

Concerning Marya Schechtman's Narrative Account

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ABSTRACT

The persistence of personal identity stands at the heart of many human practices, such as paying individuals for their work or holding people responsible for their actions. As such, it seems important that theories of personal identity are able to account for the practical implications of continuity of personal identity. Mindful of the practical importance of personal identity, Marya Schechtman(1994) argues that her narrative view only accounts for the four features that persons must possess. Any account of personal identity is supposed to make persons capable of possessing these features. She then posits her narrative self-constitution view as an account of personal identity she feels is capable of explaining the link between personal identity and certain features of persons. In this thesis project, I present how the narrative views, as described by Schechtman and others, are interpretive enterprises and that this leads them to a potentially devastating conclusion. The narratives must be constructed from something, and I argue that it is memory. But empirical facts about memory do not allow for it to persist in a quantitative way, but rather in a qualitative way, much like persons. Upon making this argument, I further argue that if mainstream psychological views is correct, this reduces the persistence of memory to resemblance relations. And memory is the building blocks of narrative. If this is the case, then narrative is also reduced to resemblance relations. Narrative, therefore, does not persist through time in a non-qualitative way, and one is better off accepting a psychological theory by virtue of parsimony. Ultimately, I argue that Schechtman and narrative theorists may save narrative views by adopting what I call as a ‘causal narrative view’. A causal narrative view will encapsulate all of the relevant features of the typical narrative view, including the emphasis on construction, but will also add the addendum that narrative states must be placed in a causal relation to each other.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

There are many ways in which the question “who am I?” is asked in everyday life by philosophers and non-philosophers alike. Remarks like “I was beside myself”, “you didn't see the real me”, or “I'm not really myself today” reveal some of the complexities of the ways in which we relate to our own behaviours, thoughts, and attitudes. Moreover, when we disown certain actions or endorse or reject certain viewpoints, we tell others something about how we want to be seen. In that sense, personal identity is not a mere factual given, not something that happens to be true of us but is a matter of indifference, but something matters to us. One of the benefits of investigating a topic like personal identity is that, despite the profound philosophical problems surrounding this concept, it is never too far removed from our daily lives.

Literature on personal identity tells us that there are many philosophical debates that laypeople and non-philosophers participate in deliberating on the theory of personal identity. Although some of these philosophers and non-philosophers have found the personal identity theory simple to critique and refine, it is important to note that the importance of such debates can be found within themselves, not in their utility or application to practical living. The personal identity theory is important not only for its own sake but because of all of the things that seem to rely on it. For example, our social interactions rest on persons' notions, personhood, the self, and persistence.

However, each of us typically feels like the same person from instant to instant or throughout our lives. Even as our appearance and personality undergo dramatic change over time, it feels natural to know this change is happening to the same person. In some sense of the word ‘know’, we all know what it is to be a person that exists over time. Let us consider some instances where we all know what it is to be a person that exists over time. For example, I know that I am a person and that I attended my philosophy courses in 2018 at Rhodes University. I also know that Siphon, who was in the same class as me, is one and the same person as the Siphon I often see in the philosophy class. Not only that, but I also know that Siphon, if questioned about what he did yesterday, would express a similar kind of knowledge

of the same fact. Siphon also knows that he is a person existing over time. This apparent certainty of our identity over time as persons is understandable if we consider the fundamental importance that person and personal identity have to understand ourselves as not just cognitive creatures.

We understand ourselves as able to perform actions and having intentions, as giving and receiving praise and blame, we reflect and have emotions, we have perceptions, feel sensations, we can be punished and rewarded, we acquire and have beliefs and knowledge, etc. Though this list of what we normally think of ourselves as being able to do is far from exhaustive, it shows us that we conceive ourselves to be subjects of experience and agents of actions that are appropriate to attribute to ourselves. A person is an agent of actions and a subject of experience (Farrer and Frith, 2002). And since we think of ourselves as agents of action and subjects of experience, a concept of 'persons identity over time' is essential for understanding ourselves. Conceiving ourselves as the same person over time is of no less important for our self-understanding than that of conceiving ourselves to be persons. For instance, being the same person seems to be a necessary requirement if the notions such as 'pain', 'guilt' and 'accountability' are to function as they do (Perry, 1983). If we did not have the notion of 'Personal identity over time, it would not be intelligible to claim that a particular person X did the morally wrong Action Z. This is partly because personal identity seems to be a condition for there being any moral actions at all, since the carrying out of action spans over a certain period of time. Another reason is that a moral agent, it is supposed, is only responsible for his own actions. Unless we took the person X, who performed the Action Z at time *T*, as being the same person as X' whom we hold responsible at *T* for the Action X carried out at *T*, it would not be appropriate to hold P' responsible for the action at all.

Historical Significance of Personal Identity

In the previous section, I have considered reasons to suppose that both the notion of 'a person' and 'personal identity over time' are of fundamental significance in the way we conceive of and talk about ourselves. I turn now to say something about the concepts many

philosophers presented in relation to persons' personal identity and persistence¹. I take this historical perspective of personal identity over time because the persistence of persons depends, at least partially, upon our understanding of the theories of personal identity.

First-person perspective -theory of personal identity

In the previous section (introduction), I presented the claim that we know that we exist over time as persons, although I qualified the claim by talking about 'knowledge' in a certain sense. This 'knowledge' of ours is grounded on a psychological fact, i.e., persons have certain psychological capacities enabling them to view themselves as persisting objects. These psychological capacities of persons enable them to have 'first-person experiences' of themselves as being one and the same person over time. Some philosophers have tried to define 'person' in terms of this psychological fact.

John Locke, for instance, defined a person as that object which is "an intelligent thinking being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places" (cited in Lowe, 2013 p101-102). Let us say that this definition of 'person' tries to specify the first-person perspective condition for persons. According to this line of reasoning, it is a necessary condition that, for an object p to be a person, p must be able to conceive of himself as existing over time. I do not think that the first-person experience condition, as Locke states it is correct², but, for the time being, I will ignore the question of the correctness of the condition. However, what is of interest is the fact that what is contained in the first-person perspective, or the informational content given in the first-person perspective, illuminates the two problems of personal identity.

In my view, regardless of whether all persons necessarily satisfy the first-person perspective condition or not, it is, at least, in virtue of having the first-person perspective that a typical person (such as you and I) view himself or herself as one and the same person existing over

¹ This concerns not only persons, but all kinds of objects. For instance, it is a fact that I know that ordinary material objects like books, trees, animals and even snowflakes exist over time. To have an existence over time is nothing peculiar for persons, enduring existence extends to all possible kinds of observable entities.

² My view here is that there are many infants, and senile individuals who do not satisfy the first-person perspective condition, but who we still think it appropriate to call persons. But, this does not mean that the first-person perspective condition cannot be a part of a necessary condition, what this show us is only that the first-person experience condition in itself is not a necessary condition for an object to be a person.

time. That is, this psychological capacity enables the typical person to be presented to himself as an object with a certain definite history and a certain, though unknown, future. We can express this thought by the claim that the first-person perspective held by persons presents personal persistence as a fact of the world. By this, I mean, firstly, that the first-person perspective presents the person as a fundamental unit of predication who exists with different properties at different times³.

But now, the two problems of personal identity emerge. We know that the first-person perspective presents the person as persisting as identical over time, as well as something primitive. But we do not know whether the first-person perspective adequately represents what personal persistence consists of. That is, we do not know the answers to the two semantical ontological questions such as, how do persons persist over time? And in what facts, if any, does personal identity consist? The first problem concerns whether we should understand 'personal identity over time' as implying numerical identity, i.e. implying the existence of an individual who is wholly present at every time where that individual exists, or if it only implies a weaker relation between qualitatively similar but numerically distinct objects. The second question concerns whether it is possible to give a non-circular specification of the relation of personal identity conceived in the first-person perspective in terms of a continuity-relation other than identity.

The bodily Identity theory

The most natural theory of personal identity, which would be almost anyone's first thought, is that personal identity is constituted by bodily identity. When we consider the idea of losing various parts of our body, we realize that such a loss does not affect what we say regarding our personal identity. The loss of our limbs and replacements of internal organs do not, we say, make us different persons than we were before these changes occur. Yet, there is also a sense in which our bodies do play a part in answering questions about our personal identity. For example, P2 at time t2 is the same person as P1 at time t1 if and only if P2 has the same body as P1 had.

³ For example, as a substance, and secondly, that the presentation of sameness over time is experienced by a person as something immediately given or primitive.

According to this view personal identity is essentially no different from the identity of material objects in general. An artefact, like a ship, or a living thing, like an oak tree or a horse, persists through time. Its persistence does not consist in its retention of the same matter, for artefacts can be repaired and patched up and living things are necessarily involved in a constant exchange of matter with their environment but in its retention of the same form as its matter undergoes gradual replacement. Likewise, according to the Bodily view of personal identity, what is required for the identity of person P2 at time t2 and person P1 at time t1 is not that P2 and P1 are materially identical but merely that the matter constituting P2 has resulted from that constituting P1 by a series of more or less gradual replacements in such a way that it is correct to say that the body of P2 at t2 is identical with the body of P1 at t1.

According to this view, as I said, personal identity is essentially no different from the identity of such other living things as oak trees or horses. And this conforms to our ordinary experience. We do not in the normal run of things in fact ever regard it as an open question whether someone who, by the Bodily view of personal identity, is identical with some earlier person, is that person, or whether someone who, by the Bodily theory of personal identity, is not identical with some earlier person, is not that person. Personal identity, as we know it in our everyday lives, outside psychopathological or other medical contexts, is in fact constituted by bodily identity. Nor can it be made an objection against the Bodily view of personal identity that it excludes any hope of an after-life. For it does not. What it does exclude, however, is any possibility of an after-life otherwise than by resurrection. But that can hardly be regarded as a conclusive objection to it.

The brain criterion

Nevertheless, the Bodily theory of personal identity has not proved popular with philosophers. For though it is undeniable that in our everyday experience personal identity is constituted by bodily identity, it seems all too easy to imagine possible cases in which this is not so. But if such cases are indeed possible then personal identity cannot, as a matter of logical or conceptual necessity, consist in bodily identity.

The sort of case which has led most modern philosophers to think that the Bodily theory of personal identity must be rejected is the following example: one part of the body the brain

seems to be of crucial importance in determining the psychology of the person whose body it inhabits. Damage to someone's brain can cause amnesia or radical changes in personality or character. Not so for damage to, say, one's left knee. Imagine, then, that in the twenty-first century it is possible to transplant brains, as it is now possible to transplant hearts, and let us suppose that the brain of Sipho (My friend) is to be transplanted into the skull of Thomas(my friend). This could be done even with existing techniques. Just as my brain could be extracted, and kept alive by a connection with an artificial heart-lung machine, it could be kept alive by a connection with the heart and lungs in someone else's body. The drawback, today, is that the nerves from my brain could not be connected with the nerves in the other's body. My brain could survive if transplanted into his body, but the resulting person would be paralysed. Even so, he could be enabled to communicate with others. One crude method would be some device, attached to the nerve that would have controlled this person's right thumb, enabling him to send messages in Morse Code. Another device, attached to some sensory nerve, could enable him to receive messages. Many people would welcome surviving, even if totally paralysed if they could still communicate with others.

Let us suppose, however, that the surgeons in the twenty-first century are able to connect the nerves from Sipho's brain to the nerves in Thomas's body. The result of the operation, call him Siphothom, will then be a completely healthy person, without any paralysis, with Thomas's body, but in character, memories and personality quite indistinguishable from Simpho, and this not as a consequence of some freak accident, but because of his possession of Sipho brain (there might be a problem about how Sipho's personality can express itself in the Thomas body if we imagine that the two bodies are very dissimilar in appearance, so, for the sake of the example, let us imagine that this is not so; let us imagine in fact that Thomas is Sipho's double). Now who will this person be?.

My observation from most modern philosophers who have reflected on this case (which I have taken from Shoemaker 1963, with elaborations due to Parfit 1984) has not found this a difficult question to answer. They have found that they could not honestly deny that Siphothom, in the case imagined, was Brown, and so they have been led to reject the Bodily view of personal identity. As Parfit puts it (1984 p253), they have been led to accept that "receiving a new skull and a new body is just the limiting case of receiving a new heart, new lungs, and so on".

But a fairly simple modification of the Bodily view can accommodate the Siphon/Siphon case, whilst retaining the assumption that personal identity consists in nothing other than the persistence of a certain physical entity. The obvious response to the case is to say that it shows only that what is required for personal identity is not the identity of the whole body but, merely, the identity of that part of the body which contingently, is the brain which is the central organ controlling memory, character and personality. According to this suggestion P2 at t2 will be the same person as P1 at t1 just in case P2 at t2 has the same brain as P1 at t1.

Numerical and Qualitative theory of personal identity

Traditionally it has been claimed that there is a distinction between, on the one hand, 'numerical identity', and on the other hand, 'qualitative identity'. Numerical identity, it is claimed, is the universally applicable relation in which every object stands to itself, and to no other object than itself. Qualitative identity, on the other hand, is the relation of 'identity of qualities' in which a certain Object X can be identical not only with itself, but also with a distinct Object Z⁴. If two objects are exactly alike, or perfectly similar, in all their internal (or non-relational) qualities, they are also qualitatively identical. That this distinction between numerical identity and qualitative identity is legitimate, and one that we usually can and do apply, can easily be apprehended if we consider a case where we are prepared to think that something has remained identical over time. Imagine that we have two balls on our table. Let us call them 'Ball A' and 'Ball B'. Suppose now, somewhat idealised, that *Ball A* and *Ball B* have exactly the same qualities. If this idealised situation occurred, then *Ball A* and *Ball B* would be qualitatively identical. But, *Ball A* and *Ball B* are not numerically identical, since they are two different objects. We can, for instance, take a and paint it red. In that case, we still have two qualitatively distinct balls on our table.

⁴ Besides this distinction between numerical identity and qualitative identity it is also often claimed that we can be using 'identity' in its 'gen-identical sense'. See for instance David Wiggins discussion of this notion in the philosophical book titled *Sameness and Substance* (pp 23-35, and pp 193-199). Roughly, 'gen-identity', or 'the unity-relation' as John Perry calls it, is the relation which combines, or unites different, but qualitatively similar parts of an object o, and it is in virtue of this relation between the parts of o, that all of those parts are parts of o. (See for instance John Perry, 1970 'The Same F', *Philosophical Review*.)

Another example, and one that does not involve identity over time, is that one can be the owner of two examples of the same edition of the book titled '*A Treatise of Human Nature by David Hume*'. In such a case we would be prepared to say that the two books are qualitatively identical, but not that they are one and the same object. That is, each individual example of the two books is numerically identical only to itself, but the two books are qualitatively identical with each other since they are exactly alike each other. Though the distinction between numerical identity and qualitative identity is both legitimate and common I think the distinction is formulated in a slippery terminology, since calling them both 'identity' seems to imply that we have different meanings of the notion 'identity'. But, I certainly oppose any such claims about 'identity' being an ambiguous notion. It is a mistake to understand 'numerical identity' and 'qualitative identity' as a distinction between different kinds, or senses of identity. When we say 'Two is identical with one plus one', and 'Sipho is the same person as Avuyile' we do not mean different things with 'identity', or 'sameness'. What we mean is nothing but the unique relation that everything bears to itself, and only to itself, *i.e.* numerical identity.

The memory theory of personal identity

An alternative view, for which many philosophical arguments seem to provide strong support, is that personal identity is constituted by psychological factors. The essence of this is the thought that, given the importance for our attitudes towards persons of their memories, character and personality traits, continuity in respect of these should be taken to constitute personal identity whether or not this continuity is caused by the persistence of some bodily organ, such as the brain; and the absence of continuity in these respects involves the absence of personal identity, even if there is an identity of body or identity of the brain.

The simplest version of this view is suggested by John Locke's writings. According to this version of the view, what is crucial to personal identity is memory, and it is memory alone that needs to be appealed to in providing a theory of personal identity. This view is especially tempting because of the fact that memory is crucially involved in our awareness, from the first-person viewpoint, of our own identity over time. But the notion of memory is a very wide one. I can be said to remember my MA Philosophy lecturers, or that I completed my MA course assignments, or that I have a deadline to submit a copy of the

final thesis . This is factual memory, retention of previously acquired knowledge. I can also be said to remember how hard it was to wait for my MA thesis results. This is the retention of previously acquired abilities. But there is also the memory of events witnessed or participated in, and, as a special case of such event-memory, there is the memory of one's own experiences and actions, which one will report in first-person memory claims.

