntyre, 2007:188-189).

This is surely the type of action envisaged by Aristotle in formulating his conception of the virtues, and carried through by MacIntyre in his concept of a practice. The theme of excellence contained within a practice has roots in the ancient Greek concept of a virtue, *arete*. Aristotle extended this concept of excellence in his pursuit of the ultimate human good by reasoning that excellent human functioning involves the exercise of our uniquely human characteristic of rationality. The theme of excellence that was so central to Aristotle's concept of a virtue is evident in MacIntyre's concept of a practice where he states in *AV* that: "A practice involves standards of excellence and obedience to rules as well as the achievement of goods" (Ibid.: 190).

MacIntyre goes on to state that participation in a practice requires accepting the authority of existing standards of excellence and the gap in one's own performance, as measured against these standards. Participation also requires subjecting one's own preferences, tastes, choices, and attitudes to the standards currently and partially defining a practice (2007:190). Although standards are subject to development and change, the authority of existing standards must be accepted by those entering a

practice. As the authority of standards and goods can only accommodate the objective analyses of judgment required of a practice, emotive and subjective analyses are not included in such judgments (Ibid.).

He clarifies what he means by a practice by way of examples: architecture is a practice, whilst bricklaying is not; farming is a practice, yet planting vegetables is not. Practices are housed within the disciplines of, *inter alia* biology, chemistry, and physics, which in turn require the support of institutions. MacIntyre envisages practices exercised within and supported by his concept of institutions, as practices cannot “simply exist by themselves” and require institutions for their survival (Moore, 2017:65). MacIntyre regards the relationship between practices and institutions as one of mutual interdependence characterised by a “single causal order” (2007:194). Where practices are sustained by internal goods, institutions require external goods for their survival and development, as clarified below.

4.4.1.5 The Distinction between Internal and External Goods

MacIntyre comments on a significant difference between internal and external goods. External goods are limited and when achieved become the property of an individual, so that the more one person possesses the less there is available for others. This occurs with external goods like power and fame, as well as with money and the goods that money can buy. Competition, which drives the acquisition of external goods, leads to winners and losers. Internal goods on the other hand do not create winners and losers, as achieving such a good “is a good for the whole community who participate in the practice” (2007:190-191). MacIntyre gives an example of how the work of the British artist Turner transformed the painting of seascapes with the effect that this internal good enriched the artistic community.

MacIntyre explains what he means by internal goods:

The aim internal to such productive crafts, when they are in good order, is never only to catch fish, or to produce beef or milk, or to build houses. It is to do so in a manner

consonant with the excellences of the craft, so that there is not only a good product, but the craftsman is perfected through and in her or his activity (2007:189 - 90).

He indicates two kinds of internal goods: the good service or product arising from the excellent application of a person's skills, and the perfection of the person participating in such a skill. The type of perfection of the person is a reference to their moral development as a person and through pursuing the excellence required of a skill a person's moral nature is developed enabling him on his journey towards achieving his own *telos* (Moore, 2017:57 - 8).

The nature of both types of goods differs as internal goods are particular to each person and is the only form of good through which we achieve our ultimate purpose, or *telos* and become 'perfected'. This raises the concept of the virtues which are intimately connected to practices: " [the] virtues find their home particularly in practices, and it is through the possession and exercise of the virtues, over and above the technical skills and knowledge involved, that we can achieve the internal goods of practices" (Moore, 2017:64). The virtues are thus essential for us to actualize the internal goods of practices. In contrast, external goods being a different form of good comprising goods and services are governed by communally agreed standards of excellence.

External goods are not subject to the type and level of scrutiny and assessment of good that human action is, which occurs particularly when action falls short of virtue and exposes flaws of a moral nature. Whereas external goods are pursued for the purpose of another type of good, internal goods are pursued for their own purpose, indicating an ordering with internal goods assuming a higher level in the hierarchy as they enable the achievement of the human *telos*. External goods then are pursued for the purpose of achieving internal goods, which lead to achieving our *telos* (2017:64.).

Although the exercise of internal goods is what virtue is about and leads to the development of our moral nature as humans, the abuse and unwise use of external goods through our actions and choices can also impact our moral nature and lead to its degeneration. This is referred to as vice: obvious examples are greed for a

disproportionate and ever-increasing amount of external goods, or the theft or unjust acquisition of such goods. Conversely, external goods present opportunities for moral development where use and appropriation reflects wise and judicious actions and choices. In both cases, external goods either help or hinder our moral development, depending on the exercise of the virtues or not. Choices and actions with regard to desires for the acquisition, use, enjoyment, sharing, and disposal of external goods surely constitutes moral action from a MacIntyrean perspective.

4.4.1.6 MacIntyre's Initial Definition of a Virtue

Having clarified the distinction between internal and external goods MacIntyre moves on to formulate his first definition of a virtue, albeit a partial and tentative one:

A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods (2007:191).

What is clear from this initial definition of MacIntyre's is how central the virtues are to practices. The standards of excellence and internal goods that constitute a practice require the virtues of justice, courage, and honesty, in particular, for the maintenance and development of a practice. Where these virtues are lacking internal goods and the standards of excellence that characterise a practice cannot be achieved, rendering the practice meaningless except as a means for acquiring external goods. The nature of a practice requires subordinating to others participating in the practice as practitioners and involves learning "to recognize what is due to whom; we have to be prepared to take whatever self-endangering risks are demanded along the way; and we have to listen carefully to what we are told about our own inadequacies and to reply with the same carefulness for the facts" (MacIntyre, 2007:191).

This statement is a clear reference to the need for the virtues of justice, courage, and honesty when engaging in practices. Those participating in a practice are in a particular type of relationship with each other, and in these relationships defined by the virtues, they share a common set of standards and purposes. Maintaining such standards and

purposes requires that standards of honesty and trust, as well as of justice and courage define the relationships between those engaged in practices. This means that everyone participating in a practice both exercise honesty and be afforded honesty by others, and that consistent and objective standards are necessary for exercising justice in treating others according to desert or merit. The virtue of courage is pertinent to practices due to “the care and concern for individuals, communities and causes which is so crucial to so much in practices” (2007:192). Courage, involving risking danger or harm to oneself arises from such a sense of care and concern. Practices then require relationships governed by the virtues of honesty, justice, and courage to sustain them. MacIntyre recognises these virtues as “genuine excellences” which should “characterize ourselves and others” (Ibid.) regardless of our personal moral views or the codes governing our societies.

MacIntyre draws on the medieval concept of a quest in considering the role of virtues within practices. As life can be fraught with difficulties and temptations, the virtues are necessary for achieving the excellence of practices as MacIntyre states in the following definition of a virtue:

The virtues therefore are to be understood as those dispositions which will ... sustain us in the relevant kind of quest for the good, by enabling us to overcome the harms, dangers, temptations and distractions which we encounter, and which will furnish us with increasing self-knowledge and increasing knowledge of the good (MacIntyre, 2007:219)

Pertinent to the purpose of this chapter, which is to gain a MacIntyrean understanding of character are the following themes contained in this definition: ‘quest for the good’, ‘self-knowledge’, ‘knowledge of the good’, and overcoming ‘the harms, dangers, temptations, and distractions’. A quest for the good indicates a desire and a search for the good, which implies a form of moral reasoning. This resonates with the nature of a practice which is subject to on-going development and a quest to discover ‘what more and what else’ (MacIntyre, 2007:193), which is consistent with the theme of excellence. The type of moral reasoning in searching for and knowing the good which

forms part of the concept of a practice draws on Aristotle's historical concept of *phronesis*, which is necessary in exercising the virtues of character.

Self-knowledge in a MacIntyrean virtue ethics sense means knowing and understanding a person's life-story or narrative (explained in the next section of this chapter) so that a person knows and understands what his or her own unique contribution to the good is. Knowledge of the good develops as a person traverses his or her life journey in the quest for the good. Implicit in these themes seems to be the concept of responsibility for seeking the good, developing self-knowledge so that a person understands his or her contribution to the good and acts upon such knowledge, and continues along the journey even when faced with adversity, by employing moral strength to overcome whatever harms, dangers, temptations and distractions are encountered along the way. In addition, an attitude of moral responsibility of those involved in practices in today's world would surely involve awareness of whether a person's actions in earning a living are just, and of how such actions impact society, particularly the environment. It is argued that this forms part of what constitutes morally good action. As this point is relevant to leaders of character it will be returned to and expanded upon in Chapter Six.

Those attitudes and behaviours characteristic of practices like respecting standards, cooperation, recognizing authority and achievement, and a type of risk-taking require fair judgment of oneself and utter truthfulness. So too, a "willingness to trust the judgments of those whose achievement in the practice give them an authority to judge which presupposes fairness and truthfulness in those judgments, and from time to time the taking of self-endangering and even achievement-endangering risks" (MacIntyre, 2007:193).

4.4.1.7 Two Contrasts between Virtues and Practices

To strengthen the link between virtues and practices, MacIntyre clarifies the nature of a practice by highlighting two important contrasts. The first concerns the nature of technical skills. Practices, as conceived by MacIntyre extend beyond technical skills and include the goods and ends that these skills serve. A practice is partially defined by

how its goods and ends are conceived, as well as transformed and enriched by extending human powers and by the type of attention paid to internal goods. This type of attention involves reflection and suggests the need for this type of activity forming part of a person's moral development.

The goal of a practice is subject to the history of the activities constituting a practice. Of significance to the virtues is the history of a practice, which is broader than the development of technical skills (MacIntyre, 2007:193-4). The outcome of skills and the exercise of the virtues then are the internal goods that constitute a practice. In emphasising the internal goods and the standards of excellence that define the activities of a practice MacIntyre draws attention to the traits of character (virtues) that are necessary for pursuing internal goods. The acquisition and development of such character traits is necessary for pursuing the excellences internal to social practices (Beabout, 2012:409-10). Entering into a practice involves entering into a relationship with all those present and past who, through their achievements, have extended the scope of the practice to its present state. The achievement and the authority of a tradition which confronts a person and from which he or she learns is the culmination of all that has gone before and requires exercising the virtues of honesty, justice and courage in the same way as is required in "sustaining present relationships within practices" (MacIntyre, 2007:194).

4.4.1.8 Institutions

The second contrast MacIntyre draws between virtues and practices is that of institutions. Although institutions house practices where internal goods are exercised, institutions themselves are concerned with external goods. He contrasts the practices of chess, medicine, and physics with the institutions of chess clubs, hospitals, and universities. The nature of institutions means they are involved with material goods, reward in terms of money, status, and power and are structured according to status and power. Institutions are thus necessary for sustaining practices as well as themselves. The mutual dependence between practices and institutions is obvious. However, this intimate relationship is vulnerable and practices can easily succumb to

the power and competitiveness of institutions. The case for the virtues should be clear. Honesty, justice, and courage are the bulwarks against the “corrupting power of institutions” (MacIntyre, 2007:194).

MacIntyre makes a distinction between two forms of institutions: modern institutions with an individualist and liberal orientation structured along individualistic lines enabling individuals to pursue their own choices in formulating their conceptions of the good life; and the types of institutions that recognise the role of the virtues in sustaining institutions (Beabout, 2012:411; MacIntyre, 2007:195). Morally good action from a MacIntyrean perspective involves those actions that display a commitment to sustaining the institutions in which the virtues are housed and exercised. Drawing on Aristotle’s themes of the good person *and* the good citizen discussed in the previous section concerning the history of the virtues, is the suggestion that a civic orientation is necessary for maintaining those practices which a functioning society requires. Good citizens display moral responsibility when they develop and grow institutions that support practices to benefit society. It will be argued in Chapter Five that the leader of character has a moral responsibility to maintain and grow the practices that support a healthy and functioning society *and* the institutions that support such practices.

4.4.1.9 The Role of Human Communities in the Exercise of the Virtues

MacIntyre likens creating and sustaining human communities, including institutions, to that of a practice. The relationship between practices of this kind and the virtues is particularly close in two important ways. The virtues are learnt or not within the context of communities with their own institutional forms that have specific attitudes to political and social matters. The context within which the virtues are exercised matters to MacIntyre’s concept of a practice, and the liberal individualistic community of late modernity is not conducive to the exercise of the virtues, as no regard is paid to community; rather individuals pursue whatever type of life they choose. In contrast, the ancient and medieval view regards the virtues as necessary for sustaining political and social life, and an important task of parents in these societies is educating their children to become virtuous adults.

As depicted in the history of the virtues in the previous section of this chapter, the role of community in the moral life was central to a conception of the virtues, and Aristotle's concept of the human good has "an essentially societal dimension: excellence is not fixed and determined for all time, but is inextricably linked to the nature of one's society, and this in turn sets limits to the ability of individuals to 'create' their own conception of the good" (Horton and Mendus, 1994:7). As previously explained, the existence of a social and moral context has provided the means for defining and understanding the virtues throughout history. This is retained by MacIntyre in his concept of a practice, and indeed later on in his concepts of a whole human life and of a tradition. The challenge faced particularly by Western individualistic society is the loss of the concept of community. For example it seems that the looming crisis of global environmental destruction facing humanity - a challenge posed by our current social and moral context - presents an opportunity for a return to a form of community life where co-operation will be necessary for our mutual survival. Questioning the meaning of the virtues as occurred within the emerging democracy of Athenian society seems apt for leaders of character in our current age, who many attribute responsibility to in addressing the problems of climate change and global warming. This is a point raised in the RL literature and will be explored further in the following chapter.

The complex relationship of the virtues to practices and institutions means that tracing the history of political societies from the *polis* of ancient Greece through to the modern state is a history of practices and institutions intertwined with a moral history. The quality of institutions as the social embodiment of practices relies on the exercise of the virtues to maintain the integrity of practices. Some types of social institution are more suitable than others in fostering the virtues. For example, for Thomas Jefferson small farming communities were the ideal society for exercising the virtues; whilst Adam Ferguson's more sophisticated view regarded modern commercial society as inhospitable to some virtues (MacIntyre, 2007:195). Nurturing and maintaining communities which present opportunities for the virtues to be learnt and passed on to younger generations constitute a MacIntyrean view of morally good action. Pertinent

to the aim of this research in developing an understanding of leader character is the type of institutions leaders of character create and grow, and the extent to which they are able to rekindle communities as the social and moral context within which the virtues are understood and exercised. This point will be explored further in Chapter Six.

4.4.1.10 The Virtues and Their Relation to Internal and External Goods

Whilst the virtues form an inextricable part of internal goods and are necessary for the acquisition of such goods, they can limit or prevent a person from acquiring external goods. External goods are genuine goods and are necessary for the sustenance of human life and of the practices, and their distribution is the concern of the virtues of generosity and justice. However, human nature not guided by the virtues but by competition often results in winners and losers. Exercising the virtues in such a context where money and power often trump the virtues may lead to the loss of external goods. The role of the virtues in maintaining a balance between the pursuit of internal and external goods in society is paramount (MacIntyre, 2007:196). This could involve exercising the virtue of practical wisdom which involves good reasoning by applying sound principles from knowledge of the past and the present so as to decide well (Beabout, 2012:420).

In his 1994 essay: “A Partial Response to My Critics”, MacIntyre distinguishes between practices and institutions in his example of two fishing crews. One crew is representative of an institution in modernity is organised for the purpose of profit. The other crew is more traditional in its orientation. Suppose someone joins the traditional crew motivated initially by the money he will earn, but later learns from the crew “an understanding of a devotion to excellence in fishing and to excellence in playing one’s part as a member of such a crew” (MacIntyre, 1994:285). Although the goal of this crew is to support the crew’s members by providing each with an income, their goals extend to “the excellences internal to the practice of fishing” (Beabout, 2012:412). This would involve an emphasis on the excellent technical abilities of fishing, as well as the moral development of the fishing crew members, who would for example be prepared

to support each other when personal difficulties arose and would continue to express care and concern to the crew and their fishing community during difficult times. This example illustrates MacIntyre's point that participation in a productive practice means a concern for the commitment to the internal goods of that practice as well as to the external goods that support such a practice (2012:412).

4.4.1.11 Aristotelian and MacIntyrean Accounts of the Virtues

At this point in his argument MacIntyre raises the question of the extent to which this initial and partial account of the virtues is "faithful to the tradition" (MacIntyre, 2007:196) he has formulated, and how much it resembles an Aristotelian view. He points out that it is un-Aristotelian in two ways. In spite of its Aristotelian teleological roots, it is not aligned to Aristotle's metaphysical biology⁷⁸. Secondly, due to the vast array of human practices and the resulting range of goods pursued requiring the exercise of the virtues, conflicts are likely to arise which cannot be attributed solely to individual character flaws. As stated above it was Aristotle's metaphysical biology as well as his idea of the unity of the virtues that were the most vulnerable parts of his concept of the virtues. MacIntyre's view is that his "socially teleological account" (Ibid.: 197) of the virtues addresses these vulnerabilities of Aristotle's and strengthens his case. The notion of an internal good central to MacIntyre's concept of a practice is teleological as it is through internal goods that we achieve our *telos*, as explained above; whilst his concept of a practice is strongly social in its orientation.

4.4.1.11.1 The Impact of MacIntyre's Rejection of Aristotle's Metaphysics

MacIntyre's theory of virtue relies on Aristotle's notion of teleology – the idea that "natural substances are attracted to determinate ends" (Lutz, 2012:167). However MacIntyre does not rely on a "metaphysical explanation for teleology" (Ibid.: 173), as Aristotle's theory of virtue does. Metaphysics is "the branch of philosophy that deals

⁷⁸ Subsequent to MacIntyre's publication of *AV* he has reversed his position and acknowledges his error in rejecting Aristotle's metaphysical biology (MacIntyre, 1999). In his 1999a work "*Dependent Rational Animals*", MacIntyre acknowledges "the nature and extent of human vulnerability and disability" (Ibid.), and now embraces the animal nature of human nature in his conception of the virtues (Ibid.: xi).

with first principles especially of being and knowing” (*Collins Dictionary*, 1979) and enquires about “substances composed of matter and form” (2012:173). As modern scientific developments in human evolution render Aristotle’s metaphysical biology false⁷⁹, there is sound reason for MacIntyre to repudiate Aristotle’s metaphysics. Although Aristotle applies metaphysics in explaining his concept of teleology, he does not rely on metaphysics as “a guide to morals” (Ibid.: 169), nor as providing a “moral epistemology” (Ibid.), which explains why MacIntyre’s theory of virtue can withstand the rejection of Aristotle’s metaphysics yet remain faithful to the Aristotelian tradition.

MacIntyre points out that his notion of a practice, which forms part of his overall concept of the virtues, is Aristotelian in three ways. Firstly, to complete his concept of the virtues MacIntyre must elaborate on his concepts and distinctions in the way that Aristotle’s account requires: “voluntariness, the distinction between the intellectual virtues and the virtues of character, the relationship of both to natural abilities and to the passions and the structure of practical reasoning” (MacIntyre, 2007:197). MacIntyre is aware of the need for symmetry between his and Aristotle’s account of the virtues. Secondly, Aristotle’s notion of pleasure and enjoyment can be accommodated in MacIntyre’s account of the virtues extending across the range of internal and external goods. For example through achieving excellence in the practice of physics research one typically enjoys one’s achievement and the activity of achieving. Aristotle comments that although the enjoyment an activity brings and the enjoyment of achieving is not the end an agent aims at, both types of enjoyment lead to the same state.

Thirdly, MacIntyre’s account links explanation and evaluation “in a characteristically Aristotelian way” (2007:199). In analysing actions that either display the virtues or do not, an Aristotelian approach extends beyond evaluation to an explanation of why certain actions were performed rather than others. Aristotle and Plato were able to assess the state of an individual or of a city by explaining the injustice of a leader or the

⁷⁹ Aristotle regarded the forms that were the subject of his research as “active, immaterial, and immutable” (Lutz, 2012:174) and he explained that “evolution is impossible because the form gives the final cause that guides the development of each animal” (Ibid.).

courage displayed by its defenders. Such explanations are necessary for understanding the role that virtues and vices play in human life. This Aristotelian method of linking evaluation and explanation supported by MacIntyre is in contrast to much of the explanations offered by modern social science involving separation of ‘the facts’ from evaluation (Ibid.: 199).

4.4.1.12 Can the Core Concept of a Virtue Extend Beyond Practices?

MacIntyre is aware that his use of the notion of a practice to define and explain the virtues does not imply approval of all practices no matter the circumstances. As MacIntyre’s use of practices to define the virtues does not specify the goodness or correctness of practices, they are subject to moral critique, which could involve applying the virtues in such critiques. That the virtue of justice is necessary to sustain practices does not mean that a practice should be pursued if it violates the virtue of justice. MacIntyre has already indicated in a previous chapter of *AV* that the counterpart to a morality of the virtues is “a conception of moral law” (2007:200), which is constituted of practices. This leads MacIntyre to question whether practices have a place within a greater moral context and to suggest that the “core concept of a virtue” (Ibid.) extends beyond that of a practice. MacIntyre goes on to question the relevance of the virtues within the larger contexts of human life (Ibid.: 201). In reflecting on these questions MacIntyre returns to his point made when locating the virtues within practices that this was merely a partial and initial account. He is thus aware that the concept of a virtue needs to be broadened.

4.4.2 The Virtues and the Unity of a Human Life

MacIntyre’s theme of unity in how he conceives of a virtue within a human life resonates with Plato’s and Aristotle’s conceptions of the virtues emphasising unity. However where MacIntyre acknowledges that the reality of the moral life includes tragic conflict as illustrated by Sophocles, Plato and Aristotle follow a theoretical conception that lacks any account of conflict.

4.4.2.1 The Virtues Located within a Whole Human Life Which Can Be Called Good

Whereas for Aristotle the purpose and function of the virtues is located within “a type of whole human life which can be called good” (MacIntyre, 2007:201), MacIntyre locates the virtues within the context of practices, yet does not limit the exercise of the virtues to practices. By defining his concept of the virtues within practices MacIntyre comments on the inadequacy of such a definition in addressing the question: what is lacking in a human being who lacks the virtues? In considering this question two related questions arise: “What is the good life for man?” posed by Aristotle, and “What is the best kind of life for this kind of man or woman to live?” (2007:201.) These questions draw on key themes of Aristotle’s virtues that MacIntyre retains in seeking to develop the “conceptual unity” (Ibid.: 186) of the virtues. These themes are those of excellence with the aim of becoming an excellent human being; the virtues as the means to achieve the good and the best kind of life; and teleology, indicating that the good and the best life aims at the achievement of our ultimate *telos*, the outcome being *eudaimonia* or human flourishing.

As the moral life is broader than practices which do not encompass the whole of life as indicated by the above two questions regarding the good life and the best kind of life, MacIntyre explains why human life informed by his account of the virtues located within practices is defective. Firstly, it would be characterized by excessive conflict and arbitrariness. Although MacIntyre’s concept of a practice accommodates tragic conflict, and Aristotle’s view of the unity of the virtues does not, the multiplicity of goods exposed by practices can lead even the virtuous to being torn and confused regarding which direction to follow. The requirements of one practice may conflict with those of another leading to arbitrary rather than rational choices. MacIntyre gives the example of T.E. Lawrence who was unable to sustain a community supportive of the virtues and maintain his devotion to the demands of a particular practice. A similar conflict occurred in Gauguin’s life where he was torn between the commitments of family life and of the arts, resulting in his flight to Polynesia (2007:186.).

The aspect of agency or free choice so central to the virtues comes to the fore when considering how the virtues can pull us in opposing directions – “for when different goods summon in different and in incomplete directions, ‘I’ have to choose between their rival claims” (MacIntyre, 2007:202). MacIntyre reminds us that the Aristotelian notion of rationality including the ability for unfettered choice inherent to the virtues occurs within the context of modern society characterized by “criterionless choices” (Ibid.) Although this context can weaken our commitment to the virtues he asks us to consider the value we place on goods and virtues in our lives, and the authority we accord these goods.

Secondly, for a full understanding of individual virtues like justice and patience “an overriding conception of the *telos* of a whole human life, conceived as a unity” (MacIntyre, 2007:202) is necessary. For example, the virtue of justice as defined by Aristotle, means allocating each person what is his or her desert or due. Deserving well means making a substantial contribution to achieving those goods which, when shared and commonly pursued, form the basis of human community. However, the internal goods of practices including the practice of developing and sustaining community life require a form of ordering and evaluation to be able to determine relative desert. Thus, an understanding of the goods underpinning an Aristotelian concept of justice extends beyond the variety of goods informing practices. It is similar with the virtue of patience, which requires attentive waiting without complaint, while seeking to answer the question: “waiting for what?” (Ibid.). Such waiting could be to serve an overriding good, a *telos* which justified subordinating other goods beneath it. What constitutes the virtue of patience then depends on the rational ordering of a variety of goods in a hierarchy.

Having made his case for practices forming a partial conception of the virtues, MacIntyre reiterates why he needs to provide a fuller and more robust account. The moral life, when limited to the internal goods of practices, develops a “subversive arbitrariness” (2007:203), whilst the context of virtues like justice and patience cannot be adequately specified. MacIntyre identifies what his account of the virtues located

within practices lacks: a *telos* “constituting the good of a whole human life, the good of a human life conceived as a unity” (Ibid.). Such sense of unity and “wholeness of a human life” (Ibid.) which the moral life requires is also required for the virtue of constancy or integrity, and what Kierkegaard refers to as ‘purity of heart’ – ‘to will one thing’ (Ibid.) Such commitment to the virtues occurs within the context of a life viewed as a whole. Kierkegaard viewed constancy as crucial to the moral life consisting of obligations and commitments uniting the past and the future so as to give life a unity. The virtue of constancy, central to the work of the novelist Jane Austen, is a relatively recent addition to the history of the virtues (Hauerwas, 1983:24;MacIntyre, 2007:182).

In his desire to do justice to the Aristotelian tradition, MacIntyre raises a question, widely understood in the pre-modern world that provides the rationale for the concepts of the narrative unity of a human life and of a tradition, which he holds are necessary for a fuller account of the virtues:

Is it rationally justifiable to conceive of each human life as a unity, so that we may try to specify each such life as having its good and so that we may understand the virtues as having their function in enabling an individual to make of his or her life one kind of unity rather than another? (2007:203.)

MacIntyre seems to be seeking an understanding of the good within the unity of a human life. The role of the virtues, he suggests, is in enabling one to discover and live out a unity that will realize the good for one’s life. In developing his concept of the virtues within a whole human life, MacIntyre draws on the structure of narrative originating in heroic society, as the means for pursuing an intelligible understanding of the virtues. It is to the concept of the role of the virtues in exploring the good within the narrative unity of a human life which extend and enrich MacIntyre’s concept of the virtues beyond practices that we now turn.

The themes of deliberate and free human action and of what constitutes morally good action introduced above continue to be explored in this consideration of MacIntyre’s narrative unity of a human life.

4.4.2.2 The Impact of Modernity on our Conceptions of the Self

In expanding his concept of the virtues, MacIntyre shifts his focus from the world of work as the purview of practices to the self, as he explores the good within the narrative unity of a human life.

Our contemporary context with its partitioning of human life into segments is not conducive to providing the virtues with an adequate *telos*. In addition, philosophical obstacles arising from analytical philosophy, existentialism, and sociological theory detract from viewing human life as a whole. Analytical philosophy rationalizes atomistically about human action and analyses complex transactions and actions in the form of simple components. This means that the idea of a ‘basic action’ recurs in different contexts. Most modern forms of thinking are unaware that the nature of specific actions is determined by being connected to larger wholes. To view actions in this way means being open to seeing life as a unity rather than a series of separate incidents and actions. Creating firm separations between individuals and the roles they occupy as epitomized by Sartre’s existentialism and Ralf Dahrendorf’s sociological theory further entrenches the thinking that life lacks unity and is rather “a series of unconnected episodes” (MacIntyre, 2007:204). The self, conceived according to modern ways of thinking and practices as characterised by Sartre or the sociological theory of Goffman, is at odds with an Aristotelian concept of the virtues constituting the self⁸⁰. The effect of the Sartrian notion of separating the self from its roles is the loss of social relationships, which is the context within which Aristotelian virtues are exercised.

MacIntyre refers to the separation of the self from its roles as the “liquidation of the self” (Ibid.: 205) - a situation in which the self is unable to develop those dispositions necessary for exercising genuine Aristotelian virtues. A virtue is a disposition that grows and develops when exposed to a multitude of situations, as we are called to exercise the virtues across a broad range of situations encompassing the varied

⁸⁰ The self referred to here is a virtue ethics concept of the moral self and excludes notions of the self considered from other ethical perspectives and from other disciplines.

circumstances of life. For the unity of a virtue in a person's life makes sense only if it is "characteristic of a unitary life, a life that can be conceived and evaluated as a whole" (Ibid.). It is against the backdrop of late modernity characterized by a fragmented morality and the dissipation of selfhood, that MacIntyre introduces a concept of selfhood that supports his concept of the virtues which pre-date modernity. This concept is one of unity in the narrative of a human life linking birth with life and with death as the narrative of a beginning linking to a middle and an end (Ibid.).

4.4.2.3 A Concept of the Self to Support the Virtues

From MacIntyre's perspective the concept of the self faces obstacles posed by modernity. In spite of this, he believes this concept is necessary for supporting an understanding of the virtues as it resonates with lived experience, and is consistent with an Aristotelian concept of the virtues originating within the self. He asks us to reflect on our clearly correct yet often unconscious assumptions regarding our understanding of selfhood and human actions that reveal "how natural it is to think of the self in a narrative mode" (2007:206). Rudd (2007) concurs stating why narrative matters when thinking about personal identity.

MacIntyre claims three essential truths about persons. Firstly, the identity of human persons as temporal beings is one that continues through time. Secondly, a self or a person possesses self-consciousness. The self is therefore able to reflect on its own identity over time, unlike that of a substance like a tree. Thirdly, a person as an agent is "a being that acts for reasons"⁸¹ (Rudd, 2007:61). These truths about persons support MacIntyre's concept of narrative, which is concerned with the type of sense that makes an event intelligible in contrast to a mere description of a sequence of events.

MacIntyre's interest is in understanding the meaning of an action, rather than an explanation of an action. Making sense of an action requires placing it in its context, knowing the intention of the agent, the cultural and social settings through which intentions are rendered intelligible, and the intended action as a response to a past

⁸¹ Rudd notes: "I leave it open whether agency in this sense can be understood in compatibilist terms, or requires a libertarian account." (2007:72)

situation. Such information, although necessary, would only provide a sliver of the history of that narrative. MacIntyre's concept of narrative then is primarily concerned with the person and his or her actions i.e. the intentional agent⁸² (2007.: 62). Actions are understood when one knows *why* they were done and the reasons *for* doing them. This indicates that narratives are teleological as we seek reasons for acting rather than (efficient) causes, which is what modern behavioural science is concerned with. In MacIntyre's use of narrative as a unifying and intelligent concept to understand the self, the intentional agent as one who acts freely and deliberately is accommodated. This aligns with MacIntyre's concept of free and deliberate human action – a pre-requisite for moral responsibility.

Narrative is the means through which to understand the identity of a person because this “simply *is* the form in which self-conscious agents make themselves intelligible to themselves as agents persisting through time, and therefore through change” (Rudd, 2007:63). To remove narrative from one's understanding and to think of oneself simply as a living entity participating in a sequence of causal events, passively observing these events as they occur, “is not to think of myself as a *person* at all” (Ibid.). The concept of narrative is also significant for ethics, as illustrated in the work of the philosophers Ricoeur, Taylor, and MacIntyre. As personal identity is not defined by using a prior concept of narrative, so too there is no concept of narrative that is ethically neutral to define the main ethical tenets. This means that the good of narrative unity is an ethical concept and “the narrative unity of life as an ethical goal must itself be an ethical notion” (Ibid.: 67). The concept of narrative then seems to facilitate an understanding of the good by providing an intelligible understanding of the unified self, capable of acting freely and deliberately.

