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Shadow People:
Relational Personhood, Extended Diachronic Personal Identity, and Our
Moral Obligations Toward Fragile Persons

by

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To Miranda
for continuous encouragement and support
and for always authentically holding me in my identity

and to Urszula, Andrzej, and Kamil
for never ceasing to care

Abstract

This Dissertation argues for a care-centrically grounded account of relational personhood and widely realized diachronic personal identity. The moral distinction between persons and non-persons is arguably one of the most salient ethical lines we can draw since many of our most fundamental rights are delineated via the bounds of personhood. The problem with drawing such morally salient lines is that the orthodox, rationalistic definition of personhood, which is widespread within philosophical, medical, and colloquial spheres, excludes, and thereby de-personifies, a large number and a great variety of human beings such as neonates, young children, the elderly who suffer from dementia, individuals with severe cognitive disabilities, and patients in vegetative states.

The reconceptualization of personhood necessary for a more inclusive definition ought to originate with an appropriate moral grounding. To this end, this Dissertation grounds the notion of personhood in the care ethical sphere, thereby emphasizing the role of care relations in the maintenance of the moral consideration of vulnerable individuals. This Dissertation argues that grounding the concept of a person in care relations entails a relational account of personhood, which, along with the insights of the Extended Mind and Social Manifestation Theses, leads to an extended and externalized understanding of diachronic identity, which allows fragile people to be held in their personal identities even if they themselves lack the capacities usually associated with moral personhood.

As we trace a person's identity through time, we track the various relational properties, which constitute personal narratives and thus act as a glue that binds such dynamic and often unique properties into stable, trackable narratives. Since care relations

are morally relevant on a care-centric account of personhood, what is lost in cases where such care relating ceases is not merely of sentimental value, but of great moral importance as well. Morally meaningful care relations are not replaceable, and, by extension, neither are the narratives that are constituted by such unique and irreplaceable instances of relating. This Dissertation argues that the constitutive care relational nature of personal narratives makes such narratives irreplaceable and is precisely what makes persons so morally precious.

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Chapter 1
Shadow People:
Exemptions from Personhood

All the world's a stage,

And all the men and women merely players.

They have their exits and their entrances,

And one man in his time plays many parts

(*As You Like It*, William Shakespeare, 1623)

1.1
Persona[1]

In *As You Like It*, the great English playwright William Shakespeare likens the

human life to a play in seven Acts (Shakespeare 1623, II.vii.138-142), thereby comparing the

human person to an actor who assumes several different *personas* throughout his or her life.[2]

Being a playwright, Shakespeare may have found it natural to draw analogies between acting

on a stage and living life as a person. However, the roots of such analogies are fixed much

further in the past.   The term *person* has its origin on the stage, making Shakespeare's

analogy not only fitting, but also instructional.

The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology (1966) traces the word *person* to

persona, and suggests that the word is likely derived from Etruscan (*φersu*), meaning mask

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[1] The following is not meant to be an argument from etymology since I will offer other, more philosophically acceptable arguments for the properties I assign to *personhood*, but I think an etymological sketch of the term in question can help point the reader to the kind of understanding of the concept of personhood for which I will be arguing.

[2] Each act or age represents a different stage of life: the infantile stage, the whining schoolboy stage, the lover stage, the soldier stage, the wise or just stage, the elder stage, and finally a second childishness.

(or masked figure) and was used to render the Greek *prósōpon*, meaning face, mask, or dramatic part, from the words *prós* meaning 'to' or 'towards' and *ốps* meaning 'face.' Ernest Klein's *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* states that the Etruscan *φersu* is itself of Greek origin (*Περσεφόνη*), which is the name of the chief goddess of the underworld, Persephone. According to Ernest Klein (1967), *φersu* refers to "the embodiment of a god of the nether world whose office it was to receive the soul of the dead and to accompany it to Hades" (Klein 1967, 1163-1164). The term *person*, as *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (2001) tells us, was also adopted in Christian Theology to stand for the three modes of being of God (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit), thereby continuing the tradition of essentially embodying abstract concepts such as divinity. Moreover, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (2001) defines *persona* as "the aspect of a person's character that is presented to or perceived by others" and *personable* as "having a pleasant appearance and manner," continuing the theme of external and communal presentation, individuation, and recognition.

The externalistic nature of the term *persona* is further evidenced by the word *personality*, which is a word we most often associate with inner psychological characteristics of an individual; the term *personality* originates from the Latin meaning 'personal estate,' which better fits the theme of a publicly visible state of an individual's standing within a community. *Persona*, then, refers to functionality within an external interpersonal context rather than inner, individualistic traits (though, of course, such traits are intimately linked to the type of functional role the *persona* assumes).

Although in common parlance, *person* refers to something one *is* while *persona* is something one can *have*, such a distinction is not entirely clear on the Greek stage since the masks actors donned transformed them into the characters they played. Contemporary usage of the term is somewhat different, of course, but it continues to retain the sense that a *person* must have a *persona*. In other words, traditionally, a mindless body, lacking a *personality* and thus a *persona* cannot *be* a *person*. I argue that if we understand the terms *persona* and *personality* in the kind of externalized way in which they were originally understood, this traditionally psychologically internalized mode of *personifying* or de-*personifying* individuals no longer makes sense.

In the ensuing chapters, I will argue that personhood is relational and extrinsic rather than intrinsic in nature, which entails that diachronic personal identity is communal or external to a significant extent. I will also argue that understanding personhood relationally drastically changes the way the term is applied and utilized; on a relational account of personhood, relational rather than intrinsic features become morally relevant making it the case that the personhood of very fragile individuals[3] can only be sustained within a social context. The relational account of personhood I develop here emphasizes both inclusion as well as the fragility of persons.

The concept of personhood is geographically, temporally, and culturally widespread; it has been in use in some form or another ubiquitously throughout various societies and at different times. The understanding and formulation of the concept of personhood has been as varied and as debated as it has been ubiquitous. For example, although the ancient Greeks

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[3] By *fragile* individuals (or *fragile* persons), I mean very young children, the elderly suffering from dementia, individuals with severe cognitive disabilities, and some cases of individuals in permanent vegetative states. That is, fragile persons are individuals whose very personhood is maintained by, and thus dependent on, others.

distinguished between civilized persons and barbarians as well as individuals possessing rational souls and beings with sensitive or merely nutritive ones, their understanding of persons certainly differs from our contemporary usage of the term. Nonetheless, the term *persona* is directly related to our contemporary use and understanding of the term *personhood*.

Besides being a socially essential category of thought, the term *person* has played an important role in metaphysics. One such example of the functionality of the term is evident in how the term is used to navigate the *mereological*[4] complexities of the doctrine of the Trinity. Thomas D. Williams and Jan Olaf Bengtsson trace the importance of the concept of a person through its usage in theological discourse:

> Its [the concept's] introduction into the mainstream of intellectual parlance...came with theological discourse during the patristic period, notably the attempts to clarify or define central truths of the Christian faith. These discussions focused primarily on two doctrines: the Trinity (three "persons" in one God) and the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity (the "hypostatic" union of two natures—divine and human—in one "person"). Confusion marred these discussions because of ambiguities in the philosophical and theological terminology, such that, for example, the thesis — ascribed to Sabellius — would be advanced that in God there was one ὑπόστασις and three πρόσωπα, where ὑπόστασις conveyed the meaning of "person" and πρόσωπα bore the sense of "roles" or "modes" of being. In order to present these mysteries with precision, the concept of person and the relationship of person to nature needed clarification. The debates culminated in the First Council of Nicaea (325) and the First Council of Constantinople (381), and in the drafting and propagation of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed. (Williams and Bengtsson 2009)

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[4] *Mereology* is the philosophical study of parts and the wholes they constitute.

Arguably the most significant function of our contemporary concept of personhood is to be found in its *moral* usage, particularly since personhood has a normative role (that is, we recognize that *persons* ought to be treated in a certain way). Much of moral importance depends on a proper understanding of the term *person*, for the term has long been used as a basis for moral status and as a justification for special, morally considerable, treatment of some individuals.

A definition of personhood must be carefully crafted. Failing to recognize a human being's personhood has often been a favoured way of justifying mistreatment and vindicating what otherwise would have been acknowledged as morally condemnable actions. My analysis proposes to abandon a well-known traditional conception of personhood, which has been amended and reworked over centuries and continues to infiltrate our understanding of what gives us moral worth, namely a conception of personhood grounded heavily in the capacity for rationality. Even noble attempts at understanding the term *person* in a more coherent manner seem to stumble on the deeply rooted bias toward rationality, intelligence, and other highly developed cognitive capacities. These capacities are certainly marvellous and deserve recognition, but nothing about possessing them makes an individual morally superior to someone with certain emotional or affective competences and proficiencies, which are responsible for the formation of care-relations upon which we depend both for physical as well as emotional sustenance and which we actively seek out since they are sources of meaning in our lives. In the following chapters, I argue that such care relations, and not the capacity for rationality or intelligence, constitute the fabric of personhood.

1.2
Personhood and Exemptions

Eric T. Olson points out that there is "no single problem of personal identity, but rather a wide range of loosely connected questions" (Olson 2010, The Problem of Personal Identity). Olson identifies three general threads of inquiry: the question of "who I am," the question of personhood, and the question of persistence. The first line of inquiry attempts to discover "what makes one the person one is" (Olson 2010, The Problem of Personal Identity) or, in other words, what makes *me* unique and thus what distinguishes *me* from others. The second thread deals with the question of what it means to be a person. "What is necessary, and what suffices, for something to count as a person, as opposed to a non-person" (Olson 2010, The Problem of Personal Identity)? The last thread deals with tracking a person through time.

Olson's first thread pertains to questions that are quite psychological in nature,[5] namely to the first-personal experience of the *I* that features in the question "who am *I*?" Although many physiological features make us unique (our fingerprints, for instance), when we wonder who we are, we are wondering about the unique introspective access we have to our own conscious experience of our *selves*. The *I* is the inner characteristic of the outwardly trackable *persona* we, as well as others, identify with ourselves.

In its existence from moment to moment, the *I* is merely a self-reflective act of being aware of one's consciousness. Narratives allow us to track and re-identify with this *I*. Narratives are also used to track the first-personal identity from a third-personal perspective.

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[5] It strikes me as quite odd that Olson recognizes this line of questioning as being relevant to the personal identity debate and yet that his own account of personhood and diachronic personal identity rejects this very thread. I discuss Olson's view in chapter 4.

In fact, as I shall argue in chapter 6, the first and third-personal narratives are intimately interdependent.

It is often this self-reflective characteristic of the first-person perspective that is responsible for the ratio-centrism that pervades most accounts of personhood. This is because we naturally identify with this first-person perspective and since we regard ourselves as persons, it is easy to confuse personhood with that introspected *I*. This is also the reason why many thinkers distinguish between personhood and belonging to the species *Homo sapiens*.

In a paper titled "Conditions of Personhood," published in his *Brainstorms*, Daniel Dennett (1978) draws just that kind of distinction between humanity and personhood. He explains:

> One's dignity does not depend on one's parentage even to the extent of having been born of woman or born at all. We normally ignore this and treat humanity as the deciding mark of personhood, no doubt because the terms are locally coextensive or almost coextensive. At this time and place, human beings are the only persons we recognize, and we recognize almost all human beings as persons. (Dennett 1978, 267)

Dennett argues that there may be non-human beings with very different biologies from ours who qualify for personhood while "on the other hand we recognize conditions that exempt human beings from personhood, or at least some very important elements of personhood" (Dennett 1978, 267), such individuals being "infant human beings, mentally

defective human beings, and human beings declared insane by licensed psychiatrists" (Dennett 1978, 267).

Dennett's discussion of *exemptions* from personhood takes an almost clinical, sterilizing tone. The first thing that may strike the reader is the term 'exemption,' which implies a *release* of sorts, perhaps from responsibilities associated with personhood. However, such *exemptions* undo much more than merely relations between an individual and accountability or responsibility. Such exemptions dissolve certain individual rights that are associated with personhood and granted to persons. Such rights have historically been denied certain individuals (i.e. women, the disabled, etc.) and such denial or withdrawal of rights has led, in some cases, to monstrous abuses and injustices.

The relationship between moral responsibility and personhood is far from simple. Dennett is certainly correct in pointing out that the actions of some human beings or actions under certain circumstances should not carry moral accountability. For example, the wrongful appropriation of property by a child who does not fully comprehend the social practices pertaining to property acquisition and transfer cannot be really referred to as theft. Similar *exemptions* can be made on behalf of individuals with severe cognitive disabilities in the appropriate situations as well as when coercion is a salient feature of the circumstances under which an individual is acting.

One way to make sense of the relationship between moral status and moral accountability is to utilize the distinction between moral agents and moral patients where moral agents have the capacity to navigate the ethical, legal, and social contexts in which agents act, thereby making moral agents morally responsible for their actions while excusing

moral patients from culpability in such contexts. Thus, insofar as moral patients lack the necessary *agency*, they cannot be morally accountable for some or even many of their actions.

If this is what Dennett has in mind by exempting some individuals from the realm of agency, then it is certainly not unreasonable. However, since personhood is often defined in terms of moral agency, moral patients are consequently also exempted from personhood. Moral patients, on such accounts, are still morally considerable and thus are protected from harm, but they are not morally considerable for the same reasons persons are, which sometimes means that they are not protected from every kind of harm. This is because the interests of moral patients may not be understood in exactly the same terms as the interests of persons. For example, non-human animals such as cats certainly have interests and thus a certain kind of moral considerability, but being treated with dignity is not one of these interests. Dignity is a term in need of a definition (I will say more about this term in chapter 7, section 7.2), but briefly stated, I understand it as a relation of respect toward person-specific interests, which in turn give rise to person-specific rights. Thus whereas both persons and cats are equally morally considerable insofar as the infliction of suffering is concerned, persons are entitled to certain treatment to which cats are not. Differentiating between moral agents and moral patients, then, is useful in the context of moral responsibility, but should not be a distinction that marks the boundary between persons and non-persons. I propose that both moral agents and moral patients can be persons. Since I will also make the case for an externalist understanding of personal identity, I will further

argue that both personhood and personal identity can be tracked on behalf of some moral patients by others.

I will focus on roughly three interconnected categories of exemptions: (1) the exemptions of individuals with not yet fully developed cognitive capacities, (2) the exemptions of individuals with mild to severe cognitive disabilities, (3) and the exemptions of individuals with no cognitive capacities. The first category includes normally developing children, but can also include adults with developmental impairments. The second category includes individuals with cognitive limitations, which spans a wide array of cases from individuals with mental illness to people with dementia. The third category includes people in temporary and permanent vegetative states.

Cognitive disabilities can be classified in at least two ways: by functional or clinical disability. "Clinical diagnoses of cognitive disabilities include autism, Down Syndrome, traumatic brain injury (TBI), and even dementia. Less severe cognitive conditions include attention deficit disorder (ADD), dyslexia (difficulty reading), dyscalculia (difficulty with math), and learning disabilities in general" (WebAim 2013, Functional vs. Clinical Cognitive Disabilities). Although clinical diagnoses can be helpful from a medical perspective, classifying cognitive disabilities in terms of function can be more useful for purposes of discussing personhood and diachronic personal identity. "Functional disabilities ignore the medical or behavioral causes of the disability and instead focus on the resulting abilities and challenges. Some of the main categories of functional cognitive disabilities include deficits or difficulties with: 1. Memory 2. Problem-solving 3. Attention 4. Reading, linguistic, and

verbal comprehension 5. Math comprehension 6. Visual comprehension" (WebAim 2013, Functional vs. Clinical Cognitive Disabilities).