It is such experience-memory that Locke's writings suggest should provide the criterion of personal identity over time. However, as numerous writers have noted, this immediately leads to difficulties. I cannot now remember many of the experiences I underwent yesterday, yet it can hardly be denied that I am the same person as the one who underwent those experiences. Again, the account of personal identity in terms of experience-memory appears to conflict with one of the logical properties of identity, namely transitivity. Thus if Siphon is taller than Thomas and Thomas is taller than Dimpho then Siphon must be taller than Dimpho. But it seems that on Locke's account I, as I am now, might be the same person as the eight-year-old who went up Capetown in 1998, but not the same person as the five-year-old who first went to Ulwazi pre-school in 1994, even though the account certifies that the eight-year-old is the same person as the five-year-old. For I might now have vivid recollections of my first day in Cape Town, but have forgotten all about my first day at Ulwazi pre-school, though the eight-year-old I was in 1998 still had recollections of that day.

The psychological theory of personal identity

Psychological theory of personal identity suggests that persons have certain psychological capacities enabling them to view themselves as persisting objects. The psychological theory of identity has been advocated, in one form or another, by philosophers John Locke as he suggests that, a person must be viewed as "a thinking intelligent being that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places" (XXVII, p 335). By pressing on this mental capacity of the person, and by claiming that both the metaphysical principle of individuation (i.e. existence itself) and that of being a thing of a determinate kind is needed for an adequate principle of identity for a specific object of a kind, Locke was able to sharply distinguish the idea of 'person' from the idea of man and 'soul'. Since those ideas are of different kinds of entities, and being an object of a

certain kind is a part of the principle of identity, Locke thought that there could be identity of soul and identity of man, without there being anything close to personal identity⁵.

But although the above reformulation of the Lockean idea avoids the most obvious objections it still involves the claim that personal identity is to be accounted for solely in terms of experience-memory. But many modern philosophers who are otherwise sympathetic to the Lockean approach think that not only experience- memory, but other psychological facts, should be taken into account in defining personal identity. For there is no reason to think that our concept of ourselves as re-identifiable individuals is so tied up with the notion of memory as to exclude the relevance of any other types of psychological continuity. Besides direct memories, there are several other kinds of direct psychological connection. One such connection is that which holds between an intention and the later act in which this intention is carried out. Other such direct psychological connections are those which hold when a belief, or a desire, or any other psychological feature, persists. These direct psychological connections are accessible to consciousness, but others need not be. Thus we can count as direct psychological connections the links between childhood experiences and adult character traits, fears and prejudices. In general any causal links between past factors and present psychological traits can be subsumed under the notion of psychological connectedness.

We can now define psychological identity theory, namely as the holding of overlapping chains of such direct psychological connections; and then relate it personal identity over time by saying that $P2$ at $t2$ is the same person as $P1$ at $t1$ if and only if $P2$ at $t2$ is psychologically continuous with $P1$ at $t1$.

Narrative theory of personal identity

Narrative view is a new issue in philosophy because ultimately all we have are our experiences, which occur over time, so the challenge is how to make sense of them. That is, to determine whether there is a relationship between our experiences, and if so, what that relationship is, and to determine what meaning can be attached to those experiences. The

⁵ In his philosophy article entitled '*An Essay concerning human understanding,*' and page p342, Locke suggest further that it is imaginable that there exist a person who claims that he has the same soul as Socrates, but that the person in question does not remember anything of the deeds done by Socrates. In that case, according to Locke, we could not say that the latter person is identical with Socrates, although we could claim that the latter persons soul is identical with Socrates' soul.

concept of narrativity has been proposed, in various forms, as one answer to this challenge. Broadly speaking, narrative view is the notion that we see or experience our lives as a story, or at least in a narrative fashion. These views typically involve an emphasis on the product, claiming that we take a classical narrative arc as a model for our life as we try to order our experiences. However, our life arguably is not static, it does not resemble a motion towards some end in Aristotelian terms, but could be seen as a matter of activity as such for its own sake, a process that is fluid, undergoing continual transformation, inextricable from time.

These views typically involve an emphasis on the product, claiming that we take a classical narrative arc as a model for our life as we try to order our experiences. However, our life arguably isn't static, it doesn't resemble a motion towards some end in Aristotelian terms, but could be seen as a matter of activity as such for its own sake, a process that is fluid, undergoing continual transformation, inextricable from time. The feature that separates narrative view from the three traditional views is the particular criteria that a thing must meet in order to qualify as a person.⁶ Furthermore, a view of personal identity that was not as prevalent in philosophical debates but has gained prominence in recent years is the narrative view.⁷ Marya Schechtman, a contemporary defender of this view and author of 'The Constitution of Selves' (1996), claims that the narrative theory of personal identity can be found in such thinkers as Bruner (1987), Polonoff (1987), Schafer (1980), Freeman (1984) and McIntyre (1994).

In Schechtman's formulation of this view, the narrative view is coupled with a thesis about self-creation. Persons, according to Schechtman, bring themselves into existence. This view is credited to philosophers such as Daniel Dennett, Jean-Paul Sartre, Harry Frankfurt, Jonathan Glover, and Martin Heidegger, according to Schechtman (1996). The narrative view according to Schechtman (1996) and can be characterized by five key theses:

- First, persons are self-constituting. This means that persons do not emerge after certain relations between some particular primitives have been established, such as an experience and subsequent memory. Instead, they are created by the act of self-

⁶ What I intend to convey here is that this is not meant to imply that the other views do not have specific criteria for personhood. What is intended is that the narrative views criteria are specific and distinct from any of the three traditional views.

⁷ Discussed further in Chapter 2.

consideration, for example, reflecting on the experience and subsequent memory and recognizing them as about the person who is self-considering;

- Second, persons are social. Interactions with other persons play a large role in a persons' self-consideration. This impact is deep and metaphysically significant;
- Third, the persistence of persons is guaranteed by self-narratives. The act of telling a story about oneself allows for the various experiences throughout time to be attributed to a single experiencing being;
- Fourth, persons fulfil functions. This is particularly relevant to the account given by Marya Schechtman. In her book, she identifies what she calls the four features (Compensation, self-interested concern, moral responsibility and survival) that persons must possess. Any account of personal identity is supposed to make persons capable of possessing these features⁸ ;
- Fifth, persons are non-reductive, in the sense that they cannot be characterized as the mereological sum or product of person-stages. Persons is a primitive kind of object; talk of person-stages is incoherent on the narrative view (p95-98).

Thesis Goals and Structure

In this project, like other philosophers now and before me, I take myself to be trying to provide natural explanations to the problems of the persistence of personal identity related to 'Narrative identity' that philosophy has generated in recent years. This thesis's general purpose is to show under what conditions our beliefs about persons are justified within some generally naturalistic framework. Because of this, I will be ignoring problems about dualism, both of substance and property varieties. This is not to say that the problems are not worth discussing, however, the focus of this thesis is to deal with certain problems that have arisen when philosophers have attempted to make sense of personal identity by appealing to psychology.

This thesis will focus on the theory of personhood found in Marya Schechtman's (1996) 'The Constitution of Selves'. This view is discussed further in the first and second chapters, and is called the 'narrative self-constitution view'. It is a kind of identity theory that Schechtman (1996) presents by attempting to refute simpler psychological views and concludes by offering her own suggestions for a theory.

The first chapter serves as a general introduction to the philosophy of personal identity. The central tenets have been defined in brief, and its problems have been provided. I suggest that readers who are more familiar with debates within personal identity will find the first chapter to be the least informative, as there is little information added that is not already in the current literature.

In the following second chapter, I begin with a critical explanation of Schechtman's Narrative view of identity, and I show how her views can be treated as a natural example of the narrative view. Furthermore, I will introduce Strawson's (2004) critique of Schechtman and narrative views. Specifically, I will argue that Strawson's arguments (2004) miss the point and that Schechtman's (1996) narrative view is not affected by his criticisms. I explain Schechtman's (2007) response to Strawson and the updated version of her position. Essentially, Schechtman's (2007) restatement of the narrative view will be treated as the best statement of her theory to date, and my later criticisms will be directed at them. Later in the chapter, I will expound a particular part of Schechtman's (1996; 2007) view, the self-constitution or self-creation thesis. The chapter ends by discussing how Strawson's (2004) criticisms have largely missed the point in regards to Schechtman's (2007; 1996) narrative views, by relying on his assumption that persons do have to be narrative (due to his insistence on the existence of what he calls episodic persons).

In the third chapter, I will provide my own critical comments on Schechtman and the narrative view. In the same chapter, I will be making comments general rather than overly specific and exegetical with the belief that they will pose serious problems to any narrative view that resembles Schechtman in a significant way. I will argue that personal identity questions and moral questions may be linked, but that they are distinct and that one can talk about personal identity without talking about morals. I will further argue that talking about persons does not commit us to moral realism; instead, it merely commits us to metaphysical realism. I will conclude the chapter by discussing the role ethics may play in some metaphysical discussions, but only when one has shifted the debate from revisionary to descriptive metaphysics.

In the Fourth Chapter, I intend to present my second argument: that narrative views as described by Schechtman (2007;1996) and Strawson presented in the second and third

chapters are entirely dependent on account of an interpretive enterprise, and that this leads them to a potentially devastating conclusion. The narratives must be constructed from something, and I will argue that it is memory. But empirical facts about memory do not allow for it to persist in a quantitative way, but rather in a qualitative way, much like persons. Furthermore, I will argue that Schechtman (1996; 2007) and narrative theorists may save narrative views by adopting what I call a 'causal narrative view'. However, even my charitable reconstruction of narrative views, where narratives are formed from self-consideration but persist through causal relationships, might still fail to overcome objections.

In summary, my thesis aims to respond to the challenge to the narrative view of Schechtman (1996) as a solution to the problem of persistence by employing two arguments which together show that if Schechtman's criticism of mainstream psychological views is correct, it reduces the persistence of memory to resemblance relations. And memory constitutes the building blocks of narrative. If this is the case, then narrative is also reduced to resemblance relations. Therefore, my arguments suggest that narrative does not persist through time in a non-qualitative way, and one is better off accepting a psychological theory by virtue of parsimony. Most critics of Schechtman have attacked her using the standard philosophical techniques of thought experiments and conceptual analysis. My arguments further show that empirical facts have a significant role to play in personal identity debates, especially within a naturalistic framework.

CHAPTER TWO

The issue of narrativity is a non-trivial question in philosophy because all we have are our experiences, so the challenge is how to make sense of those experiences. Narrativity is commonly defined as the tendency to view one's life as a story, to make narrative connections between events at different times in one's life. Proponents of narrativity range from those who say that we attempt to see our lives as well-formed narratives, like traditional realist novels, to those who argue only that we attempt to fit the events of our lives into a narrative framework, without necessarily creating a completed structure. There is also a division between those who say that this is something we should do in order to have a full, rich life, what Galen Strawson refers to as the 'prescriptive thesis' and those who argue more broadly that this is something everyone does, 'the descriptive thesis'. And what is common to all these arguments is the focus on the product *the narrative*.

In this chapter, we will examine the various aspects of the Narrative view. The chapter introduces and discusses in detail the Narrative view as advocated and developed by different narrative theorists and philosophers such as Noel Carroll, Louis Mink, Paul Ricoeur and Gregory Curry and show how the view is an intrinsic aspect of consciousness. In this chapter, I begin by presenting the significance of Narrative in general, then follow this with the critical exegesis of Schechtman's view. I show how her view can be treated as a paradigmatic example of the narrative view and the narrative's constraints. In the following section, I then discuss Galen Strawson's critique of Schechtman and narrative views. I argue that Strawson, by and large, has missed the point and that Schechtman's view is unaffected by his criticisms.

Later in the chapter, I present a section explaining Schechtman's response to Strawson and the updated version of her position. Schechtman's restatement of the narrative view in more recent works will be treated as her theory's best statement to date, and my later criticisms will be directed at them. In the section to follow, I explicate a particular part of Schechtman's view, the self-creating and constitution thesis. My general argument in this chapter is that Strawson's criticisms have largely missed the point in regards to Schechtman. And that by relying on his assumption that persons do have to be narrative (due to his insistence on the existence of what he calls episodic persons) he begs the question against Schechtman and, possibly, invokes the paradox of analysis which is the normative claim that one ought to think of oneself as or within a narrative.

The Significance of the Narrative view

There are a variety of options available when one begins discussing narrative and persons. In this thesis I begin by introducing a variety of questions and observations regarding narrative posed by Hutto (2007):

“We might wonder: what, if anything, are the identifying features of narratives? What is the basis of our unique narrative capacities? Which cognitive and imaginative capacities enable us to produce and appreciate them? What roles or functions might narratives playing in our lives?”(p1).

Reading the quote above, I agree with Hutto in particular about the taxonomy of narrative views, though Hutto identifies several questions that I believe can be reduced into more general categories. There are three distinct theses held by most narrative theorists. They are that narrative leads human action, that narrative enables persons to make sense of the world, particularly other persons’ actions, and that narrative constitutes personal identity (Strawson, 2004). Hutto (2007) writes further that the third is the most radical and the one most open to immediate critique. On that part, I agree with Hutto’s initial assessment of the narrative view. And the narrative view holds that the self-told narrative is the defining feature that distinguishes between persons and non-persons (Shoemaker, 2005). Narrative is an act of self-creation (Strawson, 2004).

As Shoemaker (2005) notes, the narrative view can be seen as a refined version of the psychological perspective:

“Narrative identity is thus really about a kind of psychological unity, but not just an artless or random unity. Imagine, for instance, a subject of experiences to whom various experiences merely happened over time. The events would be unified in purely passive respect, simply as the experiences contained within the life of that subject of experiences. But for that subject to be a person, a genuine moral agent, those experiences must be actively unified, must be gathered together into the life of one narrative ego by virtue of a story the subject tells that weaves them together, giving them a kind of coherence and intelligibility they would not otherwise have had. This is how the various experiences and events come to have any real meaning at all —

rather than being merely isolated events — by being part of a larger story that relates them to one another within the context of one life” (p2).

Shoemaker, as I will discuss further in this chapter, provides a fair description of narrative views. Furthermore, discussion in this chapter will also allow us to see that many narrative theorists see their views as an alternative to the psychological view. As such, their arguments are usually two-fold. First, they attempt to show the inadequacy of the psychological view for either the constitution or persistence of persons. Second, they attempt to show that narrative can account for both, usually through an argument about the unique features of narrative that allow it to persist and guarantee that multiple experiences multiple times can be attributed to the same single experiencing being. Simply put, the narrative view can be considered as an anti-reductionist view where narrative is seen as both the account of constitution and persistence of persons.

As Hutto (2007, p1) mentions above, narrative theorists’ central motivation is to ask what role or roles narrative plays in a person’s life. The answers range from the trivially true to the radical. Hutto (2007, pp156-157) gives us three distinct theses :

(a)Emotional Priority Thesis. It states that the past-concerned moral emotions, and in particular the feeling of responsibility, do not in their basic forms presuppose a diachronic outlook, although we tend to conceptualize them in ways that make it seem analytic that they do.

(b)Psychological Narrativity thesis. It holds as a straightforwardly empirical descriptive thesis that ordinary humans experience their lives in narrative form.

(c) Ethical Narrativity thesis. It holds that it is a good thing to experience one’s life as a narrative essential to a well-lived life, to true or full personhood.

However, within the family of narrative views, distinctions could be made within the theses to allow for a possibly innumerable amount of specific narrative views. The singular term ‘narrative view’ used throughout the thesis, maybe a misnomer. There is no one unified narrative view. There are a variety of narrative views, where the only aspect shared by all is an emphasis on the importance of narrative in persons’ lives. This is illustrated by Hutto’s (2007) identification of three distinct questions. Additionally, my survey of the literature on

narrative so far shows distinctly different theories of what role narrative plays in persons' lives.

