

# **Autonomy and the Future**

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Thesis submitted to the  
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
In Partial fulfillment of the requirements  
For the PhD degree in Philosophy

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**ABSTRACT**

This thesis introduces the idea of progressive autonomy, namely future-oriented self-governance, based on the pursuit of desired goals that one has established for oneself. As the thesis shows, focus on this sort of activity, as well as its value and importance, has been largely left out of the existing literature on autonomy. In contrast, this activity is central to progressive autonomy, which, as this thesis puts forth, enables the individual to actively determine the course of his life. Throughout the process, the individual is author of his own narrative, which, as the ongoing fulfillment of desired goals, he experiences as both meaningful and worthwhile.

The thesis does not frame the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual as merely a story or an account of events. Rather, it does so as a sequence events the progressively autonomous individual is directly responsible for bringing about, as well as concretely situated in. He is, in other words, part and parcel of his narrative, as opposed to, say, a novelist who physically stands apart from the events he imagines and writes.

Finally, the thesis demonstrates that, though the progressively autonomous individual is motivated by his own desires, he is more than just a pleasure seeker; he is strategically morally responsible. Such responsibility involves and is characterized by rejecting certain motives that undermine the actual achievement of desired goals, while affirming other motives that facilitate this achievement. This, as the thesis shows, renders the progressively autonomous individual more responsible than one who partakes in this rejection or affirmation, without regard to how either will impact one's future.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the members of my thesis committee—Andrew Sneddon, Sonia Sikka, David Raynor, and Sophie Rietti—for their helpful guidance and support in writing this dissertation. Thank you as well to Natalie Stoljar for being on the committee as the external member. I am particularly indebted to Professor Sneddon, my thesis supervisor, for his valuable direction and perspective. His regular feedback on various drafts of my thesis provided me the opportunity to rethink and strengthen it in ways I could not have done on my own.

I am grateful to the loving members of the Salvatori family for their care and encouragement during my PhD program. Their benevolent support in this challenging, though deeply rewarding, time, was indispensable to the completion of this thesis.

INTRODUCTION

**OVERVIEW OF THESIS**

The idea of self-control has a long history of attention within the discipline of philosophy. Prior to the eighteenth century, this idea was represented by what J.B. Schneewind calls “morality as obedience” (1998, 4). In particular, as Schneewind points out, such morality “is to be understood most deeply as one aspect of the obedience we owe to God...God’s authority over all of us is made known to us by reason as well as by revelation and the clergy” (1998, 4). Thus, as Schneewind suggests, morality as obedience is characterized by a form of self-control in which the individual submits his will to God; the way in which he does so is guided by reason, revelation, and the clergy—all of which tell him what God wants and expects from him. In short, morality as obedience is about conforming one’s will to the higher authority of God, who ultimately determines the right or correct way of living. Moreover, Schneewind, describing the view subsumed by morality as obedience, states, “because most people usually do not understand the reasons for doing what morality directs, threats of punishment as well as offers of reward are necessary in order to assure sufficient compliance to bring about moral order” (1996, 4). As such, morality as obedience, as a philosophical approach, concerned itself with ways people could be controlled by incentives, namely rewards, and disincentives, namely punishments, thereby keeping their action in accordance with the “moral order” defined by God.

Similarly, Plato famously concerned himself with the way people could be just and, hence, moral by ordering the three parts of the soul—rational, appetitive, and spirited—according to what reason commanded. Indeed, that is why, as we see in *The Republic*, the rational part of the soul is the highest of the three for Plato. Therefore, a well-ordered soul in his view would, for example, be one in which the mind, instead of physical desires (for food, sex, sleep, etc.), control’s one’s life. In the process, one could engage in morally commendable activity such as contemplating or philosophizing about the essence of reality. As this suggests,

both Plato and morality as obedience focus on how moral agency is not necessarily about doing what feels good. It is, rather, about doing what is in conformity with divine or rational principles.

In contrast to the idea of morality as obedience, the eighteenth century saw philosophers, such as Reid, Bentham, and Kant, begin to challenge the idea that self-control was about submission to God (1998, 4, 8). Rather, for these philosophers it was about independently ruling ourselves. Accordingly, Schneewind calls this view “morality as self-governance” (1996, 4). This view holds that “all of us...have an equal ability to see for ourselves what morality calls for and are in principle equally able to move for ourselves to act accordingly, regardless of threats or rewards from others” (1996, 4). As such, in contrast to morality as obedience, morality as self-governance is about leading one’s own life, according to what one—not God or any other external authority—wills and, by the same token, deems appropriate for oneself. For example, a person will eat healthily not because it is sinful to eat in excess but because one wants to keep one’s body in good physical condition. Moreover, as Schneewind maintains, “the conception of morality as self-governance provides a conceptual framework for a social space in which we may each rightly claim to direct our own actions without interference with the state, the church, the neighbours, or those claiming to be better or wise than we” (1998, 4). Thus, according to morality as self-governance, each person is entitled to exercise her ability to rule herself, regardless of what others may think or say about her actions. It is up to oneself to choose how to act, in what situation to do so, etc.

The idea of morality as self-governance is in line with the contemporary tradition of approaching autonomy, as psychological and action-based concept—separate from any specific cultural, religious, political, or social leanings. Arguably, this tradition begins in the 1970s with

Harry Frankfurt, introducing the idea of freedom as based on the capacity to endorse (identify with) or reject (not identify with) desires in oneself; this idea would later be subsumed under what came to be known as hierarchical accounts of autonomy, according which one is autonomous and, therefore, self-governing where this capacity is present. Frankfurt will be the first of the major theorists presented in Chapter 1, whose ideas on autonomy have emerged since Frankfurt and fall within the above tradition. Despite their differences, these thinkers all focus on what is necessary or required—apart from value or belief systems (e.g. Christian morality)—for an individual to have in order to govern his own behaviour.

Taking a position within the contemporary tradition is my concept of “progressive autonomy”. This is a mode of self-governance that is first and foremost future-oriented. Going beyond the views of autonomy we will see in this thesis, progressive autonomy, as a theory, emphasizes that in ruling oneself—making choices, pursuing desires, etc.—a person directs herself towards a particular state of affairs she both imagines and wants for herself. As I will illustrate, this process is part of the narrative structure of the progressively autonomous individual. Such a structure, more than an observed or recounted series of events, consists of an active process through and by which the progressively autonomous individual engages with the world so as to bring about his projected aims or objectives. Furthermore, I will show that such self-directedness renders the progressively autonomous individual morally responsible in a special way. In particular, while supplementing our typical ideas about personal accountability such as blameworthiness, I will do so according to the Frankfurtian sense of moral responsibility. Hence, I will illuminate how the progressively autonomous individual is morally responsible in identifying with certain motives, namely those he believes will contribute to the actual attainment of desired goals.

In Chapter 1, I provide an overview of existing theories of autonomy. Each falls under one of the following categories: desire, reflection and mental ability, or action. Despite the differences between them, every theory provides a perspective on what is central to autonomy, namely the ability to rule oneself. In other words, each theory has something to say about what it means to, independently, be in control of what one does. Before ending the chapter, I will point out what is missing from the theories of autonomy examined therein and, in doing so, how they are limited. This missing element—based on an outlook towards the future—is central to my theory of progressive autonomy. This theory will illuminate and discuss several of the element's merits, all of which are related to the advantage of living one's life by continually looking forward.

The first chapter also aims to show that, in being progressively autonomous, you do not leave things to chance, nor are doomed or condemned to reach a single fate. Rather, you purposely steer yourself towards those outcomes you want to occur in your life; you regularly have an eye towards a desired future and know what you are going to do in order to get there. In this sense, progressive autonomy empowers the individual to directly take control of his life. Having this power, you can also decide when, along your life-path, you want things to happen. For example, you can plan to become someone's spouse first and a parent later, rather than vice versa. In doing so, you do not merely hope that states of affairs will produce a particular turnout. Instead, you organize your life—project goals and behave in a way conducive to their fulfillment—so as to deliberately bring about the turnout.

In Chapter 2, I commence my discussion of progressive autonomy in earnest. In contrast to many of the theories of autonomy explored in the previous chapter, such autonomy is primarily about planning one's life; it is characterized by an orientation towards a projected state

of affairs, which the individual both establishes and pursues for himself. In discussing the details of this, I identify the psychological capacities required for progressive autonomy, as well as the particular benefits—each directly related to stabilizing the desired and anticipated trajectory of one’s life—that such self-governance has for the individual. This, of course, does not ignore but is mindful of the challenges involved in actualizing one’s plans. To be sure, such fulfillment is a key component in my theory of progressive autonomy.

In Chapter 3, we turn to narrative. I begin the chapter with an examination of various theories on the topic, showing narrative to either be: a sequence of events we think about or express, a sequence of events which we directly experience, or unnecessary for one’s well-being. Now, the purpose of this is, in part, to show how these theories—in accordance with my view of the narrative structure of the progressively autonomous individual—frame narrative as more than simply a story or account (written or otherwise) of events. Beyond this, however, the purpose is also to show what these theories are missing. Having identified this in some detail, I undertake my broader discussion of the narrative structure of the progressively autonomous individual. Reflecting my theory of progressive autonomy, this structure is *not* characterized by a mode of existence in which one regularly arrives, as it were, to where one wants to be by accident. Rather, this structure is characterized by a way of life based on personal planning, such that one continually actualizes goals one both desires and establishes for oneself. In doing so, the progressively autonomous individual is not merely acted upon, such as by external (e.g. social or political) forces. Rather, he acts upon life, steering and directing the course of its development over time. Thus, he maintains a certain degree of authorship, determining the outcomes that define and give form to his existence. Within his narrative structure, the progressively autonomous individual seeks to materialize what he only now imagines and wants for himself.

In this way, such a structure is an active work, not terminating until his death. Also, in being aware of this, the progressively autonomous person remains cognizant that her life is always something in the making, rather than something fixed and permanent. Through her own will and efforts, she can change—modify and remodel—the course of her life so as to better align it and cause it to unfold according to desired goals. Indeed, this can involve one reconsidering certain activities (e.g. incessant travelling), despite their potential rewards or satisfactions, if they sidetrack one from attaining what is most important to one (e.g. raising a family).

Finally, in Chapter 4, I show how the progressively autonomous individual is morally responsible. Having discussed and examined various theories of moral responsibility, I will do this by drawing on John M. Doris' Frankfurtian view of moral responsibility. In particular, I will demonstrate that the progressively autonomous individual's moral responsibility is grounded in identifying with certain behavioural motives, conducive to the kind of future he wants for himself. This will, in large part, centre on my concept of "strategic moral responsibility", according to which one wants to have or endorses certain motives (e.g. desires). Specifically, one does so because they directly lend themselves, in one's view, to the successful realization of various ends. Indeed, this activity may also involve drawing on particular skills, talents, strengths, etc.—all in the service of arriving at the future one wants for oneself. In the process, the progressively autonomous individual, as my thesis will address, feels that his life has meaning and purpose and that he is not just the victim of circumstance. Thus, being progressively autonomous acts as a safeguard against helplessness, despair, and even suicide that results when one, especially after a prolonged period, believes oneself to be such a victim.

As should now be apparent, the general topic of this thesis is self-rule. Specifically, however, my intention in this thesis is, in line with the foregoing, to argue three main points.

First, progressive autonomy is an ideal way of determining one's own future, not yet introduced by the existing literature on autonomy. Through such determination, a person is not the mere product of chance or circumstance but renders herself an active and, indeed, important participant in the world—the author of the life she wants for herself. This life is one she projects and intends, by way of her actions and efforts, to achieve. She does not simply wait or hope for it to materialize. Second, the narrative structure of the progressively autonomous individual is not static or predetermined. Rather, in accordance with my view of narrative as a self-driven development, it is the process in which he may effectively guide the course of his life towards desired goals. In doing so, he may consistently bring his plans to fruition. Such activity provides the progressively autonomous individual with the sense that he has something personal “to live for”, rather than being forced to conform to the wishes and expectations of others. As such, he experiences his narrative as both meaningful and worthwhile. Third, and finally, though progressive autonomy—as a theory—is not bound to any ideology or belief system (i.e. content-neutral) and promotes the freedom to do as one wants, it is by no means separate from personal responsibility. Rather, as mentioned, to be progressively autonomous is to be strategically morally responsible such that one endorses motives that one believes will directly facilitate one's achievement of desired goals, while rejecting motives that one believes will not. In this way, progressive autonomy is about utilizing one's liberty in a calculated, rather than unreflective or reckless, manner. Through such calculation, a person may, indeed, finally arrive at the future she aims to bring into existence, as well as find satisfaction in the process leading to it.

CHAPTER 1

**EXTANT THEORIES OF AUTONOMY**

Much of what has been discussed in the philosophy, as well as ordinary discourse, of autonomy makes clear that we are or have the capacity to be self-governing. This involves being able to act and make decisions so as to control our lives in a deliberate manner. As such, in believing that one is autonomous, we, in effect, hold that it is within one's mental and physical powers to behave according to one's will. When we perceive these powers as completely lacking, we do not hold one to be autonomous. Moreover, the autonomous person, in contrast to the passive subject, is not simply an outcome. That is, he is more than just the consequence of pressures or causes that determine what he does. Rather, the autonomous person is one who, as an independent self, is guided by his own will. In this sense, the autonomous person is in charge of what he does. Her life is a reflection of voluntary behaviour, which can be understood in terms of what she intends to do. The autonomous person does not wait for things to happen to her. Instead, she initiates action to achieve a particular result.

The requisite conditions for autonomy, of course, vary with the theorist. However, one would be hard pressed to find a theorist that disagrees with the idea that, in being autonomous, one exercises agency. That is, the autonomous person chooses and acts according to his own volition, rather than, for example, being compelled to do so by another. As we will see, different theorists focus on the different ways that the autonomous person does this exactly. Each thereby illuminates an important aspect of individual or human life—how our behaviour is not simply a series of reactions but is within our power to manage and control. We are, thus, free to choose and act in a manner that we approve or have a direct role in producing.

In this chapter, I will discuss what existing theories say about autonomy. These theories each fall under one of three categories, namely theories of autonomy based on desire, reflection and mental ability, or action. Having discussed these theories, I will explain what they leave out

in terms of how a person may govern himself over time. In the next chapter, I will launch my exposition of progressive autonomy, which does not leave this out. Here, I will also show how a life based on progressive autonomy is beneficial or advantageous.

It is important not to conflate progressive autonomy with self-control. For, though self-control is involved in progressive autonomy, the latter involves more than the former. Specifically, self-control is general in scope; it involves regulating or managing one's behaviour, whether one is oriented towards the future or focused on the present. Progressive autonomy, however, is more complex than this. It involves exercising self-control so as to purposely realize various desired goals that one has chosen for oneself and that make up one's future.

As this implies, being progressively autonomous involves exercising self-control with respect to the awareness one has of the potential outcome of one's life. Hence, someone who is severely cognitively impaired to the point that he cannot envision any future for himself, much less plan for it, lacks progressive autonomy. He may, however, be able to exercise self-control in so far as he retains some degree of power over how he behaves (e.g. choosing to sit rather than lie down). Such a person is conscious of his movements and that he can change and modify them but is not able to formulate goals that he can commit and aspire to over time.

This brings us to a key point on the category of autonomy that progressive autonomy falls under. Progressive autonomy is fundamentally global autonomy, namely the ability to govern one's whole person—in thought and action. This is in contrast to local autonomy which deals with self-governance with respect to a particular feature of oneself, such as a motive (Christman, 2009...). As globally autonomous, the progressively autonomous individual creates his own narrative through a series of actions and choices, which aim towards (and make sense in terms of) the desired goals he has established for himself. Indeed, in talking about progressive

autonomy, or more generally global autonomy, we are not, in contrast to local autonomy, primarily concerned with the individual's power to choose (or reject) certain preferences, desires, etc. Beyond this psychological dimension, we are concerned with the manner in which the individual acts in the world, according to goals he seeks to realize. As such, progressive autonomy, as manifested through this sort of aspirational behaviour, is public; that is, it may be observed by others. This is, of course, different from the private exercise of local autonomy whereby one may, for example, mentally endorse a desire to stop smoking but make no apparent initiative to do so (a person may continue to smoke even though he, as Frankfurt might say, desires the desire to do the opposite). Moreover, the public nature of progressively autonomous actions makes it open to critique from others, who, ideally, can provide constructive feedback regarding one's behaviour and, hence, help one enhance or improve it. As this suggests, though progressive autonomy is characterized by individual acts, others' expressed views or opinions of what a person does can have a positive impact on a certain area of one's performance (e.g. sport).

The theories of autonomy we will be looking at in this chapter, with the exception of those of Marina A. L. Oshana and Gerald Dworkin, are primarily theories of local autonomy. Hence, they focus on the role the individual deliberately plays in managing his desires and preferences. In contrast, my own theory of progressive autonomy, similar to Oshana and Dworkin, is similar to global theories of autonomy. Accordingly, it will be mainly concerned with the way the individual purposefully directs himself throughout the world, over time. This will be illuminated with respect to desired goals the individual has chosen to follow, as part of the larger narrative in which he is situated and actively creates.

Though the progressively autonomous person is individualistic—in so far as he is in charge of the direction of his life, including the goals he establishes for himself and chooses to

pursue—he does not necessarily reject tradition or conventional norms. Rather, he may, as a matter of a consciously made decision and preference, integrate these aspects of shared social life into the way he lives. For example, the progressively autonomous individual may commit himself to the conventional goal of raising a family, not because he feels forced to by others but because he desires it as a personally worthwhile and rewarding objective. As this example implies, the trajectory of the progressively autonomous individual’s life may be aligned with what is socially agreeable, since he has willed his life to be thus.

Stated differently, the individualistic nature of the progressively autonomous individual does not itself entail that he will be at odds with society, including its values and what it upholds as “good”. We might understand this as a form of voluntary conformity on the part of the progressively autonomous individual. This, of course, is in contrast to oppressive situations in which one is forced, say, via the looming threat of cruel mistreatment for disobeying an unjust social order, to conform to that order; hence, one refrains from pursuing a future one desires for oneself. Such a person is partially progressively autonomous in so far as he retains the ability to project the future in question. However, he is not fully progressively autonomous because he does not, due to the above fear, deliberately pursue this future. This may make the individual experience a certain paralysis such that he feels he is effectively being prevented from expressing the will he, deep down wishes to channel, through attempting to achieve desired goals. As the foregoing implies, a particular social context may hamper one’s ability to be fully progressively autonomous and, by the same token, experience the human flourishing (i.e. self-affirmation and growth) that comes with it. This of course can be reversed where the individual, by no small feat, is able to resist the above fear and pursue his desired future or enter another social context in which he can, without fear, do the same.

## THEORIES OF AUTONOMY BASED ON DESIRE

Many of the theories have to do with supporting or rejecting a particular want. This is captured by “‘hierarchical’ accounts of personal autonomy”, which, except for the ideas of Gary Watson and Laura Waddell Ekstrom, characterize the views featured in this section. According to such accounts, “a person is autonomous with respect to a first-order desire that moves her to act (e.g., she wants to smoke) if she endorses her possession of that first-order desire (e.g., she wants to want to smoke)” (Taylor 2005, 1). If she does not want to smoke but still has the desire to smoke, she is not autonomous with respect to the latter. This holds regardless of whether she actually ends up smoking or not. The main point that Taylor is making is that one is autonomous if one supports or chooses to have some “first-order desire”. In doing so, one forms a second or higher-order desire, namely wanting to want to do something. He or she not only desire something but wants to preserve, at least for a period, that desire.

Moreover, in line with hierarchical accounts of personal autonomy, one is autonomous if one is capable of choosing to reject a first-order desire. Here, one must be able to form a second-order desire, such as the desire to desire not to smoke. This might also involve actively attempting to undermine or eliminate a first-order desire (e.g. diminishing the desire one has to smoke). Whether a person endorses or rejects a first-order desire, she, for the hierarchical theorist of personal autonomy, performs an autonomous act; she is not simply moved by the desire controls the impact it has on her. This allows for the possibility for her to manage, rather than being determined by, her wants.

One of the primary theorists of this view of autonomy is Harry Frankfurt, whose ideas have informed several approaches that present autonomy this way. Frankfurt argues that “besides wanting and choosing and being moved *to do* this or that, men may also want to have

(or not to have) certain desires and motives” (1971, 7). This entails that not only do individuals want and behave according to their desires. Individuals also can approve or disapprove of “certain desires”, which may or may not lead to particular actions. For the hierarchical theorist of personal autonomy, such approval or disapproval constitutes autonomy since being autonomous involves endorsing or rejecting a particular desire. Moreover, in wanting particular “motives” to be efficacious in action, a person can choose what will outwardly move her. This might be done with respect to a desire. For example, one experiencing a desire to help the less fortunate may want this desire to be one’s motive to do a genuine work of charity. One here wants one’s desire to be directly involved in causing one to do the said work. In the case that one’s desire actually leads to this, one’s desire is operative in bringing about certain behaviour in one. Frankfurt calls this desire “an *effective* desire—one that moves (or will or would move) a person all the way to action” (8).

From the perspective of the hierarchical accounts of personal autonomy, the individual does not lose autonomy by setting up or establishing an effective desire as the determinant of how he behaves and what he does. For, he desires that an effective desire influence or affects him this way. In fact, Frankfurt believes that it is through effective desire that one experiences “freedom of the will” (1971, 15). Accordingly, as Ekstrom puts it, “one enjoys freedom of the will, on Frankfurt’s view, when one is free to will what one wants to will; in other words, when, with respect to any of one’s first-order desires, one can make that desire one’s will (effective desire) by wanting (at a higher level of desire) it to be so” (1993, 600-01). Thus, one can exercise one’s autonomy, as understood by the hierarchical accounts of personal autonomy, at the same time that one experiences freedom of the will, as understood by Frankfurt. In being

both autonomous and free this way, the individual “is free to will what he wants to will, or to have the will he wants” (1971, 15).

This, more specifically, may follow from introspection—a turning or looking inward so as to become aware of one’s desires. On this process, John Santiago writes that there is “a self-reflective capacity with which a person follows a (psychological) procedure to assess a ground-level desire that is motivating her, thus coming to form a higher-order attitude (or desire) regarding this desire. If the attitude is favorable...the motivating desire is granted authority as one with which the agent identifies as an aspect of her self” (2005, 79). From this, a person can proceed to establish “the motivating desire” as a genuine, effective desire—one that is actually endorsed by the person himself. This may provide him with an enhanced sense of control, such that he feels in charge of what he internally allows to move himself, rather than merely being subject to it.

Taking issue with Frankfurt’s notion of effective desire, Watson maintains that “initially, they [agents] do not (or need not usually) ask themselves which of their desires they want to be effective in action; they ask themselves which course of action is most worth pursuing” (1975, 219). As such, the individual does not seek to establish a certain motivation as the guiding force behind his action. Rather, he attempts to figure out which, perhaps among a range of options or alternatives, action has the most value for him. For example, the individual, trying to figure out which university to attend may do so with respect to the kind of career he desires to have. As a result, the individual may choose to attend the university—the action “most worth pursuing”—that he believes will prepare him best for this career. The individual does not here primarily decide which desire he wants to guide his behaviour. Instead, he primarily decides to undertake action that he sees as beneficial or advantageous to him. Nonetheless, effective desire can have a

place in engaging one in such action. In particular, this occurs where the individual establishes an effective desire, such as wanting to maintain a certain lifestyle, as a way of guiding himself towards regularly choosing beneficial or advantageous action, such as successfully maintaining the lifestyle. This is consistent with Frankfurt's view of the freedom of the autonomous individual, by which he, in establishing an effective desire, chooses the will he wants.

John Christman illustrates that Frankfurt's understanding of freedom in relation to second-order volitions becomes apparent through what Christman calls a "*structural analysis*" (1991, 9). Through this analysis, "a person's desires can be determined to be autonomous or not by taking a 'time slice' of the person and asking what her attitudes would be about the desires she has at the time (or whether they are integrated). If she identifies with them (or if they cohere), then they pass the test; if not, then she is not autonomous" (9). In Frankfurt's view, therefore, autonomy is based on what the individual feels towards his desires at any particular moment. If the individual has a desire that he does not want to have and, hence, does not identify with, he is not autonomous. Similarly, Frankfurt maintains that the will of one who has an unwanted addiction "is not free. This is shown by the fact that it is not the will he wants" (1971, 15). As such, the will of this addict is determined and characterized solely by a first-order desire, such as for a particular drug. However, his will does not conform to what he would like, at a deeper level, to do in relation to that desire, such as deny his inclination for a particular drug. Instead he is forced to remain on a one-way track—craving the object of his first-order desire and doing what he has to do to get it. This may, indeed, make it difficult for him to step back from his addiction and ask what he can do with his life other than want to consume the object. Prevented from doing this, the addict lives not only a non-autonomous life, as his addiction—rather than himself—runs his life. Unlike those who have strong preferences, such as for coffee

or cigarettes, which are within the realm of a person's control (i.e. to endorse or reject), he lives an internally impoverished existence; he is slave to the impulses of his addiction which hinders the extent to which he can seriously consider and pursue avenues other than the one he is on. He lacks both the ability to freely govern himself and experience a meaningful variety of activities throughout his life-course.

Conversely, Frankfurt argues that “the enjoyment of a free will means the satisfaction of certain desires—desires of the second or higher orders—whereas its absence means their frustration” (1971, 17). As such, where a person is in possession of a free will, she, unlike the addict, is able to fulfill desires that she wants to have and not merely those that occur within her. She is not a predetermined self—compelled to act on any odd or random desire that she experiences. Rather, she is in charge of which desires she will or will not act on. Moreover, in exercising free will, one safeguards oneself from self-alienation. Illustrating this point, Frankfurt maintains that, in relation to free will, “the satisfactions at stake are those which accrue to a person to whom it may be said that his will is his own. The corresponding frustrations are those suffered by a person of whom it may be said that he is estranged from himself, or that he finds himself a helpless or passive bystander to those forces that move him” (1971, 17). As Frankfurt points out, the individual who has his own will is not solely the consequence of “forces that move him”. Instead, as much as he might experience their intensity, one retains the control to endorse or resist them, such as in deciding to follow or reject certain desires.

By the same token, as Frankfurt argues, “a person's will is free only if he is free to have the will he wants...Whatever his will, then, the will of the person whose will is free could have been otherwise; he could have done otherwise to constitute his will as he did” (1971, 18-19). As such, “the will of the person whose will is free” is not determined, in advance, to have a

particular will, characterized, say, by a certain desire. Rather, he is free to adopt or reject the will he currently has. This implies he could have directed his will in a manner other than the way he actually did. For example, instead of making some want—a craving for sweets, for example—his effective desire, he could have purposely avoided doing so. In the process, one not only exercises control over what one does. One can also do what one, perhaps at a profound level, deeply desires.

Related to this idea, Frankfurt maintains, “someone does what he *really wants* to do only when he acts in accordance with pertinent higher-order volition. But this condition could not be sufficient unless the higher-order volition were *itself* one by which the person *really wanted* to be determined” (1988, 166). As such, one does what one really wants to and, therefore, acts authentically, when one’s conduct follows from a desire that one in fact wants to have. In doing so, one can establish “pertinent higher-order volition” as a guiding force towards desired goals or ends. Here, a person acts autonomously not only through freely exercising his will. One also does so by allowing the above volition to lead one’s conduct throughout a certain period of time, however long or short. Aside from the satisfaction of the goals or ends one may here achieve, this process may itself be rewarding. For, in allowing the above volition to lead one’s conduct throughout a certain period of time, one can take pleasure in knowing that one’s life is being guided by a force, within him or herself, that one has endorsed and is not an unwanted burden. Moreover, as Frankfurt argues, “a person, in making a decision by which he identifies with a desire, *constitutes himself*. The pertinent desire is no longer in any way external to him” (1988, 170). As such, in deliberately identifying with a desire, one establishes who one is—his or her authentic self. One no longer merely perceives a desire as separate or independent from oneself.

Rather, one experiences it as part of his or her identity. The individual thus feels attuned and not alienated from what he wants.

In her criticisms of Frankfurt, Laura Waddell Ekstrom identifies problematic aspects of hierarchical accounts of personal autonomy. Firstly, Ekstrom accurately points out that these “accounts generate an infinite regress of volitions” (1993, 601). This is because there is no point at which one is completely prevented from forming different orders (first, second, third, etc.) of what one wants. Speaking on these orders, Ekstrom states, “there seems to be no limit to the levels to which I might be driven to ascend by self-doubt and particularly by conflict at each level” (602). As such, I can never be totally certain that I am in possession of the desire that represents my genuine wishes.

Secondly, in taking issue with Frankfurt’s idea that what the individual truly desires is established by his second-order desires, Ekstrom states that “we presuppose that a self is to be identified with those second-order volitions and that desires contrary to them are external. Why should we think that this is an accurate characterization of the ‘real self?’” (1993, 602). Raising this important question, Ekstrom challenges Frankfurt’s view that who one is—one’s “real self”—is constituted by identifying with a particular want. Indeed, some people do not see what can be called the true or real self in terms of desire at all, but as represented, for example, by one’s social role and associated accomplishments. However, even where people see such a self this way, they may still deliberately act in relation to their second-order volitions, based on ability rather than how, in particular, the self is perceived. As such, one may not share on how constituting oneself is based on identifying with a desire but remains, in Frankfurt’s sense, autonomous. Clarifying this idea, Frankfurt states, “it is in securing the conformity of his will to his second-order volitions...that a person exercises freedom of the will. And it is in the

discrepancy between his will and his second-order volitions, or his awareness that their coincidence is not his own doing but only a happy chance, that a person who does not have this freedom feels its lack” (1971, 15). The will of the autonomous person, therefore, is connected with his second-order volitions on account of her wanting it to be that way, rather than this occurring simply by accident.

### **THEORIES OF AUTONOMY BASED ON REFLECTION AND MENTAL ABILITY**

Like desire-based theories of autonomy, these theories are largely centred on individual psychology. More specifically, however, these theories are about a person’s character and attendant motivations. Dworkin argues that “to consider only the promotion or hindrance of first-order desires—which is what we focus upon in considering the voluntariness of action—is to ignore a crucial feature of persons, their ability to reflect upon and adopt attitudes toward their first-order desires, wishes, and intentions” (1988, 15). Thus, perhaps more than Frankfurt, Dworkin here draws our attention to our ability to closely think about and develop certain feelings towards the contents of our minds. By the standards of this view, a person can autonomously take a position in relation to her “first-order desires, wishes, and intentions” and decide how she should or should not act based on them. Here, the individual, metaphorically, gains a certain distance from the said desires, wishes, and intentions. In particular, he is able to look at them, perhaps considering their intensity or potential impact they will have on his life, without being passively or easily influenced by them. In this sense, he becomes, if only for a short time, audience to himself—the desires, wishes, and intentions that form some aspect or dimension of his inner world. Within this period, the individual can consider the best or most

productive ways to act, while avoiding others, say, he may later regret, even if they seem to be good options in the present.

Similarly, Frankfurt argues, “a person who is deliberating about what to do is seeking an alternative to ‘doing what comes naturally.’ His aim is to replace the liberty of anarchic impulsive behavior with the autonomy of being under his own control” (1988, 175). However, it would be better for Frankfurt to take a more nuanced approach here. For, not everything, necessarily, that “comes naturally” is something the autonomous individual wants to avoid or replace. It may be that he regularly experiences the desire to help others—something that comes naturally to him in certain situations. However, this desire may be something he wishes to express, in governing his life, and not “seek an alternative to”. Nonetheless, Frankfurt’s point that the autonomous individual attempts to manage “the liberty of impulsive behavior” makes clear sense. In doing so, the autonomous individual avoids losing control over himself, potentially engaging in action or behaviour that is contrary to what, in Frankfurt’s terms, he really wants.

Part of how one autonomously controls oneself may involve what Dworkin refers to as “the capacity to raise the question of whether I will identify with or reject the reasons for which I now act” (1988, 15). Involving reflection, this requires the individual to review the reasons that are the basis for his action and determine whether they are ones he in fact supports. One may here be in the process of carrying out an autonomous action, such as deliberately pursuing a desire. However, in line with Dworkin, he may stop in the process to think about the reasons which now govern his conduct. Perhaps he may come to reject those reasons and, hence, not identify with them, even though he may have done so at an earlier time, as when, say, he began the action in question. By bringing to light the above capacity, Dworkin turns our attention to

the possibility to review or assess our reasons for acting and, in turn, deciding whether we want to keep acting on those reasons. In other words, we are not necessarily determined to permanently act according to particular reasons, once we have chosen them to guide our conduct. Rather, we are, at least in certain moments, able to reflect on these reasons and figure out whether we want them to play a role in our conduct at all. Indeed, where we see that these reasons do not provide adequate or strong justification for continuing a particular behaviour, we may abandon them as the basis for what we do. They have ceased to be valuable grounds for the way we govern ourselves.

Like Dworkin, John Christman emphasizes the ability one has to think about what is happening in one's mind, as well as doing something about it. As Christman states, "what matters is what the agent thinks about the process of coming to have the desire, and whether she resists that process when (or if) given the chance" (1991, 10). Specifically, in Christman's view, a person is autonomous when he "was in a position to resist the development of a desire and did not" (10). As such, in order to be autonomous one must possess or have a particular kind of consciousness, namely awareness of the "process" by which one's desire developed or came to be. In addition, one must be able to prevent the continuation of this desire but decide not to. All of this is to say that, for Christman, autonomy is historical in nature; it is about having the capacity to allow or disallow one's desire to keep growing over time. Where one is not in this position, one is not autonomous. Clarifying this idea, Natalie Stoljar writes, "the fact the agent fails to attend critically each time to the process of formation of the preference does not rule out its being autonomous unless...had the agent reflected on the process of development of the preference, she would have resisted the development of the preference" (2000, 100). In other

words, autonomy entails having the potential to, during reflection, stop the furtherance of a desire or “preference”, even when one does not take the active steps to do so.

Similarly, Christman argues that “autonomy is achieved when an agent is in a position to be aware of the changes and development of her character and why these changes come about. This self-awareness enables the agent to foster or resist such changes” (1991, 11). Thus, extending his view of autonomy beyond one’s desire to one’s knowledge of self, Christman maintains that autonomy involves both seeing the modifications of one’s “character” and allowing one to do something about them. On this view, one who is autonomous can control not merely one’s wants but what happens to one’s self. He or she can play an active role in determining what kind of person one is and will become. Accordingly, one who is autonomous is not simply the product of social and environmental forces but the result of how one shapes one’s character.

Related to this idea, Dworkin argues that “a person may identify with the influences that motivate him, assimilate them to himself, view himself as the kind of person who wishes to be moved in particular ways. Or, he may resent being motivated in certain ways, be alienated from those influences, prefer to be the kind of person who is motivated in different ways” (1988, 15). Thus, depending on how one views one’s self or character, one will want or not want one’s behaviour to emanate from particular influences. As Dworkin points out, where one experiences influences that one does not want to be moved by, one will experience a certain distance from them, as if they do not fit with one’s conception of who he or she is. Whatever the influences the individual experiences, he, in line with Christman, exercises autonomy where he, on reflection, can determine which of these influences he wants to guide his action. For example, a person, having become aware of a desire to promote justice in her community—an influence she

identifies with and approves of—decides that she wants to be moved by this desire. This might lead her to undertake various activities that ensure fairness or equality between people.

In contrast to the autonomy from which this emerges, Joel Anderson and Warren Lux state that “inaccurate self-assessment undermines the autonomy of one’s action by making those actions less fully one’s own” (2005, 283). We may see this, for example, where one, because of “inaccurate self-assessment”, does not become aware of the influences behind his or her actions. This might happen, say, because one fails to grasp or identify particular desires that are producing these actions. Thus, his or her actions were not reflectively endorsed as behaviour that one wanted to have. One did not carry out these actions autonomously. This can be reversed, however, where one makes the conscious choice as to how to govern oneself, while avoiding being passively moved by various influences. On this idea, Frankfurt writes, “a person who makes a decision concerning what to do...adopts a rule for coordinating his activities to facilitate his eventual implementation of the decision he has made” (1988, 175). This may be achieved by a kind of reflection by which one, weighing different possibilities open to him or her, “adopts a rule” to be followed in order to actualize any number of them. Contrary to the individual who is merely compelled, one here deliberately engages in a mode of action, expressing this choice or decision. One, as an autonomous agent, is aware of what he is doing and why. In the process, one engages in what Dworkin believes self-governing people do, namely “define their nature, give meaning and coherence to their lives, and take responsibility for the kind of person they are” (1988, 20). In other words, the individual actively shapes and influences his life.

Similarly, Alfred R. Mele believes we are autonomous with respect to how we specifically direct our action. In particular, Mele holds that an agent is autonomous “insofar as

he is capable of refraining from acting on [a] desire...and capable of acting on it. He is not, we might say, a helpless pawn of the desire, nor is he unable to attempt to satisfy it. Notice that this suggested condition is a nonhistorical one; an agent satisfies it in virtue of his present power” (1993, 278). Thus, in contrast to Christman, Mele’s view, though compatible with the idea of autonomy based on reflection (such as thinking about one’s desires), is not temporal in nature. Unlike Christman, Mele does not stress the importance of knowing how a desire within one emerged, as part of being an autonomous person. Rather, taking a “nonhistorical” approach, Mele emphasizes the agent’s “present power” in deliberately satisfying or refraining from a desire. The agent may not have a clear understanding of how this desire emerged. This, on Mele’s view, however, does not undermine his autonomy, which is primarily based on choosing to fulfill one’s desire or not. As such, managing one’s desire is what is centrally involved in being autonomous, not knowledge of its historical development.

Accepting this view, however, does not necessarily go against an idea of active agency, put forth by Christman, namely “if an agent undergoes autonomous processes of desire formation (ones he approves of and which allow proper self-reflection) but experiences conflicting desires at the end of the process, then he is not autonomous” (1993, 282). On this view, if I, at the end of “autonomous processes of desire formation” that I support or endorse amid self-reflection, am left with “conflicting desires”, I am not autonomous. Despite having approved of these processes, I still experience wants that are at odds with each other, which undermines my ability to rule myself. However, it is not clear how this experience actually weakens autonomy. For, despite the experience in question, I can continue to rule myself, even in relation to the contradictory desires or wants. For example, experiencing these desires or wants, I can, through reflection or deliberation, decide what to do about them. I might either eliminate one of the

desires or wants and pursue the other, or may effectively manage each so I can pursue them both, such as following my desire to go to the grocery store now and, later, my desire to see my friend. In doing so, I autonomously fulfill desires that would have remained conflicting had they demanded fulfillment at the same time. Conflicting desires that result from autonomous processes of desire formation may, admittedly, make it harder or more difficult to act; they, influencing a person to do different things, may confuse him as to what should actually be done. However, in contrast to Christman, they do not themselves make one non-autonomous.

Nonetheless, Christman, regarding conflicting desires, does raise a partially valuable point. As he states, “if the conflicts [of desire] the agent experiences are ones that would have easily been foreseen in some...plan of action, then those conflicts will not negate the agent’s autonomy” (1993, 287-88). Now, though it is still not clear how conflicts of desire undermine autonomy, or how anticipating them “will not negate the agent’s autonomy”, Christman here draws our attention to the problematic nature of conflicts of desire in relation to what we set out to do. It may be that, ultimately, these conflicts have no real bearing or influence on our ability to be autonomous. Yet, when it comes to carrying out our “plan of action”, these conflicts may cause disturbances and interrupt our lives. For example, a conflict of desire that pulls me in opposite directions—towards wanting now to fulfill my desire to work, on the one hand, and desire to play, on the other—when only following one direction at present (i.e. my plan of action) is possible, may cause unease in me. This, however, does not itself render me less autonomous. In fact, the unease may prompt me to autonomously make an informed decision (such as by way of deliberate and earnest use of inner resources) as to how to resolve the conflict of desire producing it.

Admittedly, the challenge of this may be compounded when one lacks an adequate understanding of one's capacities. Related to this idea, Anderson and Lux state that "someone who is seriously confused about her capacities is like someone operating a remote control that does not function as she expects it to...What these individuals intend and what they do have come apart to such a degree that it becomes implausible to say that they are genuinely governing their actions" (2005, 283). Someone who is self-governing, therefore, must be clear as to what, psychologically speaking, is responsible for producing certain behaviour. Lacking this awareness, it is not simply that one does not perceive the causal connection between one's mind and action. One, "seriously confused" about them, will not know how to employ his or her capacities towards specific objectives. Continuing this line of thought, Anderson and Lux maintain that "unless one can evaluate and appreciate the extent to which one has the capacities required for an intended course of action, one's pursuit of that course of action lacks the self-guiding character distinctive of fully autonomous action" (2005, 291). Without at least sufficient knowledge, therefore, of the capacities needed to perform "an intended course of action", the behaviour one undertakes amid that course is not truly self-governing. One may be aware that one is acting and what one is doing exactly, such as exercising a particular role. However, such a person is not thereby conscious of the capacities within herself that contribute to the activity in which she is currently engaged.

As this shows, one's psychology, whether we are talking about awareness of one's capacities or something else, has an important place in being autonomous, which is not simply about action. Following this idea, Santiago argues, "the role that mental events play is important to autonomy, but then so is the role that is played by other features of our lives. Under the social constituted view of autonomy, the functional importance of beliefs and motives lies in how well

they act towards empowering agents by situating them in the right sort of social context” (2005, 94). Thus, based on the social constituted view of autonomy, beliefs and motives have higher “functional importance” the more they enable the individual to enter “the right sort of social context”, such as a desired organization or workplace. These beliefs and motives enhance or promote his autonomy through directly helping him govern himself towards the social context in question. This, in particular, may involve reflecting on beliefs and motives and deciding, perhaps based on how much they can facilitate one’s admission to a social context, which should guide one’s conduct.