When using the term 'severe cognitive disability,' I will loosely be following the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* definition, which has recently been updated with the publication of DSM-5 (2013).   The 4th, Text-Revision, Edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (see DSM-IV - TR 2000, 317-318.2), cites the range of IQ 50-55 to approximately 70 to define mild mental retardation,[6] 35-40 to 50-55 to demarcate moderate cognitive disability, 20-25 to 35-40 to label severe cognitive disability, and individuals with IQ below 20 or 25 are labeled as having profound cognitive limitations (Benet 2013).

The DSM-5, however, emphasizes the need to utilize both clinical assessments and standardized IQ testing rather than IQ scores alone, basing the severity of mental impairment on adaptive functioning scores. The DSM-5 proposes assessment across conceptual, social, and practical domains in order to ensure that diagnosis is based on "the impact of the deficit in general mental abilities on functioning needed for everyday life" (American Psychiatric Association 2013, DSM-5 Intellectual Disability Fact Sheet).   I will use the term 'severe cognitive disability' to imply the functional deficits that accompany the IQ score range rather than merely focusing on the IQ score itself.   Paul Cooijmans provides the following functional definition for severe cognitive retardation: "[b]asic intellectual tasks, including language, are difficult to learn. [Individuals in this range c]an learn some self-care behaviour but remain dependent on others.   There are usually motor problems and physical

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[6] The DSM-5 discontinues the usage of this term. The DSM-5 replaces the term "mental retardation," which is used in previous editions of the manual with "intellectual disability" adding the parenthetical term "intellectual developmental disorder."

anomalies" (Cooijmans, I.Q. and Real-Life Functioning). Cooijmans states that an individual with a profound cognitive disability "[c]an learn no or only the very simplest tasks" (Cooijmans, I.Q. and Real-Life Functioning). Since I do not intend to use the term in a strict technical manner as might be required in a medical context, I do not worry too much about the precise distinction between severe and profound cognitive disabilities and therefore use the designation 'severe' to also, at times, imply profound cognitive disability.

The focus on the kinds of exemptions alluded to by Dennett is spurred on by an urgent need to re-evaluate the moral status of individuals with severe cognitive limitations as well as other disabilities. Thus, targeting these exemptions not only brings out the root of the problem, namely an individualistic and ratio-centric approach to the question of personhood, but also tackles a problem that has real-world implications. Patients in vegetative states are individuals whose cognitive limitations are exhaustive, for, by definition, such patients lack awareness of self and surroundings and are incapable of even the most basic intellectual activities.[7] If it can be shown that patients in permanent vegetative states can, at least in principle, retain the moral status of personhood, then individuals with severe cognitive disabilities (as well as moderate and mild cognitive limitations) certainly cease to be candidates for exemption from personhood.

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[7] Even Adrian Owen's fMRI breakthroughs of ascertaining that 40% of patients in permanent vegetative states are in fact conscious only means that a large number of patients is misdiagnosed as being in vegetative states. See Monati, Martin M, Owen, Adrien M. (2010). "The Aware Mind in the Motionless Body." *Consciousness and the Vegetative State*, Vol. 23, No. 6. 478-481.

1.3
Faded Personhood:
Severe Cognitive Disabilities and Permanent Vegetative States

Before proceeding, it might do well to define several terms. I will be using the terms ratio-centrism, care-centrism, relational personhood, and collective memory in my argument that individuals with severe cognitive disabilities and perhaps some patients in permanent vegetative states are persons. What follows are brief definitions of these terms along with short commentary on how each term is linked with the others. I will also talk about what a vegetative state is and how it differs from brain death and coma.

Ratio-centrism is the position that an entity has worth or counts as a person if and only if it has the capacity for, and on some views, the potential capacity for, rationality. That is, only entities that are at some point capable of rational thought have personhood. One may wish to avoid using the term 'person' here in favour of defining ratio-centrism in terms of certain rights in order to abstain from building moral content into the term 'person.' However, even defining the view in terms of rights tacitly assumes person-specific rights. Moreover, the very point of the term 'person' is to apply it as though it were a label picking out and tracking morally relevant entities. If we choose to define ratio-centrism exclusively in terms of rights, then what utility is there in the term 'personhood?' For example, if we chose to simply define ratio-centrism as the position that states that only rational beings have the right to life, then it would be somewhat redundant to also state that only rational beings are persons if we did not already build moral content into the term 'person.' If the right is attributed exclusively in virtue of rationality, then what, on a usage of the term 'person' that

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is devoid of moral content, is attributed in virtue of personhood. *Personhood*, much as the term *right*, necessarily has content, moral content in this case, built into its meaning.

I will also be using the term relational personhood to distinguish my account from the ratio-centric definition. Although I will follow Sue Campbell's conception of relational personhood to some extent, I will ground my relational account in the moral sphere of caring, which makes my proposal care-centric (as opposed to ratio-centric). The capacity to care is both the ability to care about things and others, including oneself, one's life, meaningful relations, etc. and the ability to value (where value is used as a verb) things and others, including oneself, other people, one's moral views, etc. Thus, care-centrism can be defined as the position that an entity has worth or counts as a person if (but, as I shall argue, not only if) it has the capacity to care, where care is inseparably entangled with the capacity for empathy and the act of valuing.[8]

Sue Campbell, in her 2003 book *Relational Remembering: Rethinking the Memory Wars*, defines relational personhood as follows:

> I argue that the cognitive abilities necessary to being a person and hence to being a moral agent develop only in relations with other persons and only with the support of shared communal practices that foster these abilities. Memory is one of the key cognitive abilities through which we develop personhood, and the kinds of activities important to the developing and maintaining of this core cognitive ability are activities involving self-narratives. (Campbell 2003, 17)

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[8] For an interesting discussion of full moral standing and care, see Jaworski, Agnieszka. (2010). "Caring and Full Moral Standing Redux." *Cognitive Disabilities and Its Challenge to Moral Philosophy*. Ed. Eva Feder Kittay and Licia Carlson. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. 369-392.

I take part of my definition of relational personhood from Campbell and follow her in stating that relational personhood has to do with relations to and relationships with others, but rather than relying on cognitive capacities, which is the time-honoured ratio-centric approach Campbell employs in her own definition, I turn to affective capacities, which characterize the care-centric approach.

Regarding collective memory, Lewis A. Coser, in the introduction to his translation of Maurice Halbwachs' *On Collective Memory*, writes:

> Collective memory...is not given but rather a socially constructed notion. Nor is it some mystical group mind...It follows that there are as many collective memories as there are groups and institutions in a society. Social classes, families, associations, corporations, armies, and trade unions all have distinctive memories that their members have constructed, often over long periods of time. It is, of course individuals who remember, not groups or institutions, but these individuals, being located in a specific group context, draw on that context to remember or recreate the past. (Halbwachs 1992, 22)

This group context, as I shall argue in chapter 6, is what Robert A. Wilson calls social manifestation of an individual's properties (in this case, an individual's remembering).

Collective memory plays an important role within relational personhood in that the relevant groups where salient relating occurs *are* a person's family or network of friends, colleagues, etc. These groups compose the social infrastructure in which personhood has moral efficacy;[9] they ground the very relations, which, in virtue of their particular group dynamics and contexts, can hold people in their identities even if they lose the capacity to

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[9] An individual's networks of family, friends, colleagues, etc., establish care relational bonds, which, on a care-ethical view, are morally relevant and, on a care-centrically grounded extended account of identity, are morally efficacious because they are necessary for the maintenance of moral personhood.

care. Relations, on the relational account I propose, in virtue of their collective power to maintain personal narratives, can preserve personhood even in individuals (such as those in permanent vegetative states, a condition I turn to next) who on a ratio-centric account (even a relational ratio-centric account) would no longer qualify for the moral protection it offers.

Ernst Kretschmer (1940) was the first to describe what he called the apallic syndrome (also known as Kretschmer's Syndrome) and what Bryan Jennett and Fred Plum (1972) dubbed "persistent vegetative state" thirty years later. Jennett and Plum explain that advances in medicine, which culminated in "[n]ew methods of treatment may, by prolonging the lives of patients with conditions which were formerly fatal, result in situations never previously encountered" (Jennett and Plum 1972, 734).

The vegetative state, Jennett and Plum argue, is a term necessarily added to the clinical vocabulary because the syndrome is different from brain death, coma dépassé (a state beyond coma), permanent, irreversible, or prolonged coma, dementia, or decerebration and decortication (both implying a specific structural lesion). The apallic syndrome, as described by Kretschmer, involves patients "who were open-eyed, uncommunicative, and unresponsive from a variety of lesions, including cerebral arteriosclerosis, lues, and gunshot wounds" (Jennett and Plum 1972, 735). Jennett and Plum proposed the term persistent vegetative state as it describes behaviour, the only data available to the diagnostician. Although behaviour is still an important factor in diagnosing persistent vegetative states, Martin M. Monti and Adrian M. Owen, among others, have made incredible progress in identifying instances of misdiagnosis with the aid of an ingenious functional magnetic resonance imaging procedure where patients who are not in vegetative states, but rather

suffer from locked-in syndrome, can communicate their consciousness through thought alone by willfully activating separate parts of their brains, which the fMRI records, in response to questions that can be corroborated (see Monti, Coleman, Owen 2010; Monti, Laureys, Owen 2010; and Cruse, Monti, Owen 2011).

Martin M. Monti, Steven Laureys, and Adrian M. Owen (2010) also distinguish between the vegetative state and brain death, but they make further distinctions to differentiate the vegetative state from chronic coma and locked-in syndrome (Monti, Laureys, Owen 2010, 293). The vegetative state is then further subdivided into the minimally conscious state and permanent vegetative state, the latter of which is a diagnosis given after a certain duration of time (over three months in cases where the vegetative state is non-traumatic and over a year if it is traumatic). A patient in the minimally conscious vegetative state has the potential for increasing independence, but the permanent vegetative state, as its name suggests, results only in death, though the state itself, despite its permanence, can last for years. Whereas coma patients and brain dead patients exhibit no sleep-wake cycles, patients in vegetative states, minimally conscious states, and locked-in syndrome do, but while locked-in patients and minimally conscious patients have awareness (partial and fluctuating in the case of the minimally conscious states), patients in vegetative states lack awareness altogether (Monti, Laureys, Owen 2010, 293).

The vegetative state is quite a perplexing condition especially when considered in the context of a discussion of personhood. A patient in a vegetative state appears to be awake; a vegetative patient opens his or her eyes, shifts in his or her bed, makes sounds and

various facial expressions, and appears to be scanning the room albeit without really settling on an object of interest, suggesting a lack of awareness of self and environment.

> The 2003 guidance from the UK's Royal College of Physicians on diagnosing and managing the permanent vegetative state defines it as "a clinical condition of unawareness of self and environment in which the patient breathes spontaneously, has a stable circulation, and shows cycles of eye closure and opening which may simulate sleep and waking." Three main clinical features define the vegetative state: *(a)* cycles of eye opening and closing, giving the appearance of sleep-wake cycles (whether the presence of eye opening and closing cycles actually reflects the presence of circadian rhythms is unclear); *(b)* complete lack of awareness of the self or the environment; and *(c)* complete or partial preservation of hypothalamic and brain stem autonomic functions. The guidelines from the Royal College of Physicians consider a vegetative state to be persistent when it lasts longer than a month and permanent when it lasts longer than six months for non-traumatic brain injuries and one year for traumatic brain injuries. Guidelines published in the United States, however, consider that for non-traumatic brain injury a permanent vegetative state exists after only three months. (Monti, Laureys, Owen 2010, 292)

The rationality bias inherent in traditional accounts of personhood has been responsible for very peculiar intuitions regarding individuals in vegetative states. For instance, a study, titled *More Dead than Dead*, conducted by Kurt Gray, T. Anne Knickman, and Daniel M. Wegner and reported in the 2011 issue of *Cognition*, concludes that people are more comfortable with death than persistent vegetative states. It turns out that the general public views individuals in persistent vegetative states as being more dead than the actually deceased and thus would themselves rather die than live in a persistent vegetative state if given the choice. This is a puzzling conclusion, which is intimately related to the ratio-centric bias that places *normal* mental life at the centre of our conceptions of personhood.

Perhaps largely due to religious beliefs, the experiments conducted by Gray, Knickman, and Wegner "suggest that perceptions of PVS patients are anomalous; though the biological functioning of such patients may lie between full functioning and death, they are perceived to have lesser mental capacities than the dead" (Gray, Knickman, Wegner 2011, 278). The researchers speculate that the persistent vegetative state is viewed as a state worse than death by the general public because "mind is perceived to be an essential characteristic of people, both morally and practically" (Gray, Knickman, Wegner 2011, 278). The assumption behind this pronouncement is that people generally believe in at least the possibility of postmortem psychological continuity whereas persistent vegetative states, by definition, lack phenomenal consciousness and other higher cognitive capacities. Gray, Knickman, and Wegner write:

> Most importantly, these results suggest that people's perceptions of PVS are out of step with objective biological functioning. A person in PVS, after all, is more functional than a dead person. Yet people seem to have difficulty thinking about such intermediate states in which modern medical technology blurs the line between life and death, allowing people to remain in limbo. As this limbo defies easy categorization, people rely more on intuition than on neurological evidence, which can lead to ethical quandaries...People ascribe moral rights on the basis of mind, and if PVS patients are perceived to have less mind than the dead, then they may also be granted fewer rights than the dead. (Gray, Knickman, Wegner 2011, 279)

Just as patients in persistent vegetative states are often thought of as having less personhood than deceased individuals, so people with severe cognitive disabilities are often de-*personalized* on the basis of deficiencies in cognitive capacities. Gray, Knickman, and Wegner point out that the belief in "life after death" must play a significant role in the

assessment that death is preferable to a persistent vegetative state since for those who believe in the immortality of disembodied consciousness, a state where such consciousness is trapped in a body that incapacitates it certainly would be less preferable to the release, and subsequent continuation, of this consciousness (or soul). Other reasons may well include the fact that death might be easier on surviving family members than a persistent vegetative state or that people may see death as more dignified than a vegetative state, even though both states are believed to be fully and irreversibly unconscious. Whatever the case may be, Gray, Knickman, and Wegner's study reveals the importance people place on consciousness and rationality, which is why the ratio-centric bias is so ubiquitous in accounts of personhood. Although intelligence and rationality are very valuable properties, ratio-centrism in accounts of personhood is quite problematic.