To begin talking about the role narrative plays in person's life, it is important we first discuss what narrative is, as suggested by the literature on narrativity. To avoid misleading the reader in the thesis a provisional definition of narrative is presented as something like; the assignment of causal relations to multiple events, where earlier events are seen as influencing later events and in some sense explaining them. 'Explaining' is used here in the sense that without the earlier event or events, the later event or events could not have occurred. When one is looking for reasons as to why a particular event occurred, the narrative provides the explanation, which would be something along the lines of an example such as, Event *E* occurred because of Event *F*, which occurred because of Event *G*. So Siphso steals the bicycle that was left outside our classroom not just because he loves cycling, but because he also has some psychological disposition to steal other students items, which could be a product of biology or environment. There are other forms of narrative, such as the causal relations can be strengthened or weakened based on the story teller's preference, and the role that objects and subjects play in the narrative may vary. However, the most important aspect of narrative is that multiple events that are somehow related should be presented in order for a narrative to be given.

The basic claims of the Narrative view

Firstly, to understand our lives as narratives, and to enact the narrative we understand our lives to be, does not entail that we must be constantly attending to our narratives in any explicit way as some critics have assumed. Peter Lamarque, a critic of the idea of analogy between narrative and life, for example, says, "Narratives are stories that only exist when they are told. Without narration there is no narrative... yet if the unity of life somehow depends on the unity of a narrative then most lives will turn out to have no unity because there is no such narrative." (Lamarque 2004, p404). I disagree that narratives only exist in the telling. Sometimes narrative just is the way I understand who I am, what I am doing and what I am experiencing. In order to experience and plan narratively, I do not have to literally lay the story out before my mind's eye. Nor do I have to explicitly spell out my autobiography to others.

Secondly, the construction of a self-defining narrative does not take place in a vacuum but in a world inhabited by other-selves. It is not a purely introspective undertaking. This fact puts paid to any extravagant claims about the extent to which we are the sole authors of our lives and grounds the model within the constraints of reality. Not just any narrative will do. From this state of embeddedness in the social world, we are forced to negotiate the multiple narratives of others in which we are involved. Our stories about ourselves emerge not only from our self-reflective activities but also through the confluence of different stories within our social environment. Others give us semantic knowledge about ourselves, that is, self-relevant knowledge that does not derive directly from our own remembered experience.⁹ Therefore in order to produce a meaningful narrative that is self-interpreting and self-constituting, we must acknowledge that at best we are only co-authors of our lives. Alasdair MacIntyre makes this qualification clear as he “emphasize[s] that what the agent is able to do and say intelligibly as an actor is deeply affected by the fact that we are never more (and sometimes less) than the co-authors of our own narratives. Only in fantasy do we live what story we please” (MacIntyre 2007, p213). Our stories need to cohere with those of others.

Thirdly, our narratives are, of course, further constrained by any number and manner of contingencies that infringe on our agency and that we cannot completely control. A narrative conception of agency, however, allows that even though we may be constrained by contingency, we do not necessarily lose our status as agents. Agency is preserved in how the contingencies that life throws at us are incorporated into our ongoing narrative and the significance we attribute to such events in that narrative (Ricoeur, 1992). As Ricoeur explains, “narrating a life of which I am not the author as to the existence, I make myself its co-author as to its meaning” (p162). Within the bounds of these constraints, there is the prospect that we are agents who can not only decide what to do and how to act, and for which reasons and purposes; we can also critically and creatively reflect on and interpret past and future experience to integrate it into our diachronic self-conceptions.

Finally, I do not recommend a narrative framework uncritically. While the creative and interpretive aspects of narrative agency seem to be implicit in narrative theories, I believe that

⁹ MacIntyre suggests that as children, family narratives in which ours is embedded inform our narrative self-conception. Then, throughout life, our self-conception develops in response to the recognition of others and our narratives are often co-authored in the light of who others take us to be and the matters that others care about (p.213).

they have not received sufficient attention. The creative act in narrative self-constitution is not merely to produce tidy, meaningful stories by plotting events into causally intelligible narratives. The more complex task is the selection, interpretation and shaping of experience for coherence in the narrative under construction. As characters in our own narrative, we enact choices and have experiences. In turn, we interpret, evaluate and find significance in those experiences such that many of them (not all) become candidates for a place in our ongoing narrative because they have self-significance. The configurative powers of emplotment that transform a group of discordant events into a narrative unity is not the whole story of narrative integration. More needs to be said about how narrative works in terms of the self-reflective appropriative processes that underlie emplotment.

In the following section, I present and discuss Schechtman's Narrative Self-Constitution View and constraints.

Schechtman and Narrative view

In her book 'The Constitution of Selves', Marya Schechtman present a narrative view of the self, and it is perfectly consistent with Shoemaker's (2005) remarks in the previous sections. Schechtman writes that

“the cornerstone of the narrative self-constitution view is the claim that a person's identity is created by a conception that is narrative in form. Most broadly put, this means that constituting an identity requires that an individual conceive of his life as having the form and the logic of a story—more specifically, the story of person's life—where ‘story’ is understood as a conventional, linear narrative. This broad characterization needs to be filled in two ways. First, more must be said about the logic and form of the story of a person's life; and second, some justification must be given for demanding that an identity-constituting narrative have this form.” (1996 p96)

Schechtman's (1996) quote above proposes several conditions that must be satisfied in order for there to be a person. The first point is that a person's identity must be narrative in form. The second point, this narrative must have what she calls the 'form and logic of a story'. The third point, this story must specifically be about a person's life and, namely, the person who is telling the story. The fourth point, this narrative must be conventional and linear. Some of

these conditions can easily be illustrated here by example: an identity-constituting narrative should resemble a book like *Discipline and Punish* rather than a movie like *The Invisible Man*. In *Discipline and Punish*, causes precede effect, and reference to the past is used to explain events. In *The Invisible Man*, the audience sees characters die and then appear again a few scenes later.

A discerning viewer can rearrange the events of the movie into a coherent, linear narrative, but if the story is taken at face value with no additional thought or interpretation, it is incoherent. This is what I take Schechtman to mean by a ‘conventional and linear narrative’. Other narrative theorists hold similar criteria for personhood and identity constitution, and by doing so emphasize the role that narrative plays in both personal and social interactions, such as when MacIntyre says that “in order to understand the actions of others, we always move towards placing a particular episode in the context of a set of narrative histories, histories of both the individuals concerned and of the settings in which they act and suffer” (1989, p97).¹⁰ Notice, though, that MacIntyre’s emphasis on the role of narrative in social interactions does not immediately support the idea that persons are narrative in form (to use Schechtman’s terminology) or that narrative is the central identity-constituting feature. There is a bit of a leap to say that simply because persons use narrative to understand the action that persons perform they are necessarily narrative creatures. And while perhaps MacIntyre is undertaking a descriptive project rather than a normative one like Schechtman, the moral of the story remains that the necessity of narrative to persons is a radical claim, and merely pointing to social practice will not provide sufficient reason to accept the conclusions.

Some philosophers would question; why should people consider Schechtman’s narrative view important in philosophy? I suggest that the answer to such a question is to acknowledge Schechtman’s goal. Schechtman(1996) is attempting to state our folk intuitions about persons and then create a systemic account of personhood that preserves all or most of these intuitions in a clear, coherent way. Furthermore, Schechtman undertakes a project that is partly descriptive and partly normative. She begins by identifying common beliefs, believing them to be intuitively justified, and proceeds to move on to offer a theory that she claims best explains them. The narrative view, she claims, most adequately does this. According to

¹⁰ In the book, Schechtman acknowledged and cites MacIntyre (1989 p97).

Schechtman, it is because narrative allows us to make sense of what she calls the four features: *survival, moral responsibility, self-interested concern, and compensation*. These characteristics are what Schechtman believes persons, philosophers and non-philosophers alike, value and care about when it comes to personal identity.¹¹

However, it is important to note that Schechtman (1996) appears to be answering the question of ‘What is a person?’ by giving a functional account of what a person does. This seems similar to the words of Peter Godfrey Smith(1996):

“we are discussing a possible view about the place of the mind in nature, where finding mind’s ‘place’ is, again, not understood as finding where it exists in the physical world, but finding its characteristic role in nature. Let us suppose, as is plausible, that there is a long list of things cognition actually does in the world. It can have a different role in different sorts of people, different sorts of animals, in the same person at different stages in life, and so on.” (p14)

An easy way to read Schechtman’s (1996) narrative work is to say that she is following a similar line of thought in her work, where she takes as an assumption that persons do certain things, and that one can begin inquiry based on these actions. Persons survive over time, arguably in a manner different than simple persistence questions; persons are moral agents, and so they have moral responsibilities; persons are self-interested in a special, unique sort of way; and persons are entitled to certain things in the future based on what they have done in the past (Schechtman 1996 p101). Thus, once one knows what persons do, one can look for what characteristics are necessary for these actions to be justified.

Schechtman (1996) further writes that “unlike the psychological continuity theory, the narrative self-constitution view can explain our intuitions about the relationship between personal identity and survival, moral responsibility, self-interested concern, and compensation” (p93). Schechtman (1996) offers a charitable way for us to understand the narrative self-constitution view by making a distinction between reidentification and characterization. According to Schechtman, ‘re-identification’ concerns the conditions under which a person at one point in time is properly reidentified at another point in time, while ‘characterization’, ask conditions under which various psychological characteristics,

¹¹ The utility of mentioning what others value when discussing ontological questions is discussed further in the next chapter of this thesis.

experiences, and actions are properly attributable to some person. The classic view of the person by John Locke (see chapter one) counts as an influential example here, as does the contemporary approach of Derek Parfit. To allow us easily understand the characterization questions, Schechtman starts by criticizing the reidentification approach for its reductionist image of the person. She contends that according to strong commonsensical intuition, it is what characterizes persons as they live through time in the rich practical contexts of their daily lives that is essential to questions of identity, and not their features at isolated moments of comparison. What characterizes a person through time is addressed by the characterization question, and characterization theorists ask “what it means to say that a particular characteristic is that of a given person” (Schechtman, 1996, p73). Schechtman’s own narrative self-constitution view provides the opportunity to address this characterization question.

Schechtman’s (1996) view puts us on a specific track that emphasizes how our personal identity should be seen as a process developing through time, which defines how people can be characterized. Narrative was presented as the means through which we constitute this evolving identity. Schechtman’s focus on the characterization question is very valuable in drawing connections between self-realization and ageing. After all, it emphasizes that narrative self-constitution is a lifelong process that connects the different temporal dimensions of existence. This also facilitates ascribing the potential for growth and development not only to youth but also to later life. However, the fact that her account relies on a rather cognitive and rational image of the agent was argued to be problematic by Strawson (2004).

However, when the focus is on reidentification, the psychological continuity theorist is forced to say that stages of consciousness at different times are actually the same consciousness. It should be noted that this is not what psychological theorists say, but rather what Schechtman believes they are forced to accept this conclusion in order to save their psychological continuity theories. About these theories, Schechtman (1996 p149) is quite clear that she believes that:

“psychological continuity theories are inherently unable to capture the four features because they do not allow for the persistence of a single, experiencing subject, and such persistence is necessary to make sense of the attitudes and practices surrounding

these features. Survival involves the continuation of the same experiencing subject; moral responsibility requires that the experiencing subject who commits a crime to be the one to experience the punishment; self-interested concern requires that the person having an experience in the future be the one who anticipates it, and compensation demands that the same experiencing subject who suffers a sacrifice enjoy the later benefits. In order to capture the connection between personal identity and the four features, then, we need a view according to which personal identity implies sameness of experiencing subject”.

Schechtman suggests here that the narrative view is just such as an account. The formation of an identity-constituting narrative creates a single, temporally extended subject of experience, and any two actions or experiences attributed to the same person by this view are necessarily attributable to the same subject of experience. It is thus fairly clear, according to Schechtman, at least in general terms, that her narrative view is able to avoid the extreme claim¹² and to illuminate our intuitions concerning personal identity and the four features. Schechtman general claim can however, be strengthened and clarified by considering the relation between identity as defined by narrative self-constitution view and each of the four features in turn.

The switch to characterization questions, which the narrative view requires, allows us to think of consciousness “in a whole new light, ... by pointing us toward issues of attribution” (Schechtman, 1996 p136). By attribution, Schechtman means the attribution of specific actions to a single consciousness. This consciousness changes,¹³ though, and so there must be something else involved. Here Schechtman (1996, p136) says that collection of actions that occur at different times can be attributed to a single experiencing being “if they are all part of a single identity-constituting narrative”. This identity-constituting narrative is part of the kind of account that Schechtman believes can make sense of the four features by providing a single experiencing subject over different points in time. Initially, though, other philosophers and I should be suspicious of what is it exactly that allows narrative to be considered a single, temporally extended experiencing subject to which actions can be attributed if consciousness

¹² According to Schechtman and Strawson, the extreme claim is that narrative is essential to leading a good or meaningful life.

¹³ What I am trying to convey is that t we can know that we are the same person we were at an earlier time is following that stream of consciousness back through those moments of which we are composed.

cannot? My question can be clarified in an easy way as ‘what meaningful distinction is there between narrative and consciousness?’ and ‘what does narrative have that consciousness does not have?’ In response, Schechtman is not clear as she claims that identity is constituted by narrative and it is because of what narrative is. But, as is I discuss further in the chapter, we will understand that this is vague and misleading.

Narrative can be a great many things. From Schechtman’s (1996, p149) quote presented earlier, we can construct a view that requires that an identity narrative resembles the form of a story. Suppose one is recalling the provisional definition of what narrative is. In that case, this indicates that an identity narrative must feature a connection between the events of the past and the events of the present, with the expectation that the future will have this same relationship to the current present when it is past. However, there is still a further issue or question that needs to be clarified - is a person a narrative, or is a person one who is capable of constructing a narrative? These are two distinct issues, and here one can find quotations in Schechtman (1996) that point to both possibilities. So before I provide a charitable reading of Schechtman on the creation of persons in subsequent sections in this chapter, I will look at the constraints of Schechtman’s narrative self-constitution account.

My criticism on the basic claims of Schechtman’s Narrative view

The narrative view by Schechtman(1996) has as its core claim that “a person’s identity is constituted by the content of her self narrative and the traits, actions and experiences included in it are by virtue of that inclusion, hers” (Schechtman 1996, p94). A person thus comes to think of herself as a persisting subject by relating experiences and characteristics across past, present and future. Schechtman endorses the general Lockean claim that what is important to us in personal identity is our psychological life and it is this that we identify with when we think about our continuity. However, Schechtman does not subscribe to the reductionist directions that some interpreters of Locke have taken. She argues that neo-Lockean accounts of personal identity, such as that of Parfit (1984), generally fail to characterize or account for a distinctively first- person relation to oneself. They therefore cannot account for the care that we have for our own survival, our sense of responsibility for our actions, our self-interested concern for ourselves in the past and future, and our desire to be compensated appropriately for certain actions, experiences, losses or sacrifices. Thus, while Schechtman’s narrative view is in essence a psychological continuity theory, it seeks to formulate an

alternative account of the psychological continuity to standard re-identification theories. For instance; if, like Newton, I renounce my old beliefs or values, under the Schechtman narrative view I will still be continuous with them so long as I can construct a biographical narrative that explains coherently how I have come to be as I am now^{14, 15}.

An implication of the narrative view by Schechtman is the claim that to be a person requires having a self-narrative¹⁶. Schechtman claims that the difference between persons and non-persons rests in how an individual organises their experience and hence their lives. Accordingly “some but not all individuals weave stories of their lives, and it is their doing so that makes them persons” (Schechtman 1996, p94). There is, therefore, a strong normative element to her narrative view. On this view, personhood derives from a particular type of subjectivity, one that acknowledges and appropriates certain actions and experiences over time as one’s own. This involves an individual conceiving of her life as “having the form and logic of a story more specifically the story of a person’s life” (Schechtman 1996, p96). Schechtman makes the point that while personhood relies crucially on the subject’s inner life and attitudes, this does not mean that just any narrative that emerges will do. She explains that acting as a moral agent, entering into contracts, making plans, expressing oneself etc. are part of living the life of a person and all require at least some coherence with other third-personal accounts of one’s life (Schechtman 1996, p95). Coherence and intelligibility thus become benchmarks for self-constituting narratives and lead Schechtman to specify what sort of narratives will count as identity defining.