⁸² Rudd notes: “The term, ‘narrative’ is sometimes used more broadly than this and it is no doubt often harmless to call a description of causal processes in the physical world a narrative. But to avoid confusion while thinking philosophically about ‘narrative theory’ I think it is important to stick to the narrower sense suggested here; or at least, to be clear when one is moving between broader and narrower senses” (Ibid.).

4.4.2.4 Understanding Intentions

It is common to characterize the same form of human behaviour in a variety of ways. For example MacIntyre says there is a range of answers to the question: 'What is he doing?' 'Digging', 'Gardening', 'Taking Exercise', 'Preparing for Winter', or 'Pleasing his wife'. Some of these answers reveal the person's intentions, others the consequences of his actions which may be unintended, some of which he may be aware of and others he may not. To understand and explain his behaviour we first need to know how the various answers to the question of what he is doing relate to each other. His behaviour can be explained if we know his intention, for example if his main intention is to prepare the garden for winter, and the consequence of this is to satisfy his wife whilst getting in some exercise, this form of behaviour can be explained. If on the other hand, his main intention is satisfying his wife due to him exercising this is a different form of behaviour to be explained and understood. An analysis of the situation involves knowing the following facts: This behaviour takes place annually in a domestic setting and the intention motivating the behaviour arises within the particular context of the "narrative history" (MacIntyre, 2007:205) of this household in which this aspect of behaviour is an incident. In addition, this incident occurs within the "narrative history" (Ibid.) of a marriage. This simple example illustrates MacIntyre's point that intention is key to understanding and explaining human behaviour and intentions are understood within the particular setting in which they occur. Knowing this is what makes the intention behind human behaviour intelligible.

4.4.2.5 Accountability

MacIntyre's interest is in intelligible actions which he regards as the outcome of a person's motives, intentions, purposes, and passions. An action is intelligible if a person can be held accountable and can give an intelligible account of their action when called upon to do so. MacIntyre reminds us that only humans are accountable for their actions. Being unable to identify an occurrence arising from the intention of a person leaves one confused, not knowing whether to characterize the action as

intelligible or not. Such a situation renders one unable to distinguish between “the humanly accountable and the merely natural” (MacIntyre, 2007:209).

Actions can indeed cause confusion for example, on encountering a foreign culture, or social structures we are unfamiliar with in our own culture, or interactions with some forms of neurotic or psychotic patients whose actions are unintelligible to themselves and others. MacIntyre elaborates on what he means by intelligible actions by giving an example: whilst waiting for a bus someone in the queue says: ‘The name of the common wild duck is *Histrionicus histrionicus histrionicus*’. The problem arises not with the meaning of this sentence, but in the meaning of his action and why he uttered this sentence. One could infer that he utters this type of sentence randomly, which could be a type of madness. Such an action would be regarded unintelligible if he had incorrectly assumed that the person he was speaking to recently asked him: ‘Do you by any chance know the Latin name of the common wild duck?’. Or on just returning from his psychotherapist who recommended he speak to strangers to alleviate his shyness by saying anything whatsoever. Or he could be a Soviet spy uttering a code whilst waiting at a pre-arranged venue for the person who is able to identify him. In each case by uttering this sentence the act becomes intelligible once it locates its place in a narrative (MacIntyre, 2007:210), or as expressed by Kallenberg: “We can now understand her action because it has been put into a context. The contexts that make sense out of human action are *stories* or *narratives*” (2011:38). Hauerwas (2007) comments on the significance of intelligibility for human action: “I have always thought that the centre of MacIntyre’s work was his development of key arguments from Wittgenstein concerning the conditions necessary for our actions to be intelligible to others as well as ourselves” (2007:36). This is consistent with the Aristotelian theme of rationality unique to humans and central to exercising the virtues.

We now return to the concept of responsibility raised above in introducing the concept of human action as the subject of moral philosophy (Lutz, 2012:148 - 9). It was argued that deliberate free action requires that we make responsible choices in acting informed by our knowledge of what constitutes morally good action. This seems to

support MacIntyre's reasoning that intelligible actions are regarded as accountable actions, and is consistent with his concept of deliberate free action and his examination of "the notion of excellence in rational human agency" (Ibid.) The overlapping concepts of responsibility and accountability means that in taking responsibility for one's actions one understands that one is accountable for those actions. As rational beings our rationality is regarded as normative (Jacobs, 2001:1), so that the application of our rationality is necessary for us to know and act for the good. This gives further weight to the argument here that the concepts of responsibility and accountability underpinned by rationality are important elements of deliberate and free action, and form part of what constitutes a MacIntyrean understanding of morally good action.

4.4.2.6 Context

The context in which an action occurs is the arena for making an act intelligible. This idea originates from heroic society where virtues were understood within a particular context and social structure. Conversation is the most common form of context in which the speech-acts and purposes of actions are yielded intelligible. A conversation bears the marks of a dramatic work in which the actors and joint authors are the participants working out the format of their production either through agreement or disagreement. Conversations resemble plays and novels as they share the same literary form consisting of a beginning, middle, and an end and contain climaxes, and possibly even subplots and digressions. Conversation, a normal aspect of human behaviour is a medium that facilitates actions. It is conversations particularly and human actions in general that MacIntyre presents as "enacted narratives" (2007: 211). He argues for narrative form as essential to rendering action intelligible, and regards it as "neither disguise nor decoration" (Ibid.).

MacIntyre returns to the point he made at the beginning of his chapter that the narrative histories of individuals and the settings in which they experience life form the context for understanding a person's actions. This forms the basis for making sense of actions and judging them intelligible as action "has a basically historical character"

(2007:211-12). As the medium through which we live and understand our lives is that of narrative, this too is the means we use to understand others actions.

4.4.2.7 Constraints Impacting Narratives

MacIntyre claims that we are not totally free to write the narratives of our own choosing and that at best we are co-authors facing certain constraints. “We enter upon a stage which we did not design and we find ourselves part of an action that was not of our making. Each of us being a main character in his own drama plays subordinate parts in the dramas of others, and each drama constrains the others” (2007:213). MacIntyre locates the notion of intelligibility within the complexity of the dramas that constitute the narratives of our lives; and it is intelligibility that forms the conceptual link that connects the notions of action and of narrative. This concept of an intelligible action supersedes that of an action, and although the notion of ‘an’ action has practical importance it can be misleading. An action occurs as a moment within a history or a variety of histories, and understanding the concept of an action and of a history involves recognising the mutuality that exists between them – “each requires the other” (Ibid.: 214). Such understanding is dismissed by the philosopher Sartre whose theory of the self is consistent with modernity and holds that as narrative differs from life it is unable to portray human life authentically. A modernist view of human life lacks unity and consists rather of a series of discrete actions lacking any purpose or order.

MacIntyre disagrees with Marx’s view of human social life depicted in narrative form, which supports a predictable and law-governed way of life, as this is not reflective of the absolute unpredictability of real life as captured in “enacted dramatic narrative” (2007:214). Together with life’s unpredictable nature is a further crucial feature of all lived narratives – their teleological character. The living out of our lives, both individually and relationally occurs against the background of an idea of a potential shared future, in which some possibilities attract us whilst others we resist, some we seem barred from, and others seem inevitable. An image of the future, which is teleological in nature, always informs the present, and consists of a variety of goals or

ends, which we are either moving towards or failing to do so in the present. Unpredictability and teleology then form part of our lives and despite not knowing what lies ahead, the teleological nature of our lives leads us “towards our future” (2007:216). Maintaining an intelligible narrative in both our individual and social lives requires being aware of the constraints impacting the way the story continues *and* of the extensive range of ways that the story can continue within those constraints.

4.4.2.8 Humans as Story Tellers in Their Practice and in Their Actions

MacIntyre’s thesis thus far reveals that humans are essentially story tellers in their practice and in their actions. Through the history of our lives we become story tellers aspiring to the truth. The question posed prior to our own authorship that seeks to answer the question ‘What am I to do?’ is ‘Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?’ (2007:216). Our entry into human society is into “one or more imputed characters – roles into which we have been drafted” (ibid.) – and our task is learning what our roles are so that we can understand the way others respond to us and the way our responses to them are likely to be interpreted. MacIntyre’s view is that stories provide meaning to our lives beginning in childhood. Stories also help us to understand society, whether our own or others, and story-telling forms part of the moral tradition of the virtues from heroic society through to medieval times where stories were used to educate citizens into the virtues. Recognizing the stories that form part of one’s life, learning one’s role in those stories, and finding meaning in how to exercise the virtues within the context of those stories, all have a bearing on the research question being pursued concerning a MacIntyrean understanding of character. Considered from the perspective of Aristotle’s notion of the good citizen, are the stories posed by our current social and moral context that are relevant to the purpose of this research in developing a conceptual understanding of leader character, which will be explored in Chapter Six.

4.4.2.9 A Narrative Concept of Selfhood

MacIntyre explains his “narrative concept of selfhood” (2007:216) as follows: a person is as viewed by others in the way he or she lives out a story starting with their birth

and ending with their death. The person is the *subject* of his or her own history, with its own particular meaning. As the subject of a narrative beginning at a person's birth and ending at their death he or she is accountable for the experiences and actions that combine to create a narratable life. MacIntyre regards the nature of personal identity as "that identity presupposed by the unity of the character which the unity of a narrative requires" (Ibid.: 218), meaning personal identity is shaped by the particular narrative of that person's life.

Secondly, narrative selfhood is also correlative, meaning in addition to being accountable I can hold others to account, as our stories overlap. Providing an account of my actions and requesting an account from others of their actions forms an important part of what constitutes a narrative. The experience of giving accounts and of listening to the accounts of others is essential to all but the most basic narratives. Thus where the self lacks accountability the sequence of events constituting all narratives, barring the simplest cannot occur. A narrative is rendered unintelligible by a lack of accountability. What renders a narrative intelligible is the concept of accountability which ensures continuity in making a narrative and the actions constituting it intelligible.

The concepts of accountability, narrative, intelligibility, and personal identity are interconnected, and MacIntyre describes the relationship between these concepts as one of "mutual presupposition" (2007:218), with each concept presupposing the applicability of the other. Thus the concept of personal identity cannot be understood independently and separately from the concepts of accountability, narrative, and intelligibility, and all prior attempts to do so have failed. It seems then that MacIntyre has remained faithful to Aristotle's concept of the virtues constituting the self in his application of narrative as the means through which to understand the virtues within the context of a whole human life. MacIntyre indicates how the concepts of intelligibility and accountability are necessary and interconnected components of the moral self. In exercising the virtues the moral self is focused on the meaning of actions

occurring within a particular context, and acts with intention, in responding to a past situation.

4.4.2.10 The Narrative Unity of a Human Life

Given the above insights into the nature of identity and human action MacIntyre returns to a question he posed earlier: “In what does the unity of an individual life consist?” (2007:218). He answers that “its unity is the unity of a narrative embodied in a single life” (Ibid.). In seeking the good for one’s life one searches to know the best way of living out that unity and bringing it to completion, and this is the good for each human to discover. Such seeking and discovering in words and in actions provides unity in the moral life, leading to MacIntyre’s claim that: “The unity of a human life is the unity of a narrative quest” (Ibid.: 219). He equates the standards for success or failure in a narrative quest with the standards for success or failure in human life considered as a whole. What is the subject of such a quest he asks? The medieval concept of a quest bears two key features of relevance. Firstly, to initiate a quest some understanding of the final *telos* must be known, even if partly. This touches on some knowledge of the human good, which originates from the questions posed in trying to transcend the limitations exposed by the concept of the virtues originating through practices. Initially defining the type of life that signifies a quest for the good involves searching for an impression of *the* good to enable the ordering of other goods, for an impression of *the* good to enable a broadening of our understanding of the content and purpose of the virtues, for an impression of *the* good to enable our understanding of the place of constancy and integrity in life.

Secondly, the medieval concept of a quest is not concerned with something known and “adequately characterized” (2007:219) for example miners searching for gold. It is in the experience of a quest that one copes with and encounters a variety of dangers, temptations, harms, and distractions which determine the incidents and episodes of a quest that one comes to understand the goal of such a quest. This is consistent with MacIntyre’s earlier point that unpredictability and teleology form part of our lives. We are sustained in our particular quest for the good by the virtues as they facilitate us in

conquering the dangers, distractions, temptations, and harms confronting us and which develop our self-knowledge and knowledge of the good.

MacIntyre draws on the medieval concept of a quest in considering the role of virtues within practices. As any situation can be fraught with difficulties and temptations, the virtues are necessary for achieving the excellence of practices. MacIntyre envisages the role of the virtues exercised within practices in his initial definition of a virtue (cited earlier), followed by his subsequent definition of a virtue, which includes his concept of a quest:

A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods (2007:191).

The virtues therefore are to be understood as those dispositions which will ... sustain us in the relevant kind of quest for the good, by enabling us to overcome the harms, dangers, temptations and distractions which we encounter, and which will furnish us with increasing self-knowledge and increasing knowledge of the good (2007:219)

The range of the virtues include those necessary for sustaining the types of households and political communities in which people search for the good together, and include those virtues that facilitate philosophical enquiry concerning the nature of the good. It is at this point that MacIntyre proposes his provisional conclusion about the good life for humans: “the good life for man is the life spent in seeking for the good life for man, and the virtues necessary for the seeking are those which will enable us to understand what more and what else the good life for man is” (2007:219). What can be gleaned from MacIntyre’s conclusion is the importance of the search for the good indicating a moral responsibility to commit to such a search, drawing on the virtues for sustenance and guidance on this lifelong journey.

In posing the question whether it is rationally justifiable to conceive of each human life as a unity, MacIntyre has applied the concept of narrative in searching for the good within the unity of a human life. He has indicated how the concept of narrative can

facilitate an understanding of the good by providing an intelligible means of conceiving of the unified moral self, capable of acting freely and deliberately.

4.4.3 The Concept of a Tradition

MacIntyre acknowledges that his task of defining the virtues has extended beyond practices to include locating them in relation to the good life for humans. However his account of the virtues remains incomplete and necessitates a third stage. In seeking the good or exercising the virtues one does so not only *qua* individual. The reason is partly because living the good life varies according to circumstances despite there being a common set of virtues and a common conception of the good life exhibited in a human life.

What constitutes the good life varies depending on one's role and the social context within which one lives. MacIntyre gives the examples of a fifth-century Athenian general, a medieval nun, and a seventeenth-century farmer to illustrate this point (2007:220). In addition people approach their own circumstances as inhabitants of a specific social identity, in which a range of roles are inherited, like the daughter or son of someone, the cousin or aunt of someone else, a citizen of a particular city, a member of a particular profession, a member of a certain tribe, clan or nation. What this means is that my good must accord with the good of one inhabiting these roles, as my inheritance stems from "the past of my family, my city, my tribe, my nation, a variety of debts, inheritances, rightful expectations and obligations" (2007:220). All of these form the "given of my life, my moral starting point" (Ibid.). It is partly this that provides my life with its "own moral particularity" (Ibid.).

Such a thought does not resonate with modern individualism, which holds that I choose my identity and am free to question what I regard as merely incidental social characteristics of my existence. From the perspective of modern individualism, the moral identity of a person is chosen and depends on the individual's preferences, whereas from the perspective of the virtues the moral identity of a person is largely inherited from one's past. At this point in his argument MacIntyre introduces the concept of responsibility by commenting that although I may be a legal citizen of a

country, I do not regard myself as responsible for the actions of my country both in the past and the present unless I choose such responsibility. This is consistent with the concept of the free and deliberate choice that characterises human agency derived from Aristotle and maintained by MacIntyre. Of relevance to the research question concerning a MacIntyrean understanding of character is an acknowledgement and acceptance of one's inheritance stemming from one's past which infuses one's identity and provides one's life with its unique "moral particularity" (2007:220).

A relevant example is the young white South African born after the advent of democracy in 1994 who maintains she is not responsible for the social ills arising from Apartheid, and chooses not to be responsible for what occurred in the past. Such an attitude holds that the self can detach from its historical and social roles and positions in society. The self so detached, aligned to Goffman's or Sartre's perspective is devoid of history. This contrasts with the narrative view of the self, which holds that my identity derives from the story of those communities in which my life story is always embedded in. I am born with a history and cutting myself off from that history, as modern individualism does, deforms my current relationships. Possessing a social identity and possessing a historical identity concur. There is no need for the self, whose moral identity is tied to its community bonds of family, neighbourhood, town, and tribe, to remain within the "moral limitations" (MacIntyre, 2007:221) of these various types of community. Although these communities provide the necessary grounding and moral starting point, it is in moving on from this point that one searches for the good and the universal.

The self therefore owes a key part of its identity to the particular past it has inherited, which remains in the present, albeit partially. I am connected to a history, whether I am accepting of it or not, or whether I acknowledge it or not and this makes me "one of the bearers of a tradition" (2007:221). MacIntyre's application of history in comprehending the self resonates with his acknowledgement of the role of history in practices, which provide a practice with a manner of understanding it which has been passed down through its history. The role of the virtues encompasses sustaining the

relationships necessary for practices, whether these relationships are to the past, the present, or the future. MacIntyre comments that practices are imparted and reshaped through traditions which, rather than existing in isolation, form part of greater social traditions.

MacIntyre then tackles the question of what makes a tradition. He begins by acknowledging that all forms of reasoning occur within the context of a traditional manner of thought that can extend beyond the limitations of previous reasoning in that tradition through invention and criticism. This applies to medieval logic as well as to modern physics. Part of what constitutes a tradition in good order is an argument concerning the goods and their pursuit that provides the tradition with its specific point and purpose. Of central importance to the life of an institution, whether a university, a farm, or a hospital, as upholder of a tradition of one or a number of practices, is a continuous argument about the point and purpose of such an institution. The same applies to the question of what constitutes good farming or good medicine. What characterizes a healthy tradition are “continuities of conflict” (2007:222). MacIntyre’s concept of a tradition, like much of the rest of his work, has no place in individualistic modernity.

The pursuit of goods within a tradition extends across generations. The search for an individual’s good occurs for the most part within a context whose traditions form part of that individual’s life. This applies to the goods of an individual life as well as to the goods internal to practices. The principle of embedding that applies to narrative is crucial once again: through the greater history of a tradition which conveyed the practice in its current form, the history of a practice is made intelligible and is embedded; and through the greater histories of a number of traditions the history of each individual life is embedded and made intelligible. As traditions are susceptible to degeneration, and disintegration, leading to their disappearance, MacIntyre questions what strengthens and keeps traditions alive and what leads to their weakening and destruction. MacIntyre defines the virtues in relation to traditions as:

Those virtues which enable their possessors to pursue both their own good and the good of the tradition of which they are the bearers even in situations defined by the necessity of tragic, dilemmatic choice (2007:223).

MacIntyre is in no doubt that it is the exercise of the virtues that sustain traditions, and their absence that leads to their demise. He holds that the meaning and purpose of the virtues is to sustain those relationships required for achieving the goods internal to practices, and to sustain the nature of an individual life which enables an individual to seek the good as the “good of his or her whole life” (2007:223). The traditions which provide individual lives and practices with their historical context also require the virtues for their sustenance. The virtues of honesty, justice, courage and the applicable intellectual virtues sustain traditions, as well as the practices and institutions that embody traditions, whilst their lack corrupts traditions.

Implicit in this is the recognition of an additional virtue - that of understanding the traditions one belongs to and those one confronts. Rather than a nostalgic hankering after the past, understanding a tradition involves a sense of grasping “those future possibilities which the past had made available to the present” (2007:223). As living traditions entail a continuous and on-going narrative, the nature of any future they confront is derived from the past. This type of virtue provides a “capacity for judgment” (Ibid.) in knowing how to apply generalizations or maxims in particular situations, and enables one to pursue one’s own good as well as the good of the tradition to which one belongs even when one faces dilemmas involving tragic choice. When such tragic situations are faced forcing one to confront two forms of good MacIntyre suggests that knowing what the good life for a human is may involve knowing a better rather than a worse way to live through such situations. In facing two forms of good *both* alternative choices lead to a good which is both real and substantial. When considering what would be better or worse for someone facing a tragic choice between two forms of good depends on the nature of an intelligible narrative which gives a life its unity (2007:224 - 225).

4.5 A MacIntyrean Understanding of Character

The purpose of this final part of the chapter is to provide an understanding of character from MacIntyre's perspective. As MacIntyre does not deal with the concept of character directly such an understanding will be extracted from his treatment of the virtues in *AV* as explained above. The relevance of the virtues to this discussion is that the virtues constitute character according to Aristotle, as discussed in Chapter Three. MacIntyre upholds this view although extends it to account for *inter alia* our social and moral context reflective of late modernity. In addition, in MacIntyre's treatment of the virtues he is mindful of how the passage of time dating from the origin of the virtues in heroic society to late modernity has shaped various understandings of the virtues, and his appreciation of the long and rich history of the virtues is woven into his account and is reflected in his philosophical method which is partly historical. Evidence of the significance of MacIntyre's contribution to the virtue tradition is that: "AV is no longer a single work; it has become the foundation for a tradition" (Lutz, 2012:192).

Understanding why MacIntyre develops and approaches the virtues in the way that he does provides the context for a full understanding of MacIntyre's view of the virtues which constitute character. Although this ground has already been covered above it is useful to highlight some key themes again as a background to understanding MacIntyre's view of character.

4.5.1 Background to Understanding MacIntyre's Concept of Character

A MacIntyrean concept of character is understood from a teleological perspective, and against the moral and social context that gives meaning to the virtues. Modern conceptions of morality, which MacIntyre regards as unintelligible are not conducive to a MacIntyrean understanding of character.

4.5.1.1 The Unintelligibility of Modern Conceptions of Morality

MacIntyre develops his concept of the virtues partly in response to the Enlightenment and its impact on how morality came to be understood. This view of morality persists and has influenced the subject of analytical philosophy to the extent that MacIntyre

regards it as unintelligible. What is striking when reading MacIntyre's *AV* is the importance he places on the intelligibility of moral philosophy – it is a recurring and persistent theme running through his account of the virtues from his concepts of practices, through the narrative unity of a whole human life, to traditions. He regards our prevailing moral paradigms as incapable of rationality and intelligibility (Horton and Mendus, 1994:3). This seems to be why MacIntyre is at pains to stress how his account of the virtues is intelligible. He responds to this state of affairs in *AV* by developing an “adequate morality” (Murphy, 2003:7) underpinned by a “conception of rationality” (Ibid.: 7), that is robust enough to accommodate such a morality. This led him to search for a different way of researching moral philosophy resulting in his method which is a historical “account of rationality in inquiry” (Murphy, 2003:7).

4.5.1.2 The Concept of Teleology as Necessary for Intelligibility

The reason for the unintelligibility of modern morality is the lack of the concept of teleology abandoned by the Enlightenment thinkers. Aristotle's concept of teleology applied to the virtues provides “an understanding of the conditions necessary for our actions to be intelligible” (Hauerwas, 2007:38). Aristotle's theory of the virtues explains why our actions need an end or purpose to be understood. Such actions also require the type of political and social conditions necessary for sustaining a life moulded by the virtues that constitute that end. MacIntyre discovered that his study of the human good needed to be grounded in metaphysics as: “It is only because human beings have an end toward which they are directed by reason of their specific nature that practices, traditions, and the like are able to function as they do” (2007:38). This is contrasted with modern conceptions of morality that deny our actions have any purpose; instead we are free to choose whatever conception of morality we please (Horton and Mendus, 1994:6). A virtue ethics understanding of the human good is that it is purposeful and directed towards our ultimate end which is the fulfilment of our nature as excellent human beings. It is the exercise of the virtues, which constitute character, that enable us to achieve this end.

4.5.1.3 Moral and Social Context for Understanding the Virtues

What MacIntyre's detailed study of the history of the virtues dating back to the earliest times reveals is the importance of the moral and social context for an understanding of what constitutes a virtue, as well as of how the virtues should be exercised within a particular society. MacIntyre's account of the virtues which inform his understanding of character accommodates the moral and social context of modernity and post modernity in his view of the virtues located within the concepts of practices, the narrative unity of a whole human life, and tradition. Writing his first edition of *AV* in 1981 MacIntyre occupies a unique position in the history of the virtues with his lived and felt experience of the effects of modern moral philosophy on our understanding of the human good, coupled with his reflection on an alternative view of this good spanning two and a half millennia consisting of a rich tradition of philosophical and theological thought. This understanding of our social and moral reality underpinned by the philosophical frameworks of modern morality coupled with the fragments of the virtue tradition form the context for MacIntyre's account of the virtues.

Given the nature of virtue ethics and the moral and social context of late modernity the concept of moral responsibility has been highlighted in the previous section of this chapter as it is regarded as relevant to a MacIntyrean understanding of character, in light of the concept of RL and the concept of leader character.

4.5.2 A MacIntyrean Understanding of Character

The following explanation of a MacIntyrean understanding of character adopts the same structure as MacIntyre's account of the virtues by beginning with practices, followed by the narrative unity of a whole human life, and tradition.

4.5.2.1 Understanding Character through MacIntyre's Concept of a Practice

Central to a MacIntyrean understanding of character is the virtues which MacIntyre conceives of as being exercised within his concept of a practice. MacIntyre views the role of practices as enabling the virtues exercised within the moral and social context of late modernity. A feature of this context is MacIntyre's concept of an institution

housing a practice which is relevant to this research concerning the character of a leader operating within a business context. Included in MacIntyre's concept of an institution are internal and external goods. Internal goods, as the outcome of exercising the virtues and applying skills within a practice leads to the perfection of the person participating in such a skill. This type of perfection refers to the moral development of a person who is enabled to move towards achieving his or her own telos (Moore, 2017:57-58). Practices that lie at the heart of institutions, while external goods are the outcomes of functioning institutions and necessary for the continued existence of practices. In considering the role of internal and external goods in sustaining practices and institutions essential for a functioning society, is a sense of moral responsibility particularly for those who lead institutions. As argued earlier, Aristotle's themes of the good person *and* the good citizen are pertinent to MacIntyre's concepts of practices and institutions and form part of a MacIntyrean understanding of character. As the scope of a leader's responsibility for guiding and sustaining institutions is significant and has a bearing on the concept of RL, it will be explored in the following chapter.

Underlying MacIntyre's concept of a practice is human action. When examined from a moral philosophical perspective attention is paid to the nature of such action and a virtue understanding is that it is freely chosen action in accordance with deliberated desire. Excellence is associated with virtue and motivates rational human agency, as does moral awareness in considering the impacts of choices and actions on agents (Lutz, 2012:148 -9). How we choose to act and the impact of our actions thus has a bearing on the self and will be returned to in chapters five six.

A MacIntyrean understanding of character then incorporates the element of human action involving participation and co-operation occurring within society – the moral and social context for exercising the virtues. The type of participation and co-operation practices require are attitudes impacting choice and action. Given the moral nature of a virtue, the type of action referred to here is morally good action. Such attitudes of participation and co-operation necessary for character are consistent with a

community-oriented view of society MacIntyre supports. The exercise of virtue within a practice is essential to the realization of internal goods, being the only form of good through which we achieve our ultimate purpose or *telos* and thus lie at the heart of character. A commitment to the exercise of internal goods that characterize practices leads to the development of character.

Central to the concept of a practice is excellence – a concept lying at the heart of virtue. Excellence characterizes the activities of practices as well as the person, who in exercising the virtues becomes an excellent character. Excellence defines a MacIntyrean understanding of character and is manifest in the character of the person living the virtues in the activities entailed in practices, as well as in the outputs of practices like products and services and the institutions which support practices. MacIntyre acknowledges the fact that human action incorporating the activity of work is a key part of human life in his reference to the extension of human powers. A commitment to excellence and the human good through the exercise of virtue enables human development and the growth of character. An argument that will be further developed in Chapter Six is that we are responsible for developing excellent character.

Included in MacIntyre's definition of a practice are *inter alia* the themes of quest for the good and overcoming the harms, dangers, temptations and distractions encountered on a quest. The medieval notion of a quest is a life journey along which are encountered a variety of harms, dangers, temptations, and distractions, and the virtues provide strength and sustenance in overcoming the evils confronted along this journey. A MacIntyrean understanding of character incorporates this notion of life as a quest with the virtues enabling and guiding one to persevere on the path of human goodness that defines one's life journey.

Finally, an understanding of character through MacIntyre's concept of a practice incorporates the activity of moral reflection in considering how ends and goods are conceived.

4.5.2.2 Understanding Character through MacIntyre's Concept of the Narrative Unity of a Whole Human Life

MacIntyre presents his concept of narrative as one of unity so addressing a problem identified above that with such differences and incompatibilities in conceptions of the virtues it is still possible for there to be unity in the concept or in its history. Understanding character through his concept of a narrative then involves viewing character holistically. The sense of unity and wholeness that pervades MacIntyre's concept of a narrative is not supported by modern moral philosophy and as this is the prevailing framework underpinning our present social and moral context, a narrative understanding of character is at odds with our current context. This highlights the need for the virtue of courage in particular as surviving and thriving in such a context requires one to swim against the tide of conventional ways of thinking and conducting oneself. As MacIntyre's concept of narrative is borne out of his need to present the virtues intelligibly, to understand character is to recognize the central theme of intelligibility rooted in ancient Greek philosophy, lying at the core of this concept. Returning to the theme of action so central to moral philosophy, MacIntyre's interest is in intelligible action and his concept of narrative accommodates such action. He regards intelligible action as the outcome of a person's motives, intentions, purposes, and passions. As he conceives of narrative teleologically with its purpose the good, an understanding of character entails motives, intentions, purposes, and passions oriented to the good issuing in free and deliberate action.

Aristotle conceived of the virtues constituting the self⁸³ and MacIntyre adopts this thesis in his conception of the self, which is one of unity within the narrative of a human life. This unity is represented by a common thread linking birth with life and with death just as a story that makes sense consists of a beginning, a middle and an ending. Such a concept of the unified self is, not surprisingly, the antithesis of a modern moral conception of the self, which MacIntyre refers to as the "liquidation of the self" (MacIntyre, 2007:205). To understand character through MacIntyre's concept

⁸³ As the concept of self extends beyond the virtues this is a reference to the moral self, understood from a virtue ethics perspective.

of a narrative means to acknowledge the centrality of the virtues to the self. This seems to indicate that the moral self and character are one and leads to the question: how does MacIntyre view the unified self within his concept of narrative? Such a self has a unity of purpose arising from the teleological nature of actions it undertakes aimed at the good. The self seeks and discovers this good by making sense of actions undertaken against the backdrop of an unfolding narrative of a life, characterized by intelligible purpose and action. Developing and exercising the virtues involving free and deliberate action encompassing responsibility and accountability within the narrative of a life constitute the good of the unified self, which is character. Such a unified self represents a wholeness of self, which is characteristic of character.

In recognising the need to extend his concept of the virtues located within a practice MacIntyre develops his concept of the narrative unity of a human life after considering a question with Aristotelian roots: what is the good life for humankind? Closely related to this question is: what is the best kind of life for this kind of man or woman to live? Recognising the inability of his concept of the virtues located within a practice to accommodate a *telos* “constituting the good of a whole human life, the good of a human life conceived of as a unity” (MacIntyre, 2007:203), provides the rationale for the development of the concept of the narrative unity of a whole human life. Reflecting on the best kind of life to live touches on the theme of excellence so central to a virtue and by implication, to character. Living the best kind of life understood within the concept of the narrative unity of a whole human life is an unfolding and continuing discovery – referred to by MacIntyre as a narrative quest. Such a quest involves a search for the good so as to discover the best kind of life to live and the best way of living out that life. As a quest is beset with dangers and temptations, the virtues are necessary in overcoming the evil encountered on a particular quest or journey of life. Such a quest is conducted within the narrative of a life comprising a unity. Character understood through MacIntyre’s concept of a narrative then is a commitment to such a quest in which the exercise of the virtues is evident.