Some of the exemptions Dennett lists in his 1978 paper (human infants, mentally defective humans, and humans declared insane by psychiatrists) are echoes of the kinds of sentiments that paved the way for inhumane treatment of individuals with mental illness and cognitive disabilities in Nazi Germany between 1933 and 1945 (as well as in Alberta between 1928 and 1972). It is disturbing to note that the widespread sentiments that make it into Dennett's paper are just as strong six years after the repeal of the Sexual Sterilization Act of Alberta as they were in 1928 when the act was passed. On pages 269-271, Dennett lists his six conditions for personhood:

(1) Persons are rational beings

(2) Persons are conscious beings

(3) Personhood depends on the kind of attitude we take toward individuals

(4) Persons must be capable of reciprocating this attitude in some way

(5) Persons must be capable of verbal communication

(6) Persons are self-conscious

He explains the order of the dependence of these conditions as follows:

> the first three are mutually interdependent; being rational is being intentional is being the object of a certain stance. These three together are a necessary but not a sufficient condition for exhibiting the form of reciprocity that is in turn a necessary but not sufficient condition for having the capacity for verbal communication, which is the necessary condition for having a special sort of consciousness, which is, as Anscombe and Frankfurt in their different ways claim, a necessary condition of moral personhood. (Dennett 1978, 271)

Dennett's conditions for personhood make many exemptions possible. The worry with such a possibility, of course, is that individuals who make it onto the "exemptions" list involuntarily forfeit person-specific rights and considerations.

Rationality, consciousness, self-consciousness, etc. are all characteristics patients in permanent vegetative states lack and are therefore, on the kinds of accounts Dennett's conditions for personhood characterize, exempt from personhood due to the fact that they lack them. I will argue that the relational account of personhood I develop in this dissertation points to a variety of person-generating relations that can continue to hold even in vegetative states, thereby extending an individual's personhood and some of the rights that come with such a status beyond the bounds of an individual's capacity for rationality or a person's cognitive ability.

1.4
Shadow People

During class discussions[10] on the issue of personhood in relation to individuals with severe cognitive disabilities, I had several opportunities to test my students' intuitions on the question of the status of personhood of the cognitively disabled, the clinically insane, and of patients in vegetative states. Not surprisingly, my students were working with a ratio-centrically informed conception of personhood and were quick and eager to exempt the aforementioned groups from the sphere of persons. These intuitions, however, were conflicting insofar as questions of conduct and practice were concerned; they generally felt that although the moral status associated with personhood was not applicable to such groups of individuals, many of the rights attributed to persons still ought to be applied to individuals with cognitive limitations and those labelled as clinically insane. They were much more immune to this kind of cognitive dissonance when contemplating cases of patients in vegetative states. However, upon seeing a video of Terri Schiavo, a patient in a permanent vegetative state, their nearly ubiquitous convictions fell into the kind of dissonance described above, namely they held that patients in vegetative states are not persons, but are entitled to some person-specific rights.

I think that such intuitions are not unique to academic circles, but rather that they are intuitions shared by many in our society (philosophers and non-philosophers alike). What this suggests is that the kinds of individuals I identified above (individuals with severe cognitive limitations, the insane, and those in vegetative states) are generally believed to be

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[10] The discussions mentioned here refer to a course I taught in Spring 2012 (Philosophy 375: Science and Society).

lacking personhood, but thought to retain some of the perquisites associated with the label of personhood. The image that emerges from such contradictory beliefs is that of shadows cast by personhood, but in the absence of personhood; they are "shadow people," impossible entities (for disembodied shadows are impossible),[11] which on the one hand we reject and exclude from the realm of personhood, while on the other, we continue to care about and feel obligations toward.

I will argue that such shadow people are logical contradictions; if we grant certain rights to individuals (even if only in practice), the titles and labels associated with those rights must also be applied. We do bestow these rights on individuals with cognitive limitations as well as individuals in vegetative states and we do so based on various affective care relations we enter into with such individuals in spite of their cognitive limitations. I argue that the reason we believe that such individuals have rights is that we are intuitively able to identify genuine person-maintaining relations that preserve person-specific rights. The reason why we are *prima facie* reluctant to endow such individuals with the status of personhood is that we are working with an antiquated conception of personhood, which is erroneously grounded in the capacity for rationality and intelligence. Since personhood has been defined ratio-centrically for centuries and across various formulations, it is not surprising that most people automatically equate personhood with rationality or intelligence (unfortunately quite often still measured by the assignment of an IQ number).

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[11] This is because where there is a shadow, there must be a substantial thing casting it.

1.5
Sketching the Argument

I will be arguing for a relational account of personhood and an extended (and externalized) notion of personal identity. A relational account of personhood grounds the moral worth of persons in relations rather than certain cognitive capacities. The relational account of personhood I propose grounds personal dignity in *care*-relations rather than rationality or highly developed cognitive capacities. An extended account of personal identity is grounded in the Social Manifestation Thesis, which argues for an intimate and inseparable connection between personal and collective memory.

Chapter 2 explores the difference between identifying persons in terms of *who* rather than *what* they are. To this end, I draw on Robert Burch's and Eric Olson's very different approaches to the question of personhood and diachronic personal identity. Since the task of defining personhood ought to be morally relevant, Chapter 2 reviews Marya Schechtman's four features essential to a proper characterization of personhood and a person's identity over time, namely survival, moral responsibility, self-interested concern, and compensation. Schechtman's four features help to place personhood onto a moral foundation by providing moral motivations for an inquiry into the problem of personal identity. Focusing on such moral motivations is meant to sidestep a worry that plagues some contemporary accounts of personal identity, the worry being that addressing the question of diachronic identity without having a robust conception of personhood often leads to identity criteria that are inconsistent with our attributions of moral status to individuals we identify as persons. The moral grounding, I argue, ought to be framed in a language of care, which is inherently future-

oriented and thus quite fitting as a grounding for the diachronic identity of persons. This grounding in caring will eventually lend itself to a relational account of personhood, where care relations are constitutive of this morally significant term, making the term itself a moral one.

Chapter 3 argues that since moral agency is what is often tracked through time in accounts of diachronic personal identity, how moral agency is defined will influence the criteria used to track a person's identity over time. The problem with this approach to the issue of diachronic personal identity is that moral agency is tacitly assumed to be the essential feature of personhood. By defining moral agency in ratio-centric terms, the scope of personhood becomes too narrow and constraining and leads to the *exemption* of certain individuals from the sacred caste of *persons*. This chapter traces several views that span both the history of western philosophy as well as a wide spectrum of moral theories in order to illustrate the deeply rooted ratio-centrism of definitions of moral agency and personhood. To this end, I explore the works of Aristotle, John Locke, Immanuel Kant, and Peter Singer. Aristotle, Kant, and Singer represent the three main approaches to morality: teleology, deontology, and consequentialism in the form of Aristotle's Virtue Ethics, Kantian Ethics, and Singer's Preference Utilitarianism.

A ratio-centric bias in defining personhood, and thus in developing accounts of diachronic personal identity, naturally privileges psychological accounts of personal identity. Psychological accounts are characterized by a focus on psychological continuity, which most often, if not exclusively, is cashed out in terms of a memory criterion of personal identity. The Lockean account of personal identity takes on such a form; in fact, contemporary

psychological accounts are often referred to, or labelled as, neo-Lockean views. This partiality toward psychological accounts, in turn, tends to polarize debate by spawning non-psychological alternatives to such psychological accounts. As a result, the orthodox literature can to a large extent be characterized in terms of a debate between Psychologism and Biologism. Psychological accounts view psychological continuity of some sort as the central and salient criterion for diachronic personal identity. Biologistic accounts, on the other hand, tend to discount psychological continuity and often psychology altogether in favour of some account of biological continuity or organismic structural integrity as the vehicle for a creature's identity through time. One example of a biological account is Eric Olson's Animalism, which states that an organism's identity through time depends on the continuity of its functional organization.

Chapter 4 addresses the insights as well as the shortcomings of Psychological and Biological approaches to the problem of diachronic personal identity. Eric Olson's Animalism takes centre stage as a paradigm example of a Biological account while the neo-Lockean views of Harold W. Noonan and Derek Parfit serve as examples of the Psychological approach. The major insight of Olson's Animalism, and thus what I term the Biologistic insight, is that psychological properties such as rationality, intelligence, or even individual memory are neither necessary nor sufficient for tracking a person's identity through time. The shortcoming of Olson's Animalism, however, is ironically its exclusive focus on the insight it offers; Animalism's total rejection of psychological continuity as a means of tracking personal identity is problematic.

The major insight of a neo-Lockean approach is precisely that it understands the salience of memory as a vehicle for personal identity. However, its narrow focus on individualistic psychological features leads to various intractable identity problems and lends itself to the adoption of the ratio-centric bias, which is responsible for the de-personification of individuals who both deserve and require the kind of protection the moral status of personhood can confer on them.

The upshot of chapter 4 is that the commonsensical notion that diachronic personal identity has something to do with embodied minds cannot be fully grasped by views either that focus on individualistic psychological continuity (i.e. neo-Lockean accounts) or that outright dismiss psychological continuity as a vehicle for diachronic identity (i.e. anti-Lockean accounts). Dismissing an exclusive focus on individualistic psychological continuity by acknowledging the Biologistic insight gives way to the possibility of an account of personhood and personal identity that relies on psychologically grounded features such as memory without requiring that such features be purely individualistic or that personal identity be tied exclusively to an individual's *capacity* to remember.

Chapter 5 explores Robert Nozick's closest continuer theory, which is an interesting account of personal identity. This chapter examines a problem that arises in Nozick's otherwise ingenious solution to the problem of diachronic personal identity, namely a problem concerning the unconstrained subjectivity of an agent's metric. It turns out that a deeper reading of Nozick, particularly his contemplations on meaningfulness and the meaning of life, reveals a possible way of extrinsically bounding the otherwise unbridled subjectivity of the self in Nozick's closest continuer theory. Briefly stated, I argue that

Nozick's account is best understood, and is least problematic, if the values that shape an agent's self conception are acknowledged to originate outside the agent in his or her social environment. That is, in the pursuit of meaning, the agent incorporates external values into his or her conception of him- or her-self, which come in the form of various networks of external relations. This reading of Nozick not only makes his account more plausible, but also hints at a *relational* and *narrative* conception of personhood as well as an *externalist* understanding of personal identity.

Chapter 6 takes a closer look at Sue Campbell's account of relational remembering and her relational conception of personhood. Campbell's relational account of personhood is a big step toward an inclusive conception of persons. Although her account does not entail ratio-centrism, she nonetheless includes rationality as one of the essential characteristics of personhood. The major problem with this move is that although Campbell champions the integrity of female therapy patients, she excludes individuals with significantly reduced cognitive capacities from her otherwise excellent account of personhood. The reason for this is that she is partial to the ratio-centric bias that plagues so many accounts of personhood. She implicitly reflects this bias even while she is sketching a relational account of personhood because although she argues for a relational understanding of memory, she does not take this insight to its logical end when she applies it to the question of personhood. Had she done so, her account of personhood would have to be both relational and *externalistic* (insofar as a person's identity through time can and is tracked externally).

Thus, although I take my cue from Campbell in proposing a relational account of personhood, I take her innovative conception of personhood beyond the limits of ratio-

centricity to develop an account of personhood perhaps best characterized as *relational* and an account of personal identity best understood as *extended*. A relational account of personhood continues to hold on to the neo-Lockean insight insofar as it takes the memory criterion seriously. However, the notion of extended identity denies that cognitive capacities are a necessary prerequisite for bestowing the moral status of personhood on an individual (this also means that not all persons need to be moral agents).

Chapter 6 explains the intimate entanglement between individual and collective memories and proposes an appropriate conception of memory for a relational account of personhood. Memory, both individual and collective, on the *relational* account of personhood, binds the various relationships that constitute a relational person. I make use of Hilde Lindemann's account of "holding-in-identity" to illustrate how personhood is dependent on relations and how families shape the identities of children as well as "hold" children and adults "in" their identities.

In chapter 7, I argue that because care relations are constitutive of relational personal narratives, the moral status of persons, along with the person-specific needs, interests, and rights associated with moral personhood, can be maintained, via such relations, even in the absence of a self-narrator or a self-conceiver. I also make use of Sue Campbell's relational (and thus extrinsic) account of emotions and affective states to further fill in the details of the relational account of personhood I propose.

Chapter 7 also argues that what makes care-relations person-maintaining is that they dignify an individual because they are, among other things, a source of both first-personal and third-personal evaluation of one-self (in the first-personal case) and another (in the third-

personal case) as having worth. This process of dignifying via the recognition of another's moral worth in turn gives rise to person-specific rights. Individuals exhibiting affective states project their needs in a manner that initiates a request to enter into morally significant care relations. This serves to exclude certain kinds of caring that have nothing to do with persons, such as, for example, my caring for my car.

Furthermore, chapter 7 outlines some of the more interesting consequences of adopting a relational view of personhood and an extended account of personal identity. In this chapter, I argue that individuals in vegetative states can retain their personhood even if the vegetative state is genuinely permanent.

Chapter 8 takes up several lingering questions and a few potential worries about the account I propose. As will become evident through the dissertation, some persons are extremely fragile entities, dependent on others for the maintenance of their personhood and personal identities. Like many delicate things, persons are very valuable. It is this value, their moral worth, that obliges us to care for them and ensure that though fragile, as well as because of it, they continue to be buttressed and reinforced via person-maintaining care relations.

Chapter 2
Moral Motivations

2.1
Asking the Right Questions

This chapter explores the difference between identifying persons in terms of *who* rather than *what* they are, which lays the grounding for a narrative conception of personhood that, in light of the arguments in chapters 5 and 6, can be understood as being, in part, constituted by care relational content. I argue that the moral grounding of personhood should be framed in a language of care since such language is inherently future-oriented and thus appropriate for a discussion of personal identity.

Understanding how persons persist through time, which involves persistence through change, should depend on how personhood is defined. Traditionally, questions concerned with diachronic personal identity (or criteria for tracking a person's identity through time) have focused on the discovery of some essential property of personhood, which can be traced through time and change. Various essential properties of personhood have been proposed: a non-material thinking substance, memory, a broader non-dualistic psychological unity, biological functionality, etc. Other than perhaps the appeal to some biological integrity, most if not all proposals suffer from what I call the ratio-centric bias, which is an appeal to a capacity for rationality and intelligence unique, as far as we can tell, only to humans (in fact, only to some humans). Those who admit non-material persons into their ontologies (such as the three *persons* of the trinity or disembodied consciousnesses, etc.) can expand the realm of

ratio-centric *persons* considerably, but this does not change the fact that many living human beings continue to be excluded on such views.