Constraints of Schechtman’s Narrative Self- Constitution View

Schechtman identifies three main constraints on what qualifies as a self-defining narrative, the first as a *conventional linear narrative*. The narrative self-constitution view requires that

¹⁴ Under the standard neo-Lockean view against which Schechtman frames her theory, it is unclear whether Newton survives in the reidentification sense because it depends on there being sufficient overlapping ties between the temporal parts. The question that narrative is well resourced to address however, is not a matter of metaphysical reidentification but the continuity of ‘practical’ identity, a *sense* of self or self-conception that extends over time and underpins our diachronic agency.

¹⁵ I note here, however, that this simple account of continuity, as articulated in the narrative view of Schechtman(1996), is problematised in later works. As I demonstrate later, when Schechtman develops her account of empathic access to underpin her notion of survival, selfhood becomes much more fragile.

¹⁶ This claim has drawn criticism especially from Galen Strawson, whose critique I engage with in the preceding sections in this chapter

a person's self-concept cohere sufficiently to make sense to themselves and others, so the character that is produced needs to be well defined. A collection of random sequences, conflicting and disjointed will not exhibit intelligibility. Schechtman believes this standard of definition will most likely emerge by adherence to a conventional linear plotline. Individuals whose narratives arrange experiences in non-linear ways will, according to Schechtman, have trouble making sense of life's events that involve plans, commitments, responsibility, and have trouble accommodating the importance of the four features: compensation, self-interested concern, moral responsibility and survival. Schechtman (1996, p99) argues further that the standard linear plotline is the norm and those with self-conceptions sufficiently different from our own linear narrative would not be recognizable to us as persons. This claim in its crudest form amounts to an insistence that to be a person one must have a narrative of this specified form.

In fact, Schechtman's claims are not as stringent as may initially appear. Perfect coherence is an extreme or ideal case. It is sufficient to recognise that beliefs, desires, values and traits are supposed to support each other. Anomalous or out of character behaviour raises questions and puzzlement when we encounter them. Examples of such questions would be something like: Why are you giving up now? or I don't understand why I did that. These questions and comments assume that one's personal identity overtime should be intelligible and coherent. However perfect intelligibility provides an ideal template of what the life story of a person should look like (Schechtman, 1996). Unlikely as complete intelligibility is, Schechtman opts for a softer constraint demanding a high degree of coherence, thereby admitting degrees of coherence and attribution (Schechtman 1996, p98). This allows for a less rigid recipe of what counts as a self-constituting narrative.

The conventional linear narrative provides the prototype, but many variants that are deficient will still be distinguishable as self-constituting. The more the different elements of a person's life cohere, the better defined is her character and her personhood. Also the more particular actions cohere with the overall narrative and the character developed by the narrative, the greater the degree to which it can be attributed to that person. For example an out of character action may often elicit some excuse that diminishes the person's degree of responsibility where circumstances have intervened, causing her to behave in ways unlike her 'usual self'. Some philosophers such as Vice (2003) and Strawson (2004) have interpreted the demand

that identity-constituting narratives must have this form as a highly contentious normative claim that is potentially chauvinistic and repressive. Schechtman (1996) thinks this is only problematic if being a person is claimed as some sort of achievement or superior position (pp98-99). Nevertheless, given the normative significance that attaches to personhood in moral, legal and practical matters Schechtman's response to this criticism seems inadequate.

To further mitigate the charges of prejudice, Schechtman also adds that the category of the traditional linear narrative is diverse. Alternative narrative forms might diverge from the standard form by degree but maintain substantial overlap. Schechtman, therefore, allows for some fluidity in the idea of the standard narrative. This may not be a completely satisfactory answer, and problems relating to rights, agency and autonomy arise around such prescriptions of what constitutes conventional narrative form and therefore personhood. Excluded narratives of groups whose narratives run counter to dominant norms may or may not comply with the demand for conventional linear narrative form. Schechtman does not however provide clear limits to diversity within the range of admissible narratives. Rather Schechtman (1996) settles on the somewhat vague constraint that a "self-conception sufficiently unlike a traditional linear narrative excludes personhood"(p100).

While Schechtman's notion of self-narration involves the inner life and attitudes of a subject, it also recognizes the social context in which a person's life is led. Therefore, the second constraint, the *reality constraint*, is that one's self-narrative must cohere with the objective account of that life that others would tell (Schechtman1996, p119). This constraint provides an anchor to reality, overcoming the problem that just any narrative could constitute a person defining narrative. Specifying the degree of mistakenness, self-deception and delusion that violate this coherence constraint are complex, but at the limit, when self-narratives stray too far from reality, as most people conceive it, personhood is called into question (Schechtman 1996, p111). A concept of self that is radically out of sync with reality and the views held by others will not permit the social interactions that contribute to the culture's concept of a person. What the narrative self-constitution view does not clearly account for, however, is the weight given to a person's self-conception relative to the views of others when these conflict. This is a question of relevance to social contexts involving power imbalance resulting from issues such as gender, class, etc.

More generally, in the light of what we know about the constructed nature of memory, and about the incapacity of persons to retain identical reproductions of the past, the reality constraint requires some moderation. A rigid reality constraint calling for complete accuracy seems unreasonable and out of line with these features of remembering agents. Narratives obviously will contain mistakes of observation, mistakes of interpretation, lapses of memory, cases of self-deception and may be viewed by different individuals from different perspectives. To ease the constraint, however, Schechtman recognises the need to discuss margins for the sorts of variance from reality that will compromise personhood. Schechtman (1996) defends her claim by stating that “As long as a person’s narrative is comprehensible and responsible to the basic facts, it is not taken to violate the reality constraint, even if its logic may seem offbeat” (p128).

The third constraint, which is the *articulation constraint*, requires that an identity constituting narrative should be capable of local articulation, according to Schechtman (1996). This suggests that the narrator should be able to explain why he does what he does, believes what he believes, and feels what he feels. The articulation constraint entails that narratives cannot be completely hidden or implicit but should be capable of articulation at least some of the time and implies the ability to give reasons and explanations for actions.

Schechtman (1998, pp115-119) makes a distinction between the explicit narrative that is easily articulated and the implicit narrative that is not, with the latter playing a different role in life because it lies hidden below the surface. Schechtman then moves to the conclusion that these hidden elements of one’s narrative are less fully one’s own, the implication being that dramatic failures of articulation can undermine personhood. She bases this conclusion on the assumption that implicit narratives are hidden from the self and others’ scrutiny and therefore their influence is rigid and automatic. Hence, they are deemed as less fully one’s own, and less well integrated into a person’s self-conception. I believe, however, that the issue of implicit narratives is far more complex than Schechtman has acknowledged. Implied aspects of the self can emerge in self-narratives such that narrative self-construal may in fact be the result of the interplay of implicit and explicit narratives. For example, when my personal narrative of academic disruption is shaped not only by my explicit account of fees must fall revolution, student protests and the differences between my life before and after the

revolution, but also by an implicit narrative ‘template’ about how she believes her academic life should be.

Schechtman’s relegation of implicit narratives to a lesser role in identity constitution, and her claim that divergence between implicit and explicit narratives compromises personhood, result from a conflation of the concepts of identity and autonomy (Mackenzie, 2009, p109). In fact, in my view, the divergence of implicit and explicit narratives may threaten autonomy but not necessarily personhood.¹⁷ This conflation becomes clear when Schechtman (1996) writes in the following passage:

“when a person is unable to explicate part of her narrative, some set of her actions and experiences are incomprehensible to her and not under her control ...is impelled by forces she does not understand rather than behaving as an autonomous subject. In these cases failure to meet the articulation constraint interferes with personhood as a whole” (pp118-119).

What Schechtman has really described in the quote above is a case of impaired autonomy and this is not the same as personhood. Requirements for autonomy are clearly more demanding than for personhood. However, her conflation of the two concepts has forced unreasonable restrictions on what counts as a self-constituting narrative. On the same note, while Schechtman suggests that implicit narratives that resist articulation possibly compromise personhood, it is not so clear that she considers the contrary situation (explicit situation). And one can question, can the public articulated version of a narrative actually obscure the real self? What, for example, is the status of explicit narratives that are highly sanitised? These questions and problems aside, what is clear regarding the articulation constraint is that I do not have to literally lay the story out before my mind’s eye. Nor do I have to explicitly spell out my autobiography to others. It just needs to be able to be articulated.

¹⁷ Mackenzie (2009) elaborates this point in her critique of Schechtman. Schechtman gives the example of a man who carries implicit hostility towards his brother. The fact that he is unaware of the impact of the hostility on his behavior means that these implicit emotions are not accessible to reflection and therefore his autonomy with respect to them is impaired. The point that Mackenzie makes is that these emotions may still be an integral part his character and motivate the way he sees and responds to the world. In this case autonomy is threatened but not personhood or his self-conception (Mackenzie 2009, p108-109).

Despite some questions about the viability of the constraints and some important shortcomings, one of which I discuss in the next sections, I find the fundamental idea of narrative self-constitution to be a valuable framework as it provides an important insight into problems that are inherent in standard accounts of personal identity. Her distinction between the reidentification question and the characterisation question has been deservedly influential. In my view, however, Schechtman's model does not give us a sufficiently developed account of the reflective activities that support narrative integration and diachronic agency (See Glen Strawson, 2007). In *The Constitution of Selves*, there is no further development of the details of the interface between selfhood and agency beyond the following acknowledgement. "Although there are many thorny issues about the agency that cannot be settled here, I think it is very easy to see how identity as defined by the narrative self-constitution view is connected to agency" (Schechtman, 1996 pp158- 159). To my mind, to characterize and account for a distinctly first-personal relation across parts of a person's life requires bringing the agent more explicitly into the picture. However, Schechtman does not account for the agential activities that underpin self-interpretative reflection.

In its initial form, the Schechtman narrative view does not interrogate the sort of relations to past experience that might support our sense of continuity. Further, when Schechtman does return to address this latter issue by developing the concept of empathic access, her analysis is couched in terms of 'survival'. A focus on survival, however, automatically forces her back into the language of re-identification not continuity because survival is usually considered an all or nothing matter. That is, unless one postulates different notions of survival, which is precisely what Schechtman does. The result is a far more fragile and fragmented notion of selfhood than the narrative constitution of selves originally promises.

Schechtman's view of personal identity has to accommodate a conviction that survival incorporates a deeper unity of self beyond the mere existence of a psychological entity that has the same contents of consciousness. Explicating this deeper unity proves problematic for Schechtman. In *Constitution*, Schechtman simply acknowledges the importance of survival in a rich sense that we really care about but goes no deeper in her account of this care than to describe it as a 'primitive,' a given sort of instinctual concern for our persistence through time (Schechtman, 1996 pp153-154). Being a primitive is not a justification of

importance and does not preclude it from being a mistake or illusion¹⁸. In her later arguments, Schechtman specifies a concept of survival to supplement the narrative constitution of selves but as I argue in the next sections and chapter four, her account proves unsatisfying and raises some knotty problems for the narrative constitution of selves.

Galen Strawson's Criticism Against Schechtman's Narrative View

In the philosophy article entitled *Against Narrative* (2004) Galen Strawson develops a criticism that focuses on what he perceives to be an inadequacy in Schechtman's (1996) narrative view. To formulate this criticism, Strawson deals with the theory of personal identity proposed by Schechtman in her book, 'The Constitution of Selves. In this work, Strawson provides an argument against the narrative view and against Schechtman's (1996) formulation more specifically. Strawson attacks two popular claims of Schechtman narrative view. The 'descriptive' or 'psychological narrativity' thesis about how we actually understand ourselves as persons entails that there is "widespread agreement that human beings typically see or live or experience their lives as a narrative or story of some sort, or at least as a collection of stories" (Strawson, 2004 p428). He views this thesis as inaccurate and irrelevant. The 'ethical narrative' thesis makes the normative claim that "that experiencing or conceiving one's life as a narrative is a good thing; a richly narrative outlook is essential to a well-lived life, to true or full personhood" (*ibid*). Strawson views this second thesis as false and "a gross hindrance to self-understanding" (2004, p448).

The basis for Strawson's objections to the psychological narrativity thesis is his distinction between two radically opposed modes of temporal experience and types of person: 'diachronic' and 'episodic'. According to Strawson, Diachronics experience a first personal and affective relationship with their past and future, which gives continuity to their selfhood. Their concern for past and future selves reflects a conception of the self as essentially temporally extended. Episodics, by contrast, do not experience their selfhood as persisting across time nor do they feel affective connections between selves. Rather, they experience their selfhood as transient: the present self is quite separate from past and future selves. An Episodic is perfectly aware, according to Strawson, of having long-term continuity as a

¹⁸ This is essentially what Parfit contends, i.e. our concern for survival is mistaken and not relevant to personal identity. This claim does not therefore defend adequately against Parfit's suggestion that survival does not have the importance we attribute to it.

human being, but feels little or no sense of connection between the selves one was, is now and will be in the future. Therefore Episodics neither seek nor need temporal coherence and integration over time through narrative (Strawson 2004, pp431-432).

At this initial stage, Strawson places the diachronic style and the episodic style on an axis such that one can be either more diachronic or more episodic, and one's styling may change over time. Further, the distinction between the two aspects is not entirely absolute, according to Strawson (2004). Using Strawson's own examples, it is possible for an Episodic to identify with, say, a memory of a long past embarrassment, or feel nausea over the (increasingly less temporally distant) reality of death. Likewise, a Diachronic may fail to make an apperceptive or appropriative link with a past moment or experience. Here, Strawson offers us a simple way to understand the aspect. He used an example of Henry James, who, even though recognizing that he is the same person who wrote a literary masterpiece in the past, simply cannot identify his current with his past self. As Battersby (2006, pp41-42) notes, Strawson's argument using Henry James example is essentially based on anecdotes, but Strawson claims that "James has no doubt that he is the same human being as the author of that book, but he does not feel he is the same self or person as the author"(Strawson 2004, p430).

Strawson claims that introspection has shown him to be an episodic who feels no special concern for experiences and events in his past or future (Strawson 2004, p433). While he acknowledges that he remembers his involvement in past events, he claims that his memories bear a simple causal relation to his identity over time as a human being. What he denies is memory's ability to impact his present sense of self in any affective way, other than in the obvious formative and causal sense. Memory delivers factual knowledge about the past and his identity and persistence as a human being over time, but Strawson claims not to experience these memories as happening to himself, his internal mental presence as he senses it now. He gives an example that he thinks it is a metaphysical fact that he, was not there in the past, that the events of his past did not happen to him. Therefore, according to Strawson (2004), the past is not constitutive of his current self other than through simple causality in developing the human person and the circumstances in which he thinks finds himself today. The past has no emotional resonance with him (as presented by Strawson) and there is no need for the integrative capacities of narrative to bring unity and coherence to his successive selves.

Employing this distinction enables Strawson to make claims for a persisting metaphysical identity, Galen Strawson the human being, without giving memory and the past a role in self-constitution of the current “internal mental presence” that he calls himself. While each self is an instance of subjectivity within the life of a human being, according to Strawson they are not diachronically connected and there is no effective identification between them. At the same time, he attributes diachronicity to the human being. The viability of this distinction is taken for granted.¹⁹ I will suggest, however, that Strawson ensures the diachronicity of the human being and non-diachronicity of the self by allocating features such as memory and affectivity with their temporally extended implications to the human being and denying them to the self. As I argue below it is not clear that excising dispositional capacities like memory and emotional affect from the domain of the self is justifiable, (refer to my argument in Chapter Four). Yet Strawson’s ability to claim episodocity hinges on this distinction between the human being and the self and he structures the temporal features of each category to provide the necessary underpinning for a robust account of episodocity.

According to Strawson (2004), diachronic persons can be narrative or non-narrative (they can think of themselves in narrative or non-narrative terms),²⁰ but episodic persons cannot be narrative. Diachronicity is a necessary feature for narrativity.²¹ I believe that Strawson is correct in this particular regard, as we can propose a simple conceivability argument that features a diachronic person who lacks narrative. This person or perhaps persisting throughout time and realizes all of the features of personhood that Schechtman requires. However, this person’s self-conception is not narrative in form. This person sees himself as intimately connected to his past selves, but perhaps his self-conception is not a traditional,

¹⁹ Strawson’s claims for the distinction of selves from human beings are underpinned by his metaphysical view of the self that he calls the *Pearl View* or *Transience View* (Strawson 1997). This view entails that, contra to our ordinary experience, there really is no persisting metaphysical entity that is the self, only a succession of short lived entities that persist only as long as an uninterrupted stretch of consciousness.