The concept of narrative raises the aspect of stories that form part of one's life. A MacIntyrean understanding of character recognises stories and that one learns one's role in those stories, and finds meaning in how to exercise the virtues within the context of those stories. Such stories form part of the moral and social context within which character is understood, and as mentioned previously, in addition to one's own stories arising from one's identity, are those arising from one's role as a good citizen. Of relevance to the concept of leader character are those stories concerning our global societal context including *inter alia*, climate change, poverty, and inequality that challenge responsible leaders, as raised in Chapter Two.

4.5.2.3 Understanding Character through MacIntyre's Concept of Tradition

As MacIntyre's concept of a tradition builds on his previous concepts of practices and of the narrative unity of a whole human life, to understand character through his concept of tradition assumes an acceptance of character understood through his concepts of practices and of narrative unity. MacIntyre's concept of tradition broadens an understanding of virtue and moves beyond reflecting on the good for an individual to the good for an individual within her role in its societal context. The relevance of one's role to tradition is that such a role carries moral responsibilities inherited from one's own unique history that impact one's social identity. This identity is partly constituted of roles one inherits arising from one's past encompassing the facts concerning one's family, community, culture, and country. This range of roles exposes a "variety of debts, inheritances, rightful expectations and obligations" (MacIntyre, 2007:220) that occur within one's societal context. One's good within this context accords with the good of one inhabiting these roles, as in the case of the late Nelson Mandela who set the standard for forgiveness within a society characterized by its history of racial discrimination and the repression of one tribe over another. Understanding MacIntyre's concept of character through his concept of tradition means acknowledging and accepting the moral responsibilities arising from one's particular inherited social roles - what MacIntyre refers to as one's "moral starting point" (Ibid.) - and aligning one's good with the good of one inhabiting these roles. His

concept of character includes one's social and moral identity, partly inherited, providing a life with its unique "moral particularity" (2007:220).

Accepting one's inherited roles arising from the facts of one's identity involves choosing to accept responsibility for the history that defines one. This is consistent with the notion of freely chosen deliberate action underlying MacIntyre's understanding of virtue. Understanding character through MacIntyre's concept of tradition means understanding one's social identity as tied to one's historical identity and being prepared to make choices that reflect one's responsibility in owning this identity, whatever it may demand of one. MacIntyre's understanding of character, although accepting of one's social and historical identity, is not limited by this identity and one is expected, as part of one's narrative quest, to seek the good in one's current context that is universal (MacIntyre, 2007:221).

MacIntyre's understanding of tradition means acknowledging one's connection to a history that makes one the bearer of a tradition (2007:221). Maintaining the relevance of a tradition involves critical argument and on-going debate about the meaning of the good and the goods of the tradition, which provide the tradition with its specific point and purpose (Ibid.: 222). To maintain the health of a tradition the exercise of practical wisdom becomes necessary. To understand character through MacIntyre's concept of a tradition means to recognize the pivotal role of history in shaping a tradition. It also means displaying commitment to maintaining a healthy tradition by engaging with other participants in on-going dialogue about the good so as to maintain its point and purpose.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to pursue the research question: what is a MacIntyrean understanding of character. The main text consulted was *AV*, MacIntyre's seminal work in which he develops his contribution to the tradition of virtue ethics. The initial section of the chapter began with a description of MacIntyre's understanding of moral enquiry, which provided the background to his method of philosophical enquiry. This was followed by a description of the application of his

method in assessing the state of our modern and post-modern society. The following section provided a history of the virtues as a background to understanding MacIntyre's contribution to the virtue tradition. This was followed by MacIntyre's argument for the tradition of the virtues comprising practices, the narrative unity of a whole human life, institutions encompassing internal and external goods, and tradition. The underlying theme of moral responsibility relevant to this study of leader character located in the field of RL was emphasised in this section of the chapter. The final section of the chapter addressed the research question concerning a MacIntyrean understanding of character. As MacIntyre's work has been applied *inter alia* to the field of business ethics, an exploration of the aspects of this field of study that are relevant to the concepts of character and leader character in business, will be explored in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five

A Business Ethics Study Applying the Virtue Theory of Aristotle and MacIntyre, with a Focus on the Flourishing of Leaders

Introduction

As discussed in Chapter Two, this research applies a humanities perspective to the study of leader character, located within the emerging construct of RL. Consistent with such a view is the application of moral philosophy to business. Ciulla, who advocates the humanities as a way of understanding the whole of leadership explains that philosophers, amongst others, depict aspects of the human condition within the context of history (Snow, 1998:2, as cited in Ciulla, 2008:395). Aristotle's and MacIntyre's moral philosophical insights into the human condition have been applied by business ethics scholars to the context of business and it is this literature that is drawn on here in initiating the argument for the concept of leader character, understood within the emerging construct of RL, which will be completed in Chapter Six.

Before proceeding with the task of this chapter which is to establish the argument for developing the concept of leader character from a virtue ethics perspective, a review of the overall argument thus far is necessary to ensure clarity and to explain the movement from the field of leadership in Chapters One and Two, to moral philosophy in Chapters Three and Four, and to business ethics in Chapters Five and Six. Chapter One identified the problem of the lack of understanding of the concept of leader character from a research perspective leading to the research question: what is leader character? The emerging construct of RL was identified as suitable for pursuing an understanding of leader character as it seems to resonate with the moral philosophy of virtue ethics – the perspective from which leader character is researched. Chapter Two provided an account of the emerging construct of RL, made a case for leader character lying at the core of RL (Ciulla, 1998; Solomon, 1999; George, 2003), and considered what makes a responsible leader (Maak and Pless, 2006). To pursue an understanding of leader character requires a prior understanding of the virtue ethics concept of

character. Chapter Three thus focused on gaining an Aristotelian understanding of character by drawing on the moral philosophy of Aristotle. Similarly, Chapter Four drew on the moral philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre to gain a MacIntyrean understanding of character.

Building on the understanding of character developed in chapters three and four the focus of this chapter shifts to the character of the leader explored within the construct of RL, from a humanities perspective, specifically virtue ethics. In view of the recognition among RL scholars that responsibility is key to leadership (e.g., Waldman and Galvin, 2008:327; Kempster and Carroll, 2016:3; Voegtlin, 2016:587), a case for moral responsibility as an important constituent of the virtues was made in Chapter Two. In addition, given the unique challenges concerning power and trust confronting leaders (Ciulla, 2001:315), the need for the moral maturity of responsible leaders was acknowledged. The theme of moral responsibility continues through chapters three and four in the study of character, consisting of the virtues, from an Aristotelian and a MacIntyrean perspective, and is maintained in this chapter and in the next.

In developing the concept of leader character the focus turns to the Aristotelian concept of flourishing (*eudaimonia*), specifically the flourishing of leaders, and how it is facilitated or not within the bounds of late modern society. Whereas this chapter is concerned with what impedes the flourishing of leaders and how such flourishing can be enabled, the following chapter seeks to answer the research question: what is leader character?

MacIntyre's Insight into the Character of the Manager

Guiding this study of leader character is MacIntyre's insight regarding the manager who "emerges as a central *character* in the social drama of the present age" (Beabout, 2013:4). This is a reference to the character of the manager identified by MacIntyre in *AV* as a characteristic feature of late modernity (2007:30). Although MacIntyre's reference to the manager differs from the concept of leadership pursued in this research, his insights regarding the character of the manager are significant to this study and are applied to the concept of leadership and leader character throughout

the chapter. As discussed in Chapter Four, MacIntyre regards the structures of capitalism as averse to the exercise of the virtues, and he identifies the manager operating within these structures as amoral. In a similar vein, in his reference to the theme of moral responsibility, central to the exercise of the virtues, MacIntyre refers to “a type of social and cultural order whose structures to some large degree inhibit the exercise of the powers of moral agency” (1999:327). MacIntyre’s insights concerning the character of the manager and how modern society impedes character development are critical in developing the concept of leader character in this chapter and in the next.

MacIntyre assesses the character of the manager operating within the structures of liberal capitalism from his perspective as a moral philosopher. The virtue concept of leader character pursued in this research is from the same perspective, incorporating MacIntyre’s philosophical insights, ideas, and critiques, mindful of the opportunities for further business ethics research his work presents. The work of various MacIntyrean and Aristotelian business ethics scholars regarded as pertinent to the concept of leader character will be drawn on in this chapter and in the next.

Structure of the Chapter

As MacIntyre regards the prevailing social and cultural order of late modernity as an impediment to the exercise of moral agency and thus of character, the first section of this chapter considers the reasons for this by focusing on the character of the manager – an archetype MacIntyre regards as representative of the social order of emotivism. Continuing with this theme, MacIntyre’s concept of moral agency matched by an understanding of moral responsibility extending beyond an individual’s role, contributes to a fully developed virtue understanding of moral responsibility considered helpful to an understanding of the concept of leader character. Consistent with MacIntyre’s view of the moral agent’s responsibility deriving from the social structures he or she inhabits, a case is made for the moral concept of the whole, undivided self. This morally mature self provides a partial understanding of the

research question being pursued concerning the concept of leader character that will be developed fully in Chapter Six.

So as to better understand the nature of leader character this chapter considers how the social structures of capitalism impact the flourishing of leaders of character at the societal level in section 2, and at the institutional level in section 3. From the perspective of the whole moral self and the understanding of moral responsibility developed in section one, section 2 considers the type of societal context hospitable to accommodating a virtue concept of leader character. The societal context proposed is an Aristotelian understanding of organization, society and politics provided by Morrell (2012), in keeping with the social and moral nature of virtue ethics, which is sensitive to context (Morrell, 2012:67), and congruent with the societal and normative aspects of RL. The argument to be developed is that the emerging construct of RL with its emphasis on society and citizenship could be extended by applying Morrell's Aristotelian framework. As the focus of this research is leadership, MacIntyre's insights concerning the manager will be extended to leadership, specifically RL.

In the third section of the chapter Moore's practice-institution combination (2002; 2005a; 2005b; 2008) drawing on MacIntyre's concepts of practice and institution comprising internal and external goods, is discussed and proposed as an alternative to the type of organisation MacIntyre regards as inimical to human and societal flourishing. This organisation – the virtuous institution – is regarded as compatible with Morrell's Aristotelian societal framework, and seems well-suited to pursuing the virtue concept of leader character. While MacIntyre's critique of the business manager is rich in insight, it will be argued that he is, in certain respects, unnecessarily scathing and out of touch with current business developments. In the final section, a critique of MacIntyre's view of capitalism together with an argument for a fairer form of capitalism, compatible with the virtue concept of leader character is offered. This is followed by a critique of MacIntyre's view of management and a view of leadership that addresses his emotivist concerns proposed by this research.

The Moral and Social Context of Late Modernity

The broader moral and societal context is central to an understanding of both virtue ethics and to the emerging construct of RL within which the concept of leader character is understood. MacIntyre's insights about how social structures, in particular those of late modernity, impact the character of the manager provide the starting point for the focus of this chapter, which is to consider what constitutes a conducive moral and societal context that will enable leaders to flourish.

5.1 Modern Social Structures and Their Impact on the Character of the Manager

As human beings are conditioned and shaped by their social structures (Beabout, 2013:79), MacIntyre's reflections as a moral philosopher are insightful to this study of leader character, particularly the flourishing of leaders of character. The central theme of AV that the social structures of modernity are inimical to the practice of the virtues, and by implication to character, persists in MacIntyre's analysis of the character of the manager. MacIntyre draws on three different sources in developing his argument for the character of the manager: Marxism, emotivism as a product of British analytic philosophical thinking, and Max Weber's sociology (Beabout, 2013:45). MacIntyre's use of the term character is a type representing "those social roles which provide a culture with its moral definitions" (MacIntyre, 2007:31). MacIntyre's reference to character is to a particular type of social role encompassing obligations and relationships, and one bearing "particular moral ideals [that] become representative of their social order through so doing" (Beadle, 2002:46). Although there is some repetition of MacIntyre's ideas captured in Chapter Four, these are considered worth repeating here as they relate specifically to the subject of leader character being considered in this chapter.

5.1.1 Marxism

MacIntyre's portrayal of the bureaucratic manager as a "character" in AV stems from his earlier critique of bureaucracy in his writings on Marxism. In his youth MacIntyre opposed certain teachings of Marxism, expressing a desire to learn from both

Christianity and Marxism. His views on Marxism changed over the years and at the time of writing *AV* in 1981 his reference to Marx was sparse. Karl Marx's interest in creating a "just social order" (Beabout, 2013:46) appealed to the young MacIntyre, who compiled "Notes from the Moral Wilderness" late in the 1950's, as a critique of modern liberal capitalism. A feature of this system is the relentless pursuit of increasing amounts of money characterised by a moral emptiness, together with Stalinism's morally corrupt notion of "bureaucratic means-end rationality" (Ibid.: 46-47). MacIntyre's critique of bureaucratic rationality was directed mainly at Stalinism, in its use of authority from above to make matters official by means of rubber stamping. MacIntyre later came to see the similarities between the bureaucratic manager and the capitalist executive running an organization of workers unknown to him, producing goods or services he or she knows almost nothing about⁸⁴. Stalin's ideal of a classless society favoured by Marx and Engels did not materialise; in its place society experienced the development of "bureaucratic state capitalism". While MacIntyre was attracted to Marx's humanity he was critical of the lack of humanism in Stalin's bureaucratic state capitalism (Beabout, 2013:48). Marx's practical philosophy expressed in a concern with how ideas influence social practices appealed to MacIntyre, and this influence is evident throughout *AV*, particularly in his idea of virtues as practices, as discussed in Chapter Four. Because of the tension between the suffering endured by many and the contemporary goal of freedom, MacIntyre saw the need for action, reflected in a transformed action-oriented form of philosophy.

His view was in contrast to the detached form of "Oxford armchair style of philosophy" he encountered as a young academic at Oxford. A consistent theme running through MacIntyre's writing on Marxism is a "deep sympathy for the notion that philosophical ideas should and do become embodied in concrete social practices" (2013:48). This is evident in MacIntyre's moral philosophy, particularly in *AV*, in how he builds on Aristotle's socially embedded concept of the virtues and so develops them fit for

⁸⁴ As will be argued further on, MacIntyre's generalised assessment of capitalism does not account for the types of organisations and leaders operating within capitalist societies, who are aware of this form of capitalism, and choose to take a normative path for themselves and their businesses.

twenty-first century society. Influenced by Marx, MacIntyre is critical of liberalism, with its economic dimension represented by capitalism, supported by utilitarianism as the corresponding moral philosophy. In MacIntyre's early writings his views on Marxism demonstrated his commitment to "a radical critique of the social order" (MacIntyre, 1970:7). This led to his rejection of enlightenment liberalism characterized by the separation of facts and values and the lack of an overriding moral order⁸⁵. The character of the manager captured in AV with which this section of the chapter is concerned, embodies enlightenment liberalist thinking (Beabout, 2013:48-49). This type of thinking separates individual acts from the character of the person where the focus is on the rightness of acts rather than character, which is regarded as less important, or of no importance at all (Horvath, 1995:507).

5.1.1.1 The Manager as the Embodiment of Emotivism

British analytic philosophy is the epitome of modern moral philosophy in its unintelligible disorderliness, according to MacIntyre. This is because it consists of fragments detached from the contexts that provided their significance. Most of us are blind to these problems, while there are no remedies for this state of affairs. This is the result of Enlightenment thinking's attempt to offer a universal morality based purely on reason detached from a social setting and from "a preceding philosophical tradition" (MacIntyre, 1984:51-61; 1988:389-404). The project was a failure in MacIntyre's view as characterized by disagreements about morality that seem interminable due to "conceptual incommensurability" (Beabout, 2013:49). Opposing parties present valid arguments, yet lack common concepts and premises, so that arguments lead nowhere. MacIntyre's character of the manager as a characteristic feature of modernity embodies this state of affairs, in particular the philosophical theory of emotivism. MacIntyre describes emotivism as:

⁸⁵ Morrell's analysis of agency theory informing the shareholder form of organisation discussed in section 1 is an illustration of MacIntyre's notion of the separation of facts and values.

the doctrine that all evaluative judgments and more specifically all moral judgments are nothing but expressions of preference, expressions of attitude or feeling, insofar as they are moral or evaluative in character (MacIntyre, 1981:12).

This philosophy proposes a relativist attitude towards morality and values meaning there is no overriding moral order to guide thought and action and each person's individual choices should be tolerated as they are "merely expressions of private or personal value" (Beabout, 2013:50). Emotivism was the dominant form of moral philosophy MacIntyre was exposed to in his formative years in Britain. As this philosophy was strongly rejected by MacIntyre, his portrayal of the character of the manager symbolising liberal capitalism and bearing the problems of emotivism is of one that lacks morality. Understanding why this is so is important to the argument in developing the concept of leader character, specifically the selection of virtue ethics as a moral philosophy to guide the development of this concept. MacIntyre bases his claim on the fact that emotivism as a moral theory embodies relativism and so lacks a moral foundation. Relativism is embodied in the moral philosophy of formalism and utilitarianism that not only are unable to provide moral guidance, but provide a "veneer of morality which actually masks "prerational preferences" [and] become smoke screens for ethically relative judgments" (Horvath, 1995:510). The result of this state of affairs means the lack of normative guidance. This is reflected in being free to choose the "universal" system one believes is right whilst arguing why the other universal systems are wrong, yet lacking a sound rationale that will convince others why they should change allegiances (Ibid.).

MacIntyre's sustained criticism of emotivism extended over a 30-year period from his student days through to the publication of *AV* in 1981. His mission was to address what he regarded as the shortfall in British analytic ethical theory and to offer an alternative. At the core of MacIntyre's criticism is the distinction between use and meaning, drawn from Wittgenstein. While emotivism is evaluated by analytic philosophers as a theory of meaning, its use is disregarded, according to MacIntyre (Beabout, 2013:51). Although it was rejected later by many analytic philosophers for its failure as a theory of meaning, the success of emotivism is evident in its continued

use – a fact overlooked by analytic philosophers (MacIntyre, 1981:21). Based on Wittgenstein’s distinction between use and meaning, MacIntyre holds that the role of moral philosophers should extend beyond an analysis of meanings to the practical and concrete application of moral philosophy to social practices, so as to understand how “ideas are embodied” (Beabout, 2013:51). As a moral philosopher MacIntyre’s interest is in how the discipline of moral philosophy with its claims concerning intentions, motives, reasons, and actions is “embodied or at least can be in the real social world” (MacIntyre, 1981:23). Dating back to Aristotle and Plato most moral philosophers understood part of their task as clarifying and spelling out how “their ideas could be socially *embodied*” (Beabout, 2013:51). Such a perspective is aimed at guiding us to live morally worthwhile lives (Hauerwas, 2007: 35-40).

The effect of the philosophy of emotivism on social relations is that there is no principled way of evaluating whether non-manipulative relations are preferable to manipulative relations, given that evaluative judgments merely express individual preferences. This social dimension of emotivism is embodied in the manager⁸⁶ who aims at a given goal, using rationality as a way of determining the most efficient means of achieving the agreed-upon end. As the manager’s role involves competing for scarce resources aimed at predetermined ends, a core responsibility is the directing and redirecting of an organisation’s human and non-human resources in the most effective means toward those ends. Of interest to MacIntyre is how the character of the manager embodies a moral philosophy (Beabout, 2013:52-53). MacIntyre explains emotivism as:

a theory embodied in characters ... The manager treats ends as given, as outside his scope; his concern is only with technique, with effectiveness in transforming raw materials into final products, unskilled labour into skilled labour, investment into profits (MacIntyre, 1981:21).

⁸⁶ MacIntyre identifies two other characters embodying emotivism – the aesthete and the therapist. As these characters are not relevant to the argument concerning leader character they are not pursued.

As MacIntyre bases this description of the manager operating within a bureaucratic organisation on the work of the sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920), it is to this work that we now turn.

5.1.1.2 Max Weber's Bureaucratic Manager

Max Weber sought to understand the social and economic context embodied in early 20th century Germany and developed an “ideal-type” theory derived from a new methodology to study social organisations and society (Weber, 1947). As a sociologist, Weber's aim was to understand the German society of his time, which he did by focusing on the societal aspects of authority and legitimacy and identified three ideal authority types or characters: charismatic, traditional and bureaucratic. The bureaucratic character is the focus here as this is the type MacIntyre draws on in his portrayal of the character of the manager embodying emotivism, and is relevant to leader character. Weber's study of the charismatic and traditional authority types leads him to “a new mode of social organization: modern bureaucratic rationality” (Beabout, 2013:54). He questions why the bureaucratic forms of legitimacy and authority dominate. To answer this Beabout provides some background to Weber's understanding of bureaucracy explaining that it derives from the French for *bureau* – a writing desk. By extension “bureau” is understood as an office for establishing and institutionalizing policies, with an office executive tasked with establishing, implementing, and maintaining policies at the core of bureaucracy. Weber's empirical claim that bureaucratic organisations deliver superior performance, compared to societies with a preponderance of charismatic and traditional leaders, is open to debate and verification; he also makes a further claim regarding the tendency of charismatic and traditional types to transform into bureaucratic types. As charismatic authority is a reality only during the initial process of questioning an existing social order and does not remain stable, it tends to move towards either traditional or rational bureaucratic types of authority, or a combination of both types (Weber, 1947:364). For this reason Weber considers social dominance as a choice of either tradition or bureaucracy, with bureaucratic organisations prevailing. What is the

nature of this type of dominant organisation, according to Weber? (Beabout, 2013:54-55).

The social authority of the bureaucratic type relies on a set of “mutually interdependent ideas” for its legitimacy (Ibid.: 55). Such ideas cover “rational legal authority” as well as “pure legal authority” and persist through to today’s business organisations. Beabout summarizes the bureaucratic manager as one of Weber’s ideal types:

An office executive, a career professional, appointed on the basis of certifiable qualifications and compensated accordingly, charged with managing a specific, limited area according to written policies and rules and applying those in an impersonal manner within a hierarchical structure while being subject to a hierarchical chain (2013:56).

Weber was interested in why the bureaucratic manager as a character type of the modern world had become so powerful, and why bureaucratic organisations dominated traditional forms of authority. The bureaucratic organisation emerged early in the twentieth century as a product of industrialisation during the transition from an agricultural economy, and it was reasonable to assume that educated professionals were better placed to lead these organisations. Hierarchically structured organisations with clear lines of responsibility were considered more favourable for social control than traditional types of social life. Management styled in terms of bureaucratic authority was favoured for its consistency and focus on organisational purpose, and structured to ensure efficiency and effectiveness (Ibid.). As Weber understood the bureaucratic organization from a technical perspective, focused on maximum efficiency he concluded that this structure is “the most rational known means of exercising authority over human beings” (Weber, 1947:337). Weber extends his claim to assert that the dominance of bureaucratic organisations is inevitable, and attempts to avoid bureaucratic control may lead to different forms of organisation yet remain subject to the bureaucratisation process (Ibid.: 338). In AV MacIntyre comments that bureaucratic authority “is nothing other than successful power” (2007:26).

Beabout concludes his analysis of Weber's bureaucratic organisation by noting a comment made by Weber anticipating a major theme in MacIntyre's work: "Only by reversion in every field – political, religious, economic, etc. – to small scale organisation would it be possible to any considerable extent to escape its influence" (Weber, 1947:338) Although as a moral philosopher MacIntyre provides rich insights into the structures of liberalist capitalism and how these impact the flourishing of character, his view of a reversion to the type of small scale organisational life he suggests seems out of touch with the reality of life in the twenty-first century. A critique of MacIntyre's view of capitalism is offered in section 4, and an alternative to his idea of organisational life is discussed in section 3.

The following section introduces MacIntyre's theme of social structures and the threats they pose to moral agency. Within this societal context and pertinent to leader character are the concepts of moral responsibility, moral agency, and the moral self, which are discussed below.

5.1.2 Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency

MacIntyre addresses the theme of moral responsibility common to both the emerging construct of RL and to virtue ethics in his article 'Social Structures and their Threats to Moral Agency.' Of interest to MacIntyre is whether a particular type of social structure precludes those operating within such structures from regarding themselves as moral agents, and of acting as moral agents (1999:314). To illustrate his point MacIntyre draws on the example of a fictitious character Jedermann (J i.e. anyone/everyone) who occupied an "unusually well-defined" role that was socially approved within the social order he inhabited (Ibid.: 311). J's role involved the scheduling of freight and passenger trains, dealing with breakdowns, and assessing the performance of drivers. J's questioning of the contents of the trains was met with a firm instruction from his superiors not to concern himself with such matters, which were regarded as outside the scope of his role. Consequently J developed the habit of paying no attention to what the trains he was monitoring carried. J's moral background encompassed the concepts of "duty and responsibility [and] His fundamental moral beliefs were that

each of us owes it to others to perform her or his assigned duties and to discharge her or his assigned responsibilities” (Ibid.:311).

Consistent with such moral belief was that one should not be distracted by wandering into areas that are not one’s concern. After J had occupied his role for a number of years, and his habit of not questioning the contents of trains had become firmly entrenched, the freight trains carried munitions, and the passengers were Jews being transported to extermination camps. On being questioned, J’s defence was that he lacked the knowledge believing it was not required of someone occupying his role to know. He concluded that he did his duty, had not failed in executing his responsibilities, and was thus not a moral failure (1999:312). MacIntyre’s hypothetical example of J can be compared to the character of Adolf Eichmann – the epitome of “moral hollowness and the banality of evil” (Beabout, 2013:87). Whilst Eichmann regarded himself as a “law-abiding citizen,” the evidence suggests otherwise as full responsibility for the execution of thousands, if not millions of Jews in accordance with Nazi policy, rested upon Eichmann. When considered against the standards of success and efficiency, Eichmann successfully achieved his assigned tasks; however as “a moral agent with the responsibility to reflect on one’s purposes in light of questions about what makes for a good human life, Eichmann was a failure” (2013: 87-88).

MacIntyre concurs and holds that in terms of widely acknowledged standards of moral agency, according to which one is justifiably held responsible for one’s actions J had failed. According to MacIntyre there are at least three instances in which one is responsible for one’s actions. Firstly, moral agents are responsible for their intentional actions; secondly, for those incidental aspects of their actions that they should have been aware of; and thirdly, for the effects of their actions that can be regarded as reasonably predictable (1999:312). Part of the responsibility of moral agents is in knowing how to differentiate between cases that call for extending oneself in exercising one’s moral responsibility and those that do not require such extension. The case of J is an example of a case requiring such an extended sense of moral responsibility and according to this view of moral agency, J is responsible for giving

reasons for distinguishing between cases by drawing on the best standards available. If J was held responsible for knowing what he was doing, regardless of the requirements of his role, we ascribe to J such a power of knowing how to reasonably differentiate between different cases involving moral responsibility. It is suggested that this ability highlights the need for moral perception - a particular perception drawn on in exercising the virtues, discussed further on.

Rozuel (2011) is supportive of MacIntyre's claims and introduces the notion of the moral self (discussed further on) and the need to transcend social roles in exercising moral responsibility. J's dulled sense of moral responsibility in the example above was limited as he chose to remain within the confines of his role. However, individual action requires free will rather than a role, indicating that people, as individuals, are more than their roles as "only individuals can choose to act" (Flores and Johnson, 1983:543). An attitude prevalent in business is that people see themselves as acting on behalf of an organisation rather than as individuals who are free to make decisions for themselves (Rozuel, 2011:687). The moral implications of this is that if the self "as the core of our identity" defined by roles is multiple and constantly changing, "what or who bears the moral responsibility for our actions" (Ibid.: 688). Moral responsibility cannot be attributed to a role as it is socially constructed; rather it requires a relatively stable subject "who is directly implicated in and affected by the actions taken" (Ibid.).

MacIntyre argues that the social structures of late modernity embodying emotivism, lead to a diminished sense of moral responsibility, as such responsibility is not exercised independently of a social role. J was the product of a system that held that the best standards were those defining and governing the "role requirements of his social order" (1999:313). J's mental habits as well as his actions were formed within the culture of this social order that did not question the truth of these standards. These established standards were shared by those who held J accountable and who had expectations that J would fulfil the requirements of his role. MacIntyre makes the point central to his argument that while these were regarded as the best standards, they were *unquestioned* (Ibid.). In condemning J, he can be held responsible for his

actions and knowledge of them, for his practical reasoning, as well as for failing to question what was previously unquestioned. The nature of responsible deliberation involves questioning established standards, regardless of the final verdict. Moral agents, according to this view are “justifiably held responsible for the standards governing the reasoning from which their actions flow and they have to understand themselves as thus responsible” (1999:314). MacIntyre’s view that how human beings understand themselves is influenced as well as limited by the type of social and cultural order they live within, provides an indication of why we may not be justified in ascribing the full powers of moral agency to J. MacIntyre asks whether some types of social structure prevent or seriously threaten those inhabiting them from regarding themselves as moral agents and of acting as such agents (1999:314).

As moral agency is central to the concept of leader character MacIntyre poses the question: “What is it to understand oneself as a moral agent?” (1999:315). This question is explored under the following heading against the backdrop of his earlier question that considers the impact of social structures on moral agency.

5.1.2.1 What is it to Understand Oneself as a Moral Agent?

MacIntyre approaches this question from the perspective of the full powers of moral agency (which J seemed to lack) and specifies three characteristics such self-understanding entails. Firstly, such understanding means that one’s identity is not limited to the identity of the role and office one assumes. Rather it is to understand oneself as a person who brings “qualities of mind and character that belong to [oneself] *qua* individual and not *qua* role-player” (1999:315). There is a variety of roles that constitute an individual’s life, and reflecting on how one is performing in these roles is not generally dictated by these roles. This is a reference to the ability of the moral agent to stand back from a role and to assess one’s performance independently of the role – an ability that was not evident in J. It is in the way one enacts one’s roles that individual character is displayed – MacIntyre is alluding to how the virtues are exercised in an individual’s life. As an individual one engages in social relationships and within such relationships one develops judgments to evaluate individuals as people,

concerning particularly their “virtues and the goodness of their lives” (1999:315). Such judgments, notes MacIntyre, are initially guided by the standards established by society as “We all begin unquestioningly with the unquestioned” (Ibid.). Over the course of his long career the thrust of MacIntyre’s work has followed the course of questioning the unquestioned in questioning the rationality of modern analytical philosophy and its supporting social structures.

Secondly, to understand oneself as a moral agent is to acknowledge one’s practical rationality as, being a moral agent involves questioning the unquestioned i.e., those standards established by society (1999:313). Such questioning extends to the standards governing and defining one’s roles, as well as to the standards one applies in evaluating individuals. As both these standards and the standards the moral agent appeals to in evaluating individuals need to stand up to rationally justifiable scrutiny, he or she should be entitled to confidence that the critical judgments of those standards can be rationally justified. It is necessary to have this confidence as these practical judgments provide the rationale for the moral agent’s actions (Ibid.: 315).