In line with this view, Dworkin states, “the idea of autonomy is not merely an evaluative or reflective notion, but includes as well some ability both to alter one’s preferences and to make them effective in one’s actions and, indeed, to make them effective because one has reflected upon them and adopted them as one’s own” (1998, 17). Being autonomous is, amid one’s preferences, choosing which ones will be the actual motivation for one’s actions. From this, one can achieve the rewarding sense that one is aligned or unified with one’s desires. As Dworkin suggests, what is involved here is thinking about and reflecting on the constituents of one’s self and whether one wishes to incorporate them into the development of one’s action.

Complementing this idea, Christman argues that “the autonomous person...is ‘authentic’ in the sense of being moved by values that would withstand self-scrutiny” (2001, 201). As Christman suggests, such values are not easily dispensable but are strong enough to motivate the autonomous person, despite being critically examined. These values might include those that one cherishes, such as the belief or idea that a formal education, because of its importance in personal development, is highly worthwhile. By Christman’s standards, a person who is autonomous acts in a genuine or “authentic” way such that she is led to act by these values,

which continue to have worth or merit after being scrutinized. The scrutinization does not undermine the meaningful quality the values have for her and so she, while appreciating them, is influenced to behave according to them. This implies that the autonomous individual, on the whole, lives an examined life in which he is aware of the values that move him and govern his conduct.

In contrast, Christman states that “to be alienated from some aspect of oneself is to experience negative affect relative to it, to experience diluted or conflicted motivations stemming from it, and to feel constricted by it, as though by an external force” (2001, 202). As such, being “alienated from some aspect of oneself” as described by Christman is to feel that it, to some extent or degree, controls one. This undermines autonomy in so far as it does not fully allow one to make choices or undertake action, unencumbered by the “negative affect” and other psychological disturbances which emanate from the said alienation. Of course, this does not necessarily eliminate autonomy altogether. For, even in the face of the negative affect and psychological disturbances, one can still act in such a way so as to weaken or eliminate these features of his or her mental life, while, in the process, possibly reaching valuable or meaningful goals in the world. This may be carried out with less difficulty if one has a good grasp of how, in relation to achieving certain ends, one should think and act.

Related to this idea is what Andrew Sneddon calls “deep autonomy” (2001, 19). According to Sneddon, such autonomy “involves scrutiny of beliefs and reasons in an effort to see what one should believe, and subsequently what one should want, value, etc.” (19). Thus, deep autonomy is about reflecting on one’s “beliefs and reasons” so as to determine the kind of outlook that one ought to have. This might, for example, be guided by what, in light of one’s purpose or social roles, is best or most beneficial to keep in mind and hold as worthy and true.

An outlook that is based on this may help one focus his or her attention on goals and activities that specifically make one's life meaningful and rewarding. Along the way, a person can remain deeply autonomous in so far as she continues, however often, to examine her beliefs and reasons so as to decide whether her outlook is beneficial for the kind of life she intends to live.

The objection against Sneddon's view of deep autonomy might be raised that, in everyday, social life, we do not engage in the kind of thinking characteristic of such autonomy. Hence, we are actually not autonomous. Reflecting this view, Anne Cunningham argues, "given that we as individuals function within a socially constructed world and tend to abide by, often without questioning, its socially constructed norms and values, it seems none of us would, according to Sneddon, be autonomous" (2003, 223-34). However, this, like the above objection, misconstrues Sneddon. For, Sneddon does not equate autonomy to what Cunningham and the objection suggests he does: operating "within a socially constructed world", while, at least at times, questioning "socially constructed norms and values". At best, this only approximates Sneddon's understanding of deep autonomy in that it involves reflecting on or examining what we might otherwise take for granted, which includes these norms and values. In contrast to Cunningham and the said objection, Sneddon does not attempt to show that we are not autonomous. Rather, through his concept of deep autonomy, he shows us that self-governing, at a more complex level, involves questioning ourselves and arriving at a understanding of the kind of psychology—characterized by thoughts and feelings—we should possess. Having grasped this part of our interior life, we, for one thing, can more authentically plan our lives so as to reflect goals that represent our genuine hopes and interests, which may not be apparent to us prior to some degree of self-exploration. Achieving this may, in turn, lead to increased freedom such that we will situate ourselves in social or other contexts that allow us greater access to what

we want from life. Unlike Cunningham and the above objection, the foregoing implies that deep autonomy is not simply a condition for autonomy but an ideal state of mind, attained through introspection, by which we can gain broader personal awareness and liberty.

In line with this view, Dworkin states, “liberty, power, control over important aspects of one’s life are not the same as autonomy, but are necessary conditions for individuals to develop their own aims and interests and make their values effective in the living of their lives” (1988, 18). As such, liberty, power, and control do not themselves guarantee that we will meaningfully lead or govern our own lives. Yet, they are required for this happen; in their absence, this fails to occur. It is not, however, until the individual deliberately chooses to pursue his “own aims and interests” and make his “value effective” in constructing his life that autonomy is achieved. This suggests that autonomy is, in contrast to liberty, power, and control, not simply a condition but a kind of self-directed activity that one purposely undertakes. Understood this way, autonomy is primarily based on action. We now turn to theories which centre on this idea.

### **THEORIES OF AUTONOMY BASED ON ACTION**

More than the theories of autonomy we have so far analyzed, these ones focus on how individuals steer the course of their lives. Exemplifying this view, Oshana maintains, “although a person’s behavior and motivations can be traced to a variety of factors, to describe a person as autonomous is to claim that the person exercises de facto control over the choices and actions relevant to the direction of her life” (2005, 183). As such, autonomy is not only about managing, as it were, what is inside the head—such as aspects of one’s personal psychology—but how one’s life unfolds according to one’s “choices and actions”. One is autonomous where one’s life is not merely a reflection or expression of external forces that have had an impact on one’s life,

as well as to which one may have passively submitted. Rather, one is autonomous where one deliberately shapes and influences the direction of his or her life. We may see this, for example, when the individual successfully achieves a set of pre-established goals. More specifically, this might involve strategizing or planning one's life in such a way that helps to ensure one, by his or her own efforts, will realize desired objectives.

In line with this view, Oshana believes autonomy “calls for agential power and authority in the form of psychological freedom—mastery of one's will—as well as power and authority within central roles and arrangements” (2005, 183-84). As this suggests, autonomy is about having control over both one's inner and outer life. In particular, it involves having control over one's will, while also having influence in “central roles and arrangements”, such as in the social world. The advantage of this might be, for example, achieving certain positions of power, as in a political institution, wherein one can do what one wants, which, of course, may be favoured by others (e.g. one's community) who want this as well. Arguably, with this ability comes increased responsibility. Touching on this point, Lawrence Haworth maintains that “the more autonomous an individual is the more responsible he is. To the degree that he possesses self-control, competence, and independence, his acts are his own; he is more completely the author of the changes he brings to the world” (1986, 49). The autonomous person, therefore, who “possesses self-control, competence, and independence” is not only the primary cause behind his actions. He or she also produces outcomes in the environment or setting he or she occupies, perhaps in line with deeply significant, personal aims.

In Oshana's view, “a self-directed individual is one who sets goals that she has selected from a range of options that she can hope to achieve as the result of her own action. Such goals are formulated according to values, desires, and convictions in an uncoerced fashion” (2003,

100). The “self-directed individual”, therefore, establishes aims and objectives for himself that he can expect to realize through his own powers or efforts. Further, the self-directed individual freely establishes these aims and objectives in relation to defining features of oneself, such as imagined hopes or dreams. All of this may amount to the individual leading, creating, and developing his life according to both what he wants over time and what provides genuine meaning or value in his life. However, Oshana suggests that the autonomous individual can change his life, as much as he may have so far been committed to living it some particular way. As Oshana states, “the autonomous agent must have the power to deliberate about and change her values and motivations and alter significant relations in her life as she chooses” (2005, 198). Accordingly, the autonomous individual is in possession of the ability to not only alter his “values and motivations”, which may define him as a person, but also “alter significant relations”, such as between himself and others, that, to some extent, characterizes his life. Here, one may express a high degree of independence or individuality, such as doing what one wants to do in the face of varying degrees of opposition from others. Indeed, this fits with Oshana’s idea that one who is autonomous is able to achieve “goals without depending upon the judgments of others as to the goals’ validity and importance” (203, 101). One is here both unencumbered in thought and action as to the avenue one believes is the best to pursue for oneself.

This does not necessarily entail that one will ignore one’s limits. In fact, one can reasonably pursue the avenue one believes is best to pursue for oneself, despite what others might say, while living according to what Haworth calls “the romantic ideal of full autonomy” (1986, 64). According to this ideal, one possesses “a power to become anything whatever, and of being exactly what one wills, within the limits set by the final, irreducible facticity that constrains one’s existence” (64). As such, the romantic ideal of autonomy promotes the idea that

one is able to do whatever he or she wants but only within the bounds—the “irreducible facticity that constrains one’s existence”—one experiences. These constraints can range from the social, such as not having enough money to raise a family, to the biological, such as the extent of one’s physical strengths allows. Where one attempts to act in ways that purposely ignore these constraints, one acts irrationally. He or she behaves in a manner that deliberately turns a blind eye to what will limit or constrain one’s behaviour. This may altogether prevent one from realizing a desired, though unrealistic, end; subsequently, this may cause one to experience frustration and disappointment.

According to Oshana, “an autonomous individual must not in fact be affected by other persons, by social institutions, or by natural circumstances in ways that render him incapable of self-control and of living a self-directed life” (2005, 184). This is consistent with the romantic ideal of autonomy in that the autonomous individual, while not being affected by the above factors, can still experience constraints that do not undermine his “self-control” and ability to live “a self-directed life”. For example, not being affected by social institutions in my autonomous life, my biology may still limit what kind of actions I can undertake. At the same time, however, I retain the ability to control what I do and the way I lead my life, within the limits imposed by my biology. As this suggests, the total absence of limits or constraints is not necessary in order to be autonomous. What is crucial to be so is having, and not losing, the power to govern myself and life—by my own will.

In exercising this power, I become the primary and active force behind my life. Haworth, elaborating on this point, maintains that “the joining of full rationality and full competence occurs in an active life marked not merely by extensive coping but creativity as well. The idea is of a life that is innovative, and of a person who stands out as a center of power and energy,

capable of rising above his circumstances in being innovative and of overcoming obstacles in seeing his innovation through” (1986, 64). As such, the autonomous person is not only capable of directing and governing his life, according to his own will. He, perhaps as part of this process, is also capable of leading an innovative life, by which he can solve problems and prevent obstacles from standing in his path. This entails that the autonomous individual may, in developing the course of his life, not only be concerned with achieving ends, in whatever way possible. He may also be concerned about, as well as be focused on, creating unique or original methods by which to achieve ends. This may be because the autonomous individual cares about the process, namely what it allows him to experience, leading up to the realization in question. For example, in pursuing his goal of becoming wealthy, the individual may invent a previously unknown, though effective, service to raise the happiness and well-being of others. He may do this not only for the purpose of becoming wealthy. Rather, he may do so because he believes, in providing the service, he will, over time, experience himself as morally contributing to humanity. This may also be a way of behaving he believes reflects the kind of person he is, the idea of which is itself a potential source of satisfaction.

Similarly, Ekstrom maintains that “in acting autonomously, I act in a way that is characteristic of me—a way that coheres and is not at odds with the ways I should behave, given what I prefer and accept” (1993, 615). Thus, acting autonomously involves doing what is consistent with one’s identity. In particular, this, as it “coheres and is not at odds with the ways I should behave, given what I prefer and accept”, entails doing what one believes is good. Acting in opposition to this may have rather undesirable consequences for one, such as undermining one’s personal integrity, since such opposition goes against what one takes to be right and valuable—at the heart of one’s identity. Moreover, as Oshana states, “the autonomous person

does not allow, and is not party to the roles that allow, the influence of others to overshadow or usurp her own judgment” (2005, 184). As this suggests, the autonomous person avoids being weakened in her ability to exercise her own judgment, which may include reflecting on or determining what she takes to be right and valuable. In effect, the autonomous person can prevent herself from being in a position where she is unable to act in ways that she has judged to be consistent with what she takes to be good. Where achieved, the individual may also here be “psychologically autonomous”, as understood by Mele, in that he does not experience “compelled motivational states, nor any coercively produced motivational states”, which might impair his ability to make judgments without interference (1995, 187).

Oshana suggests that making judgments this way may be challenged by particular commitments. In her view, “dedication to a system of belief, to a cause, to an institution, or to another person might...frustrate the authority that autonomy demands” (2005, 184). This is true in so far as such “dedication”, perhaps because it may draw one’s attention away from his or her critical abilities, potentially prevents one from independently exercising one’s judgment—central to autonomy as understood by Oshana. However, this idea should not overshadow or draw our attention away from the possibility that, at least in certain instances, the same sort of dedication (“to a system of belief”, etc.) may set people on a path on which they can exercise their own judgment, as well as will, in relation to realizing an important goal. For example, in being dedicated to helping the poor (i.e. a social cause), I, using my own judgment and will, move closer to alleviating the financial or economic obstacles faced by this group. My autonomy is here not threatened but used or embraced to make positive change in the world. Arguably, we need only feel threatened by the possibility that the dedication, pointed out by Oshana, will “frustrate the authority that autonomy demands” where such dedication clouds or

overpowers our ability to make independent decisions and actions (e.g. unquestioning obedience to a cult). Dedication itself does not necessarily undermine autonomy.

Though freely-made, autonomous decisions and actions, as Christman suggests, rely on a functional memory. As Christman states, “without memory, one cannot justify actions as part of ongoing strategies, an aspect of virtually all action. In this way, memory is apparently an operational component of intentional, rational action and not merely an instrumental source of information with regards to it” (2008, 133). Memory, understood as such, is not merely a storehouse of ideas or recollections. Rather, memory performs an active function. As Christman suggests, this function is to demonstrate that certain actions are “part of ongoing strategies”, which memory allows us to see as connected, such as by way of images, over time. If one cannot remember these strategies, one may lack a sense of “where one is going”, much less anticipate the means by which one intends to fulfill various goals. In line with Christman, memory, if only at an unconscious level, preserves one’s temporally extended—from past to present—awareness of one’s ongoing strategies, helping to ensure that one will perceive rational and calculated ways of achieving his or her ends. This entails that memory aids a person against forgetting the approaches, devised by him, to realize what he envisions and sets out to attain. If only indirectly, therefore, memory contributes to one autonomously bringing about a foreseeable or anticipated future.

The theories of autonomy we have so far looked at, though revealing of particular aspects of human experience such as ways of controlling our desires and actions, do not capture something important. That is, they do not address how the individual can autonomously imagine and create his future over time. Thus, the theories fail to draw attention to the way in which he

can govern himself in such a way that he consistently achieves a series of goals or objectives, towards which he or she is oriented.

According to Michael E. Bratman, “desire-belief models of intelligent action do not do justice to the role of future-directed intentions and partial plans in our ongoing planning and conduct” (1989, 444). Though Bratman’s statement targets “desire-belief models of intelligent action”, it has relevance for all the categories of autonomy theories we have examined. For, like these models, the theories of such categories do not emphasize “the role of future-directed intentions and partial plans”, as part of the process we engage in when we autonomously project goals or objectives and seek to realize them during our life-course.

None of this is to say, of course, that the theories of autonomy we have looked at are entirely wrong and make little, if any contribution, to thought on autonomy. Rather— notwithstanding their value in being able to illuminate important ways by which we govern ourselves—these theories are limited to areas of human experience not mainly about designing and constructing our lives, according to foreseeable ends. Admittedly, Christman talks about strategies, as part of his discussion of autonomy, which people can use in designing and constructing their live as such. But, in doing so, Christman primarily looks at the role of memory in grounding actions part of strategies. Hence, his treatment of strategies is less to do with the future than the past. In contrast, I will now introduce what I call “progressive autonomy”. Unlike the theories we have seen, progressive autonomy emphasizes our orientation to the future and how that can be used to autonomously shape and develop the course of our lives—our autobiographies in the making. For example, progressive autonomy may turn our attention to the way in which one intends on becoming an artist, through specific goal-based thought and activity centred on cultivating one’s talent and creativity. As this suggests,

progressive autonomy is not only a theory shedding light on our ability to merely think and act as we wish. It is also one that shows people can partially define their existence in advance. They can steer themselves towards the future they now anticipate and have chosen for themselves.

CHAPTER 2

**PROGRESSIVE AUTONOMY AND THE FUTURE**

In this chapter, I will define and explain in detail what I mean by my concept of “progressive autonomy”. In doing so, I will discuss the manner in which the progressively autonomous individual governs himself over time, as well as the positive value of this. In subsequent chapters, namely on narrative and moral responsibility, I will attend in more detail to the way the progressively autonomous individual rules his existence in creating a meaningful life-story, governed by a favourable perspective of his life that makes it worth living. As I have done so far, I will critically engage with the work and theories of others to support and make my position.

Progressive autonomy is, fundamentally, future-oriented self-governance. In particular, it is based on, firstly, establishing desired goals and, secondly, deliberately pursuing those goals. Through such self-governance, one both plans and realizes—progresses towards—an imagined or anticipated future. In line with Bratman, I understand plans as characterized by “mental states involving an appropriate sort of commitment to action: I have a plan to A only if I plan to A” (1989, 446). Accordingly, as progressively autonomous, I not only envision a future I want for myself. I also intend to achieve that future. This, of course, is not to say I will not take time, perhaps a lengthy and onerous period, to think about my plans, such as what kind of goals they will contain and by what methods exactly I will achieve them. I may make sure to deliberate in this manner in the belief that it will raise the chances I successfully attain my objectives. However, when I in fact have a plan to go about doing something, this is not all I endeavour to do. At the moment I have planned to do that something, I mean to actually do it—to carry it out through action. It is no longer uncertain, if it ever was, as to whether I will eventually do it or not. I may decide not to carry out my plan, for example, because I no longer see it as promising. But at the moment I have abandoned my plan; it has become a memory. Depending on how I

feel at having abandoned my plan, I will regard this memory positively (e.g. happy that I did not waste a period of my life pursuing it any further than I did) or negatively (e.g. disappointed that I did pursue it and wasted time doing so).

Progressive autonomy, as a theory, presupposes that the individual is at a stage in his life, such as adolescence or adulthood, where he is able to both establish and pursue desired goals. In other words, he has matured such that he possesses both the mental and physical capacity to formulate and realize plans. When exactly this maturity occurs is an empirical issue, beyond the scope of this thesis. It is safe to say, however, that this maturity is necessary in order to be progressively autonomous. Without it, such as in the case where one, in early infancy, has not developed the cognitive abilities to think about one's future (i.e. pre-progressive autonomy) or has lost these abilities in old age (i.e. post-progressive autonomy), one cannot lead the future-oriented life, characteristic of progressive autonomy. Thus, the absence of the maturity in question renders one incapable of creating or authoring one's own narrative.

Following the above, there are two main capacities that constitute progressive autonomy. The first is the ability to be aware that one has a future. Having this ability allows one to establish desired goals, as possible moments of his or her life that he or she wants to actualize. Without this ability, one's vision is temporally limited or stuck. That is, he or she cannot see beyond the present and, hence, establish any long or short-term objectives. The second capacity is the ability to purposefully attempt to realize desired goals. This is based on a willingness to actively achieve these goals, rather than hope or wait for them to materialize. Without such willingness, the individual will not be intent or serious about attaining a future that he wants. He will make no plans or efforts to, metaphorically speaking, arrive there.

I am attempting to provide a thick account of progressive autonomy in so far as one who is progressively autonomous not only possesses the two psychological capacities described but is, throughout his life course, committed to creating a future of his own making and which is truly worthwhile to him. In other words, the progressively autonomous individual does not periodically but *frequently* (i.e. daily) plans; he is always trying to envision and bring about a future that has value to him, rather than resigning himself to the chance or uncertainty of life or, more specifically, how these factors will determine the outcome of his life. By the same token, the individual who is not at all interested or lacks the willingness to imaginatively, as well as through action, develop his future, is not progressively autonomous. He may take pleasure in constantly living from moment to moment—without any eye to the future—but, unlike the progressively autonomous individual, is not serious about enacting self-determined plans.

One can technically be autonomous without being progressively autonomous in the sense that one can rule oneself, at a basic level (e.g. choosing which desires to endorse or reject), without attempting to realize a kind of future—a fundamental characteristic of progressive autonomy. As such, progressive autonomy is not a theory of autonomy. Rather, progressive autonomy, supplementing existing theories of autonomy, is a dimension of self-rule that has been neglected. This dimension illuminates a person's potential to design his life according to the way he envisions or intends his future to look like. In contrast to some of the theories of autonomy we have seen in the previous chapter, progressive autonomy emphasizes more than choice or decision in ruling one's life. It also draws attention to how the individual plays a direct role in unfolding the course of his life, in advance (i.e. establishing desired goals) and during (i.e. deliberately pursuing desired goals) the various moments that characterize it. As will be the

focus of the next chapter, progressive autonomy, as a theory, illustrates that the individual is author and not simply bearer of his fate. His life is a reflection of what he wanted it to be.

Progressive autonomy can be beneficial in several ways. Firstly, it allows one to direct the course of one's life, rather than being a passive subject. Related to this idea, Bratman argues that "our planfulness helps us project our agency in an organized way over time" (2000, 42). Similarly, as progressively autonomous, we "project our agency" so as to establish future goals, which we intend to achieve at different moments in time. In the process, I map out my envisioned future so as to populate it with objectives I want to achieve. At the level of action, I pursue these objectives in ways I deem will likely, if not certainly, lead me to actually realizing them. Where such realization occurs, I bring into existence a personally favourable state of affairs—no longer imagined but real. As such, as progressively autonomous, I determine the manner in which my world or personal universe unfolds.

Secondly, progressive autonomy prevents one, in the pursuit of a foreseeable future, from being unwillingly influenced by events or other factors outside oneself. This is so since, as progressively autonomous, the individual is the primary force in the development of his anticipated life. He temporally directs himself through the world and, hence, is not entirely subject to (as much as he might be affected by) external pressures he faces or experiences. For example, in steering the course of my life through the environment I occupy, I am not, moment to moment, easily moved or swayed by others. Rather, I am, however intensely, focused on "staying on track"—maintaining a trajectory towards the fulfillment of my plan. Of course, in the process I may be tempted, for example, by various potential enjoyments or pleasures that would make me fall off track and, possibly, lose sight of my plan. If I give in to these temptations not as a matter of choice but because I cannot control my desire to satisfy them, my

progressive autonomy, if only temporarily, is undermined. I have lost control over my ability to move in the direction of realizing my plan. This does not, however, entail that I am doomed to forever be not progressively autonomous. For, on reflection, I may become aware of how giving-in to the above temptations has prevented me from fulfilling my plan. At this point, I, wanting to reverse this, can place myself again on the trajectory towards this fulfillment and, hence, regain progressive autonomy.

Thirdly, progressive autonomy allows one to govern one's life according to long-term wishes, hopes, and desires—embodied in the form of goals. In doing so, one lives a life that matters to one over the span of one's life, as opposed to only at certain, unconnected moments. In contrast to the individual who is prevented, say, because of some external authority or threat, from doing this, a person who lives in the manner described does not experience his life as empty or devoid of meaning. Rather, he experiences it as valuable and significant, namely an ongoing process that he not only directs and influences but is satisfied by. Furthermore, progressive autonomy, orienting the individual to the future, allows him to see or imagine a potential state of affairs in which he will either be seeking to realize personal wishes, hopes, and desires, or actually realizing them. Thus, progressive autonomy lets the individual envision a possible future that is not impersonal and tiresome but worthwhile—characterized by reaching for or achieving what one truly cares about. Accordingly, progressive autonomy not only allows the individual to conduct a life he finds enjoyment in now. It also allows him to perceive a possible future in which he can continue doing this. Indeed, this gives one something to look forward to.

Fourthly, and finally, progressive autonomy allows one to see and experience one's life as an overall work—a project of one's own making that one can actively shape and influence. Specifically, in orienting him to desired goals, progressive autonomy draws the individual's

attention to what is yet to be done—the part of his life that is incomplete. He may be aware that his life has so far amounted to a series of important accomplishments, which, as the result of his own efforts, may justifiably be a source of pride. However, as progressively autonomous, the individual looks towards a possible or imagined future where his goals will eventually be fulfilled. He does not wait for such fulfillment but directs himself towards it. In the process, the individual defines the course of his life, helping to ensure that it eventually culminates in a state of affairs where his goals will be achieved. Life, as he views it, is not simply a series of independent and discrete moments; the progressively autonomous individual does not live strictly in the present. Instead, he views life as spanning across time, while he himself attempts to actualize objectives along this expanse. Though not necessarily forgetful or unaware of the past, the progressively autonomous individual is primarily, as it were, turned to the future, as that is the domain in which these objectives are temporally situated and realizable.

Despite the fundamentally future-based character of progressive autonomy, a person can resolve to overcome aspects of himself grounded in his past—such as the inclination to commit certain crimes because of former environmental influences and socialization—in being progressively autonomous. For example, this inclination can be undone by, perhaps with the help of a professional, one pursuing the desired goal of becoming a person, say, a year from now, who no longer has the inclination. I will further explore this issue of self-transformation in the later discussion of how, in the creation of his narrative, a person can detach himself from the life (i.e. past), which has characterized his existence thus far.

It is important to note that the theory of progressive autonomy is content-neutral in so far as it does not endorse or promote any particular lifestyle (other than one that is based on establishing and pursuing desired goals), as a way of being progressively autonomous. This, of

course, has significant implications, namely that both morally good (e.g. responsible parents) and evil (e.g. sadistic killers) people can be progressively autonomous, so long as their lives are centred on attaining projected aims or ends. However, people who are morally evil such that they regularly commit acts that are unfair to (i.e. injure or harm) others, run the large risk of alienating themselves from society. In particular, if these acts are discovered, such people will be viewed disapprovingly by others (e.g. the victims of the acts, those who take offense to the acts, etc.) and, hence, ostracized. Accordingly, it will be more difficult for them, despite having the capacity for progressive autonomy, to successfully achieve desired goals that require help from or the presence of others, such as gaining employment.

In contrast, one who is morally good such that one respects and cooperates with others does not face the above risk. Such a person will be looked upon favourably by others. It, hence, will be easier or less challenging for her, in being progressively autonomous, to achieve goals that require help from or the presence of others; think, for example, of a person who, in part, receives a job because she is thought to be highly cooperative in professional environments. The foregoing, of course, does not entail others will simply hand-over, as it were, to one that which is sought after (i.e. the spoils or rewards of a goal). Rather, this entails that others, through the above ostracization, will not make it more difficult for one to reach desired goals. Unlike the evil progressively autonomous person, the good progressively autonomous person is less likely to be exceptionally marginalized from goals that are achieved within social contexts. Indeed, the evil progressively autonomous individual may be penalized, as through imprisonment for harming others, such that his progressive autonomous is severely limited; he may be able to establish goals for himself (e.g. what he would like to do if he were not imprisoned) but not physically be able to pursue them because of his forced jail confinement.

## **PLANNING THE FUTURE OF THE PROGRESSIVELY AUTONOMOUS INDIVIDUAL**

Throughout the thesis, as in this section, my method of argumentation and style of exposition is to present progressive autonomy as an ideal, namely a mode of existence in which the individual propels himself towards a future of his own making. I will not primarily attempt to prove or show empirical instances of progressive autonomy, as represented by particular individuals, in the world. Rather, I intend to put forth progressive autonomy as a content-neutral standard of life, according to which, if and when achieved, the individual determines the shape of his life over time; he does not merely expect or wait for the future to turn out some way. In being progressively autonomous, therefore, one is a designer—he creates the life he wants to live, despite the pressures and influences that might affect him. Accordingly, when I refer, throughout this thesis to the “progressive autonomous individual” or “person”, I am talking about an agent who engages in such creation over time. Such engagement for him is a way of life—that is, carried out regularly or consistently—and not merely an infrequent practice, exercised, say, at random, disconnected moments.

The progressively autonomous individual, though representing the above ideal, can be seen in our everyday, concrete lives. Such an individual is one who deliberately behaves so as to realize plans, based on his desired goals, which he has made for himself. For example, a person who deliberately behaves so as to arrive at work on time, finish a series of tasks while there, and then pick-up his child from school (a series of goals he wants to have), is a progressively autonomous individual. Indeed, if he continues to engage in such goal-based activity on a day-to-day basis, we can safely say that he, in general, lives a progressively autonomous life. As the example suggests, what is important in being progressively autonomous is not primarily what one does but *how* one does it. Specifically, the defining feature of the progressively autonomous

individual is that he intentionally goes after desired goals he has established for himself, instead of aimlessly floating through life or being forced to follow goals imposed by others.

We can become aware that we personally embody this feature when, reflecting on our thinking and behaviour, we become aware that we have and follow the above plans. However, it is also possible, from an external point of view, to know others embody the same feature. In particular, we can do so by an intelligent or well-reasoned inference, namely seeing that one coordinates one's actions, over time, so as to bring about a desired result. For example, we might see this where we observe a painter who, having expressed he wants to complete a mural by a certain deadline (desired result), works a set of hours every day (designing the mural, painting the mural, etc.), so as to achieve such completion. Of course, we may verify this by the painter telling us directly that such behaviour was based according to his plan of finishing the mural on time.

Now, success in one's aims, as a progressively autonomous individual, can be measured in two ways. The first way is based on how close one gets to actually fulfilling one's aims, such that the closer one gets to them, by one's own efforts, the more successful one is. For example, the progressively autonomous individual who dramatically spends over his budget for the year, when his goal is to avoid that, is less successful than he would have been if he spent over his annual budget but by very little. Such success can be confirmed by reflection, in so far as one, through introspection, sees that he has been able—over a stretch of time—to advance towards achieving a certain aim; this might involve visualizing the steps he engaged in to reach that aim such as driving from one city to another for an important job interview. Similarly, others observing this progress and engagement, as it unfolds in the world, can confirm the first kind of success.

The second way is based on realizing the aim itself, such that one is successful when this realization occurs. For example, the progressively autonomous individual is successful when he achieves his desired goal of fixing his car on his own, rather than bringing it to a mechanic. Such success can be confirmed when one or others see that one has produced actual results, verifying the success. For example, when a person's family sees he has cooked them a full gourmet dinner—a desired goal—the success of this aim has been confirmed. As the foregoing suggests, the progressively autonomous individual experiences success not only in attaining desired goals themselves. He is also successful in drawing himself towards those goals, such as through various tasks and strategies. By the same token, the success of the progressively autonomous individual does not solely depend on him finally arriving at (i.e. accomplishing) his desired goals but his performance—as an ongoing process—in reaching that moment in time.

In line with this view, progressive autonomy is not, in contrast to some of the theories of autonomy we have seen (e.g. hierarchical accounts), centred only on what happens in the mind. Rather, it is a theory grounded in both the individual's thinking, namely his outlook towards the future, and his activity in the concrete world. Following this idea, I will, throughout the thesis, frame progressive autonomy as a facet of self-rule based on constant foresight and goal achievement. What primarily underlies such activity is not anything, as it were, on the outside—external to the individual himself (e.g. demands made on him by others). Instead, underlying this activity is the desire in one to achieve what he wants from life, namely the fulfillment of specific goals that he has projected for himself. These goals may be part of the individual's immediate or distant future. Nonetheless, they always represent the authentic will of the person establishing them. They are, therefore, not objectives he tries to achieve reluctantly or indifferently, as if he were forced to. Accordingly, they each, to various degrees (depending on

the strength of the individual's desire for them), symbolize aims the individual cares about and wants to reach for the personal value they have for him.

Moreover, in presenting the idea of progressive autonomy, I am attempting to put forth a way of life that both promotes and preserves the integrity of the individual. By this I mean that, in living a progressively autonomous life, the individual does what is right for himself; he follows his own desires and not those of someone else. In the process, he not only affirms his ability to make independent decisions but do so according to his true wants, represented by goals that may be ordinary (e.g. making a meeting on time) or extraordinary (e.g. becoming a national leader) in nature. Throughout the thesis, however, I will not stress or emphasize the kinds of wants one can have (social, political, cultural, etc.) as much as I will this process itself. For, it is the value of this process itself, and not the content of the aims which populate it, that I will be foregrounding in the work in question. It will be my task to show not only that progressive autonomy is conducive to one's interests (i.e. desired goals) but, as a plan-based form of existence, inherently rewarding and worthwhile.

Having its basis in planning, the progressively autonomous life is never fully complete. It is one, rather, that regularly involves deciding, by way of planning, how you are going to get the desired goals you have established for yourself. In line with this view, Bratman observes, "reasoning that takes initial partial plans as given and aims at filling them in with specifications of appropriate means, preliminary steps, or just relatively more specific courses of actions" (1987, 3). In terms of progressive autonomy, this entails taking various rational and strategic steps towards realizing desired goals. Indeed, this may be a slow and gradual process, involving the fulfillment of "partial plans", perhaps part of larger ones that take a significant amount of

time in one's life. Moreover, as Bratman states, "a central way that planning agents like us take... a stand—given the fundamental roles of planning structures in our practical thought and action—is to go beyond a conflicting stew of needs, desires, and considerations and settle on consistent and coherent plans and the like" (2009, 431). With respect to progressive autonomy, this involves projecting or establishing various goals, while, as part of this process, not ultimately being held back by "a conflicting stew of needs, desires, and considerations". Rather, the progressively autonomous individual, stepping away from this stew, organizes his imagined or envisioned future according to these goals. Where interrelated, such as when they are part of an important, overall endeavour, these goals lend or provide coherence to this future. Instead of being disparate, these goals are similar in character; they all make sense in terms of and represent moments towards reaching the endeavour at hand.

The progressively autonomous individual may be concerned about what course of action or line of behaviour is the best one to pursue, in light of deep hopes and interests. He may want to first establish this in order not only to live a progressively autonomous life that is meaningful, but one in which he realizes what is of paramount value to him. In addition to his will, what he wants to be effective in action is his ability to achieve deep hopes and interests, in the form of projected goals. He may call on and attempt to utilize particular inner resources, such as talents and intelligence, to help ensure this outcome. Part of the challenge of this may be that he will have to overcome a dimension of himself, such as irrational insecurities or anxieties, he deems an interference to attaining deep hopes and interests. Progressive autonomy, as this suggests, may involve the weakening—to various degrees—of negative forces within oneself.

Despite how much he may appreciate his freedom to do as he pleases, the progressively autonomous individual may not be primarily concerned with his own happiness, possibly derived

from such freedom. Instead, he may be focused on aiding and improving the lives of others. This makes it likely that his plans will be characterized by altruism, motivating him to develop and enact strategies that are ultimately in the best interest of other people. Desire, as a result, does not escape the picture. It is still there but in an unselfish way—channelled and directed towards behaviour that is humanitarian. This implies an important point about progressive autonomy: one's goals, however meaningful and satisfying, emanate from oneself but are not necessarily self-referential. They, as in the example above, may be characterized by a sincere wish or concern to promote others' well-being. Progressive autonomy need not always be, if ever or usually, self-centred but exercised as part of the project to improve or enhance the future of the people around one.

Whether I am more focused on myself or others, I remain progressively autonomous so long as I continue to keep a future orientation in thought and action, namely establish and pursue personal goals that make up my anticipated life. Thus, the progressively autonomous individual is not a static or passive thing, such as defined by various features (e.g. religion, ethnicity, class, etc.), but a dynamic force—an agent of future-directed action, consciously aiming or striving towards bringing about a desired state of affairs. Using cognitive capacities, he may strategically move, as it were, through time so as to actually enter this circumstance. Throughout the process, one may develop and enhance him or herself, such as sharpening the ability to predict or forecast events, through the gradual achievement of objectives leading up to the desired state of affairs. For example, involved in attempting to bring into existence the condition in which I am an accomplished member of some professional field, I may gain new skills and talents by the realization of various objectives that lead to this state of affairs. As this illustrates, one who is

progressively autonomous may both produce positive change in one's life and, in turn, positively change oneself.

Moreover, the progressively autonomous individual is not only a cause or facilitator of change. He is also, as this power, able to enlarge the potential degree of his freedom, which may more or less liberate one from existential constraints (e.g. a socially or politically oppressive environment). Through realizing various goals and objectives, he may open up further life-opportunities. In other words, such realization may lead to and increase the options available to one, within his or her overall field of experience. Of course, this does not necessarily amount to greater contentment or happiness. With the enlargement of personal freedom, whether achieved through progressive autonomy or not, comes the challenge of having to choose from an increased number of possibilities. Whereas when one, having a diminished number or range of possibilities to choose from, does not have to worry about regretting a large remainder of options one does not choose, another person, with an increased number or range of possibilities, does. A potential difficulty, therefore, that one living in a progressively autonomous way encounters is the burden of making the "right" choice among many alternatives. This may require the individual to reflect on and evaluate his history, thereby gaining insight into what he can both realistically achieve, as well as—from seeing what he has enjoyed in the past—expect to find substantively worthwhile.

Despite the value of such retrospective analysis, the self-rule associated with progressive autonomy is based on organizing one's life according to and focusing one's efforts on goals that, constituting his or her desired future, match or correspond to the kind of life one wants to live. Though such a life may be deeply satisfying, this hardly implies that it is particularly hedonistic. Rather, it is centred on arranging one's existence according to aims whose fulfillment will shape

one's life in a desired or sought-after way. Here, the individual is chiefly concerned with planning his life around activities and desired ends, through which he can realize what has high, if not supreme, value for him. Given the uncertainty of life, such as unpredictable events, he may encounter disagreeable situations in the process. But if he is wholly committed to living a life of progressive autonomy, these situations are not likely to deter him from sustaining the self-directed life characteristic of progressive autonomy. Such an individual propels himself toward realizing a future, through which he can both sustain and enhance the personally valuable character of his existence. When strongly committed to this way of life, the progressively autonomous individual earnestly pursues desired goals and, in effect, attempts to fulfill them as his destiny. Aside from the struggle this might involve, this may be experienced as an ongoing period of growth—gratifying and worthwhile—in which one takes on and meets the challenge of bettering one's life and oneself.

Though the individual, in living a progressively autonomous life, develops and introduces new character to his life by way of actualizing goals, he is not necessarily removed or cut-off from his past. That is, he may be guided in pursuing his future goals by following what is suggested by what has been. For example, the individual may attempt to reach his objective of becoming a better artist because of former criticisms he has received, implying the need for improvement in certain areas of his creative work. The manner in which the individual can guide himself according to the past depends, in part, on his memory, namely the ability to recollect or capture parts of his history. The more he can do this, the better he will be able to live a life that is consistent with various facts of his life that extend from his past to his present. In the process, one can follow plans and pursuits that are likely to be successful as they are aligned with certain realities (e.g. abilities) concerning oneself, represented or embodied by those facts.

When the individual acts in accordance with these realities, he lives in a way that is attuned to various features that have, over time, characterized his existence. He may thereby situate himself on a path that is reasonable, respecting the limits of what he can and cannot do. In doing so, one may also live a progressively autonomous life that is directed towards realistic goals, instead of ones that are out of reach.

As much as the past might guide him, the progressively autonomous individual, as future-oriented, is primarily concerned with yet to be achieved ends. This may have nothing to do with the way one mainly feels now. Rather, it may have to do with what one believes will bring one satisfaction, perhaps happiness, at a later time. Here, the individual is concerned with goals he believes will be fulfilling in light of how he perceives himself in his imagined future. For example, anticipating I will one day be a parent, I, though currently not feeling any desire to do laundry for others, believe I will take some satisfaction in doing this for my future son or daughter, whose overall welfare (including clean laundry) is deeply important to me. As a result, I think about how I will successfully manage the goal of doing laundry for others, namely my yet to be children, while recognizing such an activity is not the most exciting. By way of such projection, a person's orientation "lifts" her from any strict preoccupation with the present and directs her thoughts or awareness towards the future she expects to enter. One's behaviour or action that results from this is, thus, explainable not simply in terms of what one currently desires but what one imagines will bring one future gratification. This reinforces the idea that progressive autonomy is achieved while one sees, so to speak, beyond the present. In pursuing objectives he envisions to be there, the progressively autonomous individual moves towards desired states of affairs. In doing so, he situates himself on a personally significant trajectory, amounting to more than, perhaps despairingly, going through life hardly ever doing what he truly

wants. Instead, he traverses the path towards emotionally fulfilling, and not merely mechanical or robotic, self-realization. He here enjoys life and does not—in contrast to one, for example, who feels his or her life prevents him from experiencing such fulfillment—perceive it as being at odds with his him or even his enemy. As such, he is likely to view life as favourable means or temporal continuum along which he, by way of thought and action, can actualize rewarding aims.