²⁰ According to Strawson (2004) diachronicity, by itself, however, this is not enough to establish narrative identity, one could be a diachronic without supporting the psychological thesis. One could very well be, say, a substance dualist, and thus the diachronic nature of one’s self-experience would be due to a soul-like substance, however philosophically problematic this position is. It is when we combine diachronicity with another feature, Strawson call this feature a *form-finding tendency* in one’s life which narrative identity emerges.

²¹ In this context Strawson take it that many people are naturally Diachronic, and that many who are Diachronic are also Narrative in their outlook on life.

linear form. This intimate connection is a simple reflection, over time, that the first-person indexical he is employing now referred to this same self at different points. A primaeva, basic recognition of sameness over time without narrative seems possible, so I find it hard to immediately accept that all diachronic persons are narrative in form.

Putting aside my objections, for the time being, Strawson's (2004) criticism can be analyzed on its own merits. The core of Strawson's argument against the narrative view can be adapted in a simple way, and formalized according to my interpretation as follows: (a) If the narrative view is correct, episodic persons do not exist. (b) Episodic persons do exist. (c) The narrative view is incorrect. This is what I suggest is Strawson's metaphysical argument about the nature of persons. It is a simple rule of inference argument, one any philosopher should recognize. The crucial premise is obviously (a), which flat-out denies the central claim of any narrative view²². In addition to his metaphysical argument, Strawson has a moral argument about the practice from a given metaphysical theory, which I have formulated as follows: (d) The adoption of the narrative view excludes some persons and treats them as not persons. (e) Treating a person as something that is not a person is wrong. (f) The narrative view advocates the wrong actions. (g) No correct theory leads to immoral consequences. (h) The narrative view is false.

Strawson's moral argument does not seem to be logically valid, though it is intuitively valid.²³ However, Strawson sees the moral aspect as an important feature of narrative views. He characterizes them as exclusionary and immoral. In my opinion, the point (g) is the best way to explain this, though the premise is never explicitly stated in his work. But it is a reasonable assumption and one that I am willing to grant him at least for the moment. A further discussion of his moral argument and moral arguments in general is made in the third chapter of this thesis. Furthermore, Strawson (2004) attempts to give an account of persons that are free from narrative altogether and adds a moral element to his overall argument. He claims that narrative is not, as Schechtman (1996) describes, what constitutes a person. More significantly, he believes we can paint a picture of personhood that finds narrative

²² In essence Strawson's claims to be an Episodic person, and therefore (b) is justified. However, this raises further questions. One should see persons' as self-considerations veridical? I do not think so. If persons' self-considerations were veridical, then the arguments would be easily settled.

²³ The point here is straightforward, the form-finding features of narrative identity entails an exclusive concern for one's self, and this can diminish, rather than enable, ethical action.

unnecessary in some instances. These are his *episodic persons*, and they are, according to Strawson, a completely normal variant of human persons. There are *narrative persons*, and these are the persons that Schechtman (1996) describes in her work, but these are not the only kinds of persons.

As soon as one introduces kinds of persons, one must ask what it is that makes all of these kinds fall under the umbrella of persons. There must be some unifying themes or a set of criteria that allow us philosophers to distinguish between persons and non-persons. And so we look for what the defining features of all persons are in order to give a proper account of the necessary and sufficient features of persons. If a unitary account is impossible, then we can begin to explore bifurcation. Of course, closeness is a rule of thumb and should not be treated as a refutation in the absence of further evidence or counter-arguments.

However, Strawson (2004) is attempting to disprove a family of views in his piece, not simply because of Schechtman's views or propositions. And in fact, he is attempting to not only make room for his philosophical position but also to change a social practice. Namely, this is the psychological practice of treating subjects as if they are the narratives they hold, or as if they be compelled to hold narratives about themselves.²⁴ By doing so, an episodic person becomes deficient in virtue of not being regarded as a person and in need of more psychological help than a narrative person from the very beginning. This is perhaps the most ambitious part of Strawson's project, and it is here I have the most doubts. Put simply, I believe that the psychological notion of narrativity is much less radical than the philosophical notion and that it can perhaps have positive results in psychological practices. Whether it actually has positive results is not for me to say, though, and I can simply defer to psychologists' expertise. Now, it does seem possible that there are perfectly healthy people who have a weakened self-narrative compared to a narrative person. If this is the case, then narrative theorists need to identify these dispositions and treat them accordingly.

Perchance Strawson is begging the question? Premise (b) would seem to suggest this. Can we suppose that Strawson is simply denying the consequent and counts it as a refutation? I think

²⁴ I have used the word 'compelled' with the view that it could be interpreted as either a moral compel (it is morally better to hold a self narrative) or as compel about reasons (if one wants to live a full life, one has good reason to hold a self-narrative).

not. It is apparent that the real core of Strawson's argument is whether or not there are persons who are entirely free of narrative. After this has been identified, it seems that the dispute can be resolved empirically. One cannot be counted as begging the question by pointing to an empirical fact. Strawson (1996, p448) claims to identify non-narrative persons simply. If this is the case, then there is a clear answer. The existence of episodic or non-narrative persons refutes the narrative view. So while most defenders of the narrative view may want to see Strawson as begging the question (because they believe that non-narrative persons do not exist), but this is because they have already adopted an explanatory schema concerning persons. From the point of view of differing conceptual schemes, one philosopher's 'method of affirming' may be another's 'method of denying'. But the answer is not so simple as one might imagine. Strawson (1996) is wrong to claim that by looking at literature one can easily see that non-narrative persons do, in fact, exist²⁵. Narrative is a vague notion that has been overused by many philosophers and scientists, to the point that one has to be exacting in one's reading in order to discern what each particular writer means when talking about narrative and narrativity. As a refutation to Strawson, Schechtman (1996) identifies different notions of personhood narrative. I explain these notions below.

First, nevertheless, one can put an important question: has Strawson defeated Schechtman's position? If we take Schechtman to be asking an important question about the constitution of persons, and thus making an ontological claim, then perhaps not. I read Strawson (2004) as largely missing the point of Schechtman's (1996) thesis. For one, the normative claim that one need to think of oneself as or within a narrative is not explicit in Schechtman,²⁶ and I believe that a charitable reading will not include it. So as we will see in the next section, Schechtman (1996, pp96-98) does claim that in order to be morally responsible for one's life, one must think of oneself as or within a narrative. And for Strawson to provide his normative challenge, he needs another premise. Thus to say that it is itself good for one to be a moral agent.²⁷ As we will note in the next section, the good-making properties of moral agents in

²⁵ I suggest that the reader see also Strawson (2007) '*Episodic Ethics, in Narrative and Understanding Persons*' (2007). According to my view, it would be so interesting contraction if Strawson was able to invalidate narrative theories by appealing to narratives.

²⁶ It suggest that while narrativity may not be true of every one, it should be because it is the only way to have a full emotional and/or moral life.

and of themselves are not a part of Schechtman's work (I will discuss further in the next section).

Schechtman's Refinement and Defense of the Narrative View; Response to Strawson's view

As a response to Strawson's (2004) criticism, Schechtman (2007) clarified her views in an article entitled '*Stories, Lives, and Basic Survival: A Refinement and Defense of the Narrative*'. Schechtman embraces that, on significant issues regarding narrative, she and Strawson (2004) are actually in little disagreement. However, Strawson claims that some of Strawson's main claims draw attention to important parts of her theory that need clarification.

The first point is that there is the problem of narrative and narrativity. Strawson's (2004) criticism of narrative theorists relied on his notion of narrativity, which was an all or nothing type of thing. One is either in a narrative or not within a narrative. On the other hand, Schechtman prefers to see narrative as an inverted spectrum.²⁸ Schechtman is describing a spectrum across which we relate to the first-person point of view or the third-person perspective of:

“Consider first the question of what constitutes a life-narrative. At one end of the spectrum, a life-narrative can be conceived as nothing more than a sequential listing of the events in one's history. Here ‘narrative’ would be used in something like the sense in which it is used in the context of police reports, or in the narrative of a medical procedure. Toward the middle of the spectrum are conceptions of a life-narrative that involve not just a sequential listing of life events, but also an account of the explanatory relations among them—a story of how the events in one's history lead to other events in that history. At the far end of the spectrum is the idea of a life-narrative as an account of a life that approximates as much as possible a story created by a gifted author and edited by a talented editor. On this understanding there should be a unifying theme and direction to a life-narrative, and extraneous material should be left out” (p159-160).

²⁷ see Strawson (1996 p 450). While my central focus remains Schechtman narrative thesis, it is important to start address introduce the notion of moral agent in this context because it relates to living a flourishing life and thus to the importance of integration.

²⁸ Schechtman attends to this need but it would take us too far afield to discuss the finer detail.

While in previous sections I discussed only one distinction between the narrative of causality and some sort of life-narrative, in the above quote, Schechtman identifies at least three different kinds of narratives as ‘sequences of events’, ‘causal sequences of events, and ‘causal sequences of events that only focus on the salient features of a life’. It is the ‘causal sequences of events’ that Schechtman said to be a true, identity-constituting narrative as she discussed in the ‘The Constitution of Selves. But after her revisiting the narrative view in light of Strawson’s comments, she now has what she calls a middle-ground view and Schechtman claims that:

“At one end of this spectrum is the rather weak requirement that a person’s narrative must somehow operate to impact his current experience. According to this understanding a person’s narrative need not be in any way accessible to consciousness in order for her to be said to have a self-narrative. In the middle range, having a narrative would require that a person be able, at least sometimes, to become conscious of her narrative and make it explicit. At the extreme end of the spectrum would be the view that in order to have a narrative in the relevant sense a person must actively and consciously undertake to understand and live her life in narrative form”. (2007 p160)

So far Schechtman (1996; 2007) can be said to hold that a person must recognize their life as a sequence of events with causal connections and that, at least sometimes, should be aware of this fact. To be a narrative person then is to not only live within a narrative but to recognize that this is the way one is living. An identity-constituting narrative contains a certain degree of self-awareness, though this self-awareness need not be that the narrative is identity-constituting (Hutto, 2007). It need only be the awareness of a self-narrative. One has the internal recognition, from time to time, that this narrative is about oneself and no other, or at least the narrative is centrally about oneself. Further to this recognition, there is a range of implications of self-narrative. First, it allows persons to function. Second, there is the claim that narrative allows persons to engage in person-specific activities (the four features Schechtman enunciated earlier). The extreme claim is that narrative is essential to leading a good or meaningful life. If one adopts the extreme claim, then one has added further premises, namely moral ones that contribute to the good life. Schechtman (2007) rightfully

rejects the extreme view and remains silent on the issue of narrative as a means of fulfilment. Even if one accepts Schechtman's spectrum, one can still see cause for concern.²⁹

My proposition in this thesis is that Schechtman (2007) is right to reject the extreme claim about narrative. The deeper meaning the extreme claim requires is simply asking too much. Meaning is determined by the person spinning the narrative (Hutto,2007). This meaning is ingrained in events by the person involved. On the same note, Schechtman's (2007) view, though, is the middle-ground. I take it that something (some object, some organism, some being, etc.) is a person if and only if he or she has a narrative that is more than just a sequence of events and that takes note of the causal relationship between these events, he or she is able in some sense to be aware of this narrative and is able to articulate the narrative when needed, and this narrative allows him or her to perform person-specific activities. A short note should be made on my use of the biconditional statement (combination of a conditional statement). Some may claim that is inappropriate, but I believe that the proper formulation of Schechtman's theory, in the condensed form I have presented, must include the biconditional statement instead of the conditional statement (or the turnstile).

The biconditional does not imply causality, but rather that, in order for something to be true, both sides must be true. If we were to phrase Schechtman's (1996; 2007) theory only using the conditional, then it would be true whenever there is a particular kind of narrative and a person and whenever there is not a particular kind of narrative, by virtue of material implication.³⁰ By using the biconditional, I am able to show that Schechtman views a particular kind of narrative (a personhood narrative) as materially or logically equivalent to a person.³¹ While Schechtman sees her view as rational, I believe that the use of the biconditional actually shows the radical nature of the claim.

²⁹ In my view, Schechtman's spectrum does not give us a sufficiently developed account of the reflective activities that support narrative integration and diachronic agency. Moreover, I see Schechtman does not account for the agential activities that underpin self interpretative reflection.

³⁰ We do not need necessarily to engage any form of judgments on how the material of our life story cohere or narratives is composed.

³¹ The question of whether *person* and *being that holds a self-narrative* is being presented as logically or materially equivalent is an interesting one, according to Hutto (2007) and Mendelsohn (2003).

The first part of Schechtman's (2007) revised view is that the narrative must be composed of sequential events and their causal relations. A less robust version of narrative, one that is composed purely of a sequence of events, is dismissed immediately by Schechtman (and here she sees herself as in agreement with Strawson) as irrelevantly applicable and thus not important in a personhood debate. The causal relations added to the moderate kind of narrative are, apparently enough to distinguish between a legitimate person's identity-constituting narrative and simply a narrative. The recognition of causal relations is surely a good thing (Reid, 1997), and it is an impressive feature of human persons that we are able to recognize not just simple causal relations, but complex ones as well. But what this has to do with the constitution of identity is unclear. Humans that we consider full persons are able to appropriately assign cause and effect to events³², but so are some children who have perhaps not developed a theory of mind yet. Animals are also able to assign cause and effect, but not all animals who are able to do so are persons. Hence we must ask if these other creatures are also narrative in form? If so, what can we say about narratives in persons that distinguish them?³³

In the previous sections, I addressed the second part of Schechtman's revised view, namely that narrative allows persons to engage in person-specific activities, and that without narrative they could not do so. Thus, narrative is necessary for personhood, or persons are necessarily narrative creatures. However, a narrative or a capacity for producing a self-narrative does not seem to me to be the necessary and sufficient condition for personhood. While Schechtman (2007, 1996) positions herself as proposing a moderate view of persons and their relation to narrative, I say that making narrative necessary is too restrictive. The simple possibility of persons who are able to engage willingly and not only by simple happenstance in person-specific activities without narrative is enough to discard the view that narrative is an essential property. Schechtman's (1996, pp96-101) articulation constraint, which states that persons must be able to at least at sometimes articulate at least a partial

³² I have used this term 'full persons' to prove my propositions and suggest that in some instance we call some humans 'non-full person' as one who is unable to fully consider himself as a self in all the ways that are expected of persons. Because of this, one would hold him not morally responsible for some actions, but responsible for others. An example, a street beggar may be held morally responsible for stealing a phone, but not held morally responsible for starving his dog because he forget to feed it.

³³ Some philosophers such as Devitt and Sterelny (1999) and Ricoeur (1988) think that a defining feature of persons is their use of language. And we can see that animals do not have the capacity for language as humans do, and this explains their inability to hold self-narratives and thus, by the narrative view, fail to be persons. But this is only plausible if one thinks of the narratives as necessarily linguistic, which I do not think they are.

narrative about themselves, is also troublesome. This articulation constraint does seem like an attempt to restrict personhood to those who we already think of as persons, but it does not do so effectively.

As I will argue further against Strawson in Chapter 3, I see that the atomistic view of the psychological life of persons seems to have influenced Schechtman to make concessions to Strawson's critique of narrative theories. In attempting to defend narrative, Schechtman makes a compromise by formulating a similar distinction between person-narratives and self-narratives, where person-narratives aligns with Strawson's persisting metaphysical identity as a human being and a self-narrative accommodates Strawson's short-lived self or internal mental presence. The self that is constituted by a self-narrative is essentially episodic, in Strawson's terms, because that self is not required to identify with other phases of her more diachronic person narrative. Under this influence, Schechtman's picture of the psychological life becomes disjointed and atomistic, effectively negating narrative's potential to explain the important phenomenological, first-personal and affective connections and identification that support diachronic agency.