Many accounts of diachronic personal identity do not devote much time to defining personhood. The reason for this is that they tacitly assume one or another of the kinds of proposals mentioned above as constituting an appropriate definition of personhood. An account of diachronic personal identity, then, proceeds by choosing an essential property that is taken to be the definition of personhood and analyzing how this property can be tracked through time. This methodology is not unique to questions pertaining to personhood; it is actually borrowed from metaphysical deliberations of puzzles regarding the diachronic identity of objects in general. Plutarch's "Ship of Theseus" paradox is a famous example of this. Plutarch writes:

> The vessel in which Theseus sailed, and returned safe with those young men, went with thirty oars. It was preserved by the Athenians to the times of Demetrius Phalereus; being so pieced and new framed with strong plank, that it afforded an example to the philosophers, in their disputations concerning the identity of things that are changed by growth; some contending that it was the same, and others that it was not. (Plutarch c. 99, 63-64)

Harry Deutsch explains the paradox in greater detail:

> Imagine a wooden ship restored by replacing all its planks and beams (and other parts) by new ones...Hobbes added the catch that the old parts are reassembled to create another ship exactly like the original. Both the restored ship and the reassembled one appear to qualify equally to be the original. In the one case, the original is "remodelled", in the other, it is reassembled. Yet the two resulting ships

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are clearly not the same ship. Some have proposed that in a case like this our ordinary "criteria of identity" fail us. The process of dismantling and reassembling usually preserves identity, as does the process of part replacement... But in this case the two processes produce conflicting results: We get two ships, one of which is the same ship as the original, by one set of criteria, and the other is the original ship by another set of criteria. There is a similar conflict of criteria in the case of personal identity. (Deutsch 2007)

The idea is that just as there is an identity puzzle about a ship that undergoes changes through time, so there is an identity puzzle about a person undergoing changes through time. Moreover, the assumption is that by whatever methodology we resolve the first puzzle, that same methodology ought to be applicable to the puzzle about personal identity.

However, I think that Robert Burch (2004) is correct in insisting that persons be analyzed in terms of *who* rather than *what* they are and therefore that using the same methodology we utilize in tracking objects does not work well when tracking people. The question of who we are will largely depend on a very intricate collection of narratives, those we weave about ourselves as well as those others keep on our behalf, share, or even force upon us. Such personal narratives are not edited, proof-read, polished, and published biographies. Rather, they are more like open source works in progress, with published excerpts that are often retracted in order to be revised and are constantly supplemented by the working and re-working of others. Thus, when pursuing the question of personal identity, what we are after ought to be the identity through time of *persons*. But since persons do not belong to the same realm of existence as objects like chairs (since they are a *who* rather than a *what*), they cannot be tracked as though they were mere objects, such as chairs. Persons, in

fact, belong to the moral realm; personhood is a moral term attributed to certain individuals within the infrastructure of a moral community. This means that *persons* are moral entities.

2.2
Who Am I?

As I will argue in chapter 4, when pursuing the question of personal identity, how the question is formulated can significantly influence the kinds of answers that emerge. Asking *what* rather than *who* we are as a preamble to defining the criteria for diachronic personal identity can (and as I will show, does in some cases) lead to accounts of personal identity, which utterly ignore psychological continuity as a measure of a person's identity through time.

In "On the Place of Mind: A Philosophical Epilogue," Robert Burch reminds us that to view the self as an object is wrong. Burch writes: "the question one typically asks about a self is not, *what* is it? But, *who* is it?," and he adds, "[y]et, philosophers have tended in general to distort this distinction for the sake of an *essential* characterization of human being" (Burch 2004, 409). He continues:

> Following the Platonic model, they [philosophers] have asked "what" human being is and have sought a theoretical definition that serves to specify what it is that distinguishes every human being as such as one kind of thing among others. But, obviously, this sort of search translates the question of "who" directly into that of "what," occluding the sense in which it is human being as a self that distinguishes itself as such. (Burch 2004, 409)

It is the human-being-as-a-self that interests us when we inquire into the existence and persistence conditions of *persons*. Some thinkers have proposed that identity of persons is best accounted for by defining the persistence conditions of human organisms. Such an approach is exemplified by Eric Olson's (1997) account. Olson inquires about *what* we *essentially* are and responds that we are essentially biological entities (animals). Thus what it means to be one and the same person over time is to satisfy the necessary and sufficient conditions for being one and the same biological entity from one time to another. However, Burch argues, the problem with this approach is that we can never truly define persons in this manner since attempting to do so requires that we ask *what* rather than *who* persons are. To illustrate his point, Burch writes:

> There is an old joke that points out the failing here. Seeking an essential definition of human being, serious-minded philosophers proposed "two-legged animal." Waggish sophists brought forth a chicken. Undeterred, the philosophers refined their proposal. "Human beings," they said, "are *featherless* bipeds," whereupon the sophists plucked the chicken. (Burch 2004, 409)

The title of Olson's 1997 book, *The Human Animal: Personal Identity without Psychology*, reveals the nature of a project that attempts to reduce *personhood* to biological processes while ignoring psychology and other subjective states that contribute to one's sense of self. Nonetheless, there is great value in Olson's insightful pondering, for he brings intriguing considerations into the personal identity debate. However, although Olson's project may be valuable as an important part of the whole picture, it cannot be presented as a complete account of the nature of persons.

Had Burch's "serious-minded philosophers" asked the question "*who* are we?" instead of "*what* are we?," their answer would have taken a very different turn. It may be worth pointing out that John Locke also distinguished between what and who we are.[12] "I know that, in the ordinary way of speaking," Locke writes, "the same person and the same man stand for one and the same thing" (II.xxvii.15), but, Locke recognizes, in extraordinary situations like those the myriad of famous personal identity puzzle cases explore, we must transcend the ordinary way of speaking. It is precisely at this point that the distinction between personhood and humanness becomes apparent.

The problem of personal identity can be (and has been) encapsulated in examples and cases such as the following. It is commonly accepted (though not by everyone)[13] that I am the same person I was when I was a child. The question of my identity as a person can be stated in terms of what precisely makes me the same *person* now that I was then. I have some vague recollections of my early childhood, but the further I push my memory, the less it delivers. There comes a point when the few lonely memories I do possess are questionable to say the least. Some (if not all) are confabulations composed out of visual images I used to recreate in my mind so as to more efficiently refer to (or perhaps in order to mentally label) the stories my parents told me of my early childhood. With the passage of time, the memory of the images themselves became confused with the vague, foggy images of my actual

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[12] The distinction Burch points to (and I emphasize here) is by no means a novel idea. And although Locke identifies the distinction, it does not follow that the Lockean account is unproblematic. However, in spite of the numerous problems with the Lockean view, I think that Locke's starting point is on the right track insofar as it acknowledges that the person (or the "who" of our inquiry) is inseparably entangled with the subjective experiences of selves. For Locke, this insight reduces to private, personal memory, but it need not reduce to such narrow terms.

[13] Derek Parfit, as I will explain, disagrees with this "common" assumption.

recollections making it the case today that I cannot be certain whether what I remember are recollections or confabulations.[14] And if I push my memory beyond this fuzzy point, it fades away altogether as though the time before the few dubious images I recall were spent by me in utter darkness, unconscious and unaware.

Moreover, my adult desires and character traits are in many ways quite foreign to the dreams, wishes, and ambitions of the child I once was. Perhaps some character traits have persevered, but many have changed (some in spite of my wishes and desires and some because of them). My adult self has abandoned many of my childhood beliefs and has gained much more knowledge and experience (both worldly and intellectual). In short, if I truly am the same as the child, I have little in common with him.

Given such extreme change, it is no surprise that many authors have inquired into an *essence* of a person that would glue such different beings into one continuous whole. On the other hand, it is also not surprising that others have embraced the opposite and declared the child and the man to be distinct people (see Parfit 1971 and 1986). There are problems with both approaches, however. The first, as Burch warns, runs the risk of objectifying the person while the latter severs the link (however faint) between children and who they grow up to become (or, alternatively, the matured and who they once were). An account of personal identity ought to include an explanation of change because, after all, people are not static like castles or paintings (although even those, as all things, undergo change). Moreover, an

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[14] The issue of the accuracy of memory as well as the active nature of remembering or recollecting is important to this discussion, but I will not pursue it here since it bears little significance on the example I wish to illustrate.

account of the diachronic identity of persons should not be developed in isolation from an account of personhood.

2.3
The Moral Fabric of Personal Identity:
Picking out the Moral Threads of Personhood

So why are we still discussing diachronic personal identity when our definition of personhood remains lacking? An analysis of our practice of tracking persons through time may reveal some of the things in which we take personhood to consist. Why should the practical, everyday usage of a term lend itself well to a philosophical definition? It often does not! However, it can reveal what we wish the term 'person' to denote and since the term is to pick out that which we find morally relevant and personally valuable, we ought to look to what we find morally relevant and personally valuable in order to tease out the salient components by which to navigate the philosophical problems of defining the term of interest.

Marya Schechtman (1996) identifies four features intimately related to what she calls the project of providing a re-identification criterion for persons, a project in which she argues thinkers such as Derek Parfit and David Lewis are clearly engaged. The four features, according to Schechtman, are survival, moral responsibility, self-interested concern, and compensation. There may be other considerations and those she listed may perhaps be categorized differently. However, the four features presented by Schechtman are representative of the types of motivations that govern our need to track, and our interest in tracking, the identity of persons through time. In other words, they are representative of the kinds of factors that motivate (and thus ground) our inquiry into the problem of personal

identity. And, as it turns out, our concerns are primarily moral in nature. Schechtman convincingly illustrates the importance of turning to morally relevant features of characterizing personhood before attempting to address the diachronic identity problem.

However, I think that Schechtman's insight would be more powerful had she rephrased her four features in a language of care. The reason for this, as I argue below, is that care is intimately connected with persistent identity of persons and, as I argue in later chapters, in cases where personhood requires buttressing, it becomes, in the form of care relations, a salient grounding of personhood itself. To this end, I modify Schechtman's list of four features in order to rephrase it in terms of a language of care. In the process, I merge compensation with moral responsibility since the four features Schechtman lists are all related. Compensation may well be a feature of our self-interested concerns as well as part of moral responsibility, especially if self-interested concerns include such things as future-oriented projects and commitments (which naturally extend into the past). Thus, for the sake of simplicity, when I present my modified list, I will conjoin compensation with moral responsibility.

Schechtman proposes that one of the problems facing contemporary theories of personal identity (at least in the analytic tradition) is that "debates about personal identity have become so far removed from the concerns that originally impelled them" (Schechtman 1996, 1). She states that "the problem with philosophical accounts of personal identity originates in the failure of contemporary identity theorists to recognize the full complexity of the issues they discuss. These theorists do not recognize that there is no monolithic 'question of personal identity,' but rather a variety of identity questions arising in different contexts,

bearing diverse significance, and demanding distinct kinds of answers" (Schechtman 1996,

1). Schechtman distinguishes between what she calls the *re-identification criterion* and the

characterization question. Schechtman explains:

> The former is the question of what makes a person at time t_2 the same person as a person at time t_1; the latter [is] the question of which beliefs, values, desires, and other psychological features make someone the person she is. The reidentification question thus concerns the logical relation of identity, whereas the characterization question concerns identity in the sense of what is generally called, following Erikson, an "identity crisis." (Schechtman 1996, 1-2)

The reidentification question is often taken on without a second thought given to the

characterization question. However, without an answer to the latter, the reidentification

question can and often does yield quite outlandish results, fed, as it were, by bizarre and

sometimes otherworldly thought experiments. One important contribution of Schechtman's

distinction is that it forces participants in the personal identity debate to ask and seriously

consider the question of "who *I* am." As already noted in chapter 1, our personal narratives,

which are a product of the interaction between first-personal and third-personal narratives

about us, play a salient role in what Schechtman refers to as the reidentification question. An

individual's first-personal narrative helps to characterize the *person* the individual

introspectively tracks by tracing the history of his or her *I*. Such a narrative, and thus such a

characterization, are naturally saturated by what the individual genuinely cares about. Re-

identification, then, even from a third-person point of view, must take into account such a

characterization. This gives each individual whose identity is being tracked some control

over what features of one's identity are salient, making it impossible to re-identify an

individual without first answering the characterization question. In chapter 5, I will discuss the external boundaries imposed on the extent to which one can inform one's own identity and in chapter 6, in my discussion of the Social Manifestation Thesis and in the discussion of Lindemann's concept of holding others in their identity, I will contemplate the extent to which first-personal narratives are influenced by and interdependent on third-personal narratives.

Schechtman insightfully illustrates my worry that addressing the question of diachronic identity without having a robust conception of personhood leads to identity criteria that are inconsistent with our attributions of moral status to individuals we label or identify as persons. Schechtman writes:

> Those working on what is called "the problem of personal identity" in the modern English-speaking tradition usually address themselves formally to the reidentification question and so expect their views to take the form of a reidentification criterion. I maintain that these "reidentification theorists" fail to appreciate the boundaries of this question. As a result considerations linked to the characterization question creep into their investigation and are used (inappropriately) to guide their formulation of reidentification criteria, which undermines their project (as currently conceived) at its very foundations. The fatal confusion stems from the central role reidentification theorists give to the practical importance of personal identity. There is a strong pre-philosophical sense that facts about identity underlie facts about four basic features of personal existence: survival, moral responsibility, self-interested concern, and compensation...Reidentification theorists seem to assume that since they are working on defining personal identity, and since identity is linked to the four features, their definition of identity must capture that link...It is the use of this constraint which leads contemporary theorists into trouble. I contend that the four features are indeed linked to facts about personal identity, but identity in the sense at issue in the characterization question, not the reidentification question. It is thus a theory of characterization and not of reidentification that is properly

charged with the responsibility of explaining the connection between identity and the four features (Schechtman 1996, 2)

A similar distinction is made by David DeGrazia in his 2005 book *Human Identity and Bioethics* where he distinguishes between *numerical identity* and *narrative identity* and argues that narrative identity presupposes, but is distinct from, numerical identity, which he cashes out in terms of the biological approach to the problem of identity through time. Robert Burch (2004), as already discussed, also calls for the recognition of such a distinction by pointing out that it is wrong to view the self as an object.

All such criticisms of what we might dub the orthodox solutions to the problem of personal identity differ among one another in fundamental ways, but they unanimously point to a serious problem with such approaches, which tend to equivocate on the distinct questions. Moreover, such criticisms reveal an alternative course of inquiry.

I wish to briefly flesh out the moral and ethical factors that motivate the inquiry into the problem of personal identity. The question we should ask ourselves before setting out in search of a solution to our problem is why should we care about personal identity in the first place? The answer must have something to do with the kinds of things we *care* about. In its broadest sense, care is intimately entwined with morality.