In contrast, a person who avoids this actualization may prevent himself from fulfilling his genuine wishes. Similar to the one outlined by Frankfurt, a certain alienation may take place here in which a person feels distanced from what he wants. There are two important points worth mentioning here. First, when the alienation occurs, one, as a result, is prevented from establishing goals he or she desires, thereby undermining the possibility for progressive autonomy. However, and this is the second point, in the absence of the alienation there is no guarantee one will sustain progressive autonomy. For this, one needs to consistently or regularly align one's will with desired goals; one must, in other words, be committed to realizing what he or she wants and has planned. This, of course, requires the individual to become self-aware to the extent that he has some clear conception of the kind of future he wants for himself. Without doing this, one may be able to satisfy basic survival needs in the present, like eating and sleeping. But one will not be able to project any kind of future that, as desirable, one may find worth pursuing. Actually achieving this future may involve controlling certain wants, such that they do not interfere with one's plan to reach desired goals he or she deems more important to fulfill than these wants.

The degree to which one exercises creativity in this process depends, in part, on how much one is involved in formulating one's goals. The more one invents or formulates one's

goals, rather than unreflectively adopting them based on what, for example, is merely a conventional or socially acceptable objective, the more creative one is in the pursuit of one's plans. This idea can also be applied to the way people achieve their goals; a person is more creative in pursuing her objectives the more she relies on her own imaginative resources—and less from instructions from the outside world—in achieving these objectives. Creativity, admittedly, is not a necessary ingredient in order for one to live a progressively autonomous life. What is necessary for this life, rather, is that one, oriented beyond the present, earnestly attempts to realize desired goals. A progressively autonomous life is achieved when one deliberately undertakes action aimed at satisfying one's desired goals, even if inherited, say, from a particular tradition and are not entirely of one's own making. Failure in this pursuit may or may not result. Whatever the outcome, a progressively autonomous life is secured by making the actualization of one's desired goals the focus of one's plans and behaviour. Here, one potentially does what has enduring, rather than fleeting, personal value that provides one with a lasting sense of satisfaction. Where such behaviour is manifested as a particular way of life, this might have the added, perhaps unintended effect, of inspiring gratitude towards one's particular manner or style of being in the world. The possibility thus arises for one's existence—embodying a particular way of life—to be cherished, as opposed to simply the goals that fill it. Moreover, if one follows a cherished way of life long-term, one may gain the sense that one's activities consistently, rather than irregularly, reflect one's most genuine hopes and interests. Far from feeling alienated from oneself, one may here come to believe, such as through recollection, that one's life-history mirrors a series of initiatives to obtain what has ultimate worth for him or her. Indeed, it would be difficult to look upon or regard such a life—characterized by the active fulfillment of personally significant desires—with regret.

We, of course, may never have the opportunity to fulfill some of these desires for the simple reason that they remain unconscious. Yet, through critically thinking about the contents of our minds, we can become conscious of at least some of these latent wants within us (a concept familiar to various modes of psychotherapy and analysis). For example, one, through reflection, becomes aware of one's desire to change careers which one has unconsciously ignored because of the difficulty acknowledging it might introduce into one's life, such as having to work in an a largely unfamiliar, even though interesting, field. Not readily apparent to one, this desire may require a prolonged period of self-examination before it is clearly identified and grasped by one. However, once this is achieved, one reaps the benefit of being able to deliberately, as well as constructively, make plans centred on this desire. This might include establishing the goals of finding another job, relocating to a different city, etc. Throughout the process, one is progressively autonomous in a special way; such a person not only develops plans based on what she wants but does so in relation to a newfound truth—a previously hidden desire, the pursuit of which may contribute to one having a more meaningful life. This opens the potential for the progressively autonomous individual to realize a future representing hopes and wishes, grounded in the desire that would have not been possible prior to this discovery. In this pursuit, one can actualize a certain degree of untapped, self-enhancing potential, thereby undermining or offsetting the chances that one will sustain activity causing him or her significant disappointment and regret.

In contrast, progressive autonomy, as future-oriented, allows one to determine how best to live, over time, a satisfying life. This might not necessarily include any painful or drudgerous planning. It does include, though, taking the time to select or create goals for oneself that will infuse one's life with a measure of pleasure and enjoyment. What is primarily involved here

may have not so much to do with, as Frankfurt states, “seeking an alternative to ‘doing what comes naturally’” as much as strategically mapping out one’s future. At a basic level, this involves figuring out how to generally lead or conduct one’s existence—as through a style of life—so as to successfully reach desired goals. However, at a more complex level, this may require the individual to coordinate specific kinds of tasks and activities, along a projected continuum of time, by which this success will in fact be attained. The overall aim of the individual at both levels is to effectively realize a favourable future. Arguably, the more favourable he perceives or anticipates it to be, the more the individual is willing to exercise considerable deliberation, as well as physical effort, on how to make it a concrete reality.

Admittedly, deliberation may allow one to thoroughly understand the reasons why he or she acts, without giving one any substantive grasp on what kind of future one ultimately wants. For example, one, during deliberation, may come to realize that the reasons for one’s actions are based on a motivation one, for moral reasons, was not previously willing to acknowledge. Yet, such knowledge, however valuable, does not itself suffice for one of the main components of progressive autonomy—establishing desired goals—which may or may not have anything to do with understanding the reasons for one’s present, or even past, actions. Such knowledge may make one more self-aware but does not necessarily do anything that significant in choosing one’s objectives. This, more than deliberation, requires the individual to maintain a prospective gaze towards what may or will infuse one’s life with substantive or great fulfillment. Not casting this gaze, one may fail to be concerned with goals whose attainment offers rich reward. This at least threatens the possibility that one will in fact actualize what is most important to one. In order to achieve this, one must do more than, as Dworkin states, “identify with or reject the reasons” of one’s action. One must also perceive goals that are truly valuable, if not dear, to one.

Progressive autonomy here requires foresight encompassing aims representing cares and wishes of real or even profound personal worth.

In controlling where one goes or ends up, such as a particular future setting, progressive autonomy allows one to control what happens to oneself. By the same token, one can more easily manage and direct oneself towards goals that represent aims reflective of the kind of person one wants to be. Specifically, one may play an active role in deciding the type of character one becomes, thereby influencing both the sorts of moral concerns one will have, as well as the style by which one seeks to deal with them, such as through some ethically appropriate action. Indeed, this is central to progressive autonomy where it involves actualizing moral goals that, aside from confirming or perfecting one's goodness, are desired as part of the plan to achieve a virtuous or honourable future. As this suggests, progressive autonomy is not necessarily, for any single individual, characterized by the sort of robust striving or development through and by which one becomes stronger and succeeds, without becoming any better morally. To be sure, progressive autonomy is not only apparent in the actions of those who willingly do evil in the world. Rather, progressive autonomy, as an ability or power of bringing about a desired future, may very well be exercised as part of an intended effort to increase goodness—not only one's own but in the world in general, such as through fulfilling compassionate ends that promote the welfare of others. The progressively autonomous individual may possess or retain a future-orientation which, though characterized by his own thoughts, wishes, and aspirations, focuses his attention on benefitting humanity, before himself as a single person. Like the saint, martyr, or altruist, his goals here are based on a selfless desire to take care of people, without necessarily wanting or expecting anything in return.

In line with Anderson and Lux's idea that inaccurate self-assessment makes one (particularly his or her actions) less autonomous, such evaluation also limits or eliminates progressive autonomy, be it primarily directed towards satisfying oneself or others. For, on account of it, one may find it rather difficult to determine one's true desires and, hence, formulate goals based on them. Not being able to do this, one, at least for a time, is prevented from realizing and forming plans—the first step of progressive autonomy—that represent the kind of future one wants and is willing to pursue. As such, one may be condemned to act and live according to reasons which have nothing to do with what one ultimately desires from life. Such a person might also act according to immediate impulses, not leading her to a future she would rather avoid. She may still be said to, here, have agency, in so far as she does what she feels but without an eye toward the future. But a life of this kind disqualifies the possibility of planning. Hence, it does not give one the opportunity to rationally select goals that promote one's desires. A life that is strictly focused on doing what one wants now is, if not hedonistic, contrary to thinking about what one wants to do with oneself over time—how he or she will make his life-story. Such a life may very well allow one to concentrate personal energy on satisfying momentary needs. Yet, it amounts to a form of existence that does not permit one to live with a long-term purpose, allowing one to actualize desires that might give one a fulfilling sense of commitment or dedication to an important cause. In the extreme, one who is not progressively autonomous is at risk of living recklessly—actualizing desires without any regard for the consequences of this. In contrast to progressive autonomy, he or she is strictly oriented towards the present and not the future. If personal growth and development requires planning, then he or she is also blocked from improving him or herself in concrete or substantive ways.

## **SELF-REGULATION AND PROGRESSIVE AUTONOMY**

Similar to some of the theorists we have seen in the previous chapter, the progressively autonomous individual may want, such as because of how he views himself, to be motivated according to only certain influences. In order to do so, he may make the conscious or deliberate effort to behave in a particular manner, as opposed to another, that draws him closer to realizing desired goals. For example, in wanting to be motivated by the wish to be altruistic, I may attempt to realize the goal of eradicating poverty, without any regard for my own gain (I see this as genuinely part of the motive in question). Here, I—while resisting various pressures within myself (e.g. self-serving desires)—may morally evaluate certain motives, as part of the progressively autonomous task of allowing myself to, over time, realize what I want and in ways I approve.

This might be important to me, for example, because I generally do not like the idea—indeed, it may be contrary to my self-concept—that I make the effort to achieve certain ends because of motives unfavourable to me, as the basis of particular pursuits. For example, to continue the previous illustration, I may find it is immoral to eradicate poverty on the basis of the selfish desire (i.e. motivation) to primarily gain fame and not alleviate suffering. The potential effects of this might be well-received; people may be glad and praise me for the said eradication and alleviation I have brought about. Nonetheless, I may still be of the view that such consequences do not emanate from moral action—I would be attempting to bring them about because of a motive I do not, in relation to my goal, ethically sanction. For me, as may be for other people, progressive autonomy here involves not only achieving desired goals. It also means doing so according to a driving force within me that I, in relation to these goals, look favourably upon. The future, as such, must be “correctly”—that is, according to what I want to

motivate me—realized. By the same token, the future may not be worthy of being realized at all if the only way possible, say, because of my circumstances, is “incorrectly”, contrary to what I want motivating me.

As the foregoing suggests, part of progressive autonomy is management of the way we feel. This involves, as we have seen, deciding which feelings to guide us. Furthermore, this may involve deciding which feelings we should allow to grow to the point that they will influence the formation of personally favourable goals we want for ourselves (e.g. allowing our desire to start a company grow, as opposed to oppressing it, such that it will eventually lead us to establish the goal or plan to actually start the company). Indeed, we are not responsible for all desires that emerge in us. It is no mystery that at least some of them are contrary to what kinds of wants we wish to have. Whether these sorts of desires emanate from the unconscious or elsewhere, the fact that we do not like them will not necessarily prevent their recurring emergence throughout our lifetime. Accordingly, the challenge of the progressively autonomous life is to both channel certain desires into productive, goal-oriented activity, while deciding which desires—as guiding forces or influences—will effectively sustain such activity. Some desires will simply not work for the activity in question. For example, the desire to become a celebrity will not alone suffice to sustain action towards becoming a professor. Fulfilling this desire requires more. One must desire *specifically* to become a professor, in addition to be willing to undertake the various, indeed sometimes difficult, steps in the direction of that goal. In the process, one coordinates his or her activities so as to partially attain a projected future. The more complex the tasks to reach this end, the more the individual may be required to strategically envision the way by which he will actually carry out these tasks. For, the complexity of tasks may be of such a level that,

without, in advance, mentally charting how one is going to perform them, the less likely one will be able to do so with success.

Moreover, the longer it takes for a person to realize a goal, the more, however serious, challenges will she encounter along the way. This is largely due to the fact that as time transpires, it brings with it a host of obstacles and difficulties that may act as potential barriers against her. It is within the progressively autonomous individual's best interests, therefore, to project and map effective lines of action or behaviour, by which he can minimize, if not eradicate, the impact of these barriers on his desired goals. In light of this, planning becomes not only an instrument or tool, namely a means of anticipating and attempting to achieve what one wants. It also becomes a rational method of regulating one's interaction with the environment. For example, as part of the plan to take a vacation, I may ensure that not only will this vacation occur but that unwanted possibilities, such as certain physical dangers, do not materialize on my trip. There is of course no guarantee that my plan will, overall, be realized as I wish; there is always the unpredictable—things that occur and we encounter that might hinder our plans. Acknowledging this is important more than because it might agree with our general experience of the world. It is also important to acknowledge because keeping in mind the unpredictability of events helps guard against self-deception: it prevents one from easily or naively believing that, so long as one establishes realistic plans, what one wants will necessarily follow.

In addition, this acknowledgement may contribute to one living a satisfying, progressively autonomy life: carrying out action to realize one's desired goals, while preparing to—rather than avoiding—experience the disappointment that comes from a blindness to the possibility of various negative outcomes. Furthermore, this makes one likelier to have a flexible attitude towards life such that, in having awareness of the aforementioned outcomes, one is more

apt to change its direction. I may want to be a lawyer, for example, but, because of certain social or economic constraints, this is a goal I am prevented or barred from reaching. I may be quite disappointed by this outcome. However, having the flexible attitude described, I may be still willing to select a new path, other than the road of an aspiring attorney. Furthermore, I may here altogether avoid serious unhappiness or despair if, as an agent with several options (other than becoming a lawyer) offering meaningful fulfillment, I realize that being a lawyer is not the only worthwhile pursuit for me. This realization may give me courage and confidence to undertake action that corresponds to these options. Also, this realization may appeal to me because, through it, I am able to see that personal satisfaction need not be only experienced from a single way of life. With this in mind, I can set out to become something other than a lawyer, allowing me, in the process, to potentially experience a great deal of reward.

In such a process, the progressively autonomous individual also acts as existentially authentic author. That is, he “writes” or fashions the course of his existence according to a projected future, containing aims that, as a whole, characterize the kind of life he genuinely wants to live. Both the process towards and the eventual fulfillment of these aims are valuable not only because of the satisfaction derived from them but also because of the sense of self-actualization—characterized by growth and development—that one can gain from them. This sense provides one with the feeling that one’s life is not merely a life of gradual acquisition and self-control. Instead, it provides one with the feeling that one effectively realizes self-chosen or created goals, which, over time, potentially increases the significance one’s life has to oneself, as well as others. Moreover, where a person is aware that this feeling truly reflects her ability to direct her life, this feeling confirms to one that she is not only advancing along her life-path. It also confirms she is the primary force or agent behind this success and evolution through time.

He or she does not rely on chance, accident, or contingency to realize desired states of affairs—as well as their attendant positive feelings—but attempts to do so through deliberate and self-guided action.

The progressively autonomous individual may find himself in circumstances that he did not entirely create or bring about on his own. However, they may remain agreeable or desirable to him if they largely accord with the kind of life he sought for himself. For example, in attempting to become a mechanic, the progressively autonomous individual enters a situation where he sees it better to spend his efforts on becoming a computer programmer. This might be the case, say, because he, at some point, realistically perceives he is not able to gain access to the schools or training to become a mechanic but has access to the schools or training to become a computer programmer. The progressively autonomous individual, however, may accept, perhaps welcome, all this as agreeable or desirable because he is still able, as a computer programmer, to live the life he wants, such as one in which he pursues and enjoys a technical career (which can be achieved through either being a mechanic or computer programmer).

Of course, this pursuit may not be easy to embark on all at once. One may, first, have to manage opposing wants, such as, respectively, engaging in this pursuit and doing something easier, so as to gain the resolve to enter this pursuit—if that is what one really or ultimately wants. When it comes to living a progressively autonomous life, resolving conflicts of desire may involve suppressing inclinations that interfere with one's aspirations. This entails determining which particular desires, in conflict with one another, are most amenable to these aspirations. For instance, in light of my aspiration to become a serious film director, I resist the desire to watch movies, however entertaining, that will not help and could possibly undermine me in this pursuit (think of mindless films that have little or no value in cultivating a sensibility

for making intelligent or mature films). At the same time, I follow my desire—in conflict with the one just described—to watch movies that do help in this pursuit. As this example suggests, progressive autonomy may require the individual to, in light of what is paramount to him, live according to certain desires while overcoming or avoiding others. What is here involved, of course, is not necessarily one having contempt for any of one's wants but not following those one deems, even if appealing on some level, will not lead one to attain the kind of life that is deeply valuable or important to one.

As factors that may make it difficult, but not destroy, a person's attempt to realize valued objectives, conflicts of desire do not overpower his ability to govern himself. Rather, it may be that these conflicts are those which the progressively autonomous individual accepts as part of the life-long endeavour or project of realizing difficult, though meaningful, goals. This sort of acceptance has two beneficial aspects. Firstly, it prevents the individual from falling prey to self-deception. When he is aware of potential obstacles, including anticipated conflicts of desire, the progressively autonomous individual is not blind to the fact that these obstacles may materialize in his future. Secondly, the acceptance in question allows, if not prompts, the progressively autonomous individual to responsibly prepare himself for his future. This may involve developing the capacities, skills, intelligence, and resources to successfully face and overcome obstacles that might lie before one.

### **THE PERCEPTION OF OBSTACLES AND THE INNER EXPERIENCE OF THE PROGRESSIVELY AUTONOMOUS INDIVIDUAL**

In general, anticipated obstacles may, at some level, be regarded positively. Specifically, these obstacles may represent to the individual potential opportunities for him to grow and

improve himself. For example, in encountering a serious financial difficulty, the individual may apply various abilities, such as keen entrepreneurship, in order to eliminate this obstacle. Despite the actual result of this, what may happen, however gradually, in the process is desirable—the perfection of one’s performance in some virtuous or moral area, such as hard work and fair business dealings. This, of course, has the added instrumental value of improving one such that he or she is better able to deal and handle obstacles that require this performance. In fact, the development of this performance may reach a certain degree so as to render previously regarded obstacles minor difficulties, if any challenge at all. Specifically, the enhancement of one’s behaviour has the potential to positively affect the perception one has of the external world. By refining one’s performance in some area to an exceptional degree, one may learn to see possible barriers in a less threatening or intimidating light.

Viewing these barriers as such, one develops a greater willingness and even confidence to pursue desired goals. This is not merely because when one sees possible barriers as less threatening or intimidating one also sees less likelihood of failure. Rather, regarding such obstacles in this manner, one perceives them as manageable hurdles, rather than impossibilities, along the path of achieving one’s objectives. One may interpret the removal or surmounting of these hindrances as ascending towards the future to which he or she is oriented. Though this may not itself encourage and motivate the progressively autonomous individual in any particular way, it will offer him some level of assurance that his plans are not altogether unrealistic or doomed to collapse. He can more securely, therefore, proceed to undertake projected courses of action, leading to an overall increase of fulfillment in his life. With this security, the progressively autonomous individual will be less likely to submit to the defeatist belief that the pressures he experiences in enacting his plans are indication that he is headed towards

disappointment. Instead, he is more apt to view these pressures as necessary and inescapable aspects of the challenge of actualizing his desired goals; a challenge that does not daunt him to the point of inaction or paralysis.

A person may gain confidence to plan and create one's future if he regularly keeps in mind that he has certain capacities, such as envisioning future goals and how they can be realized, to help him in this pursuit. If one lacks such recognition, he may not be actively aware that he possesses the inner or mental resources to project future goals, which is the first step towards attaining them. Admittedly, in the absence of this awareness, one may still be able to perceive a future one wants, such as might emerge automatically in the imagination without any conscious effort. Yet, this does not necessarily promote progressive autonomy since such autonomy involves pursuing goals that one has deliberately chosen or established, rather than simply surface in one's mind. Moreover, similar to Anderson and Lux, if I do not at all know how to use my capacities to realize desired goals, I am prevented from being progressively autonomous. For, without this knowledge, I am not able to become aware of how to employ my capacities in the pursuit of the said objectives. At best, I can guess how to use my capacities in this manner. However, this offers no consolation to me, if, in wanting to be progressively autonomous, I primarily intend on achieving desired goals through the application of my abilities and not by fortune or chance. This intention may be reinforced and strengthened by my desire, in line with being progressively autonomous, to reach ends by my own efforts—an activity I find inherently rewarding and, hence, valuable.

In contrast, a person who is not progressively autonomous may have no desire to achieve anything by his own efforts and very well may be happy attaining what he wants simply through the help of other people or causes other than himself. Now, he can remain progressively

autonomous if given this help or influenced by these causes. However, he does not remain so if such help or influence, rather than himself, is the main force behind the attainment of what he wants. Moreover, for the progressively autonomous individual who desires to primarily achieve ends on his own, attainment that he does not play a central role in may offer little, if any, satisfaction. Indeed, it might be part of his desired goals or plans to bring into existence a future he deliberately, as opposed to accidentally, creates. It is not enough for him that he be fulfilled or satisfied, whether physically or mentally. There is something more he desires—the realization of imagined states of affairs by his own initiative or agency; states of affairs, indeed, for which he is mostly responsible for producing. Even, if in the process, he does not fully achieve his most cherished and prized objectives, he may, consistent with this desire, take comfort or pleasure in knowing the accomplishments he has made predominantly emanate from his personal agency, not external forces or causes.

If a person fails in all respects to know this, his behaviour, as Anderson and Lux similarly observe, may seem foreign to him (2005, 284). It is challenging to feel connected to one's behaviour when one does not view oneself as involved in its production. Related to this idea, it will be a significantly difficult for a person to view herself as progressively autonomous if she perceives herself as distanced or separated from her behaviour. This is so since such distance or separation prevents one from perceiving one is in charge of what one does, including establishing and pursuing desired goals. Moreover, lacking this perception, one might not be particularly motivated to establish projects, such as meaningful activities that span over time. For, one, as much as he or she might desire that these projects be completed, experiences one's behaviour as detached from oneself and so believes one cannot direct it towards the future (i.e. completion of projects) one wants.

If this, overall, amounts to one experiencing a diminished sense of self-governance or control over his or her life, one may be inclined to feel or believe that factors, external to one, are what determine, so to speak, where one is going. Without an adequate sense of self-governance or control over one's life, one cannot easily motivate oneself to pursue desired goals, requiring this governance or control. In contrast, such a person, regardless of whether she can be called autonomous at all, might think, "what I do may at any moment be diverted by causes of which I am currently unaware and cannot anticipate". Implicit within such thinking is the idea that my life is not wholly mine. Aside from leading to a host of negative feelings from hopelessness to despair, this potentially erodes and destroys one's willingness to take charge of one's life, as the means to attain wishes, hopes, and dreams that imbue one's life with lasting and substantive value. In the process, one may fall away or retreat from society in that these goals, as well as the life in which they are found, require one to interact and engage with others.

This may be reversed by progressively autonomous action. Similar to Santiago's suggestion that certain "beliefs and motives" help one be autonomous, in so far as they aid one entering "the right sort of social context", progressive autonomy, when used to project and pursue goals whose fulfillment amounts to finding oneself in the environment he or she wants to be in, can facilitate one entering a social context. For example, the progressively autonomous individual, in establishing and going after the aim of gaining admission to a particular institution (e.g. university), is able to lead himself into a desired setting where he enjoys the nature of his work, colleagues, and professional privileges. To bring back the discussion to Santiago, certain beliefs and motives may assist him in the success of this kind of pursuit, such that they orient him towards achieving ends consistent with them, as might the goal of becoming a department head—in accordance with his encouraging belief that he has the ability or skill to do so and, in

effect, is motivated towards achieving that. As this illustrates, certain beliefs and motives empower the progressively autonomous individual if they enable him to gain social footing within a preferred set of circumstances.

Now, other people and institutions may themselves exert pressure on and influence the progressively autonomous individual to act in various ways, not necessarily aligned with his desired goals. Accordingly, beliefs and motives within the progressively individual that—when expressed or manifested through his behaviour—allow him not to be dominated by the said pressure and influence (in addition to being empowering as described) also act as a safeguard; they prevent him from being moved to do what he does not desire, might even loathe. This, of course, does not alone entail that the progressively autonomous individual, amid forming and pursuing goals social in nature, must always be on the lookout for those ready to manipulate and exploit him. This kind of readiness, as well as the defensive attitude and behaviour that might accompany it, is possibly useful in battling enemies or warfare. However, succeeding in one's social context, be it through achieving a particular rank or otherwise, may not constantly require this, as is apparent in any relatively stable and peaceful society. Rather, such success involves being aware of the effect that factors within our social environment have on us and knowing how, in light of our desired goals, to respond to them. Similar to Dworkin, the progressively autonomous individual may here use his particular preferences, such as the manner in which he wants to achieve desired goals, as a guide to socially appropriate action—not simply to do what is conventional or “normal” but because such action, at least in certain settings, is necessary in order to gain admission to contexts he seeks to enter (e.g. conforming to an organization's rules to reach a privileged position within it). Rather than blind obedience or submission, such action

is strategic and is especially not a threat to progressive autonomy if it does not ultimately undermine one's ability to direct oneself to self-chosen or established goals.

Unlike simply pursuing pleasures that do not stem beyond the present, the future-orientation characteristic of progressive autonomy may involve visualizing one's potential life and walk through it, as it were, within his or her imagination. For example, one might envision the time when one expects to be a father or mother and how, at that time, he or she will go about raising a child—providing the proper care, supervision, love, etc. As this suggests, the progressively autonomous individual, oriented towards the future, may mentally navigate an anticipated field of activity or domain of life where he carries out behaviour relevant to these goals. Doing so allows him to situate himself, so to speak, within a realm yet to be directly experienced—as a concrete state of affairs. Here, he may steer oneself through various scenarios, consisting of different challenges, obstacles, and barriers. In the process, the progressively autonomous individual can mentally practice tasks and activities which enable him to overcome these problems. If, in real life, he does in fact overcome them, he may do more than just achieve or realize his desired goals. His behaviour might also set a positive example for others, viewing it as the right or even ideal conduct for a particular pursuit. Where his behaviour is publicly observable, others, sharing desired goals similar to his (e.g. becoming an athlete), may see his action as embodying the virtues and qualities necessary to obtain these ends. Seeking also to possess these traits, others may emulate his action as the appropriate way to realize the future they want for themselves. Rather than necessarily implying any kind of heroic or excessive worship, others here position themselves in such a manner that is conducive to becoming an accomplished and self-defined person. Far from undermining progressive

autonomy, constructively modeling oneself after another can help one lead oneself towards desired goals of high and, possibly, supreme personal value.

Moreover, significant psychological discomfort, such as heightened anxiety, does not fully undermine the capacity or potential for progressive autonomy. It, however, may impair it. For, in experiencing the discomfort, we undergo mental unease, making it potentially difficult to concentrate on and go after our desired goals. In order to overcome this, we must successfully reduce or manage the unease, at least to the point that it does not interfere with envisioning our future and how we intend to actualize it. This, for example, may be achieved by way of psychotherapy, a process through which we can eventually grasp the source of the unease and take the necessary steps to prevent it from interfering in the manner described. From this, one can, as challenging as this may be in certain instances (e.g. an acute psychiatric disorder making one less liable or susceptible to change), modify his or her behaviour that—on account of the unease—was not effective in realizing one's desired goals. Here, one can strategically alter one's conduct so as to actualize a certain state of affairs, which was not a likely possibility in the face of the unease. Indeed, this may itself be an objective of the progressively autonomous individual, characterized by the active attempt or striving towards reaching the moment in which his behaviour, rather than holding him back from desired goals, facilitates their eventual achievement.

Where heavily weighed down by considerable discomfort, be the cause physical or mental, the progressively autonomous individual may experience a loss or reduction of energy that can be invested in the pursuit of desired goals. More specifically, in the absence of this energy, the progressively autonomous individual potentially undergoes two things. First, he may come to feel that he is trapped in the present. For, without this energy, the progressively

autonomous individual may be unable to establish and pursue desired goals, providing his life with a sense of movement over time—perceiving he is not stuck in his current circumstances but, by his own volition, is actually going somewhere (temporally, as well as spatially). Second, and as an effect of what has just been described, the progressively autonomous individual may also come to feel a sense of hopelessness. In particular, this derives from believing that he will not attain the future he wants, as he realizes he is lacking the energy (which he might, among other things, use to motivate himself towards certain ends) that such attainment involves or entails. It may be of some consolation to know that after, for example, discovering certain evidence or facts, his lack of energy is only temporal—perhaps a life-phase that is dependent on circumstances that will eventually disappear—and he will regain the energy he needs to achieve desired goals. However, until this occurs, the progressively autonomous individual may not feel he can exercise his full potential in the pursuit of desired goals; he may, thus, also feel diminished in his capacity to get what he specifically wants by such exercise. To offset the sense of inadequacy that may result from this, the progressively autonomous individual can consider and devise ways of getting what is in his reach, given the energy and motivation (however diminished) he might have, perhaps in the overall direction of other desired goals he cannot yet achieve. This allows the progressively autonomous individual to feel and remain efficacious—that is, able to realize objectives, even though they may not be the goals he most desires. Though this may not wholly satisfy him, it might enable him to feel that his life, by his own efforts, is developing—that he is moving himself in a positive direction, meaningful and worth living.

## **THE PROGRESSIVELY AUTONOMOUS INDIVIDUAL'S EVALUATION OF POSSIBLE AIMS**

Similar to Sneddon's idea of deep autonomy, progressive autonomy may involve a careful assessment according to which one determines which desired goals to follow, among a range of several appealing objectives. This might be done, for example, because a person seeks to only follow goals that allow him to live an intellectually or spiritually fulfilling life, as opposed to one that is simply physically or materially satisfying. The kind of exploration that a person here undertakes can draw him into an in-depth analysis of himself, such as regarding characteristics of his personality and the way he tends to view certain people and events. In the process, he may come to learn new details about himself, previously hidden or (unconsciously) ignored. Such details can, in turn, influence how he thinks about his overall life and what, in light of that, he can reasonably expect from it; this may give a person a renewed sense of who he is. For example, in coming to realize that I have certain strengths in a particular area, I may be prompted to see my life in terms of a range of certain possibilities which, on account of these strengths, I can likely achieve—anticipating significant satisfaction and reward where this occurs. Viewing my life this way also allows me to see myself as a particular kind of individual. That is, one who possesses distinct, perhaps unique, powers to actualize a future that is within my grasp. If this future becomes the focus of my life, it may also become my purpose, embraced as my main reason or motivation for living.

Commitment to a single purpose is, of course, not necessary for progressive autonomy, which, as we have seen, largely depends on the individual pursuing desired goals, even if they—in contrast to objectives that make up a single purpose—are rather disparate. Similar to the “openness to possible ways of living”, characteristic of Sneddon's idea of deep autonomy,

progressive autonomy can be exercised as part of the larger project to freely consider and eventually undertake various modes of existence—perhaps quite different from those (e.g. certain career member or spokesperson) in which one is currently engaged (2001, 22). Aside from allowing one to actually pursue desired goals, this kind of openness introduces the possibility that one will be better able to—that is, with more success—achieve these goals.

For example, in considering the ways of life different from one's own (e.g. cultural practices), he or she can learn new means to achieve desired goals, which often seemed near impossible to one. Such regard may have been due to one being previously engaged in a way of life—directed towards desired goals—that involuntarily caused one to encounter many barriers and obstacles. In contrast, through openness to possible ways of living, one can reach a more broadened or enlightened outlook, perhaps coming to see that one's thinking about how to attain desired goals can be improved (i.e. oriented in a way that is more conducive to such attainment) by stepping outside one's usual mindset. It might be the case that a person's usual mindset narrows her perception or vision such that she is prevented from knowing effective ways to achieve personal objectives, as much as she might desire them. This may be overcome where the progressively autonomous individual makes the committed effort to explore avenues—previously unconsidered—of attaining the future he wants, thereby expanding his horizons to include the knowledge in question. Moreover, one may here consider various lifestyles, some of which might radically depart from and challenge one's own. This is worthwhile not just because of educational reasons, such as what one might learn about lifestyles themselves. It is also such because, in considering various lifestyles, one may see that there are several ways of attaining the same desired goals, while recognizing that each route, along the way, offers unique rewards not offered by the others. This may prompt a person to think, as a progressively autonomous

individual, not only of what kinds of goals she wants or the steps necessary to achieve them. It may also induce her to consider what lifestyle, overall, constitutes the most satisfying path towards the achievement of desired goals, even before they are reached. In the process, one may develop a new outlook towards his or her existence that, more than encompassing certain objectives, allows one to fully appreciate a particular way of being in the world—conducive to what one genuinely cares about.

Coming to realize exactly what these cares are may be a challenge in and of itself. This is so since they may, for example, be unconscious to the individual, even if he senses them at some vague or ambiguous level. At the same time, knowing what we care about may be obscured by certain biases, such as those socially or culturally acquired. For example, we may not know that we possess a particular care (e.g. to enter an unconventional career) because these biases prevent us from seeing this part of ourselves. Accordingly, we are unable to deliberately form desired goals, based on a clear or full awareness of this care. This may leave the progressively autonomous individual uncomfortable; he may sense that he has an intense, underlying care but not know what it is precisely, much less how to form goals based on it. In cases where the progressively autonomous individual feels that this care would, if “excavated”, enable him to actually form, as well as pursue, these goals in a way that would enhance the quality of his life, he may find it worthwhile to endure the potentially serious burden or challenge of stripping away the said biases (which might be deeply ingrained in him and so difficult to undo). In doing so, he may reach an important truth, namely a hidden care, that he can now incorporate as part of his conscious planning of the future. This care may also embody one of his deepest hopes and interests (i.e. strongest desires for particular aims or ends), which comprise a significant part of who one is. As such, in discovering this care, the progressively

autonomous individual can gain a better sense of his identity, possibly leading him, in turn, to see other veiled or concealed aspects of his personality. From this, the progressively autonomous individual learns more about the kind of person he is, including propensities for various things, which he can establish as new goals for himself. Commitment to these goals reinforces a person's true or genuine desires, which, especially where this commitment is resolute or strong in intensity, may also make it difficult for him to be easily swayed by the influence of others—including what they, perhaps erroneously, may attempt to get him to believe about himself or his future.

In contrast, a life that is based on strictly what others want one to do, and not what oneself wants to do (even if this involves following the lead of another person, such as a political or religious figure, or devoting oneself to the needs of one's children), can create a certain sense of emptiness in one's life; that is, make the individual feel he is not going after what he truly desires, regardless if, at some level, he enjoys doing what others want him to do, building a future around this as well. Where this occurs, one's life may generally be characterized by a considerable lack of fulfillment. If, in particular, this lacking results from being, such as because of social or political oppression, prevented by others from pursuing one's wants, one may experience his or her life as a constant failure to achieve what has special personal significance or value. As a result, a person may feel alienated from her true wishes, perceiving them as unattainable because of her external circumstances (i.e. interference from others). In other words, one's cares are felt but not seen as within reach. The danger of this is not only that one, feeling this way, can become frustrated or even depressed. It is also that, on account of this feeling, a person's outlook may undertake a negative hue or character to the point that she begins to believe that her lot is to be mainly or perpetually unsatisfied.

In other cases, however, it may in fact be that one's external circumstances are not primarily responsible for this kind of outlook but a "bad" attitude within oneself. For example, a person, resistant to acknowledging that anticipated personal failures are a result of his own weaknesses, may refuse to see one's unsatisfactory life-condition as his own fault. Instead, he may view others or the world as responsible for this condition, never thinking that he is largely its cause. As a result, he is not inclined to view himself as part of the "equation", namely the set of circumstances—including himself—that brings about the condition. An example of this is people who, not acknowledging their role in personal misfortunes, blame others for their unhappiness. This lack of acknowledgement, as long as it is maintained, contributes to one turning a blind eye to the real basis of one's discontent; one is, therefore, not likely to do anything to change oneself in order to become happier. Yet, this can be overcome where one, through constructive dialogue with a helpful or compassionate other, is led to recognize (ideally at a comfortable pace) one's involvement in his or her unhappiness. Having recognized this, one can proceed to alleviate such unhappiness in an effort that might be regarded as an inward kind of progressive autonomy—establishing and pursuing goals aimed at eliminating what within oneself, be they negative ideas, attitudes, or beliefs, prevent one from feeling contentment. In the same way that the progressively autonomous individual may work or strive through the world to achieve various aims, so can he here, navigating the realm of his psychology, realize objectives that improve and enhance the overall quality of his life.

Whether the progressively autonomous individual is, at some particular moment, seeking to realize these sorts or other kinds of objectives, he may, in the process, encounter challenges or circumstances that will force him to reconsider what kind of life he should carry out. For example, a person who repeatedly fails at some valued undertaking may eventually question

whether he should continue that pursuit. He might ask whether the undertaking is something that is realistic in light of his or her capabilities. In asking such questions, the progressively autonomous individual takes mental distance from the life he is living, which itself contains positive potential—the position enables him to reflect on or scrutinize his mode of existence, instead of being unquestioningly engaged in it, from which may emerge newfound truths about himself and his life. If, among these truths, is one that reveals or suggests that his mode of existence is not worth pursuing, he does not necessarily, as a result, fall into despair. For, in coming to know this truth, a person may be prompted to deliberate on the kinds of life-paths that are available to her. Through such deliberation, one can come to discover specific undertakings would be personally meaningful or valuable. In turn, one may reorient oneself towards a future that is both within one's power to achieve and worthwhile.

All this, however, may be postponed until one has had time to mourn or grieve the loss of a desired future, associated with a previous mode of existence in which one was engaged. At the end of this period, the progressively autonomous individual, however gradually, can begin to choose or formulate new objectives that fit with or constitute the kind of life he wants to live. Having possibly learned of where he “went wrong”—made certain mistakes that prevented him from achieving past desired goals—the progressively autonomous individual may here imagine or dream of an appealing future that earnestly takes this knowledge into consideration. In doing so, the progressively autonomous individual can guard himself against undertaking certain pursuits he foresees as leading him to make the same mistakes, preventing him from realizing newly established aims. He helps to ensure, therefore, that the road towards the future he wants will not be, disappointingly, averted. This is all the more likely where the progressively

autonomous individual pursues desired goals that are within reach, despite influences which might, to a degree that is not overwhelming, affect him along the way.

Such success might occur where the progressively autonomous individual follows a life-path where he regularly satisfies aims, in accordance with his abilities—including resisting various pressures that would sidetrack him from these ends. It may be the case that the achievement of these ends involves deliberately enhancing one's current capacities, so as to, for example, attain previously unfulfilled objectives. A possible criticism here is that if this becomes the purpose or focus of a person's activities, he effectively "lives in the past"—he does not move on with his life but is preoccupied with realizing objectives that characterize an earlier period of his life. This criticism, however, does not hold much weight. So long as one pursues desired goals, one progresses, and so advances, towards a future he or she wants. It, hence, does not matter that these goals may represent previously unfulfilled objectives; the progressively autonomous individual still moves towards satisfying objectives and does not remain stagnant.

Moreover, in freely coordinating one's efforts and activities around these goals, one, over time, can experience a valuable and rewarding life—characterized by a series of enjoyable and, perhaps deeply, fulfilling events. This, of course, presupposes that one is not forced to follow goals he or she finds painfully oppressive, such as those imposed by an evil regime. Having to follow these goals significantly undermines one's liberty, necessary for the coordination described to take place. In contrast, establishing and pursuing desired goals, as does the progressively autonomous individual, not only allows one to experience a life that is emotionally pleasant or agreeable. It also allows one to experience one's life as authentic, namely as true to his or her cares, hopes, and wishes. Through this experience, a person may feel the purpose of her life complements her greatest personal aspirations, as opposed to merely what others would

have her do. As such, she does not sense she passively moves through life, like a preprogrammed robot or machine. Instead, she is able to experience her will as the guiding force towards cherished and gratifying aims.

### **THE GENERAL LIFESTYLE OF THE PROGRESSIVELY AUTONOMOUS INDIVIDUAL**

The progressively autonomous life, as rewarding as it might be, is not necessarily, if ever, tantamount to living a life of unbridled pleasure-seeking. This, of course, would place such a life on par with hedonism. Rather, the progressively autonomous life is always the attempt to fashion or actualize a future that coheres with one's current desires—ones which, indeed, may be arduous to fulfill. When I live this way, I undertake self-directed action, the purpose of which may be to develop or generate a life-course that, because of its character (e.g. athletic or entrepreneurial), demands the exercise of particular skills and abilities. As such, the path I follow may require me to perform well in various areas, applying myself, perhaps, to surmount obstacles that stand in my way. The specific nature of such activity will vary according to what I ultimately aim to do. For example, in attempting to write a novel, I may use the power of imagination instead of my ability to run a certain distance, which has no apparent value in achieving the literary aim. Despite, however, the differences between activities used to undertake various pursuits, the activities themselves—when carried out in a progressively autonomous way—are primarily motivated by the strategic impulse to effectively attain what is beyond one's current grasp or possession. Where preserved or maintained, such an impulse can help propel one along a path that is burdensome and difficult to endure. Alone, however, this impulse does not suffice for the progressively autonomous individual to succeed on this path,

namely to realize challenging aims or objectives. It will also require he tactically employ his strengths. Specifically, this may require him to use the very best in himself, such as special talents and gifts (i.e. aptitudes), which make the attainment of challenging aims or objectives possible, as well as lessen the strain or exertion required in order to actually achieve them.

Whether we are talking about easy or difficult tasks, the exercise of progressive autonomy always contains within it the potential to refashion oneself into an enhanced version of the person one currently is. In the pursuit of desired goals, I may be forced to undertake activities that, in the process, hone my skills and abilities, thereby improving upon who I once was. For example, in pursuing the desired goal of turning my hobby into a profession I may have to do more than, however intensely, practice the hobby itself. In addition, I may have to learn to market myself properly, including how to network with others who will assist me in the attainment of the desired goal. By means of this, I may hone my skills and abilities to “make the right connections” (something which I may not have been willing or interested in doing before), allowing me, say, to make my hobby of singing into a full-time career. No doubt, I may along the way experience hardships and challenges that partially erode my confidence to achieve this objective, which may be all the more disappointing if I also consider it a personal dream (i.e. a high aspiration). However, as long as I persist in applying various skills and abilities towards the realization of this objective, I seize the self-enhancing opportunity to perfect them, which, when fulfilled, can restore confidence in me.