What Strawson does not acknowledge, and what Schechtman in response implicitly excises from the 'self-narrative', is the power of persisting mental dispositions such as memories, beliefs, desires and emotions to carry the past into present mental states and thereby to affect and influence his present sense of self. He renders these dispositions affectively 'inert' as mere causal links that deliver his persistence as a human being. Strawson (2004) acknowledges having autobiographical memories and even memory experiences from the internal perspective, but claims that they do not present as something that happened to him and denies their relevance to his current self, his "internal mental presence." (p433) Moreover, my view is that if Strawson's non-reflective, current time-slice, episodic self proves to be an acceptable, convincing alternative, then his objections present a challenge to the importance Schechtman and I have placed on narrative integration. Such a self does not seek continuity, purportedly does not resort to narrative and certainly has no use for the self-reflective space provided by narrative distance. In what follows in the next two chapters, I contest Strawson's objections to each of the two theses that he attributes to the narrative view. The narrative view remains robust although, as I argue in Chapter Three and Chapter Four, it needs some further development.

My Response to Strawson's use of narrative view

I disagree with Strawson's view that the descriptive or psychological narrativity thesis that "human beings typically live or see or experience their lives as a narrative" is inaccurate and irrelevant (2004, p428). Strawson's episodic experience of time does not accommodate reflexive self-awareness beyond the brief duration of the internal mental presence he labels the 'self'. Or at least this is how he reports his own experience of being in time. His attack on the psychological thesis thus hinges on this belief in his own discontinuous states, which he cites as a metaphysical fact as described above.

I will defend against Strawson's objections to the psychological narrativity thesis on four fronts. Firstly I believe that Strawson works with arbitrary and unstable categories and does not maintain clear distinctions between episodic and diachronic experience. Secondly, Strawson underplays the importance of memory for self-conception and at times supports his view using an unrefined generic account of memory that conflates different types of memory. Thirdly, he ignores the importance and role of the survival of our first-personal diachronic viewpoint for agency. Finally, it seems apparent that Strawson inherently recognizes a need for integration, but he attributes that need for integration to the human being. He sees no need to understand our selves, or in Strawsonian terms our inner mental presence, as persisting. Nonetheless, he uses narrative to organise human experience, thereby acknowledging its integrative powers.

While Strawson suggests that the dispositions for episodocity and diachronicity are genetically determined, later in the same paragraph he concedes that "...one's exact position in Episodic/Diachronic/Narrative/non-Narrative state--- space may vary significantly over time according to what one is doing or thinking about, one's state of health, and so on; and it may change markedly with increasing age" (Strawson 2004, p431). It seems that these genetically determined individual differences are not quite so deep or determined. This inconsistency is strongly criticised by Battersby as follows:

...it seems ... despite the fact that the "Episodic and Diachronic style of temporal being are radically opposed", it is possible for Episodics at times to form connections with "charged events" of their past, with, for example,

"embarrassing memories" and, I suppose, traumatic events. This accommodating, flexible plasticity of the Episodic mode of being is quite commendable, I think, since it displays an admirable openness to facts of common experience, but it also reflects what appears to be a persistent feature of this system of distinctions—a reluctance on the part of crucial terms to stay put and thus remain serviceable to the ends of analysis and argument. The critical terms and distinctions fail in the task of making sharp discriminations among things and kinds (Battersby 2006, p30 citation from Strawson 2006, pp430- 431).

I believe that the other distinction that Strawson maintains throughout his analysis, between the human being and the self, is also problematic because it involves an unwarranted allocation of characteristics and dispositions between the two categories. This allocation removes important dispositional capacities like memory and emotional affect from the domain of the self because that would undermine Strawson's claims to episodicity. In other words, Strawson denies the temporality of selfhood by attributing to the human being the temporal experience of persistence that most of us would connect with our conception of self. Since so much of his analysis rests on the viability of this distinction the charge is damaging³⁴. Further, in order to maintain the non--- diachronic nature of selfhood Strawson cannot afford to acknowledge the affective impact of autobiographical memory on self-conception. Consequently, he is forced to rely on a diminished conception of memory.

I find Strawson's rejection of narrativity somewhat disingenuous. He inherently recognizes the need to relate to one's temporally extended experience every time he resorts to narrative to manage the collection of episodic events experienced by him in the past. He does this whenever he wants to refer to the past of the human being, Galen Strawson. Strawson seems to recognize intuitively that a person is not understandable at a single point in time because he looks to the continuity of the human being to find identity and persistence as needed. He fails to acknowledge that narrative locates that single point in time in the context of others to

³⁴ This allocation of features remains unjustified in his influential 2004 paper. Strawson attempts to justify this distinction phenomenologically in his 2009 book but to my mind the distinction as Strawson draws it remains problematic (Strawson 2009).

make it intelligible. At the same time as Strawson critiques and dismisses narrative theories, he presupposes narrative as the means to organize the temporal existence of the human being. Even the narrative excursions of his chosen models of the episodic life confirm the utility of narrative for integrating the self over time. The fact that those he cites as models of episodic existence, such as Henry James and Stendhal,³⁵ all take a narrative interest in their experience and resort to narrative to manage clusters of events and retrieve their significance seems to escape him. Without acknowledging it, Strawson needs to resort to narrative structures to integrate his life. While he specifies that it is the life of a human being, that life clearly encompasses the experiences of his supposedly separate selves that are more effectively interconnected than Strawson admits. It is because of the above reasons I reject Strawson's case against the psychological narrativity thesis and I now turn to discuss the construction and constitution of the self as form of narrative thesis.

The Constitution and Construction of the Self

To further discussion in this thesis, it is important to note that an important part of many narrative theories of personhood is the idea that selves are self-creating. This would force other philosophers to be suspicious and question: what does it mean to self-create? The initial circularity of such a thesis is good reason to be skeptical. What is being created? Apparently, it is the self. But then again what is creating this self? We are told by Narrative theorists or philosophers that it is the self. Personhood, according to Schechtman (1996), is a creative or constructive enterprise. Schechtman (2007 p165) also makes a historical note, arguing that Locke also implicitly argued for the self-creation of persons.

As I note in the subsequent chapter, this is interesting because following John Locke's line of thought allows us to begin our analysis of persons without adding the normative premises that narrative views do. Locke's intuition is that personal identity is constituted by the connection to the past that is given in memory (Parfit, 1984), though modern identity theorists have added other connective cognitive functions include other psychological connections given by beliefs, desires, intentions, character traits. Locke further claims that what is important to us in personal identity is our psychological life, and it is this that we identify with when we think about our continuity (Parfit 1984, p.207). What Locke stresses as the important connection between past and present is 'affect'. I take from Locke's line of

³⁵ Cited in Strawson (2004, p422-438)

thought that it is not only that we remember or what we remember but how we remember that matters for appropriating experiences and events into one's life story. For past experiences and characteristics to be recognisably ours and implicate a deep unity of self, something deeply connective must exist between a present self and the past experiences we appropriate and integrate into our self-narrative. While the narrative view relies on normative premises for its justification, the self-creation thesis does not. This indicates an important distinction: one need not be a narrative theorist if one is a self-creation theorist, however, one may need to be a self-creation theorist if one is a narrative theorist.

Self-creation theories may be found in degrees, but I believe that it is acceptable to group them into two notions of 'weak and strong'. According to Gottfredson (2002), weak self-creation theories hold no ontological significance;³⁶ strong self-creation theories, however, do. Velleman (2006) holds a weak self-creation view,³⁷ while Schechtman (1996; 2007) holds a strong self-creation view. Across the spectrum of self-creation theories, there may be borderline cases where one is not sure if it is weak or strong, making it at first questionable to demarcate theories in such away. However, each of these theories will be able to eventually be placed within the weak or strong; in principle, there is no reason why they cannot be. Strong theories are 'ontologically significant'; weak theories are not.

A theory can be said to be ontologically significant if it would alter the number of objects in our ontology or change the relevant properties of some particular objects in our ontology (Lewis, 1966), provided, of course, that the theory is true. For example, the theory of resemblance nominalism is a metaphysically significant theory precisely because, if it is true, then there are fewer objects in our ontology than if some version of a theory of universals is true. Ontological disputes are settled by choosing one ontologically significant theory over another (Hornsby, 1997). A simple example, Jennifer Hornsby's question is whether self-creation is possible based on social, economic, and political conditions for certain persons. But this is not a metaphysically significant theory because, while it does attempt to describe the world, it does not alter the ontological status of persons if it is true. One can contrast Schechtman's ontologically significant theory with Anderson (1928) or Routley (1982) both

³⁶. By ontologically significant I mean something very specific.

³⁷. The time slice person that is the ontological significance of David Velleman's (2006) model does not have what it takes to be a diachronic agent.

of whom hold that the self does not exist but instead is a phenomenon of narratives.³⁸ And my view is that narratives need something to be placed on, the self is the ‘centre of gravity, but if we were to go looking for it, there would be nothing to find. The self here cannot be seen as fulfilling a function, and it is a supposed something that explains a set of experiences or phenomena. So, this view is ontologically significant since it has an effect on the number of objects in our ontology.

The simple way to read Schechtman, once again being treated as the paradigmatic narrative theorist, is that the act of reflection, the ‘considering one as a self’ of a person’s life, is what creates persons. It is what I propose separates persons from merely thinking things. The act of thinking makes one a thinker (Rodin, 1979). For example, as some organism reflects on its life and by doing, so it creates a narrative, its self-identity is established. As this power of reflection continues into the future, with the new events being established as part of the self-narrative, that organism’s self-identity persists through time. Schechtman’s self-creation thesis’ relevance will be further proved in the last chapter of this thesis, where I assume narrative concerns have been resolved.

³⁸ It is important note here that the two theorist or philosophers cannot be read as self-creation theorists, as they hold that there is nothing being created. They can still be read as narrative theorists and their theories are still ontologically significant, as they alter the number of objects in the ontology.

CHAPTER THREE

My primary aim in this chapter is to discuss my critical view or comments on Schechtman (1996; 2007) and the narrative view. As I intend to show in this chapter that by making my comments general rather than overly specific and exegetical, they might pose serious problems to any narrative view that resembles Schechtman's view in a significant way. I begin the chapter, however, with an argument against a common methodology in personal identity. I argue against the use of ethical reasons as justification for metaphysical views. Additionally, I argue that person is an ontological term, not a necessarily ethical one. This should allow my general criticism against the philosophy of personal identity's methodology to be applicable to constitution and persistence questions.

In the next section, I argue tangentially for metaphysical realism, though I intend to write that the common conception of realism may be troubled when persons are included in the analysis as they are necessarily mind-dependent objects, while realism has typically been characterized as arguing for the existence of non-mind-dependent objects. The chapter concludes by proposing the role ethics may play in some metaphysical discussions or justifying certain conclusions, specifically when one differentiates what Galen Strawson call 'descriptive and revisionary metaphysics' (Strawson, 2009). In the last part of this chapter, I argue that the case of determinism versus compatibilism demonstrates the distinction and provides an example when ethics, in some sense, is a proper motivation for metaphysical conclusions.

The Ontological and Ethical Experiencing Subject Through Time

As one can recall in the previous chapter, I formalized Galen Strawson's criticism and argument against Schechtman, and one notices that there are precisely four premises in his argument and that the normative aspect of his theory does little to nothing to criticise the case of Schechtman narrative view further. The same applies earlier in chapter one, the first section, I identified two distinct types of questions about personal identity. These were the metaphysical questions about identity-constitution and persistence and the epistemological questions about how we can know that some subject is a person. What I did not mention earlier in the previous chapter are the ethical questions that reveal themselves when

reviewing the literature on personal identity. Strawson (2004), along with many other narrative theorists, confuses the debate by inserting moral premises into his argument. For example, in Strawson's (2007) philosophy article titled 'Episodic Ethics', he argues that, while episodic persons might not be able to feel guilt in the sense that other philosophers insist they must, this is acceptable for moral practice because guilt is not a positive emotion, and is in fact a self-indulgent one. The fact of the matter about the nature of guilt is irrelevant here because what Strawson is doing is equally egregious no matter what role guilt plays in ethics. His ethical argument³⁹ about episodic persons has no application to whether or not they are persons or not. In fact, Strawson does not speak about identity-constitution or actual persistence conditions (whether of the self or of the human, since he makes this distinction as well). As such, I suggest that the actual goal of personal identity debates is lost. What I am principally concerned with is whether or not some subject is the same experiencing subject through time. I take the persistence question to be the most important question and questions about the relation of ethics and personhood to be secondary.

Ethics does not play an essential role in ontology, that is my main criticism of this approach. It may even be the fact that there are ethical maxims that hold true about the world but that the world does not contain the necessary objects, persons, or conditions to allow the maxims to be instantiated. For instance, assume that if there is a banana one ought to eat a banana. This moral percept can hold true even if a banana does not exist. That is the nature of hypothetical imperatives. And it does not follow that, just because one ought to eat an existent banana, there are existent bananas. The normativity of the statement plays no role in the ontology of the world. I take this to be an analogous case; persons may engage in moral practice, but that does not mean that persons are necessarily moral creatures, that person talk presupposes moral talk, or that moral norms affect the nature of persons. Similar Schechtman (1996; 2007) makes Strawson's (2004) mistake according to my view, as do many narrative theorists and others working in the philosophy of personal identity. What I identified as Schechtman (1996; 2007) functionalist account of persons is misguided. This is because one can even have faith in the efficacy of functionalist definitions of persons and their applicability to questions about the metaphysics of persistence and hold my view in the

³⁹ Strawson argues that "Episodic person is the kind of person who does not tend to conceive of their momentary self as part of a chain of selves stretching into the past and future and may still lead to a meaningful life" (p431).

previous statements. Schechtman (1996; 2007), like many other personal identity theorists, notes the fact that persons are moral creatures, that by virtue of their personhood, they have certain rights and responsibilities. Where Schechtman (1996) goes wrong is assuming without argument that persons are essentially moral creatures and that their defining features are the social and personal practices that comprise the four features.

It can be helpful to acknowledge John Locke's original view of persons (presented earlier in Chapter One). By Locke's theory of identity, persons must be intelligent and capable of thought, and they must be able to consider themselves as themselves throughout time. When intelligence, thought, or consideration is compromised, then the person no longer persists (Winkler, 1991; Perry, 2008). I am also of the opinion that John Locke was generally right, and that theory of persons is not fundamentally misguided as suggested by Namita Nimbalkar (2011). As other philosophers and person identity theorists have noted before me, Locke's person identity view is vague, and so it is the job of those who consider themselves intellectual descendants of Locke to provide a clear, coherent fleshing out of his original definition. My observation is that any reader who is knowledgeable about Locke might immediately recognize irony in following Locke's views of a person but denying the normative aspects. After all, Locke claims that 'person' is a forensic term⁴⁰ (Schechtman, 2014 p56), while I deny this.

What is a person, then? I propose that one possibility is that a person is a natural kind or persons are a distinct set of objects that are not synonymous with some other set (for example, human beings). We may then introduce a different kind of normative device without having to presuppose moral realism. We can say that truth is normative, though in a non-moral sense. If one wants to properly describe the world, then one ought to use true statements. That is a normative aspect of the analysis, but one that does not need to invoke morals. And the questions such as "Do persons exist?" and "Under what conditions can organisms or agents be morally responsible?" are different. Each may have implications for one another, moral responsibility may necessitate that persons exist in this world, as persons are moral agents by some philosophers' lights such as Fischer and Ravizza (2000); Fischer (1999); Russell (1995). But even if other philosophers are concerned that there are

⁴⁰ Locke writes that person-which is the self's 'name'-"is a forensic term, appropriating actions and their merit; and so belongs only to intelligent agents, capable of a law, and happiness, and misery" (Locke 1741, 296-7)

implications, I take the observation that two distinct questions in the previous statement to be truism. The question certainly becomes this; if there are two distinct questions that have commonly been conflated in personal identity debates, ‘what significance can we draw from this new-found distinction?’ and ‘how does it inform the debate, and what theories does this distinction threaten?’