Harry Frankfurt, in "The Importance of What We Care About," states that there are two major branches of inquiry: epistemology, which pursues questions pertaining to what we should believe and ethics, which is concerned with how one ought to behave. Frankfurt adds that "[i]t is also possible to delineate a third branch of inquiry, concerned with a cluster of

questions which pertain to another thematic and fundamental preoccupation of human existence – namely, *what to care about*" (Frankfurt 1988, 80). Frankfurt continues:

> There is naturally an intimate connection between what a person cares about and what he will, generally or under certain conditions, think it best for himself to do. But while the third branch of inquiry therefore resembles ethics in its concern with problems of evaluation and of action, it differs significantly from ethics in its generative concepts and in its motivating concerns. Ethics focuses on the problem of ordering our relations with *other people*. It is concerned especially with the contrast between *right* and *wrong*, and with the grounds and limits of *moral obligation*. We are led into the third branch of inquiry, on the other hand, because we are interested in deciding what to do with *ourselves* and because we therefore need to understand what is *important* or, rather, what is *important to us*. (Frankfurt 1988, 80-81)

Although Frankfurt's point regarding the intimate connection between what a person cares about and what he or she ought to do is well taken, I am inclined to disagree with his categorical differentiation between caring and ethics. I concur with Michael Slote (1990) that morality ought not to be limited to merely caring for the well-being of others, but that there should be a place for the moral agent's self-interested pursuits. Although theories such as Act Utilitarianism or Kantian Deontology offer concessions to the agent's interests and happiness, concessions are certainly not enough. In "Some Advantages of Virtue Ethics," Slote writes:

> In summary, then, it would appear that over a large range of cases our ordinary thinking about morality assigns no positive value to the well-being or happiness of the moral agent of the sort it clearly assigns to the well-being or happiness of *everyone other than the agent*...I believe that this aspect of common sense morality is and can

be shown to be ethically objectionable...And I believe that such considerations give us much reason to be suspicious of common-sense or Kantian morality, considered as our most central or fundamental form of ethical evaluation, as consequentialism's supposedly exorbitant demands for self-sacrifice give us reason to question the validity of consequentialism. (Slote 1990, 441)

Thus, when I speak of the moral dimension motivating our search for a solution to the problem of personhood and personal identity, I do not merely have in mind such paradigmatically moral features as other-regarding relationships. Rather, I embrace the spirit of those who recognize the central role of *caring* in ethics, which, among other things, includes prudential self-concern. Best examples of such theories are those that follow in the footsteps of the revitalized interest in virtue ethics as well as the recent turn of some feminist philosophers to a care-based morality, which can be quite elegantly integrated with some versions of virtue ethics.[15] Having said this, I by no means have the intention of downplaying the importance of other-regarding relationships, both moral and non-moral in nature. In fact, as I will explain in Chapter 6, part of my argument draws on the salience of such relationships.

In her 1982 book *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, Carol Gilligan argues that the perceived deficiencies in moral development Lawrence Kohlberg noted in female children is a result not of differences between masculine and feminine moral development, but rather between masculine and feminine morality. Gilligan argues that males embrace a morality of rights and non-interference while females speak in a different voice, that of responsibility and interdependence. Gilligan writes: "[t]he

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[15] One way of merging care and virtue ethics is to understand caring as a central and salient virtue.

psychology of women that has consistently been described as distinctive in its greater orientation toward relationships and interdependence implies a more contextual mode of judgment and a different moral understanding" (Gilligan 1982, 22).

Rather than following Gilligan in identifying two distinct and gendered voices, however, I think it is more accurate to view care ethics as a distinct and descriptively accurate approach to morality. Many philosophers address caring as something that resembles morality or even as an important addition to a moral character, but not many, outside the feminist critiques of the "justice" or "rights" approach to morality, have embraced care and caring as a central feature of moral thinking. Although I disagree with Gilligan that this kind of moral thinking is predominantly (and perhaps even essentially) feminine, I concur with her that it is both a robust and adequate alternative to more traditional approaches such as utilitarianism or deontology.

What I find particularly attractive about a care-based ethic (or a virtue ethic grounded in caring)[16] is precisely its intimate tie to considerations of personhood. That is, the reason we deem it important to track our self-conceptions or identities through time via memories and narratives is because we *care* about certain relations to self and others. Frankfurt also acknowledges this intimate connection between caring and personal identity. He writes:

> A person who cares about something is, as it were, invested in it. He *identifies* himself with what he cares about in the sense that he makes himself vulnerable to losses and susceptible to benefits depending upon whether what he cares about is diminished or enhanced. Thus he concerns himself with what concerns it, giving

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[16] Here, I have in mind a virtue ethic that recognizes care as a central and essential virtue.

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particular attention to such things and directing his behavior accordingly. Insofar as the person's life is in whole or in part *devoted* to anything, rather than being merely a sequence of events whose themes and structures he makes no effort to fashion, it is devoted to this. (Frankfurt 1988, 83)

Caring for something, according to Frankfurt, is different from liking or desiring something. He explains that "[t]he outlook of a person who cares about something is inherently prospective; that is, he necessarily considers himself as having a future" (Frankfurt 1988, 83). This is different from mere desiring since it is possible for a creature to have desires without having a prospective outlook. Frankfurt argues that caring can only occur over an extended period of time, which further buttresses the intimate connection between caring and one's personal identity through time. Frankfurt explains:

> [A] person can care about something only over some more or less extended period of time. It is possible to desire something, or to think it valuable, only for a moment. Desires and beliefs have no inherent persistence; nothing in the nature of wanting or of believing requires that a desire or a belief must endure. But the notion of guidance, and hence the notion of caring, implies a certain consistency or steadiness of behavior; and this presupposes some degree of persistence. A person who cared about something just for a single moment would be indistinguishable from someone who was being moved by impulse. He would not in any proper sense be guiding or directing himself at all...If we consider that a person's will is that by which he moves himself, then what he cares about is far more germane to the character of his will than the decisions or choices he makes. The latter may pertain to what he *intends* to be his will, but not necessarily to what his will truly *is*. (Frankfurt 1988, 84)

Thomas Nagel states that "[t]o identify with one's past or future is simply to regard the present as a stage in the life of a persisting individual, of which those other times are also

(earlier or later) stages" (Nagel 1970, 60). Nagel views prudential reasons, rather than caring, as an essential property of temporally persistent beings such as persons. Although prudential reasons or concerns do not encompass the notion of caring in general, they are a kind of caring (though not the kind care ethicists insist upon nor the kind that my account of personhood utilizes). Nagel writes:

> Those practical intuitions which acknowledge prudential reasons, and the motives connected with them, reflect an individual's conception of himself as a temporally persistent being: his ability to identify with past and future stages of himself and to regard them as forming a single life. Failure to be susceptible to prudence entails radical dissociation from one's future, one's past, and from oneself as a whole, conceived as a temporally extended individual. (Nagel 1970, 58)

Nagel's proposal that prudential reasons and motives inform a person's identity through time (or tie a person's various experiences, beliefs, and desires into a single life) adheres to the traditional conception of persons as rational and autonomous beings. Although I agree that autonomy in many cases is a feature of persons, I do not think it is a prerequisite for personhood.[17] The kind of caring care ethics advocates, however, can also perform the function Nagel assigns to prudential reason, but without the ratio-centrism that prudential reasoning necessarily presupposes. Caring, in these care-ethical terms, about something is intimately tied to future-oriented interests and commitments, which are, in part, the bearers of meaningfulness in people's lives. The other source of meaning, as I shall argue in Chapter 5, which is also grounded in ethical considerations that ultimately lead back to caring, is

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[17] If either science, which, via many prominent scientific voices, is already leaning in this direction, or philosophical contemplation point to the metaphysical absence of free will (and thus autonomy), a concept of personhood that does not depend on antecedent autonomy would be morally advantageous.

constituted by relations to others. The concept of care, however, lies at the heart of both the intrinsic and extrinsic sources of meaningfulness, which endows the concepts of personhood and our prudential interest in diachronic personal identity with value.

Returning to Schechtman's four features and my understanding of the moral dimension motivating the question of diachronic personal identity, Schechtman's modified list[18] will look something along the following lines:

(1) We care about *survival*. This of course applies both to our own survival and the survival of others. There is definitely something very distinct about our expectations and anxieties related to our own survival, but I think that the anxieties and expectations that have to do with the survival of others is sometimes unnecessarily understated. It is quite important to me that what I label my future continuer indeed proves to be identical to me. Thus, in this sense, the question of personal identity is motivated by worries about personal survival. This is something both Parfit (1986) and Lewis (1983) emphasize. We should also add that it is equally salient whether or not other peoples' continuers are identical with their predecessors. This is not only because that is how we keep track of who to praise and blame, but also because the identities of others matter to us in and of themselves. Our relationships with acquaintances, close friends, family members, children, siblings, parents, and lovers are quite particular in that we do not merely *care* that there be some such relationships between us and others, but we actually value these relationships primarily (or at least

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[18] I have modified Schechtman's list by grouping responsibility with compensation and, in the virtue ethical spirit of broadening our understanding of morality to include prudential considerations regarding welfare, flourishing, and seeking to live the good life, I have re-interpreted self-interested concerns in light of such virtue ethical goals.

in part) because those particular individuals occupy the part of the *other* in those relationships. Thus, for example, it is of the utmost importance for a lover that her partner is that particular person from t_1 to t_2 through t_n. Moreover, what the lover (or parent or friend) is most interested in is not that the person in question does not undergo change since change is likely both expected and perhaps even encouraged, but that the person retains his or her identity through time and despite change.

(2) We care about *moral responsibility*. Again, limiting accountability to moral responsibility is also a bit too narrow. We care about other sorts of accountability as well, moral responsibility being a particular subset of our practices of praise, blame, and other kinds of judgment. Legally, it is quite important that we sentence the right person for the right reason or that we re-distribute unjustly acquired property in an appropriate manner, etc. Morally, it matters to us who we praise or blame and for what. Socially, when we enter into contracts of all sorts with one another, it is generally practically useful as well as socially beneficial if we can identify the parties involved and the roles, conditions, and other salient details they have agreed to. This is why one of Schechtman's four features, *compensation*, could well be placed under the broader heading of *accountability*.

(3) We care about *self-interested concerns*. Here, I think such prudential concerns as living a good life or the best life for us fit quite well. It is important to me, for instance, that as I choose the course of my own life, with a view to making it the best life for me, it is I who benefits from the undertakings that such a goal naturally entails. Similarly, I may be rightfully indignant if I am compelled to live a life chosen

by someone other than myself.   Moreover, if living a good life means that I must

undergo some fundamental changes of character, it is important that these changes

result in *me* living a better life and not in my turning into another person who is

happier than I could ever have been.   And of course, as with the other two motives,

such self-interested concerns are not merely relevant to our own persons, but rather it

also matters to us whether or not our acquaintances, close friends, family members,

children, siblings, parents, and lovers live good and happy lives, which they

themselves have chosen, shaped, and worked towards.

To sum up, then, the moral dimension motivating the inquiry into the problem of personal

identity consists of our intimate interest in personal survival, accountability, and various

prudential concerns.   Given that what we care about tracking when we trace a person's

identity through time is something that glues together the various properties that inevitably

undergo change, care relations, which emerge within various interpersonal relationships

prove to be stable properties by which to track an individual through various changes.   For

example, care relations established between spouses or a parent and a child are relational

properties of an individual, which need not change even if all other intrinsic properties do

undergo changes and which can both *characterize* and *re-identify* the individual.[19]

Although (1) does not seem to have much to do with morality or ethics, I think that it

ties into questions of prudential considerations insofar as survival, understood in terms of the

right kind of closest continuer, weighs heavily on whether or not the plans I set into motion

today bear the kinds of fruit my future self (my closest continuer) will want to gather.   Thus,

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[19] Such relational properties can continue to characterize and re-identify individuals even if they are solely references to past relations such as past care relations between ex-spouses or deceased parents or children.

the notion of survival central to debates about personal identity is closely connected to moral considerations. (2) is obviously a moral concern. Both moral responsibility (or accountability) and compensation belong under the moral heading. And I have argued that caring in general, which includes the kinds of prudential concerns I outline above ought to be considered an important part of moral philosophy. Thus, (3) is most certainly a moral consideration.

Moral concerns and considerations, then, are very much at the heart of the problem of personal identity. I think that this is as it should be since personhood is also a central term in moral discourse. If the analysis of the motivations for tracking persons through time is correct, then the term we are tracking ought also be a moral one. The above mentioned moral factors, then, should play a grounding role for a definition of personhood. That is, personhood should be defined around the kinds of moral considerations I broadly outlined above.

In this chapter, I have argued that a definition of personhood is intimately tied to moral considerations, which would explain the reason why the notion of personhood has traditionally been reserved as a special indication of moral status. I have also argued that such a definition ought not to mirror the kinds of criteria used for the identification and re-identification of objects like chairs, tables, or statues. With these preliminary bearings set, it may prove useful to consider a sample of views that take this moral grounding of personhood seriously. I consider the accounts outlined in the following chapter to be the orthodox definitions of personhood, definitions that are unfortunately both exclusionary and commonplace.

Chapter 3
Moral Agents

3.1
Defining Personhood: A Moral Project

In this chapter, I argue that moral agents have historically been and continue to be defined in rationalistic terms, which in turn informs the solutions to the problem of diachronic personal identity. The problem with this approach to the question of personal identity is that a ratio-centric conception of moral agency is tacitly assumed to be the essential feature of personhood. By defining moral agency in ratio-centric terms, however, the scope of personhood becomes too narrow and constraining and leads to the exclusion of fragile groups of individuals from the protective realm of personhood.

Pointing to the moral origins of personhood, as I have done in the previous chapter, is neither a new endeavour nor a surprising one. Questions of personhood are traditionally conceived of as moral projects. Philosophers, however, typically pose questions of diachronic personal identity in abstraction from moral considerations. This is not as perplexing as it may at first appear. Since personhood is generally described in moral terms, the criteria for the identity of persons thus often consists in tracking moral agents. Moral agents, in turn, can be thought of as having certain persistence conditions; the exact formulation of persistence conditions of moral agents will depend on how precisely moral agents are defined, which really brings the discussion back to the original question and thus to the problem at hand in this chapter.

The problem with many such approaches, then, lies in how they conceptualize moral agency. In the most general terms, moral agent-hood is defined in terms of rationality. That is, moral agents are viewed as decision makers who must have the capacity for the formulation of informed, rational choices in a variety of morally significant circumstances. For example, broadly speaking, deontologists make reasoned choices based on intellectually accepted motives while consequentialists make informed decisions based on rational calculations of outcomes. This in itself may not be a bad thing. However, since moral agents are also taken to be persons, personhood is cast in a ratio-centric mould, which is often too narrow and too constraining. The lamentable result is the exclusion of individuals who fall short of an arbitrarily defined intellectual threshold and thus are barred from the realm of personhood, individuals who merit moral consideration, but lack the attributes necessary to be defined in terms of rational agent-hood.

I will trace a selected sampling of views spanning the history of western philosophy and a wide spectrum of moral theories in order to shed light on this persistent problem. This is not intended as a historically deep survey, but providing a very general historical background will serve well to illustrate my point. I will offer a brief examination of the views of personhood contained in the works of Aristotle, John Locke, Immanuel Kant, and Peter Singer. The reason for choosing these and not other western philosophers is that they will provide a manageable sample of thinkers, spanning history and the theoretical landscape in ethics: Aristotle championing virtue ethics, Kant advocating deontology, and Singer promoting consequentialism. I discuss John Locke not primarily for his distinctive theoretical standpoint in ethics, but for his innovative insight into the nature of personhood

and diachronic personal identity itself. The Lockean formulation of the problem of personal identity is, in fact, the orthodox starting point for all inquiries into this question. Much, if not all, of contemporary literature on this perennial philosophical predicament owes a nod of acknowledgment to the Lockean formulation of diachronic personal identity.