Thirdly, to understand oneself as a moral agent means to understand oneself as accountable not only in one’s roles, but also as a rational individual. The socially assigned responsibilities attached to roles are partly defined by the nature of the accountability attached to each role. Accountability is essential to the concept of responsibility and for each role one assumes, one is accountable to a range of others; failure to exercise responsibility means one must give an account to these others. The consequences attached to responsibility as well as its enforcement are a key aspect of the “social recognition of roles” (1999:316). When responsibility lacks significant content and is detached from accountability how does this impact the responsibility of moral agents *qua* moral agents? To whom do they understand themselves as accountable? MacIntyre considers the following sets of individuals and groups: those they engage with in critical and informed deliberation and those who unquestioningly accept the established standards of their social structures. Moral agents are accountable to the former by giving reasons why their actions have thus far withstood

the strongest criticisms; they are accountable to the latter by giving good reasons for challenging the established standards, inviting them to engage in “critical deliberative conversation” (Ibid.: 317). Understanding oneself as a moral agent is to understand oneself and those others as accountable.

In summary, to understand oneself as a moral agent then means to be accountable to particular others, to engage in critical practical deliberation, and to acknowledge one’s individuality and that of others, which are all features of the form of self-understanding and social relationships characteristic of the moral agent. In the absence of this form of self-understanding and these social relationships, what remains is a “seriously diminished type of agency, one unable to transcend the limitations imposed by its own social and cultural order” (1999:317). In view of our current social context characterised by *inter alia* the urgency to address climate change, global inequality, corruption, and persistent poverty, the ability of leaders to transcend their social and cultural orders is paramount, amidst growing expectations for being responsible. In Chapter Two a case was made for leaders to be morally mature and the theme of moral responsibility as central to the emerging construct of RL and to the exercise of the virtues, was argued for. MacIntyre’s explication of what it means to understand oneself as a moral agent has deepened our understanding of moral responsibility, critical to the concept of leader character.

5.1.2.2 The Moral Agent’s Ability to Question the Existing Social Order

In the above synopsis MacIntyre has made a case for moral agency requiring a social setting of a particular kind – a setting that seemed lacking within the social order J inhabited. For the full powers of moral agency to be given expression, spaces for engaging in “reflective critical questioning” of standards previously taken for granted, need to be available within the social order (1999:317). The ancient Greek concept of the *polis* facilitated debate about the meaning of democracy and ethics, and this is what MacIntyre seems to have in mind. Morrell’s (2012) integrated concept of organization, society, and politics derived from Aristotle and argued for below as a societal framework compatible with the concept of leader character argued for in this

research and suitable for expanding the emerging construct of RL, could accommodate this form of debate and the growth of moral agency. Informing such critical questioning should be some shared understanding of the nature of a good human being, exemplified by those individual qualities that individuals possess *qua* human beings, independent of their roles that enable them to stand back from and reflect on the nature of their “engagement with the established role structures” (MacIntyre, 1999:317).

These qualities refer to the virtues, which may vary according to social context, yet require the two central virtues of ‘integrity’ and ‘constancy,’ for the possession of the other virtues. To possess the virtue of integrity means to be the same kind of person regardless of social context. The virtue of constancy is evident in the long-term commitment to, and constant pursuit of, the same goods over time, not being swayed or distracted by changes in social contexts. Integrity and constancy enable one to reason and reflect about one’s goods and one’s character independently of one’s roles (1999:318). This was what was required of J. The reality of life for the moral agent engaging in this form of critical reasoning means she or he inhabits two moral systems – one reflecting the “established social order with its assignment of roles and responsibilities,” and one in which such social order is questioned (Ibid.).

5.1.2.3 The Case for Moral Perception in Exercising the Virtues

Of relevance to this study of leader character is how the leader possessing the virtues of integrity and constancy makes choices between these two social orders, which requires practical reasoning. MacIntyre notes that this can result in tension between how one lives and acts, at times leading to conflict between two differing moral standpoints that extend beyond the theoretical being socially embodied. This form of tension and the moral reflection required of the moral agent in defining her relationship to these conflicting social orders provides the substance of what the virtues call for in a particular setting (1999:321). For the leader of character, a significant part of his or her responsibility means developing the ability of moral awareness so that in facing and dealing with moral dilemmas of this nature, he or she

is able to draw on the abilities of moral reflection, moral reasoning, and moral imagination. MacIntyre's example of J indicates the need for an additional moral ability – that of moral perception – an ability identified by Aristotle in the exercise of virtue. Moral perception, together with affect and choice, is a manner of acting specific to the virtues of character requiring the exercise of practical wisdom (Sherman, 1989:5). What MacIntyre seems to be suggesting in the case of J is that his lack of moral perception was an insensitivity to his moral and social context that prevented him from acting as a moral agent.

Moral perception is particularly relevant to character, as a failure to perceive morality in the situations encountered in daily life amounts to a “deficiency of character” (Blum, 1991:705). One of the consequences of the moral relativism pervading our current societal context is a culture that can make it difficult for people to tell the difference between right and wrong, and the existence of mistaken moral beliefs in a society where people can be “systematically mistaken about the content of morality” (Price, 2005:69). Given RL's focus as well as the focus of this chapter on the moral and societal context, it is argued that moral perception involved in the exercise of virtue should be emphasised as a necessary ability for the leader of character that could be aided and fostered within the spaces for “reflective critical questioning,” (1999:317) MacIntyre deems necessary for the development of the full powers of moral agency.

A particular type of environment is conducive to the moral agent being able to exercise the virtues. Within such an environment the moral agent understands that to be accountable extends beyond one's role-performances and includes others. Only within a social order capable of accommodating MacIntyre's three preconditions including the relevant forms of self-understanding, critical discourse and reflection, and accountability, can moral agency be sustained. MacIntyre's interest is in the types of social structure threatening the powers of moral agency, and by implication the flourishing of a person's character.

5.1.2.4 Compartmentalisation and its Impact on Character

One of MacIntyre's insights into the character of the manager is the psychological phenomenon of compartmentalisation, and its influence on the manager who changes character to suit the social setting. MacIntyre's assessment is that the character of the manager "has become more like a mask or a suit of clothing: an agent may have to possess more than one" (1979:125), leading to the question: how is a mask held accountable for its actions? (Rozuel, 2011:685). Compartmentalisation can be described as "pigeonholing one's life into rigid and exclusive categories" (Monte, 1977:665), and although it is a useful coping strategy for handling bad experiences it bears a moral cost and is pervasive in the workplace (Rozuel, 2011:690-692). MacIntyre's comment in *AV* draws attention to why managers lack the virtue of integrity and assume different characters: "Modernity partitions each human life into a variety of segments, each with its own norms and modes of behaviour" (2007:204).

MacIntyre draws here on his experience as a participant observing the moral sphere of decision-making by power company leaders during the nineteen-seventies. He discovered that these leaders answered the same questions differently, depending on whether they were answering *qua* parent and head of household, or *qua* leader of a power company, or *qua* concerned citizen (1999:321). The fact that their moral attitudes shifted according to their social roles and that they lacked awareness of this was an example of what MacIntyre refers to as the "peculiarly modern phenomenon [of] ... compartmentalization" (Ibid.: 322). Although social orders differentiate between institutional structures and roles, compartmentalisation exacerbates this differentiation so that distinct spheres of social activity create their own role structures governed by their own specific norms independent of other spheres. The norms governing each sphere dictate what considerations are relevant when making decisions and what are irrelevant and should be excluded.

Referring to the leaders of the power company, from their perspective as leaders they were unable to consider any reduction in overall power consumption, yet were able to do so from their perspective of concerned citizen or consumer. As individuals move

from one sphere of activity to another switching between roles, and adjusting their practical reasoning to fit different standards, they become “dissolved into their various roles” so that they play one part as a member of a family, a different part as member of the workforce, another as sports club member, and yet another as military reservist (1999:322). Within each sphere individuals are expected to conform to the requirements imposed by each role, yet a milieu for coming together with others to reflect on their roles and requirements by standing back and examining themselves and the society they are part of from an external viewpoint, is lacking.

MacIntyre illustrates the nature of compartmentalisation with his example of deception in the workplace by considering the varying answers to the questions: ‘Who is justified in deceiving whom and about what?’ and ‘Who has the authority to object to deception?’ (1999:322) His first example is of the chief executive officer of a business organisation whose decision to overstate the progress of the organisation’s scientists on a research report, was prompted by his need not to lose customers to competitors, and to bolster the share price. In this scenario as the scientists are bound by the conditions of their continuing employment not to deceive the CEO, they have no right to lie or to speak out. The only objection to such deception, should the CEO be willing to listen, would be the longer term effect of failing to maximise profits.

In contrast, MacIntyre’s second example is of the same scientists publishing their work in professional journals. The standards governing scientific research in this context do not justify deception under any circumstances, and scientists expose those engaged in falsifying data leading to the deceivers being expelled from the scientific community. For the individual moving between the spheres of independent scientific research and corporate activity, he or she exchanges one ethics of deception for another each time, often without any awareness of doing so (Ibid.: 323). Other contexts the same individual moves into have “their own ethics of deception” like the type of social occasion where strangers meet with an eye on impressing prestigious types whilst avoiding insistent bores (Ibid.). In an effort to present a favourable persona, deception in the form of lying is considered acceptable in such situations. MacIntyre’s purpose in

these examples is to illustrate that each social context has its own “norms of deception,” and in moving between one role within a sphere of activity and another within another sphere of activity one moves “from one context-based moral standpoint to another” (Ibid.).

In view of the real challenges presented by the social structures of late modernity, and consistent with our essentially social nature, MacIntyre offers respite to the compartmentalized self in the form of morally enabling milieus in which moral agents understand themselves “as having a substantive identity independent of their roles and as having responsibilities that do not derive from those roles” (1999:324). Such milieus would accommodate the “reflective critical questioning” (Ibid.: 317) MacIntyre regards as essential for fostering moral agency, so assisting in unifying divisions within the self, wrought by compartmentalisation, and opening up to the inevitable conflict suppressed by compartmentalisation (Ibid.: 324).

5.1.2.5 The Divided Self

The moral agent possessing the virtues of integrity and constancy is contrasted with the divided self - a feature of compartmentalisation. Such a self, moving between different sets of standards depending on her role, lacks a standpoint from which to critically judge the standards that govern her various roles. The context-bound and temporary set of standards of the divided self are in opposition to the virtue of integrity; whilst the recurring changes in direction the divided self makes in moving from one sphere to another are in opposition to the virtue of constancy. As the divided self understands virtue as “excellence in role performance rather than ... excellence as a human being,” (1999:325) excellence defined according to one role may differ from and even be incompatible with the excellence defining another set of roles. Due to lack of moral awareness, the divided self, in abiding by the moral requirements governing each separate sphere of activity, avoids the conflict arising from the tension between two differing moral standpoints – that of the established social order, and of the order that is questioned. The consequence for the divided self is a “diminished morality that matches its diminished powers of agency” (Ibid.). It would seem, suggests MacIntyre,

that we would not be justified in holding this divided self responsible for his actions in the same way we would hold moral agents responsible. Are we justified in attributing a diminished responsibility to those inhabiting a certain social structure? MacIntyre answers this by arguing that the divided self is largely responsible for its divided state, and its lacks or absences arise from that self's active refusals (Ibid.). This sentiment is consistent with the Aristotelian theme of voluntariness holding that we are responsible for our actions "as virtue is a character state concerned with choice" (Sherman, 1989:5) and strengthens the case made earlier for moral perception as a necessary ability for moral agency.

5.1.2.6 The Whole Self

In contrast to the divided self is the whole self. In Chapter Two it was noted that researchers probing the concept of leader character understand character as representing a "wholeness of being" (Bauman, 2013; Palanski and Yammarino, 2007; Crossan et al., 2017:990). MacIntyre's portrayal of the divided, compartmentalised self, together with his explanation of what it means to be a moral agent, has highlighted the significance of social structures in contributing to or detracting from wholeness of being. As the wholeness of self is a "pre-requisite to effective moral agency" (Rozuel, 2011:691), an understanding of the concept of character includes the whole self, in particular its moral value (Rozuel, 2011:688). Such a whole self, conscious of "our fragmented nature" yet "working towards the state of a whole self" contains the "totality of our being" (Guillory, 2001; Zsolnai, 2004). The self extends beyond our personality and represents "our whole beingness" (Layder, 2004) and resonates with the idea of "wholeness of being" expressed by researchers investigating the character of a leader (Bauman, 2013; Palanski and Yammarino, 2007; Crossan et al., 2017:990).

In view of the natural human tendency to compartmentalize and fragment parts of our personality there is a need for awareness so as to nurture high moral standards (Gotsis and Kortezi, 2008). This awareness is essentially moral awareness and involves taking responsibility for one's growth in becoming a whole self. This is supported by

MacIntyre's argument that the divided self is "to a significant degree responsible for its own divisions" (1999:325), from which we can assume that we are each responsible for our own personal growth, and for the development of our characters. Rozuel captures the sense of moral awareness coupled with moral responsibility in explaining that: "As moral agents, we are expected to scrutinise our identity and all those factors that shape our character and our moral expectations" (2011:688). Being able to acknowledge "the inner moral tensions inherent to every individual is essential to rediscover the self and achieve a state of wholeness" as exemplified in Carl Jung's process of individuation (Jung, 1958, 2002). Jung's psychological concept of wholeness of self, incorporating the virtues of integrity and constancy, identified as necessary for overcoming compartmentalisation, reveals its connection to the philosophical concept of character pursued in this research. The habits of moral awareness, and moral reflection discussed in Chapter Two are necessary for developing the whole self, which is an indication of moral maturity that characterises the leader of character.

This first section of the chapter has considered MacIntyre's view of the character of the manager as a type representative of "those social roles which provide a culture with its moral definitions" (MacIntyre, 2007:31). Of particular concern to MacIntyre is the culture of emotivism characterised by moral relativism, and the influence exerted by the social structures of this culture on the character of the manager. In contrast to this character, MacIntyre's robust account of the moral agent and the nature of moral responsibility to counter the threats posed by the social structures of late modernity, as well as the moral concept of a whole self, indicative of moral maturity, has deepened the virtue understanding of leader character. From this partially developed understanding the following question is posed: what types of social structures are conducive to the flourishing of the character of the leader at a societal and at an organisational level? This question, dealt with at a societal level in Section 2 below and at an organisational level in Section 3, considers the nature of the leader's moral responsibility within these social structures in contributing to flourishing societies and flourishing organisations.

MacIntyre has illustrated the importance of social structures to moral agency by considering the pervasive influence of the structures of late modernity on those operating within business organisations. In making a case for the importance of social structures to moral agency, MacIntyre indicates that the type and influence of social structures is central to a virtue understanding of leader character. Morrell's (2012) Aristotelian concept of organisation, society, and politics discussed below is an alternative societal framework proposed as more conducive for the flourishing of leaders, and necessary for enriching the understanding of leader character.

5.2 An Aristotelian View of Organisation, Society and Politics

An understanding of organization, society and politics provided by the Aristotelian scholar Kevin Morrell (2012) could lead to and facilitate the flourishing of organizations, leaders and more broadly, citizens. This integrated concept seems compatible with the emerging construct of RL with its emphasis on society and citizenship together with its normative focus, and it is proposed that this Aristotelian concept could extend the conceptual foundations of the emerging RL construct. Morrell draws on Aristotle's notion of the human person as political in nature (*zōon politikon*) (2012:3) as he reconsiders the concept of organisation, inter-linked with society and politics. Organisations are viewed far more broadly according to this integrated view than current business views of organization are, privileged by capital (2012:4). Morrell derives his view of 'organisation' from Aristotle's idea of humans as social or political beings, which extends beyond the view of organisation espoused by critical management studies (CMS). As a relatively new discipline, CMS's view of organisation is broad and includes the private and public sectors, and an extensive range of social forms from the smallest voluntary communities and associations to society as a whole, challenging "various hegemonies in relation to business and management" (2012:1). This seems to be what the emerging construct of RL is engaging in, in its openness to pursuing possibilities for redefining and redeveloping ways of conceiving leadership (Kempster and Carroll, 2016:3), which occurs within organisations. Extending the concept of RL by applying an Aristotelian understanding

of organisation inclusive of society and politics as this research aims to do, is in keeping with Waldman's caveat to researchers that: "RL can be conceptualised and examined based upon multiple definitions and moral bases" (2011:77).

Morrell commences his argument for the integration of organisation, society, and politics by regarding organisation as a verb and thus an activity (Cooper, 1990) rather than as a noun connected to a place of work (Robbins and Judge, 2007:4). Understood as noun, the capitalist view of organisation, which pervades many of the organisational behaviour texts, is not only "blind to other forms of association" but excludes and silences the worker (Morrell, 2012:2). Morrell acknowledges that viewing organisation as verb challenges the prevailing hegemonies that entrench inequality and class dominance (Gramsci, 1971). The basis of Morrell's understanding of organisation is drawn from Aristotle's view of the social world characterized by humans' natural tendency to organise into groups, based on their biological nature⁸⁷ (Morrell, 2012:3). Aristotle's reference to humans' political nature (*zōon politikon*) is not reflective of an inherent desire for politicking, and is a biological statement reflecting how he distinguishes humans from other types of animals, rather than a political one. It is Aristotle's insight into our inherent social nature that Morrell regards as so "basic and powerful" that informs Morrell's concept of organization and "related terms like society and politics" (Ibid.: 3), to encompass a diffusion of social forms and activities covering politics, aesthetics, ethics, and persuasion. It is Aristotle's "most basic definition of a human being" (Ibid.: 4) contained in his practical philosophy that can be applied to all these activities that provides the rationale for Morrell's broader understanding of organisation, and its links to society and politics.

Pertinent to the societal aspect of RL and in contrast to Morrell's societal framework the following review of agency theory reveals the limitations of agency theory, particularly with regard to its lack of a concept of society.

⁸⁷ This, in spite of the overtly discriminatory nature of some of Aristotle's work in which he recognises the inferior position of slaves, women, subjects, and barbarians, and the dominance and advantage of masters, men, kings, and citizens (Morrell, 2012:3).

5.2.1 A View of the Organisation from an Agency Theory Perspective

Although Morrell and Clark's (2010) discussion of agency theory takes place within the context of the private equity industry, this theory's influence on how business organizations in general are conceptualised is pervasive and extends to the emerging construct of RL, as stated above. Agency theory focuses solely on individuals' actions and their choices resulting from a rational process characterised by self-interest and maximising usefulness. Forming such choices is understood in terms of a standard process of collecting information, creating options, weighing these options up, and implementing the option most likely to deliver maximum utility (2010:254). This view of the social world is 'gloomy' and contractual where relationships within a marketplace dominate, rather than emotions, values, or ethical principles (Ghoshal, 2005).

Scholars comment on the effects of agency theory, for example, the role of academia in favouring agency theory and how this has influenced the moral culture permeating organizational life (Donaldson, 2005); the extent to which large scale corporate failures are as a "consequence of failures in theory and, in part, the overwhelming dominance of agency theory" (Daily et al., 2003); the far-reaching effects of agency theory extend to how accountability is assessed in the public sector and in non-profit organizations (Gaudin, 1998). In reflecting on a specific aspect of the private equity market – the 'take private' business model (TPBM) – and its influence on wider society, Morrell and Clark note that the bias towards agency theory leads to severe constraints in conceptualisation. It is also at odds with well-established thinking concerning governance within the public sphere, and its history of interest in the public good dating back to the dawn of democracy (2010:254). Despite the dominance of agency theory coupled with its exclusive focus on the shareholder, different conceptions of organizations demonstrating an awareness of society do exist as revealed by Moore (2002, 2005a, 2005b, and 2008). These conceptions of organizations incorporate a sense of moral responsibility extending to society and are discussed in section three of this chapter.

When analysing actions occurring within the private equity industry an agency view emphasises returns favouring a consequentialist approach. A similar approach is often applied to stakeholder theories that look to outcomes for different stakeholders, without considering the means of achieving such outcomes. This is in spite of the aim of stakeholder theories which is to achieve “a better or ‘good’ society” (Russo and Perrini, 2010:209), aligned to the virtue ethics concept of ultimate ends, and the means of achieving these ends (Morrell and Clark, 2010:257). Hartman considers the impact of the shareholder-structured organization on society, from an Aristotelian virtue ethics perspective, drawing on MacIntyre’s insight that employees are primarily regarded as means whereas shareholders are viewed as ends. This is in line with Friedman’s (1970) argument that management’s overriding responsibility is to deliver profits for shareholders⁸⁸ (Hartman, 2013:174). Friedman provides no proof of the margin of profit that should accrue to shareholders and to employees. Although the fact that shareholders as owners of an organization through their shareholding have certain rights, including the residual profits after other stakeholder claims have been met is pertinent, it is not a decisive fact.

Friedman’s view that this is how a strong economy is built is juxtaposed against Hendrik Smith’s (2012) view that a strong middle class builds a strong economy, which a shareholder form of capitalism is hollowing out, particularly in the United States (Hartman, 2013:175). The employment relationship seems skewed in shareholder-structured organisations expecting loyalty and commitment from employees, yet only pretending to offer the same in return, particularly in the case of downsizing and outsourcing, often blamed on globalisation and its competitive pressures. Stagnant wages in spite of increased productivity is a characteristic feature of North American society, and is in contrast to the example of Germany where wages have increased in line with workers’ productivity. Although this occurred in America for almost thirty years after the Second World War, since then most gains arising from productivity have accrued to shareholders and executives (Ciulla, 2000:155-157 especially; Smith, 2012, chapters 4 -6). The pervasive state of affairs persisting in North American

⁸⁸ As previously stated in chapter 2, page 11

society, and in other societies following a similar approach, makes it difficult for employees to be confident about participating in organisations structured differently, for example the MacIntyrean type of organisation as envisioned by Moore (Hartman, 2013:175), and discussed in Section 3 below.

5.2.2 Different Views and Perspectives of RL

The review of RL in Chapter Two notes the different views of RL and that three different perspectives inform the views of RL: agent, stakeholder, and converging (Miska et al., 2014:350). Converging views of RL combine the agent/economic view with the stakeholder view and vary depending on the extent of stakeholder inclusion and their scopes of responsibility (Miska et al., 2014:351). Waldman and Galvin (2008) make a similar distinction based on the economic perspective and the stakeholder perspective. Broadly, the agent and economic perspectives focus on the shareholder as the source of a leader's responsibilities, derived from agency-based instrumental thinking. In spite of the normative and societal focus of RL, it appears that agent and economic perspectives influence how organisations are conceptualized within the construct of RL. In light of Voegtlin's comments that the study of RL lacks depth (2016:586), and that ethical principles and values that should underpin RL are not sufficiently explicit (Maak and Pless, 2006; Pless, 2007), it is argued that the societal and ethical insights that Morrell draws on from Aristotle's work including his *Ethics* and *Politics*, that locates the human person as a social and political being at the centre of society, can enhance the emerging construct of RL.

The above brief review of agency theory and its influence on the structure of shareholder organisations reveals its lack of a concept of society. The implication of this for the RL construct is that the business organisation conceived according to agency theory is unable to account for its impact on stakeholders in broader society, as its awareness of its moral responsibility only extends as far as the shareholder. Morrell and Clark's Aristotelian analysis reveals the incongruence between agency theory and RL, particularly the societal and normative aspects of RL. A conceptual framework capable of strengthening the societal and normative aspects of the emerging construct

of RL is virtue ethics, with its rich conception of society and ethics. In view of the focus of this chapter regarding social structures and their impact on moral agency and the flourishing of leaders, the Aristotelian term of flourishing concerning the ultimate human good is helpful in considering an alternate societal context to understand the nature of leader character, located within the emerging construct of RL.

Aristotle understood all human activity as aimed at an ultimate good or final end. *Eudaimonia* is understood as human flourishing and is the type of activity we pursue when engaging in activities that “make us distinctively human” (Morrell, 2012:14). This Aristotelian concept is in contrast to agency theory lacking a concept of society. An Aristotelian view accommodates “ultimate questions of value” extending beyond shareholder returns characterised by the principal-agent relationship, to “the social fabric and the ultimate social end of *eudaimonia*” (Ibid.).

5.2.3 Ultimate Questions of Value – Human Flourishing

Ultimate questions of value concerned with human flourishing is pursued here against the background of leader character understood within the emerging construct of RL. Aristotle’s concept of *eudaimonia*, translated as human flourishing, is applied by Morrell and Clark in their evaluation of how organisational structures impede or enable flourishing. An Aristotelian understanding of ultimate questions of value is a reference to flourishing, whether individual, institutional, or at the level of society as a whole (2010:258). As flourishing concerns the ultimate good MacIntyre’s insight about the good Athenian being both a good *man*⁸⁹ and a good *citizen* (2007:133) is a reference to the virtues, reflecting a holistic understanding of the good. In this section of the chapter societal flourishing is considered within Morrell’s conceptual framework of organisation, society, and politics, regarded as a conducive environment for moral agency and the exercise of the full powers of moral responsibility.

⁸⁹ This gender insensitive comment about the human good refers specifically to the Athenian society of ancient Greece.

5.2.4 A Fairer Form of Capitalism

Morrell views his broader sense of organisation as emancipatory as it permits the questioning of power relations, thereby challenging assumed hegemonies existing in formal relationships like manager-worker, supervisor-supervisee, employee-employer, or conceptual groupings like leader-follower (2012:7). The following comment indicates his discomfort with capitalism: “If we understand ‘organization’ as the firm, as business, or as enterprise, we are never more than one move away from capitalism as a way of seeing. This can contaminate understanding of other social forms and relations” (2012:5). Although his understanding of organization transcends capitalist structures, this study of leader character located within the construct of RL concerned with business organisations is conducted within the bounds of capitalism, and argues for a fairer system of capitalism rather than its abandonment⁹⁰.

To this end it is proposed that a reformulated conception of the organisation embracing a virtue ethics understanding of organisation, society, and politics, together with Moore’s (2002, 2005a, 2005b and 2008) MacIntyrean ‘Virtues-Goods-Practice-Institution’ type of organisation, (the virtuous institution, discussed below), underpinned by an economic model “that empowers people in the service of life”⁹¹ (Korten, 2019:1), can contribute to a fairer and more inclusive capitalist system. RL’s concern with the re-distribution of power (Blakeley, 2016:110) indicates an openness to challenge existing hegemonies aimed at improving levels of human rights, social justice, integrity, and sustainability (Ibid.), which a fairer form of capitalism is concerned with. In view of the case MacIntyre makes for the moral agent to question the unquestioned, we can deduce that the leader of character as moral agent has a moral responsibility to question current capitalist structures and to create spaces for engaging with others in “reflective critical questioning ... and critically informed

⁹⁰ This is not to deny nor disagree about the importance of Morrell’s claim that his broad concept of organisation extends beyond capitalist structures. It is merely to demarcate this business study as limited to the confines of capitalism, whilst arguing for a fairer form of capitalism.

⁹¹ <https://davidkorten.org/a-21st-century-economics-for-the-people-of-a-living-earth-2nd-revision/>. Downloaded 19.11.2019.

deliberation” (MacIntyre, 1999:317) concerning the nature of capitalism, including the social structures supporting this system.

5.2.5 A Broader Sense of Organisation

A broader sense of organisation accommodates an understanding of society derived from Aristotle’s notion of the *polis* that “could defensively be rendered as ‘society’” (Morell, 2012:7). Despite the significant differences between the structures of ancient Greek society and our own, the social nature of the *polis* embodying *koinōnein*, meaning to share or to participate, remains relevant to modern understandings of society. Mindful of the nature of the social and moral context underpinning RL and the search for more inclusivity incorporating stakeholders, the RL construct could well benefit from this ancient Aristotelian idea. Various meanings associated with *koinōnein* relevant to RL are the noun *koinōnia*, meaning ‘association’, ‘partnership’, or ‘community’ and the adjective *koinos* describing that which is shared or held in common (Stalley, 2009: xxxvii-viii). This applies particularly to finite resources and the environment. These terms are particularly relevant to the societal concerns of a global nature that RL grapples with, like inequality, climate change and responsibility for environmental damage.

Aristotle’s idea of common purpose differs from the notion of common goals, found in some definitions of work organizations. The Aristotelian term *koinōnia* has no concern with market relations; rather it concerns society and justice and wider relations in a polity and is opposed to “the logic of capitalism” (Morrell, 2012:8). The ideals of a just political community expressed by Arnhart could serve to inspire a fairer form of capitalism as argued for in this research:

A just political community can be judged to be one that serves the common advantage of all its members as contrasted with an unjust political community that serves only the private advantage of its ruling group (Arnhart, 1994:466).

It is acknowledged that Arnhart’s ideal could well be seen as naïve, given that power lies at the heart of business and political systems – a challenge all leaders face (Ciulla,

2001:315). In spite of this reality the interest and support for the emerging construct of RL seems to be an indication of the need for a more just ‘system’ underpinning business. From a societal and moral perspective the germination of the RL construct could be viewed as a proactive response to agency theory and a call for a more just organizational and social structure. The appeal of an integrated understanding of organisation, society, and politics is that it draws on Aristotle’s wisdom regarding his understanding of what it means to be human and to live as a social being able to fully realize human potential (see Crocker, 1992 and Mathias and Teresa, 2006 for reviews; and also Sayer, 2011).

Arnhart’s illustration of *koinōnia*, acknowledging our humanity provides the rationale for a “broad, generous sense of organization” (Morrell, 2012:9) that could enrich the moral and societal elements of RL. Such a sense of organisation is understood as a verb drawing on Aristotle’s works covering politics, rhetoric, ethics, and aesthetics that concern activity. ‘Organisation’ in the sense of activity “is an expression of and manifestation of power, with the tensions between freedom and organisation lying at the heart of politics” (Russell, 2010). Morrell’s broad concept of organisation, encompassing politics is relevant in view of the ethical challenges leaders face in confronting and dealing with power, as previously discussed. The idea of ‘organisation’ linked to ‘society’ represents a shift away from the market and its assumptions; whilst joining ‘organisation’ and ‘politics’ seeks to “recognize and challenge forces of exclusion and privileging” (Morrell, 2012: 10-11), by considering processes as well as structures.

This extends to examining various aspects of organisation-as-noun including definitions of organisations supporting privilege and exclusion: how elites are singled out and preferred, how belonging and abandonment are connoted, how outsiders are disenfranchised and silenced, and how membership status and boundaries are reified. An exercise like this includes the activities that organisation-as-verb entails: processes that can reproduce, entrench, or destabilise inequalities, such as collective action, deliberation, sense-making/sense-giving, resistance. The broader and more generous

sense of organisation facilitates challenges like these (Ibid.). These types of activities get to the heart of the argument for a fairer form of capitalism. Challenging the status quo of shareholder-oriented capitalism informed by agency theory, if conducted in a responsible manner by responsible leaders and is aimed at a more just and inclusive society, could lead to a strengthening of democracy and a more sustainable future.

The above explanation suggesting a way of challenging the shareholder-focused form of capitalism has addressed the notion of power, central to the role of all leaders. The responsible management of power is essential to an ethical understanding of leadership, and justifies the connection made by Morrell between politics and ethics. Aristotle's understanding that politics and ethics are deeply interconnected clarifies the link between organisation, society and politics (Morrell, 2012:11). In view of the challenges responsible leaders are called to make to existing power structures, the nature of business ethics changes to include questions concerning political economy (Parker, 2003:189). The broader sense of organisation encompassing society and politics derived from Aristotle's conception of the human person as essentially social in nature has an impact on the nature of business ethics extending to politics revealing a broader scope for business ethics "as an activity that does not just seek to shore up the ethical basis for corporate behaviour, but that considers the role of organizations in contributing to, or detracting from, societal well-being (Morrell and Clark, 2010:258). Such a "reimagining of the purpose of business ethics" makes sense when considered from the perspective of an integrated understanding of organisation, society, and politics (Morrell, 2012:12).