Moreover, where, in the pursuit of a desired goal, one’s belief in oneself is shaken, one may take no negative stance against the progressively autonomous life itself. On the contrary, such a life, in accordance with it being a possible means of self-growth (through the fulfillment of desired goals), may be still perceived by one as a veritable avenue of personal development

and reward—despite discouraging episodes he or she may, at times, have to endure. In seeing this, one, rather than abandoning it, may continue to embrace the progressively autonomous life as a way of bettering oneself over time, allows one to excel in pursuits that are, in and of themselves, gratifying. Such a person may in fact desire to live this life because it can be difficult—one in which she will have to steer oneself towards challenging but desirable outcomes, not guaranteed by external forces such as others (e.g. people who ensure one's place in an institution without any work on one's part). In living this life, one not only may be willing to accept the struggles it involves but welcome them—so as to experience the highly gratifying, anticipated reward of attaining rather difficult ends by the strength of one's own agency.

Unlike some of the theories we have seen in the previous chapter, progressive autonomy involves a kind of self-governance based on not only what is in but outside the mind, namely the world in which one can realize desired goals reflecting various intentions within oneself. This world, I would add, is an important and valuable topic for discussion on autonomy in general. In failing to address it, we turn ourselves away from the possibility of understanding how people deliberately engage with their surroundings, so as to carve a place within it. Such engagement, which we see in progressive autonomy, enables one to situate him or herself within a favourable circumstance—a domain in which one can regularly achieve a series of interrelated objectives, particular to the kinds of activity one can, and might be encouraged to, pursue within that domain (e.g. scholarly pursuits within the university environment). In doing so, one may enter a context that, in making certain options accessible to him or her, caters to one's preferences, thereby allowing one to, as it were, feel at home. This, of course, is in contrast to contexts that make one feel out of place, such as where one is prevented or discouraged from doing what has significance to one. This, for instance, may occur at an institution that prohibits one from

undertaking research that one values for its potential to lead to important, though controversial, discoveries.

When we are talking about autonomy with respect to one's engagement within the sorts of contexts described, we go beyond discussion of governing oneself psychologically, such as making decisions and endorsing or rejecting particular desires. We move into the external realm in which the individual may navigate situations of varying complexities, while attempting to secure states of affairs that will allow him to do what he has an interest in. A life led this way is one not simply free and unencumbered. It is also one that allows the individual to purposefully define his environment or setting, an act through which he can enlarge the scope wherein he can participate in the world as a successful, self-determining agent.

As such an agent, a person actively affects the course of his existence such that it will unfold according to the future he has projected for himself. In terms of progressive autonomy, this entails a person advances towards goals he desires, as well as is committed to achieving. It is important to note that the progressively autonomous individual, as much as he might desire a goal, may not actually value it. Admittedly, this sounds paradoxical. But, on closer look, we can see that one may want something but not appreciate it, such as the addict who desires his drug of choice but hates it for what it does to his body, mind, personal relationships, etc. All of this is to say that, even if it is likely (in particular circumstances) that the progressively autonomous individual will both desire and value his goals (e.g. wanting a diploma and appreciate it for the educational achievement it represents), this connection is not always guaranteed.

Nonetheless, the objectives of the progressively autonomous individual may be both regularly valued and desired in so far as they are anticipated to offer fulfillment that appeals to him and which he finds worthy. Such anticipation may also itself motivate the progressively

autonomous individual towards these objectives, as they, taken together, might represent or symbolize to him a future that is desirable on multiple levels—social, political, cultural, etc. Now, where the progressively autonomous individual both desires and values the goal towards which he directs himself, he, upon satisfying it, may experience something much more than enjoyment. He may also experience enduring happiness or joy, where the goal is perceived by him as having extraordinary worth. Indeed, the attainment of this goal may produce a sense of great fulfillment, corresponding to this worth—above and beyond the satisfaction of a future one cares about (in virtue of containing something one wants from it) but does not necessarily embody goals of special or profound significance.

We may also associate this kind of worth with one's most cherished hopes and interests. For, prized by a person, such hopes and interests may have a remarkable value for him, so much so that he would never be willing to give them up. In fact, pursuing them, the progressively autonomous individual may be engaged in a passionate form or mode of existence, in which he remains exceptionally steadfast or resolute in attempting to realize them. Specifically, this may be not only because of the great fulfillment the realization potentially brings. It may also be because the above engagement is a highly gratifying endeavour for one, even if, in the end, cherished hopes and interests are not actualized. For example, I may passionately engage in a life of music—consisting, say, of playing and composing for a particular instrument—regardless of whether my cherished hopes and interests of becoming a famous performer obtain. Apart from them, I passionately pursue this life because I both feel and view it as immensely satisfying—it is good on its own accord. As much as I at the same time may strive towards becoming a famous performer—never abandoning this aim for what it is worth to me—I will

always find my life of music, because of what it allows me to experience overall, as itself an endeavour to be genuinely treasured.

Moreover, living this way allows a person to be true to his inclinations. As such, one acts according to his preferences, which may provide him with a significant degree of satisfaction. A life based on this is, indeed, conducive to progressive autonomy. As much as such autonomy involves steering oneself towards particular objectives (i.e. personal control requiring some level of restraint or discipline over time), it is also one in which one follows desired goals, which, to some extent, reflect one's inclinations. It is important to note that exercising restraint or discipline, namely as it relates to keeping oneself on the path towards one's various objectives, does not alone guarantee one is actually following one's inclinations; it may be the case that one, while exercising the restraint or discipline that prevents their free expression, does what one does because he or she fears what not doing so would entail (e.g. breaking social custom with troubling consequences). As much as the denial of one's inclinations, as well as the restraint or discipline here involved, may be understandable in relation to, say, certain consequences one is trying to avoid, it ultimately prevents one from being progressively autonomous. As we have seen, this involves more than self-control, as important as it is in directing oneself along a particular path. It also involves following, rather than denying, one's inclinations in so far as they are represented by desired goals one has established for oneself.

At the same time, the progressively autonomous individual may find certain desired goals more valuable than others, in virtue of their symbolism. This may be so even if the perceived physical satisfaction of these goals is not very high. For example, one may view the desired goal of doing something that is right for one's family as more valuable than the desired goal of doing something that is right for oneself. The reason for this may be that the former goal, in one's

mind, symbolizes loyalty to his or her family, which, despite the level of physical satisfaction he receives from such fidelity, has greater importance to one than doing something that is right for oneself. In terms of progressive autonomy, this may be seen where a person sacrifices some of her self-interests in order to realize a future where she demonstrates, perhaps during a particular family ritual or occasion, the above loyalty. As this example suggests, the desired goals of the progressively autonomous individual need not be primarily based on satisfying one's self-centred needs or what may be regarded as egocentric. Rather, they may be primarily based on doing what is good for others (as part of one's philanthropic wants or inclinations), which, as a way of life, we might see embodied in the saint or martyr. But, perhaps at a more common or ordinary level, we may also see this represented in the behaviour of individuals in collectivist cultures, who put the interests of others before one's own. Entirely consistent with the idea of progressive autonomy is a truly altruistic life in which the individual, frequently giving up his own interests, pursues goals that will help other people and is which is why he desires to fulfill them. Admirably, he may do so even in the knowledge or belief that such a life is likely to involve having to endure suffering, without which the goals cannot be attained.

Before the progressively autonomous individual undertakes such a life, it would be prudent of him to honestly decide whether he cares enough about the interests of others that he would often pay less attention to his own, so as to fulfill theirs. He may here discover that he does in fact possess this care and so reasonably proceed to pursue the life in question. However, even if he discovers that he lacks this care and, hence, pursuing this life is not something he is willing to do, he, amid the process that led to this discovery, may recognize new and important truths about himself. Such truths can be constructively incorporated into his vision of the future. This might involve projecting goals that correspond to previously hidden desires, manifested by

the truths, and whose fulfillment he foresees as benefitting or enhancing his life. Moreover, in order for the progressively autonomous individual to plan a life that is meaningful and worthwhile, he must recognize in himself what he truly values and how to achieve this as part of the future he wants for himself. As this implies, progressive autonomy is not simply about individual strength or force, as might be revealed by courageous or brave action. It, where living a meaningful and worthwhile life is concerned, also involves planning out one's life in such a way that allows one to pursue what has real significance to one. In doing so, one may, indeed, feel attuned to one's hopes, cares, and wishes, all of which, if only indirectly, point to what one wants or seeks to gain from life. Though such attunement, in quality or intensity, may vary with the individual, one, in pursuing what has real significance to one, effectively authors his or her life such that it becomes defined by what genuinely and, perhaps, matters most to one.

Similar to Haworth, this, if it is to be carried out successfully, involves a level of responsibility, namely fulfilling commitments or promises a person has made to himself to pursue particular desired goals. In contrast, if he lacks any intention to do what he dreams or wants from life, he will hardly be able to motivate himself towards actually achieving this, much less authoring the course of his life in the process. It may be the case that the individual desires some future but does not "have it in him"—the real intention—of going after it. The individual here, and at best, may be partially progressively autonomous; wanting a certain future, he has possibly established, in some form, desired goals that embody it. But, of course, in order to become fully progressively autonomous, he must also intend and so be serious about attaining that future.

In line with Haworth's idea of the individual "control, competence, and independence" that is characteristic of the self-governing person, one who is fully progressively autonomous

applies himself, in mind and action, towards bringing about an anticipated state of affairs; he thereby makes a personal mark or impact on the world around him. Specifically, he does so to finally fulfill the above commitments or promises. The progressively autonomous individual develops himself in the world by materializing his desired goals, which, especially where he is interested in helping or coordinating his efforts with others, may have nothing to do with exercising power for its own sake or pleasure. Indeed, where the progressively autonomous individual has this interest, he may be motivated to serve the well-being of others. This occurs, for example, when one, perhaps as part of a genuine concern for the plight of the disadvantaged, seeks to alleviate their suffering. As a progressively autonomous pursuit, this involves, to some extent, organizing one's life around various humanitarian goals, the fulfillment of which ideally reduces the suffering in question. Though altruistic, this pursuit is not necessarily tantamount to pure self-sacrifice. For, by means of it, one goes after ends intended to benefit others but are, nonetheless, desired by one; it is not relevant that the satisfactions that may occur as a result of the pursuit are primarily experienced by others, instead of oneself. In fact, progressive autonomy is not undermined but maintained by the effort to achieve outcomes that one desires for those one will never know personally (e.g. distant citizens of a country other than one's own). And one may do so not in any way resentfully or begrudgingly but by a passionate willingness, investing his or her entire self into producing a future that enhances the lives of others. In the same way that one progressively autonomous individual may intensely pursue desired goals that will mostly bring himself benefit, so may another pursue, with the same ardour, desired goals that will better the condition of those less fortunate. Both kinds of progressively autonomous people seek to realize desired goals but of different natures.

No doubt, certain circumstances may influence and, in part, determine the sorts of desired goals one possesses. For example, one imprisoned may, in order to regain freedom in the near future, have the desired goal to be granted early release from incarceration. This may involve, say, a certain level of express cooperation (e.g. not defying authority, being confrontational, etc.), perhaps even more so than we are used to seeing in regular society, and which is a necessary condition for the attainment of his or her goal. One may, of course, want to rebel against this where the cooperation described is considerably difficult, as when others provoke one to anger. However, as part of the progressively autonomous pursuit of his or her desired goal, the inmate may resist this impulse. The expression of it, perhaps viewed as “bad behaviour”, might produce consequences against the realization of this goal, such as prolonged incarceration.

As this example suggests, we can make sense of one’s desired goals in terms of the context which he or she inhabits. But, what is more, we can make sense of these goals in terms of the kind of freedom one wants. We can, for instance, understand the inmate’s desired goal of early release as part of the task of achieving freedom, outside of prison, where he can undertake pursuits that are currently not possible for him—raising a family, starting an independent business, public outreach or volunteering, etc. In other words, the inmate desires early release in order to increase his freedom to do what his present conditions prevent him from taking part in. By the same token, the progressively autonomous individual, whether incarcerated or not, may purposely establish goals that widen the scope of his freedom. There may be certain objectives or points of life that he wants to eventually reach but realizes that right now, such as because of social constraints, he cannot—they are blocked from him. Responding to this, the progressively autonomous individual may, as part of a sub-project, determine how he will, over time, enter a

situation in which he will possess the freedom to undertake a larger project. This might involve, for example, figuring out particular strategies (sub-project) that will, temporally speaking, get him to a place where he will have the actual liberty to pursue various financial endeavours (larger project). For the progressively autonomous individual, desired goals may not, at any particular moment, be directly about gaining physical things, such as car or house, but a position in the world (socially, economically, etc.) that enable him to eventually achieve those things. In following these goals, the progressively autonomous individual uses his freedom to enlarge the range of opportunities available to him. As this suggests, the exercise of personal freedom may beget or result in more of it.

Similar to Oshana's view of the autonomous agent, the progressively autonomous individual may reconsider what, as part of the exercise of his freedom, has importance to him. In particular, the progressively autonomous individual can, by way of reflection, question the meaning of something in his life, in relation to desired goals. Through this, he may determine whether that thing still has significance for him and is worth preserving or continuing. For example, I may deliberate on whether doing a certain activity, as a means to achieving a desired goal, still has importance to me. Where I find it does, I may continue to undertake that activity, on account that I believe it is worthwhile and not a waste of time. On the other hand, where I find it does not, I may cease from the activity on account that I believe it is not worthwhile and a waste of time. As this example illustrates, the progressively autonomous individual is not necessarily, if ever, on "auto-pilot", namely goes after goals without stopping to think about whether the activities involved in their potential achievement are meaningful to him. In fact, the progressively autonomous individual who, as part of the goal to, throughout life, avoid behaving in a way he deems not meaningful (and possibly unsatisfying), may abandon a certain activity he

foresees—if carried out far enough—will allow him to experience an exceptionally rewarding future. For, the activity itself may altogether lack value for him. By the same token, he may view engaging in such activity as tantamount to enduring periods of displeasure or boredom, not adequately compensated for by any future outcome.

Through reflection, the progressively autonomous individual can also assess the moral character of his desired goals, with respect to what he values. For example, I may see my desired goal of becoming an educator as, aside from my enjoyment in the pursuit itself, ethically good. My reasons for this might be grounded in how being an educator benefits others, such as through learning, and the way I contribute to the overall welfare of society by playing this role. In recognizing these reasons, as well as the belief that becoming an educator is ethically good, I may come to see my future as not only desirable but as being virtuous. No doubt, this may hardly impress people not interested in living a progressively autonomous life that is moral or virtuous in any sense. For them, perhaps, what is important is that they use such autonomy to direct themselves towards a future in which they reap rewards and benefits at the expense of others, but not themselves. In the extreme, there may be a sadistic element in this; those described may actually take enjoyment or pleasure in knowing they harm others, where such wrong or injury is entailed by the said expense. However, for the progressively autonomous individual who is interested in leading a moral life, it may be prudent for him to, periodically, assess his desired goals and what they, morally speaking, involve. For, in not doing so, one may pursue—without knowing—desired goals that produce bad or unethical effects. In so far as he, in living a moral life, is concerned about working towards a future that does not produce these effects, the progressively autonomous individual would benefit from determining what kind of moral outcome his desired goals will, once fulfilled, potentially have. From this, the progressively

autonomous individual can decide on whether certain objectives are right to pursue, in virtue of the moral or immoral consequences that follow their realization.

Indeed, it may be the case that the progressively autonomous individual's motivations towards various desired goals are not immoral, though, as mentioned, the fulfillment of these goals are perceived to have immoral effects on the world. For example, I may be motivated by the moral impulse to, as a politician, create a public space to promote the morale of citizens. However, in light of certain evidence, I anticipate that the space would be largely used for existing sorts of criminal activity, having a harmful impact on the community. I may, therefore, not—for the time being, at least—directly pursue the goal of creating the space but, instead, undertake measures to undermine or eliminate this activity (as challenging as this might be). Similar to any other progressively autonomous individual who has no moral qualms about what drives him to pursue what he does, I may see nothing at all wrong with my motivation to create the space but withhold from doing so until I can reduce the criminal activity as described. In doing so, I do not abandon the future I want to see occur, namely the creation of certain public space, but actually find ways of ensuring that it comes into existence the way I, and perhaps believe others (e.g. citizens), want; that is, as a place free of criminality, producing certain undesirable or negative effects.

Though the assessment of his motivations may be primarily to discover their moral worth or character, such assessment, as an introspective activity, may also allow the progressively autonomous individual to know from where, psychologically, his motivations arise. As such, the progressively autonomous individual can more astutely comprehend or grasp what, internally speaking, influences him towards desired goals, which may not be apparent in how he perceives the goals themselves. For example, the progressively autonomous individual may come to

realize that what moves him towards his desired goal of becoming a prominent figure in his community is pride, rather than its overall welfare. Depending on his moral outlook, he may or may not attempt to rid himself of this motivation, not to mention abandon the desired goal altogether (out of shame of his motivation, for example). At any rate, engaging in the kind of self-exploration necessary to arrive at this point—where he is more aware of what, within himself, affects the path he takes and what he does—the progressively autonomous individual gains a special position; that is, he is able to directly monitor the extent to which his motivations exert pressure on him. Consequently, he can more efficiently regulate the potential effects this pressure will have on his behaviour, including both the establishment and pursuit of desired goals.

By extending or shifting his future-orientation to potential negative outcomes, the progressively autonomous individual can anticipate possible states of affairs he does not want to occur. Similar to what Hazel Markus and Paula Nurius illustrate in their work on “possible selves”, this is useful or valuable for the progressively autonomous individual since it allows him to perceive outcomes that may undermine or lessen the chances that he will actually attain his desired goals, which might also represent the kind of person he wants to become (1986). From this, the progressively autonomous individual can proceed to strategically plan his life such that he actively avoids external interferences, such as certain events, that disrupt the path towards the successful realization of his desired goals. For example, in anticipating that war is likely to occur in my environment, I can make the necessary arrangements to ensure my desired goal of keeping my family safe and free from harm. This might include deciding where we need to travel, how to get there, on what budget, etc. As such, by way of progressive autonomy, I take

precautions against a significant threat (i.e. possible war) from obstructing or ruining the future I want for myself, which in this case also involves others for whom I care.

Moreover, in avoiding certain outcomes that can disrupt the path towards the successful realization of his desired goals, the progressively autonomous individual can maintain and reinforce a positive trajectory; one that not only leads him towards the fulfillment of desired goals but is also not characterized by frustrations or harms, produced by unfavourable outcomes. As such, this trajectory allows the progressively autonomous individual to, overall, experience the path towards his future in an enjoyable, rather than, say, unhappy or miserable, way. By the same token, the process towards the future he wants may be valued or even embraced for its own sake—as a temporal bridge, as it were, the crossing of which allows one to directly experience pleasure or satisfaction. Where the progressively autonomous individual is especially intent on actually maintaining this process, he, aside from experiencing this pleasure or satisfaction, is less likely to be distracted by various temptations—however momentarily enjoyable their fulfillment might be—which lead him away from desired goals that have ultimate worth for him. It may seem paradoxical that one who possesses these goals would be distracted as such, given that they have crucial or supreme importance in one's mind. However, distraction of this sort can occur where the progressively autonomous individual, as much as he might value certain desired goals, temporally loses focus (perhaps because of specific or unusual life circumstances) of the path towards their successful realization. Without such focus, it is easier for him to be lured by enticements that, in effect, push him in a direction contrary to his desired goals. Here, the challenge of the progressively autonomous individual is to, on the whole, stay focused on the path in question, such that he does not become blind to both what he has to do to obtain the future he wants, as well as potential threats (i.e. outcomes) that can undermine this achievement.

Finally, in avoiding certain outcomes that can disrupt the path to the successful realization of his desired goals, the progressively autonomous individual may favourably navigate the world so as to minimize the physical and mental strain he experiences. For, such avoidance allows the progressively autonomous individual to fulfill these goals without having to endure challenges and stresses that follow immediately from the above outcomes. In particular, these challenges and stresses might include pains, emotional difficulties, and frustrations, which may intensify and accumulate every time he experiences the outcomes in question. In contrast, by often avoiding these outcomes, the progressively autonomous individual may effectively reduce or eliminate what would otherwise cause him tension; he thereby renders life “smoother”. As such, life is experienced as regularly proceeding along the lines conducive to his desired goals, allowing him to overcome states of affairs that would hamper or impair this movement. This, of course, is not to say that the progressively autonomous individual is immune or will never be affected by events that will have some unwanted consequence for him. Rather, what is being suggested is that, in strategizing his life so as to frequently steer clear of the outcomes in question, the progressively autonomous individual may successfully circumvent states of affairs that would make his life less enjoyable and, perhaps, unsatisfying.

## **SUMMARY**

Steering the course of his life is a central feature to the construction and development of the life-history of the progressively autonomous individual. Aside from the two main capacities, which characterize progressive autonomy, namely establishing and pursuing future goals, there, as we have seen, are more specific capacities that are or might be part of this. These capacities, as we have seen, include ongoing planning of the future, regulating the kind of influences that

affect one, perceiving barriers or obstacles in a way that allows one to more effectively move towards one's future, evaluating aims open to one and rationally deciding which are favourable to pursue, and carrying out a way of life in which one, on the whole, seeks to bring about a future that represents one's current desires. Indeed, these capacities, when applied, enable the progressively autonomous individual to positively shape and influence the unfolding of his life over time. Directing his life in this manner, he is able, at once, to be both the author and main character of his narrative, a key theme to which we now turn.

CHAPTER 3

**NARRATIVE AND PROGRESSIVE AUTONOMY**

Since the progressively autonomous individual not only governs himself but attempts to give a certain shape to his life-course or history in the process, it is appropriate that we refer to such activity as narrative. Now, at a basic level, narrative is a story. But as we will see in this chapter, various thinkers, adding to this, see it as a specific kind of story. For example, some view it as a story that is put together by the mind, while others see it as a sequence of events on which one's identity is based. I will present my own view of narrative that shows it to be an embodying story. In particular, I will present it as a process of which the progressively autonomous individual is both physically and mentally part and experiences firsthand the events that constitute it. Through this process, he directs the course of his life according to a projected (i.e. imagined) trajectory. Accordingly, I will provide a view of narrative that is more than a sum of happenings. Rather, it is an ongoing unfolding or development that is brought into existence and sustained by the person living it. Unlike the storyteller who creates a narrative by stringing together a series of moments, though not part of these moments themselves, the progressively autonomous individual is situated within the events he shapes and influences; he is the protagonist who writes, as it were, his life-story at the same time he traverses it.

As this suggests, I will, in this chapter, introduce an understanding of narrative that centres on the progressively autonomous individual's ability to determine his concrete future. As part of this endeavour, I will examine and discuss three kinds of theories on narrative. The first presents narrative as a sequence of events we think about or express, such as through words or writing (most of the theories fall under this category). The second presents narrative as a sequence of events which we directly experience. Finally, the third presents narrative as unnecessary for one's well-being. Though these theories have much to offer, they do not, as I will show, fully capture the dynamic idea of narrative I will introduce, representing and

illuminating the experience of the progressively autonomous individual. In my presentation of the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual, I will discuss what the above theories leave out, as well as why such a narrative is valuable.

Though we will entertain several different views of narrative, they are similar in at least one basic respect—they show narrative is chronological. Whether we are thinking about or living through a particular narrative, we experience or pass through a series of interrelated moments, constituting a segment of time or history. Knowing this, though, does not necessarily entail anything about the behaviour of one who may exist within these moments. Looking at such behaviour, however, I will explain how the progressively autonomous individual not only undergoes the development of his narrative but actively plays a role in influencing what happens therein. We will see how he, always looking beyond the present, does this by engaging in activities or behaviour aimed at realizing desired goals, the fulfillment of which brings his imagined future into accord with real life. At this point, his present matches or reflects what he once envisioned for himself.

For the progressively autonomous individual, narrative involves drawing on certain psychological capacities (not emphasized by other accounts of autonomy): foresight and planning. This entails envisioning or otherwise mentally constructing his possible future according to desired goals, comprising some segment—long or short-term—of his life. This segment is part of the greater life-story or narrative that constitutes the self-driven experience of the progressively autonomous individual, according to which he can control the outcome of events. Moreover, through foresight and planning, the progressively autonomous individual can help ensure he does not fall into living a life that amounts to a random conglomeration of moments. Instead, by way of these capacities he may establish a future that harmonizes with his

past and present, rendering his narrative not only the product of his intentions but one that is historically coherent. On reflection, he can see it as having a stable and, perhaps, predictable trajectory over time.

Turning to narrative helps to reinforce the idea that to be autonomous is not itself the same as being progressively autonomous. Being autonomous, of course, involves self-governance. However, such governance does not necessarily entail what is characteristic of and defines progressive autonomy—establishing and pursuing desired goals. For example, one can be autonomous by simply endorsing or rejecting present-based desires without any concern for the future. This is not conducive to the planning of the progressively autonomous individual, which is based on projecting a future he seeks to realize.

Now, a person who is autonomous, yet lacking this orientation, might be said to create her own narrative in so far as she, such as by various decisions, determines the outcome of a series of independent moments, without seeing them as making up a past, present, and future. Regardless, unlike the progressively autonomous individual, this person cannot, because of the missing orientation, actualize a narrative imagined or otherwise mentally designed in advance of its long or short-term realization. Also on account of the missing orientation, he or she cannot steer his or her life towards a projected future, representing a potential state of affairs that can be incorporated into an eventual past. Whereas this might be a concern for the progressively autonomous individual, seeking, say, to intentionally create a history that conveys a particular picture of himself, it is not an issue for the autonomous person who lives strictly moment to moment. For example, the progressively autonomous individual may be concerned about creating a history that shows him to be a compassionate individual. He may attempt to do this

through realizing various altruistic aims—helping the poor, sick, hungry, etc.—which do not enter the concerns of the autonomous person whose focus is only on the present.

It is important that we talk about narrative when discussing progressive autonomy for, in doing so, we illuminate the temporally extended nature of the progressively autonomous individual's attempt to realize various plans. Such an attempt cannot be explained or reduced to a single, isolated period. Rather, it can only be understood by viewing it as characterized by a series of interrelated moments—bringing together past, present, and future—in which the progressively autonomous individual continually directs or harnesses his goal-based efforts. Also, though his orientation is primarily future-oriented, we will not be able to make sense of his life simply by studying or grasping states of affairs this orientation encompasses. Instead, such knowledge is achieved by perceiving the self-made or defined trajectory of the progressively autonomous individual as it, like stories in general, unfolds over a span of time.

In contrast to other developments, such as the lives of others, this trajectory is part and parcel of the lived biography of the progressively autonomous individual. Only he, as its particular subject, can directly experience the events (mentally and physically) that constitute it. Moreover, if we just talk about, as with the theory of progressive autonomy, the individual establishing and pursuing desired goals while leaving out any discussion of narrative, we run the risk of focusing too much on his thinking and behaviour, while losing sight of the overall product—his narrative—these activities generate. This is especially important, as we will see, in the case where the progressively autonomous individual is concerned about creating a certain narrative that, aside from the activities that take place within it, conveys a particular theme or meaning.

We now turn to discuss and explore the various theories of narrative outlined above. There are two main reasons for doing this. First, it is to show the different ways narrative has been understood by various thinkers, particularly in philosophy, and how, despite their difference of perspective, they believe narrative to be more than simply what it is colloquially understood as, namely a story. Secondly, it is to show what these theories contribute of value to the discussion of narrative but, at the same time, what they leave out from it. As I will point out, these theories do not adequately capture the kind of self-directed life of the progressively autonomous individual, especially the kind of narrative or future-based thinking involved in this process. Accordingly, as the last section of this chapter, I will present my view of the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual, which, more than telling or thinking about a story, involves producing it through constant interaction with the world or one's surroundings. This interaction is guided and informed by one's perception of the future and what he or she actively seeks to attain from it.

There will be many theories presented in this chapter, more than in the previous chapters. Accordingly, this chapter will contain a rather lengthy discussion. In order, amid this discussion, to avoid losing sight of what the main argument of this chapter is, I would like to provide a brief summary of it here. Narrative may be conceived of a sequence of events in which a person is actually embedded and directs according to her will. As such, narrative can be more than simply a written or oral account. It is, rather, a self-driven development, which I will make clear and show with respect to the life of the progressively autonomous individual. Within this development, one does not precede one's narrative, as if standing outside it and bringing it into existence as a work from which one is detached (as, say, a painter is from his painting). Instead, a person and her narrative are continually intertwined, the latter being the temporal context in

which the former's life unfolds. Of course, a person may speak or think about her narrative, as a historical record. However, such a record is a verbal or mental representation and so is not to be confused with narrative, as I will be presenting it—a concrete process taking form in the world. Indeed, such a process constitutes the narrative structure of the progressively autonomous individual, in which he attempts to realize, as well as potentially fulfills, desired goals he has established for himself.

### **NARRATIVE AS A SEQUENCE OF EVENTS WE THINK ABOUT OR EXPRESS**

The intention of this section is to show narrative, according to the views of others, is something to which we are related, yet stand apart from. As such, narrative is something we are not directly embedded in. We will begin exploring this idea with Marya Schechtman. In her view, “we constitute ourselves as persons by forming a narrative self-conception according to which we experience and organize our lives” (2008, 162). As such, narrative is an idea that allows us to perceive and make sense of our existence over time. Specifically, this idea is a “self-conception” according to which the individual can imagine or project a future he believes he will encounter, for better or worse. More than simply a guess or random estimation, this may be based on and partly determined by my connection to both the past and present. Schechtman states, “in order to have a narrative self-conception in the relevant sense, the experienced past and anticipated future must condition the character and significance of present experiences and past actions. When I have a self-constituting narrative, what happens to me is not interpreted as an isolated incident, but as part of an ongoing story” (162). Further illuminating this idea, Christman states, “in spelling out what she means by narrativity in her theory, Schechtman clearly relies on the idea of classical, linear, stories” (2004, 698). All of this to say that narrative,

as the sort of conception that Schechtman believes it to be, is a view of one's life as in transition, developing—to various degrees—moment to moment.

According to Schechtman, “the narrative self-constitution view says that in developing and operating with such a narrative one constitutes one's identity as a person, and that the actions and experiences included in someone's narrative are, for that reason, her own actions and experiences” (2008, 162). The general point that Schechtman is making here is rather obvious: the events we experience as part of our ongoing life-history or narrative are ours. After all, in order to experience these events, we, and not somebody else, have to be present. Nonetheless, in making this point, Schechtman provides the basic ground for a valuable idea we will explore in further detail. That is, in understanding that the events we experience as part of our ongoing life-history or narrative are ours, we can view these events as something we are part of. As such, we may—if our powers permit us—be able to actively shape and live through these events, to which we bear a close relation. Through such activity, we effectively manage and regulate the course of our lives. We are not the passive subjects or outcomes of chance and circumstance but play a self-directed role in defining our narrative.

Though the trajectory of one's life is arguably forward-moving (contrary, as we will see, to the view of Galen Strawson), in that it is always unfolding towards and into the future, one's past—by reminding one of important aspects of oneself, such as of what one is capable—can be a useful guide in following this trajectory. Schechtman, situating narrative within the mind, maintains that “as with allegory, autobiographical memory often is a constructive and reconstructive process used to condense everyday memories of events and activities, extracting those features that embrace and maintain meaning in one's self-knowledge system. In turn, seemingly unconnected episodic recollections become allegorical in that particular events can be

remembered and used as instances of generalized life experiences to convey one's sense of self to an audience" (1994, 8). Thus, narrative is a remembered set or sequence of events that the mind, through autobiographical memory, puts together. In the process, the mind links "particular events" that reveal some aspect of the individual, such as a certain personal tendency or inclination. Memory, therefore, illuminates not only the individual's past but features of himself that he may have otherwise ignored or forgotten. In this way, memory is a form of self-knowledge, which, in illuminating the features in question, can help direct the individual along his life-trajectory. This does not necessarily involve memory ensuring that the individual make his past, present, and future cohere, such as through some continuous and distinct activity, but that memory can suggest to the individual ways of behaving in the present and future which accord with parts of himself that have endured over time. Behaving as such, the individual will not only feel a connection to his past but engage in action that reflects, rather than totally diverges from, who he is.

Providing an interesting illustration of the way we remember our personal past, Schechtman states that "like a scientist who creates a continuous graph by drawing a line close to, but not necessarily in contact with, all the data points, our autobiographical memories draw a smooth storyline among the various experiences we have had—a storyline which is constrained by the bulk of those experiences, but which need not contain them exactly, and which gives our lives a narrative unity" (2007, 9). As such, the kind of narrative that autobiographical memory provides is one that is primarily grounded in the past—events that have already occurred in one's life. As Schechtman suggests, this narrative is one that does not necessarily encompass all our experiences but is selective in that, perhaps because of the significance they have in relation to one another or to the individual, it only links together a certain number of them. The "storyline"

that emerges from this offers a coherent record of what the individual has so far done in life, possibly revealing a certain level of performance in a particular area or pursuit.

It is important to note that this storyline, though arguably continuous with the life one now experiences, is viewed retrospectively and so primarily represents how one remembers one's past (which is tracked by the non-pathological person as the part of his narrative that has been) rather than how one originally experienced it. This is not to invalidate the truth or legitimacy of the way one remembers his or her past. Rather, bearing this in mind, one may be more inclined to reflect on and analyze the extent to which such a past contains fictions (e.g. confabulations). In doing so, one may be able to identify false memories and, hence, get at a version of one's history that better reflects the way things actually were. For example, a person may feel that a certain remembered action, of which he is the author, is a false memory. He feels this since the action is too out of line with what he genuinely believes he is capable of. As such, he may ask others, present during the time to which the memory refers, whether the action actually occurred. The responses they give may allow him to confidently conclude that the above memory is indeed false, as when the responses confirm that the action contained by the memory did not happen (e.g. "You never carried out the action"). Conversely, the responses might prevent him from arriving at such a conclusion, as when they confirm that the action did happen (e.g. "I'm certain you acted that way, as much as you might believe you are incapable of doing so"). Either way, the individual's actual or concrete history can become more transparent, as opposed to obscured, to him.

Indeed, the greater our awareness of such history, the better we are to tell what kind of person one is. Related to this idea, Schechtman states, "only when the facts [of a person] have been interpreted and presented as part of a smooth and continuing narrative does a picture of the

character underneath and of the life of a person emerge” (1994, 11). Thus, the kind of person one is, including, say, whether he is generally moral or immoral, emerges from one’s narrative. Whatever specifically about someone is revealed by it, the picture that comes to light here is always historical. In other words, the kind of person that emerges from one’s narrative is mainly who, as evinced by various events, one has been up until the present. No doubt, this is important. For, if we are to know who a person has been over time, not to mention how they have developed over this period, we must look at and understand the part of his narrative that largely characterizes his past.

This perhaps comes as no surprise to us; we often do not believe we truly know someone unless we have a good sense of his or her history, as much as their current actions or behaviour might express an aspect of their identity. By the same token, a person may not know who she is without being entirely able to perceive a narrative that incorporates her past, present, and future. Such lack of ability has been observed by Lloyd Wells in his study of a bipolar patient. Commenting on his findings, James Philips states, “a full self-narrative must integrate the past into a present that projects itself into the future. We do not see much of this happening during the patient’s alternating mood states. When either depressed or hypomanic, he seems to be a product of that mood state, without much reflection of the larger picture of his life or the course of his fluctuating mood states. Doctor Wells attempts to engage him in such reflection, but he resists the engagement” (2003, 8). Thus, the patient, as might others who are psychologically similar, may primarily experience himself as the result or “product” of differing mood states, effectively preventing him from reaching a significant level of awareness that would enable him to see his life in terms of a past, present, and future that gives him at least an adequate sense of who he is, has been, and might become. This awareness might also be lacking in those with

dissociative disorder. Evidence of this is presented by Wells who studied Mary, a woman with the condition. According to Wells, she “spoke of the ongoing nature of time and her perception that she had never ‘finished’ being any particular age: ‘I can be three or eighty; maybe it averages itself out [Mary’s words]” (2004, 301). As such, individuals like Mary may find it difficult, if not impossible, to view their lives in terms of the past, present, and future, while feeling stuck or frozen in some moment or period of time (e.g. personal age). Consequently, they may lack any reason to project a future they, like the progressively individual, can attempt to realize as part of their narrative.

Yet, as clinical psychologist Menna M. Jones found in her study, individuals with bipolar disorder are productive at work when they were not subject to the above mood states (2005, 6). In particular, Jones states that these individuals “reported being able to maintain good work functioning, while the negative influences of a history of BD [bipolar disorder] (e.g. a legacy of disrupted work history and medication side-effects) were out-weighed by such positive effects of BD as facilitating interpersonal relations in the workplace and attitude to work” (2005, 6). This suggests that under beneficial circumstances, such as when receiving proper medical attention or treatment, individuals with bipolar disorder may be able to act in a productive manner and, hence, in a way that requires them to reflectively coordinate their activities over time. Analogously, those with dissociative disorder, given the same circumstances, may also be able to exercise this capacity. All of this is to say that though there are episodes in which the above temporal awareness is lacking in certain people, such lacking may not be a permanent feature of their existence but a challenge that can be overcome when the conditions (e.g. good healthcare) to facilitate this are in place. Where this challenge is overcome, such individuals may begin to

see, perhaps with the aid of therapy or clinical intervention, that they are headed towards a future, the outcome of which is affected by what they have been doing up until the present.

Similarly, the picture of the individual that emerges from a person's narrative, as understood by Schechtman, might, in addition to revealing what she has so far done, provide indication or suggest what she might do in the future. This picture may contain, for example, evidence of various personal dispositions, traits, and tendencies, which, since they have endured over time, lead us to believe that they will cause the individual to continue behaving in a certain manner. All of this is to say that one's past narrative can illuminate one's future narrative. Moreover, one's past need not be viewed as separate or detached from one's present or future but interconnected with them. Touching on the idea, Schechtman maintains, "it is precisely because our lives do not appear to us as a meaningless hodge-podge of events and experiences, but rather as an unfolding story, that we are able to act from reasons, plan for the future, take responsibility for the past, make commitments, come to decisions, and engage in the wide variety of complex activities definitive of the lives of persons" (1994, 11). Alternatively, it is arguably because we exercise the above ability that "our lives do not appear to us as a meaningless hodge-podge of events and experiences". In either case, our narrative—when thought about—does not present itself to us as random or disorganized. Rather, perhaps with the aid of some mental function, it does so as "an unfolding story" and, therefore, a unified, though changing whole. Viewed as such, our lives are perceived as a series of interdependent events, with respect to which we can engage in a "wide variety of complex activities" that provide our lives with meaning and coherence.

Arguably, the more we can become aware of the unfolding story mentioned by Schechtman, the more will we be able to know who we are at any particular moment. Similarly,

Kim Atkins, pointing out that narrative is something we stand apart from, maintains, “our personal histories precede our explicit self-understandings and so, our lives need to be recounted in order to be understood. As an individual’s past becomes known to her through the resources of her carers, associates and culture, that understanding forms an essential part of the context in which she understands her present situation and who she is” (2004, 346). Thus, in order to understand or grasp who we are, we must know our narrative. As Atkins points out, we do not become aware of our narrative in isolation but in relation to others, who, such as through storytelling, illuminate to us our history. Moreover, as Atkins suggests, the more the individual knows his past, the better he is able to understand his current circumstance. As this suggests, knowledge of one’s past provides insight into what one experiences now. If one does not have, say, because of amnesia, a truthful sense of one’s history (as it was lived and experienced), this does not totally eliminate the possibility of further developing one’s life. It may, however, prevent one from doing so in a way that is reasonable in light of abilities one, consciously or not, can remember one has. For example, in not being able to remember that a person is a good painter, he may be prevented from reasonably developing a life according to the exercise of this talent. The recollected narrative that may have shown him, such as through personal accomplishments, that he has such abilities is not available to him. The same narrative may also have reminded him, such as through personal failures, that he lacks certain abilities. Accordingly, he may unintentionally pursue a future that is far-fetched or even impossible for him.

Like Schechtman, Atkins focuses on the historical dimension of narrative, namely the past. More specifically, Atkins shows us the value of what this dimension can tell us about ourselves and situation. In doing so, she, also like Schechtman, illustrates that the past can

reveal aspects of ourselves we might otherwise be blind to in the present. By becoming aware of these aspects, we can perceive how our life has been and, by comparing it to the present, see if our life is still the same way. In the case that it is, we might expect that we will repeat, to some degree, some aspects of the past, be they good or bad. At the same time, we can arguably understand one's actions, whether they containing these aspects or not, in terms or as part of a larger narrative. On this view, Crowther, illuminating the separateness between ourselves and narrative, states, "it is only through being identifiable in relation to long or short term narratives concerning intentions and their outcomes that a person's actions become intelligible" (2002, 435). Thus, one's actions can be understood within a particular sequence of events in which one's actions occur and are connected with one another. As Crowther suggests, this connection might rely or depend on a link between one's "intentions and their outcomes".