By talking about persons, we commit ourselves to metaphysical realism⁴¹ or at least to some variety of factionalism. I suggest that when talking about persons, we do not commit ourselves to moral realism.⁴² Or at least, on the surface, it does not necessarily commit us to moral realism. We are discussing thinking, intelligent beings capable of self-characterization. Because of this, any explanation of persons that relies solely on metaphysical realism will be more parsimonious than one that relies on both metaphysical and moral realism. Why then have so many personal identity and narrative view debates involved problems of morality? Some of the major books on the topic, from narrative and non-narrative theorists alike, have primarily concerned themselves with topics of morality (Strawson; 2004; Currie, 2010; Van Dijk, 1976). Without a doubt, there is some connection, and in my opinion, it would be unreasonable to deny that. What is also unreasonable is to assume that, by discussing one, a philosopher is forced to discuss the other. But what if a close or an intimate connection can be shown between personal identity and ethics, such that one must discuss personal identity to discuss certain moral problems? Even if that is the case, it does not follow ethics must then be discussed in order to talk about personal identity. The relationship does not hold true in both directions. This stands to my assumption that if a philosopher is concerned about the ethics of punishment, then a philosopher must ask if the same person has persisted. If persistence is not accounted for, then the possibility of punishing a person for the crimes of another become an issue. But what if a philosopher is merely concerned about persistence for persistence’s sake? Should the ethics of punishment be taken into account? Unquestionably not.⁴³

⁴¹ As opposed to the practical concerns of persons.

⁴² The idea here is to present moral realism as if one acts, one must think that the end of one’s action is good. Moral realists hold that moral facts are what they are even when we see them incorrectly or not at all.

⁴³ My point here is that others could pose a possible objection to such rhetorical questions as; one cannot be interested in the persistence of persons for its own sake, as person is necessarily a normative or ethical term. I do not think this is a damning objection, however, as the idea of persons does not seem to imply ethics without question begging against the moral anti-realist. So ‘Do persons exist?’ and ‘What makes some being a

The ontological questions of personhood and persistence are methodologically prior to the ethical questions. Without answers to the ontological questions, there cannot be answers to the ethical questions. To discuss ethics and use it as the basis for ontology is misguided, it is the philosophical equivalent of buying a frame for a painting that does not exist yet, without even knowing the dimensions of the canvas. This is what I take as Schechtman's (1996) mistake.⁴⁴ What are persons? They are thinking beings, capable of considering themselves as themselves from one time to another, according to John Locke. This allows them to become moral agents, but these moral capabilities do not make up the essence of what they are. Resembling cases can be shown here as an example; persons are capable of writing and communicating, but this does not mean that they are primarily linguistic creatures; similar, persons are capable of forming social relationships, but that does not mean that they are primarily social creatures; and, to further my main thesis, persons are capable of forming narratives, but this does not mean that they are primarily narrative creatures.

Where should one go after dispensing with the ethical talk? Straight to the root of the matters: persistence and characterization. John Locke offers a characterization, and I have already noted in the previous discussions that I find this characterization suitable. By doing so, I place myself firmly in the psychological tradition. When mind theorists and personal identity theorists/or philosophers have been mindful of each other on issues within the psychological tradition, they have produced new and powerful observations about the nature of persons. An example of this is work done by Harris (1991) Shoemaker (1994) and Perry (1975), while the three have never collaborated, these authors view the other's work as sharing a common spirit with their own, showing that the neuroscientist and the philosopher can both make meaningful contributions to the debates about personal identity. But the ethicist does not have a role to play, in particular, moral theory simply is not relevant, similar to the way that

person?' are distinct questions from 'What are moral standards?' or 'What makes something morally right or wrong?' If it is the case that one cannot be interested in the persistence of persons for its own sake, then one can see that I have been gravely mistaken during this entire project.

⁴⁴ Schechtman takes normative account, by suggesting that while narrativity may not be true of every one, it should be because it is the only way to have a full emotional and/or moral life (Schechtman 1996 p 96-100).

political science or the epistemologist has no role to play when discussing constitution and persistence questions.⁴⁵

Some Possible Moral Motivations

One might be worried by my treatment of ethics in the previous section, apparently rendering it useless except when discussing ethics qua ethics. But I do believe that there is at least one kind of case where an appeal to ethics or ethical talk can motivate, in a weaker sense, metaphysical conclusions. The case I am referring to is a debate within the philosophy of free will, namely that between the determinists and the compatibilists. For instance, let us take determinism to be the thesis that all things within the universe are causally determined by something prior, and that explanations for events can be given in terms of causal chains. Some event occurs because of some prior event, and so on. The determinist, within free will debates, additionally holds that human action or person action is not given someplace of privilege in the universe. It, too, is causally determined by past events as such nothing is free in any sense of the word.

On the other hand, take compatibilism to be the thesis that all things are causally determined, along the same lines as determinism. But the compatibilists hold that human and personal action can still be regarded as free in a specific sense (Watson,1987). The compatibilist holds that human action is free if it is in accordance with the appropriate kinds of desires (ibid). These desires may themselves be causally determined (and most compatibilists hold that they are), but once actions have occurred based on these desires, then the action is considered free. A proper reason for compatibilism is that without freedom in some sense, one cannot make sense of ethics. This can be treated as an argument from ethical practice. Without freedom, persons cannot practice ethics. But persons do practice ethics. Therefore, there is freedom. Usually, I would see this kind of argument as begging the question against the determinist. In fact, on the surface, it appears to do just that. The determinist, based on his metaphysical commitments, is eliminating the possibility of moral responsibility. If something is not freely chosen, then the person who did it cannot be held morally responsible.

⁴⁵ Essentially we can say that the epistemologist has some role to play, but only concerning epistemological questions.

However, I do not think that the compatibilist is begging the question at all, provided that the main compatibilist thesis is modified slightly. Take the compatibilist to be embarking on a project within descriptive metaphysics, not revisionary metaphysics.⁴⁶ Both of the projects can be worthwhile, and one large metaphysical project may attempt to do both. The determinist is simply doing revisionary metaphysics. The compatibilist, by arguing first for causal determinism about the world, is also doing revisionary metaphysics. But, once the compatibilist begins the important part of his project, he has begun to do descriptive metaphysics. The compatibilist project can be taken to concern a coherent interpretation of human practice. While the determinist says that we are not free, the compatibilist is asking how we can make sense of freedom talk within a determined world. This is, I think, the means I can present a fine example of using ethics to motivate a particular conclusion. It is also important to note that that this is not a question about what exists and how what exists behaves (that is the first part of the compatibilist thesis, but not the defining part). The question is how a philosophical account of human action can rescue or save parts of language and discourse. One would think a line of thought goes something like - people talk about moral responsibility and free will, but how does that make sense in a determined world? This of course is true or makes sense because what people really mean by *free* is not what we have previously thought. We merely revise a definition in order to properly describe the way that people act.

My Personal Remarks on Strawson's narrative view

My view on Strawson's claims against the psychological thesis is that lack coherence because they are founded on three tenuous footings that I have identified. He offers diminished accounts of human 'temporality' and 'memory' to underpin his claims to episodcity. He makes an arbitrary allocation of characteristics between the human being and the self to remove temporally charged items from the self that would score against his claims to episodcity. Further, as I have suggested, his case is somewhat undermined by his own use of narrative to negotiate his own being in time. Strawson's claims against the ethical thesis are weakened in the face of psychological evidence. Illustrations of autobiographical narratives

⁴⁶ The distinction is also discussed in Strawson's (1959) philosophy article titled 'Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics'. Strawson claim that descriptive metaphysics is concerned with what the structure of reality would be if it were accurately mirrored in the structure of our conceptual scheme, the conceptual scheme we actually have. Revisionary metaphysics is concerned with what the structure of reality would be if it were accurately mirrored in the conceptual scheme we ought to have.

of disrupted lives, like the example of Newton's, and the efforts were undertaken to achieve temporal coherence, demonstrate that coherence seems to be a need that most of us have. Failure to sufficiently integrate is antithetical to flourishing, contra Strawson's own anecdotal assessment of his own life.

Secondly, I have argued that Strawson's model cannot accommodate moral emotions such as guilt, regret and remorse for past actions. Thirdly, neither can it accommodate long term ethical commitments such as friendship despite his denial of this. Fourthly, Strawson's model of episodic moral decision--- making, developed in his 2007 paper, is based purely on cognitive awareness of external moral principles. The idea that passive adherence to external moral norms without inner volitional assent is sufficient for moral reasoning, assumes a much--- diminished picture of moral agency. Finally, I have cited a body of evidence that contradicts Strawson's own claim that the Episodic life is a flourishing life "among the best there are, vivid, blessed, profound" (Strawson 2004, p449). The normative claim that narrative integration is important for the leading of a flourishing life remains robust in the face of Strawson's critique.

In summary, Strawson's objections to both theses are argued largely on the basis of a dubious and arbitrary allocation of dispositions and characteristics between selves and human beings. Further, his testimony against the psychological thesis and the ethical thesis, based on weak anecdotal evidence, is overwhelmed by evidence to the contrary. I now turn to chapter four to present my positions and further arguments against the narrative view presented by Schechtman.

CHAPTER FOUR

Having examined Schechtman's (1996) narrative theory of identity and Strawson's (2004) criticism of Schechtman narrative view and others. It is important for now to further question; why is it that Schechtman's narrative view seems to have generated difficulties, disallowing the sort of definitive resolution that would put the persistence of personal identity issue to rest? This chapter's task is to show what I have argued and discussed in previous chapters is not a knock-down argument against narrative theorists. All I have shown or tried to show is that ethical reasons do not always justify a metaphysical conclusion, at least metaphysical arguments in the philosophy of personal identity and that Schechtman's thesis, which claims that the holding of a self-told narrative and being a person are logically equivalent, is too strong, as it is not necessarily the case that all persons hold self-narratives. In response, I note and propose two separate theses, one empirical and one metaphysical.

The empirical question asks about persons 'in this world', while the metaphysical question asks about 'across all worlds'. The rejection of the terms' logical equivalence reduces the narrative thesis to an empirical one about this world. But the current views in psychology do not seem to hold that narrative is as strong a force in persons' lives as Schechtman suggests. The advantages of using this empirical question are only gained if Schechtman's theory is not a necessity argument. The a priori nature of her argumentation would suggest initially that her argument is a necessity argument. But, because the term 'person' and the term 'one who holds a self-narrative' are not analytic, we should be skeptical of 'narrative' being a necessary feature that would hold true of all persons in all possible worlds. So my view is that Schechtman's argument, in its most defensible form, becomes a contingency argument. It happens to be the case that persons 'in this world' all hold self-narratives. But this is a posteriori and can therefore be disproven through contrary experience.

Identity Constitution and Other Problems

At the beginning of our examination of the narrative view, we noted that the view places four restrictions on persons. According to Schechtman (1996), these restrictions are: persons must be narrative in form, that this narrative must have the logic and form of a story, that this story must specifically be about a person's life, and that the narrative must be conventional and linear. Schechtman (1996; 2007) is emphasizing what I have called the strong sense of narrative, and Strawson (2004) has shown, quite convincingly, that the strong sense of

narrative does not seem to be a necessary condition of persons. Hence we can construct or deduce a relatively simple argument; can one conceive of non-narrative persons? If so, then the narrative is not necessary for personhood. This is a non-normative part on Strawson's argument. In addition to lacking a moral element, my argument has fewer premises. All one must accept is that the conceivability of some fact, object, or state of events that contradicts a theory should count as evidence against the said theory, or that the conceivability of a contrary case speaks against the necessity of a theory. In other words, what I am communicating or arguing here is that neither the statement 'all persons are narrative in the form' nor the statement 'all persons have the ability to form self-narratives' are analytic. This lack of analyticity shows that there possible worlds in which there are non-narrative persons.

The more interesting view is to know whether or not we reside in such a world. Strawson (2004) suggest that we do. However, my view here is that Strawson is vague, both in his criticism against Schechtman's Narrative view and his 'Episodic Ethics', about the details of non-narrative persons. Strawson claims that there is an abundance of examples to be found of episodic persons (who are necessarily non-narrative) within some great works of literature as this is immediately unsatisfying. Literature, while beautiful and fulfilling, is hardly evidence for a metaphysical conclusion (debate). Without diverting too far into a separate issue, it can be in theory or provisionally said that literature involves various degrees of make-believe and pretend. The specific catch of literature work can be debated, in fact, that may be what most literary critics do in some cases debate. But scientists, especially the current work in the brain-based sciences, hopefully, strive to eliminate make-believe in providing accounts of the world.

Empirical evidence suggests that persons may utilize narrative in order to make sense of the world, though not in the extreme way that the work of Sommer, Baumeister and Stillman (1998) describes⁴⁷. Sommer, Baumeister and Stillman look at the power of personal narrative as a way for people to understand meaning and state that individuals search for meaning in their daily lives in much the same way that they look for general meaning in life. Reviewing

⁴⁷ Sommer, Baumeister and Stillman (1998) in the book titled ' Empirical studies of personal narratives' argues argues that the utilization of stories is the only way to gain knowledge if one is an empiricist. Luckily, there is at least one simple solution out of three authors presented problem, thus denying that knowledge is only gained through experience. If the a priori has any role to play in human knowledge, then their radical conclusion is false.

some of the needs of meaning: efficacy, self-worth, values and purpose, Sommer, Baumeister and Stillman (1998) mention that “people must find a way to make sense of events whose implications contradict their understanding of what makes life meaningful...Life stories communicate a wealth of information regarding the ways in which people counteract the loss of meaning” (p4). My take is that the narratives described by Sommer, Baumeister and Stillman are moderate, they seem to lack the kinds of features narrative theorists require. Similarly, in Rabins and Blass’s (2009, p45) discussion on split-brain patient experiments, they hold that such “elegant experiments suggest that human beings have a module in the left hemisphere that seeks to make sense of events by constructing a narrative that links facts together into a coherent whole”. Rabins and Blass further claim that the centre “participates in the construction, maintenance, and modification of a personal identity by linking together life experiences into a unique, comprehensive, and comprehensible narrative that we refer to as personal identity” (p45).

We can see that Rabins and Blass speak too strongly here, and sound very much like empirical scientists that have become narrative theorists. But within their propositions and arguments, they moderate their claims, holding instead that narrative is one component of the complex construction of personal identity in human persons. If one were to think of human beings’ capacity for constructing personal identity, it would include several features. Each of these features can in theory be mapped to some regions of the brain. According to Rabins and Blass (2009, p47), these include self-recognition, which can be mapped to the left prefrontal cortex, and in the case of patients whose corpus callosum had been surgically cut, the left hemisphere was more activated in recognizing self, memory, specifically self-referential memory, possibly located in the medial prefrontal cortex and sensorimotor capacities.⁴⁸ All of these contribute to the sense of self that persons have.

Rabins and Blass (2009) seem to emphasize the role of narrative in persons life, and I do not think that my overall thesis will sound weak by accepting that narrative plays some role in the persistence of a persons identity and defining a person. On the other hand, Strawson (2004) seem to be worse for the wear, at least when discussing human persons. My conceivability argument about the possibility of episodic persons (discussed in the previous

⁴⁸ In the psychology-philosophy article titled ‘A Neurobiology of Personal Identity,’ Rabins and Blass noted that the findings about split-brain patients have not been successfully replicated by every researcher.

chapter and this chapter), does not seem to be affected, by virtue of there being a possible world in which persons exist and yet they do not construct narratives, whether self-held or not.⁴⁹ As I further my discussion in the next section, characterizing narrative as an identity-constituting feature, and specifically as the identity-constituting feature of persons, is not a sufficient account of the world we live in. Rabins and Blass seem to frequently refer to personal identity as a constructive enterprise. And my view is that if a theory claims that persons are constructed, presumably by themselves, then there are some possibly fatal problems for that view. The next section specifically addresses the problem of constructive narrative identity, particularly the problem of change and persistence in a constructive identity

Personal Identity and Memory Phenomena

Considering the presented difficulties of establishing the persistence of personal identity, I believe it should be clear that the narrative view is unnecessarily limiting and that it does not fully account for all actual and possible persons. We can suggest that the narrative view is too restrictive, and it also provides an improper account of Schechtman's four features. There are two different theses, one metaphysical and one pragmatic. The pragmatist question asks how persons in this world are constituted and how they persist, and the metaphysical question asks what the necessary features of persons in all worlds are. The intention in this section is to defend the claim "If sameness of consciousness cannot account for a single experiencing subject over time, then neither can narrative." If narrative can account for a single experiencing subject over time, then so can sameness of consciousness. Sameness of consciousness has fewer requirements for personhood while having the same explanatory power. Therefore it is more parsimonious. It is a more straightforward theory, which is a virtue but also has sufficient explanatory power and adequacy to the data. Therefore, narrative view can be rejected as an identity-constituting feature.