A final point with regard to Aristotle's notion of politics and its relevance to this study which creates "the connection between ethics and politics" (2012: 13), is that only the human species, as a political being, that can perceive good and evil and distinguish between what is just and unjust (*Politics*, 1253a7-18. Activities like politics and organisation, as well as rhetoric, aesthetics, and ethics follow from the ability to reason, and it is this that informs Aristotle's worldview. As a human is *zōon politikon* by nature (*phusei*), by extension "organisations are political, social forms by nature."

Organisation understood as a verb entailing our ability to form groups and organise, stems from this inherent social and political nature (*phusei*) (Morrell, 2012:14). It is this nature lying at the heart of Aristotle's concept of the human species that informs Morrell's integrated understanding of organisation, society, and politics; it also has implications for the concept of leader character and seems well suited to extending the societal and moral aspects of RL. Our essential social and political nature lends weight to the argument of this research for a fairer form of capitalism, underpinned by Morrell's integrated concept of organisation, society, and politics. A system aligned with our human nature rather than against it is far more likely to create greater possibility for the development of human potential.

5.2.6 An Aristotelian Understanding of Public Good to Extend the RL Construct

In view of the moral and social context of RL, the notion of the public good at the centre of an Aristotelian understanding of organization, society, and politics seems apt here in seeking to extend the emerging construct of RL. The public good is "an overarching criterion we invoke when considering whether something benefits wider society" (Carcello, 2009; O'Brien, 2009; Patashnik, 2003; Shapiro and Rynes, 2005; Shergold, 1997; Tullock, 1984). Given the societal focus of RL theory and that it can be regarded as a response to a societal context characterized by human rights abuses, sustainability threats, increasing centralisation of power, decreasing levels of wellbeing, and "highly problematic" ethical business standards (Blakeley, 2016:109), it seems the construct of RL could benefit from an Aristotelian understanding of the public good.

Invoking the public good could extend to *inter alia*, considering the effects of agency theory on the shareholder model of capitalism, or broad economic or political reform, or changing social attitudes (Morrell and Clark, 2010:254). The concept of 'good' refers to a good for society foundational to Western thinking originating with the earliest understandings concerning governance and society traced to Aristotle in 350 BCE. Private equity and the TPBM, being the subjects of Morrell and Clark's analysis of

agency theory reveal the lack of any “space for public in the contemporary literature on private equity and the TPBM” (Ibid.).

In contemporary literature the clearest path to a concept of the public good can be traced via stakeholder theory (Barnett, 2007; Berman et al., 1999; Freeman, 1984.) As discussed in Chapter Two the stakeholder perspective informs aspects of RL theory and considers “broad stakeholder networks through an ethical lens” (Miska et al., 2014:351). Of relevance to the RL construct is Morrell and Clark’s view of the connection and overlap between stakeholder theory and the notion of the public good (2010:255). Whereas agency theory has “a remnant construction of the public: that which is left behind once the market has had its say,” stakeholder theory is connected to the public good through its concern for the harmful or beneficial impacts on key stakeholders – ‘the public’ (2010:255). A note of caution about stakeholder theory is that should subsequent research be conducted from an agency theory framework, stakeholder theory can be assimilated into agency theory, and the result can mean that addressing stakeholder concerns amounts to the limitation of loss (Ibid.). Moore notes the literature on stakeholders (Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Phillips, 2003; Phillips et al 2003) in the mainstream literature seems to leave responsibility for choosing ultimate ends to be decided by the normative stakeholders (Phillips et al. 2003; Moore, 2008:493). As is argued further on, an important responsibility of the leader of character is to question ends based on MacIntyre’s assessment of capitalism, which takes ends as given. This provides a rationale for applying an integrated understanding of organisation, society, and politics to extend the emerging construct of RL to account for this shortfall of stakeholder theory.

Given the normative nature of the term public good, attention should be given to questions concerning values and ethics in addition to operational or ethical questions, which supports Morrell and Clark’s admonition to resist settling for a fixed definition of the term public good (2010:256). Morrell and Clark’s support for virtue theory encompassing the public good is flexible and sensitive to context and is more suited to

the study of contemporary management theory than for example the normative framework underpinning stakeholder theory (Ibid.).

This section of the chapter has considered the nature of the broader societal context conducive to the flourishing of leaders of character, including the moral responsibilities leaders have to society. Aristotle's idea that humans are social beings and political in nature (*zōon politikon*), lies at the heart of an alternate way of thinking about society proposed in this research. This understanding is considered helpful for reflecting about what constitutes flourishing at a societal level, and seems able to accommodate MacIntyre's concern with the type of milieu in which "moral agents become able to understand themselves as accountable to others in respect of the human virtues and not just in respect of their role-performances" (1999:321). The Aristotelian nature of Morrell's integrated understanding of organisation, society, and politics provides a conceptual framework for the emerging construct of RL for reflecting on the responsibilities leaders have towards society, and forms the basis for extending the construct of RL so as to accommodate the virtue concept of leader character. In addition, Morrell's integrated understanding of organisation, society, and politics provides a societal framework commensurable with MacIntyre's moral agent at the individual level, and with Moore's practice-institution combination at the institutional level. It is to this institutional level that we now turn.

5.3 Moore's Practice-Institution Combination - The Virtuous Institution

This section of the chapter considers the type of organization that enables flourishing set within the societal context of Morrell's integrated Aristotelian concept of organization, society, and politics. MacIntyre's 'virtues-goods-practice-institution' schema forms the conceptual framework within which a virtue-oriented type of organisation is understood (Moore and Beadle, 2006:369). Institutions are an essential element of MacIntyre's 'general theory' and his schema is incomplete without them (Beadle and Moore, 2006:333). MacIntyre's institution with its Aristotelian roots is a particular type of organisation compatible with Morrell's Aristotelian framework of organisation, society, and politics. To address MacIntyre's charge of emotivism Moore

applies MacIntyre's 'Virtues-Goods-Practice-Institution Schema' in developing the concept of the virtuous organisation. In considering the nature of the type of organization that enables flourishing, Moore (2012) explains that this type of business organization applies neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics emphasising flourishing (Solomon, 2004:1024), organization purposiveness (Solomon, 2004:1023, 1026; Tsoukas and Cummings, 1997:673), understanding rationality as narrative, prioritising practical wisdom rather than scientific rationality, and eliminating the fact/value distinction owing to the reconnection of means and ends. The significance of these features, which are elaborated on below, is that they "all present a powerful critique of Enlightenment-based business ethics and offer a means of 'thinking differently' about management theory" (Tsoukas and Cummings, 1997:664-670, 676; Moore, 2012:363).

MacIntyre's conceptual framework consisting of his 'virtues-goods-practice-institution' schema depicts how he regards virtue within the context of organisation (Beadle and Moore, 2006:323). Informing MacIntyre's concept of organisation is his idea that social theory "should embody features of practical social life and that the proper purpose of theory is to enable practitioners to develop better understandings of that life" (Ibid.: 326). This approach to social theory is evident in *AV* (1981) where MacIntyre presents an account of work conducive to human flourishing centred around his concept of the virtues (2006:327). MacIntyre's interest in organisations is in how they foster 'a properly human life,' later referred to as an 'essentially human life' (MacIntyre, [1953] 1995:52). Elements of MacIntyre's 'virtues-goods-practice-institution' schema, encompassing neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics (Moore, 2012:363), are explored from this perspective.

5.3.1 The Concept of a Practice and Internal Goods

Noonan poses the question: 'what is genuine flourishing?' and notes that answering this question involves turning from a general discussion of modernity and the problems it poses, to a specific study of the interrelationship between the internal goods of MacIntyre's concept of a practice and the external goods of institutions (2014:191). MacIntyre's concept of practices and institutions embodying the virtues

has been explored by business ethicists Moore and Beadle (see Beadle, 2002; Moore, 2002, 2005a, 2005b, 2008; Moore and Beadle 2006; Beadle and Moore, 2006) and their work provides the basis of this consideration of what constitutes flourishing organizations. Moore regards MacIntyre's critique of the social structures of modernity as too pessimistic (2005a:241) and by way of a response to MacIntyre offers a 'Modern Virtue Ethics Approach' to the creation of a virtuous organization – the virtuous institution.

Although MacIntyre's concepts of internal goods and practices, and external goods and institutions were discussed in Chapter Four, it is necessary to return to these concepts to understand how they have been applied to business, and their relevance to the flourishing of organizations. MacIntyre's definition of a practice introduces this discussion:

[a]ny coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended (MacIntyre, 2007:187).

The reference to internal goods is to goods arising from participation in practices that leads to excellence and the individual's perfection, as well as to the excellence of the products or services produced (MacIntyre, 2007:189-190, and MacIntyre, 1994:284). It is only through participation in practices that internal goods are achieved leading to individual perfection. As the virtues are the means to human perfection, MacIntyre's concept of practices, located within the human activity of work, are forms of organization that enable virtue. Practices, then, in enabling virtue, are a means to flourishing. However, to sustain practices institutions are necessary, incorporating MacIntyre's concept of external goods.

5.3.2 External Goods, and Institutions

External goods in contrast to internal goods, are a by-product of participation in practices, and so do not lead to individual perfection (Moore, 2008:496). Examples of external goods are profit, power, reputation, and survival and are indicators of success, particularly in shareholder oriented organisations. Horvath's (1995) distinction between excellence and effectiveness referred to above is a reference to the virtue associated with internal goods, contrasted with the emotivist idea of effectiveness that characterizes external goods. MacIntyre's concern is with the dominance of external goods over internal goods, and exposing this fact gets to the heart of what drives modern capitalism (Noonan, 2014:192). Business ethics scholars concur that capitalism's bureaucratic organisations are not conducive to the flourishing of the virtues and the achievement of the internal goods of excellence (Beadle and Moore, 2006:334); and that capitalistic business and the virtues are incompatible to the extent that this form of business "actually tend[s] to drive out the virtues" (Dobson, 2009:45). This provides the rationale for Moore's concept of the virtuous institution enabling the flourishing of virtue, linked to MacIntyre's concept of a practice, within which the virtues have pride of place:

A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods (MacIntyre, 2007:191).

As practices need to flourish to enable the realisation of internal goods, MacIntyre recognizes the need for institutions to sustain practices:

Institutions are characteristically and necessarily concerned with ... external goods. They are involved in acquiring money and other material goods; they are structured in terms of power and status, and they distribute money, power and status as rewards. Nor could they do otherwise if they are to sustain not only themselves, but also the practices of which they are the bearers. For no practices can survive for any length of time unsustained by institutions. Indeed so intimate is the relationship of practices to institutions – and consequently of the goods external to the goods internal to the

practices in question – that institutions and practices characteristically form a single causal order in which the ideals and the creativity of the practice are always vulnerable to the acquisitiveness of the institution, in which the cooperative care for common goods of the practice is always vulnerable to the competitiveness of the institution. In this context the essential feature of the virtues is clear. Without them, without justice, courage and truthfulness, practices could not resist the corrupting power of institutions (MacIntyre, 2007:194).

MacIntyre's acknowledgement of the need for institutions and the external goods necessary for maintaining practices, presents leaders with the task of balancing the internal goods of practices, with the external goods of institutions in a way that ensures the long-term sustainability of practices and the institutions that support them. Moore notes that "the essential association and tension between practices and institutions, and between internal and external goods, clearly gives the texture of organizational life a central dilemma" (2008:497). Moore makes the case that it is the leader who, as a virtuous character, confronts this dilemma by prioritising internal goods over external goods in such a way as to maintain the essential nature of the practice, whilst developing the "character of the virtuous institution" (2008:498). Reflecting on the nature of this dilemma how might the leader of character create and sustain a flourishing virtuous organization, in view of his or her moral responsibilities? It is against the backdrop of Moore's (2005b & 2008) "character of the virtuous institution" that this question is considered.

Moore explains how the virtues: "as enduring character traits, are not practice-specific, but are exercised in each of the practices in which an individual engages and are necessary to the flourishing of each such practice" (2008:497). It is to ensure the flourishing of practices that Moore recognises the need to expand the 'virtues-goods-practice-institution' schema in the sense that those representing the institution housing the practice are tasked with an additional practice of creating and sustaining the institution. This task, as with the practice on which the institution is built, requires prioritising internal goods over external goods to ensure the institution does not succumb to the dominance of external goods so subverting virtue. In prioritising

internal goods over external goods and developing the “character of the virtuous institution” (Moore, 2008:498) the leader of character can be guided by those neo-Aristotelian elements that characterise a virtuous organisation i.e., flourishing, purposiveness, narrative, practical wisdom, and means and ends. These elements are considered further on in view of how leaders balance internal and external goods by developing the character of the virtuous institution.

5.3.3 The Character of the Virtuous Institution

Factors guiding the conceptualisation of the character of the virtuous institution are the behaviour of leaders, as well as group and peer behaviours, and the cultural norms embedded within organisations (Weaver, 2006:352). Just as individual character is formed by the virtues, so too can one conceive of *institutional level* virtues (and vices) forming the character of a virtuous institution (Klein, 1988 and Moore, 2005b). It is possible argues Moore, by drawing on metaphor (Morgan, 1997:4-8) or on projection or analogy (Goodpaster and Matthews, 1982:135), to refer to the virtuous or vicious character of an institution, or a character located between the extremes of virtue and vice (Moore, 2008:499). Klein notes that as “formal organizations can function like a moral person ... they potentially have something analogous to character, which can be evaluated as virtuous or vicious” (1988:56). Moore defines a virtuous institutional character as:

the seat of the virtues necessary for an institution to engage in practices with excellence, focusing on those internal goods thereby obtainable, while warding off threats from its own inordinate pursuit of external goods and from the corrupting power of other institutions in its environment with which it engages (Moore, 2005b:661).

To address MacIntyre’s emotivist charges, Moore proposes that the character of the virtuous institution which is “practice-oriented and thereby a means to the end of internal goods” can enable the flourishing of the virtues (2005b:668). Moore’s concept of the virtuous business organisation is based on the business organization assuming the form of a practice supported by an institution, coupled with his definition of

virtuous institutional character. Certain requirements characterise the character of the virtuous business organisation. Firstly, a *good purpose* is necessary; secondly, the foundation and most important function is “*the sustenance of the particular business practice that it houses*” linked to *encouraging “the pursuit of excellence in that practice”* whatever the requirements of that particular practice; thirdly, the focus on *external goods* (like profit, reputation, and survival) as a beneficial and necessary function of the organization would be for the purpose and to the extent necessary for *sustaining and developing the practice*; fourthly, the organisation would be able to “*resist the corrupting power of organizations in its environment*” like suppliers and competitors and those representing the financial market concentrating solely on external goods (Moore, 2008:499). Other features of a virtuous organisation are a “*power-balanced structure*” aimed at inclusivity and not favouring one group over others; and “*decision-making systems and processes*” to “*enable rational critical dialogue*” and being able to question the previously unquestioned (Ibid.: 499-500).

5.3.4 Preconditions for Virtuous Business Organizations

Certain preconditions must exist for virtuous business organisations to flourish:

- a) Virtuous agents present at the level of the institution and of the core practice as it is through the possession and exercise of the virtues that moral agents sustain the core practice by pursuing excellence, and prioritise internal goods over external goods at the institutional level, so avoiding distortion of the practice. For those within the institution tasked with decision-making-authority, the possession and exercise of the virtues is critical (Moore, 2008:500). The concept of a virtuous agent, explored in section one, is the moral agent whose understanding of moral responsibility extends beyond his or her role to questioning and changing existing social structures. Such an agent assumes responsibility for his or her growth towards becoming a whole self, so displaying moral maturity.
- b) The mode of institutionalisation (MacIntyre, 1994:289) which concerns the distribution of decision criteria and decision-making authority within institutions. As institutional forms vary we can expect that the support for the core practices they

house will vary, thereby enabling, to a greater or lesser extent, internal goods arising from the exercise of the virtues (Moore, 2012:500). Weaver highlights the role of organisations in normalizing and reproducing virtue and vice and being a “primary influence on the moral identity of their employees, and thus on the degree of virtue characterizing those employees” (2006:356). His point attests to the normative nature of organizations, which are not morally-neutral. In establishing the mode of institutionalization to suit the particular type of virtuous organization, the leader of character exercises practical wisdom in deliberating well, making good judgments, and following up with action (Beabout, 2012:419). The mode of institutionalization is reflected in the organizational culture – referred to by Moore as the ‘character of the virtuous institution’ (2005b) discussed further on.

c) A conducive environment which is necessary for enabling the on-going exercise of the virtues to support the core practice housed by the institution. MacIntyre’s view is that organizations are open systems impacted by other institutions in society that are capable of creating barriers between each another. This applies to virtuous organizations and their ability to shield themselves from the dominance of external goods that are a feature of most societies (Moore, 2008:500). An example of a conducive societal environment to enable the ongoing exercise of the virtues, discussed in the previous section, is the Aristotelian integrated framework of organisation, society, and politics proposed by Morrell.

These preconditions for virtuous organizations are considered in light of leader’s responsibilities in creating and sustaining flourishing organizations, informed by MacIntyre’s understanding of moral agency, discussed in section one of this chapter.

As the factors guiding the conceptualization of the character of the virtuous institution are the behaviour of leaders, as well as group and peer behaviours, and the cultural norms embedded within organizations (Weaver, 2006:352), attention shifts to how leaders, groups, and cultural norms might positively influence the character of the virtuous institution.

5.3.5 The Leader of Character as Wise Steward

In response to MacIntyre's character of the manager embodying emotivism, Beabout (2013) offers a view of the character of the manager as a wise steward. This MacIntyrean view, drawing on the virtue of practical wisdom, is pertinent to the dilemma facing the leader of character of how to balance the internal goods of a practice with the external goods of the institution, so positively influencing the character of the virtuous institution.

In his Aristotelian approach to management theory and the conceptualization of organizations, Tsoukas asks "what sort of *knowledge* do practitioners need to possess in order to manage organizations?" (1997:655). The application of Aristotle's virtue of practical wisdom could strengthen the leader of character's ability in prioritising the internal goods of a practice over the external goods of an institution. Whetsone's (2003) study of excellent managers reveals their understanding of and display of virtue (2003:352), leading Beabout to propose that as "there are standards of excellence internal to the activity of managing," management can be regarded as a "domain-relative practice" that pursues the excellences internal to management drawing on the virtue of practical wisdom (2012:418-419). The virtue of practical wisdom then, forms an integral part of the excellence internal to managing a practice. Practical wisdom is:

the virtue whereby one acquires a habit of mind such that, in each case, one is excellent at 1) deliberating about what to do while attending to relevant particularities, 2) making in each instance a good judgment, and 3) carrying out such decisions in action. As such, the person of practical wisdom has actively developed excellent habits of deliberation, judgment, and execution (Beabout, 2012:419).

In applying practical wisdom, the leader of character as wise steward could guide group and peer behaviours, and influence cultural norms by focusing on the culture of the virtuous institution – its character.

5.3.6 The Culture of a Virtuous Organisation - Its Character

Moore's reference to the character of the institution touches on the theme of culture, specifically an ethical culture. Of relevance to the concept of the character of the virtuous organisation is how moral responsibility, regarded as an element of an ethical culture, is generated and transmitted through business organisations (Dempsey, 2015:319). Returning to the nature of the dilemma facing the leader of character in creating and sustaining the character of the virtuous organisation, attention to the type of culture he or she creates is important in establishing the character of the organisation. Moore differentiates between the culture and values of an organisation focused *externally* on corporate success, and the "character-virtues combination as essentially practice-oriented and thereby a means to the end of internal goods" (2005b:667-668). His reference to encouraging a supportive culture thereby creating a balance between internal and external goods (Ibid.) seems to be a reference to the nature of the dilemma facing the leader of character in creating and sustaining the character of the virtuous organisation. What would such a supportive culture entail and how could this strengthen the character of the virtuous institution and lead to flourishing?

5.3.7 A Shared Commitment to Moral Responsibility

Dempsey (2015) offers a view of culture focusing on a shared commitment to moral responsibility that could strengthen the leader of character's ability to create a balance between the internal goods of a practice and the external goods of an institution. Despite Dempsey's application of the term organizational culture as "the intrinsic values that are shared by organization members and underpin organization goals," (2015:320) his idea that members who participate in jointly committing to sharing certain values can be held morally responsible for actions of the organization, seems compatible with Moore's virtuous organization, given the centrality of moral responsibility to the virtues. Dempsey draws on Margaret Gilbert's (1992, 2008) account of 'joint commitments' to explain how individuals within an organisation share values by "jointly committing to value certain things" (2015:320). Such a joint

commitment involves individuals making a decision *together*, which is significantly different from individual commitments, as entering into a commitment with others creates an obligation to all those involved to behave in specific ways (2015:324).

Applied to Moore's virtuous organization, this could be a joint commitment by all to valuing the practice housed within the institution and to acting in ways that reflect their commitment to the practice. The types of commitments referred to are formed by the habitual engagement in behaviours and ways of doing things that are value-laden so creating "morally relevant relations" (Ibid.: 320, 328). This could be an example of how group and peer behaviour could positively influence the character of the institution, guided by the leader of character as wise steward. This could also be a reference to the virtues, in particular the virtues of integrity and constancy required of the moral agent, as well as the virtues of courage and justice that a commitment to moral responsibility is likely to invoke. These virtues will be explored further in the following chapter. Dempsey explains that this form of commitment is a tacit form of agreement "to promote those values that are sufficiently robust to ground genuine normative commitments and sufficiently strong to be important in determining moral responsibility for organizational outcomes"⁹² (Ibid.: 320).

Dempsey argues that the strength and breadth of the culture arising from "joint commitments to value can be sufficient to ground a meaningful account of responsibility for corporate outcomes" (2015:329). The leader of character's actions, in creating a culture of responsibility by encouraging the participation of all in jointly committing to value and preserve the practice, are likely to contribute to strengthening the character of the virtuous organisation. Within such a culture features of neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics like purposiveness, narrative, practical wisdom, means and ends, and flourishing, that foster an 'essentially human life' (MacIntyre, [1953] 1995:52) would be evident. In addition, the participative nature of the commitments as well as the joint commitments to value, in this case to the value of a practice, by the members of the virtuous organization, is an indication of

⁹² This is the language used by Salz, A. (2013) in his Independent Review of Barclays' Business Practices

participation in “the common life” referred to by MacIntyre in his example of fisherman working within a practice (1994:295). Such a common life is a reference to the concept of community deriving from our nature as political beings (*zōon politikon*). It is within the community that virtues are developed, and partially for whose benefit they are exercised and nourished (Moore, 2005a:244).

The following discussion of meaningful work, purposiveness, narrative, means and ends, and flourishing, touch on the cultural norms that characterize a practice. Together with the leader’s behaviour as wise steward, and the group and peer behaviours jointly committed to moral responsibility, these neo-Aristotelian features form part of the character of the virtuous institution, that could serve to sustain “the particular business practice it houses” (Moore, 2008:499).

5.3.8 Meaningful Work

Compatible with the culture of moral responsibility characterising the character of the virtuous organisation, is the theme of meaningful work that is “critical to the pursuit of the good life” (Beadle and Knight, 2012:433), and seems relevant to the leader of character’s quest to create a balance between internal and external goods. MacIntyre’s concept of a practice, focused on internal goods, incorporates the idea of meaningful work, drawing on the Aristotelian theme of function (*ergon*). As we fulfil our function as humans largely through the activity of work, Beadle and Knight contend that “work should be inherently meaningful” and this activity should be fulfilling and provide a sense of completion (Ibid.: 434). This understanding of meaningful work provides the rationale for the leader of character to enhance the character of the virtuous institution by structuring work in a way that prioritises the internal goods of the practice so allowing the virtues to be cultivated (Ibid.: 436). The type of participation in practices that the virtues allow (Ibid.: 444) and that meaningful work is aimed at is one with the type of participation required within the culture of moral responsibility described above. Moore’s reference to a “*power-balanced structure*” aimed at inclusivity and not favouring one group over others as a feature of the character of the virtuous institution (2008:499), is consistent with MacIntyre’s

concern about the nature of power structures that prevent workers being able to control their own activity (MacIntyre, 1998, Noponen, 2011).

5.3.9 Purposiveness

The theme of meaningful work is connected to the neo-Aristotelian feature of purposiveness that derives from Aristotle's teleology based on his idea that a human being has a purpose and therefore a specific excellence (*arête*). As Aristotle's ethics represents "the most that we humans are by nature capable of attaining ... and that we fulfil our nature in being people of good character" (Hartman, 2013:11); and MacIntyre's concept of purpose is embedded in his idea of internal goods that lead to well-being and is central to "a good human life" (Kempster et al., 2011:320), it seems that the leader of character, as wise steward, would do well by applying practical wisdom in structuring work within the organisation so that it serves human purposes rather than the purpose of the market. As questioning and reflecting about the purpose of the organization, including its purpose within society, is "fundamentally a sense-making activity" (Kempster et al., 2011:331), this should reflect in the design of meaningful work, extending to "decision-making *systems and processes*" to "enable rational critical dialogue" and being able to question the previously unquestioned (Moore, 2008:499-500).

5.3.10 Means and Ends

The separation of means and ends, raised in the first section, is strongly Weberian, arising from Enlightenment thinking concerning the character of the manager. Weberian thought is applied in establishing the means of managers, yet ends are not subject to questioning. Weber's view, as previously stated, is that: "Questions of ends are questions of values, and on values reason is silent; conflict between rival values cannot be settled" (MacIntyre, 2007:26). In contrast to Enlightenment thinking, a virtue understanding of ethics entails the questioning of means as well as ends, as explained by Koehn: "Mere cunning takes the end as given: deliberative choice, by contrast, explores and articulates the end at the same time as it considers how and whether the end should be pursued" (1995:535). Tsoukas refers to the "multiple

dysfunctions for individuals, groups and organizations that are caused by the extreme separation of means and ends” (1997:668). The questioning of means and ends is essential in the creation of virtuous organisations and in their ongoing sustenance, and is an important responsibility for the leader of character tasked with leading this type of organisation. By encouraging a culture of questioning means and ends within the organisation and embedding it in ways of working, the virtuous institution is likely to be able to withstand “the corrupting power of organizations in its environment” (Moore, 2008:499).

5.3.11 Narrative

MacIntyre’s idea of narrative is a response to what he regards as the unintelligibility of emotivism, and concerns persons and their actions. To make sense of an action it needs to be placed in a context that describes the agent’s intentions, the cultural and social setting through which those intentions are made intelligible, and the past circumstances that give rise to the intended action. A narrative is teleological as actions make sense when one understands *why* they are performed - “narrative provides reasons, not just (efficient) causes” (Rudd, 2007:62). MacIntyre’s concept of a *quest* located within the narrative or story of a person’s life is a search taking a person on a journey of discovery in search of their *telos*, which is “both partially known and unknown” (Beadle and Moore, 2006:332). As a person’s life is a unity that is understood and evaluated as a whole, the ‘story’ of a person’s life consists of interlocking narratives (MacIntyre, 2007:218-219). Within the context of the leader of character’s life, the narrative of her work, while constituting a significant part of her life, would intersect with other parts of her life story and be intelligible within her life viewed as a whole. This narrative unity is an ethical notion (Rudd, 2007:67) and is in contrast to the unintelligibility of emotivism. Narrative is relevant to the virtuous organization as the stories of an organisation contribute to its culture.

5.3.12 Flourishing

Aristotle's "central ethical concept ... is a unified, all-embracing notion ... translated as 'flourishing'" (Solomon, 2004:1024), is an outcome of the nature of the character of the virtuous institution presided over by the leader of character. The virtues enable human flourishing, which is understood as "the ultimate end of humans" (Dawson and Bartholomew, 2003:127). Organisations that foster an 'essentially human life' (MacIntyre, [1953] 1995:52) by enabling the exercise of the virtues through prioritising internal goods over external goods are flourishing organizations. In such organisations there is an awareness of whether actions lead to the human good, extending beyond the economic to incorporate social, environmental, spiritual, and possibly professional understandings of well being" (Dawson and Bartholomew, 2003:128). Solomon notes the importance of a business organization as a practice as "it views business as a human institution in service to humans" (2004:1024). This is the orientation and focus for the leader of character, and surely forms part of the leader's moral responsibility in maintaining a balance between the internal goods of a practice and the external goods of an institution, so that a practice contributes to "the good of humans, both the wider community and ourselves" (Dawson and Bartholomew, 2003:129).

This third section of this chapter has focused on the type of organisation that enables flourishing, informed by MacIntyre's 'virtues-goods-practice-institution' schema. The nature of this organization has been considered from the perspective of the leader of character as moral agent embodying MacIntyre's concept of moral responsibility, extending beyond the leader's role to reflect the whole, undivided self. In contrast to compartmentalisation as a feature of emotivism, the concept of the virtuous institution emphasising the notion of its 'character' presents a holistic view of the organisation in which the leader of character, (including his or her followers), as a whole, undivided self can flourish. The neo-Aristotelian features that characterise the virtuous organisation are in contrast to the divided nature of the type of organisations characterising emotivism.

The above presentation of the virtuous institution emphasising the notion of its ‘character’ has explored the type of organisational structure within which the leader of character as a whole, undivided self can flourish. The leader as moral agent derives moral responsibilities extending beyond his or her role requiring the questioning and probably restructuring of social structures reflective of the unity and wholeness offered by MacIntyre’s ‘virtues-goods-practice-institution’ schema, set against Morrell’s broader societal framework of organisation, society, and politics. As MacIntyre’s interest in organizations is in how they foster an “essentially human life” (MacIntyre, [1953] 1995:52). The virtuous institution rooted in MacIntyre’s understanding of virtue contains the elements capable of fostering an this form of life The extent to which such a life can be fostered is dependent on the nature of leadership entrusted with fulfilling this ideal.

In this final section of the Chapter Two critiques of MacIntyre’s work are presented. The first relates to his view of capitalism, followed by an argument for a fairer form of capitalism that is regarded as compatible with the concept of leader character being pursued in this research. The second critique relates to MacIntyre’s view of management and leadership, followed by the view of leadership this research supports.

5.4 MacIntyre’s View of Capitalism – A Critique

This critique of MacIntyre builds on the critiques of other virtue business ethics scholars, like McCann and Brownsberger, 1990; Horvath, 1995; Dobson, 2009; Moore, 2005a; 2005b; 2008; Beabout, 2013; and Noonan, 2014; and is limited to an aspect of MacIntyre’s thought relevant to this study of leader character, the social structures of capitalism. A further critique of MacIntyre’s work concerning his understanding of management will be subject to critique in Chapter Six.

MacIntyre’s comment about “a type of social and cultural order whose structures to some large degree inhibit the exercise of the powers of moral agency” (1999:327), is the reference point for the following critique of his stance on capitalism. While it is acknowledged that MacIntyre’s moral philosophical insights add enormous richness

and depth to any reflections about the human person located within society, it is his assessment and dismissal of Western capitalism (Dobson, 2009:43) representative of our social and cultural order that forms the subject of this critique. Moore's view is that MacIntyre is too pessimistic about the capitalist system as there is a lack of evidence that *pleonexia* is pervasive and a dominant virtue or that the virtues in general have been largely obliterated (2005a:241). MacIntyre's lack of work experience within a business environment is an advantage on one hand, offering an untainted outside view from a discipline independent of, and removed from business; yet could be a disadvantage on the other hand due to his lack of first-hand experience, particularly with regard to the reality of business life, raising justifiable claims of "armchair" critic. Although MacIntyre's critique of capitalism can be justified in terms of its impact on moral agency and thus human flourishing, this research argues that a fairer form of capitalism is possible.