3.2
Aristotle's Function Argument

Aristotle's Function Argument reveals Aristotle's understanding of what in contemporary philosophical parlance is called the concept of a person. It is interesting to note that even as far back as c. 350 BCE, roughly the time Aristotle popularized his philosophical thoughts, the concept of humanhood (or what we today refer to as personhood) has been intimately intertwined with rationality. In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle (c. 350 BCE) urges the reader to live a life of virtue in order to live a life of flourishing (an *Eudaimon* life). There are, according to Aristotle, morally significant virtues of character, which lead to a truly blessed and flourishing life befitting a human being if an agent can habituate himself (Aristotle is speaking to an exclusively male audience) to act in accordance with them. As Richard Kraut explains in "Two Conceptions of Happiness," it is not up to the individual to determine where his happiness lies. Rather, happiness is fixed by the very nature of the species to which the agent belongs. The agent's job, then, is to discover the essence of this nature so that he may identify the appropriate virtues necessary for the attainment of *Eudaimonia* (Kraut 1995, 93).

According to Aristotle, each action has an end. That is, we do things for the sake of something. Some ends, however, are higher than others in that the lower ends are subordinate to the higher. The higher ends are more choice worthy than all the ends subordinate to them "since the lower ends are also pursued for the sake of the higher" (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094a15-16). According to Aristotle, a final end, an intrinsic good, must be complete. That is, all instrumental goods are incomplete since they are not ends in themselves, but rather means to further ends. All intrinsic goods, on the other hand, are complete insofar as they are desired in and of themselves. Happiness is a complete end.

For Aristotle, happiness is the good without qualification.[20] Happiness, as a term, however, is too general to capture what Aristotle is after. Aristotle addresses the question of what precisely happiness is via his *function argument*. The following is a sketch of the function argument along with Aristotle's reasoning for it.

For a thing to be good for something, it must be good because it fulfills that something's function. For example, what is good or healthy for the eyes depends on the function of the eyes and what is good for a sculptor depends on the function of a sculptor, etc. That is, whatever benefits sight is good for the eyes since vision is the function of an eye. Since *happiness* is supposed to be the ultimate human good, it is important to determine what the function of a human being is in order to understand precisely what happiness is. The function of a thing is that which is essential to it. That which is essential to a thing must

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[20] As I will show in the next section, the unconditional good (or good without qualification) for Immanuel Kant is quite different. For Kant, the good will is unconditionally good. Aristotle's conception of the good is more akin to the Utilitarian understanding of this concept than Kant's insofar as it focuses on *happiness*. However, Aristotle's understanding of the good is substantially different from the hedonistically inspired conception of Utilitarian happiness.

also be unique to that thing. Therefore, the function of a human being must be that which is essential to a human being and therefore also unique to a human being.

Before we can answer the question of what is unique to human beings, it is important to understand Aristotle's view of the soul, which can be roughly understood as that which makes living things alive; a living thing's soul is its capacity to engage in the activities that are characteristic of living things of its own kind (i.e. plants will differ from animals in some ways). In short, the soul is the vital force responsible for the living thing's vitality. The soul, however, though similar in all living things, differs between them. A living thing is defined by the capacity to nourish itself, grow, decay, move about (on its own and not just when moved by something else), perceive, be aware of being alive, etc. Although not all of these capacities are necessary for something to be considered alive (i.e. plants are not aware of being alive), the soul, for Aristotle, is that which is causally responsible for these animate behaviours of living things. This vitalizing force is divided into three parts: nutritive, perceptive, and rational. The first is the vegetative soul that belongs to plants, but is also found in non-human animals as well as human beings. The second is the sensitive soul, which is only found in some non-human animals and human beings and is responsible for perception via the senses. The rational soul is unique to human beings alone and is responsible for rational thought.

According to Aristotle, then, what is unique or essential to human beings is *rationality*, which means that the human function consists in the "activity of the soul in accord with reason or requiring reason" (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1098a9-10). Human happiness, on the Aristotelian account, depends on this human function to engage in rational

activity. What makes humans happy is different from what makes dogs (or other non-human entities) happy; the reason for this is that the function of dogs (or other non-human entities) is different from the function of humans. The term Aristotle uses, *eudaimonia*, is not best translated as happiness, but rather as *flourishing*. So, given the function of human beings, engaging in rational activity is constitutive of human flourishing.

If the greatest good for human beings is to flourish and if human beings can only flourish if they live in accordance with their natures, then human beings can only flourish if they live a life fit for a human (rather than a dog or a maple tree). To summarize Aristotle's function argument, we, as human beings, can become *eudaimon* only if we lead lives natural to human beings, which means that we must live rational lives since rationality is that which is unique (and therefore essential) to our species.

Aristotle proposes that given our nature as human beings, the only way to reach *eudaimonia* is to strive to inculcate virtues or character traits that will help us live well (that is, that will help us live in accordance with our *rational* human natures). These virtues or character traits will obviously be uniquely human.[21] The virtues are not instrumental to *eudaimonia*, but rather constitutive of it. *Eudaimonia*, then, can be understood as the kind of flourishing that emerges from the state of being virtuous.

Kraut explains that Aristotle's test for *Eudaimonia* is to measure how close one comes to a perfect human life (to the *eudaimon* life). Given Aristotle's function argument, it is clear that the *eudaimon* life can be led only by individuals with highly developed cognitive capacities. Flourishing or happiness, on the Aristotelian view, are unattainable goals for

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[21] Aristotle lists the following virtues: courage, temperance, liberality, magnificence, proper ambition, magnanimity, patience, truthfulness, wittiness, friendliness, modesty, and righteous indignation.

severely cognitively disabled individuals since they lack the appropriate modes of self-governance, which presuppose a high level of rationality, to be able to exercise the virtues required for *Eudaimonia*. Thus, on the Aristotelian account, individuals with severe cognitive disabilities (among many other kinds of people) can neither live fulfilling lives nor participate in the community of moral agents since they are incapable of attaining the virtues of character that lead to *eudaimonia* (and thus are constitutive of a flourishing life) and that place an individual within the realm of moral agency and full moral considerability.

This attitude is not limited to individuals with severe cognitive limitations, but rather casts a shadow on a much greater population; for example, Aristotle's view barred slaves (whose cognitive capacities were not severely limited at all) from the realm of moral personhood because slaves, lacking in the freedom to exercise the appropriately rationally driven modes of self-governance, could not fully exhibit or exercise the virtues constitutive of *Eudaimonia*. Kraut writes: "a slave is neither justified in congratulating himself on the way he is living, nor can others justifiably congratulate him. For to congratulate someone on his life is to call him *eudaimon*" (Kraut 1995, 106). And, Kraut adds, "the less virtuous one is, the less one can justifiably love oneself, and so, since the slave can at best achieve a reduced form of virtue, he is entitled to little self-regard" (Kraut 1995, 106). There is, according to Kraut, something inhumane about Aristotle's doctrine. According to Aristotle's account, then, self-regard is reserved only for a select and quite limited group of individuals with a specific set of cognitive capacities.

Jennifer Whiting (1988) argues that Aristotle need not be interpreted in a manner that leads to a ratio-centric definition of personhood. However, I am compelled to side with the

intellectualist interpretation of Aristotle since it integrates much better with the Aristotelian concept of *eudaimonia* than the non-intellectualist interpretation does.   An intellectualist interpretation of Aristotle is proposed by Thomas Nagel (1980) who, in "Aristotle on Eudaimonia," explains that Aristotle puts forward two accounts of *Eudaimonia*: an intellectualist and a comprehensive account. The first, according to Nagel, has to do with the activity of theoretical contemplation while the latter, one described as secondary by Aristotle himself, has to do with the full range of human life, which consists of the interaction of reason, emotion, perception, and action in an ensouled body (Nagel 1980, 7). Nagel thinks that Aristotle believes *Eudaimonia* to be attainable solely in virtue of our intellectual abilities, which are god-like and thus have their origins in perfection, while the practical employment of reason characterized by the comprehensive account is meant merely to provide support for intellectual activity (Nagel 1980, 13). In other words, we must sustain ourselves and make correct prudential choices conducive to health and survival in general in order to be able to participate in the intellectual activities that will pave the way to the Good Life, the life of the *Eudaimon*.

Jennifer Whiting (1988), in "Aristotle's Function Argument: A Defense," disagrees with Nagel's interpretation, which reads a strict intellectualist account of *Eudaimonia* into Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. She argues that since Aristotle believes human beings to be neither god nor beast, human *Eudaimonia* can neither consist of purely pleasure seeking nor exclusively in contemplation (Whiting 1988, 195). However, even with this more liberal interpretation, the sense that *Eudaimonia* can only be attained via rational agency by developing those virtues which enable the agent to pursue and attain his goals still lends

itself to a ratio-centric understanding of human beings (and thus of persons). Since not all human beings can be virtuous agents and thus since not all human beings are entitled to the same amount of self-regard, only those agents whose intellectual prowess is appropriately sufficient are entitled to the pursuit of happiness and the kind of treatment we believe is appropriate for *persons*.

The upshot of this section is that Aristotle's Function Argument reveals the beginnings of a definition of personhood, which continues to be dominant to this day. Moreover, Aristotle's approach is echoed in the philosophical method of Immanuel Kant and many others, namely the practice of defining personhood in terms of what is understood to be unique to human beings, but reserving the term 'person' only for a select group of human beings. This approach results in the de-personification of individuals we should treat as persons and de-humanization of de-personified human beings, for it points out that they lack (or are in too limited a possession of) that which is *essentially* human.

Although it is not clear that Aristotle possessed a philosophically technical conception of personhood in the way we understand and utilize the term today (since his view speaks more to degrees of humanity, which is different from our Lockean inspired conception of personhood which makes an explicit distinction between humanhood and personhood), had he formulated such a philosophically technical concept, he would have had to tie it to his moral theory in the same way he ties humanity to his notion of *eudaimonia*. As I will explain in the next section, Locke makes a similar move in order to tease out the criteria for the persistence of persons and pry them apart from the criteria that govern the diachronic identity of substances on the one hand and vegetables, animals, and humans on

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the other. As will become clear throughout this chapter, the concept of personhood (even if not explicitly stated as such) is tied to morality, moral responsibility, and ethics, meaning that, to use Locke's language, *personhood* is a forensic term.

3.3
Lockean Persons

John Locke begins his analysis of personal identity by considering the identity relation itself and then moves on to distinguish between three types of identities. He states that if two bodies or particles are found to be in the same place at the same time, then those bodies or particles are in fact one and the same (II.xxvii.2). He applies this definition of identity to substances composed of parts. He states that when a particle is added to a mass and then the mass remains unaltered (that is, no more particles are added or subtracted), then the mass is one and the same mass until an addition or subtraction of particles is made (at which point, the mass becomes a different mass than the one it used to be and continuity of identity ceases). The organization of particles within the mass may change, but this, in the case of substances themselves, makes no difference to the identity of the mass as long as all the particles that belong to it remain with it (II.xxvii.3). What constitutes the identity of substances, however, differs, according to Locke, from that which constitutes the identity of other types of things such as vegetables, animals, or human beings on the one hand and persons on the other.

The identity of vegetables (which is meant to include other non-animalistic living beings such as trees) does not consists, as was the case with substance, in an unalterable

aggregation of matter since, as Locke (likely following Aristotle's example) observes, an oak tree is very different in shape and composition from an acorn even though it is the same vegetable (to use Locke's phrasing). That is, the acorn and the oak are merely different stages of the same being. The identity of vegetables, then, according to Locke, consists in the continued organization (conformable to the particular plant) of parts into a functioning whole (II.xxvii.4). The same criteria for identity are applied to animals, though Locke admits that the complexity of functioning is more akin to a machine (like a watch) rather than a plant (II.xxvii.5). The identity of human beings, or to use Locke's terminology, the identity of man, is tracked in much the same way one tracks the identity of vegetables and animals (II.xxvii.6).

As is becoming clear, the way we track identity must be suited to the idea we are tracking (II.xxvii.7). Thus, when we are concerned with the identity of substances, we work under one set of criteria, which cannot be applied to the tracking of the identity of animals, for example. Locke names three types of identities: substances (i.e. a mass), man (i.e. human being), and person, the latter of which is different and requires a unique criterion for tracking identity than the previous two (II.xxvii.7). The criterion, as we shall see, will depend on the kind of consciousness that is had only by rational beings. The difference between persons and their bodies is made clear by Locke's anecdotal example of a parrot that seemed to display rational thought. Locke explains that if the parrot is rational, though it could then be considered a person, it would not be a man (II.xxvii.8), meaning that being a person is distinct from being a human. Rationality clearly lies at the centre of the Lockean definition of personhood. Locke writes:

This being premised, to find wherein personal identity consists, we must consider what "person" stands for; which, I think, is a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places; which it does only by that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking, and it seems to me essential to it: it being impossible for anyone to perceive, without perceiving that he does perceive. When we see, hear, smell, taste, meditate, or will anything, we know that we do so. Thus it is always as to our present sensations and perceptions: and by this everyone is to himself that which he calls "self"...For since consciousness always accompanies thinking, and it is that that makes everyone to be what he calls "self," and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things; in this alone consists personal identity, *i.e.* the sameness of a rational being. (II.xxvii.9)

Continued consciousness, then, is the criterion by which identity of persons is established and conscious remembering is the criterion by which personal identity is tracked on Locke's account. He writes:

For as far as any intelligent being can repeat the idea of any past action with the same consciousness it had of it at first, and with the same consciousness it has of any present action; so far it is the same personal self. (II.xxvii.10)

Locke acknowledges that his account entails the possibility of one consciousness transferring from body to body or one consciousness occupying two bodies at once, meaning that one person could, in principle, switch bodies or that one person could inhabit two bodies simultaneously (II.xxvii.13). Locke considers what has become a classic thought experiment of a prince and a cobbler switching minds (or consciousnesses):

[S]hould the soul of a prince, carrying with it the consciousness of the prince's life, enter and inform the body of a cobbler, as soon as deserted by his own soul, everyone sees he would be the same person with the prince, accountable only for the prince's actions: but who would say it was the same man?...I know that, in the ordinary way of speaking, the same person and the same man stand for one and the same thing...But yet, when we will inquire what makes the same spirit, man, or person, we must fix the ideas of spirit, man, or person in our minds; and having resolved with ourselves what we mean by them, it will not be hard to determine in either of them, or the like, when it is the same and when not. (II.xxvii.15)

Locke's criterion for diachronic personal identity consists in the continuity of consciousness rather than bodily or substantive integrity. The diachronic tracking of consciousness plays a crucial role in the forensic nature of personhood. Locke argues that if one does not have conscious awareness of an action, then one cannot be responsible for it. Locke's memory criterion for both tracking diachronic personal identity as well as moral responsibility is necessitated by the forensic nature of personhood (II.xxvii.26). That is, personhood and the identity of the self are tracked via a continuity of consciousness, which in turn is linked to the tracking of responsibility for that self's actions.

For Locke, only consciousness matters for responsibility since only consciousness matters for personal identity. Locke argues that the only reason our legal system punishes people for crimes they cannot recall is that it has no way of determining whether or not someone is lying about the lack of memory, but that if, as in the Final Judgment, the hearts of persons were fully opened and thus their memories laid bare, then people would, as they will in the Final Judgment, be punished only for what they consciously remember (II.xxvii.22).