Moreover, as Crowther implies, when we want to understand one's actions, we do not simply turn to the world (where one's actions take place) but inward, thinking about or trying to make sense of the "long or short term narratives" that compose one's life. This will allow us to gain a better grasp of the individual's behaviour, as might emanate and be expressed by the above intentions and outcomes respectively. If understanding one's actions allows us to know who someone is, narrative, always representing some stretch of time, will enable us to understand who someone has been so far. Narrative, therefore, can point to the identity of an individual, as conveyed by various actions—from the personal to the political.

We can apply Crowther's idea of narrative as a way of making sense of someone's actions to not only the actions one has already committed but those one will commit in the future. Specifically, if we want to know why someone, for example, plans or wants to engage in certain behaviour at a later date, we can discover this by turning to one's imagined narrative—

the segment of one's history that one anticipates for oneself. In doing so, we can make sense of both one's past and present actions, in relation to non-immediate goals that define and constitute one's future. Actions that had seemed strange or bizarre to us may, within the context of one's narrative, now seem comprehensible and, perhaps, even reasonable in light of the objectives one has established for oneself.

Aligned with this view, Crowther argues, "for a self-conscious being, the character of its present is defined not only by its immediate relation to the perceptual field, but equally by the way in which this relation is informed by a current concept of the past and the future...Human agents exist in a present that is the expression of an on-going narrative. Its temporal horizon is that of a narrative whose meaning changes on the basis of new circumstance" (2002, 438). Thus, the individual's present is not an isolated moment but affected and influenced by the way in which he thinks about "the past and future". He understands what is happening now in terms of what has transpired, as well as what will or is expected to occur. This illustrates that the individual's present is not something removed or separate from the other temporal dimensions of his life, namely his past and future, but connected to and partially determined by them. Accordingly, how the individual views himself in the current situation cannot be fully dissociated from earlier and later parts of his narrative, which, to some extent, condition this situation. This will possibly change the individual's range of concerns in so far as what he cares about may be affected by his perception of both his past and future. For example, one may no longer care to become a professional cyclist in virtue of seeing that one has not demonstrated sufficient skill and talent needed for that but still cares to take cycling expeditions for recreation and enjoyment. As this example suggests, the range of one's concerns may depend on more than

what is happening now. Rather, it may be shaped and influenced by how one views the temporal expanse—the “on-going narrative”—of one’s life.

Such perception may also affect the extent to which one believes a goal is worth pursuing. In particular, one may envision oneself positioned in relation to a near or distant objective in way that makes it more or less appealing to go after. Illuminating this idea, Crowther states that “once an event or situation has gone into the past it has gone forever and cannot be recovered. A spatially distant situation, however, is not irretrievable by virtue of spatial distance per se. The key factor in terms of such distance is how much time it would take to make contact with the desirable situation, and whether the attainment of it would make the expenditure of that amount of time worthwhile” (2002, 439). Thus, what is important in determining whether it is “worthwhile” to attempt to achieve various objectives is not simply if their fulfillment would bring one pleasure. Also important is whether the amount of time required to reach such objectives is reasonable in virtue of the reward and satisfaction their fulfillment will offer. For example, one may find it worthwhile to become a doctor because the hard work and discipline this entails is more than compensated by the reward of improving the health and well-being of others as a doctor. This might be subsumed as a part of a cost-benefit analysis in which one attempts to determine whether the overall satisfaction one will receive as a doctor, in the long-term, makes up for the challenges he or she will have to deal with along the way of becoming one. The question here, as in other similar cases, that may arise in one is, “Will the journey of becoming what I want to be pay off when I arrive at my destination?”

Similar to Crowther, Dan Zahavi, while showing that we stand apart from narrative, looks at the way that narrative facilitates certain understanding. As Zahavi states, “a storyteller will typically impose more coherence, integrity, fullness and closure on the life events than they

possessed while simply being lived. To put it differently, a narrative necessarily favours a certain perspective on one's experiences and actions to the exclusion of others" (2008, 183). As such, narrative orders and brings together a sequence of events, so as to present a "certain perspective on one's experiences and actions", which may, in turn, become the focus of, say, a listening audience. One reason one might do this is to present a positive or agreeable picture of oneself to others. For example, in wanting to give others the impression a person is accomplished in her field, she may, as part of an oral narrative, string together various events in her life that convey she has earned several professional achievements. This, of course, does not necessarily entail dishonesty on the part of the narrator. Rather, in line with Zahavi, this may be done in order to, aside from the impression in question, reveal to others that one's life has been characterized by a certain continuity, suggesting one, over time, has been committed to a particular pursuit. Hence, others may view him or her as having integrity, instead of being inconsistent or erratic as might be an opportunist in search of any kind of success. This may be viewed in contrast to one who admirably remains steadfast to a particular pursuit (e.g. trying to find a cure for a disease) regardless of what success may follow.

According to Zahavi, "elaborate storytelling might serve a function: it might be an attempt to make up for the lack of a fragile self-identity" (2008, 183). As this suggests, telling a narrative about one's life that is rather detailed or complex may be a way of dealing with not having a real sense of who one is. This sense might originate, for example, on account of one not having or perceiving any purpose in one's life. In order to rectify problems of this sort, the individual may create or build a narrative out of which, as Schechtman similarly points out, emerges a picture of who one is. In particular, a person sees this picture, if only indirectly, by viewing the actions and events that make up the narrative he has constructed. Furthermore,

telling the above sort of narrative may also be due to the individual experiencing his narrative as under-developed, namely not formed to the extent that he, say, on the basis of realizing difficult though meaningful objectives, wants. In such a case, the individual, to himself or others, might present a comprehensive story, including, for example, forces and events that acted against him, to explain how his narrative came to be under-developed. This may, in turn, justify to himself or others why his narrative is in its current, unsatisfactory state. On a positive note, this may also give him new perspective on factors responsible for holding back a favourable development of his narrative.

Still, there are those who have a fragile self-identity who do not compensate for it with a complex narrative. The fragility of such identity may, for example, be based on a lack of strong belief in some competency, such that criticism from others is enough to ruin or destroy this identity. In other words, the integrity of one's self-identity could not withstand this criticism. Hence, where this criticism is introduced, it will cause one to stop believing that one is the bearer of a particular ability. We may see this where the individual stops believing he is a good entertainer (i.e. self-identity) after receiving criticism that he bores audiences, while at the same time making no attempt to provide any compensatory narrative as to why he received the criticism (e.g. feeling ill has led him to give a series of poor performances lately).

As this implies, there are certain cases where creating, much less expressing, a complex narrative is not one's response to experiencing a fragile self-identity. Rather, one may not do anything about it, even if it based on an erroneous, perhaps, unconscious belief about one's competencies. This belief may be that one does not have the ability to be a good entertainer when, by legitimate standards (e.g. those endorsed by experienced members of the entertainment world), one does. Though such an individual is constantly at danger or risk of having their self-

identity undermined in the face of criticism from others, he may avoid this by either coming to realize, such as through several successes as a performer, that he in fact has the ability in question or at least by coming to see that criticism from others does not necessarily entail his worth as a performer and that there are other measures, such as the above standards, that can actually confirm he is a good entertainer. In either case, the individual, without a complex narrative being part of the picture, can sustain a fragile self-identity in the face of criticism and potentially strengthen it in the process. He may also come to see that certain factors, such as unwarranted criticism from others, has held him back from carrying out the life he ultimately wants to live, be it as an entertainer or something else.

With this in mind, the individual can proceed to figure out, as through effective planning and strategizing, how to manage or overcome the potential impact of various factors in the future, which impaired him the past. Through this, he is more likely to achieve the desired development of his narrative. On the other hand, where a person perceives her narrative has developed favourably, she may seek to actively remember it so as to lead herself to new experiences that build upon old ones and, in the process, enhance her overall life-experience. For example, she may, while remembering a favourably developed narrative in which she was a consistently a good student, lead herself to, if late in life, enter university for the first time. At the same time, she may gain the sense that her life is improving and so experience it enhanced or bettered as a whole. Moreover, it is important, whether one perceives it to be favourably developed or not, to at least periodically remember one's narrative. For, if it completely disappears from one's mind, one may find it impossible or difficult to believe that one is the bearer of a particular or specific history. Without such a belief, one may not feel at all

differentiated from others, thereby preventing one from experiencing oneself as a unique person—a potential source of pride, confidence, and esteem.

Where it occurs, this kind of experience may remain intact despite several changes to one's narrative. This is so since these changes, though potentially causing one to view oneself in a new light, do not necessarily erode one's belief that one has a distinct past. Supporting this idea, Zahavi states, "unlike the abstract identity of the same...narrative identity can include changes and mutations with the cohesion of a lifetime. The story of a life continues to be reconfigured by all the truthful or fictive stories a subject tells about him- or herself" (2008, 182). One's narrative can be maintained, even as it takes on various forms throughout the stretch of one's life. Thus, one can continue to view oneself as the unique person described above, regardless of range of developments that take place within one's narrative. Such developments, as much as they might be part of a life trajectory one primarily directs, are not necessarily caused by oneself alone. Rather, there may be various forces or influences that play a role in these developments, external to one. This is not to say that such forces or influences are completely alien to one but that their impact on one's narrative does not simply rely on one's own agency.

In line with this view, Zahavi states, "when I interpret myself in terms of a life story, I might be both the narrator and the main character, but I am not the sole author. The beginning of my own story has always already been made for me by others and the way the story unfolds is only in part determined by my choices and decisions" (2008, 18). Zahavi here points out that one's narrative is socially influenced—it is, in part, created and developed by those around one. This might occur, for example, when one's family members, who have seen one grow and mature, tell him or her about various events of his or her life, which one does not fully remember. In the process, one becomes aware of one's narrative in a way that is, to some extent,

determined by the people in one's life. Of course the individual does not have to accept, especially where he believes it false, what he is told—events or otherwise—about his life. Indeed, it is not imprudent or unwise for him to question the validity of what others tell him about his life when it does not fit well with his conception of how his life has been so far. Here, the individual might feel the need to investigate or inquire into some aspect of his life or history that he has held as true. In challenging this belief, the individual potentially experiences an intellectually enhancing effect—a greater awareness of the truth of his life or narrative. He may thereby correct or eliminate an erroneous way of heretofore regarding his life-story, replacing it with a more accurate understanding of what he in fact experienced. If he is interested in periodically, such as through artwork, representing actual events that took place in his life, arriving at such understanding may be a goal to which he regularly strives.

Overall, developing and steering one's life may be influenced by the kind of narrative one believes is suitable to live in one's society. Related to this idea, Kwame Anthony Appiah argues that "my story...should cohere in the way appropriate to a person in my society...For modern people, the narrative form entails seeing one's life as having a certain arc, as making sense through a life story that expresses who one is through one's own project of self-making" (2005, 23). As Appiah suggests, the "narrative form" of one's society will influence him or her to see one's narrative in a particular way, such as "one's own project of self-making". This does not necessarily prevent one from doing as one desires or wishes. Rather, as in the case of "modern people", one's narrative form can encourage one to see one's life as something one independently designs. How one does this exactly is up to him or herself. Admittedly, there may be specific narrative forms, such as those found in certain cultures or societies (e.g. strongly collectivist), that discourage people from seeing one's life as something one independently

designs. Nonetheless, as a guide to how one views one's life, a specific narrative form may contain the potential to view one's life as a work, as it were, one is in charge of; a life-story one is ultimately responsible for shaping according to one's own will.

Whatever its form, narrative is arguably characterized by particular temporal aspects, closely related to various events. Christman, contributing to our understanding of narrative as a process from which we stand apart, illuminates three of these aspects. The first is "causal connectivity", according to which narrative events are linked together such that earlier ones produce and are linked to later ones (2004, 702). For example, getting a raise at work (event one) leads someone to buy a new car (event two). The second is "teleological connectivity", according to which narrative events ultimately lead to a certain state of affairs (703). For example, the events of one's narrative may eventually amount to one being a political leader. The third is "thematic connectivity", according to which narrative events are connected under a larger idea, such as the struggle for justice (705). We might see this, for example, when the events of one's narrative show or convey that one makes the constant effort to ensure fairness and equality in circumstances, such as under an oppressive regime, where this is difficult to achieve.

All of these aspects can potentially be discovered in one's own narrative, when one thinks about or reflects on it and, perhaps, in the process see various enduring patterns that characterize one's life. For example, upon reflection, one may discover a sequence of events—characterized, say, by a pattern of repeated behaviour—in one's narrative that led him or her to enter an academic discipline (causal connectivity), that the greater purpose of this sequence is to lead a life dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge (teleological connectivity), and that this all falls under the larger idea of a genuine appreciation or love for education (thematic connectivity).

It is important to stress here that, in line with the above, these aspects appear through such thought or reflection, rather than empirical observation, as these aspects do not actually exist in the outside world but emerge through a conception of one's biography. Furthermore, these aspects each imply that one's narrative constitutes a temporal unity, characterized by interrelated events. As such, the events of one's life are not discrete or separate moments but make up a cohesive whole, which may become apparent to one's mind.

This idea is consistent with the view that one's life can be made of several strands, representing sets of events in which the individual partakes in different activities. Reflecting this view, Christman states, "many sequences of a person's life proceed quite independently of each other; plans and projects in one area of experience remain quite separate (in time as well as space) from other plans and projects" (2004, 702). As such, one's narrative may be made up of various "plans and projects" which do not overlap with one another. Instead, we might say, they unfold in independent realms—social, political, personal, etc.—of the individual's life. Arguably, the more such realms within the individual's life, the more complex and, therefore, rich his life will be overall. Moreover, in pointing out that these plans and projects are detached from one another "in time as well as space", Christman suggests that the individual's narrative is not necessarily characterized by any one grand purpose, embodied by only one, enduring sequence of events. Rather, his narrative may embody and be shaped by various circumstances in which he is devoted or committed to realizing many plans and projects (as well as sub-activities within them) that evince a range of purposes. In particular, these purposes may be what gives the individual's life special meaning, as much as they might differ and having nothing to do with one another. For example, one may seek to become a responsible pet owner and champion race car driver, each pursuit involving different plans and projects that point to

different purposes in one's life. These purposes might be, on the one hand, to properly take care and raise an animal companion and, on the other hand, to be victorious in motor competition. Though dissimilar in character, both pursuits, taken together, arguably add special meaning to one's life, allowing one to regard one's narrative as personally valuable and worthwhile (rather than indifferently as might one not satisfied with the course of one's life).

At the same time, however, it is prudent or wise for the individual to keep in mind that, as Christman states, "we experience tragedies or bursts of good fortune that could not be foreseen and which are not planned" (2004, 703). Thus, however positive he might regard his narrative, perhaps on the basis of consistent accomplishments he has made and good relationships with others he has formed over time, there is always the chance the individual may undergo a set of unexpected events that either significantly benefit or hinder him. As much as he might welcome the former, the individual may, given various factors, be forced to face the latter. In order to avoid or overcome the frustration or even despair that may result from this, the individual can, with some degree of courage, accept that he might have to undergo negative events that cannot be avoided. In doing so, he can ready himself, as through certain countermeasures, to offset the undesirable impact these events would have on his life. Furthermore, the individual, on account of this impact, may be prompted to step back from life, as it were, and think about what is realistic for him in light of the effects the impact has had. In the process, he can begin to formulate new objectives that are actually within reach. This, of course, does not entail that the individual, when the above impact occurs, should not grant himself a period of mourning during which to cope and deal with what the impact has caused him to lose, such as a cherished opportunity or loved one. Indeed, such a period may be crucial, if not required, in order for him to overcome the loss in question—to distance himself from it in a way that allow him to

comfortably move on with his life. As he nears the end of this period, the individual may mentally reorganize his narrative so as to align himself with projected goals or aims, whose fulfillment infuses new vitality into his life.

In Christman's view, "many factors that crucially define the path of our lives were unplanned and random, making no sense at all except in that we responded to them and built our subsequent life around them. Lives may have themes (plural)—organizing ideas through which certain projects and periods can be understood—but few lives have one single theme" (2004, 706). As such, one's narrative may contain many themes, according to which events and activities within it are rendered intelligible, and which may also enhance the quality of one's life through a valuable diversity (such as based on meaningful social roles, friendships, artistic endeavours, etc.) these themes potentially introduce to it. Moreover, as Christman suggests, "many factors that crucially define the path of our lives" are not only unforeseeable but are the basis on which we may undertake activities or projects, representing various themes in our narratives. For example, in responding to a major natural disaster (an unforeseen event), the individual may commit himself to finding temporary shelter, helping others harmed by the disaster, etc. This may reveal different themes within the narrative of the individual, such as taking care of one's own well-being in dire circumstances, assisting others in serious need, and the like.

As this example illustrates, the activities or projects of one's narrative, as well as their associated themes, are not all necessarily the result of a desire or wish alone. Rather, they, in line with Christman, may be ways of adapting to new circumstances, which one may or may not welcome. This is not to say, of course, that even where the circumstances are not welcome, one is automatically prevented from engaging in activities or projects that one does not enjoy. For,

perhaps unlike in the described case of natural disaster, certain circumstances may prompt one to respond to them in ways that calls one to utilize various skills, talents, and capacities. As a potential form of self-affirmation, such utilization may provide the individual with an enhanced sense of power and well-being, offering him a significant level of satisfaction. In the process, the individual may be encouraged to take on rather challenging or demanding pursuits, believing that he possesses the efficacy to achieve certain ends. Once realized, these ends, if similar in character, can represent gratifying moments of personal ascendancy in one's life, which, collectively, may represent themes such as overcoming difficult obstacles, humanitarian work, winning fair competition, etc. Such themes, especially if they endure throughout one's narrative, may also be testament to one's capacity to often do good for oneself and the world, potentially strengthening the quality or positive character of one's self-concept.

As much as this concept might be derived from one's life experiences, it does not necessarily embody every aspect of them. On this view, Christman argues, "at no time will self-conception include the limitless details of my entire causal nexus—the number of air molecules bouncing against my foot, for example. Self-interpretive activity, which forms the core of the self in narrative theories, is selective and partial, leaving out of account most of the causal sequences in which we figure" (2004, 703). As such, one's self-conception, as much as it might illuminate, does not provide an exhaustive but limited account of the details that constitute one's existence. Which of these details precisely one's narrative leaves out or includes may depend on various mental factors, such as an unconscious bias to primarily view one's life in terms of moral sequences of events (e.g. reforming bad behaviour in others) of which one is the main cause. Accordingly, one's conception may be based on only some events or details of one's narrative, which one becomes aware of on account of these factors. This idea implies an important point

about one's perception, namely the way one thinks about or remembers one's narrative is not necessarily a pure reflection of one's existence. It could be that the way one perceives one's narrative bears little, if any, relation to the manner in which one's life actually unfolds.

For example, feeling he has produced a great artwork, which is in fact substandard or inferior, the individual may falsely believe he has finally reached the point along his projected narrative of becoming an exceptional artist. Here, we might say, he has overestimated the extent to which he has succeeded in his life (as much as he might have the potential to reach high levels of success). As this suggests, the individual's feeling of having produced a great artwork does not necessarily guarantee he has reached the associated narrative aim of becoming an exceptional artist. On the other hand, to prevent deceiving himself that this aim has been reached, the individual, perhaps like others talented and accomplished, may hold himself accountable to well-grounded criteria of excellence, such as determined by experts, which, when met, ensures he has actually reached the aim. What these criteria are with respect to any particular narrative aim is open to debate and beyond the scope of our discussion. Nonetheless, we may at least say the purpose or function of using these criteria can be to truthfully determine the extent to which the individual sees his narrative as having attained a certain level of success actually mirrors reality. Rather than simply being a restriction or imposition, such criteria, where taken seriously, can also move one to develop or cultivate various skills and abilities, necessary in order to make advances along one's narrative. We will explore this in more detail later this chapter.

Illuminating the revelatory character of narrative—distinct from the person who might articulate it—Gregory Currie and Jon Jureidini maintain that “narratives are...highly expressive objects. They are artifacts: the intentional projects of agents who intentionally give their creations the essential features of things of that kind. So also are things like hammers, houses

and motor cars. Things of all these kinds may be said to be expressive of mental states” (2004, 418). As Currie and Jureidini suggest, narrative is based on “mental states”. Arguably, therefore, without a thinker, a narrative cannot be articulated. Stated differently, there must first be a mind in which the mental states in question exist before they can be expressed, such as to one’s audience. This is not to say, of course, that narrative has no reference to the external world, as, for example, to people and places. Indeed, consistent with Currie and Jureidini, the mental states that might constitute a narrative may be experienced as ideas or images of where one was born, places one has travelled, those one has met, etc. However, at the centre of all this is the individual or, more particularly, his subjectivity, in which his narrative is grounded. Moreover, we might say that, in line with Currie and Jureidini, one’s narrative changes according to new mental states that are added to and, hence, alter it. For example, in travelling to a previously unvisited destination, certain mental states, such as pleasant or unpleasant memories of the place, are added to and, hence, alter my narrative. This, in turn, may modify my overall conception of my narrative such that I, to some major or minor extent, think of my life-story in terms of positive or negative recollections that I derived from my visit. As this example suggests, though narrative may be expressive of mental states and so rooted in the mind, it may be impossible to separate them from the outside world to which they point or refer.

In Currie and Jureidini’s view, “narratives of all kinds provide for us what we may loosely call a story-world: a sequence of foregrounded events, together with a more or less elaborated background of other events and standing conditions. These are things which are so *according to the story*, though they may not be so in reality, and will, in the case of fiction, be commonly assumed not to be so” (2004, 418). As Currie and Jureidini suggest, “narratives of all kinds” are based on conceived or imagined events, which, together, make up a “story-world”.

This world, however, as Currie and Jureidini point out, does not necessarily reflect or mirror “reality”, separate from this world. For example, the narrative one has in his or her head, as it were, is not necessarily an accurate picture or representation of events that have transpired in one’s life. It, instead, may only partially reflect reality and, to some extent, be made up or comprised of false memories, perhaps unconsciously formed because of a latent fear of facing certain aspects of one’s past. In contrast, we might say, in line with Currie and Jureidini, that truth can be found where one’s narrative intersects with reality—where one’s narrative and actual events of one’s past mirror one another. Admittedly, such truth may be difficult to discover as we may be limited by biases, attitudes, perception, and beliefs that distract or prevent us from seeing things the way they occurred in reality. This difficulty might also be compounded by the confusion that might arise or be introduced by the accounts others give about one’s life, which are at odds and do not match the way one views one’s narrative. In such cases, one might be rather unclear about how exactly events happened in one’s life. Thus, one may see one’s narrative as a potentially erroneous account of the unfolding of one’s concrete history.

Nonetheless, however much it may mirror reality, an individual’s narrative itself can reveal or point to important aspects of his psychology. Illuminating this idea, Currie and Jureidini state, “understanding a narrative is first and most importantly a matter of grasping this [a] story-world: understanding what events, against what background, are said to occur according to the story. Here we make constant appeals to and inferences from the mental states of the story-maker, as expressed in the narrative itself” (2004, 418). As Currie and Jureidini suggest, we can make sense of and interpret one’s narrative according to “mental states”, such as various beliefs, feelings, or attitudes, which are manifested within that narrative in question. In the process, we can come to better understand one’s subjective or inner world. Furthermore, in

coming to this understanding, we may also understand the reasons why one views one's narrative as one does. For example, in having certain traumatic memories, the individual may refuse, if unconsciously, to acknowledge particular segments of his past. In effect, he may exclude that part of his history from his narrative or remembered "story-world". As this example implies, the individual may be in possession of particular mental states, be they memories or otherwise, that have an impact on his overall perception of the kinds of experiences he has had so far. Though such perception is retrospective in that it orients the individual towards seeing his past some way, it has the potential to have considerable influence on what he will do now or in the future. In particular, this perception, in telling one, so to speak, what he has been through, may give one reason to do something or avoid it. For example, in viewing a particular location in his past as dangerous or unsafe, the individual might make it a point to avoid going there. By the same token, he may project a future in which his narrative never takes place in that location.

The larger process of this may be referred to as what Dan P. McAdams calls "narrative identity" (2006, 83). Such identity, which stands apart from us as a representation of ourselves, "is the internalized and changing story of your life that you begin to work on in the emerging adult years" (2006, 83-4). As an "internalized" account of one's history, such identity is something that exists primarily within one's mind, rather than the outside world. However, this does not mean that one's narrative identity does not bear any resemblance to what goes on in that world. Indeed, it might be the case it does. For example, in having committed myself to the project of improving the quality of life of my neighbourhood, I may regularly involve myself in activities (e.g. launching safety programs) directed to reaching this aim. As a result, I may come to see a significant share or portion of my narrative identity as being an active community member. In particular, the events that characterize this period may be of the sort that provides

me with the rewarding sense that I care about my neighbours. Moreover, if my neighbours experience these events in the same way, it may be said that, in accordance with McAdams, we share a certain narrative identity. Where we all have an interest in keeping such an identity alive, say, out of concern for communal welfare, we might, as a cohesive group, stay committed to the above project over time. In this case, we might also be moving towards a collectively envisioned future we want to be part of our narrative identities.

As such, each one of us could be strategically engaging with our surroundings to secure that future (e.g. crime-free community) while avoiding or preventing its opposite (e.g. crime-ridden community). Through such engagement, the present may act as a means both the means of attaining a deliberate, concrete result, as well as changing and developing our narrative identities to incorporate memories that testify to our civic involvement. Such memories may be reminders to us that we are capable of cooperating with others while introducing good into the world. This may strengthen our confidence in reengaging in future, communal efforts (i.e. socially-coordinated action) that are improved by our presence and which, if they are activities we see ourselves as helping to lead, can increase our sense of efficacy. In the process, we may not only experience raised self-esteem or well-being but also be moved to further the development of our narrative identities as individuals, according to skills, talents, or abilities this sense confirms or reinforces.

Illuminating what is potentially involved in such development, McAdams states, “constructing a meaningful narrative identity involves weighing different hypothetical possibilities in life, choosing and mixing among alternative abstractions in a way that requires the full powers of abstract thought” (2006, 84). Thus, creating a “meaningful narrative identity” entails reflecting on options that are open to one. In this process, one, as McAdams suggests,

deliberates about “alternative abstractions” which embody or reflect these options. The end of this might be to choose or decide which of these options are best for one to pursue, such as because they promise the most reward. Moreover, creating a meaningful narrative identity may involve thinking about the way one’s future, because of factors other than oneself (e.g. political or economic instability), will, in part, unfold. For, such creation, as McAdams illustrates, is concerned with what may or may not occur, which can include events that one is not responsible for. Hence, in “weighing different hypothetical possibilities” that is characteristic of creating a meaningful narrative identity, one may not only determine what one wants one’s future to look like but what, believing one will potentially be affected by these events, one needs to do in order to ensure an overall state of affairs. For example, in the process of creating a meaningful narrative identity, the individual may not only form the intention of moving but, thinking it likely he will be negatively affected by a country’s predicted financial recession, avoid taking residence in that country.

As this example suggests, creating a meaningful narrative identity may, to some degree, involve exercising accurate foresight with respect to certain obstacles, which may hinder or obstruct the desired trajectory of one’s life course. However, through such foresight, the individual may help ensure that his meaningful narrative identity matches or reflects this trajectory, thereby securing a future that he both imagines and wants for himself. Related to this idea, we might say that the individual, as a way of maintaining a desired trajectory, may occasionally or periodically attempt to bring his meaningful narrative identity in accord with what he does in real life. Though we will explore this in more detail when we arrive at our discussion on progressive autonomy and narrative, we can at least say here that the narrative that a person develops in his mind (e.g. meaningful narrative identity) may not be sufficient to bring

him satisfaction. He may, in order to do this, have to go a step further and do what is necessary to make that narrative correspond to his concrete existence. For example, in simply envisioning, as part of his meaningful narrative identity, becoming a therapist and helping people in a clinical setting, the individual may not be satisfied. This might be so despite his own awareness that this future is likely, given his will, abilities, and determination. For this individual, what is required for him to experience satisfaction is that he take the actual steps (e.g. registering in courses, receiving official certification, treating clients or patients, etc.) towards realizing the future in question. In other words, narrative identity may orient one towards a desired future but it is potentially only through action that one will receive fulfillment in relation to that part of his narrative.

How one brings his or her narrative identity into accord with one's life may, even for people with what might be considered "average" (i.e. common or unexceptional) aspirations, be an activity that is in itself challenging. Illuminating this idea, McAdams states, "modern societies offer a daunting range of life possibilities. There is no single, one-size-fits all, 'correct' way to live in a society like ours" (2006, 83). As McAdams suggests, our contemporary society is one in which we are free to pursue a variety or range of different options. Especially because there is, arguably, no absolute authority in this society as to which one of these options to pursue, it can be difficult to decide how to create a meaningful narrative identity out of these possibilities. Hence, for the individual living in today's world, the important question may be what kind of life he, as an unencumbered agent, should project for himself as part of creating his narrative identity and how he should realize that identity. Deciding this might be an emotionally challenging task. For, despite the depth of his thought and deliberation, the individual may feel uneasy about there being the chance that possibilities he has chosen to pursue may not in fact

lead him to actualize a life that corresponds to his narrative identity. Rather, this choice, despite his best intentions, may lead him to experience a negative outcome. For example, in choosing to run for elected office (i.e. a personal possibility), one may unintentionally fail to pay sufficient attention to or neglect the emotional needs of one's family. As a result, one's life might proceed along a path contrary to the envisioned future one wanted for him or herself and in which these needs would be fulfilled.

Needless to say, anxiously obsessing over this sort of outcome, namely a potential state of affairs that opposes the direction a person wants her narrative identity to take, may discourage one from taking initiative and being productive. To avoid this, the individual may determine the effective means—perhaps involving an intelligent strategy or plan—of how to concretely realize a narrative identity, in which he calculates (as but a segment of this process) how to successfully overcome or manage the outcome. Thinking this way, the individual may draw his attention away from over focusing on negative consequences that might deter him to the point of avoiding activities that would be beneficial to himself and others. This allows the individual to be more confident about engaging with the world, without being blind to potentially undesirable results. In being aware, but not overwrought by worry of them, the individual can, with clarity of mind, take steps to avoid these results from materializing. He may thereby feel in charge of the ongoing course of his narrative, through which he might not only seek to make real what he imagines but express who he is to the world.

Similarly, Hannah Arendt, distinguishing us from narrative itself, maintains, “*who* somebody is or was we can know only by knowing the story of which he is himself the hero—his biography, in other words; everything else we know of him, including the work he may have produced and left behind, tells us only *what* he is or was” (1959, 1966). Thus, as Arendt

suggests, one's narrative or "biography" tells us the kind of person one is or was. For example, one's narrative may tell me that he or she is a compassionate person. This, more specifically, may be based on several acts of kindness and charity contained within his or her narrative. At the same time, however, who someone is overall may be overshadowed by a narrative, such as written or told, that only illuminates positive aspects or events of one's life. For example, a written biography that only recounts one's morally outstanding contributions in an important area (e.g. curing the sick and poor) may convey to one that such a person was dedicated and responsible, when in fact that person often behaved in ways that would challenge that impression (e.g. stole from friends, abusive towards spouse, etc.). Arguably, the narrative of this person does not totally represent who he is.

As this example suggests, narrative may conceal significant aspects of one's existence that define the kind of person one is. Rather, how we perceive a person might be based on the sort of narrative we are told of him. As such, who someone is depends on the individual presenting the narrative. Indeed, this individual, say, for political reasons (e.g. partiality to a public authority), may be inclined only to reveal certain characteristics of one's narrative and not others. In cases where these characteristics cause or influence an audience to view a narrative subject (i.e. protagonist) in a way that significantly or radically diverges from the person he is in a wide range of concrete situations, a certain level of discrepancy exists between the subject and who we might call the "real" person that subject represents. In contrast, where there is no such discrepancy, a close correspondence might exist between the two. Here, who one is overall may be captured or embodied by the narrative presented.

Similar to Arendt, Oliver Sacks shows the connection between narrative and one's identity. In particular, Sacks points out that one must have a certain degree of awareness of his

or her narrative—distinct from us physically—to know who one is. States Sacks, “to be ourselves we must [metaphorically] *have* ourselves—possess, if need be re-possess, our life-stories. We must ‘recollect’ ourselves, recollect the inner drama, the narrative, of ourselves. A man needs such a narrative, a continuous inner narrative, to maintain his identity, his self” (1985, 110-11). As such, in order to have an “identity”, one must, by way of memory, be able to grab hold of one’s life-story—to “possess” or “re-possess” it. If he is not able to do so, the individual, as Sacks implies, lacks an identity and, hence, does not know who he is. From this perspective, someone who has a condition, such as amnesia, preventing her from remembering her life-story, does not, at least for the duration of this condition, have an identity.

This does not, of course, mean the individual did not live through a series of experiences and events that can be identified, perhaps by someone else, as his personal past. Rather, in line with Sacks, his past is not known to him in a way that would arguably give him an understanding of what he has gone through. Unable to remember his life-story, the individual can be said to be blocked off from grasping the details of his history (e.g. relationships, accomplishments, challenges, etc.) that have had a significant role in defining the person he is today. If the possibility exists for this individual to retrieve these details, such as through psychotherapy, and he desires to do so, we might say the challenge he faces is learning how to recapture his “inner drama” or “narrative”. In the process, the individual might also come to see prior commitments he, in experiencing a certain condition, lost sight of and so did not fulfill. He might intend to make up for this by fulfilling at least a certain number of these commitments (e.g. organizing a family reunion he promised he would do), possibly restoring in himself a sense of integrity or wholeness he feels is lacking so long as these commitments are not met.

Illuminating the way narrative distinguishes us, Sacks maintains that “biologically, physiologically, we are not so different from each other; historically, as narratives—we are each of us unique” (1985, 111). Hence, narrative is something that moulds one’s life in an original or distinctive way. It is important to note the attention that Sacks draws to the material aspect of us, namely the biological and physiological, and how that alone does not much differentiate us in terms of the kinds of people we are. In doing so, Sacks suggests that it is not the material that makes us “unique”. Instead, it is the temporal or historical—what we have experienced in the course of life. In this process, the individual passes through various events, all of which may have a major or minor impact on his overall identity. However, since the individual, as in pursuing various goals, may be active in this process, these events are arguably not the sole determining factors in what makes him different from others. Rather, such difference, as we will later explore, might largely have to do with purposeful engagement in the world, characterized by self-directed activity. Here, the individual interacts with his surroundings so as to produce desired results along his life-path. As such, he not only responds to but introduces elements of himself, such as, for example, acts of kindness and generosity, into his environment. Engaged this way, the individual potentially alters the nature of his surroundings, which may thereby make it easier for him to lead or facilitate the desired development of his narrative. In other words, in giving to the world, his life is possibly enhanced in turn. Should this occur, his history or narrative may unfold in a manner that is consistently favourable to himself, as well as others affected by it.

From Peter Lamarque’s perspective, this unfolding is not itself a physical, observable process. As Lamarque, emphasizing narrative’s separateness from us, states, “narratives must be narrated: that is how they come into being. They are human artifacts, not natural or even

platonistic waiting to be discovered. And if they are narrated they need an actual person, not merely a fictional character, to tell the story. Events narrated might be mind-independent but narratives cannot be” (2004, 396). As such, narratives are not isolated from the individual but are the psychological product of him. In particular, this, as Lamarque points out, involves the individual telling a narrative, such as a remembered sequence of events. Also, in pointing out that narratives are not “mind-independent”, Lamarque suggests that a narrative not only relies on it being expressed, say, literally or orally, but on the inner experience or consciousness of the individual. In sum, therefore, Lamarque believes that a narrative cannot exist unless there is a mind to first think it and then someone to recount it. However, it is not totally clear as to whether Lamarque also believes that the mind that thinks the narrative must originate in the mind of the person who eventually recounts it. We can think of someone who might recount a narrative that was told her by a parent, say, about her family’s past, that she did not initially put together. Rather, it may have been formed by the mind of her father or mother. As this example shows, it is possible to recount a narrative without having mentally authored it. Thus, Lamarque could have better clarified his position by specifying whose mind exactly a narrative cannot be separate from in order to exist.

Though he believes narratives can be told, Lamarque doubts that most people can fully capture their life-stories through them. As Lamarque maintains, “what seriously undermines the narrative theory of personal identity is that only in the rarest cases—full biographies or autobiographies—do individual narratives offer anything like a comprehensive coverage of whole lives. Few people can attempt to tell the complete stories of their lives” (2004, 404). Therefore, narratives often cannot tell us what an individual has experienced or which events he has gone through. At best, he can only provide an account of a segment of his past, which he, for

example, recalls. Furthermore, in pointing out that “few people can attempt to tell the complete stories of their lives”, Lamarque suggests that most of us lack the capacity to recount the whole course of our history. This implies it is not necessarily that the individual does not want to do this but that he does not possess the ability to do so. Precisely why this is the case is not spelt out by Lamarque. It might be, for example, that the ability in question is absent because memory limits us to only retrieving certain parts of our histories but not others. Alternatively, it might be because we are not able to fully receive from others, as through dialogue, accounts of our past that would fill all the gaps of our remembered narrative. Either way, it is clear that Lamarque intends narrative to be something that exists as story that is told. Later on, however, I will show how narrative can, as an individual experience, be much more than this, including the value of such a view.

Whereas narrative for Lamarque can primarily be a story about one’s past, Catriona Mackenzie, without denying this, looks at how narrative—separate from who one is now—can be about one’s future. As Mackenzie states, “in deliberating, planning and working out how to carry out our plans, we imaginatively project ourselves into the future. Such imaginings usually encompass not only our own possible future actions and their consequences but also the imagined actions and reactions of others” (2008, 122). Thus, we can think about our narratives in terms of what is yet to come, instead of what has already been. As Mackenzie points out, this involves envisioning what our future will look like, which might include “our own possible future actions and their consequences”, as well as “the imagined actions and reactions of others”. In other words, in thinking about one’s future narrative, one may imagine potential states of affairs in which one both acts and has an impact on the world around one. One might do this in order to anticipate possible outcomes in one’s life. In doing so, one can act now so as to draw

oneself nearer or farther away from these outcomes. For example, in anticipating that one's future behaviour will have negative consequences on others, one will direct oneself away from the possibility that one will engage in such behaviour.

One might also imagine the state of affairs described as part of a way of weighing and comparing various possibilities he or she would like to pursue, thereby determining what is realistic and potentially rewarding for one. In the process, the individual may mentally form a future according to which he can orient his thinking and behaviour. Indeed, if such a future is viewed by him as both well within his reach (i.e. realistic) and highly satisfying (i.e. rewarding), the individual, in effect, may be motivated to commit time and energy in the present towards realizing that future. Also, because the realization of this future might be perceived by the individual as one that will raise his general well-being or contentment, it is arguably rational that he remain focused on how to attain it, as opposed to being preoccupied with attaining a future, for example, that is well beyond his reach. Through such focus, the individual can plan and organize his life so as to make it likelier that his imagined narrative will become, in time, part of his actual life-story. Especially where this involves challenging tasks, such strategizing may be necessary in order for this part of his narrative to materialize—shifting from being thought to being lived.

Aside from thinking of narrative in terms of possible futures, Mackenzie illuminates how narrative can either help us learn about our lives or lead us to make bad decisions. As she states, “by narrating to ourselves stories of our possible futures, we try to understand the emotional import of our decisions and to evaluate their practical and normative significance. On the other hand, such stories can also provide opportunities for self-deception, self-indulgence, wishful thinking, and other failures of agency, leading us to make decisions that we later regret” (2008,

123). Thus, narrating our possible futures to ourselves is a two-sided coin. First, it allows us to “understand the emotional import of our decisions and to evaluate their practical and normative significance”. From this, we can better comprehend the nature and effects of our choices, such as how they morally make us feel about ourselves. By the same token, we can achieve greater awareness of how these choices might affect others and the world around us. All of this shows how narrating our possible futures to ourselves, in line with Mackenzie, is an activity that contains within it an educational potential.

Yet, on the other hand, this activity may “provide opportunities for self-deception, self-indulgence, wishful thinking, and other failures of agency, leading us to make decisions that we later regret” (Mackenzie, 2008, 123). As such, narrating our possible futures to ourselves may, if unintentionally, lead us away from the path that we want to be on and, as a result, cause us to experience disappointment. For example, the individual who, self-deceptively, narrates a possible future to himself in which he receives a high-paying job shortly after graduating university, while refusing to acknowledge significant obstacles (e.g. scarcity of employment opportunities in his field), may decide not to worry about thinking of alternative routes he can pursue if he does not receive the job. If it comes to pass that he does not receive this job, he may, in retrospect, regret the choice of not thinking about these routes, which may have offered him various avenues of fulfillment. The chance of such disappointment, however, can be offset or undermined by, at least periodically, asking what barriers one might encounter in achieving a possible future one narrates to him or herself. This, while preventing the individual from over focusing on a possible future—as a desired end—allows him to narrate to himself potential hurdles that have to be overcome in order to attain this future. He can mentally construct and devise ways of doing this as he moves towards the end in question.