In support of the argument about the benefits of capitalism is an argument by some of MacIntyre's critics concerning modernity and how its impact has been more contradictory and complex than MacIntyre has accounted for. The advent of modernity led to the development of a new moral and social order, coupled with new forms of social relations, and the new related values of individuality, liberty, equality, and tolerance (Blackledge and Knight, 2011:83-84). Modernity has ushered in a "new field of human possibilities" (Sayers, as quoted in Noonan, 2014:194), ranging from science to art, as well as political movements embracing principles of liberation and equality, enabling new internal goods, and possibilities for different and more satisfying ways of life in the future. This leads Noonan to conclude that whilst MacIntyre's criticisms of modernity are warranted, his account of modernity is one-sided (2014:194). As these types of advances associated with capitalism and modernity cannot be reversed, the challenge seems to be how to ensure these human advances

are directed in a manner “that empowers people in the service of life”⁹³ (Korten, 2019:1).

Of particular relevance to leaders and to the concept of leader character are the threats posed by money and power that can “subordinate the forms of human flourishing that people achieve through practices to the external goods of money and power” (Noonan, 2014:192). From an ethical perspective, the virtues provide guidance for leaders confronting the challenges posed by money and power. The virtue of moderation is particularly important with respect to money, and is in contrast to acquisitiveness a feature of capitalism that can easily lead to the vice of *pleonexia* (greed), detracting from the “intrinsic motivation of doing the job well for its own sake” (Horvath, 1995:515). Leaders guided by the virtue of *sophrosune* know that power brings responsibility to fulfil one’s obligations, rather than personal glorification (Ibid.). The case for leaders of character was made in Chapter Two, supported by Ciulla’s claim that power poses a distinct ethical challenge to leadership, (2001:315) and that our common nature gives rise to the ethical problems leaders face as we are all carved from “the warped wood of humanity”⁹⁴ (Ibid.: 313). Money and power, then, signify moral responsibility for leaders and raise the notion of Beabout’s “wise steward.” Being entrusted with money and power, the leader as wise steward understands her responsibility of “holding something in trust while choosing service over self-interest” (Beabout, 2013:212). The reference to wisdom is to the virtue of practical wisdom involving deliberation and good judgment thereby developing a disposition to seek and to discern how a wise person would act (Ibid.). The virtue of practical wisdom is an important virtue to be exercised by the leader of character, as explained above.

MacIntyre draws on the notion of competition derived from *agon*, the Greek word for ‘contest,’ which provided the arena for striving for excellence and improving one’s

⁹³ <https://davidkorten.org/a-21st-century-economics-for-the-people-of-a-living-earth-2nd-revision/>. Downloaded 19.11.2019.

⁹⁴ This quote is adapted from the philosopher Immanuel Kant: “... from such warped wood as is man made, nothing straight can be fashioned” (trans. 1983).

performance. As excellence is related to virtue, this Aristotelian understanding of competition motivating excellence is good for the individual as well as for society (Horvath, 1995:515). However, when competition ceases to be directed to the goal of personal excellence, and monetary success becomes the measure, whether of winning a greater share of the market for the organisation, or acquiring personal power and wealth for the individual, it becomes unhealthy and can lead to the vice of *pleonexia* (greed). From a virtue ethics perspective, a flaw of the shareholder form of capitalism is that: “Accumulating wealth becomes an external sign of victory, and overwhelms the intrinsic motivation of doing the job well for its own sake” (Ibid.). This statement indicates how unhealthy competition impedes the excellence associated with virtue. Competition, then, is not so much the problem as its orientation posing challenges for the leader of character at an individual level, at the intermediate level of the organization, and at a societal level, indicating the necessity for leaders to work towards maintaining a balance in favour of healthy competition. Moore’s (2002, 2005a, 2005b, and 2008) practice-institution schema discussed in the previous section addresses this need for balance indicating that it is an important responsibility for leaders of character.

5.4.1 A Fairer Form of Capitalism

The following argument for a fairer form of capitalism should be understood both as a response and as a challenge to MacIntyre’s claim that: “the tradition of the virtues is at variance with central features of the modern economic order” (2007:254). Morrell and Clark’s analysis of the shareholder form of organisation, with its lack of a concept of society indicates the need to challenge the economic assumptions underlying capitalism. It is suggested that a fairer form of capitalism, rather than excluding non-shareholders, should seek to be more inclusive. With regard to economic systems, particularly market economies⁹⁵, a virtue ethics perspective is interested in “questions about human goods and flourishing, about what makes for a good life or a life worth living” (Keat, 2008:243). This is in line with RL’s emphasis on the well-being of society,

⁹⁵ However not limited to capitalist market systems

and is linked to the main theme of this chapter – the social structures conducive to the flourishing of leaders of character.

One way of challenging existing assumptions underlying capitalism relevant to this research is to include an ethical dimension, which draws on the discipline of philosophy to broaden and enrich our understanding of society and the economy. MacIntyre’s view that markets are not ethically neutral (Keat, 2008:244) seems congruent with the view of French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, who argues that “we are *by definition* moral creatures” as our shared existence “‘condemns’ us continuously to make choices about ‘what we ought to do’ in regard to others” (Gini, 2004:28). This is a reference to the communal and collective nature of ethics. Business and ethics lack a common view of human nature. Economists regard human nature mainly from an egoistic perspective focusing on the rational pursuit of an individual’s desired wants, tastes, or preferences. Economics has a subjective orientation disregarding any normative evaluation of whether such desired wants, tastes, or preferences are good or bad. The main focus is on how an individual achieves her or his desires and wants (Ibid.: 29-30). The scholar and concerned citizen David Korten refers to the limitations of our current understanding of economics:

With few exceptions, economics, as it is currently taught, is grounded in the same badly flawed theories and principles that bear major responsibility for the unfolding crisis. These theories and principles value life only for its market price; use GDP growth as the defining measure of economic performance; assure us that maximising personal financial returns benefits society; recommend policies that prioritise corporate profits over human and planetary well-being; and ignore the natural limits of a finite Earth. A significant update of economics to align with reality, authentic values, and environmental imperatives of our time is urgent and seriously overdue (2019:2)⁹⁶

In contrast to economics, ethics has a pluralistic focus, evaluating the “self in relation to others” that requires an individual to account for how her actions impact on others (Gini, 2004:30). Should an individual’s interest conflict with those affected by her

⁹⁶ <https://davidkorten.org/a-21st-century-economics-for-the-people-of-a-living-earth-2nd-revision/>. Downloaded 19.11.2019.

actions the individual should consider adjusting or abandoning her action, so recognising the other's interests. This means that ethics requires that at times we "ought to act" actively "on behalf of the interests of another" (Ibid.). Where the focus for economists is on advancing one's best interests with no regard for the interests of others, ethicists are aware that in pursuing one's interests, one "ought" to consider others. The shift to a stakeholder approach embraced by RL, indicates openness to an ethical perspective, representing the integration of economics and ethics, which suggests a step towards a fairer form of capitalism. The extended construct of RL including Morrell's Aristotelian understanding of organisation, society, and politics is compatible with an ethical perspective that accounts for our inherent human and social nature that a purely economic view of capitalism excludes.

Korten recently provided a blueprint for an economic system that seems congruent with the virtue perspective of leader character being developed in this chapter and the next and argues for:

an economics for the twenty first century that will guide us from an economy that empowers corporations in the service of money to an economy that empowers people in the service of life.

We now face a fundamental question. Are we humans primarily financial beings whose well-being depends on growing money? Or are we living beings whose well-being depends on the health and vitality of a living Earth? The answer should be obvious, as is the reality that we are in trouble because we have created a global society based on a false assumption (2019:1).

Korten's understanding of economics reflects the nature of human beings as inherently social and political (Morrell, 2012:14) as explained above. A societal view capturing Aristotle's integrated framework of organisation, society, and politics could inform a fairer type of capitalism. As MacIntyre makes a case for the moral agent to question the social structures of capitalism (discussed in the first section), Korten's call should be viewed in this light.

5.4.2 MacIntyre's View of the Manager

This critique of MacIntyre's view of the manager recognizes that his critique of management offers valuable insights to business ethics (Sinnicks, 2018:735). Rather than dismissing MacIntyre's stinging critique of the character of the manager outright, this research seeks to integrate MacIntyre's rich moral philosophical insights into this virtue concept of leader character, whilst being mindful of developments in the field of ethical leadership research not accounted for by MacIntyre. As MacIntyre's critique is directed at those who have power and authority within organisations, his challenge to existing conceptions of management extends to leadership as well. Sinnicks notes that charismatic and transformational styles of leadership in particular, embody MacIntyre's charge of emotivism (2018:736).

In contrast to these styles of leadership it is argued that the moral philosophical nature of this research located in the humanities does not warrant this charge. Despite the dominance of charismatic and transformational forms of leadership, MacIntyre seems to "paint with very broad brush-strokes" and his view may be too narrow (Dobson, 2009:46). The reality seems more nuanced than MacIntyre acknowledges, for example the interest in a humanities perspective of ethical leadership, and the growing interest in the moral and social aspects of RL. In addition, MacIntyre does not seem to account for the conceptual distinction between management and leadership, with management being more closely linked to rigorous planning and technical expertise, and leadership regarded as more of an art (Sinnicks, 2018:736)(see March and Weil, 2005). This study of leadership draws on Ciulla's understanding that leadership is essentially ethical and responsible: "Leadership is a complex moral relationship between people based on trust, obligation, commitment, emotion, and a shared vision of the good" (2004:xv). Her understanding of the central role of ethics in all human relationships including the "relationship between leaders and followers" (Ibid.), mirrors that of Jean-Paul Sartre's: "we are *by definition* moral creatures" (Gini, 2004:28). Ciulla's identification of means, ends, and persons (2004:xvi) as dimensions

of ethics and leadership seems congruent with MacIntyre's emphasis on means and ends, as well as the character of the manager.

Sinnicks is interested in a type of leadership not "susceptible to MacIntyre's charge of emotivism ... [and] compatible with MacIntyre's moral philosophy" (2018:742). This study of leader character located within the emerging construct of RL with its normative focus, facilitating moral agency, open to questioning means and ends, and emphasising excellence over effectiveness, seems well-suited to this task. From MacIntyre's description of the character of the manager below the three highlighted aspects are addressed, to ensure an account of leader character that aims to do justice to MacIntyre's work whilst refuting his emotivist claim:

The manager represents in his *character* the obliteration of the distinction between **manipulative and non-manipulative social relations** ... 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, investment into profits (2007:30) [emphasis added].

5.4.2.1 Manipulative and Non-Manipulative Social Relations

Our emotivist culture arising from the lack of an overriding moral truth leads to MacIntyre's claim that manipulative and non-manipulative social relations are indistinguishable. This is due to the fact that "moral claims merely reflect subjective preference" (Sinnicks, 2018:736). The character of the manager looms large in this culture leading to diminished moral agency. As characters "bear particular moral ideals and become representative of their social order through so doing" (Beadle, 2002:46), the leader of character as moral agent exercising the virtues of integrity and constancy, is representative of a social order that challenges emotivism. As explained in section one, the moral agent is accountable to particular others, engages in critical practical deliberation, and acknowledges her or his individuality and that of others, that are all features of the form of self-understanding and social relationships characteristic of the moral agent (MacIntyre, 1999:317). The moral agent, possessed of the virtues and capable of engaging in authentic moral argument is able to distinguish between

manipulative and non-manipulative social relations, chooses not to engage in manipulative relations. Although the leader of character as moral agent inhabits a predominantly emotivist social order, part of her responsibility involves challenging this order by engaging in “reflective critical questioning” of standards previously taken for granted (MacIntyre, 1999:317).

5.4.2.2 Ends as Given

A Weberian approach to management informed by emotivism holds that: “Questions of ends are questions of values, and on values reason is silent” (MacIntyre, 2007:26). This is due to the lack of common moral precepts and premises that renders judgment between competing values impossible. This relativist stance means one is unable to evaluate given ends and explains why the emotivist manager deliberates about means but not about ends. This inability to assess ends is a characteristic feature of the manager’s role (Sinnicks, 2018:736-737). As managers understand themselves as “morally neutral characters” their focus is “to devise the most efficient means of achieving whatever end is proposed” (MacIntyre, 1984:74). MacIntyre highlights the impact of a Weberian approach to management influenced by utilitarianism⁹⁷ and cost-benefit analysis. Once at work the executive accepts the aims of the organization, whether public or private, as given. The executive’s own tasks are purely technical set within the bounds “imposed by corporate goals and legal constraints” effectively suppressing any questioning concerning the moral ends of cost-benefit analysis (MacIntyre, 1977:218 & 237).

The moral neutrality imposed by an emotivist Weberian approach to management is at variance with our essentially moral nature as human beings. The need for questioning ends is borne out in the case of J, discussed in Chapter Five, and as moral agent the leader of character bears the responsibility for questioning ends, not least of which concern the structures of capitalism and the business organisations operating within these social structures. In light of the next generation (‘Gen Y’ 1982-2000) who

⁹⁷ “In this ethical system, good involves determining the benefits and costs of an act to all who might be affected by that act” and is regarded as “the moral equivalent of a cost/benefit analysis” (Horvath, 1995:508-509).

understand RL as “responsibility for our planet, businesses, and society” (Turnbull and Williams, 2016:183), the leader’s role in questioning ends becomes an increasingly urgent imperative. Morrell’s Aristotelian concept of organization society, and politics framing the emerging construct of RL in which leader character is understood, together with Moore’s virtuous institution discussed in section three would provide the space for such questioning.

5.4.2.3 Effectiveness

MacIntyre regards the character of the manager as “morally neutral ... [and] skilled at being effective whatever the ends may be” (Moore, 2008:486). However, MacIntyre denies that effectiveness is morally neutral; rather it involves manipulating other human beings into complying with set behavioural patterns. By appealing to this essentially manipulative form of effectiveness the manager is able to validate his or her authority (MacIntyre, 1984 or 1985:74). In *AV* MacIntyre exposes managerial effectiveness as “expressions of arbitrary, but disguised, will and preference” (1985 or 1984:107) that is “part of a masquerade of social control rather than reality” (ibid.: 75). Within this capitalist social system effectiveness is the measure of success, which indicates the need for questioning ends. Horvath contrasts the capitalist “ethic of effectiveness” with the “ethic of excellence” associated with virtue where the measure of success is personal being internally determined (Horvath, 1995:524). There is a need for maintaining a balance between effectiveness and excellence – crucial for the leader of character – that can be associated with MacIntyre’s concept of external goods, and excellence associated with virtue and internal goods (Moore and Beadle, 2006:376).

Considered from the perspective of flourishing, MacIntyre’s insights into the character of the manager reflect a character unable to flourish within the social structures she or he inhabits. In contrast to this character, the view of leader character this research proposes is one in which the leader is enabled to flourish, within a societal context framed by an integrated understanding of organisation, society, and politics. This societal context provides the type of Aristotelian background compatible with an organization in which the leader of character can flourish – the virtuous institution.

Within these virtue enabling societal and organisational contexts the leader of character as moral agent is enabled to flourish. In response to his depiction of this character that he regards as amoral, MacIntyre presents the moral agent as an ideal type encompassing a fully developed account of moral responsibility. The virtue understanding of moral agency MacIntyre presents is matched by a corresponding sense of moral responsibility, and a notion of the whole, undivided self, representing moral maturity. To address MacIntyre's concerns concerning the culture of emotivism the moral agent, possessing the virtues of integrity and constancy is capable of engaging in authentic moral argument, is able to distinguish between manipulative and non-manipulative social relations chooses not to engage in manipulative relations, is open to questioning means and ends, and chooses excellence over effectiveness. This view of the moral agent provides a partially developed understanding of leader character.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored a central theme of MacIntyre's work concerning the threats posed by the social structures embodying the moral philosophy of emotivism, and the effects on the 'character of the manager' – an archetype representative of the culture of emotivism. In response to his depiction of this amoral character, MacIntyre presents the moral agent as an ideal type encompassing a fully developed account of moral responsibility. The virtue understanding of moral agency MacIntyre presents, matched by a corresponding sense of moral responsibility, together with a notion of the whole, undivided self, representing moral maturity, that does not engage in manipulative relations, is open to questioning means and ends, and favours excellence over effectiveness, provides a partially developed understanding of the concept of leader character that will be completed in Chapter Six.

From this partially developed understanding of leader character, the types of social structures regarded as conducive to the flourishing of the character of the leader at a societal and at an organisational level were considered. The nature of the leader's moral responsibility within these social structures in contributing to flourishing

societies and flourishing organisations was emphasised. At a societal level an Aristotelian conceptual framework comprising organisation, society, and politics was proposed as a suitable societal context conducive to the flourishing of leaders, and to exploring the virtue concept of leader character. As this research is pursuing the concept of leader character within the emerging construct of RL, an analysis of this construct revealed the need for extending its moral and social components, and this Aristotelian conceptual framework was considered suitable for extending the RL construct beyond stakeholder theory. This extended construct of RL is compatible with the virtue concept of leader character this research seeks to develop, at an individual, organisational, and societal level.

The type of organisation considered conducive to the flourishing of the character of the leader in section three of the chapter proposed an organization based on MacIntyre's 'goods-virtues-practice-institution' – the virtuous institution (Moore, 2002, 2005a, 2005b, and 2008). The 'character' of this institution, depicting its culture was considered from the perspective of the leader's moral responsibilities in creating a flourishing organisation that meets MacIntyre's criteria of fostering an 'essentially human life' (MacIntyre, [1953] 1995:52).

Finally, two critiques of MacIntyre's work were presented. The first, a critique of his view of capitalism was conducted, and an argument for a fairer form of capitalism, as a more just social structure within which to understand the concept of leader character was proposed. The second critique of MacIntyre's work concerned his view of management and leadership. This was followed by a view of leadership this research supports in the closing part of this chapter.

Chapter Six

Developing the Concept of Leader Character from a Virtue Ethics Perspective

Introduction

A return to Chapter One provides the introduction to this final chapter regarding the type of leadership required to adequately address the issues of responsibility and sustainability facing business leaders, given our current context characterized by the global challenges of scarcity of resources, climate change, and world poverty (Eisenbeiss, 2012). A review of current models of leadership in Chapter One ranging from transformational, authentic, servant, and other approaches that address the ethical or moral challenges of leaders revealed conceptual constraints in adequately encompassing the causes and implications of present leadership challenges (Voegtlin et al., 2012:2). RL, an emerging concept overlaps studies in leadership, ethics, and CSR (Ciulla, 2005; De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2008; Doh and Stumpf, 2005a; Maak, 2007; Maak and Pless, 2006a; Voegtlin et al., 2012; Waldman and Galvin, 2008; Waldman and Siegel, 2008), was identified as a suitable construct for addressing the issues of responsibility and sustainability facing business leaders.

Pless and Maak (2011:5) are mainly concerned with the conceptual foundations of RL and seek to contribute to fostering a better understanding of the foundations of this emerging construct. It is against this background that they pose a guiding question: “what makes a responsible leader?” (Pless and Maak, 2011:5). Their view, supported by other researchers, is that “having a good character and being a moral person are at the core of being a responsible leader” (Maak and Pless, 2006:105; Ciulla, 1998; Solomon, 1999; George, 2003). Character, a concept formulated by the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, has recently raised interest among researchers in the field of ethical leadership (e.g. Hannah and Avolio, 2011; Hannah and Avolio, 2011a; Quick and Wright 2011; Wright and Quick, 2011; Seijts et al., 2015; Sturm et al., 2017; Crossan et al., 2017). Character is the critical measure of leadership excellence, notes Sankar (2003:45) and is a key aspect of the study of leadership. Hannah and Avolio (2011) believe that through character and competence sustainable leadership performance

can be fostered across contexts, cultures and challenges (2011:979). Thus they propose that both character and competence form “... the raw building blocks of effective and sustainable leadership” (2011:979).

Structure of the Chapter

As the objective of this research is to develop the concept of leader character, the emphasis of the chapter is on achieving this objective, commencing with a return to the rationale for this study - the problem and purpose statements posed in Chapter One. Thereafter a brief synopsis of the argument of each chapter is provided indicating how this research has set about tackling the problem of the lack of understanding of leader character, located within the emerging construct of RL. This is followed by the central task of developing the virtue concept of leader character, taking the form of an integration of the Aristotelian and MacIntyrean understandings of character developed in chapters three and four, combined with the partially developed account of leader character comprising moral agency, and the whole moral self, capable of addressing MacIntyre’s emotivist concerns, developed in Chapter Five. Once the concept of leader character is developed, a definition of this virtue concept will be provided. The closing section of the chapter indicates how the fully developed concept of leader character contributes to extending the conceptual foundations of RL, and more broadly, to the growing body of leadership literature focused on the study of leader character. The limitations of this study are noted and recommendations for future research are provided.

Problem Statement – the Lack of Understanding of Leader Character

A review of the leadership literature reveals that the concept of leader character has been neglected from a research perspective (Hannah and Avolio, 2011; Hannah and Avolio, 2011a; Quick and Wright, 2011; Wright and Quick, 2011), although more recently, research within the field of management is starting to emerge (Seijts et al., 2015; Sturm et al., 2017; Crossan et al., 2017:988). Researchers have encountered challenges in adequately defining leader character as revealed by current research (Wright and Quick, 2011:978; Quick and Wright, 2011:984; Hannah and Avolio,

2011:979; Wright and Huang 2008:983; Wright and Goodstein, 2007; Sarros et al. 2006:683), giving some insight into the enigmatic nature of this construct. There is a need to further develop and refine the understanding of this construct and to engage in a dialogue with leadership scholars “... on examining what constitutes the leader character construct” (Hannah and Avolio, 2011:979). This lack of understanding of leader character lying at the heart of RL poses a research problem that this research has sought to address, guided by the research question: what is leader character?

Problem Statement – the Lack of a Suitable Way of Researching Leader Character

As discussed in Chapter One, to date, the nature of research engaged in by leadership scholars is not entirely satisfactory for defining the notion of leader character, a concept lying at the heart of RL (Maak and Pless, 2006:105; Ciulla, 1998; Solomon, 1999; George, 2003), and there is an interest in extending the existing conceptualizations of character (Hannah and Avolio, 2011a:991). Hannah and Avolio “... submit there still remains an extensive range of meaningful constructs that have been untapped in prior research” (2011a:991). They go on to state that the ontological basis for the concept of character requires refinement and unpacking (Ibid.). They believe that much work still needs to be done to understand how character operates within the limited theoretical space developed by current theories of ethics and leadership (Ibid.).

This is pertinent in view of the fact that character research is predominantly undertaken from within the transformational leadership and positive psychology constructs, leading to the claim that the subject of character has been “hijacked by these fields” (Conger and Hollenbeck, 2010:312). This is evidenced in the way character is regarded as “an additional dimension of transformational leadership theory” (Ibid.), presenting a research opportunity that this research has sought to address. The lack of satisfactory ways of researching leader character lying at the heart of RL, coupled with the need for researching leader character from a leadership construct other than the transformational one, poses a second research problem that this research has sought to address, leading to a second research question: what

method of researching leader character is suitable for extending the concept of leader character, lying at the heart of RL?

Purpose Statement

Based on these two research questions, the purpose of this research is to develop the concept of leader character lying at the heart of RL (Maak and Pless, 2006) so as to make a contribution to the emerging field of RL by applying a philosophical virtue ethics perspective to an in-depth study of leader character.

6.1 Tracing the Argument of this Research

This final juncture in the research process involves clarifying how this research has been conducted by tracing the argument from Chapter One through to Chapter Five. Understanding *how* this research has been conducted paves the way for an exploration of *what* the meaning of leader character is in the following section. This will address the problem questions concerning *what* leader character is and *how* it is researched.

6.1.1 Chapter One

A historical overview of research about the character of leaders in Chapter One reveals how leadership researchers have struggled to fully understand the enigmatic nature of leader character (Wright and Quick, 2011). This is in spite of on-going debate concerning the nature of 'good character' (Hackett and Wang, 2012). This research has built on the views expressed by leadership researchers interested in advancing knowledge and plumbing the depths to gain a better understanding of leader character (Quick and Wright, 2011:984). Some of the themes acknowledged by leadership researchers that this research develops are: a core moral framework as the defining feature of character and character-based leadership (Wright and Quick, 2011:976); traditional definitions of character containing both moral and social dimensions (Wright and Goodstein, 2007); character defined as "habitual qualities within individuals, and applicable to organizations that both constrain and lead them to desire and pursue personal and societal good" (Ibid.: 932); constituents of character including disposition, a way of thinking guided by principles, and action (Hannah and

Avolio, 2011:979); and the themes of inner self and moral goodness, common to most definitions of character.

This research incorporates, clarifies, and refines these views by applying the moral philosophical theory of virtue ethics as the core moral framework to define leader character (a virtue definition of leader character is provided further on), and to elaborate on the moral and social nature of leader character. The reference to “habitual qualities within individuals” is to the virtues of character that lie at the centre of the concept of leader character that is developed in section two. As indicated in Chapter One, the position taken in this research is that both ‘being’ and ‘doing’ constitute character, although this remains subject to debate among some researchers. An understanding of virtue as human action, elaborated on in section two, should clarify why ‘being’ and ‘doing’ constitute character.

6.1.2 Chapter Two

As this research aims to extend the conceptual foundations of RL by developing the concept of leader character, which is foundational to RL, Chapter Two examined the emerging construct of RL and its suitability as a framework for exploring the concept of leader character. An argument for the need for leaders of character was made, particularly for the virtues of character as necessary for addressing the challenges all leaders face, particularly regarding the moral challenges and human desire for power (Ciulla, 2001:315). The concept of moral responsibility was introduced, its links to the exercise of virtue, and the need for the associated competence of “ethical intelligence” (Maak and Pless, 2006:104-105), comprising moral reflection, moral awareness, and moral imagination. An analysis of the normative aspect of RL reviewed the largely deontological ethical base of RL, arguing how virtue ethics, with its deep insight into the nature of character and human goodness can extend the conceptual foundation of RL. Distinguishing between a social science and a humanities way of researching the study of leadership clarified how this concept of leader character is researched. The application of philosophy in the form of a moral philosophical argument supports a humanities approach.

6.1.3 Chapter Three

Based on the work of Aristotle's *NE*, Chapter Three developed an understanding of character derived from his concept of the virtues and how they lead to human goodness. The virtues of character, including the concept of virtue, the nature of the virtues, how virtues are manifested, and what the exercise of virtue involves, together with excellence associated with a virtue, combined to form an Aristotelian understanding of character. The political and societal context necessary for an understanding of Aristotle's concept of virtue was emphasised, noting the parallels to the political, societal, and normative aspects of RL.

6.1.4 Chapter Four

In Chapter Four, MacIntyre's *AV* detailing his account of the virtues provided the basis for developing a MacIntyrean understanding of character. MacIntyre's reflections concerning modern moral philosophy, its influence on late modern society, and the implications of a relativist form of morality form the background to understanding MacIntyre's concept of character. His response to this state of affairs is his concept of the virtues that extends the virtue tradition of thought and provides rich material for the concept of leader character. MacIntyre draws on Aristotle's notion of the good *person* and good *citizen* (2007:133), which resonates with the societal nature of RL, and forms part of the concept of leader character.

6.1.5 Chapter Five

Whereas Chapters Three and Four considered the nature of character from a moral philosophical perspective, Chapter Five applied a business ethics perspective and included the concept of the business leader. MacIntyre's insights regarding the social structures of modernity and their impact on the character of the manager and the leader were considered in this chapter. In response to his depiction of this character that he regards as amoral, MacIntyre presents the moral agent as an ideal type encompassing a fully developed sense of moral responsibility. The virtue understanding of moral agency MacIntyre presents is matched by a corresponding

sense of moral responsibility, and a notion of the whole, undivided self, representing moral maturity. To address MacIntyre's concerns regarding the culture of emotivism, the moral agent is capable of engaging in authentic moral argument, and is able to distinguish between manipulative and non-manipulative social relations. Such an agent, possessing the virtues of integrity and constancy, chooses not to engage in manipulative relations. In addition, the moral agent is open to questioning means and ends, and chooses excellence over effectiveness. This view of the moral agent provides a partially developed understanding of the concept of leader character that would be completed in section 2 of this chapter.

From this partially developed understanding of leader character, the types of social structures regarded as conducive to the flourishing of the leader of character at a societal and at an organisational level were considered. The nature of the leader's moral responsibility within these social structures in contributing to flourishing societies and flourishing organisations was emphasised. At a societal level an Aristotelian conceptual framework comprising organisation, society, and politics was proposed as a suitable societal context conducive to the flourishing of leaders, and to exploring the virtue concept of leader character.

As this research is pursuing the concept of leader character within the emerging construct of RL, an analysis of this construct revealed the need for extending its moral and social components, and this Aristotelian conceptual framework was considered suitable for extending the RL construct beyond stakeholder theory. This extended construct of RL is compatible with the virtue concept of leader character this research seeks to develop, at an individual, organizational, and societal level. The type of organisation considered conducive to the flourishing of the character of the leader is an organisation based on MacIntyre's 'goods-virtues-practice-institution' – the virtuous institution (Moore, 2002, 2005a, 2005b, 2008, 2012). The 'character' of this institution, depicting its culture was considered from the perspective of the leader's moral responsibilities in creating a flourishing organisation that meets MacIntyre's criteria of fostering an "essentially human life" (MacIntyre, [1953] 1995:52).

Considered from the perspective of flourishing, MacIntyre's reflections on the character of the manager reflect a character unable to flourish within the social structures she or he inhabits. In contrast to this character, the view of leader character this research proposes is one that addresses MacIntyre's concerns regarding emotivism. This portrait of a flourishing leader encompasses a societal concept of flourishing framed by an integrated understanding of organisation, society, and politics that is compatible with the type of organisation that facilitates flourishing – the virtuous institution.

It is from this partially developed account of leader character that a fully developed concept of leader character can proceed.