⁴⁹ Here, I think, is the key for us to understanding the problem of Schechtman narrative view. Imagine a possible world in which there are persons, capable of reason and reflection, and yet the concept of storytelling does not exist. This shows that the concept of persons and the concept of self-held narratives are separate. There can be one without the other. One may initially point out that, just because the persons do not have the idea of stories, this does not imply that they do not have self-held (or implicit) narratives. First, that seems to indicate a desire to insert narratives into an explanation even when it is not needed. Second, it indicates the strong claim of logical equivalence between persons and beings holding self-narratives.

However, some philosophers would question what is the similarity between narrative that makes my contention valid and consciousness? Specifically, it is the way that consciousness and narrative are both changing over time. Schechtman's (1996) primary criticism of psychological theories of personal identity has been that they cannot account for a single experiencing subject such that when pressed for clarification, they are forced to phrase sameness of consciousness over time in terms of similarity relations. It is not that consciousness persists, but it is that consciousness at some time A_2 resembles, with extraordinary closeness, an earlier consciousness at some time A_1 . But a resemblance relationship cannot adequately prove persistence. At best it proves resemblance. Thus, the psychological view must be rejected as it cannot make sense of persons' persistence (this is Schechtman's position and not my own). Similarly, we can also see that narrative suffers from the same problems that consciousness does, such that if one tries to attempt to salvage the narrative view will inevitably save the psychological view as well. Here, my earlier parsimony argument becomes more convincing.

Narrative changes over time, as does consciousness, according to Funkenstein (1989), and there rests its fatal flaw. Hence, in a case whereby a narrative theorist, tries to attempt to rescue narrative from even the beginning of criticism, can say that it is a unique property of narrative that it grows and changes over time, as the life story of a person extends into the future, so will their self-held identity-constituting narrative. Granted, this is an ad-hoc gesture and can be dismissed as such (and, one can ask, why is this a unique property of narrative that cannot be held by consciousness alone?), but one can tentatively accept this revision and still have a further problem. My point here is that narrative is, seemingly by necessity, an interpretive enterprise. Even without some grand, overarching meaning or purpose to the narrative, there are interpretations of events going on at all times when narratives are constructed. Judgments are made as to what caused events or experiences, since persons are constantly assessing their positions and origins. This interpretation is perpetually tied to memory. This seems at first inconsequentially true, and undoubtedly interpretation is tied to memory because without memory, there is quite literally nothing for the person to interpret. And memory,⁵⁰ though, has an interesting feature in that it does not remain static.

⁵⁰ According to my view, I see that memory involves interpretive, evaluative and affective responses to the past such that it is reconstructive rather than reproductive.

Memory is not compiled and stored in the way that computer stores information (Tulving, 1989). Firstly, there is no outside agent giving commands of which memories to recall and when. Secondly, memories do not remain as accurate archives of information. In one sense, memories are corrupted by the agent's emotional state at the time of reflection (Helm, 1978). When a person looks back and reflects on himself and his memories, he reinterprets and colours these memories with his emotions at the time. In this regard, memory is an interpretive enterprise in the same way that narrative is described to be. This is perhaps the most speculative part of my argument because the relationship between memory and emotion has not been fully explored, but results from those working in the brain-based sciences (psychology, neuroscience, cognitive science) appear to frequently be discovering new findings that strongly suggest that our memory cannot be thought of in the traditional sense, where it is seen as a picture of an earlier time that can be accessed at any other time. For example, the study done by Lewis and Critchley (2003) suggests that there is a mood-congruence effect, where memories are more easily accessed when they reflect the emotional state a person is already in. The pragmatic data does not suggest that memory is a fixed thing, persisting through time and remaining numerically identical (*ibid*).

There is also a philosophical account of memory that undermines narrative views. In a philosophical-psychological work by Godfrey-Smith (1996; 2012) entitled *Complexity and the Function of Mind in Nature*, he suggests that memory can be thought of as a kind of internal messaging system for organisms. Godfrey-Smith (1996) drew his work from the mind theorists/ philosophers such as David Lewis 'Convention: A Philosophical Study' and Brian Skyrms *Signals: Evolution, Learning, and Information*. Godfrey-Smith (1996) further outlines a general theory of signs that he hopes can help us account for the way organisms communicate with one another in addition to how they communicate within themselves. It is within this realm of thinking that Godfrey-Smith (1996), suggests that the meaning of signs is dependent on the establishment of an evolutionarily stable environment, where there has been some kind of adaptation or survival benefit for the use of these signs. While Lewis's (1969) analysis on the theory of signs is limited to cases for where it is shared, mutual interest and this interest was perfectly stable, Skyrms (2010) and Godfrey-Smith (1996) show that this does not have to be the case if we are attempting to create a general theory of signs. The relevance of this 'theory of signs' to personal identity and narrative is not immediately clear. The point that I am trying to make here is highly speculative. It may be the case that memory

is not best thought of in this way. But if one can count that it is the case that memory is to be thought of as a signal system within organisms in a similar way that language is a signal system between organisms, then it becomes clear that memory is hardly the kind of thing that would count as identity-constituting.

Memory is something that is interpreted by the receiver (Bernecker, 2010; Lewis and Critchley, 2003). The unique feature that the receiver is the same as the sender is not the part that matters and can mostly be ignored in the analysis. From the literature, I have noticed that there has been no focus on linking the scientific and philosophical consensus on memory to a theory of signs like the ones offered by Lewis (1969), Skyrms (2010), and Godfrey-Smith (1996), but one should be able to see some important connections. Allowing for some evolutionary speculation, consider the possibility that memory plays some evolutionarily significant role in an organism's fitness. This easily stays in line with certain theories of fitness, as it should be able to benefit an organism, nearly regardless of the environment, though not entirely regardless of the environment (Mitchell, 1995). Still, the general theory of signs, specifically by Skyrms and Godfrey-Smith, seems right to me (though, as Skyrms rightfully admits, it is only a proto-philosophy of language), and it seems largely consistent with the scientific consensus on memory. Thus, to suggest that memory is a sign that is sent by an organism at one time in order to be received by that same organism at a later time is not a radical idea, and once Skyrms (2010) and Godfrey-Smith's (1996) modifications to Lewis (1969) theory are accepted (in particular, getting rid of the requirement that there must be shared self-interest in the signal, or that the language game must be at equilibrium), it may become clearer how these two ideas can complement over time. Still one would question; why does memory change? My response is: because the organism changes, and so the way in which the organism interprets the signal changes. Memory becomes interpretive because it is a sign, and signs must be interpreted by virtue of them being treated as signs by some receiver.

The theory of Godfrey-Smith (1996) 'memory as a signal' is also consistent with other philosophical accounts of memory, at least in some respects, and in fact, explains something which I take issue within some of the philosophical literature. Memory has been characterized as having first an essential indexing feature (Helm, 1978). Persons perceive memory, and "the perception must be experienced as something that has been experienced

before” (Sutton, 1998 p167). One can also see the same view in Locke when writing on memory, as well as in more contemporary work. But there is a second feature, and it is with it that I see deep problems. It is the idea that memory, or at least propositional memory, is truth-entailing or veracious. That is to say, a propositional memory cannot be false (Sakuragi, 2013). Here I think that most philosophers have gone too far. This is because they have defined memory as an indexed perception that is truly experienced by a subject. But I believe there are two distinct ways that memory can become skewed.

First, let us imagine there is a man, let’s call him ‘Sipho’, Sipho can forget that he wrote his MA Philosophy exam in 2019. So Sipho, for present purposes, should be assumed to have known he wrote the MA Philosophy exam not his final MA thesis project in 2019. Eventually, Sipho can come to believe that he did not write the MA Philosophy exam in 2019, but wrote his final MA thesis. He can do this because he has the indexed perception of collecting lots of philosophy articles, writing philosophy essays. He is rightfully remembering that he had spent time writing essays, and readings lots of philosophy articles in 2019, but he also believes himself to remember being nervous about writing an essay in philosophy. It could very well be part of the same sign. One can question: so, what has changed? Well, we can say Sipho has. And his method of interpreting memory signals has changed as well, even in an ever so slight way. Some philosophers might want to hold that he is not remembering at all, but he is simply confused. I think it will be hard-pressed to show in principle why this cannot be counted as a false memory and instead must be thought of as some aberrant function of a faulty mind. It may even be the case that memory can lose its indexed feature. Suppose that, as a child, Sipho went to Joza township on a class trip. Suppose that Sipho was found stealing a pencil belonging to one of the learners taking part in the trip, and his teacher punished him for doing so. Later in life, Sipho may forget that it was he who stole the pencil, but he may still remember that someone in his class was punished for doing so. He has lost a supposedly essential feature of remembering that the sensation or experience has occurred to him before.

Once again, I do not think this is a case of abnormal activity of a faulty mind, and I think that it is a case of signals being reinterpreted by persons who have persisted and changed throughout time. If memory and narrative share this interpretive feature, what significance can we draw from their similarities? Simply put, neither memory nor narrative is sufficient

for the establishment of personhood if we are using Schechtman's criteria,⁵¹ (I will discuss this further in the next section). Schechtman (1996) takes great pains to avoid the resemblance relation, and according to her, the resemblance relation cannot establish a single experiencing being over time. Narrative is offered as the alternative that can ensure this single experiencing being over time because it can persist through time; however, it cannot persist through time in some privileged way that consciousness cannot. Therefore, one should reject the narrative view as an account of the persistence of persons throughout time.

Drawing Conclusions

In my thesis, I make a case for a comprehensive reading of Schechtman's (1996) narrative view and criticism of her view by Strawson (2004) and based upon her own engagement with aspects of narrative and persistence of persons' identity, at least at this point we draw a deep belief that persons persist. Persons are also intimately linked to their consciousness or psychology. These are two statements that I think are, while not self-evident, highly intuitive. My sketch of memory above may have overreached, calling into question the intuitive belief that persons persist because of the belief about the relationship between consciousness and psychology. So we obviously need to do something about the plan of memory, else abandon the conjunctive thesis I just mentioned. Another concern is that I have taken a pragmatic fact that memory is mutable and drawn too significant of a conclusion from it, specifically that a constructive identity cannot be based on memory (as narrative must be) because of this mutability. I think that this concern is warranted, but that it is not fatal.

Any presence of change will deeply trouble the interpretive view of the narrative theorists as I have described in previous chapters and sections of this chapter. We can simply state the problem as the mutability of memory will trouble a psychological view in the same way that it troubles a narrative view. Earlier in this chapter and chapter three, I made an extremely cautious argument, saying that we should favour consciousness theories because they postulate fewer features. However, parsimony is a practical device. The law of parsimony is not a logical tool; I claim that it is a rule of thumb that we generally believe to be truth-directive. But a general belief about it is not enough to favour one view over another when

⁵¹ My point here is that we should think memory is relevantly similar to narrative through the way we process our memories (autobiographical memories) has structural similarities to narrative (autobiographical narrative). Where the temporal gap exists between the past 'I' and the present narrating 'I', as it does in autobiography (and autobiographical memory).

both face a similar problem. Because of this, I will argue in this conclusion section that one may try to save narrative views by adding extrafeature to them that negates my memory objection. However, by adding this extra feature, one loses some of the important benefits that narrative supposedly offers. Thus, the presence of change does not affect what we will call the 'causal narrative view'. A causal narrative view will encapsulate all of the relevant features of the typical narrative view, including the emphasis on interpretive enterprise, however, it will also add the amendment that narrative states must be placed in a causal order to each other. To be clearer, it is important to note that there must be a causal link between various narrative states (at the time of the original experience and at the memory retrieval) for a given person for there to be a persistent narrative. A person constructs a narrative initially, and each time a new narrative is constructed further in the future, there must be a causal claim attached.

The person creates a sort of meta-narrative or a narrative of sense determining or influencing the later narratives. There is a looping effect of narratives. By holding a self-narrative, a person considers himself in narrative terms. Viewing himself in narrative terms can then lead to a new way of looking at future events, thus changing how they are incorporated into the self-narrative. Unfortunately, a causal supplement (my proposed view/feature) does not save narrative in the way that one might hope. It first leads to the rather unsatisfactory conclusion that a person must hold an infinite number of narratives. A person must hold an infinite number of narratives because no narrative is sufficient for identity preservation until another new narrative has been constructed; there is no special class of narrative that suddenly makes it possible for this to not be the case (say, at the eleventh iteration of the narrative). Holding an infinite number of narratives seems to conflict with the idea of mental representation. That is, it conflicts with the intuitively plausible idea that persons do not have infinite representations of anything, or that the sum of a given person's representations is less than infinity.

Discovering My Personal courage in narrativity

I believe in having established that the narrative view, at least as presented by Schechtman (1996), fails to account for persons' persistence through time. In addition, I am sceptical that narrative can appropriately account for the constitution of persons. I have presented arguments that would seem to favour psychological accounts of personal identity. However, it is also my worry that while all of my intuitions lean towards psychological theories, I am

becoming increasingly suspicious of the distinction between bodily identity theories and psychology theories. It may be the case that human beings, being the only case of persons we are sure of at the present time, are more holistic than psychological theorists have suggested. The brain may be influenced in an important way by the body, calling into question the body or psychology distinction that most philosophers accept when debating about personal identity. Maybe body and psychology theories are more amenable to one another than is assumed in the literature suggests Animalism.

Animalism account is a natural extension of the physical account of personal identity in that it tries to establish in a more determinate way what kind of physical body we have. Animalism has been endorsed by Paul Snowdon and Eric Olson and others. Snowdon (2014) and Olson(2003), defenders of Animalism claim that being the same animal is necessary and sufficient for the survival of individuals like you and me. That is, besides relying upon the animal attribute view in claiming that every individual like you and I are identical with an animal, Paul Snowdon and Eric Olson also claim that the persistence condition for individuals like you and I is that of some kind of animal. Though animalism seems to determine a plausible necessary condition for our persistence over time, I argue that it cannot be understood as an adequate criterion for our identity, since it already employs a pre-understanding of personal identity over time, and that it relies upon a misrepresentation of which substance sortal it is that picks out what we are essential.

In my view, the brain seems to be currently an area of vast study, in both philosophy and the sciences, and the way it functions is still very much a mystery in many important respects. As science progresses, things will become more apparent, and the current view, which silently presupposes a kind of isolation of the brain may turn out to be wrong. At present, however, it still remains an open question. On the same note, my critique of ethical motivations could benefit from some fleshing out in certain regards. As this thesis was not intended to be on topics within metaethics, certain problems were ignored. One section, in which I wanted to argue that some ethical theories like sentimentalism (basing actions and reactions upon emotions and feelings, in preference to reason) could explain moral semantics without presupposing moral agents, was completely left out due to a lack of relevance to the main topic. And I believe what philosophers have become very good at in personal identity is showing problems with positive views. Schechtman took the opposite route and should be

commended for doing so. Her book is well-written and, despite my extensive criticisms, I admire her work. However, I believe Schechtman's (1996) positions are to be threatened by many criticisms, some of which I believe to be original to me.

I have not mentioned standard philosophical counter-examples in personal identity, like fission or fusion problems. Others have noted before me that Schechtman's (1996;2007) account has nothing to say about these problems. I believe they are right, the narrative view suffers from the same problems as every other theory in the contemporary field. My endorsement of psychological theories is, admittedly, intuition-based and not the product of a particular, damage argument. Overall, I believe that I have been successful in my point, which is refuting Schechtman's (1996) narrative view of persons. In the future, my criticisms could be expanded to other narrative theories, most likely with varying degrees of success. Subsequently, while I am not certain about many things, including the nature of persons or by what mechanism they persist, I am convinced that the narrative view is false and that most attempts to save it would simultaneously undermine the initial reasons for such a view. While it's true that persons, or at least humans, are story-tellers, But we are not primarily story-tellers. Constructing narratives is one of the many interesting things we do. No matter how many stories we tell, I do not think it is the case that we are the stories' product, at least not in a deep metaphysical sense. A person is a thinking, intelligent being, capable of recognizing itself as itself from one time to the next, as suggested by John Locke.

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