Related to this idea, Mackenzie argues, “in making commitments, promises or plans, whether short or long term, we narrate to ourselves a sequence of actions that we will be required to undertake in order to realize them. The narration serves partly to make sense of what we are doing, or what we intend to do, and partly to prepare us mentally and emotionally to enact our intentions” (2008, 123-24). As such, in mapping out our futures, we narrate to ourselves what we have to do to get there. In doing so, we, as Mackenzie suggests, give meaning to our actions, current and future, as well as ready ourselves “mentally and emotionally” to carry out those actions. All of this is to say is that the above narration serves as both as a means of understanding what we do and, psychologically, rendering what we do easier. However, in contrast to Mackenzie, this narration is not necessarily required in order to make at least some “commitments, promises or plans”. For, through earnestly intending to do something, a person can commit, promise, or plan, if only at a surface level, without having to tell himself a “sequence of actions” that this will involve. For example, I may promise myself that, in the long-term, I will give a sizeable portion of my salary to an important charity. However, this promise does not necessarily require that I tell myself a sequence of actions such as first sitting down at my desk, taking out my checkbook from a drawer, writing a check to the charity, etc.

As this example implies, being serious about achieving something, as in making commitments, promises or plans, does not necessarily involve immediately knowing all the actions one has to perform in order to arrive at that point. One can first be serious about achieving something and, later, decide what individual steps (i.e. sequence of actions) one has to go through in order for that achievement to become a reality. These steps need not be narrated to ourselves in terms of statements, such as “I will first get an education, then a job”, but can be visualized by way of the imagination. Through such visualization, the individual may imagine

himself in possible situations along his future narrative and what he has to do within them in order to help ensure he gets what he wants.

This may be part of the larger task of achieving what Mackenzie calls “a narratively coherent imagined future” (2008, 133). Such a future is “one that can be integrated in a meaningful way with the life one is leading. That is, it must be one that makes sense of one’s future as a continuation of one’s present perspective, which itself is shaped and influenced by one’s past” (2008). As such, the individual, in thinking what he wants his life to be like, may project a future that is in accordance with “one’s present perspective”. For example, in possessing the idea of having a family of his own—his present perspective—the individual may project a future in which he is a responsible husband and father. Moreover, one’s present perspective may incline one to project a future that is arguably predictable in virtue of certain attitudes, beliefs, and feelings that possibly characterize this perspective. For example, in having the present perspective that is, in part, defined by the belief that money will bring one happiness, he or she may be inclined to project a future, arguably predictable in terms of this belief, in which one consistently accumulates wealth. As this example implies, the individual, despite possibly having a wide range of opportunities, may, because of his present perspective, only focus on one or a select amount of these opportunities, in accordance with an imagined narrative that reflects or mirrors this perspective. One might say that there is an aesthetic quality or dimension to this; one’s present corresponds with one’s imagined narrative such that they together create a psychologically satisfying, unified whole. However, this may not directly enter the concerns or aims of the individual in forming his imagined narrative. Rather, in line with Mackenzie, this activity may be primarily driven by a need to determine a practical direction for himself, according to which he can realistically pursue meaningful activity, over time. The

better one can envision this, the more one may feel confident that one's imagined narrative, embodying the pursuit, will transform into satisfying or fulfilling reality.

The theories of this section have been useful in pointing out that narrative is something that can be considered or articulated. Indeed, such theories may be valuable when trying to understand narrative as a mental phenomenon, eventually revealed or told to an audience in order to convey a series of events or particular story—one, perhaps, with an intended meaning or message. However, as we will later see, these theories do not sufficiently help us capture what is involved in the self-directed attempt or effort to create one's life-story. Such creation does not primarily involve what can be thought about and expressed. Rather, it primarily involves developing and shaping one's concrete existence over time, such that it unfolds according to desired goals. Through this, one actively designs that path one traverses in the world.

This experience will be brought to light as a central feature of my view of the narrative of progressively autonomous individual. We will look at how such an experience involves constantly looking towards the future in order to realize the unfulfilled (i.e. imagined) part of his life-story. As this suggests, the progressively autonomous individual, in thinking about his narrative, has the intention of bringing some segment of it into existence. In particular, the function of such thinking, beyond some theories we have seen in this chapter, is to lead the progressively autonomous individual to achieve desired goals in the world and not just simply a certain level of understanding, such as of his abilities.

As much as he might be a deliberator, as when reflecting on desired goals, the progressively autonomous individual ultimately seeks to actualize a projected future through action—to make reality what he envisions. It is useful to talk about narrative when discussing this because such a process is always chronological in nature, necessarily involving a series of

events—past, present, and future—that the progressively autonomous individual must pass through in order to arrive at the goals in question. By the same token, we cannot understand what the progressively autonomous individual does, namely establishes and pursues desired goals, outside narrative. For, this occurs within and as part of an ongoing development, embodied by narrative itself. Indeed, the behaviour of the progressively autonomous individual is not reducible to any single happening. Rather, it is extended over time and so cannot be fully captured without reference to the sequence of moments that constitute or define it.

This section primarily attempts to convey that, for certain theorists, narrative is, whether thought about or expressed, a sequence of events one stands apart from. In particular, Schechtman's view of narrative shows that it is something by which one understands and views one's life as an ongoing development, which also constitutes one's identity. Similarly, Atkins holds that narrative has to first be told before our lives can be understood. Like both these theorists, Crowther illustrates that the individual exists within an ongoing narrative, which, when thought about in relation to his actions, allows him to make sense of them. Moreover, for Zahavi, narrative represents a certain point of view, which alters or changes as the individual tells himself stories (real or fictional) about himself. Among these stories, as well as the larger narrative in which they occur, we can find the various narrative connections—causal, teleological, and thematic—pointed out by Christman. Rather than in the world itself, these connections exist in and are illuminated by the mind—a view supported by Lamarque who asserts that narrative cannot be separate from the mind that thinks it. Also, for Currie and Jureidini, the above events refer to or are indicative of mental states, which, collectively, make up the expressive “artifacts” that narratives are. Finally, for McAdams, Arendt, and Sacks, narrative, an account that is perceived or put together by the mind, reveals to a person who she

has been over time. This account, as Mackenzie illustrates, may be developed and elaborated on by mentally projecting a future that coheres with the present. As we will see, such projection, through which one may establish desired goals, is central to the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual.

### **NARRATIVE AS A SEQUENCE OF EVENTS WHICH WE DIRECTLY EXPERIENCE**

In contrast to the previous section, this section will show narrative, according to the views of others, to be something we do not stand apart from. It is rather something we directly experience. Turning now to theories in support of this view, we begin with Anthony Rudd's idea that "the narrative history of a Self is not simply the working out of the potentialities present within that Self; it is in large measure a series of responses to the challenges that the social and physical environment throw at it" (2005, 428). As such, narrative is not simply thought about or expressed but lived through. In particular, as Rudd points out, this involves a "series of responses to the challenges that the social and physical environment" present one. This may entail one, in the process of creating one's narrative, figuring out ways of overcoming these "challenges", such that they do not prevent one from realizing one's aims. Where they do, the individual might experience defeat in so far as he, for at least some time, is blocked from achieving the kind of life he cares to establish for himself. This, however, may be compensated for by new experiences of success, namely achieving the life in question, beginning with the individual better familiarizing himself with what bars him from this life (e.g. political obstacles) and how it can be overcome. Indeed, this, as we will later discuss, can be incorporated into the larger project of strategizing one's life so as to maximize the extent to which one actualizes various goals. In learning about and acknowledging the barriers his surroundings pose to these

goals, the individual gains an increased awareness of possible interferences to fulfilling his plans. From this, he can organize his life so as to minimize, reduce, or even eliminate the impact of these barriers. Despite possibly not achieving all his aims, the individual may here, to some extent, foresee the life he will live and so anticipate it with less uncertainty. The sense of preparedness the individual might experience here, as a result, may allow him to face his future more confidently.

According to Rudd, “someone’s narrative will typically revolve around certain projects, patterns of intelligible activity pursued over time. And these projects are themselves framed by larger projects...It is these projects that give a sense of meaning and purpose to people’s lives—I am doing *this now* for the sake of my wider project” (2004, 429). This may entail one having several projects, all of which make sense in terms of the “wider project” of realizing a grand life-plan or structure. For example, as part of the wider project of realizing my aim of becoming a teacher in a particular area, I undertake several other (smaller) projects, such as attending university, going to teacher’s college, specializing in a field, etc. As this example implies, an active narrative is not necessarily only characterized by incessant striving. It may also involve stepping back, as it were, from the flow of one’s life so as to make sure one is headed towards a certain outcome. In particular, in living an active narrative, the individual, even when his aims are not exceptionally demanding, may pause to deliberate and determine how (perhaps most effectively) to realize the kind of life he wants to live. There may here be no need in him to intentionally embark upon a path that is aligned with his past, as if he, say, because of the psychological satisfaction it brings him, were trying to create a future in harmony with his past (e.g. attempting to become a barber because he had the desire to become one as a child).

In fact, one aim of the individual, within an active narrative, may be to break or escape from his history, so as to actualize a present or future he believes significantly improves his life. Nonetheless, in mapping out his life, the individual, in line with Rudd, may, in some way, link various past, present, and future projects together where he perceives this the only way to secure a particular outcome. For example, the individual may do this where he believes the only way of becoming a true artist is to apply what he has learnt in past projects (e.g. learning the basics of painting) to present and future projects (e.g. learning how to paint well or impressively). As this example suggests, an active narrative, though it may be forward-looking in so far as it is primarily characterized by developing one's life according to near or distant aims, may also be one in which the past, metaphorically, resonates in the present and future.

Similarly Rudd maintains, “not only can we look back and tell stories—about ourselves or about others—we also live our lives forwards in narrative mode. That is, as I act I do so with some grasp, explicitly or implicitly, of who *I* am, why *I* am acting as I do, what *I* want to bring about in the future and why *my* past life has made it the case that I am trying to bring *that* about now” (2005, 430). As such, one acts while, at some level, understanding aspects of one's past, present, and future. This, as Rudd suggests, involves knowing how the past influences or is the reason for someone's current actions. Through this knowledge, the individual may recognize that his future aims reflect cares and interests, which have endured over time. Furthermore, he can live in the “narrative mode”, mentioned by Rudd, in which he regularly fashions the direction of his life. More than a storyteller, the individual here is storymaker. That is, he carves out a personal path for himself according to his “ambitions and ideals” (2005). This may also involve being open to new or different areas of activity that such a way of life leads one to. For example, in attempting to realize the ambition and ideal of becoming a politician, the individual

may, consequently, be willing to partake in a related area of activity this, perhaps through networking, leads him to. Such an activity might be, say, collaborating with other politicians on a pressing problem or issue. As this example suggests, the ambitions and ideals of the individual may, if only indirectly, lead him towards entering a future he did not necessarily foresee but may still value or enjoy.

The individual, however, as strong as his desire to enter this future might be, may not actually do so. Rather, as a free and deliberative agent, the individual may entertain a range of possible futures, from which to choose how he will provide concrete form to his life or narrative. Each of these possible futures may, to a degree, contain ambitions and ideals or, more particularly, their potential satisfaction through some activity or series of events. Arguably, this makes it more challenging for the individual to decide which possible future to pursue, each providing him, he believes, with the kind of life he wants. However, the individual may resolve this challenge in two ways. First, determining not merely which possible future he is most likely to achieve, but also which one, along the way, will allow him to grow and develop (e.g. intellectually) in ways he values, as trying as this might be at times. Hence, the individual may be inclined to specifically pursue this future rather than being bogged down by having to choose among a range of possible futures, not offering, say, any valuable growth or development.

The second way to resolve the challenge is determining which possible future will allow the individual to experience the most satisfaction overall. He may perceive that each of his possible futures allow him to experience a measure of satisfaction, but some, perhaps because they are likely to involve deeply meaningful activities, are perceived by him as offering an exceptional amount of such reward (well beyond the other futures). As such, some possible futures may be more appealing to the individual than others and so, here too, incline him in the

above manner. All of this is to say is, in line with Rudd's idea that we "live our lives forwards in narrative mode", the individual is not simply concerned about what options are open to him but which ones are best for him. Accordingly, he may structure or centre his narrative round these options. Controlling the outcomes of his future arguably involves their management—choosing some and not others—in the present.

In achieving these outcomes, the individual may look at his past or narrative, as a whole, differently. Reflecting this idea, Rudd states, "as new events occur the significance of past ones alters. My story is constantly being re-written" (2005, 431). For example, in achieving a certain objective, I am able to view past events, which directly lead up to it, as not a waste of time and effort but as instrumental to its realization. By the same token, the individual may also view the suffering he might endure in the process as worthwhile, rather than meaningless pain or hardship amounting to no reward (i.e. achievement). At a prior time, perhaps, the individual did not see the purpose or point of the suffering in question. It may have seemed to him as lacking any redeeming value, as through it he would gain nothing. However, with respect to new events, he may now view the suffering as having positive import, such as being necessary or pivotal to the desired development of his narrative. This accords with Rudd's idea that "my story is constantly being re-written", not because the events of the individual's life have themselves changed, been altered, or disappeared. Rather, it is so for a change in the individual's regard or perception of his suffering. Accordingly, the individual's life becomes "re-written" when, in the process of creating his narrative, past events are interpreted in a way that gives them new meaning. In turn, one thinks of one's life-story in a different light—one that potentially transforms, as it were, negative events into positive ones.

At the same time, the overall shape of the individual's life is, to some extent, always yet to be determined. On this view, Charlotte Linde, contributing to our understanding of narrative as process we do not stand apart from, writes, "the life story is...an open unit—one that is begun and continued without a clear notion of any given time of what its final shape will turn out to be. An open unit is one whose structure is not tightly constrained, and hence the beginnings of the unit does not fully predict the possibilities of what the middle and the end may be" (1993, 27). As such, the individual's narrative, as an "open unit", is continually in the process of change. In particular, it may develop according to the choices he makes with respect to his immediate and non-immediate aims. However, in contrast to Linde, one, observing patterns and repeated behaviours that characterize another's narrative, can potentially predict and, hence, gain a "clear notion" of where it is headed or the direction it will take. This does not itself deny that the individual's narrative is an open unit. For, even where it can be predicted, it arguably remains one that is never fully created in advance. Rather, his life, despite the regularities or enduring characteristics that might define it, may always contain a remainder (i.e. future) which he is yet, by choice and will, to give concrete form. It may also be said that because of the prevalence of uncertainty in the world, the life of the individual is bound, to some extent, to be affected by contingency. As such, chance, be it fortune or misfortune, may cause his life to materialize in ways far removed from the way he currently envisions his narrative.

No matter how unique this vision, it arguably bears some resemblance to the way the lives of others, say in one's society, unfold. Similarly, Linde maintains, "in the field of psychology, the notion of a life history is tied to the idea that any individual's life can be viewed according to a theoretically posited developmental course that includes predictable landmark events and developmental stages" (1993, 43). Accordingly, the individual may go through

“predictable landmark events and developmental stages” (e.g. adolescence and middle age), despite the differences between his life and those around him. Within these events and stages might be aspects or characteristics of one’s life that most other members of one’s society might and even be expected to experience, as part of “normal” growth. This, however, does not itself imply that the individual totally lacks uniqueness. For, while, as part of his narrative, he goes through the above events and stages, he may still define his life according to objectives that reflect his own particular needs, feelings, cares, hopes, and desires. In the process, the individual may provide original form to his narrative that, if not exceptional (e.g. heroic), may not be reflected or embodied by anyone else’s. Moreover, while going through the above events and stages, the individual might retain the freedom or liberty to actualize a range, rather than limited number, of objectives that differentiate him from others (e.g. peers) going through the same events and stages. He may do this rationally through attempting to fulfill aims that are realistic in light of the constraints or limitations he experiences at any given time.

For example, as a young adult, the individual may feel his circumstances, which have prevented him from much being around and learning about children, have also limited him from gaining the experience he needs to be a good parent. Appropriately, therefore, he may put off pursuing this goal in earnest until he has gained this experience, which because, say, of his personality, may be quite difficult for him (imagine someone who is easily annoyed by “normal” child behaviour). As this example implies, the individual, in actively designing his narrative, may not—as valuable this activity might be to him—constantly experience satisfaction. Rather, he may, amid the process, undertake challenges and, hence, possibly experience lack of comfort to overcome barriers to his ends. Rewarding as it may be overall, the active narrative is not necessarily characterized by an ascending level of fulfillment. Rather, in line with Linde, it may,

as a “developmental” process taking place in the world, be periodically or often marked by strenuous hurdles, interrupting one’s desired trajectory. Where these hurdles are overcome, not only does one maintain the active quality of one’s narrative but may, likewise, reinforce and strengthen his or her strengths and abilities, if but involuntarily. Future obstacles may thereby be rendered less threatening or challenging.

The theories of this section illustrate how narrative, more than a story, can be lived through, as does the progressively autonomous individual who steers himself through a projected or anticipated series of events. Specifically, this involves engaging with the world so as to carve out a path towards one’s preferred future. As this suggests, the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual may be characterized by the dual effort or labour—mental and physical—by which one delivers oneself to a favourable state of affairs. These states of affairs represent the culmination of various plans or intentions the progressively autonomous individual has carried out, perhaps arduously, over a stretch of time; in the process, the present acts as the conduit through which the progressively autonomous individual effectively links the past (when plans or intentions were formed) with the future (where they are realized). Accordingly, the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual is not necessarily defined by any particular set of social, political, cultural, etc. events. Instead, as we will see, it is primarily defined by the power—within the progressively autonomous individual himself—to determine his fate.

This section is primarily intended to convey that, for certain theorists, narrative is, as something we directly experience, a sequence of events one does not stand apart from. It is, rather, something in which we are embedded and so the context in which our experience and perception of the world is always taking place. We saw this with Rudd’s idea that narrative usually is based on various projects that give our lives significance. The form of such narrative,

as Rudd points out, changes as new events are added to it and so experienced by the individual. Moreover, emphasizing its indefinite quality, Linde views narrative as something that we experience as constantly in the process of change. In particular, earlier moments of the narrative do not, for Linde, totally reveal what will happen at later moments. As this implies, how the individual experiences his narrative at one point does not inevitably determine how he will later experience it, such as in terms of a positive or negative state of affairs. However, as we will see with my view of the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual, one can exercise some degree of control in leading himself towards attaining the future he wants for himself. He can shape and define his narrative by his own will.

### **THE NARRATIVE OF THE PROGRESSIVELY AUTONOMOUS INDIVIDUAL**

The main tension of the theories of narrative we have seen so far is between those, on the one hand, that present narrative as something we stand apart from and those, on the other, that present narrative as something we do not stand apart from. As such, this tension is characterized by opposing views that either show us to be situated within or outside narrative. In what follows I will address this tension, siding, in part, with theories of narrative that present it as something we do not stand apart from. Now, many of these theories, though similar to my own, do not emphasize the future-orientation of the individual who is attempting to direct his life in a particular manner. It was important to discuss and examine these theories, however, as it shows that we can talk about narrative as something that is directly experienced without necessarily talking about the temporal outlook of the individual. My view of the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual will avoid this and draw significant attention to the way that such an outlook, namely a future-orientation, is key to determining the outcome of events

that make up one's narrative. I will illuminate that narrative is not just a lived process but one that one seeks to mould and shape amid the orientation in question. He or she thereby actively, rather than passively, experiences events. Despite its affinity to theories we have seen that view narrative as something we do not stand apart from, my view will also be similar to theories that see it as something we stand apart from in so far as the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual is, in part, about conceiving of one's narrative before it is fully brought into existence. In uniting the two perspectives—narrative as something we stand apart from and something we do not stand apart from—I will resolve the tension between them. Specifically, I will do so by showing that narrative, as lived by the progressively autonomous individual, is something he both has metaphorical distance from—in thinking about and mentally constructing it in terms of desired goals—as well as something he is directly embedded in and brings into existence through realizing these goals over time.

In line with the theories of narrative that presented it as something directly experienced, the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual is—more than a sequence of events—an actively lived process. The progressively autonomous individual, however major or minor, forms and reforms his narrative by attempting to realize desired goals, to which he is regularly oriented and intent on achieving; his narrative changes, for better or worse, as these aims are pursued. To some extent, namely the limits within which he can act unhampered by physical or external forces (e.g. natural disasters), the progressively autonomous individual is here able to determine which events he will pass through or experience, as both part of the path towards achieving desired goals and this achievement itself. For example, he may decide that, as part of his desired goal to become a member of a certain profession, he will pass through or experience events such as moving to another country, going to school there for a certain period, networking

with various colleagues within that time-frame, etc. As this example suggests, in order for one's narrative to be progressively autonomous in character, it is necessary for that narrative to be the deliberate outcome of a series of anticipated objectives, the fulfillment of which one wants to define one's life. Moreover, unlike narratives experienced by audiences (e.g. film plots), the progressively autonomous narrative may unfold in the absence of others; alternatively, the same narrative may occasionally, but not always, involve others. For example, as part of my progressively autonomous plan to write a poem today, I may retreat to my study and produce one in private. Later, however, as part of my aim to have it heard and, perhaps, appreciated by others, I will deliver it publicly at a café poetry reading. Nonetheless, the defining feature of a progressively autonomous narrative is not that such a narrative has an audience or even involves others. Rather, it is that such a narrative is the intentional realization of one's plans, however social they may be in character. As such, the progressively autonomous narrative is primarily a relationship between the individual, himself (i.e. awareness of desired goals), and his physical environment. Depending on the types of goals the progressively autonomous individual has chosen to pursue, his narrative will be more (e.g. helping the poor) or less (e.g. being a solitary writer) interpersonal.

Whatever goals he chooses to pursue, the progressively autonomous individual is, at once, author and subject of the life-story—his narrative—he brings into existence through his own efforts. By the same token, his narrative is dynamic, characterized by the channeling of his agency towards an imagined future, which, more than fantasy, represents to him the potential though deliberate culmination of his will. Indeed, the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual is one that is lived with the purpose of moulding it according to projected ends, rather than simply being told. In contrast to one who merely recounts a story, the progressively

autonomous individual plays a central role in attempting to favourably influence and affect the outcome of events that constitute his narrative. This is especially promising for a person who does not want to live a life that is continuous or the same with his past. For example, acting as the above force, one can separate oneself from a lifestyle in which one no longer wants to take part. As this example suggests, the progressively autonomous individual, through effective decision-making and behaviour, can produce a narrative that both fulfills his desired goals, as well as departs from a history he seeks to overcome.

Moreover, by way of such departure, the progressively autonomous individual may direct himself towards a future that embodies his deepest hopes and wishes. This, in line with Rudd's idea that we live "forwards in narrative mode", might involve planning according to various ideals (e.g. the highly valued goal of becoming a teacher), which guide him through a range of activities and contexts (e.g. social, cultural, professional, etc.) that facilitate the fulfillment of these hopes and wishes. In contrast, one who is autonomous but not progressively autonomous does not necessarily engage in any of this. For, being autonomous alone does not guarantee that one, unlike the progressively autonomous individual, is usually guided according to concern for the future. Thus, a person who is autonomous but not progressively autonomous may lack a vision of her future, according to which she organizes her life. She might not prefer to create a narrative through pursuing desired goals that would constitute her potential future. Instead, she may very well be content living a life in which she "lives in the moment", making deliberate actions and decisions in the present so as only to achieve a particular outcome in that moment.

For example, one, in line with the hierarchical account of autonomy, can be autonomous by endorsing a present desire to eat, without any regard for the consequences of how the food eaten will affect one in the future (make one feel ill, cause one to gain weight, etc.).

No matter how content, not to mention successful, she might be living this way, such a person effectively refrains from experiencing the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual. For, unlike this individual, she does not engage in the temporally extended process of realizing desired goals, with the intention of creating a corresponding future. This person's narrative can be said to be a process, involving a sequence of events in which she defines each independent moment, but not one in which he is not concerned about shaping his future in any particular manner. Even if the autonomous individual who is not progressively autonomous has rare or infrequent moments where he does think about his future, he is not thereby rendered progressively autonomous. For, such autonomy is based on a future-orientation that one constantly maintains, so as to frequently attempt to draw oneself closer to desired goals. Accordingly, the progressively autonomous individual's psychology is regularly characterized by the orientation in question.

Despite the differences between the autonomous and progressively autonomous individual, they are, indeed, both distinct from the person who is completely resigned or passive; one who experiences a life in which one is mostly determined by forces (e.g. other people and institutions) other than oneself. Unlike autonomous people in general, such a person does not actively define the shape or character of his existence; it is, rather, made for him or her. We might say that this individual is the subject but not primary author of his narrative. Occupying this position, he may come off to the observer as lazy or symptomatic of someone who "does nothing". Perhaps overly cynical about achieving what he envisions, this individual may have given up his potential to be the said author in the belief that he is condemned to live a particular life, whether he likes it or not. This, however difficult, may be undone by adopting a perspective that accords with progressive autonomy, namely one can develop and even enhance the course of

one's life through self-directed, planned behaviour. This does not entail the seemingly naïve view that one can be in control of every aspect or detail of one's life, which, to some extent, is affected by what is beyond our control. Rather, it implies one's narrative need not simply amount to a series of responses to the outside world. As seen with the progressively autonomous individual, a person's narrative can be characterized by her own agency, eventually leading one to satisfy what she most cares about. Here, she can steer the course of her narrative, while taking on the challenge of reconciling unexpected events (i.e. dealing with new, positive or negative circumstances) with the successful realization of her plans.

In sum, the tension between the views that narrative is something we stand apart from and something we do not stand apart from is resolved by the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual. As we have seen, such an individual never entirely stands apart from his narrative but is central to it as its author. From this position, the progressively autonomous individual gives shape and direction to his narrative while, metaphorically, retaining the distance he needs from it to think about how to live and organize it—according to desired goals. All of this ensures that the progressively autonomous is never estranged from events in his life but one of the main forces behind the way they unfold.

## **NARRATIVE AS UNNECESSARY FOR ONE'S WELL-BEING**

So far we have looked at various theories, which, however different, show the importance or value of narrative. In contrast, Galen Strawson—an anti-narrativist—contends that narrative is not required for a good life. In particular, he takes issue with and rejects what he calls “the *Ethical Narrativity thesis*”, namely the view that “a richly narrative outlook on one's life is essential to living well, to true or full personhood” (2004, 1). For Strawson, this outlook entails

“putting some sort of construction—a unifying or form-finding construction—on the events of one’s life, or parts of one’s life” (2004). In other words, having or maintaining a narrative outlook involves seeing one’s life as a story, coherently bringing together the past, present, and future. According to Schechtman, “it is with respect to the self—the *inner*, mental entity whose persistence conditions can differ from those of the human—that Strawson denies the narrativity thesis” (2008, 157). Thus, as Schechtman illuminates, Strawson’s anti-narrativist position is opposed to the view that to experience a satisfying life one has to see one’s self historically—as a “mental entity” enduring over time. Though, admittedly, narrative is not necessary for well-being, it is important that I show how the narrative structure of progressive autonomy allows or contributes to such well-being. For, it illuminates the particular merits of life within such a structure, which one would miss out on and, hence, potentially regret if one were to live the non-narrative life. Strawson’s anti-narrative position does not pose a threat to my view of the narrative structure of progressive autonomy. It fails to prove that the experience of such a structure is in any way not worthwhile. In contrast, I, as suggested above, will show the value of this experience.

Now, arguably, the individual can live well, or even be happy, without seeing his life as a narrative. A person, for example, may take regular enjoyment in living his life in the “now”—from moment to moment, without, if any, consideration of how each fit together, much less as a narrative. In the process, he might, whether or not it reflects his greater potential or ability, become the kind of person he wants to be. Supporting this idea, Strawson argues, “people can develop and deepen in valuable ways without any sort of explicit, specifically Narrative reflection, just as musicians can improve by practice sessions without recalling those sessions. The business of living well is, for many, a completely non-Narrative project” (2004, 9). As

Strawson implies, narrative need not figure at all as a central feature of one's existence, for it to be one characterized by a significant level of reward and satisfaction. I may have no concept of the temporal course of my life, nor the way it unfolds, but, on Strawson's view, I can still feel good about my life and myself. Accordingly, Kathy Behrendt observes that Strawson "attacks the narrative view of the self both as construed descriptively, as offering an account of how we in fact live and view our lives, and normatively, as a prescription for how we ought to live our lives" (2008, 135).

Strawson suggests that, in experiencing this, one is not necessarily suppressing any desire, natural or otherwise, to see one's life narratively. Citing himself as an example, Strawson states, "I have absolutely no sense of my life as a narrative with form, or indeed as a narrative without form. Absolutely none. Nor do I have any great or special interest in my past. Nor do I have a great deal of concern for my future" (2004, 3). This is not evidence or symptomatic of someone who is sad or depressed. On the contrary, it may very well be a testimony of someone happy or content, living his or her life in a manner that is never preoccupied with seeing it as a story. Indeed, given the fear and anxiety that we may experience when thinking about the uncertainty of the future, perhaps living a life in this manner is not so objectionable. It might, rather, be one that is rather appealing, allowing us to enjoy the present and not worry about the future. Such worry may distract us from fully enjoying the present, which, in terms of our well-being, potentially has a lot to offer—from the pleasant people we interact with to the admirable or beautiful quality of our surroundings.

Though it is possible, if only for some, to live well without seeing one's life as a narrative, this lack of outlook has a negative side. That is, it does not allow one to perceive direction in one's life over the course of time. Perhaps for the individual, such as the hedonist,

who is preoccupied with living in the present and deriving from it the maximum amount of pleasure, this is of no real consequence. However, as we will later explore, this matters for those, such as the progressively autonomous individual, who may want to keep their life on a certain trajectory. Without perceiving direction in one's life, one cannot know whether one is actually on this trajectory, including the future one will encounter. Also, without such perception, one cannot navigate oneself such that one realizes various, pre-established aims. This may prevent a person from having an adequate sense that she is in charge of the course of her life. Though this does not necessarily undermine one's well-being, it, especially when compounded, may have the unintended effect of weakening motivation in one to undertake planned initiatives (e.g. finding a new job) that might enrich the quality of one's life.

This may be a potential source of worry to a person who currently, like Strawson, has no "great deal of concern" for his future. For, such an individual, though non-narrative in the manner described by Strawson, may still have an interest in fully maximizing the amount of satisfaction he can derive from the quality of his life. He may very well be content living non-narratively. Yet, the sudden thought that he may be missing certain experiences—based on undertaking planned initiatives—which would allow him to experience the above maximization, may create an uneasiness in him about whether he is truly living a life offering the most satisfaction. Depending on the intensity of this feeling, this may or may not prompt him to think about how to undertake planned initiatives. For example, one, living non-narratively, may be made so uneasy about the possibility (i.e. idea) of losing out on experiencing the pleasure of a well-planned trip that one stops living in the moment, as it were, and starts taking the steps to make that trip happen. Where this occurs, such a person will not necessarily become permanently narrative in outlook, as understood by Strawson, but he will at least have a

momentary shift of thinking that extends to the future. This allows him to consider or appraise the value of changing his life in a certain manner, as embodied or represented by future goals—an opportunity he would not have when strictly living non-narratively.

According to Strawson, “remorse and contrition seem particularly important, when one asks whether an Episodic [one without a narrative outlook on his or her life] can be a fully moral being. They seem to be emotions to which one ought to be susceptible in certain circumstances. Neither of them, however, depends on any sort of Diachronic [narrative] connection with one’s past, for both are often felt intensely immediately after action” (2008, 91). As such, one can experience “remorse and contrition”, which may function to guide one to correct one’s immoral or bad actions, without any concept of the interrelatedness of one’s past, present, and future. Guided this way, one can also be lead to perform moral or good actions, which, in turn, provide one with the above feeling and, hence, a heightened sense of well-being. In particular, Strawson does not believe one needs to have a narrative outlook to feel remorse and contrition, or any moral feelings at all, since, for him, moral responsibility is not essentially tied to nor dependent on such an outlook. Rather, Strawson holds that such responsibility “is just a sort of instinctive *responsiveness* to things, a responsiveness in the present whose strength or weakness in particular individuals has nothing to do with how Episodic or Diachronic or Narrative or non-Narrative they are” (2008, 100). In Strawson’s view, then, we are hard-wired, so to speak, to feel moral responsibility, which is fundamentally “non-historical”.

Though perhaps contrary to the anti-narrative spirit of Strawson, this view is actually compatible with the idea of one who lives narratively. In particular, such an individual need not abandon his perception of his life and what he does as extended over time, in order to experience the above kind of moral responsibility. Rather, in addition to the moral responsibility (or lack

thereof) he may experience in knowing how much he has pursued the future (i.e. narrative) aims he believes he ought to attain, he may, at other times, experience moral responsibility as the result of a mental or physical trigger, set off by a certain state of affairs. For example, while carrying out a primarily self-interested life, the individual may feel guilt for not adequately helping others along the way. To feel this, he does not first have to necessarily think about or reflect on his life as a narrative—the series of moments that constitute his existence. Instead, he may, in line with Strawson, feel this due to his natural makeup or constitution, which automatically produces guilt in him upon realizing he has not been charitable in the manner described.

Moreover, this does not undermine the individual's ability to shape the course of his life, according to an envisioned future. This is so since his experiencing moral responsibility as the result of instinctive responsiveness does not, as such responsiveness can work alongside imagination, necessarily interfere with individual actualizing foreseeable goals. In fact, because he may experience Strawson's version of moral responsibility, the individual does not necessarily have to worry or be overly concerned with commonly carrying out bad or immoral behaviour—within the course and development of his narrative—that will go unnoticed by himself. For, in virtue of the above makeup or constitution, the individual may be regularly and unreflectively alerted to this behaviour, any or most times he carries it out. Thus, the individual can remain focused on pursuing various goals, without having to feel he has completely turned a blind eye to the ethical or moral value of his conduct. The individual, amid a dedicated effort and commitment to realizing these goals, can at once become aware of this value, such as whether his conduct qualifies as good, through the above makeup or constitution. This makeup

or constitution may be designed in such a way as to, if only unconsciously, signal or indicate to the individual this value.

In Kathy Behrendt's view, "it is clear that the life of the self upon the narrative view is essentially time-dependent. It requires concern for one's past and future self, in so far as the self has an ongoing engagement in the realisation of the non-immediate achievements, goals, and possibilities that form and contribute to the narrative construct" (2004, 144). This view, which accords with "Strawson's broad characterisation of the narrative approach", entails that in perceiving his life as narrative—including his "past and future self"—the individual does not ignore but pays attention to time (2004, 144). Thus, despite not having to necessarily think of narrative in order to be moral, as Strawson holds, a person cannot avoid thinking of narrative if he is to structure or organize his life around future objectives, including, perhaps, those which give his life most meaning. It is in this process, and never outside it, that the individual both engages with himself and the world in order to fulfill "non-immediate achievements, goals, and possibilities that form and contribute to the [his] narrative construct".

Moreover, to smoothly achieve non-immediate goals, the individual might have to map out the course of his narrative in advance; before this, such goals, arguably, cannot be clearly imagined or foreseen. As such, it will be difficult to finally reach these goals. In contrast, mapping out a person's narrative may involve carefully plotting where, along his projected future, he imagines and intends to realize certain objectives (e.g. at a certain city, alone, many years from now, etc.). In the process, the individual may be able to lead himself with relative ease to fulfilling these objectives. Where this process characterizes his life, it renders it a continual project or task, however demanding, that requires him to consider his life within a chronological framework. He cannot project, much less deliberately or consciously bring into

existence, an anticipated future (simple or complex) he has not, previously, given thought to. Such thought involves him not viewing his future in isolation but as part of a series of interrelated moments, constituting the ongoing story of his life.

The point of this section was to illuminate that, for those like Strawson, to live non-narratively is no major loss. Rather, one can live this way and still experience a significant amount of well-being—enjoying one’s life moment to moment, without an eye towards the future. Indeed, one who lives non-narratively does not structure his or her life according to anticipated or projected goals. By the same token, such a person does not plan a near or distant future, which in Strawson’s view does not itself hamper or take away from the quality of this person’s life.

In the following section, my approach will not be to directly discredit Strawson, whose non-narrative approach does not altogether deny the potential good one can experience in living narratively. Accordingly, I will attempt to show how the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual can be a significant source of well-being. Whereas Strawson does not pay sufficient attention to the value of narrative, I will convey that it can serve as the basis of a significantly rewarding and enjoyable life, though not, of course, without its challenges. In doing so, I will not be putting forth the position that it is necessarily better to live a narrative life than not. Rather, I will be illuminating how the development and experience of the progressively autonomous narrative—as a lifestyle—has much more to offer than Strawson’s anti-narrative approach would ever suggest.

## **THE VALUE OF THE NARRATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRESSIVELY AUTONOMOUS INDIVIDUAL**

As challenging or as difficult as it may be, the progressively autonomous individual may regularly experience satisfaction over the course of his life. This satisfaction, which, in contrast to Strawson, is narrative-based, may be derived from how intensely the progressively autonomous individual—looking forward—desires any one goal. Specifically, the more he wants it, the more satisfaction he may experience upon fulfilling it. For example, in very intensely desiring the goal of becoming financially successful, the progressively autonomous individual may, upon its fulfillment, experience a corresponding degree of high satisfaction. The poignancy of this experience may be increased the more the progressively autonomous individual, as part his narrative, struggles—in virtue, say, of certain social and economic disadvantages—to reach financial success. For, the farther the progressively autonomously must go, so to speak, in order to reach a desired goal, the more he may take satisfaction in relieving the strain that increases with this distance, but alleviated with the goal's fulfillment. In short, such satisfaction is proportionate to the strain undergone. Moreover, the well-being that accompanies such satisfaction may be reinforced or strengthened, where the progressively autonomous individual feels a significant sense of empowerment—one that emerges and is sustained in overcoming the hardship of struggle. Thus, the harder or more difficult it is to reach a point along the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual, the more proficient and capable a person he might see himself as when he arrives there.

As the foregoing suggests, a progressively autonomous narrative that is characterized by a high number of goal fulfillments, does not necessarily entail a high level of satisfaction (though this, of course, is possible where such fulfillments corresponds to deeply valued and desired

ends). In fact, the experiential quality of the progressively autonomous individual's narrative largely depends on the process of his narrative itself. Specifically, this quality is based on how the progressively autonomous individual experiences not only the fulfillment of his desired goals. It also relies on the manner in which he experiences the events leading up to those goals. As such, the experiential quality of his narrative is grounded in the process of living through it. For example, this quality may be positive or rich where the progressively autonomous individual, in living his narrative, goes through a series of events in which he meaningfully interacts and relates to others. Through this, he may experience a genuine connection with those around him and, hence, a raised level of well-being that heightens the experiential quality of his narrative.

Indeed, where he is not preoccupied with simply fulfilling his desired goals, the progressively autonomous individual may enjoy the segments or periods of his life in which he is engaged in the world, though not directly concerned about achieving those goals. This, similar to the process of the previous paragraph, may involve experiencing events that are not strictly on the trajectory towards the desired goals of the progressively autonomous individual. Rather, they, perhaps as an intermission to the regular pursuit of these goals, involve activities that are inherently pleasant or enjoyable. In fact, these activities may have no bearing whatsoever on the chances he will actually achieve his desired goals or, similarly, give an overall form or theme (e.g. being a dependable physician) to the course of his narrative. For instance, the progressively autonomous individual, taking a break or periodically stepping away from the constant effort to fulfill his desired goals towards becoming an established musician, may often spend quality time with family members that bring him a great deal of contentment. In such a case, we may say that the progressively autonomous individual has, for a moment, disengaged himself from the active pursuit of realizing those goals. But he has not, thereby, forfeited or given them up; he is simply

refraining from activity whose main purpose is to get to them. As this example implies, the progressively autonomous individual does not incessantly have to be striving towards goals to preserve his intention to achieve them. Rather, he can do so through the earnest attempt, over time, to realize desired goals a pace right or appropriate (i.e. attuned to his abilities or capacities) for him; rushing towards his desired goals may not at all be in his interest, not to mention a possible source of unwanted pressure. The progressively autonomous individual's narrative may be characterized by much success—several or continual fulfillment of desired goals—without necessarily involving a tireless or exhausting effort to achieve them. In other words, he can define his biography without at every moment straining himself, much less to a degree that is highly distressing or uncomfortable.

Living the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual is beneficial in several ways. Firstly, it is self-affirming. That is, through creating and developing his narrative by pursuing and achieving desired goals, the progressively autonomous individual feels genuinely competent—capable of effectively exercising his will in the world and getting what he wants; this may involve “landmark events and developmental stages”, such as becoming a responsible parent, pointed out by Linde. As a result, he experiences a heightened sense of efficacy, which confirms to him his strength and abilities that may, in turn, motivate him to pursue further objectives. Secondly, it allows him to decide or choose a range of experiences—amid his life-story—he wants to have. In particular, in directing his life and, hence, narrative, according to specific desired goals, the progressively autonomous individual can steer himself towards certain types of events he wishes to live through, while, perhaps at the same time, avoiding others.

For example, in attempting to create a narrative in which he is well-travelled, the progressively autonomous individual might pursue the desired goal of visiting many countries.

In doing so, he may steer himself towards, say, encountering new and interesting cultures. He may also, here, avoid remaining stagnant, namely living a life or narrative that is characterized by little, if any, travel and, hence, the opportunity to grow. In general, in avoiding such stagnancy, the progressively autonomous individual may meaningfully develop and enhance his life. Thirdly, the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual is beneficial in that it allows him to feel connected to the world. Through directing the course of his life, the progressively autonomous individual engages with his surroundings, ranging from places (e.g. his place of work) to other people (e.g. friends and family). Thus, rather than being alienated from them, he experiences a certain relatedness to his environment—of which he is a concrete part, unlike one who recounts a narrative (i.e. storyteller) but does not exist within it. As such, he may come to believe that he can have a positive impact on the world, such as helping to preserve nature, which might itself be one of the desired goals he seeks to realize along his narrative path.