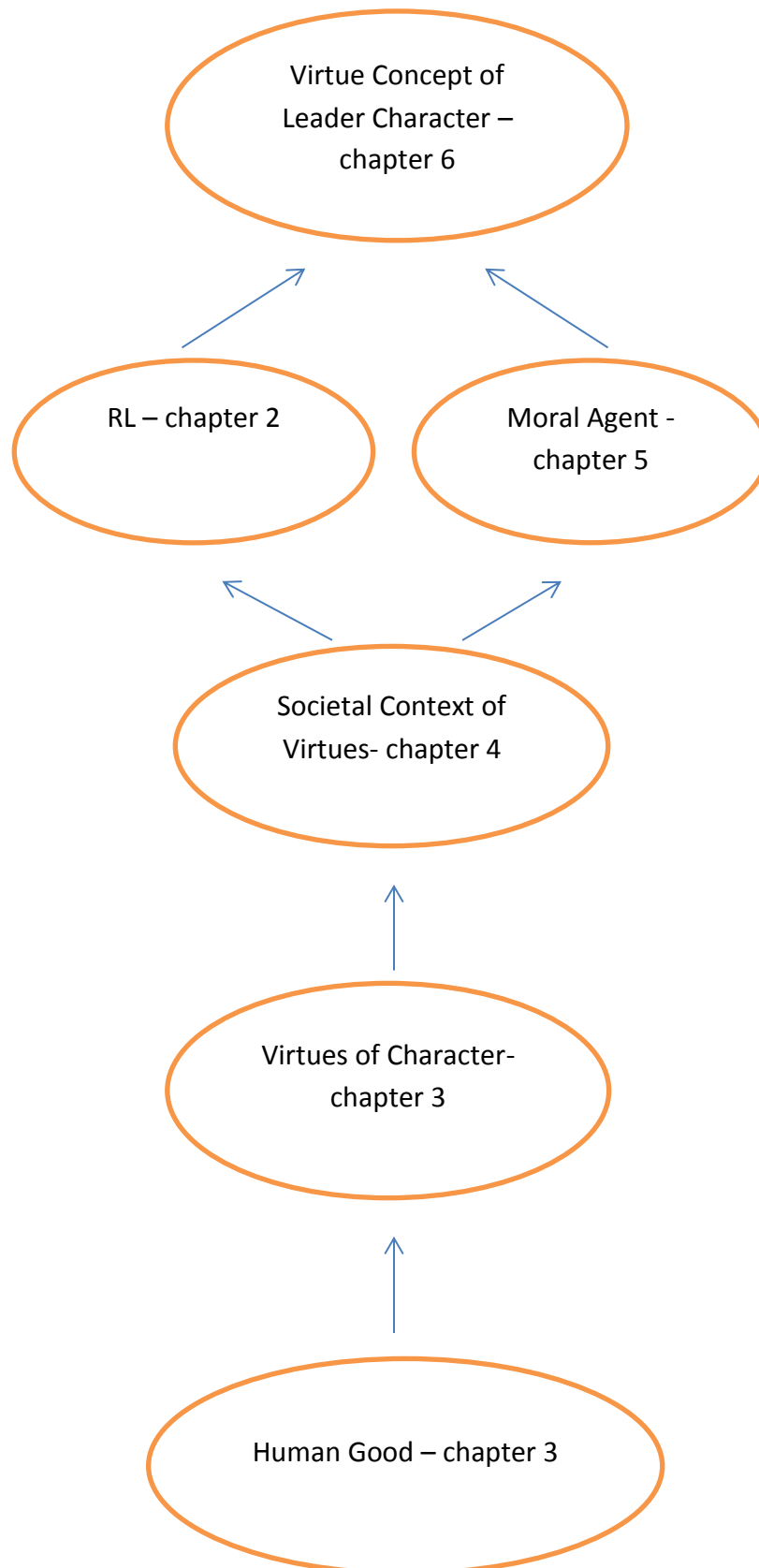
6.2 How Leader Character is Conceptualised

This research conceptualises leader character by tracing the argument of each chapter, commencing with Aristotle's understanding of human good, from which the virtues of character derive. The societal context of the virtues based on MacIntyre's reflections of late modern society makes a case for the moral agent with a fully developed sense of moral responsibility representing the whole, moral self, and is a necessary counterpart to the dominant social structures embodying emotivism. This concept of leader character, framed within the emerging construct of RL, is based on the assumption that a good leader is ethical and responsible.

These dimensions illustrated in the diagram below represent the core themes of each chapter, illustrating that Aristotle's concept of the human good forms the foundation on which this virtue concept of leader character is built. MacIntyre, as a modern moral philosopher, extends Aristotle's understanding of the human good, as he reflects on the possibility of virtue within the societal context of modernity, as explained in Chapter Four. His response in the form of a socially-embodied understanding of virtue provides a moral philosophical framework for business ethics scholars to examine the moral ills plaguing modern business, and to formulate a view of the type of leadership necessary to address these ills, was discussed in Chapter Five. The moral agent representing a whole, moral self, displaying moral maturity, open to questioning

means and ends, choosing excellence over effectiveness, and not engaging in manipulative relations, formed a partially developed concept of leader character in Chapter Five, that is carried forward to this chapter. In Chapter Two it was argued that the normative construct of RL, with its societal orientation is a suitable framework for pursuing an understanding of leader character, compatible with MacIntyre's rich concept of moral responsibility extending to the societal and organisational domains. The key themes extracted from the argument of this research depicted in Diagram 1 below indicate how leader character is conceptualised from a virtue perspective.

Diagram 1: Conceptualisation of Virtue Concept of Leader Character



6.2.1 A Virtue Model of Leader Character

As a result of the process of tracing the argument of this research, a model of leader character has emerged that can be distilled into six core dimensions, each representing various facets of leader character that make up the whole, as illustrated in diagram 2 below. The six dimensions that constitute the model are the key virtue themes arising from the central argument of this research concerning the nature of character and leader character, consisting of: *human good, the virtues of character, the societal framework of organization, society, and politics, the virtuous institution, the moral agent, and the emerging construct of RL*. The dimension of RL in diagram 2 represents an anomaly as depicted by the single arrowed line connected to the virtue concept of leader character. The reason for this is that the theoretical foundation of the emerging construct of RL, unlike the other dimensions of leader character, is not rooted in the theory of virtue ethics. This point be expanded on further on.

Corresponding to the core dimensions are the various facets of leader character this research has considered from a virtue perspective concerning the type of: *good, action, society, organization, person, and leadership*. As the concept of moral responsibility has been explored in examining the core themes comprising the dimensions of leader character, and touches on each dimension of leader character, the theme of moral responsibility is regarded as central to a virtue understanding of leader character, together with the concepts of *eudaimonia, telos* and excellence, and the virtues of character, discussed below.

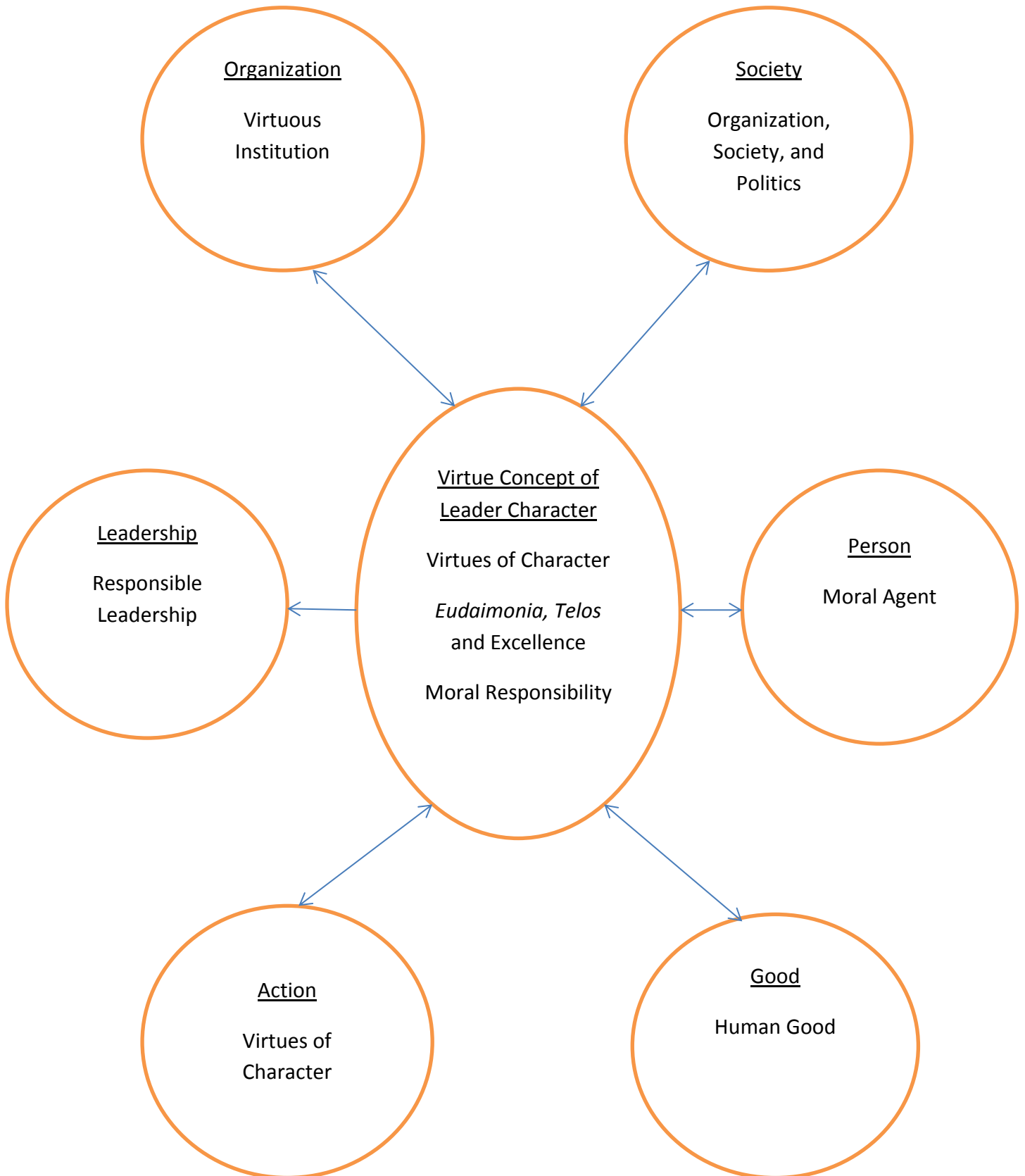
6.2.2 The Key Concepts of Eudaimonia, Telos, and Excellence Foundational to the Model of Leader Character

As the human good is foundational to Aristotle's concept of virtue, this concept of leader character originates in Aristotle's understanding of human good. A brief return to Aristotle's argument in his *NE* concerning the human good should clarify why the key concepts of *eudaimonia, telos*, and excellence lie at the heart of this model of leader character. Aristotle's question concerning the ultimate goal of human life (*NE* 1095a6-17) leads to his conclusion that this is human flourishing (*eudaimonia*) - the

ultimate human good, which he regards as an end point (Pakaluk, 2005:47). Aristotle follows a teleological approach in his study of the good with his use of the concept of ends, indicating that the concept of purpose is central to his idea of the good, and to the notion of an ultimate goal of human life. He considers the function of a human being, reasoning that “a good human being is a human being who performs the human function well” (Shields, 2007:317). Aristotle’s proposition that the meaning of virtue is based on the concept of excellence, and “what it is about a thing which makes it such that it perform[s] its function well” (Pakaluk, 2005:88), leads to his conclusion that the virtues enable us to perform our human function well. The ultimate purpose of human life then, is human flourishing (*eudaimonia*) - the perfection of human nature enabled by the virtues, reflected in a life that is lived that expresses humankind’s essential nature.

At the core of this concept then, is an understanding of the leader of character as an *excellent* human being, who acts with *purpose* and lives a *flourishing* life. As *eudaimonia* is living and acting successfully (NE 1095a17-20; Lawrence, 2009:420) this leads to the question: what does living and acting successfully mean for the leader of character? This question, concerning the flourishing of the leader of character, guides the development of this model, and will be returned to later. Following on from Diagram 2 the next level of the model is conceptualized detailing the components of each of the key dimensions as depicted in Diagram 3.

Diagram 2: Model of Virtue Concept of Leader Character



6.2.3 The Components of a Virtue Concept of Leader Character

The next step in the process of developing the concept of leader character involves returning to the argument of this research from which the conceptualization and model of leader character has been developed, to consider the components of each dimension of leader character, so as to add necessary detail to the model. As the human good is foundational to the development of this model, a review of the argument of this research is conducted to consider how the core concepts of *eudaimonia*, *telos*, and excellence representing the human good, are evident in the argument of this research. From this review those components that represent the key dimensions of the model will be identified, as depicted in diagram 3 further on.

6.2.3.1 The Argument for Human Flourishing (*Eudaimonia*), *Telos*, and Excellence

The virtues of character and the human good centred around the key concepts of *eudaimonia*, *telos*, and excellence form the conceptual pillars supporting this model of leader character. The argument developed in Chapter Two was that RL as a normative construct concerned with the societal impacts of leader's actions, is compatible with a virtue exploration of the concept of leader character. The inclusion of RL as a key dimension of this model of leader character, lacking the virtue concepts of *eudaimonia*, *telos*, and excellence, may seem to be an anomaly. In Chapter Five an extension to the conceptual basis of this leadership construct in the form of Morrell's (2012) Aristotelian framework of organisation, society, and politics, with its virtue understanding of human good was proposed, so providing the justification for the inclusion of RL as a key dimension of this model of leader character. However, as mentioned above, RL has not been conceived as a virtue concept and lacks the roots of virtue ethics shared by the other dimensions of the model so remains slightly apart from the other dimensions as indicated by the single direction arrow. This means that RL does not contribute to leader character but can be enhanced by including the virtue concept of leader character.

In Chapters Three and Four the conceptual foundation of the human good was laid leading to the formation of an Aristotelian and a MacIntyrean understanding of

character. Building on this conceptual foundation, Chapter Five focused explicitly on the core theme of flourishing (*eudaimonia*), particularly as it pertains to the leader. In response to the social structures embodying the culture of emotivism and the influence on the character of the leader as portrayed by MacIntyre, the moral agent, Morrell's (2012) Aristotelian framework of organisation, society, and politics, and Moore's (2012) virtuous institution were proposed as virtue concepts that embody flourishing at the level of the person, society, and organisation. Although the themes of *telos* and excellence were not as explicitly argued for in Chapter Five, they are woven through the argument of the chapter, as explained below.

6.2.3.2 Human Action

Human action, encompassing the concepts of *eudaimonia*, *telos*, and excellence that lie at the heart of this model of leader character represents acting or living successfully. The purpose of tracing the argument of Chapter Five is twofold. Firstly, to clarify how *eudaimonia*, *telos*, and excellence are woven through the dimensions of the model specifically with regard to the moral agent, Morrell's organisation, society, and politics, and Moore's virtuous institution. This will provide necessary detail for the components of each of these dimensions of the model. Secondly, to reveal how this model represents successful living for the leader of character as indicated at the conclusion of this discussion.

As Aristotle's *NE* is a study of "practical philosophy" his concern is action (*Praxis*), specifically "rationally chosen" action expressing the agent's "preferential choice (*prohairesis*)" (1111b6-8)(Lawrence, 2009:419). This type of action referred to as human action, not merely intentional or voluntary, is *valued* by those who choose it, and regarded as "what is *best* to do or what they *should do*, in light of their views of human goods and bads; as what counts as human success (*eudaimonia*) and as acting or living successfully (*eupraxia*; *euzôia*)" (Lawrence, 2009:419). This type of human action is the domain of the virtues of character and leads to the realization of the self, and to character (*Met E.1* 1025b23-4. Cf. *NE VI.2* 1139a18-20, 31-3; *EE II.6* 1222b18-20, II.8 1224a27-30, II.10 1226b21-3, and e.g. 1094a1-2, 1095a14-15 1097a21, III.1-3. See

McDowell (1980: sect. 1-6); also Lawrence (2004)(Lawrence, 2009:419). Acting or living successfully and what it means for the leader of character is what this concept of leader character aims to conceptualise and articulate.

MacIntyre makes explicit reference to the theme of human action in AV, and he “comes to Aristotelian philosophy with its ethics of human action” (Lutz, 2012:54). In AV MacIntyre distinguishes between the virtue understanding of human action as “freely chosen means to ends” and human behaviour viewed from a modern scientific perspective as “uncaused” human acts (Ibid.: 13). Social scientists studying human behaviour disregard Aristotle’s concepts of “human ends and rational deliberation” and look for what causes human behaviour “in the circumstances that determine our responses” (Ibid.: 14). In contrast, human action is “inherently teleological” as we act for reasons and our natural human need is to understand the meaning of people’s actions (Ibid.: 49). The significance of human action to this concept of leader character is succinctly expressed by Moore: “Actions lead to outcomes which enable us ... to achieve our purpose [*telos*] in life ... Actions also reinforce character” (2017:36).

6.2.4 The Moral Agent and the Argument for *Eudaimonia*, *Telos*, and Excellence

Although the concept of *eudaimonia* was explicitly argued for in Chapter Five, the concepts of *telos* and excellence are intimately connected to the concept of *eudaimonia* as alluded to in the explanation by Lawrence (2009:419) above, and the purpose of this discussion is to reveal how the concepts of *telos* and excellence, although implied, are evident in Chapter Five in the argument for the moral agent, Morrell’s societal framework of organisation, society, and politics, and Moore’s virtuous institution.

As discussed in Chapter Five, MacIntyre reflects on how the social structures embodying the culture of emotivism impact the character of the manager. In response, MacIntyre makes a case for a virtue understanding of the moral agent with a fully developed sense of moral responsibility, who is aware of the impact of social structures on his or her character. Chapter Five argued that the moral agent represents an archetype of a whole, moral self that is morally mature and capable of moral

perception involving the sensitivity to interpret the moral landscape of emotivist social structures, and respond with virtue. The moral agent engages in the type of virtue activity defined as human action by exercising the virtues of constancy and integrity identified by MacIntyre as necessary to counter the threats posed by the phenomenon of compartmentalisation (1999:317). MacIntyre's concept of the moral agent captures a virtue understanding of the human good in the way human action is portrayed as activity requiring engagement with and involvement in society, together with a response in the form of rationally chosen virtuous activity. This type of human action involves questioning established societal standards - what MacIntyre refers to as questioning the unquestioned (1999:313). This action requires being accountable in one's roles and as a rational individual, engaging in social relations involving critical practical deliberation, whilst acknowledging one's individuality and that of others (MacIntyre, 1999:317).

This concept of moral agent is able to "transcend the limitations imposed by its own social and cultural order" (MacIntyre, 1999:317), as recognized in this concept of leader character, and is open to questioning means and ends, chooses not to engage in manipulative social relations, and favours excellence over effectiveness. The nature of this human action, being rationally chosen, means that "as individuals we should be able to offer justifications for our actions because they contribute to our own purpose or *telos*" (Moore, 2017:10). This depiction of the moral agent, with a well-developed understanding of the human good, acts purposefully, for-the-sake-of his or her *telos*, which is flourishing. How the moral agent acts is by exercising the virtues of justice and courage, as well as the virtue of practical wisdom in questioning the prevailing social structures and choosing to respond with virtue, which is a reference to excellence. Human action for the leader of character then, as argued for in Chapter Five, means acting within one's societal context.

MacIntyre's account of the moral agent in Chapter Five reflects the Aristotelian idea of the social and political nature of the human person (*zôon politikon*), and seems to be a reference to his idea of the good *person* and good *citizen* (2007:133). The nature of

human action that characterizes the moral agent, together with the fully developed sense of moral responsibility MacIntyre attributes to this agent indicates the type of good *citizen* MacIntyre seems to have in mind. Turning to his idea of the good *person* MacIntyre's point concerning the qualities possessed by moral agents as individuals independent of their roles, is a reference to the virtues of constancy and integrity "without which the other virtues cannot be possessed" (Ibid.). MacIntyre explains that these two virtues set "limits to flexibility of character" (Ibid.: 318) as to have integrity is to be the same kind of person regardless of one's social context, and constancy "requires that those who possess it pursue the same goods through extended periods of time" (Ibid.). The good *person* exercising the virtues and the good *citizen* deliberating about the good for society exercising the virtue of practical wisdom embodies the human good concept of excellence. MacIntyre's reference in *AV* to "a view of human life as ordered to a given end" (2007:34) is a reference to a teleological understanding of the human good as human action is engaged in for-the-sake-of flourishing (Knight, 2007:10).

Based on the above explanation of how the moral agent as a dimension of the model of leader character depicts a virtue understanding of human good, the following components constitute this dimension:

Good *person* and good *citizen* (MacIntyre, 2007:133);

whole, moral self;

moral maturity;

moral perception;

understanding of moral responsibility extending to organizations and society; and questioning the unquestioned.

6.2.5 Organisation, Society, and Politics and the Argument for *Eudaimonia*, *Telos*, and Excellence

As argued in Chapter Five, Morrell's (2012) Aristotelian framework of organisation, society, and politics, is a societal framework that facilitates flourishing, in contrast to the prevailing social structures embodying the culture of emotivism that threaten moral agency. Morrell's societal framework with its Aristotelian understanding of human good is compatible with the view of moral agency described above. This framework recognises the social and political nature of the moral agent as a good *person* and a good *citizen*, providing justification for the scope of moral responsibility MacIntyre accords the moral agent. To understand the moral agent is to understand the relevance of societal context. This is acknowledged by Lewis who notes that the action of a person as a citizen is judged according to her or his politico-social context (2009:124), and is a reference to the ethical theory of virtue ethics that "explicitly incorporates context sensitive exploration of what is the good" (Morrell and Clark, 2010:256). Our current societal context frames this research as it applies virtue ethics as a means to explore the nature of leader character.

The societal framework of organisation, society, and politics with its Aristotelian understanding of human good regards organisation as verb, which is congruent with the nature of human action and its emphasis on activity. Within this framework the moral agent is free to engage in responsible deliberation involving questioning established standards (MacIntyre, 1999:314). MacIntyre refers to a social context in which spaces for engaging in "reflective critical questioning" of standards previously taken for granted need to be available within the social order (Ibid.: 317). Chapter Five argued that the leader of character, as smoral agent, has a responsibility to create spaces for this form of dialogue, which Morrell's societal framework provides. This framework is also helpful for exploring ideas about leadership and a leader's role in and responsibilities towards society. An example is the argument in Chapter Five for a fairer form of capitalism, guided by the ideals of a just political community, and the need for a more just system underpinning business.

MacIntyre has made a case for the moral agent to assume a fully developed sense of moral responsibility within her or his societal context, and although not explicitly alluded to, his argument indicates the need for the exercise of the virtues of justice and courage in challenging established societal standards, and seeking to bring about a more just social order. These virtues, together with the virtue of practical wisdom and the virtues of constancy and integrity that are explicit in MacIntyre's argument for the moral agent are a reference to excellence. The examples of the nature of teleological human action undertaken by the moral agent as a good *person* and a good *citizen*, for-the-sake-of the human good, as envisioned within this virtue-enabling Aristotelian form of society, is what constitutes flourishing.

Based on the above explanation of how Morrell's societal framework of organization, society, and politics as a dimension of the model of leader character depicts a virtue understanding of human good, the following components constitute this dimension: an Aristotelian understanding of society conducive to the flourishing of leaders of character; the human person as a social and political being (*zôon politikon*) at the centre of society; the organization understood as verb that is consistent with a virtue concept of human action; a framework for reflecting on the responsibilities leaders have towards society.

6.2.6 The Virtuous Institution and the Argument for *Eudaimonia*, *Telos*, and Excellence

In Chapter Five, Moore's virtuous institution based on MacIntyre's 'virtues-goods-practice-institution' schema was argued for as the type of organization that embodies and enables flourishing. This examination, mindful of the moral agent within his or her societal context, considers how the concepts *eudaimonia*, *telos*, and excellence are evident in the argument for the virtuous institution in Chapter Five. Moore's virtuous institution is designed specifically to give expression to the social nature of the virtues. This examination of *eudaimonia*, *telos*, and excellence is approached from the theme of human action, so central to MacIntyre's argument in *AV*, and particularly evident in his concept of a practice. His interest is "the rationality of human action" (Lutz, 2012:172), which is a reference to the teleological nature of human action. Moore's

virtuous institution captures the world of work and how, within this world, the moral agent engages in rational human action that exemplifies excellence leading to the realisation of character and to flourishing.

As explained above, the nature of this human action is characterized by action that addresses MacIntyre's emotivist concerns requiring the moral agent who is able to "transcend the limitations imposed by its own social and cultural order" (MacIntyre, 1999:317), by choosing not to engage in manipulative relations, being open to questioning means and ends, and favouring excellence over effectiveness. This is the type of human action the virtuous institution would be hospitable to, given that Moore too has addressed MacIntyre's emotivist charge in his conceptualization of the virtuous institution characterized by the neo-Aristotelian concepts of purposiveness, narrative, practical wisdom, means and ends, and flourishing (Moore, 2012:363) that foster an "essentially human life" (MacIntyre, [1953] 1995:52).

The nature and substance of this type of human action was specified in Chapter Five, requiring the leader as moral agent to balance the internal and external goods of the practice by favouring excellence over effectiveness, which is a reference to the virtues, discussed in the following section. The leader as moral agent would develop the 'character' of the virtuous institution, and the types of human action argued for in Chapter Five includes a shared commitment to moral responsibility, engaging in meaningful work, a sense of purposiveness, particularly regarding how the practice serves human purposes rather than the purpose of the market, encouraging a culture of questioning means and ends and embedding it in ways of working (Moore, 2008:499). MacIntyre's concept of narrative as a response to what he regards as the unintelligibility of the culture of emotivism concerning persons and their actions, and the cultural and social setting through which those intentions are made intelligible, forms part of the culture or 'character' of the virtuous institution, as argued for in Chapter Five. As stories are the means through which people make sense of their lives, a story-telling culture that serves to inspire and encourage the exercise of virtue forms part of the moral agent's remit in creating and sustaining the 'character' of the

virtuous institution. These types of activities undertaken within the context of the virtuous institution characterize the form of human action that exemplifies *eudaimonia*, *telos* and excellence.

Based on the above explanation of how Moore's virtuous institution as a dimension of the model of leader character depicts a virtue understanding of human good, the following components constitute this dimension: balancing the internal and external goods of a practice; ethical 'character' of the institution; a shared commitment to moral responsibility; meaningful work; and serving human purposes. These components were discussed in Chapter Five.

Two additional components of the foundational concept of human good pertinent to this model of leader character are the common or public good, and community, discussed below.

6.2.7 The Common Good and the Public Good

The concept of common good has Aristotelian roots and is linked to Aristotle's concepts of the flourishing of the *polis* or political community, and citizenship. Related to a business organisation "the common good of the firm is the production of goods and services needed for flourishing, in which different members participate through work" (Sison and Fontrodona, 2012:211). The view of Sison and Fontrodona that work should be prioritised "over the product that results or the service that is provided" differs from a MacIntyrean view of common good supported by Moore (Moore, 2016:160). Moore offers a correction to the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition of common good supported by Sison and Fontrodona. Moore argues that the virtues can be exercised in the provision of services and production of goods, as well as in creating and sustaining institutions focused on external goods (see Moore, 2008 for example). This MacIntyrean view of common good aligns with Moore's virtuous institution, based on the good purpose of the virtuous institution through which internal goods contribute both by virtue of the "products or services and the 'perfection' of practitioners (Moore, 2016:162). The common good of the firm is interested in the work undertaken in common that develops skills, as well as moral and intellectual

virtues (Sison and Fontrodona, 2012:212). This idea of the common good as it relates to the organisation, and the virtuous institution in particular, is a component of the human good as a foundational dimension of this model of leader character.

The idea of the public good, introduced in Chapter Five, is congruent with the Aristotelian framework of organization, society, and politics formulated by Morrell (2012). The concepts of public good and common good seem to overlap, with the emphasis of the public good on the role of politics and creating excellent administration and an environment conducive to the flourishing of citizens (2012:63). The public good can be evaluated according to: “(i) how it controls power over time; (ii) how it itself exhibits virtue; and (iii) how it creates the conditions within which citizens can live the good life” (2012:63). As a good citizen, the leader of character as moral agent who assumes the scope of moral responsibility specified by MacIntyre, has an interest in the public good, and engages in action like questioning the established social order, and being able to “transcend the limitations imposed by its own social and cultural order” (MacIntyre, 1999:317).

6.2.8 Community

An understanding of human good includes the concept of community as the context for the exercise of the virtues, which is a significant theme originating in heroic society, carried through to ancient Greek society and maintained by MacIntyre in his work. As explained in Chapter Four, virtue was understood and exercised within and for the benefit of a community, and evaluated by members of that same community. Aristotle’s concept of the good man (the term person is used in this research) and the good citizen derives from his idea of being a member of the Athenian community (MacIntyre, 2007:35). However the social dimension of morality (Kallenberg, 2011:28) is not a feature of late modern society and the significance of community as the arena for the exercise of the virtues has to a large extent been lost. However, MacIntyre remains faithful to this theme of the social and communitarian nature of the virtues throughout AV and in his other works, regarding it as an important aspect of the tradition of the virtues. This Aristotelian theme permeates the work of Morrell (2012)

including his Aristotelian framework of organization, society, and politics, as well as the work of Moore (2012) in his conception of the virtuous institution, and more broadly in his work as a MacIntyrean business ethicist. The leader of character as moral agent has a virtue understanding of community as the forum within which the virtues are exercised, whether within the societal framework of organization, society, and politics, or within the virtuous institution.

6.2.9 The Virtues of Character Foundational to the Model of Leader Character

As the virtues constitute character and are the means to us achieving our *telos* and lead to *eudaimonia*, they are foundational to this model of leader character. Although the nature of Aristotelian and MacIntyrean virtues constituting character have been extensively dealt with in chapters three and four, and their application to business in Chapter Five, this section of the chapter focuses on those specific virtues of character regarded as pertinent to the leader of character as moral agent within his or her societal and organizational contexts. A selection of the virtues regarded as necessary for the leader of character as moral agent begins with the *cardinal* (the Greek word for a hinge) virtues of temperance (self-control), fortitude (courage), justice and practical wisdom, acknowledged as central to the Aristotelian tradition (Robson, 2015:S115). As MacIntyre makes a case for the virtues of constancy and integrity to ward off the threats posed by the culture of emotivism, these virtues are regarded as necessary for the leader of character as moral agent (as discussed in Chapter Five). The notion of power, a distinguishing feature of a leader, presents moral challenges highlighting the need for the virtues (Ciulla, 2005:324), as discussed in Chapter Two (section 3.1). Ciulla proposes the virtue of reverence to counter the threat posed by the power that comes with the job of leading (2005).

The following list of virtues form the components of the virtues of character, which is a foundational dimension of the model of leader character:

Justice

Self-control

Reverence

Practical Wisdom

Courage

Constancy

Integrity

In addition to the above virtues, the concepts of the unity of the virtues and narrative quest, discussed further on, form the remaining components of this dimension of the virtues of character.

6.2.9.1 The Virtue of Justice

The following discussion of the virtue of justice touches on the other virtues listed above. A return to Aristotle's virtue of justice discussed in Chapter Three provides the introduction to this discussion of the virtue of justice, with an emphasis on those aspects of Aristotle's concept of justice regarded as relevant to this model of leader character. This examination of Aristotle's virtue of justice, understood from the perspective of the moral agent acting within his or her societal and organizational context, raises additional components of the human good, like community and common and public good that form part of this model and are discussed further on. The theme of citizenship is central to Aristotle's concept of justice and his work, *The Politics*, informs his understanding of justice in his *NE* as indicated by the type of questions he poses: "What is it to be a good citizen? Aristotle conceives of justice against the background of the political community (*polis*) within which individuals live, interact with one another, and exercise the virtues. This is a reference to our communitarian nature as human beings living within the *polis* – "the most complete and important kind of human community" (Schofield, 2006:308), and resonates with the societal nature of RL.

For Aristotle the principal question of justice is: who should have power? He reflects on this question and considers various criteria of merit yet does not resolve this matter

in the *NE* but does so in Book III of the *Politics*. The underlying factor among competing criteria is “what it is for citizens to live well” (Kraut, 2002:147). This raises Aristotle’s concept of flourishing (*eudaimonia*) and is what living the virtues of character entails i.e. “the point of the good life is the living of it” (Hughes, 2013:89). He regards the ultimate goal of the community to be that of creating and sustaining the conditions that facilitate all citizens fully exercising their intellectual, emotional and social powers – what he regards as “fully realized human beings”⁹⁸ (Kraut, 2002:147), who are most suited to making wise judgments which involves “the full exercise of the intellectual, emotional, and social powers of all citizens” (2002:147). This Aristotelian idea of flourishing citizens living within a community lives on in MacIntyre’s ethics as he questions ‘who should rule?’ (1988, cited in Knight, 1998:115). His answer is that those in power should choose the “goods of excellence” guided by a justice of desert or merit (1998:115).