Locke gives the example of day and night man, which is a 17th century precursor to Robert Louis Stevenson's 1886 dual personality of Dr. Jekyll and his alter ego Mr. Hyde,

arguing that the two personalities are, in fact, two different persons sharing one body (II.xxvii.23). Day man and night man do not share memories and thus it would be very odd to punish day man for night man's actions if day man does not have conscious continuity with night man's thoughts, intentions, beliefs, and other conscious states or memories. Essentially, then, in ignoring (albeit for practical reasons) the forensic nature of *personhood*, our legal system treats bodies in a forensic manner. This, however, though often harmless, does raise the worry that we might be punishing the wrong person by tracking the self's identity via a person's body rather than his or her consciousness. Locke explains: "[f]or suppose a man punished now for what he had done in another life, whereof he could be made to have no consciousness at all, what difference is there between that punishment and being created miserable" (II.xxvii.26)? For Locke, then, personal identity, and thus personhood, are intimately entangled with moral responsibility (making *personhood* a forensic term).

The popularity of the neo-Lockean or psychological approach to the problem of diachronic personal identity, an approach that remains the current orthodoxy, can be traced back to the now-famous Lockean puzzle (I cited above) of a prince and a cobbler exchanging bodies. Although the thought experiment still fuels personal identity debates and puzzles students of philosophy to this day, the reason the puzzle was included in the second edition of Locke's masterpiece as part of an added chapter ("Of Identity and Diversity") is not as relevant to contemporary inquiries into the problem of diachronic identity as it was during Locke's time. Locke's mentor, Robert Boyle,[22] the 17th century natural philosopher, chemist, physicist, inventor, and theologian worried about resolving tensions between

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[22] Locke met Boyle when Boyle became the new leader of the Oxford scientific group while Locke was still a student (Uzgalis 2012, 1.1).

biblical assertions regarding the Resurrection of the body and what science revealed about the various processes associated with bodily nourishment, growth, and decay. According to William Uzgalis (2012), such problems of integrating scientific explanations with religious doctrines likely confronted most scientists of the Royal Society, though these kinds of issues were of particular concern to Boyle.

More precisely, Boyle (1675) worried that since the Bible asserted that people will have the same body at the Resurrection as they had in life and since bodies decay or are consumed by other creatures, and thus their various atomic parts inevitably end up scattered through space and time, then the reconstruction of the *same* body might be somewhat problematic. Of course, an omnipotent God might be able to locate each individual atom and put a person's body back together for the Final Judgment; even if some of the person's atoms end up residing in the flesh of other beasts and become integrated into the structural organization of such organisms, beasts are not required to be in attendance at Judgment Day and thus those particular atoms might well be collected and reorganized appropriately. However, real confusion might ensue if someone is eaten by cannibals since the cannibal and his or her victim will have shared some of the same atoms. Boyle's concern was that even an omnipotent God would find it impossible to decide whether the atoms in question belonged to the victim or the cannibal since those same atoms are integral to both the victim's and the cannibal's bodies (and both would have to be in attendance at the Resurrection at the same time). Boyle writes:

> And yet far more impossible will this reintegration [of atoms at the Resurrection] be, if we put the case that the dead man was devoured by cannibals; for then, the same

flesh belonging successively to two different persons, it is impossible that both should have it restored to them at once, or that any footsteps should remain of the relation it had to the first possessor. (Boyle 1675, 198)

Locke explicitly states (II.xxvii.15)[23] that the example of the prince and the cobbler is a resolution to the worry about the Resurrection. Uzgalis explains:

The case is one in which the soul of the prince with all of its princely thoughts is transferred from the body of the prince to the body of the cobbler, the cobbler's soul having departed. The result of this exchange, is that the prince still considers himself the prince, even though he finds himself in an altogether new body. Locke's distinction between man and person makes it possible for the same person to show up in a different body at the resurrection and yet still be the same person. Locke focuses on the prince with all his princely thoughts because, on his view, it is consciousness which is crucial to the reward and punishment which is to be meted out at the Last Judgment. (Uzgalis 2012)

As already argued, part of the reason why personhood is often associated with rationality is that it not only confers perquisites and rights upon those who bear the label, but it also functions as a way of tracking praise, blame, and accountability. This function is closely related with the problem of diachronic personal identity for Locke and is the reason why Locke thinks of personhood as a forensic term. Anna Lännström (2007) traces Locke's exclusive application of forensic personhood to intelligent agents.

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[23] Locke begins section II.xxvii.15, the section that contains the famous thought experiment as follows: "And thus we may be able without any difficulty to conceive, the same person at the Resurrection, though in a body not exactly in make or parts the same which he had here, the same consciousness going along with the soul that inhabits it."

Personal identity was important to Locke because of its connection to moral responsibility. He calls "person" a forensic term...and stresses that it "belongs only to intelligent Agents capable of a Law" (II.xxvii.26). Beings that lack these characteristics cannot ever be held morally responsible for their actions and they are not persons. In short, "person" in Locke's view seems to be synonymous with "moral subject." (Lännström 2007, 40)

I agree with Lännström's assertion that Locke's view seems to be synonymous with moral agency, but I think Lännström should have used the phrase "moral agent" rather than "moral subject" to make the connection between rationality and personhood more explicit.

Locke identifies the memory criterion as the appropriate manner of tracking a 'person' through time; this corresponds with the Lockean understanding of personhood. Much of the literature on personal identity that follows does not understand personhood and its identity through time as fundamentally *forensic*. Neo-Lockean conceptions of personhood that fail to appreciate the fundamentally forensic nature of Lockean personhood tend to miss an important and innovative Lockean insight. Locke himself does not seem to think of personhood in terms of substance or being, but rather as something more akin to a process, one that requires consciousness. Jenny Teichmann (1985), in her paper "The Definition of Person," argues that whether or not Locke wanted it that way, his account of personhood reads more like the concept of a state rather than the concept of a thing, more like being magnetized, Teichmann explains, than like being iron or being a saucepan.[24]

Before setting out on an analysis of what I understand Locke's view of personhood to be, it may be helpful to put it in Locke's own words. He writes:

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[24] This, as will be shown in a following chapter is similar to the approach Marya Schechtman takes to the problem of personhood and personal identity.

"Person," as I take it, is the name for this self. Wherever a man finds what he calls "himself," there, I think, another may say is the same person. It is a forensic term appropriating actions and merit; and so belongs only to intelligent agents capable of a law, and happiness and misery. This personality extends itself beyond present existence to what is past, only by consciousness; whereby it becomes concerned and accountable, owns and imputes to itself past action, just upon the same ground and for the same reason that it does the present. All which is founded in a concern for happiness, the unavoidable concomitant of consciousness; that which is conscious of pleasure and pain desiring that *that* self that is conscious should be happy. (II.xxvii. 26)

As the passage makes quite clear, for Locke, the designation 'person' is a label to be attached to a self. However, given Locke's earlier distinction (II.xxvii.6) between the identity of the same substance, same human being, and same person, it is clear that this self refers to something other than a substance or a kind of living organism. And there is a good reason for it. The very next sentence of the above-quoted passage suggests that wherever and whenever I reflexively self identify, there and then a third person observer, assuming she has evidence of such reflexive self identification on my part, can point to this process of "finding what I call myself" and designate it with the label "person." This is important insofar as identifying such processes allows us to track a "person's" actions and thus assign praise or blame or any other judgment to the agent *responsible* for a particular action. And since such personalities extend themselves beyond the present moment by remembering their own pasts, they can be held accountable for those past actions for the very same reason that they can be held accountable for their present actions. It is plausible to read Locke as suggesting that the problem of personal identity primarily originates in moral considerations and concerns. And

of course, how does such a self track its own past and individuate its own present? "Only by consciousness," according to Locke. Thus, Locke presents us with a memory-based criterion of personal identity. In his own words, the reason Locke endorses such an approach is that

> whatever past actions it [this personality] cannot reconcile or appropriate to that present self by consciousness, it can be no more concerned in than if they had never been done: and to receive pleasure and pain, i.e., reward or punishment, on the account of any such action, is all one as to be made happy or miserable in its first being without any demerit at all. (II.xxvii.26)

Since this is not meant to be a deep or scholarly examination of Locke, nor is it intended to be a historical analysis of the problem of personal identity, I do not wish to delve too deep into my interpretation of the above mentioned passages. What I hope to point out, however, is that, throughout his metaphysical contemplations of personal identity, Locke can reasonably be understood as engaging in a moral project. This, if nothing else, is, to my mind, to Locke's credit, for I think that this starting point is not only a valid and interesting way to begin the inquiry, but it does, in fact, have the potential to be quite fruitful.

As already mentioned, I think that there is much more to the moral dimension of personal identity than just praise and blame and I think that Locke is quite aware of this. He does write that the label *person* "belongs only to intelligent agents capable of a law, and happiness and misery" (II.xxvii.26) implying the importance of a variety of prudential concerns, which I generalize and consider under the heading of morality. After all, a *person* for Locke is "that which is conscious of pleasure and pain desiring that *that* self that is conscious should be happy" (II.xxvii.26).

The Lockean understanding of personal identity takes memory as its criterion for tracking a person's identity through time. Although I am in agreement with Locke when it comes to the general idea of memory as a medium for personhood through time, I think that Locke's understanding of the memory criterion forces him to designate only "*intelligent* agents capable of a law, and happiness and misery" (II.xxvii.26, my emphasis) as candidates for personhood. This, of course, excludes human beings who lack the requisite cognitive capacities from the morally protective and rights-conferring label of personhood. As I shall argue in chapter 6, I believe that Sue Campbell's (2003) excellent account of personhood suffers from this very problem and that although it is as innovative in its own right as the Lockean account, it nonetheless falls short of providing a complete view of the nature of persons. In a nutshell, the goal of this dissertation is precisely the completion of an account that begins to emerge in Locke's and Campbell's insightful proposals. I shall argue that it is in fact their commitment to a ratio-centric understanding of selfhood, which they deem imperative for a grounding of personhood in the memory criterion, that prevents them from taking excellent starting points to a more inclusive, and to my mind more complete, theory of personhood.

For Locke, choosing memory as a criterion for diachronic personal identity is a direct result of thinking of personhood as a forensic term. Although the real innovation in Locke's account of diachronic personal identity is the understanding of the concept of personhood as a forensic term, his proposal that individualistic episodic memory be used as a criterion for tracking personal identity through time seems to have been the longer lived idea. To be sure, Locke's innovation was never forgotten, but it does seem as though it has been

lost sight of in much of the contemporary literature on personal identity, which has focused

on issues and problems related to or caused by the individualistic memory criterion.

The reason why memory is an appropriate criterion, for Locke, is that personhood, for him, is a forensic term. In Locke's mind, this also meant that personhood can only be assigned to moral agents who are necessarily intelligent and rational. Many philosophers have inherited this connection from Locke without stopping to analyze its internal logic. Although I do not think of personhood as a forensic term, but rather as a relational one, my account of personhood nonetheless stands on the shoulders of Locke's invaluable innovation. First of all, Locke's understanding of the concept of personhood hints at the fact that personhood ought not to be understood in the same way we understand objects and therefore, that tracking someone's personhood through time cannot be done in the same manner one would track the diachronic identity of an object. Second, Locke's proposal that diachronic personal identity is closely tied to personal memory makes sense given the function Locke assigns to the term *personhood*. Understanding this relationship between the memory criterion and Locke's definition of personhood as a forensic term also reveals the fact that how we understand the memory criterion will depend on our definition of personhood.

Even though Locke himself argued that personhood ought only to be attributable to rational agents, reading his account closely reveals that this is not so because the memory criterion demands it, but rather because a ratio-centric memory criterion is necessitated by his forensic understanding of personhood. This is precisely where I believe Sue Campbell's relational account of personhood falters; she understands personhood in relational terms, but follows the Lockean formulation of individualistic memory as a criterion for identity through

time rather than applying a relational memory criterion, which her relational account of personhood demands. I will argue this point more clearly when I deal with Campbell's insightful proposal in chapter 6.

The upshot of this discussion is that even though Locke's account of personhood is as ratio-centric as they come, the reason for it is that Locke was concerned with matters of law and judgment, the Final Judgment to be precise, and thus, his understanding of personhood required that distinct persons could be identified for purposes of moral accountability even if their bodies could not. Individualistic episodic memory of an intelligent, rational soul made for a good solution to Locke's problem. However, once we shift focus from matters of the Last Judgment to issues of rights and the humanitarian treatment of fellow human beings as the motivating force behind the assignment of the label of personhood to individuals, then we should no longer have to be constrained by ratio-centric criteria or individualistic accounts of memory meant to track moral agency rather than moral considerability.

I have argued that many philosophical speculations about the identity of persons cut right to the question of diachronic identity without taking the time to properly analyze, as Locke suggests we ought, the concept of personhood or what it means to be a *person*. Many moral theories, on the other hand, as was illustrated in the discussion of Aristotle and shall become evident through a brief discussion of Kant and Singer, do just that (though they do not concern themselves much with the identity question). I think that those who pursue the identity issue, but do not define personhood for themselves beforehand, simply ally

themselves with one such moral understanding of personhood, be it Aristotelian, Kantian, Singerian, or some other.

As far as this strategy goes, I support it since the term 'person' is defined prior to an analysis of a *person's* persistence through time. What I take issue with, however, is the term itself. Surprisingly enough, it is virtually ubiquitously defined in terms of rationality, often blindly following the Lockean formulation, which is entailed by his particular understanding of personhood and its function. However, such ratio-centric definitions of personhood are not derived from the function of the term *person* itself, as it was the case for Locke, but are rather a result of a ratio-centric bias, meaning that the reason for a ratio-centric definition of personhood is not integral to the theory itself. This poses a serious problem of exclusion and omission in the application of the term, often tearing theory and practice at the seams.

3.4
Kantian Rationalist Elitism

Immanuel Kant (1785), in his *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, ties personhood to rationality rather than to humanhood or humanity because he does not think that all human beings are capable of rational agency, which he argues is morally significant. Kant's argument for a special kind of moral considerability of individuals in possession of rational agency suggests that he views rational agency as a prerequisite for what philosophers have been calling the moral status of personhood.

Kantian ethics is heavily rooted in rationality. What follows is a brief sketch of how rationality is integral to Kantian deontology. According to Kant, the only thing that is

unconditionally good is the good will. The reason for this is that the goodness of the good will resides in its willing, and thus intending, rather than the consequences it causes. The reason why the good will is the only thing that is unconditionally good is that other goods such as courage, intelligence, etc. can all be put to ill use, but a good will, by its very nature, will result in unconditionally good willing.

Human beings, on a Kantian understanding of moral psychology, fall somewhere between being instinctual and rational. The first, they share with non-human animals while the latter is unique to human beings. The fact that the character of a good will's volition is motivated by a moral principle rather than an inclination is what makes a good will unconditionally good. This is precisely what distinguishes human beings from non-human animals and thus what makes some human actions morally relevant. Kant argues that because human beings share in animal nature insofar as they have desires and inclinations, actions motivated by desires and inclinations do not have moral worth. Inclinations, for Kant, are states akin to what Frankfurt (1971) calls first-order desires, namely involuntary motivational states such as hunger, thirst, sex drive, inclination toward pleasure, etc. we cannot choose to have or avoid.