Admittedly, the progressively autonomous individual, like others in general, is exposed to forces—including, as Christman points out, “tragedies or bursts of good fortune”—that may change the direction of his narrative. However, he, unlike those who exercise little or no agency, can control the impact these forces will have on himself. For example, the progressively autonomous person may lessen the impact a newly imposed law will have on her life. As this example implies, the progressively autonomous person may make it a point to offset certain consequences that would negatively shift (i.e. contrary to desired goals) the course of her narrative. In the process, the progressively autonomous person can stabilize the trajectory of her narrative along a path, conducive to his cares and interests. By the same token, the non-future oriented autonomous person can make a concerted effort to both define the present in manner

that accords with his wishes, while preventing immediately perceived threats (e.g. objects in his or her environment) from interfering with the successful realization of this.

In addition, the narrative of the purely passive person, in contrast to that of the progressively autonomous person in particular, can be characterized by unreflective responses that stem from a lack of care to control his future. For example, over some period of time, the purely passive individual may—without concern for the consequences—simply react to fears induced by his surroundings, rather than first thinking about these fears and then rationally deciding what to do about them. This might involve, say, finding new people to associate with who do not prompt him, without deliberation, to act on the fear they inspire. Contrary to the above characterization, the progressively autonomous individual, amid his future-orientation, is thoughtful or reflective in action. In particular, he is so with respect to the direction he wants his narrative to take, according to a foreseeable future. There may be times, of course, where he may slip-up, so to speak, and have a sudden reaction (e.g. fit of anger), on account of circumstances (e.g. an unbearably frustrating situation) that make it difficult for him to be thoughtful or reflective in action. On the whole, however, the progressively autonomous individual is a planner; he retains, as a deliberative agent, the presence of mind to think soberly and rationally about how to achieve a particular future. This might, for example, involve strategizing or re-strategizing his life according to new information he obtains, such as on some political state of affairs, about what concrete steps to take towards various aims. Where these aims are realized, the previously imagined (i.e. future) narrative of the progressively autonomous individual is brought into accord with reality; hopes and dreams may now have become a tangible future.

As shown, the narrative of both the purely passive individual and the autonomous person who only lives moment to moment, involve a lack of planning. In contrast, the narrative of the progressively autonomous person is one, as illustrated, in which he executes his plans that contain his desired goals. The fulfillment of these goals introduces, to various degrees, new form to his narrative. As this suggests, the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual is not merely a thing. That is, it is not a static entity which does not change over time. Rather, it is a story-in-the-making, in which he is both author and actor. In playing these roles, the progressively autonomous individual has or maintains a dynamic relation to himself and the world, whereby he regularly determines what he wants (writing his future story as author) and engages in his surroundings (as an actor in the world) so as to bring about a particular result. Indeed, this may be a long and arduous process, especially where this result involves or amounts to very demanding activity—perhaps requiring him to use the best of his abilities. Regardless of the degree of challenge the progressively autonomous individual faces in creating his narrative, this process, as self-directed, is one in which the progressively autonomous individual leads himself through the world, rather than one characterized by him relying on luck. As both primary author and actor of his narrative, the progressively autonomous individual actively seeks to realize goals, as opposed to waiting or hoping for them to be fulfilled—without any effort on his part.

A certain progressively autonomous individual may only care to fulfill desired goals simply, for example, in order to experience various levels of physical and mental satisfactions. On the other hand, it may, for another, be one of his cares or interests to create a narrative that, however much satisfaction he experiences in the process, reflects a theme that has value or importance to him. One such narrative might be, for example, one that reflects the theme of

being a good son. In particular, this may involve regularly visiting his parents, taking care of them in old age, helping them do household chores, etc. None of this, of course, need interfere with the rest of his narrative that does not directly involve these activities. Yet, perhaps unlike some other ones in his life (e.g. playing a sport), the purpose of these activities is to develop and sustain a certain quality—the theme of being a good son—throughout the course of his narrative. As such, he, like others seeking to do the same with respect to another theme, may commit a significant portion of his time and energy to ensuring this quality is a constant in his life.

In contrast, other progressively autonomous individuals may, not interested in achieving the “thematic connectivity” described by Christman, have no desire to create a narrative that reflects a theme of value or importance. They may, rather, only care or be interested in simply living a life in which they are free to pursue various objectives, whether or not such a theme emerges in the process. This might involve, for example, living in different places around the world (i.e. desired goals), without concern for the emergence in question or even what enduring significance such a lifestyle might have for him. Similarly, other progressively autonomous individuals may, in creating their narratives, only have a series of short-term plans, such as taking a vacation and learning the basics of a new instrument, which, in their mind, do not add up to any theme expressed by their narrative. Whether the progressively autonomous individual attempts to achieve such a theme, however, does not necessarily have any bearing on how pleasant or worthwhile his narrative will be for him. One progressively autonomous individual may, in contrast to another, experience a pleasant or worthwhile narrative simply in virtue of being true to himself amid its creation—pursuing and fulfilling desired goals, independently of whatever thematic meaning they might, collectively, convey to others. Moreover, the essence of progressive autonomy, or the narrative one creates by its exercise, is not necessarily captured by

any one lifestyle (e.g. secular or religious) that these goals may represent. There are many ways of being progressively autonomous—provided one fulfills the minimum condition of establishing and pursuing desired goals—each of which allows one to enjoy life in different ways. Whereas one progressively autonomous individual may find a certain lifestyle advantageous, another may not.

Now, depending on the particular narrative of the progressively autonomous individual, the goals therein may cohere more or less. For example, there may be a high degree of such coherence in the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual where many or several of his goals are part of the greater attempt, say, to enter a certain profession. These goals might include completing special training, getting official certification, passing various tests, etc. On the other hand, the goals of a progressively autonomous individual whose narrative does not involve, for example, projects (long or short-term) in which the coordination of various interrelated objectives is necessary, may collectively express a moderate or low level of coherence. We might see this, for example, where the progressively autonomous individual goes through life successively making plans for the immediate future (e.g. what he will do tomorrow) but without connecting that future with what will come after it.

Regardless of the degree of coherence between the goals of the progressively autonomous individual, there will always be a certain level of harmony between the moments of his narrative. In particular, this harmony is between the past (i.e. when desired goals were established) and the present (i.e. when desired goals are pursued). Such harmony exists whatever the nature of the desired goals, such as social or financial, of the progressively autonomous individual; whether goals are about, say, becoming a criminal or police officer, they necessarily are established and pursued along a temporal continuum that constitutes the harmony. Moreover, such harmony

exists independently of whether the progressively autonomous individual, amid his narrative, actually fulfills the goals he is pursuing. For, this harmony is established the moment one becomes progressively autonomous, which, as we have seen, is based on going after projected aims or objectives. Realizing them, as much as it might enhance the experience of the progressively autonomous narrative, is not an essential characteristic of such a narrative.

This leads us to an important point about this narrative. What defines it first and foremost is not goal satisfaction. Rather, the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual is so defined by the periodic or regular exercise of an ability, namely establishing and pursuing desired goals (the main condition for being progressively autonomous). The concrete outcome of this does not undermine progressive autonomy itself unless it, somehow, leads to this ability being completely undermined or compromised, say because of a severe brain injury. Furthermore, in line with the above, the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual is not necessarily affected by the degree of coherence, high or low, between his goals. Indeed, one who establishes and pursues a wide range of desired goals, according to which one leads a rather eclectic life, may be creating a progressively autonomous narrative just as much as one who, perhaps avoiding this, establishes and pursues a limited range of desired goals, rendering one's life quite uniform (though not necessarily easy). Despite this difference, both individuals can, reflecting the progressive aspect of "progressive autonomy", potentially build and develop their narratives in a way that is meaningful and worthwhile. Indeed, both individuals may find inherently rewarding the ability to exercise progressive autonomy, through which they experience the freedom to live the life they want; a life too, perhaps, that they hold, regardless of what others may think, to be of the highest value or even means to true happiness.

In creating his narrative, the progressively autonomous individual can, in line with Mackenzie's view of imaginative projection, predict or anticipate where he is going based on plans. That is, he can foresee the kind of future that is in store for him, according to goals or objectives he has established in advance. Perhaps like a storyteller to himself, he can remind himself of this future, at least periodically, by recounting it to himself, such as in moments of uncertainty when he feels he is losing sight of what lies ahead. However, unlike the novelist who can perfectly control the direction of the story he writes, the progressively autonomous individual may enter unforeseen circumstances that can throw him off the direction he wants his narrative to follow. Even where it is unlikely, there is, because of contingency in human affairs, some possibility that the progressively autonomous individual's narrative will take a negative turn—contrary to his plans. Indeed, this turn may have not at all have been predicted or anticipated by him, especially where his plans were not sufficiently based on calculating the chances this possibility would actually occur.

That being said, the progressively autonomous individual can, where this possibility materializes, re-strategize his life in order to bounce back, so to speak, onto the direction he wants his narrative to take. Such resilience is important for three reasons. Firstly, it allows the progressively autonomous individual to remain on a trajectory he has not only chosen for himself but one that imbues his life with meaning and purpose. Off this trajectory, the progressively autonomous individual may feel (though not necessarily) he lacks such meaning and purpose and be at a loss as to what he should do with his life. Thus, he might sense that his narrative is in a state of limbo, namely not advancing or developing in a way that is personally significant. Such movement in his life, he may feel, is, at least temporarily, suspended or frozen; he has yet to figure out what to do with his life—how to resume creating his narrative—such that in may

advance or develop in the above manner. Secondly, it allows the progressively autonomous individual to remain on a path on which he can strengthen his skills and abilities. For example, resituating himself along the desired trajectory of his narrative, the progressively autonomous individual remains on a path where he is able to hone his skills and abilities as a scientist or athlete. Prior to this, he may have been discouraged from following this path because of failure, such as not succeeding at a challenging task. However, in getting back on this path, as might occur with a shift of thinking (e.g. believing he can do something rather than not), he will be able to improve various competencies, beyond what they were before the failure itself. Indeed, this may be in line with the direction the progressively autonomous individual wants his narrative to ultimately take.

Thirdly, the above resilience allows the progressively autonomous individual to reassert himself on a mental level. That is, it may give him the newfound energy to—similar to the activity, pointed out by McAdams, of “weighing different hypothetical possibilities in life”—rethink or consider his goals. In the process, he may change or keep them. For example, in being resilient after being thrown off the direction he wants his narrative to follow, the progressively autonomous individual can, rather than being discouraged from thinking about what to do next with his life, deliberate on whether the goals that are part of that direction are suitable for him. He might measure such suitability based on, say, the extent to which these goals are—given his perceived abilities—within reach. He may determine they are not and, hence, reestablish new goals that he both desires and are realistic for him. As this example implies, resiliency can help the progressively autonomous individual to restructure or organize his imagined (i.e. yet to be lived) narrative, such that it reflects plans or aims that are aligned with what he is capable of. In some cases, it may be necessary for him to first fail in order for

this to even begin. For, in possessing a certain personality or attitude (e.g. resistance to seeing or acknowledging one's weaknesses), it is possible the progressively autonomous individual will not undertake the above restructuring or organization until he experiences the real life outcome of failure. Specifically, this is so since such an outcome may, as an intense concrete event, have such an impact on him that, despite the above personality or attitude, he is forced to recognize he just might not be capable of what he originally thought he was. We may take an even more nuanced view or approach here and say that the outcome in question can inform or indicate to the progressively autonomous individual that he is capable of doing something (e.g. cooking) but not, at least in the present, to the extent (e.g. cooking gourmet) he thought he was. Offsetting the disappointment that might result from this, he can plan out a narrative in which he goes through a series of steps, allowing him to eventually extend his capability to this point. Consequently, he may achieve a desired goal that was previously out of reach—beyond a realistically imagined narrative.

Though, as future-oriented, the progressively autonomous individual creates a narrative through the fulfillment of desired goals, he, in doing so, may be seeking to also create a history he will not regret. Specifically, he may do so by only pursuing goals he believes would make him feel good for actualizing, when looking back on his life. For example, believing he will feel admirable (i.e. good), upon retrospection for fulfilling the goal of being a responsible parent, the progressively autonomous individual may pursue this goal, as opposed to one of becoming an experienced philanderer, which he believes he will one day feel guilty (i.e. bad) for achieving. As this example suggests, the progressively autonomous individual may, in creating his narrative, be guided by a conception of how he thinks he will morally perceive his past in the future. At some level, this involves determining what kind of moral person he will be and how

that person will judge what he is yet to do—eventually incorporated into his lived past. The upside of this is that it helps ensure the progressively autonomous individual will not veer from certain principles he may believe, with good reason (e.g. the intrinsic value or worth such principles have for him, regardless of context), will endure over the course of his life. The downside of this is he may incorrectly determine what kind of moral person he will be and how that person will judge what he is yet to do. Accordingly, he may prevent himself from doing things that in the future he would actually not regret, perhaps even feel good for doing. It is wise or prudent for the progressively autonomous individual to keep this in mind. For, in doing so, he may allow himself a certain flexibility or liberty according to which he will not be afraid to experiment with new goal-based activities, through which he is likely to grow and develop. Risk is certainly involved here but, in virtue of the life-enhancing experience these activities (embodying the opportunity) may very well contain, is one, arguably, worth taking.

Moreover, through these activities, the progressively autonomous individual may not only benefit himself but create a narrative that sets an example for others. Indeed, this may be one of his desired, perhaps long-term, goals. In creating the said narrative, the progressively autonomous individual may seek, over time, to bring into existence a life-story that conveys a particular meaning. For example, in continually battling injustice, while suffering, until he corrects various forms of it (e.g. sexism, racism. etc.), the progressively autonomous individual may, in the life-story he creates in the process, convey that through courageous persistence one can defeat evil in the world. If this does not move others to action, it may at least show or teach them that various forms of injustice need not be a permanent feature of human existence. Also, as much as this may be a self-driven effort, the progressively autonomous individual may, as part of it, use role models or the past as his guide to carrying it out. For example, in undertaking the

above battle, the progressively autonomous individual may emulate the actions of activists, such as Martin Luther King Jr., who have been effective in undermining various forms of injustice. If he is able to successfully bring into existence the narrative that embodies the particular meaning (in this case, the message that one can defeat evil in the world) he seeks to convey by it, the progressively autonomous individual also creates a narrative that others, in the future, will potentially refer to in order to live the kind of life the narrative represents. Finally, where he uses exemplary figures from the past (living or deceased) to actually produce this narrative, a temporal harmony occurs such that the past (where the figures were), the present (where the progressively autonomous individual produces the narrative), and the future (where the narrative is referred to by others) are brought into accord. By the same token, the progressively autonomous individual passes on, as it were, his narrative to posterity—future generations who might use it to model their own lives or narratives after. In effect, these generations may introduce positive changes in the world.

Though he is future-oriented, autobiographical memory, as described by Schechtman, has importance for the progressively autonomous individual in the process of creating and living his narrative. Illuminating and connecting particular events, such memory can make apparent to him certain patterns in his life, which his goal-based actions have produced. For example, illuminating and connecting a series of events that show him to regularly pursue an immoral end, autobiographical memory may make apparent to him a pattern of bad behaviour in his life. In turn, the progressively autonomous individual may be prompted to eliminate such behaviour, especially if it interferes with the successful attainment of desired goals he values or prizes much more than continuing it. As this example suggests, autobiographical memory, in helping the progressively autonomous individual become aware of negative patterns in his life, allows him

the opportunity to change or eliminate them. Consequently, he may provide his narrative with a character that is more conducive to his long and short-term interests. In particular, this, as a process, may involve gradually introducing new forms or kinds of behaviour, aligned with the future he aspires to.

In contrast to living on pure impulse, this may, similar to Frankfurt's observation that we have the capacity not to be determined by certain desires, also involve overcoming one's immediate inclinations. For, in wanting a particular future, the progressively autonomous individual might have to avoid certain feelings in the present, which, if followed, would detract him from that future. Indeed, the concern he has for how to attain this future may be at odds with what he wishes right now—perhaps something ultimately in opposition, despite its immediate rewards, to the possibility of such attainment. Moreover, in the process of creating his narrative, the progressively autonomous individual may first and foremost be committed to bringing about a future that represents his most cherished dreams, even if such a future requires that he forego a great deal of what would periodically offer him intense satisfaction. Where the progressively autonomous individual has this commitment, in addition to a desire to achieve it with little interruption, he may feel it is also worth it not to give into temptations that would sidetrack him, though only for a time, from his most cherished dreams. It is important to note that such disciplined avoidance does not necessarily have a deeply moral element to it; the progressively autonomous individual may have no serious qualms about partaking in the particular behaviours that characterize the above temptations. Rather, the purpose of the avoidance is tactical, namely to minimize disruptions along the path to achieving his most cherished dreams. We may say that the progressively autonomous individual, here, not only desires certain goals but that they are reached smoothly and efficiently.

Along the way, the progressively autonomous individual may remain tied to his past, without being hampered by it. For example, in creating his narrative, he may attempt to become an accomplished member of a field, more than he has so far been. Here, the progressively autonomous individual remains tied to his past, in so far as he remains a member of the field, though may be changing himself in positive ways as he near this goal. As this implies, the progressively autonomous individual, while creating his narrative, can also improve himself and, by extension, his circumstances, without experiencing his life as detached from his history. Instead, and this might be one of his, if only secondary, aims, the progressively autonomous individual can transform—to different degrees—the kind of person he is, while remaining on a continuous life-trajectory; one where the past coheres with the present and future. Remaining on this trajectory does not necessarily entail a restless perseverance, namely never veering for a second from personal aims. Rather, it entails a temporally extended commitment to a future one seeks to realize. In pursuing and achieving this future, the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual, despite being continuous with his past, may take on new and even complex forms (e.g. characterized by an increased number of social roles) that enrich his life overall. His narrative may, thereby, be experienced as both worthwhile and rewarding, as well as make rational sense in light of his deepest or highest aspirations. When this occurs, the progressively autonomous individual may, indeed, perceive the lived events of his life as more than just a series of moments. He may, gratifyingly, also regard them as the building blocks upon which he temporally rose to achieve his desired goals.

Related to this idea, the progressively autonomous individual, in creating his narrative undertakes behaviour that cannot fully be explained by reference to the present alone. Rather, to be understood, this behaviour needs to be explained in terms of aims that, as desired goals,

motivate him to act in a particular, future-based manner. When we have become aware of these aims—part of the progressively autonomous individual’s narrative yet to materialize—we can grasp what prompts him to do what he does in the present. By the same token, we can discover the imagined state of affairs that both appeals and drives the progressively autonomous individual to bring about a certain future. Whether or not the actions he undertakes in the process have any value to us, say, in relation to our beliefs, we can recognize the instrumental point of these actions, namely as means to an end. We might not like or approve of his actions but can at least identify the logic behind them.

This logic, for example, may be identified when we notice or observe that the progressively autonomous individual seeks to realize, as a concrete part of his narrative, something he was not able to achieve in the past. Helping to illuminate this idea, Crowther maintains, “our recall of the past is always based on our present interests and what it is that we want to find through this interrogation of the past. Likewise our recollection of the facts themselves can be heavily biased by the present concerns which have prompted our recollection” (2002, 436). Similarly, the progressively autonomous individual, feeling his life is lacking accomplishment, may be predisposed to remember what he has not, among his desired goals, yet achieved. Accordingly, the progressively autonomous individual may more resolutely focus on achieving this, while, perhaps, also temporarily turning his attention away from other desired goals.

Though he may, perhaps due to an error of memory, fail to see he has already achieved what he is going after, such pursuit is not necessarily counterproductive. For, through it, the progressively autonomous individual may, in the process, strengthen or better himself. In particular, this might occur through various tasks, efforts, and activities that the pursuit

encompasses or involves (e.g. solving mathematical problems one forgot he or she already successfully completed may still refine his or her calculative skills). Furthermore, the progressively autonomous individual, in repeating a form of past achievement may reinforce his position along a desired trajectory. This is so since, through such repetition, the progressively autonomous individual may engage in behaviour (e.g. refining his calculative skills) that was just as helpful at the time it was used to gain the above achievement as it is now in reaching his desired goals (e.g. becoming a mathematician). In the process, the progressively autonomous individual may, despite such repetition, draw and guide himself towards a future embodying what he is most set or intent on becoming. As such, where he repeats the past, as described, the progressively autonomous individual does not remain stuck within it but relives it, as it were, in a way conducive to where he ultimately wants to go.

Now, this direction may significantly depend on how the progressively autonomous individual sees his present, in relation to the past. For example, he may decide, in the process of adopting new aims, to abandon the previously desired goal of becoming an artist when he recognizes nothing up until the present demonstrates he possesses creative talent. As this example suggests, the progressively autonomous individual may, in light of how he views his life thus far, redefine his imagined future. By the same token, the progressively autonomous individual may never come to have desired goals that will necessarily ensure he will always want his narrative to turn out a certain way. Instead, he may, such as because of certain self-realizations, have and pursue different ones over time. This may result in a narrative that radically diverges from the kind he once thought he would live, without compromising his willingness to realize the future of that narrative.

It is appropriate, therefore, that we do not measure one's commitment to being progressively autonomous in terms of how long one has possessed and followed the same desired goals. Rather, we should do so in terms of how dedicated one has been to realizing, through one's own efforts, any combination of desired goals. This implies that what is important in being progressively autonomous is not that the individual pursue an unchanging set of desired goals throughout his narrative. Indeed, this might be counterproductive and even unhealthy where he has no real or sincere interest in doing this but, for example, is forced to. What is important in being progressively autonomous is that the individual has the ability to undertake a lifestyle or form of behaviour by which he can pursue desired goals, regardless of their content. In doing so, the progressively autonomous individual is not only self-governing but authentic; he actively engages in creating and living a narrative that is an expression of his genuine cares. As much as these cares may change over time, the progressively autonomous individual preserves this authenticity so long as he, through action, remains committed or dedicated to achieving desired goals that embody them.

Different from Zahavi's view that one's life-story changes as it told to oneself, the narrative of the progressively autonomous individual takes on new form, as we have seen, through action. In particular, this occurs in directing the course of his life, according to desired goals. His narrative, we might add, changes significantly when the fulfillment of these goals represents major turns or accomplishments. Now, whether or not the progressively autonomous individual, in contrast to Zahavi, tells himself the narrative he lives and creates in the process, this change still happens. For, it is primarily based or depends on outward behaviour rather than thought. Arguably, however, in order to gain a sense of how he has been living it, the progressively autonomous individual must think about, such as through self-recounting, his

narrative. More specifically, this might be done so as to clearly disclose to himself the events he has experienced and, perhaps, what to do in light of them. Out of this may emerge a picture of the kind of narrative (e.g. moral or immoral) he has so far lived. This is especially useful and valuable in that such a picture potentially illuminates to him the extent or degree to which he has fulfilled desired goals. Consequently, he may feel he has attained a larger or smaller degree of his cares, embodied by them. In turn, he may purposely orient himself towards achieving certain desired goals, namely a range of unattained cares, which possibly results in a more satisfying life. Throughout all this, the progressively autonomous individual may forge a positive identity on the basis of real accomplishments. Such identity, as a self-concept grounded in true success, may offer or provide him the genuine sense that he is now the person he deliberately strove to become.

This may be easier for those Appiah calls “modern people”, who, as he suggests, live in a society that is favourable to self-making, rather than for those who live under conditions where striving to become who or what wants is considerably limited (2005, 23). This, for example, might occur where one is mostly prohibited from doing what one wants. Here, one may be, say, in a repressive society, where one is regularly forced to conform to certain norms and behaviour that prevent such choice. Indeed, this setting or context may not be amenable to individual rights and freedoms. Here, however, progressive autonomy is not altogether impossible. For, despite the difficult situation at hand, one, through a brave feat of courage or protest, can act contrary to an oppressive power as part of the larger pursuit towards desired goals; the initiative for such an undertaking begins in oneself, not the outside world. Furthermore, such an undertaking is not necessarily self-serving but, as revolutionaries such as Mahatma Gandhi have demonstrated, can be directly aligned with the welfare of others. This is so since such welfare can be achieved as

part of a strong assertion of individual will but one directed towards the benefit or well-being of people around one. Acts of individualism are not, in all cases, tantamount to egoism. Such acts, depending on their character, can be intended and aimed at ameliorating the condition of others. If only in exceptional cases, altruism may underlie most or a great deal of the progressively autonomous individual's pursuit of desired goals. Maintaining or showing selfless concern for others may be one of things he genuinely, perhaps even passionately, wants to do and does not feel impaired by.

Besides positive feelings such as altruism, the progressively autonomous individual may be motivated in action by negative feelings associated with possible states of affairs. Specifically, he, in the construction of his narrative, may fear or be anxious about certain events, such as an outcome that would harm him, and so be prompted to do something about it. For example, he might plan and live a narrative, centred on activities that avoid the events in question. As this implies, the progressively autonomous individual, in the pursuit of desired goals, may not only deliberate and think about the future he desires. He may also imagine a future he does not want and specifically seeks to overcome. Accordingly, it is reasonable for him to actively take steps or proper precautions against this future, when he perceives it likely to materialize. In contrast, it is dangerous for the progressively autonomous individual, having this perception, to ignore and, subsequently, do nothing about this future. For, doing so may usher in this future and force him to experience its potential displeasure. As the foregoing suggests, the successful progressively autonomous life is one that may not only be characterized by the satisfaction of cares. It is also one—in the face of a future the progressively autonomous individual wants to avoid—involves reorganizing his life to circumvent possible threats. Through this, the progressively autonomous individual protects both himself and the narrative he

wants to live from being impeded or even destroyed. He thereby safeguards the preferred development of his life.

Such development, as we will see in the next chapter, is central to the moral responsibility of the progressively autonomous individual. For some, moral responsibility is closely tied to notions of good and evil, as well as punishment. However, taking more of a Frankfurtian approach, I will show such responsibility to be something that involves identifying with one's motives and having the will one wants to have. In particular, I will do so with respect to the progressively autonomous individual's concern and orientation towards the future. In the process, the progressively autonomous individual identifies with forces within himself, facilitating the attainment of desired goals. As such, moral responsibility for the progressively autonomous individual is based on moving towards the future he wants for himself.

CHAPTER 4

**STRATEGIC MORAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Up until now, we have looked at and discussed the active nature of progressive autonomy and how it manifests itself in narrative. The present topic is progressive autonomy and moral responsibility. In this chapter, I wish to illuminate this issue with respect to the progressively autonomous individual's identification with certain behavioural motives and how such identification makes sense in terms of his future-orientation. To do this, I will take my starting point from John M. Doris' identificationist approach to moral responsibility, which, as we will see, is itself influenced by and reflects Frankfurt's idea of moral responsibility (2002). Moreover, in undertaking this task, I will not attempt to show that the progressively autonomous individual is morally responsibly in any culturally, politically, socially, etc. specific way. Rather, in line with Doris, I mean to show that, in exercising such responsibility, the progressively autonomous individual acts in a tactical manner—effectively channeling his motives towards the realization of his desired goals.

This chapter consists of three main parts. First, I will give an overview of theories of moral responsibility and what they, collectively, tell us about it. Here, I will also argue why, of all the said theories, Doris' is most appropriate for my purposes. Second, I will show the extent to which the progressively autonomous individual is morally responsible under Doris' identificationist approach. Here, I will answer the question as to whether the progressively autonomous individual is more morally responsible than others who meet the minimum requirement of moral responsibility, under this approach. Third, I will provide a presentation of what I call "strategic moral responsibility" and how it is exercised by the progressively autonomous individual. As we will see, this kind of moral responsibility, unlike Doris' identificationist approach, emphasizes the future-orientation of the progressively autonomous individual. Specifically, it does so as an activity that centres on the progressively autonomous

individual's identification with motives he believes will lead him to reach desired goals. In discussing this, I will draw from Frankfurt's idea of "volitional necessity", showing how such a force helps the progressively autonomous individual remain on the path towards the future he wants for himself.

## **THEORIES OF MORAL RESPONSIBILITY**

One of the most influential figures in the debate on individual moral responsibility has been P. F. Strawson. The ideas of his that we will be looking at come from his well-known essay, "Freedom and Resentment", first published 1962. As a figure who continues to remain central to philosophical discussion on what makes an agent morally responsible, it is appropriate we begin with him here.

According to Strawson, moral responsibility is based on what he calls the "reactive attitudes", such as praise or blame (1974). In particular, we hold those responsible we judge deserving or potentially deserving of these attitudes. For Strawson, these are people with whom we have interpersonal relationships—the members of our society such as family members, employers, and friends (1974, 6). Such relationships also extend to include strangers, who, though we do not know them personally, are still people with whom we interact in society. In Strawson's view, just because we do not have deep emotional attachments to certain individuals, such as strangers, does not mean that we are socially estranged from them. Indeed, for Strawson, strangers and people we care for are both kinds of people with whom we have interpersonal relationships, in virtue of sharing society with them. This entails, under Strawson's view, that we would regard both kinds of people as morally responsible and, hence, candidates for reactive attitudes.

Clarifying this idea, Fischer states, “when members of a given society regard someone as a responsible agent, they react to the person (or deem it fitting to react to him) with a characteristic set of feelings and attitudes—for example, gratitude, indignation, resentment, love, respect, and forgiveness” (1999, 93). To illustrate this point, imagine one who knowingly steals. Members of society who are affected or disapprove of this may—manifesting a reactive attitude—respond to one with indignation or resentment. Moreover, Strawson believes that “we demand some degree of goodwill or regard on the part of those who stand in these [interpersonal] relationships to us, though the forms we require it to take vary widely in different connections” (1974, 6). As this implies, we expect the people around us will have at least the minimum amount of respect for us, shown through “some degree of goodwill or regard”. They are not allowed, therefore, to arbitrarily interfere with or prevent our well-being. If they do, they are subject to negative reactive attitudes and, perhaps, associated penalties or punishments, such as jail for defrauding us. Also, if the demand of goodwill or regard observed by Strawson is thought of as part of some implicit or tacit social contract, governing the behaviour of individuals, then those who ignore it by doing its opposite—purposely harming us—have violated the agreement in question. Depending on the importance of certain “forms” of goodwill or regard that may have been ignored in the process, such as not assaulting the innocent, the consequences of this violation may be more or less severe, ranging, for example, from censure to imprisonment.

In contrast to the reactive attitudes is what Strawson calls “the objective attitude” (1974, 9). For Strawson, this attitude “cannot include the range of reactive feelings and attitudes which belong to involvement or participation with others in interpersonal human relationships; it cannot include resentment, gratitude, forgiveness, anger, or the sort of love which two adults can

sometimes be said to feel reciprocally, for each other” (1974). As this suggests, the objective attitude is reserved for what we do not regard as morally responsible. This may, indeed, include what we do not consider as belonging to the regular domain of “interpersonal human relationships”, such as “nonhuman animals and inanimate things” (Fischer, 1999, 94). Expounding on this idea, Fischer states, “nonpersons can be used, exploited, manipulated, or perhaps just enjoyed. But we do not have the reactive attitudes (such as resentment or gratitude) toward them. In contrast to our attitudes toward persons, we view nonpersons from a more detached an ‘objective’ perspective” (1999). We may do this, for example, in relation to a dog. In doing so, we would not, say, express the reactive attitude of resentment toward it for tearing up our carpet. Instead, we, though perhaps feeling annoyed that our carpet is damaged, view— from a “detached” or “‘objective’ perspective”—the dog as not knowing how to show us the goodwill or regard we expect from persons.

In sum, for Strawson, moral responsibility involves being the potential target of reactive attitudes. Specifically, one who is morally responsible is the object of these attitudes, such as blame or indignation, where one fails to show at least a minimum level of respect to others, expecting this. As a result, he or she will be at the receiving end of reactive attitudes, expressed by others. All of this is to say that, in Strawson’s view, moral responsibility is a social phenomenon. It involves an actor who will be the object of various reactive attitudes when he contravenes what is, implicitly or otherwise, demanded by those around him.

Reflecting this idea, R. Jay Wallace argues, “episodes of guilt, resentment, and indignation [reactive attitudes] are caused by the belief that an expectation to which one holds a person has been breached; the connection with expectations gives the reactive emotions common propositional objects, tying them together as a class” (1994, 12). Thus, our reactive attitudes

emanate and are based on a particular thought, namely “the belief that an expectation to which one holds a person has been breached”. In the above example, we do not have this belief since we do not regard the dog as a person—one of the “propositional objects” or targets which we deem appropriate to be the recipients of our reactive attitudes. In line with Strawson’s view, we do not regard the dog, or nonpersons in general, as having disrespected us in the way that individuals do who do not show us a certain degree of goodwill or regard; we simply do not expect that from them. Arguably, to do so on Strawson’s view would be irrational. We would, in effect, be demanding that they show us something that they are cognitively or otherwise incapable of.

This idea is compatible with Wallace’s own position that “to hold someone morally responsible is to hold that person to moral expectations that one accepts. The set of moral expectations that one both accepts and holds people to is basically the class of...*moral obligations*” (1994, 63). These obligations for Wallace are “strict prohibitions and requirements” (1994, 37). As such, regarding someone as morally responsible involves holding that person accountable to rules that one and someone else both accept. We may, of course, see this in a community where a group of individuals hold each other accountable to the same moral expectations that each one of them respects and observes. Where these sorts of expectations are not met or violated, we may find that, aside from potential penalties or punishments that might follow, people will have negative affective responses (as captured by Strawson’s reactive attitudes). This accords with the Strawsonian view that moral responsibility is grounded “not in terms of beliefs about the people who are held morally responsible, but in terms of the emotions one feels towards them” (Wallace 1994, 74). Now, whether we regard moral responsibility of persons in this way or in terms of holding them accountable as described by Wallace, such

responsibility arguably involves a normative assessment or evaluation. That is, it entails determining whether someone, including through his or her actions, is ethically right or wrong. Putting forth this idea, Wallace argues, “to hold someone morally responsible is to view the person as the potential target of a special kind of moral appraisal” (1994, 52). In doing so, we do not merely describe or explain a person’s behaviour, such as walking from point A to B. Beyond this, we judge whether the behaviour is praiseworthy or not, such as when we determine that a certain acting of killing is wrong (and so not praiseworthy) because it is murder. We might, further, demand that the culprit be subject to specific measures, legal or otherwise.

Helping to illuminate this view, Wallace states, “people who are morally responsible may be made to answer for their actions, in the sense that their actions render them liable to certain kinds of distinctively moral responses. These responses include most saliently the response of moral blame, which is called for when the responsible agent has done something morally wrong, but they extend beyond simple blame to include a range of sanctioning responses as well, such as avoidance, reproach, scolding, denunciation, remonstrance, and (at the limit) punishment” (1994, 54). As this suggests, those who are morally responsible, when “made to answer for their actions”, are not necessarily treated neutrally. Rather, as one who is indebted to another, they may have to pay for their actions. These individuals may be the object of either blame or “sanctioning responses”, deemed fitting for the action they have committed. Whether or not such blame or responses are corrective, in the sense that they, say, aim to improve the character of their targets (i.e. individuals), they can be regarded as just in so far as they are judged to be proportionate to the action in question. For example, a society may view as just that an individual pay a monetary fine for a parking violation, rather than be physically tortured for it—a measure the society would see as cruel and excessive. Indeed, it is important that in determining

which kind of sanctioning responses are appropriate for a certain misdeed, those administering them, such as judges and lawmakers, do not allow their desires to cloud their judgment as to what counts as a fair sanctioning response. To achieve this, one may exercise what Wallace calls “moral agency”, namely “the capacity to step back from one’s given desire and to assess the ends they incline one to pursue in light of moral principles” (1974, 13). Through such agency, one can, while governed by “moral principles”, control the intensity of a certain desire (e.g. for revenge), such that it does not prevent one from making a decision as to what constitutes an ethically sound sanctioning response.

Like Strawson, moral responsibility entails the possible expression of reactive attitudes. Such expression occurs, in Wallace’s view, when “an expectation to which one holds a person has been breached”, as when others view one’s actions as violating someone’s rights. Thus, also like Strawson, moral responsibility for Wallace involves responding to the behaviour of others. This may lead to what Wallace calls “sanctioning responses” that include punishment, as well as other forms of penalty. Arguably, the best or ideal forms of such responses are those that are proportional to the degree of the above breach. No doubt, the idea of such responses, in line with Strawson, support Wallace’s interpersonal view of moral responsibility—people having to answer to others for their conduct and not, as it were, being let off the hook for it. This view is consistent with the notion that there are morally appropriate consequences, administered by various members of society (e.g. parents, teachers, judges, police, etc.), for what people do in the world.

So far we have been talking about what, from a Strawsonian-Wallacian perspective, it is to hold one morally responsible. As we have seen, this involves others regarding one as accountable for what he or she does. More specifically, John Fischer and Mark Ravizza point

out that such accountability renders one “*an appropriate candidate* for the reactive attitudes. A morally responsible agent is *rationally accessible* to the reactive attitudes; he is ‘in the ballpark’ as a potential candidate for at least some of the reactive attitudes, but he need not be an *actual* recipient or target of any such attitude” (1998, 7). The question, however, remains as to what individual capacities must one have in order to be appropriately regarded as morally responsible. Strawson and Wallace tell us how one who is morally responsible is treated and regarded by others. They do not tell us, however, the abilities that define such a person.

In contrast, Fischer and Ravizza hold that a morally responsible “agent must not behave as he does as the result of undue force; that is, he must do what he does freely. Alternatively, one could say that...the agent must *control* his behavior in a suitable sense, in order to be morally responsible for it” (1998, 13). As such, in order to be appropriately regarded as morally responsible, one must have the ability to act of one’s own volition, and not be compelled to do so. In doing so, one can also act on the basis of what Fischer and Ravizza call “reasons-responsiveness”, according to which one sees a reason to perform an action and does so (1998). For example, one sees a reason to eat dinner at home, instead of going out to eat at a restaurant, since, in doing so, he or she will save money. Recognizing this reason, one in fact stays home to eat dinner. Such responsiveness, for Fischer and Ravizza, is, in addition to the above ability, necessary for one to be morally responsible. As this suggests, being a morally responsible agent, from the point of view of Fischer and Ravizza, involves knowing why one acts as one does, on top of being in control of one’s actions. Indeed, this, as we will see, will have a central place in my theory of strategic moral responsibility.

Now, one who lacks the above capacities, such as a severely mentally ill person, does not have what it takes, as it were, to be morally responsible. Arguably, therefore, it would not be fair

to apply the reactive attitudes to them. In line with this view, Fischer and Mark Ravizza, maintain, “we are *engaged* with persons. In contrast to the perspective from which we view other persons, our perspective toward nonpersons tends to be ‘objective.’ We treat nonpersons as objects to be used, exploited, manipulated, or perhaps just enjoyed. But we do not have attitudes such as resentment or love toward them; rather, we view them from a more detached and uninvolved—a more objective—perspective” (1998, 6). As this implies, we expect a certain degree of respect from only those with whom we are “engaged” and, hence, interpersonally connected. Indeed, this idea is central to the Strawsonian-Wallacian perspective in so far as such a perspective emphasizes that holding one morally responsible is about how we, outwardly, relate to others. In contrast, other theorists focus on how moral responsibility is not so much a matter of such social activity but, similar to Fischer and Ravizza, what the individual himself actually does or can do.

Turning now to these theorists, Oshana states, “when we say a person is morally responsible for something, we are essentially saying that the person did or caused some act (or exhibits some traits of character) for which it is fitting that she give an account” (1997, 77). As such, one is morally responsible when it is deemed appropriate that one “give an account” for one’s behaviour. What is central to moral responsibility is not the agent’s behaviour itself but an explanation of it when it is thought to be “fitting”; that is, when the behaviour is recognized to have been caused, “knowingly and freely”, by the agent (1997, 73). Moreover, Oshana argues that “a person is responsible for an act if and only if it ought to be the case that the person account for her behavior, where doing so involves giving some statement of the person’s beliefs or intentions regarding the act. Thus ‘X is accountable for Y’ can be unpacked as ‘It is appropriate that X explain her intentions in doing (or being) Y’” (1997, 77). Thus, when one is

morally responsible we, as Oshana suggests, also expect that he or she tell us about the “beliefs or intentions” involved in the behaviour. From this, we can determine the reasons or motivation behind one’s action, such as personal or political ones. Subsequently, we can assess whether such reasons or motivation, on moral grounds, justify one’s behaviour. For example, we might think this is so when there is enough evidence—provided by one’s account of one’s behaviour—to conclude that one’s reason for using physical force against another was to protect him or herself from a fatal threat. As a result, we do not see one’s behaviour as, say, assault but self-defense; whether or not such a view will prevail or stand in a court of law, however, is another matter.

In line with her idea that one give an account of one’s behaviour when “it ought to be the case” that one do so, Oshana believes her view of moral responsibility “enables us to charge a person with responsibility even where she fails to explain her behavior. The accountability analysis of responsibility [Oshana’s view of moral responsibility] does not insist that the person *in fact* give an account to someone, or that there be someone (or some institution) to whom the agent must deliver the account, or that the account elicit a response” (1997, 79). Rather, for Oshana, moral responsibility entails one is in a position to give an account for one’s behaviour (unfortunately, Oshana does not specify in detail what psychologically constitutes this position, such as being rational, intelligent, deliberative, etc.). It does not, however, entail one who is in this position will be forced by anyone to give this account. Yet, as Oshana observes, one who does not give this account when appropriate “is open to criticism or reproach because of this failure” (1997, 79). For example, a student who refuses to account for why he is regularly disruptive in class—an account the teacher deems fitting (as understood by Oshana)—may be criticized or reproached as being uncooperative. This may be all the more so if it is believed by

the teacher that the student not only knows how to give this account but, in doing so, would reveal the cause and so help determine ways of eliminating the disruptive behaviour—taking away from the educational experience of other students.