Although merit is the basis on which questions of distributive justice should be resolved, the nature of the merit should be considered in light of the common good of the whole community. When an institution distributes goods the requirements of justice are twofold. Firstly, that contributions are made to the common good and secondly, that distributions are made according to the appropriate criterion of merit, with the common good that is to be achieved, in mind. The goal of justice is not served where the well-being of the community is undermined (Kraut, 2002:147). The theme of flourishing community, central to the virtue of justice, is evident in Morrell’s societal framework as well as in Moore’s virtuous institution, and explains the significance of community to a virtue understanding of human good.

A discussion of MacIntyre’s concept of justice and its relevance to the leader of character has been reserved to this stage of the research process, as it is best appreciated in light of his ‘virtues-goods-practice-institution’ schema, explored by Moore (2012) within the context of the virtuous institution. MacIntyre’s concept of justice draws on the foundation established by Aristotle. However, in MacIntyre’s

⁹⁸ Excluded from this category are slaves and women – reflective of the type of society that existed in ancient Greece.

sequel to *AV*, his concern, alluded to in the title ‘*Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*’ (1988), is the nature of practical rationality informing an account of justice. He understands that a conception of justice needs to be matched by a conception of practical rationality (1988:389), and that these conceptions form part of a larger overall tradition “of rational enquiry which are at one and the same time traditions embodied in particular types of social relationship” (Ibid.). This is a reference to MacIntyre’s concept of a practice that derives from Aristotle’s “particular type of practice-based community, partially exemplified in the *polis*” (Ibid.).

The virtue of justice is understood within practices, as MacIntyre explains: “it is only by participation in rational practice-based community that one becomes rational” (Ibid.: 396). Staying with his concept of practice he explains in *AV* that the nature of external goods and their allocation require the “virtues of justice and generosity” (MacIntyre, 2007:196). Of relevance to the leader of character as moral agent is the case MacIntyre makes for the virtues understood within practices, in his definition of institutions: “... the essential feature of the virtues is clear. Without them, without justice, courage and truthfulness, practices could not resist the corrupting power of institutions” (Ibid.: 194). A similar, although more positive sentiment is expressed by Moore: “the virtues find their home particularly in practices” (2017:64).

The psychological state of the just person, (as discussed in Chapter Three, section 11.2) characterised by a learned ability to be free from the extreme states of greed, appetite, fear and anger – in other words a balanced state arising from a desire for the good seems congruent with Aristotle’s notion of a virtue bringing a thing into a good condition (1106a 15-16)(Pakaluk, 2005:108). Such a balanced psychological state, in contrast to the extreme states that the unjust person is captive to, contributes to emotional maturity, which appears to form part of an Aristotelian understanding of ethical maturity. Just actions then, spring from a balanced psychological state with the just person having learned to overcome the extreme states that characterise the unjust person. This learned ability obviously involves conscious choice, and a desire -

the desire of the just person to consciously choose the good, which is a reference to virtue.

The reference to moral maturity reflected in the whole, moral self that is a mark of the moral agent argued for in Chapter Five, is particularly evident in the Aristotelian understanding of justice, and reinforces the case for the inclusion of this broad-ranging virtue in this model of leader of character.

6.2.9.2 The Virtue of Self-Control

The virtue of self-control alluded to in the discussion above regarding the nature of the just person, highlights the need for this virtue to support a healthy emotional state, reflected in control over one's emotions and appetites. In addition, an uncontrolled desire for power, and the vice of *pleonexia* (greed) that often characterize unethical leadership behaviour, provide sound reasons for the virtue of self-control for the leader of character. As discussed in Chapter Three, Aristotle's concept of the virtue of self-control refers to the mastery a person has over her desires as evidenced by the way the desiring part of the soul unifies deliberate desire and practical wisdom. Such a person is pleased to perform a particular action characteristic of self-control. In contrast, the person who lacks self-control does not have mastery over her desires and there is a lack of unity between the desiring part of the soul and practical wisdom, with self-control and desire being at odds.

The need for leaders of character was discussed in Chapter Two, drawing on the work of Ciulla whose understanding of ethical leadership concurs with this virtue perspective of researching leader character. She refers to our common human nature and how we are all carved from "the warped wood of humanity"⁹⁹ which makes us imperfect (2001:313) and in need of the virtues. Ciulla turns to the wisdom of Eastern and Western philosophers for guidance about moral goodness, particularly concerning the nature of the leader's role and the moral challenges inherent to leadership. She notes that for centuries, self-control and self-knowledge have been recognized as

⁹⁹ This quote is adapted from the philosopher Immanuel Kant: "... from such warped wood as is man made, nothing straight can be fashioned" (trans. 1983).

centrally important in developing leaders. Ancient philosophers like Aristotle, Plato, Lao Tzu, Buddha, and Confucius highlighted self-control, self-knowledge, and good habits, as challenges for leaders, whilst self-discipline and control of ego were included by Eastern philosophers, and Confucius linked a leader's self-control with effectiveness (Ibid.: 316).

6.2.9.3 The Virtue of Reverence

Ciulla notes that "One of the oldest themes concerning the ethics of leaders is the ability of a leader to have the personal resources to have and exercise power" (2005:326). Her comment, already noted in Chapter Two, that power poses a distinct ethical challenge to leadership (Ciulla, 2001:315), provides the rationale for the inclusion of the virtue of reverence in this model of leader character. Ancient philosophers like Lao Tzu, Confucius, Plato, and Aristotle have produced some of the finest work on leader's personal morality. However, the contemporary philosopher Paul Woodruff's work, *Reverence: Renewing a Forgotten Virtue*, recognises reverence as a virtue identified by Confucius and his followers and the ancient Greeks that addresses the human desire for power (Ciulla, 2005:326). Woodruff defines reverence as follows:

Reverence begins in a deep understanding of human limitations; from this grows the capacity to be in awe of whatever we believe lies outside our control – God, truth, justice, nature, even death. The capacity for awe, as it grows, brings with it the capacity for respecting fellow human beings, flaws and all. This in turn fosters the ability to be ashamed when we show moral flaws exceeding the normal human allotment (2001:3).

Reverence encompasses traditional moral principles and is specifically relevant for leaders as it is the virtue that guards against "one of the greatest ethical challenges of leadership," which is a leader's desire for power that can make them "forget their human limitations" (Ciulla, 2005:326).

6.2.9.4 The Virtue of Practical Wisdom

The virtue of practical wisdom (*phronesis*), classed as an intellectual virtue, shares an intimate relationship with the virtues of character, as explained by Dunne, who refers to the “strain” when distinguishing between the ethical and intellectual virtues (1997:275). He clarifies the nature of this virtue:

The virtue of *phronesis* is a virtue of the rational part of the soul which gives direction to the non-rational part although this virtue can exist in the rational part only if the nonrational part is already inclined to the ethical virtues (Ibid.).

We have in the notion of *phronesis*, then, ethical knowledge in a very full sense: not just knowledge that directs ethical action, but knowledge that must itself be constantly protected and maintained by good character (Ibid.: 277).

This interconnectedness between the virtues of character and the virtue of practical wisdom leads to judgment in knowing and choosing the “truly virtuous act” (Moore, 2017:47). It is a “capacity to judge and to do the right thing in the right place at the right time and in the right way” (MacIntyre, 2007:150). Such judgment is practical in nature emphasising the “need for practical, lived experience, not theory” (Dunne, 1997:290). The evidence of practical wisdom is in living a certain type of life aimed at the human good, which involves understanding that one’s actions make sense from the perspective of a flourishing¹⁰⁰ life (Hughes, 2013:90). This type of wisdom can be regarded as the wisdom involved in a “way of living a particular kind of life thoughtfully”(Hughes, 2013:93), which is a reference to the quality of what one is doing in living one’s life (2013:93), and is a reference to moral awareness. Beabout’s conception of the leader as ‘wise steward’ is an outcome of his deliberations concerning the virtue of practical wisdom and what this means for the character of the manager, and the leader (2013:211).

The virtue of practical wisdom holds a central place in this model of leader character, given the scope of the leader’s responsibilities envisioned within the emerging

¹⁰⁰ Hughes (2013) uses the term fulfilled in referring to *eudaimonia*

construct of RL, together with the fully developed sense of moral responsibility accorded the moral agent within his or her societal and organizational contexts. Due to the varied and unpredictable nature of many of the moral dilemmas likely to face the leader of character as moral agent, the need for this virtue is vital. How practical wisdom is employed in the process of decision-making clarifies the nature of this form of human action, so important in the life of the leader of character. In deliberating, the leader has a “disposition to act” arising from a “harmony between ... feelings, desires, thoughts, and actions” (Moore, 2017:47) – the outcome of the intimate relationship between practical wisdom and the virtues of character. These states constitute the emotional, motivational, intellectual, and behavioural dimensions of virtue (Alzola, 2015:293), engaged in decision-making. This explains the lack of a “direct link from virtue to action” indicating the complexity of this form of decision-making (Moore, 2017:47-48).

6.2.9.5 The Virtue of Courage

In Chapter Three the virtue of courage was explained stating that between the feelings of fear and confidence lies the mean of courage. Aristotle acknowledges that fear is a very real human emotion and he takes account of this in this virtue. Consistent with the mean state that a virtue of character occupies, he holds that courage concerns “feeling the right amount of fear” (Pakaluk, 2005:160) and feeling the appropriate amount of fear, rather than having no feeling of fear at all. It was recognized in Chapter Three that moral courage is necessary for leaders as citizens who have a role to play in building just societies, and the nature of this form of courage, although not acknowledged by Aristotle given his context, should form a necessary part of the virtue of courage and of this concept of leader character. This point was reinforced by MacIntyre in Chapter Five, in view of his assessment of the social structures embodying the culture of emotivism and their influence on the character of the manager. MacIntyre’s proposal for the moral agent to question the unquestioned, specifically those standards established by society, and to establish spaces for moral deliberation and “reflective critical questioning,” (1999:317), highlight the significance

of courage to a virtue understanding of moral agency, and to this concept of leader character. Given the nature of the virtuous institution and “the essential association and tension between practices and institutions, and between internal and external goods, [that] clearly gives the texture of organizational life a central dilemma” (Moore, 2008:497), courage would be required by the leader as moral agent in addressing these types of dilemmas, as alluded to by MacIntyre in his definition of institutions: “... without justice, courage and truthfulness, practices could not resist the corrupting power of institutions” (2007:194).

6.2.9.6 The Virtues of Constancy and Integrity

MacIntyre’s reflections concerning the influence of social structures on the character of the manager and the leader, leads him to propose the virtues of constancy and integrity as a bulwark against the phenomenon of compartmentalization. As discussed in Chapter Five, these central virtues characterize the moral agent and are necessary for the exercise of the other virtues that constitute the components of this model of leader character, like justice, self-control, reverence, courage, and practical wisdom, which may vary according to social context. The virtue of constancy can be viewed as a unifier holding together “the unity of a good life ... [and] is required for the possession of other virtues, because without it a good life cannot be achieved” (Robson, 2015:S116). As explained in Chapter Five the virtue of constancy is evident in the long-term commitment to, and constant pursuit of, the same goods over time, not being swayed or distracted by changes in social contexts. The virtue of constancy is complemented by the virtue of integrity that requires one to be the same kind of person regardless of social context. Amidst changing societal and organizational contexts within the culture of moral relativism defining late modern society, constancy and integrity are the virtues that ground a leader, contributing to the whole, moral self that is the mark of the leader of character as moral agent.

The virtues of constancy and integrity introduce the remaining components of the virtues of character – the concepts of the unity of the virtues and narrative quest.

6.2.9.7 The Unity of the Virtues

MacIntyre conceives of the virtues of constancy and integrity within a “unifying conception of the good which holds together a coherent scheme or set of virtues” (2015:S116.). The “doctrine of the unity of the virtues” (Porter, 1993) means that in possessing constancy one possesses the other virtues as well (Robson, 2015:S124). The person who is truly virtuous possesses all the virtues indicating a unity and a harmony in the way their life is directed towards the achievement of their *telos* (Porter, 1994:121-123). As the virtue concept of leader character this research proposes presupposes the leader to be a truly virtuous person, he or she will display the virtues of constancy and integrity being “prerequisites for the possession of other virtues” (Robson, 2015:S119), in this case those of justice, courage, self-control, practical wisdom, and reverence.

6.2.9.8 Narrative Quest

MacIntyre’s concept of narrative quest derives from the idea that we make sense of our lives as we journey in discovering and living our good, within the context of the interconnected stories that provide our lives with meaning. Narrative quest then, is a search for and an understanding of the good, expressed as “the narrative unity of a human life” (Robson, 2015:S119). Within such a unified life MacIntyre expresses how the virtues sustain us on our quest for the good:

The virtues therefore are to be understood as those dispositions which will not only sustain practices and enable us to achieve the goods internal to practices, but which also sustain us in the relevant kind of quest for the good, by enabling us to overcome the harms, dangers, temptations and distractions which we encounter and which will furnish us with increasing self-knowledge and increasing knowledge of the good (2007:219).

MacIntyre captures the sense of journey in his illustration of how the virtues act as a bulwark against being derailed, emphasising the virtue of constancy that ensures we remain faithful to our quest for the good, and the virtue of practical wisdom, that aids us in developing our self-knowledge and understanding of the good.

This leads to the question of what the narrative quest of the leader of character as moral agent might be?

In giving consideration to this question, some key themes may be helpful in developing an understanding of the nature of the story characterizing the life of the leader of character, within which the search for and the living of the good occurs. In developing this story key themes familiar to this concept of leader character are borne in mind: the leader as moral agent with a fully developed sense of moral responsibility extending to organisations and society; the leader as good *person* and good *citizen*; the leader as wise steward; the leader as a whole, moral self, displaying moral maturity; the leader with a well-developed capacity for moral perception; the leader as someone prepared to question the unquestioned. The leader of character's place of birth and particular cultural background provide the history of his or her life, and this history carries certain inherited moral responsibilities and provides one of the stories of that person's life.

MacIntyre's view, as stated in Chapter Four, is that from the perspective of the virtues, the moral identity of a person is largely inherited from one's past (2007:220-221). This means that the narrative quest of the leader of character is interwoven with the personal history of his or her life, and his or her inherited responsibilities become integrated with the organisational and societal responsibilities that the leader of character as moral agent assumes. From a MacIntyrean perspective, the narrative quest characterizing the leader of character is one of how best to integrate and live out one's moral responsibility, partly inherited and partly derived from one's role as a leader, as one journeys through life. Reflecting on the nature of the narrative quest that may characterise a leader of character's life, the creation and sustenance of the virtuous institution and the array of human action this entails, including creating the 'character' of the institution (Moore, 2005b:667-668), provides rich material previously discussed that would form the substance of this MacIntyrean concept of narrative quest.

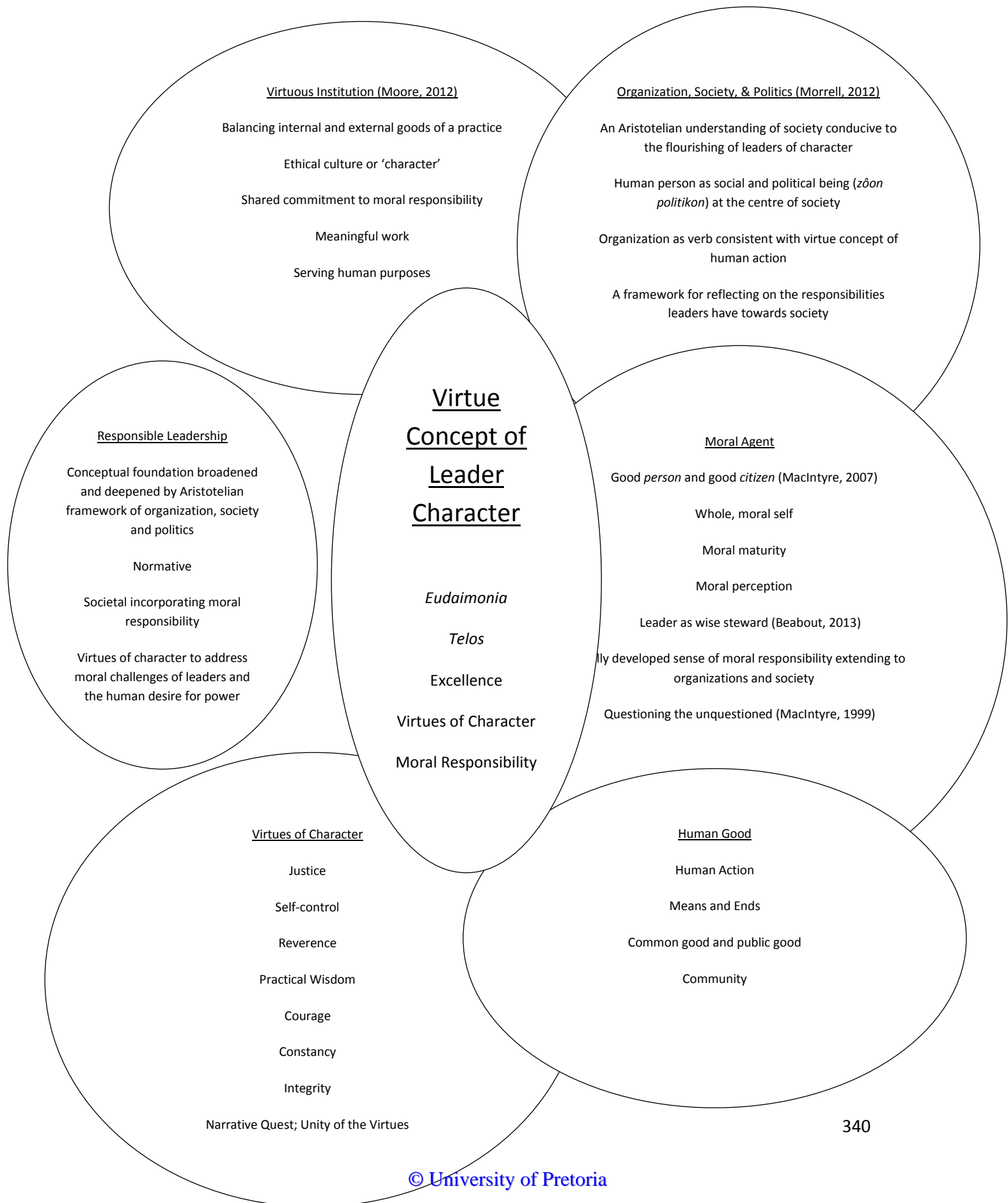
The above discussion provides the rationale and substance of the virtue model of leader character this research has developed, as reflected in the fully developed model depicted in diagram 3. This diagram again reflects RL as slightly removed from the remaining interconnected dimensions of this model, owing to the fact that virtue ethics is not foundational to the leadership construct of RL.

6.3 Definition of this Virtue Concept of Leader Character

The concept of leader character, rooted in Aristotelian virtue ethics, is founded on an understanding of human good incorporating *eudaimonia*, (flourishing), *telos* (purpose), and excellence, the virtues of character, and a fully developed sense of moral responsibility. Central to the concept of leader character is the moral agent embodying wholeness of self, moral maturity, and a well-developed sense of moral perception required for perceiving morality in the situations encountered in daily life. As a social and political being the leader of character is a good person and a good citizen, whose responsibilities extend to the societal and organisational realms. The concept of leader character is compatible with the emerging leadership construct of RL with its normative and societal themes.

Diagram 3: Dimensions and Components of Model of Virtue Concept of Leader Character

A Virtue Understanding of Successful Living for the Leader of Character



6.4 How this Research Contributes to the Emerging Construct of RL

The moral philosophy of virtue ethics applied in this research for developing the concept of leader character has provided a normative framework for reflecting on the nature of the emerging construct of RL, with a specific focus on the nature of leader character. To establish how this research has contributed to the emerging construct of RL, it is necessary to return to Chapter One where the case was made for how the virtue concept of leader character can extend the conceptual foundations of RL. The aim of this study of leader character has been to answer the research question posed in Chapter One: what is leader character? Although leadership researchers recognize and acknowledge that leader character lies at the heart of RL (Ciulla, 1998; Solomon, 1999; George, 2003; Maak and Pless, 2006a), the conceptual foundation supporting the concept of leader character has been lacking in leadership research. This virtue model of leader character addresses this lack. This means that the ontological nature of Maak and Pless's (2006) question regarding what makes a responsible leader can now be answered.

As RL is an evolving concept located at the intersection of CSR, leadership, and ethics (Ciulla, 2004; De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2008; Maak, 2007; Maak and Pless, 2006; Waldman and Galvin, 2008; Waldman and Siegel, 2008), this research makes a specific contribution to the normative foundation of RL, in the way it applies a humanities perspective to this study of leadership. The application of the moral philosophy of virtue ethics has addressed the second research question posed: what method of researching leader character is appropriate for extending the concept of leader character? This model of leader character provides rich material that addresses Voegtlin's concern that the study of RL lacks depth (2016:586), as well as Maak and Pless's comment that the ethical principles and values that should underpin RL are not sufficiently explicit (Maak and Pless, 2006; Pless, 2007). This model of leader character also addresses Maak and Pless's concern that there is a lack of knowledge about what being a responsible leader entails (Maak and Pless, 2009).

6.4.1 Morrell's (2012) Aristotelian Framework of Organisation, Society, and Politics

The review of agency theory by Morrell and Clark (2010) discussed in Chapter Five revealed the need for an alternative way of conceiving of organisations within the construct of RL. Their findings revealed that agency theory – a dominant perspective influencing RL – lacks a concept of society and is fully focused on the shareholder, which is incongruent with the normative and societal focus of RL. To address this shortcoming in RL theory, this research has proposed that Morrell's (2012) Aristotelian framework of organisation, society, and politics is a normative theoretical construct rooted in a long tradition that provides a rich understanding of society, together with an expansive body of knowledge that can strengthen the construct of RL. As MacIntyre's reflections discussed in Chapter Five indicate, societal structures hold sway over the character of managers and leaders; this strengthens the case for a view of society that enables not only managers and leaders, but citizens and stakeholders to flourish and achieve their *telos*.

The Aristotelian concept of the human person as a social and political being (*zōon politikon*) at the centre of Morrell's framework, provides necessary focus for the theoretical construct of RL in further developing a concept of society that can strengthen this aspect of the RL construct. The inclusion of the Aristotelian concept of *eudaimonia* (flourishing) as a guide to individual and societal well-being, further strengthens the construct of RL. In addition, Morrell's societal framework shares the same theoretical foundation of virtue ethics this concept of leader character is derived from, and provides a conceptual framework for the emerging construct of RL for reflecting on the responsibilities leaders have towards society, as discussed in Chapter Five. The teleological nature of virtue ethics generally, and Morrell's societal framework specifically, addresses Blakeley's (2016) interest in a "sense-making paradigm" (2016:119) to underpin the emerging construct of RL. As *telos* is foundational to this concept of leader character, Morrell's framework is compatible with the theme of the moral purpose of business and its concern about its impacts on society that informs the theory of RL.

6.4.2 How Virtue Ethics can Strengthen the Ethical Bases of the Emerging Construct of RL

The analysis of the ethical bases of RL conducted in Chapter Two revealed the need for an ethics encompassing an understanding of the human person wedded to society, which Kant's deontological theory, with its focus on the duty of the individual, does not provide a full account of. In addition, the moral philosophy of virtue ethics recognises the place of human desires and emotions in its ethical theory, and given that the desire for power, which presents one of the most challenging moral aspects of leadership (Ciulla, 2001:315) is commonly located within the emotions, virtue ethics provides a fuller account of human nature, than does deontological ethics. The emerging construct of RL could be broadened and deepened to extend beyond the prevalent deontological ethical theory currently informing RL, particularly in respect of the concept of human good, foundational to this model of leader character embracing the concepts of *eudaimonia*, *telos*, and excellence. As indicated in Chapter Two, CSR generally lacks a concept of moral responsibility compatible with a moral philosophy like virtue ethics with its particular understanding of moral responsibility extending to society, which this research accounts for. This lack in the form of the fully developed sense of moral responsibility espoused by MacIntyre, is included in, and is foundational to this model of leader character.

Before bringing this research to a close the following limitations and opportunities for further research, as well as the strengths of this study are noted.

Limitations of this Research

This research as a conceptual study is limited to a theoretical examination of the concept of leader character from a virtue ethics perspective, drawing specifically on the work of the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, and his modern neo-Aristotelian proponent, Alasdair MacIntyre. Both scholars are leading authorities in the field, covering the spectrum of ancient as well as modern virtue ethics, so providing continuity. There are other scholars who take different approaches to virtue ethics and their work was not considered here, due to the need to limit the scope of this study.

This provides an opportunity for further research. As theory needs to be tested this presents an opportunity for further more practically-oriented research, with the model developed in diagram 3 providing a basis for such empirical work. In addition, this research provides an understanding of leader character from a single ethical perspective, and from a single leadership perspective, which is a limitation of this research. Testing the feasibility of this model in practice and engaging with leaders of character in the business world and more generally would provide further research opportunities. It is acknowledged that this is a conceptual and theoretical model that presents an extremely demanding and idealistic view of leader character that few in practice could meet.

Strengths of this Research

The strengths of this humanities study of leadership lie in the application of moral philosophy to leadership. This study of leadership from a philosophical virtue ethics perspective is in response to the call by leadership researchers to consider different ways of researching the concept of leader character (Maak and Pless, 2006a:105). This moral philosophical study offers deep insights and critical reflections about the nature of the human person, human goodness, moral responsibility, and the significance of society, which is the context for leadership. These philosophical insights and reflections incorporated in the model of leader character developed in Chapter Six strengthen the conceptual foundations of RL. The research fills a lacuna in humanities research work on ethics and leadership, which Ciulla notes is lacking (2008:6-7).

Future Research Opportunities

Opportunities for future research involve broadening the scope of leader character research by applying a range of humanities subjects extending beyond virtue ethics and philosophy, to art and history as examples. Further opportunities presented by this research include how to develop leaders of character, to ensure this research moves beyond theory to its practical application.

Conclusion

With the completion of this virtue model of leader character the objective of this research has been achieved. This means that the research question posed in Chapter One can now be answered, namely what is leader character? This concept of leader character depicted in the form of a model in Diagrams 2 and 3 explains that leader character is a multi-dimensional construct, consistent with the view expressed by Wright and Huang (2008), encompassing the following: person, good, action, organization, society, and leadership. These elements representing the core dimensions of leader character examined from a virtue ethics perspective in Chapters Two through Five, translate into the virtue dimensions of: moral agent, human good, the virtues of character, the virtuous institution, an Aristotelian framework of organisation, society, and politics, and RL. These dimensions of leader character form the fully developed concept of leader character, together with its components as portrayed in Diagram 3.

Foundational to this concept of leader character is an understanding of the human good, comprising the virtue concepts of *eudaimonia*, *telos*, and excellence, the virtues that the leader of character embodies, and a fully developed sense of moral responsibility extending to organisations and society. Based on this model this research provides the following definition of leader character: The concept of leader character, rooted in Aristotelian virtue ethics, is founded on an understanding of human good incorporating *eudaimonia*, (flourishing), *telos* (purpose), and excellence, the virtues of character, and a fully developed sense of moral responsibility. Central to the concept of leader character is the moral agent embodying wholeness of self, moral maturity, and a well-developed sense of moral perception required for perceiving morality in the situations encountered in daily life. As a social and political being the leader of character is a good person and a good citizen, whose responsibilities extend to the societal and organisational realms. The virtue concept of leader character now provides substantial depth previously missing from the emerging leadership construct of RL.

This humanities study of leader character has taken up the challenge presented by leadership researchers concerning the need to extend the existing conceptualizations of character (Hannah and Avolio, 2011a:989), and to conduct research to frame the concepts of character, ethos, and virtue, and to further develop the concept of leader character, which they regard as an important element of the ethical aspect of leadership research (Wright and Quick 2011). This virtue concept of leader character addresses their call for the ontological basis of the concept of character to be refined and unpacked (Ibid.: 991), and for “examining what constitutes the leader character construct” (Hannah and Avolio, 2011b:979). It has accomplished this by turning to the humanities as the source of an alternative way of research that aims to understanding the whole of leadership (Ciulla, 2008:393).

This virtue concept of leader character encompasses the moral and social dimensions common across both traditional and more secular ways of studying leader character (Wright and Goodstein, 2007). This virtue ethics study of leader character provides clarity concerning Hannah and Avolio’s (2011) distinction between the *locus*, the *transmission*, and the *reception* of leadership, and Quick and Wright’s call for a framework that highlights the distinctions between *being* and *doing* (2011:984). While this research understands the locus and transmission of leadership as unified elements both constituting a virtue, the reception of leadership is a separate element of leadership and while it does form part of a virtue it is an important consideration for the study of leadership, and could provide an opportunity for future research. Given the nature of a virtue, being and doing are not distinguished as separate elements of leadership and form a unified whole as expressed in this concept of leader character.

Returning to the historical overview of leader character research presented in Chapter One, this research provides a definition of leader character that incorporates some of the ideas presented by leadership researchers considered relevant to leader character, subject to modification for e.g., “those interpenetrable habitual qualities within individuals, and applicable to organizations that both constrain and lead them to desire and pursue personal and societal good” (Wright and Goodstein, 2007:932);

moral discipline regarded as “The most basic element of character” (Hunter, 2000:16); being able to constrain personal desires for the sake of the needs of the greater good of society (Wright and Goodstein, 2007:931).

This research has explored the nature of leader character from the moral philosophy of virtue ethics, which is consistent with the statement expressed in Chapter One that the work of scholars in researching and defining character, reveals a core moral framework as the defining feature of character and character-based leadership (Wright and Quick, 2011:976). This research advances the task of refining the concept of leader character initiated by Hannah and Avolio (2011), proposing a definition of leader character based on the work of Bass and Bass (2008): “character of a leader involves his or her ethical and moral beliefs, intentions, and behaviours” (2008:219), which is a reference to a disposition or trait, a way of thinking guided by principles, and a behaviour or action. This detailed study of the nature of the virtues clarifies and deepens these elements of virtue that are foundational to this concept of leader character.

In identifying an opportunity to add to the conceptual foundational of RL and to leadership theory in general, this research has sought to uncover the enigma that is character. The emerging construct of RL now has a philosophical basis underpinning the concept of leader character, which should lead to more dialogue and debate among ethical leadership researchers, and enrich the conversation between the philosophical and social science traditions interested in probing this key aspect of leadership.

Appendix 1

1920s “[Leadership is] the ability to impress the will of the leader on those led and induce obedience, respect, loyalty, and cooperation.” (Burns, 1979:36).

1930s “Leadership is a process in which the activities of many are organized to move in a specific direction by one.” (Ibid.: 439).

1940s “Leadership is the result of an ability to persuade or direct men, apart from the prestige or power that comes from office or external circumstance.” (Reuter, 1941:133).

1950s “[Leadership is what leaders do in groups.] The leader’s authority is spontaneously accorded him by his fellow group members.” (Gibb, 1954:877-920).

1960s “[Leadership is] acts by a person, which influence other persons in a shared direction.” (Seeman, M. 1960:127).

1970s “Leadership is defined in terms of discretionary influence. Discretionary influence refers to those leader behaviours under control of the leader, which he may vary from individual to individual.” (Osborn and Hunt, 1975:28).

1980s “Regardless of the complexities involved in the study of leadership, its meaning is relatively simple. Leadership means to inspire others to undertake some form of purposeful action as determined by the leader.” (Sarkesian, S. C. 1981:243).

1990s “Leadership is an influence relationship between leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes.” (Rost, 1991:102).

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