As this example implies, Oshana's view of moral responsibility "focuses on the activity of the agent whose responsibility is at issue—the subject himself—rather than inviting and then extrapolating responsibility ascriptions indirectly, by way of the feelings, attitudes, and punitive rewarding practices of others" (1997, 80). As such, in contrast to Strawson and Wallace, Oshana centres moral responsibility not primarily on those who, perhaps as an audience or community, affectively react to or administer sanctions against a particular individual. Rather, she centres it on "the subject himself" who, when having been judged to have knowingly and freely caused an act, is expected to provide an account of that act. Though Oshana does not expressly say so herself, it is arguably unreasonable to ask for this account when the subject is, say, because of a verified mental disorder, completely unable to do so. By the same token, it may be unreasonable to hold someone morally responsible if they lack the ability—psychological or otherwise—to provide this account, despite having been recognized as the cause of a certain act. What exactly constitutes this ability is beyond our present purposes. Nonetheless, Oshana's view of moral responsibility lends itself to the question: what must the individual himself possess in order to actually be able to provide an account of his behaviour when others deem it appropriate or fair to do so?

The notion of possession, albeit in a different way, is also important to Derk Pereboom's view of moral responsibility. On this view, "for an agent to be *morally responsible for an action* is for this action to belong to the agent in such a way that she would deserve blame if the action were morally wrong, and she would deserve credit or perhaps praise if it were morally

exemplary” (2001, xx). As such, to be morally responsible is to be an owner, namely for an “action to belong to the agent” such that we respond—with blame, credit, or praise—to the action in morally appropriate ways. For a person, then, to be morally responsible in the way described, an action, as Pereboom states, must be “imputable” to her. Conversely, when an action does not belong to her, she is not responsible for it and so cannot be ascribed to her. There is, of course, the possible difficulty of determining whether an action belongs to one, such as whether one caused it or not. Arguably, we cannot hold one morally responsible for an action before we know this for certain. For example, we cannot hold the individual morally responsible for a crime that we are not entirely sure he committed. By the same token, we cannot blame him for that crime unless we know that he was in fact its perpetrator.

As this example suggests, the above difficulty is important to consider in applying Pereboom’s view of moral responsibility in the real world. For, unless we know whether a particular individual has actually performed an action, we are not necessarily justified in blaming, crediting, or praising a person for the action in question. Without this knowledge we might end up blaming, crediting, or praising those who do not deserve it. In the extreme, this may, sadly, involve faulting or condemning the innocent, leading to severe punishment such as long-term incarceration. However, by adopting Pereboom’s view of moral responsibility, one may undermine or militate against the affective pressure, such as introduced by revenge, which may prevent one from making a correct and sober judgment as to whether a person actually did something deserving of punishment. Reinforcing this idea, Pereboom states, “I oppose the idea that to judge a person morally responsible essentially involves having an attitude toward her. Rather, I think that to make a judgment of this sort is most fundamentally to make a factual claim” (2001, xx). Such a claim, for Pereboom, is tantamount to making an objective

determination as to whether an action belongs to a person, independently of the reactive attitudes one may experience in the process of such a determination. Despite Pereboom's anti-Strawsonian position, interpreters of Strawson, such as Fischer and Ravizza, would not necessarily deny that such a determination could be made on a Strawsonian account. For, such an account, though focused on the reactive attitudes, is compatible with the idea that we can judge whether an action belongs to one or not.

Pereboom's notion of moral responsibility is similar to what Watson calls the "self-disclosure view" (1996). This view maintains that "an agent is morally responsible insofar as he has the capacity to choose ends freely and act in accordance with such choices. An agent with such a capacity can be considered morally and not merely causally or 'superficially' responsible for his behavior" (Fischer 1999, 96). Now, on the surface, this does not illuminate the connection between Pereboom and Watson. However, this connection becomes apparent when we go more deeply and see that, for Watson, to exercise the above "capacity" is to be the owner or author of one's action. As Watson holds, it is on the basis of this exercise that "conduct can be attributable or imputable to an individual as its agent ... The individual is an agent in a strong sense, an author of her conduct, and is in an important sense answerable for what she does" (1996, 229). Therefore, like Pereboom, Watson's self-disclosure view entails that an action for which a person is morally responsible is one that he has performed and so is "attributable or imputable" to him. Furthermore, in being "answerable" for the action for which he is morally responsible, he, under Watson's self-disclosure view, can be thought to be on par with Oshana's morally responsible agent—he is expected to provide an account for his action.

The kind of moral responsibility that is entailed by the self-disclosure view is not the same as the kind entailed by what Watson calls "accountability" (1996). For Watson, to be

morally responsible in terms of accountability means that what one does is our “business” (1996, 231). Clarifying this idea, Fischer states, “Watson employs the term ‘accountability’ to refer to a more ‘social’ notion of moral responsibility which includes the reactive attitudes and associated practices, that is, roughly a Strawsonian notion of moral responsibility” (1999, 97). As such, one can be morally responsible under the self-disclosure view, namely be the author or agent behind a certain action. However, this does not necessarily imply that one is morally responsible in terms of accountability; hence, we would not respond to one with various “reactive attitudes and associated practices”. Illuminating this point is Watson’s example of the “vicious criminal” who we hold responsible for physically committing his crime (reflecting the self-disclosure view) but, because of “facts about his formative years” (e.g. domestic abuse), we are not fully inclined to hold morally responsible in terms of accountability (1996, 240). In particular, Watson holds these facts make us aware that “the individual [vicious criminal] has already suffered too much and that we too would probably have been morally ruined by such a childhood. What is inhibited by these concerns is accountability blame” (1996). In pointing out the above awareness, Watson suggests that what underlies such inhibition is understanding why someone did what he or she did and not just why. In the example of the criminal, this might involve empathizing with the potential effects of excessive suffering. Moreover, in the same example, Watson does not seek to convey that through inhibiting accountability blame—that is, holding one culpable—we turn a blind eye to the behaviour of the criminal. Rather, Watson means to show that we recognize such behaviour as stemming, in significant part, from historical forces. These forces are what hold us back from blaming the criminal in a way that would, arguably, be appropriate for one who was never subject to them and committed a crime simply of one’s own volition.

The question, however, remains as to what extent people refrain from such blame in actual society. It is not uncommon, as we see with public response to serial killers, for people to fully blame certain individuals whose histories, they know, contain the above facts. Such blame might occur because, at least for some, these facts ultimately have no bearing on how one chooses to act. However ethical or rational such blaming, though an important issue, is beyond our present purposes. Yet, as an observational point, it does challenge Watson's view that people are inclined to entirely withhold blame from those whose histories contain the above facts. This challenge can be resolved, perhaps through social scientific research, by determining to what extent members of the public hold responsible—in the accountability sense—those with such histories, even when they are aware of such histories. Admittedly, the difficulty of this might involve figuring out what counts as the above facts and how much, if at all, they should excuse certain individuals from blame. This is arguably an empirical issue that involves demonstrating causal links between one's unfortunate (i.e. morally damaged) past and socially disagreeable (e.g. crime) actions that one, as a result, commits. Even if this were achieved, there is, of course, no guarantee that there will be a universal agreement to hold certain individuals less morally responsible—in terms of accountability—than others. By the same token, there may always remain a rift between those who see people as equally responsible in this sense and those, whether because of the above facts or otherwise, who do not.

Arguably, degrees of moral responsibility, like moral responsibility in general, are centred not on merely what we think or desire but what we do. In support of this view, Thomas Pink asserts, "our moral responsibility is for action" (2009, 127). Though at least some of the theorists (e.g. Wallace) we have seen suggest that, in particular, such action is the sort we willfully do, none, perhaps, illuminate—in a single statement—this more clearly than Pink. As

Pink argues, “our moral responsibility for how we act presupposes a kind of power to determine for ourselves how we act...It is the existence of this power which explains, if anything does, why it should in particular be for our actions and omissions of actions that we are responsible” (2009, 129). Thus, moral responsibility depends and is based on self-determination. Accordingly, a person is not morally responsible if she is not able, through her own power, to act. Such a person, for example, might be compelled by an external body or force to do so. She, unlike someone we might call autonomous (an issue I will return to later this chapter), did not determine her behaviour. On Pink’s view, therefore, we cannot blame this person for what she does. Alternatively, we cannot, on the same view, blame her for what, because of an inability to determine her actions, she fails to do.

Supporting this idea, Pink maintains, “if what someone does is morally wrong, and so breaches moral standards, we may blame them for having done it. And the message of blame is that not only did they do wrong, but that they did wrong was their fault. Not only was what they did bad; but it was bad of them to do it. They were responsible” (2009, 127). As this implies, in order to do what is “morally wrong”, as well as receive the associated blame, what is done must emanate from the person herself; it is her fault the action was committed. Accordingly, Pink states, “responsibility of the sort invoked in blame, the idea of something’s being one’s fault, really is tied to agency...We are responsible for the [a] bad occurrence only if it arises as or out of our own action or omission” (2009, 128). Under Pink’s view, it would therefore not be correct to blame individuals for an event if they were not “in a position...to determine for themselves whether it occurred” (2009). For example, if, because of a nervous (i.e. involuntary) tick, someone beside me knocks over my drink, that person, as disappointed as I may be at the occurrence, is not morally responsible for doing so. This does not change no matter how

apologetic the person is for having knocked over my drink. Expressing regret does not itself transform an accident, which in this case is knocking over my drink, into willful and, therefore, morally responsible action. Indeed, such expression might entail that one wishes that a certain occurrence never happened. Yet, that hardly guarantees that the occurrence results from the power within one to, voluntarily, commit wrong against us—morally responsible action for which, under Pink’s view, one would be blamed. The occurrence may be the outcome of chance and not at all the result of ill-will towards us.

Honing in on the agential character of his view of moral responsibility, Pink argues “it is the agent, and not simply some state or events within him, that is responsible, because it is the agent, and not simply some state of events within him, who is in control and who determines how he acts. Excuses that reduce moral responsibility can do so precisely by displacing responsibility from the agent himself to an event or state involving him” (2009, 130). As such, it is primarily the individual himself—“in control and who determines how he acts”—that is morally responsible. In making this statement, Pink, in effect, is saying that the individual is one or to be identified with the power, within himself, to act as he chooses. On the other hand, things like psychological events, such as the experience of particular emotions, may be separate from him. Reinforcing this view, Pink states, “we might say: the agent was not responsible for what he did; it was his overwhelming fear that made him do it” (2009). As this implies, for Pink, intense feelings, such as “overwhelming fear”, can be something other than the agent himself. This idea, however, may be viewed as problematic. For, one might not see oneself as separate from one’s feelings, no matter how intense. If so, one will not be inclined to perceive a split between oneself and these feelings. He or she, rather, is more likely to deny the existence of such a division. This person, however, may find the above idea less problematic if it entails that

intense feelings may be experienced as (similar to Frankfurt's phraseology) alienating—metaphorically separate from the kinds of experience one wants for oneself. Nonetheless, Pink does not say—in terms of argument, discussion, ideas, etc.—enough to tell us conclusively whether he views the disconnect between intense feelings that make people do things and the people themselves in this metaphorical sense. However he views this disconnect, it is clear from the foregoing statement he makes about fear that it is one characterized by the non-autonomous event of being determined, rather than being a determining force oneself. For Pink, this, regardless of the lack of evidence mentioned, is an important point. It reinforces his view that one cannot be held morally responsible for something one did not intentionally do and so cannot be blamed for.

Like Pink, Frankfurt believes that one's will is central to moral responsibility. For Frankfurt, however, this does not entail that one is always able to choose the will one wants. Rather, in Frankfurt's view, a morally responsible person may have failed to have been “in a position to have whatever will he wanted” (1998, 24). Such a person, for example, may have been strongly influenced by his environment to have the will of desiring to take a vacation. Yet, in line with Frankfurt, such a person can still be morally responsible in so far as he identifies with this will as one he wants. As this suggests, what is important for moral responsibility in the Frankfurtian sense is not so much how one came to have a certain will but whether one endorses (i.e. identifies with) or rejects (i.e. does not identify with) it. Also, for Frankfurt, the degree to which one has access to a certain range of alternatives for action does not affect moral responsibility. Rather, in Frankfurt's view, if “the will that moved him [the individual] when he acted was his will because he wanted it to be, he cannot claim that this will was forced upon him or that he was a passive bystander to its constitution. Under these conditions, it is quite

irrelevant to the evaluation of his moral responsibility to inquire whether the alternatives that he opted against were actually available to him” (1998, 24). Thus, moral responsibility involves wanting to have what motivates or propels one’s action—even if circumstances played a large role in one having such a desire. This aspect of one’s psychology, not the outside world, is central to and defines such responsibility.

Accordingly, Doris maintains that “identification is a necessary and sufficient condition for [such] responsibility. To the extent an actor identifies with the determinative motive of a behavior she performs, she is responsible for that behavior: to the extent that she does not so identify, she is not” (2002, 140). As such, the individual is morally responsible for behaviour that is caused or determined by a motive that he identifies with. This form of identification is of the Frankfurtian variety such that “to identify with one’s determinative motive is to embrace or regard it as ‘fully one’s own’”; one wants to have the motive in question (2002, 140). It would, therefore, be misguided for such a person to blame himself for this behaviour (e.g. breaking a diet to eat junk food), as disappointed as he may feel at the fact that this behaviour occurred. Furthermore, reflecting what Doris and Joshua Knobe call the “*real self view*”, such a person may perceive that this behaviour does not result from genuine cares or values, which constitute at least part of the self in question (2010, 5). It might, instead, result from a part of oneself that one seeks to suppress or deny, say, because one is ashamed of it. Rather than identifying with it, one may regard or experience this part of the self as foreign. Under Doris’ view, one would not be morally responsible for behaviour motivated by it. By the same token, the individual might view such behaviour as not fully his own but emanating from a source from which he feels psychologically distant.

This leads us to an important point on the Frankfurtian idea of responsibility, put forth by Doris. Such responsibility, as we have seen with other theorists, is not so much defined in terms of one being the potential object of blame or other reactive emotions. However, in emphasizing the behaviour that follows from certain motives, such responsibility can have meaning for others, namely those who experience (e.g. observe) or are subject to (e.g. victimized by) the said conduct. For example, behaviour that follows from one identifying with the motive to hurt another—rendering, under Doris’ view, one morally responsible for such behaviour—can be perceived by others as cruel or malicious. Despite the social implications, illustrated by this example, that Doris’ view of moral responsibility might have, it remains individualistic in so far as it is defined in terms of self-perceived ownership. In particular, such ownership is based on whether a person sees (i.e. identifies with) the determinative motive of one’s behaviour as belonging to him. Accordingly, he can do something that, by societal standards, say, is deemed unethical but not be morally responsible for it if it is caused by a motive that he sees as other than his own. This, however, does not necessarily entail that one who acts this way will not be corrected, such as through penalty or therapy that would make one, for example, more aware of the wrongness of one’s behaviour. Yet, such correction—as important as it may be in matters of rehabilitation, penology, etc.—is a separate issue from what Doris means by being moral responsible for one’s behaviour. Such responsibility, for Doris, exists in virtue of the identification described, not whether one is aware of the rightness or wrongness of one’s behaviour, as well as how it might be regarded or managed by others.

Now, Doris does not believe that one is necessarily free of moral responsibility for one’s behaviour if, at the moment it was carried out, one failed to identify with the motive behind it. Rather, as Doris argues, “identification may be said to obtain if a person *would have* identified

with the determinative motive of her behavior at the time of performance had she subjected it to reflective scrutiny. Accordingly, unreflective persons—as all of us are sometimes—may be quite legitimately responsible for their unreflective behaviors” (2002, 141). As such, one may have failed to identify with the motive of one’s behaviour when it occurred but that does not alone suffice for the person to not be morally responsible for it. For example, one may unreflectively make a generous donation. In doing so, one does not identify with the motive behind such behaviour. Yet, one is still morally responsible for the behaviour since, had he or she had the opportunity while performing it, one would have identified with it.

Moreover, in line with Doris’ view that “mere refusals to avow identification are not exculpating”, one who does something unethical but does not identify with the motive behind such behaviour is not thereby freed of moral responsibility. Such a person might be one, for example, who unreflectively (as in a fit of anger) destroys the property of someone who slighted one. This person, under Doris’ view, is still responsible for what he did if, during this event, he would have identified with the motive behind such destruction. More specifically, the reason for such identification might be that one, at least at the time of the event, believed that destroying others’ property is justified when one is slighted. Indeed, such identification may be difficult to admit to oneself if, at a later date, one, say, because of a new but strongly held sense of propriety or justice, denies one would ever partake in it (as well as have any belief that would contribute to it). However, similar to Doris, one may, through “critical scrutiny” of one’s former psychological makeup (perhaps with the guidance of therapist who helps illuminate one’s prior motives, beliefs, etc.), come to see that such identification occurred or would have occurred. This allows one to accept moral responsibility for one’s past behaviour, potentially years after not doing so. How one feels about such behaviour, such as happy or remorseful, depends on

whether one views it as good or bad. This, however, is based on a particular outlook (e.g. personal, cultural, political, etc.) that is independent of what Doris means by one being morally responsible for one's behaviour.

The views of moral responsibility put forth by Frankfurt and Doris are, as Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen suggests, not contrary to our regular behaviour. As Lippert-Rasmussen, commenting on the identificationist approach of these theorists, states, "since we do not ascribe responsibility to agents for alien forces they disapprove of, it is...unsurprising if one's being moved against one's higher-order volitions implies absence of moral responsibility. However, we do ascribe moral responsibility to those who were in a position not to be moved by "alien forces they disapprove of". For example, we ascribe moral responsibility to a murderer who could have resisted the impulse to kill (i.e. alien force) someone, such as through the power of reflection still, despite his anger, available to him. Nonetheless, the identificationist approach of Frankfurt and Doris reflects our intuitions about what we ideally want and will not later regret. Moreover, where the agent is moved in accordance with higher-order motivational elements, it is natural to see his identification with his will as an expression of his view that he is in control of himself" (2005, 372). As such, the identificationist approach of Frankfurt and Doris reflects our intuitions. In particular, it expresses our "natural" sense to hold morally responsible those who act or are moved according to their "higher-order volitions", while those who act or are moved contrary to them—and so do not have the will they want to have—are not morally responsible. In such a case, a person may have been forced (e.g. assaulted) to physically behave or respond in the manner he did, without at all having the will to want this. Furthermore, similar to Lippert-Rasmussen, we might not ascribe moral responsibility to those moved by forces other than what they identify with out of an empathetic sense that others, with whom we share the same or

similar psychological constitution, would not adequately feel in control of what they do. Accordingly, we may view it as wrong or unjust to hold such individuals morally responsible—a perspective, perhaps, we expect others (from the sense described) to apply to us as well.

Supporting Lippert-Rasmussen, Doris et al. found in their empirical study that “the degree to which actors ‘identified’ with an action was strongly associated [by laypersons] with responsibility for the action being assigned to them” (2006, 297). As this suggests, people are inclined to hold morally responsible those who, through identification, view their behaviour as their own—constituted by the will they want to have. In addition, Doris et al. found “an actor who desired an outcome was judged to be to some extent responsible, even though there were extenuating circumstances of the most extreme sort” (2006). As this implies, people hold others morally responsible if they want a certain state of affairs to occur. Along the lines, therefore, of Frankfurt and Doris’ identificationist approach, people’s conception or view of moral responsibility begins with the actor’s psychology, namely whether they desire something or not rather than, say, what influences may be weighing-down on them in the outside world. This supports the incompatibilist idea that, as Doris et al. observe, “actors may be held responsible even in circumstances where it is apparent they were coercively constrained to act as they did” (2006, 298). This is so since under such circumstances one can still have the will wants to have, which suffices and is necessary for identificationist moral responsibility. For example, one may be forced or “coercively constrained”, say, by a demanding supervisor to move heavy equipment or risk losing one’s job. If, however, one identifies with a desire within oneself to partake in the challenging task, one is morally responsible for the behaviour that follows from it (i.e. moving heavy equipment). One is no more or less morally responsible because of the pressure one’s

supervisor placed on him or her. That may partially annoy one but it does not undercut such responsibility.

The findings of Doris et al. confirm their observation that “what causes people to attribute responsibility...is to some extent what is believed to be in the ‘heart’ of the actor and this is so even for actions committed under overwhelmingly coercive or constraining circumstances” (2006, 299-300). As such, people view an actor as morally responsible for behaviour whose motive is endorsed by the actor himself. If the actor did not want to be moved in a certain way but was—that is, if it was not in his “heart” to act this way—then he is exempted from being morally responsible for it. Moreover, as suggested by the above observation, people see others as morally responsible “under overwhelmingly coercive or constraining circumstances”, which severely limit one’s range of options. Such circumstances, as Frankfurt states, may have “made it impossible for a person to avoid doing something; these circumstances actually played a role in bringing about that he did it, so that it is correct to say that he did it because he could not have done otherwise” (1998, 10). But under such circumstances, Frankfurt continues, the person may have “really wanted to do what he did; he did it because it was what he really wanted to do, so that it is not correct to say that he did what he did only because he could not have done otherwise” (1998). The above observation lines up with the implicit point Frankfurt is here making, namely that circumstances alone do not guarantee that a person loses or does not possess the freedom to identify with the will she wants to have—to do, as it were, what her heart is telling her because that is what she wants. So long as this freedom is retained, she has the capacity to be morally responsible in the Frankfurtian sense, even if the action, for which she is so responsible, was not entirely of her own doing. Under this view, “elements of

control over an action that matter for moral responsibility occur independently of whether the agent who performs the action could have done otherwise” (Talbert 2009, 424).

Despite their differences, the theories of this section illustrate that foundations of moral responsibility are grounded in what people do and, to some extent, how others respond to that. We saw with Strawson that moral responsibility is based on expressing reactive attitudes, such as resentment or praise, towards others from whom we expect a certain amount of respect. In the case of Wallace, moral responsibility involves holding one accountable to expectations or obligations, which that person, as well as ourselves, accept. Oshana put forth the idea that one is morally responsible if one causes an action for which it appropriate one give us an account. Pereboom showed that one is morally responsible for an action for which it is appropriate that, depending in its moral nature, he or she receive blame, credit, or praise for it. This view is echoed by Watson’s idea of accountability, namely that one who is morally responsible is a legitimate recipient of reactive attitudes, as well as “associated practices” such as punishment. This is in contrast to what Watson calls the “self-disclosure view”, which holds one is morally responsible for action one chooses in accordance with particular ends but is not necessarily such a recipient. This, as illustrated by Watson’s example of the criminal, depends on how much we see one’s past affecting one’s present actions. Moreover, Pink put forth the idea that moral responsibility is based on having the power to determine one’s own actions, for which one may be blameworthy. In doing so, Pink stressed that where a person has such power, he is morally responsible; the converse is true where one does not. Like Pink, Doris presents a view that emphasizes individual will, namely Frankfurtian identification—with the motive behind one’s behaviour—is necessary and sufficient for moral responsibility. The behaviour that emanates from such will, as we saw, can have significance to those around one, such as where it is

perceived as morally wrong. Moreover, moral responsibility, in Doris' view, can obtain even where circumstances pushed someone to do something. For, central to such responsibility is wanting to have or not have a certain motive, regardless of other pressures that affect one.

Out of all the theories of this section, Doris' emphasizes most having the kind of will one wants. This centres moral responsibility on the power of the individual himself to identify with certain motives, rather than others. Indeed, such a theory of moral responsibility draws attention to the individual's potential to control his motives, rather than be simply determined or overwhelmed by them. This makes it a particularly attractive theory of moral responsibility. For, moral responsibility, as supported by the empirical findings of Doris et al.'s study, presupposes that a person is in charge of what she does. Indeed, this active role is represented by Doris' theory of moral responsibility, characterized by one regulating the expression of one's motives, through identification. By the same token, Doris' theory is also an ideal candidate for my purposes, namely to show the special way in which the progressively autonomous individual, as one who not only pursues desired goals but controls or manages his motives, is morally responsible. I will, however, go a step beyond Doris' identificationist approach to moral responsibility. I will show that the progressively autonomous individual not only satisfies the minimum requirement for such responsibility but always does so with regard to the future he wants for himself. As we will see, central to this are the motives the progressively autonomous individual will identify with in order to realize desired goals. These motives, though they occur and are experienced in the present, are considered by the progressively autonomous individual in terms of what role they can play in getting him, temporally speaking, where he seeks to go.

## **THE IDENTIFICATIONIST APPROACH AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PROGRESSIVELY AUTONOMOUS INDIVIDUAL**

The progressively autonomous individual is morally responsible in a way that goes beyond what the approach holds as a minimum requirement for moral responsibility. This requirement consists of identifying with a behavioural motive, though not necessarily with an eye towards the future. So long as the actor partakes, or would partake, in such identification, he is responsible for the behaviour that follows from the motive. Doing this and more, the progressively autonomous individual identifies with a motive he thinks will—through the actual behaviour it leads to—contribute to his achieving a desired goal. For example, believing that courage (motive) will contribute, through the brave conduct (behaviour) it produces, to him being promoted to a higher military rank (desired goal), he will identify with it. As this example suggests, the progressively autonomous individual, as part of moral responsibility under the identificationist approach, does not simply want a behavioural motive out of curiosity; that is, an interest to see what the motive might lead him to do. Rather, the progressively autonomous individual wants such a motive in virtue of whether he perceives it as ultimately delivering him to the future he wants for himself. In this way, the kind of identification he takes part in is strategic. It is based on him interpreting a motive as helping situate himself along his preferred course of his life.

Though strategic moral responsibility does not require the progressively autonomous individual to belong to a community of others, there are two advantages of being so that I would like to relate to such responsibility. First, in belonging to a community of others, the progressively autonomous individual can more effectively be strategically responsible. In particular, this occurs where others help him endorse or reject motives—based on the future he

wants for himself—which he would otherwise have difficulty doing alone. For example, a recovering addict may have the help of a support group—counselors, sponsors, family, etc.—to make sure he does not identify with a desire for a drug, bound to lead him to a future he does not want to himself—permanently abstaining from the drug. The help in question may take the form of the support group reminding him of the dangers of identifying with the drug (i.e. falling back into addiction), as well as under what circumstances (social, environmental, etc.) such identification is likely to occur and so worth avoiding altogether.

Secondly, in belonging to a community of others, the progressively autonomous individual can dialogue with those around him. Such individuals can offer him, collectively, more perspectives on his desired goals than he would have if he were socially isolated. Considering these perspectives, the progressively autonomous individual can determine whether his goals are truly worth pursuing (personally, socially, politically, etc.) and, hence, whether he should continue investing his energy in being strategically morally responsible with respect to particular aims. For example, others, through dialogue, may offer him perspectives, such as the eternal value of learning, that debunk his belief that he is too old to return to school. Now perceiving the belief as false, he may divest the energy he has channeled into pursuing only activities that will distract him from his desire to return to school. In turn, he may, in being strategically morally responsible, rechannel that energy into endorsing or rejecting motives that, respectively, help or draw him away from fulfilling the desire in question. Indeed, the progressively autonomous individual may, in the process, experience his life as more aligned with what he wants and, thus, more meaningful and rewarding.

Now, the question might arise as to whether the progressively autonomous individual is more morally responsible than one who is morally responsible, strictly according to the

identificationist approach. This is the case in so far as the progressively autonomous individual, through the above strategic identification, identifies with behavioural motives on two levels. That is, he not only identifies with a certain motive. He also identifies with it as a facilitator towards reaching a desired future. In contrast, one who is morally responsible strictly according to the identificationist approach, identifies with these motives on one level. That is, he or she identifies with a certain motive but not with respect to its role in bringing about a desired future. In doing so, the progressively autonomous individual is, admittedly, more subject to blame than one who is merely morally responsible under the identificationist approach. In particular, this is so since the former person, through the above double identification, has invested a greater degree of himself in his conduct than the latter person. Accordingly, the progressively autonomous individual is more answerable for that conduct than one who is merely morally responsible under the identificationist approach.

One might object that this makes being progressively autonomous less attractive than being morally responsible, strictly under this approach. For, being more morally responsible and, hence, more subject to blame is arguably less preferable to being less morally responsible—a condition in which one is less subject to blame and so further from the possibility of experiencing its associated negative effects of guilt, shame, censure, etc. However, there are two reasons that being progressively autonomous, despite its increased moral responsibility, is better than being merely morally responsible under the identificationist approach. First, the progressively autonomous individual is more apt to achieve his desired goals through strategically identifying with motives. Such identification focuses the progressively autonomous individual's attention on the future he wants and how to channel his motives so as to actually get there. Second, in being more morally responsible, the progressively autonomous individual is

more subject to praise. In particular, his ethically favourable actions (e.g. helping the poor), where recognized by others as stemming from his increased responsibility, will be seen as more admirable than if perceived to be result of less responsibility and, hence, less effort.

Moreover, the moral responsibility of the progressively autonomous individual involves him purposely identifying with motives so as to experience more than present-based satisfaction (e.g. physical). In doing so, he allows himself to be moved by inclinations that will enable him, through action, to construct the narrative he wants and imagines for himself. This places the progressively autonomous individual on par with one who, in Frankfurt's view, cares, rather than, say, just wants to experience pleasure right now. As Frankfurt states, "the outlook of a person who cares about something is inherently prospective; that is, he necessarily considers himself as having a future. On the other hand, it is possible for a creature to have desires and beliefs without taking into account at all of the fact that he may continue to exist" (1998, 83). Like the caring person, then, the progressively autonomous individual is aware of the part of his life yet to be formed. But he does not stop there. Rather, amid this awareness, he identifies with behavioural motives he thinks will allow him to define the said part of his life in a particular way; he will want the motives he believes will lead him, through action, to realize a specific kind of future (e.g. entering an occupation and being successful at it). If he believes they will not, the progressively autonomous individual will not identify with them. By the same token, he will not be responsible for them either.

### **PROGRESSIVE AUTONOMY AND STRATEGIC MORAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Since the progressively autonomous individual goes beyond the minimum requirement for moral responsibility under the identificationist approach, there is the issue of what to call this

state. I propose that we call it “strategic moral responsibility”. For, in addition to fulfilling the said requirement, it also involves the progressively autonomous individual doing so in a way that enables him to successfully arrive at the future he wants for himself—what we might describe as his sought after temporal destination. In line with this view, the progressively autonomous individual, while identifying with certain motives, purposely rejects others. The reason for this is that he believes such motives will prevent him from achieving desired goals. For example, the progressively autonomous individual may reject the desire to eat chocolate (motive) in virtue of his belief that doing so will prevent him from losing weight (desired goal). Eliminating this desire entirely may, indeed, be difficult, due to its strength or intensity. However, as part of being strategically responsible, the progressively autonomous individual can at least avoid identifying with this desire, and so not set himself on a path that veers from his desired goal of losing weight; in terms of reaching this goal, this is arguably more important than the above elimination. The progressively autonomous individual may, of course, not be bothered by this. In particular, this might occur, say, where he trains himself to closely associate chocolate cake with a negative self-image or body type, thereby doing away with desire to eat chocolate cake. This makes it significantly easier for him to pursue the goal of losing weight. As this example suggests, strategic moral responsibility may involve, if possible, ridding oneself of motives that tempt one away from desired goals. This is never done for its own sake, namely as an end in and of itself. Rather, it is done as a means to achieving the future one wants more than satisfying a motive, not conducive to this future. Similarly, we can make sense of why a person attempts to rid himself of particular motives, in terms of what one desires his future to look like.

If the progressively autonomous individual believes that a certain motive, overall or in most cases, is conducive to and facilitates his achieving desired goals, he may make it a personal

policy to identify with it whenever it occurs. For example, in believing that the desire to produce art (motive) is conducive and facilitates his achieving recognition within a larger community (goal), he may, as a personal policy, always identify with it. In establishing this policy, the progressively autonomous individual does not have to first think about or reflect on whether to identify with the desire in question. Rather, he can do so unreflectively or without much consideration, having already determined—through the policy—that he wants such identification to take place. There, of course, can be exceptions to the policy. For example, the progressively autonomous individual may, one day, decide not to identify with the desire to produce art if he thinks that will engage him in pursuits (intense creative work, etc.) that will distract him from family priorities he has that day. This will be all the more relevant to him if meeting such priorities is part of his desired goals and not something he only does, say, reluctantly.

Both the personal policy discussed, as well as the exceptions there might be to it, are central to strategic moral responsibility. For, through them, the progressively autonomous individual controls and manages his motives in such a way that they ultimately contribute, and do not take away from, the kind of future he wants for himself. This, of course, is not to say that this is experienced without challenge. The progressively autonomous individual may, for example, experience difficulty in controlling and managing his motives where, amid this process, he is tempted to identify with some of them he does not wish to have, such as those which he thinks will lead him to experience immediate pleasure but away from his desired future (which he wants more than such pleasure). However, in being strategically morally responsible, the progressively autonomous individual refrains from such identification and, thus, secures himself against this negative outcome. As this example suggests, the progressively autonomous individual, through such responsibility, attempts to limit the extent to which his motives will be

expressed through future-based action. This cannot occur where one no longer exercises this limit but, rather, is indiscriminate as to which of these motives to manifest in behaviour. Arguably, such a person does not care about his future, as he is not actively concerned about how these motives, through the said behaviour, will affect or change it. In contrast, the progressively autonomous individual, in being strategically morally responsible, is selective as to which motives to identify with—in virtue of how he perceives them to play a role (or not) in bringing about the future he wants for himself.

Throughout the process, the progressively autonomous individual may perceive his life as characterized by the fulfillment of desired goals, as well as a reflection of what he takes to be ethically correct. For example, the progressively autonomous individual may perceive his life as characterized by helping friends in need—a goal he both desires and views as ethically correct. As such, the progressively autonomous individual does not view his life as detached from what he wants and normatively values. Rather, he sees it as embodying the two. Viewing his life this way may be a truly positive experience for the progressively autonomous individual. This is so since it might rewardingly confirm to him that he not only has the strength and wherewithal to follow his will but is living a morally sound life. This, in turn, may give him the sense that he is a person of integrity, namely one who is genuine to what he takes to be good. Hence, rather than simply wishing for this correspondence, he may, with an empowering sense, regard it as an achievement he has reached through the efforts of his own will.

This achievement may be facilitated by what Frankfurt calls “volitional necessity”, restricting one to behave in a particular manner (1998). Besides its potential to limit one’s behaviour to doing what he takes to be ethically right, such necessity can help the progressively autonomous individual achieve desired goals of major significance (whatever their ethical

status). Illuminating this idea, Frankfurt maintains that “when someone is tending to be distracted from caring about what he cares about most, the force of volitional necessity may constrain him to do what he really wants to do” (1998, 88). By analogy, the progressively autonomous individual, in being strategically morally responsible, can be moved by volitional necessity to identify with only those motives he believes will bring him towards the desired goals “he cares about most”. For example, the progressively autonomous individual may be moved by volitional necessity to only identify with the desire to be an educator (motive), so as to actually achieve the goal of becoming one (a desired goal he cares most about). At the same time, volitional necessity would prevent the progressively autonomous individual from identifying with motives that would undermine this pursuit, such as wanting to watch television all day.

As this example suggests, the importance of volitional necessity for the progressively autonomous individual lies in its ability to secure his moving towards the future he ultimately wants. In the process, various motives may tempt him, perhaps unreflectively, to stray from this path. However, volitional necessity, acting as a safeguard against this, helps ensure that the above future will be realized. Indeed, containing the desired goals he cares most about, this future may be of crucial significance to the progressively autonomous individual such that not realizing it would cause him to feel an unwanted emptiness—characterized, perhaps, by sadness or despair. Where he is acutely aware that volitional necessity can effectively lead him away from this emptiness, his desire to maintain such necessity may, no doubt, be strengthened and reinforced. Volitional necessity may, here, be regarded as protective force against reaching a fate, represented by the emptiness, that would ruin the opportunity for him to experience the future he ultimately wants. This accords with Debra Satz’s observation that “a person who is subject to a volitional necessity accedes constraints on his will because he is unwilling to oppose

it; moreover his unwillingness is itself something that he is unwilling to alter” (Frankfurt, 2006, xi). Similarly, the progressively autonomous individual does not oppose volitional necessity because he is not willing to. This is so since, doing so, would prevent him from achieving the future he wants (based on desired goals) or ultimately wants (based on goals he desires most) for himself.

Related to volitional necessity, and relevant to strategic moral responsibility, is action Frankfurt refers to as “unthinkable” (1998). Illuminating what this action entails, Frankfurt states, “a person who asserts that he finds an action unthinkable means that there are no circumstances in which he would be willing to perform it” (1998, 8). Applying this to strategic moral responsibility, this involves an unwillingness of the progressively autonomous individual to perform any action that compromises his attaining his desired future, regardless of how strong a particular motive might be in him to do the opposite. In contrast, in being strategically morally responsible, the progressively autonomous individual is only willing to identify with motives that lead to action that he, on the basis that he thinks that these motives will help him arrive at the future in question, is willing to perform. Indeed, for the progressively autonomous individual, this sort of action has instrumental value. For, in his mind, it will help him cross the bridge, as it were, towards actualizing a potential state of affairs (desired future) he now wants for himself. Moreover, the progressively autonomous individual may find nothing particularly ethically objectionable to an action he is unwilling to do. However, it may still represent to him a threat or danger in the sense that, by undertaking it, he will veer away, and perhaps dramatically so, from the state of affairs in question.

For example, this may occur where the progressively autonomous individual attempts to decide whether an unusually strong desire for money (motive) will lead him towards high

acquisitiveness (action). Others may find such acquisitiveness as immoral on the basis that it is tantamount to greed but he, on the other hand, does not see anything inherently wrong with it. He does, however, see it as a threat or danger that, if engaged in, will detract him from becoming a charitable donor or philanthropist (desired goal). Moreover, such recognition may not be obvious but only the outcome of reflection on what certain action will incline one to do. This may involve thinking about the extent to which identifying with a certain motive will manifest itself in favourable or unfavourable behaviour—that is, respectively, action that is conducive or not conducive to desired goals. Arguably, such manifestation depends on the progressively autonomous individual's nature such that identifying with certain motives, given his personality or temperament, will predispose him towards a particular form of outward expression. Where it is apparent to him that such expression is unfavourable in the above sense, the progressively autonomous individual will avoid identifying with the motive he believes will lead to it.

Furthermore, if along the way to his desired future the progressively autonomous individual strays from it, he may, in being strategically morally responsible, “step back”. From this position, he can think about which motives to identify with in order to realign himself with his desired future. In the process, he may also realize that previous identification with motives, which led to behaviour that was contrary to realizing his desired future, was driven by a mistaken belief about how these motives would incline him to act. For example, he may realize that previous identification with the desire to never take a vacation (motive), which led to behaviour resulting in him experiencing burnout, was driven by the mistaken belief that this desire would incline him to act only in ways that brought about a desired future in which he always felt invigorated and productive. As this example suggests, the progressively autonomous individual can learn from mistaken beliefs about how motives will incline him to act. Subsequently, he can

make adjustments or changes in his life to prevent him from assenting to these beliefs and committing the associated error of behaving in ways that are contrary to the future he wants to achieve for himself.

In accordance with this idea, Velleman argues, “the point of learning from a misfortune...is to prevent the misfortune from being a total loss. Learning from the misfortune confers some value on it, by making it the means of one’s edification” (2000, 65). By the same token, the progressively autonomous individual can learn from the “misfortune” of having identified with motives that lead to behaviour that is contrary to moving towards his desired future. As a result, he can figure out ways of preventing such behaviour from happening again. As “the means of one’s edification”, this sort of learning can also make the progressively autonomous individual wiser, specifically as it relates to which motives are best to identify with in order to achieve desired goals. Hence, this wisdom can be used to guide the progressively autonomous individual towards becoming the person (ethically, socially, politically, etc.) he wants to be and which are embodied by these goals.

In conclusion, the progressively autonomous individual is in charge of the course of his life. This, as we saw in earlier chapters, does not simply stem from his ability to make choices, moment to moment. Rather, it is based on his ability to establish and pursue desired goals and, in the process, bring about a sequence of events that lead to and include the future he desires for himself. Indeed, this involves the power of imagination, through and by which the progressively autonomous individual can plan and anticipate the way in which his life will unfold. In order, however, for the progressively autonomous individual to ensure that his life will actually take this form he, as we have seen throughout the thesis, must act in the world—in a manner conducive to the attainment of desired goals. This chapter has illuminated how the progressively

autonomous individual does this in terms of being morally responsible. In particular, it stressed the role motives, and identification with them, play in the purposeful direction of his life. Such emphasis conveys that it is not only control over external events (in the world) that the progressively autonomous individual must exercise in getting to the future he wants for himself. It is also control over internal events (within himself) that he must exercise to arrive, metaphorically speaking, at this destination. Through such control, the progressively autonomous individual manages the expression of his will and regulates his interaction with the environment so as to lead himself towards ends sought after. He is, thus, not only self-governing but a strategic author. One, that is, who both creates and effectively steers himself towards a favourable future.

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