Moral actions must be motivated by certain volitional states and not, as it were, by physiological, chemical, or purely physical ones. Such physiological events as swallowing, blinking, or satisfying hunger or purely physical events like coming down after jumping up can never have any moral worth. The moral principles that motivate the good will, then, must conform to rationality rather than emerge out of inclination or desire. The reason for this is that inclinations motivate actions without the kind of volitional states that are

characteristic of a good will and since only the good will is unconditionally good, only actions derived from a good will can be unconditionally good and thus infused with moral worth. Kant therefore argues that we must ensure that our inclinations do not override our reasons.

Morally worthy reasons are best captured by actions done out of duty rather than inclination since performing good actions because one is inclined to do so can cease as soon as the inclination to act morally ceases, but when one acts out of duty, even if inclinations change, the actions will continue to be motivated by a good will. Acting out of duty requires the formulation of a maxim upon which one is duty-bound to act. Such a maxim becomes the moral principle that motivates the good will to act in a morally worthy manner. The maxim, in order to be a dutiful principle, must not be logically inconsistent when universalized (when the maxim is assumed to be adopted by every rational individual). Thus, we discover universally acceptable maxims through reason and such maxims ought to motivate a good will in a dutiful, absolute, non-relative, universal, and knowable manner.

For Kant, autonomy is the ability to choose duty over inclination. This is something that non-human animals are incapable of doing and thus, even though they may be afforded the freedom to satisfy every desire and inclination, they cannot act autonomously since their actions are deterministically related to desires and inclinations that are not volitions and thus do not belong to motives that originate within the agent's will. We are autonomous because we are rational. Autonomy, then, is a special volitional capacity required for the bringing about of events that are instilled with moral worth. Kant writes:

An action done from duty has its moral worth, not in the purpose that is attained by it, but in the maxim according to which the action is determined. The moral worth depends, therefore, not on the realization of the object of the action, but merely on the principle of volition according to which, without regard to any objects of the faculty of desire, the action has been done. (Kant 1785, Ak 399-400)

And nothing short of rationality is capable of attaining the kind of volitional autonomy required for actions done from duty, which are the only acts instilled with moral worth because whereas inclinations require only enough awareness to tacitly identify and consequently to respond to them by pursuing the object of one's desire, acting from duty requires the intellectual capacity to formulate a maxim that is rationally acceptable and universalizable and then rationally choosing to be motivated to action by this rationally determined maxim rather than allowing emotions and inclinations to run wild.

For Kant, this notion of autonomy is pivotal; in fact, the Kantian notion of autonomy is the reason why Kant's concept of personhood is exclusively reserved for rational beings. Dignity is a trademark of personhood for Kant. *Persons* possess dignity because they are aware that they have the capacity to exercise power over themselves. Individuals without such a capacity are incapable of possessing dignity in the Kantian sense. The inseparable relationship between the Kantian notions of dignity and autonomy result in a ratio-centric concept of personhood. This is because the respect due to persons that makes Kant's ethics so appealing accords dignity and the kind of treatment that dignity entails to individuals who already possess it; since only autonomous individuals can have dignity and only rational individuals can be autonomous, only rational individuals ought to be treated with dignity. Thus, when Kant states that persons are ends in themselves because they are intrinsically

valuable and ought not to be treated as mere means to someone else's end, since they possess intrinsic rather than instrumental value, he is really saying that *rational* individuals ought to be treated as ends in themselves. This, however, bars human beings lacking capacities necessary for Kantian autonomy from the moral considerability enjoyed by individuals protected by the morally lawful and thus binding Categorical Imperative, which commands us to treat them as ends in themselves. Since rationality presupposes psychology, the psychological account of diachronic personal identity is an inevitable choice for anyone who takes the Kantian account of personhood as a starting point.

To summarize, Kant can be understood to argue that only rational beings can be persons and that only such beings can have dignity and thus be intrinsically valuable. Persons, for Kant (as for many of us, I would think) are beings to be treated as, to use Kant's terminology, ends in themselves. In other words, persons have dignity and thus must be treated accordingly. Unlike an automobile, the purpose of which is speedy locomotion, a person's purpose, as it were, is self-contained insofar as our entitlement to use another person is concerned. That is, although we may all exchange services, each one of us must do so autonomously because we are not merely service providers, but dignified individuals who choose to provide particular services. Unfortunately, on Kant's view, this special and dignified treatment is reserved for individuals with an elitist level of cognitive prowess and ability.

3.5
The Singerian Preference Hierarchy

Before addressing Peter Singer's more contemporary as well as more sophisticated version of Utilitarianism, it may be helpful to briefly sketch the general outline of Utilitarian thought. I turn to Jeremy Bentham's classical formulation of this influential moral theory. Bentham argued that in accordance with our nature, the only genuine good known to us is pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Bentham writes: "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure…They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think: every effort we can make to throw off our subjection, will serve but to demonstrate and confirm it" (Bentham 1789, I.1). Thus, the origins of Utilitarianism are hedonistic in nature; hedonism, the view that pleasure is the only intrinsic good (and that pain is intrinsically bad), is precisely the aspect of utilitarianism, which allows the theory to adopt a stance of genuine moral considerability toward non-human animals and gives it its impartial flavour. Regarding the kind of equality of interests that grants genuine moral considerability to non-human animals, Bentham states: "the question is not, Can they *reason*? nor, Can they *talk*? but, Can they *suffer*" (Bentham 1789, XVII.4)?

By 'pleasure,' Bentham means something more than mere sensual experiences; Bentham understands pleasure in a broader sense that encompasses all experiences and mental states that lead to or constitute 'happiness.' Bentham's argument for Utilitarianism, and thus for its centrepiece principle, the Principle of Utility, goes roughly as follows:

1. Seeking pleasure and avoiding pain for ourselves is what we naturally do.

2. It is rational to maximize pleasure.

3. If pleasure is intrinsically good, rationally, more of something good is always better than less of something good.

4. Rationally, it does not matter if it is my pleasure or yours as long as there is more of it. (Reason tells us that your pleasure should not count for more than another person's pleasure).

5. Therefore, we should maximize pleasure and minimize pain for the entire community. (reconstruction based on: Bentham 1789, I-II)

The Principle of Utility, then, in its non-philosophical formulation, states that morality compels the moral agent to seek the greatest good for the greatest number of people. However, the principle ought to be phrased somewhat differently if it is to be accurately understood; the philosophical formulation of the principle is as follows: morality compels the moral agent to act in such a manner as to maximize overall utility. The consequence of this subtle rephrasing is that Utilitarianism seeks to maximize the *total* utility rather than an *individual*'s total utility, meaning that the interests of particular individuals can be sacrificed in order to bring about a consequence that maximizes overall utility. The problem with such a view is that, given certain contexts, it can fall into treating individuals as mere vessels for utility, essentially making individuals morally replaceable. This is precisely the problem Singer's Preference Utilitarianism faces.

The value of a pleasure or pain, according to Bentham, depends on the pleasure's or pain's (i) *intensity*, which is its strength or vividness, (ii) *duration*, which refers to the length

of time a given pleasure or pain lasts, (iii) *certainty* (or *uncertainty*), which refers to the agent's certainty that a given pleasure or pain will occur, (iv) *propinquity* (or *remoteness*), which takes account of how soon the pleasure will occur, (v) *fecundity*, which refers to the chance that the pleasure or pain will be followed by a sensation of the same kind, (vi) *purity*, which refers to the chance that the pleasure or pain will not be followed by a sensation of the opposite kind, and (vii) *extent*, which refers to the number of people, "with reference to each of whom the value of a pleasure or a pain is considered" (Bentham 1789, IV.4).

Calculating the general hedonic tendency of an act is accomplished by taking an account of (1) the value of each pleasure (that is, the pleasure's intensity, duration, certainty, and propinquity), (2) the value of each pain (these, of course, will always be negative), (3) the value of each pleasure that appears to be produced by the act (the initial pleasure's *fecundity* and the initial pain's *impurity*), (4) the value of each pain that appears to be produced by the act (the *fecundity* of the initial pain and the *impurity* of the initial pleasure), and finally (5) the net-worth of pleasure over pain (or of pain over pleasure) is determined by the balance of pleasure over pain (or of pain over pleasure) after all the values are summed up.

Utilitarianism is an impartial moral theory commendable for its objectivity and universal scope. Utilitarianism, in all its numerous forms, is grounded in the ideals of consequentialism, which is the view that consequences of actions are morally significant. Utilitarianism, in its classical form, measures the utility of morally significant consequences in the currency of pleasure and pain, which, in more sophisticated versions of the theory, such as Peter Singer's Preference Utilitarianism, is replaced by preference satisfaction.

Generally speaking, the interests of others, be they the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain or the objective of satisfying preferences, take centre stage on a Utilitarian account. Since what truly matters is preference-satisfaction (or, broadly speaking, the satisfaction of interests) and the overall positive profit of satisfied preferences/interests in the world, specific differences between individuals and their varying interests as such are not important in and of themselves. That is, Utilitarians treat interests equally, no matter whose interests they are.

In Peter Singer's hands, at least at first glance, Utilitarianism advocates an ethic that is universal in scope and is governed by impartiality of our considerations of the interests of others, meaning that not only human interests, but also non-human interests must be weighed impartially. He explains that Equal Consideration of Interests acts like a pair of scales that impartially weigh interests. "True scales favour the side where the interest is stronger or where several interests combine to outweigh a smaller number of similar interests; but they take no account of whose interests they are weighing" (Singer 1993, p. 22). One should expect equal consideration of interests of all human beings on a view like Singer's, especially since he argues for an equal considerations of interest across species. In fact, Peter Singer is well known for his vision of animal liberation (Singer 1975), his humanitarian global perspectives (Singer 1972), as well as his non-speciesist ethics (Singer 1993). However, an extrapolation of his account of personhood from his Preference Utilitarianism reveals a deep-seated ratio-centrism, which could well be construed as both speciesist and inhumane. I turn to this presently.

Peter Singer's Preference Utilitarianism, as outlined in his *Practical Ethics*, holds that preferences are the fundamental units of utility. Preferences, on Singer's view, are interests of a certain kind. Preferences are a subclass of interests; although interests can be attributed to individuals who do not have preferences, preferences themselves are always interests. Both non-human and human animals have interests on Singer's view (e.g. the interest not to suffer, etc.). According to Singer, "[t]he essence of the principle of equal consideration of interests is that we give equal weight in our moral deliberations to the like interests of all those affected by our actions" (Singer 1993, 21). This principle itself is neutral with respect to race, gender, and species. That is, since interests, rather than individuals, are at the centre of the moral theory, it does not matter who or what has a particular interest. This means that a woman's interest to avoid suffering is identical to a man's, a black man's interest to avoid suffering is identical to a white man's, and a human's interest to avoid suffering is identical to a non-human's. However, not all species and not all humans have identical (or equal) interests and thus not all species and not all humans have identical (or equal) preferences. The forward-looking and forward-planning capacity of rational beings makes their preferences, on Singer's view, more valuable than the temporally non-extended preferences of non-rational beings precisely because such ratio-centric preferences are extended through time (this interestingly enough coincides with the diachronic identity of persons). Thus, on Singer's view, non-rational beings are more readily replaceable than rational ones.

The reason why, on Singer's view, non-rational beings are more readily replaceable than rational ones is that utilitarians argue that *utility* is morally significant and thus valuable. Interests, in the broad sense I have outlined above, are constitutive of the kind of utility

utilitarians value and consider morally salient. This, as already stated, means that interests themselves, rather than individuals who have them, are of value. Utilitarianism is concerned with individuals insofar as interests must be had by someone or something.   This inseparability of interests from individuals having interests ensures that Utilitarianism, as a moral theory, is always concerned with individuals.   However, the exclusive focus on interests, and more accurately, on the utility of interests, opens the utilitarian to worries about measurements or comparisons of the utility of various interests. Although utilitarians argue that the same interest has the same utility regardless of whose interest it is, they do not argue that all interests are equal. That is, even though my interest to satisfy my thirst may carry the same utility as my cat's interest to satisfy its thirst, this does not mean that the kinds of interests (other than satisfying thirst and the like) my cat has carry the same utility as the kinds of interests that I have. The utility of my satisfying thirst, then, may well be identical to the utility of my cat satisfying his thirst, making it morally irrelevant whether or not it satisfies its thirst instead of me (this makes my thirst-satisfaction-interests replaceable by my cat's thirst-satisfying-interests and vice versa).   However, the utility of my reading philosophy is not equal to the utility of my satisfying my thirst and thus also not equal to my cat satisfying its thirst. Given that my cat is incapable of reading philosophy, there is no equivalent interest the utility of which might in principle be interchangeable as it was in the case of satisfying thirst. What is interesting about Singer's view is that he evaluates such abilities as reading philosophy as having more utility than interests that do not presuppose cognitive capacities, which lend themselves to such activities.   That kind of evaluation,

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however, is not made in the same utilitarian spirit as Singer's principle of the equal consideration of interests.

Perhaps Singer is following John Stuart Mill in this. According to Sidgwick, in order to overcome the vagueness and ambiguity inherent in the common sense notion of 'happiness,' a hedonist ought to understand 'happiness' as "the greatest attainable surplus of pleasure over pain" (Sidgwick 1907, 120). However, Mill's distinction between quantity and quality of pleasures neither lends itself to the kind of quantitative definition of 'happiness' offered by Sidgwick nor to the kind of hedonic calculus developed by Bentham. Mill's distinction, then, encounters the problem of the incommensurability of pleasures and pains. This is problematic because, as Moore points out (Moore 1903, 80), by calling something a 'pleasure,' we must identify some one thing that is shared in common with all such things we designate as pleasurable and though this something may exist in different degrees, it cannot differ in kind. Mill's distinction, however, differentiates between "higher" and "lower" pleasures on the basis of something that is not a pleasure. That is, "higher" pleasures appear to be different *in kind* from "lower" pleasures. And thus, Sidgwick writes: "The distinctions of *quality* that Mill and others urge may still be admitted as grounds of preference, but only in so far as they can be resolved into distinctions of quantity" (Sidgwick 1907, 121).

Mill feels it necessary to smuggle non-hedonistic values into his theory in order to assign prioritized utility valuations to certain kinds of pleasures. Mill does this in order to avoid the objection both Hedonism and Utilitarianism have faced for centuries, namely some version of the argument from worthless pleasures. The argument from worthless pleasures is

best illustrated by Fred Feldman's example of Porky (initially, though not as colourfully, stated by G. E. Moore in his *Principia Ethica* § 56). Feldman explains:

> Imagine a person—we can call him 'Porky'—who spends all his time in the pigsty, engaging in the most obscene sexual activities imaginable. I stipulate that Porky derives great pleasure from these activities and the feelings they stimulate. Let us imagine that Porky happily carries on like this for many years. Imagine also that Porky has no human friends, has no other sources of pleasure, and has no interesting knowledge. Let us also imagine that Porky somehow avoids pains—he is never injured by the pigs, he does not come down with any barnyard diseases, he does not suffer from loneliness and boredom. (Feldman 2004, 40)

Upon considering the argument from worthless pleasures, it becomes immediately apparent that not all pleasures are equal. Mill's response to the argument from worthless pleasures pursues the Epicurean line of argument. He states that "the Epicureans have always answered that it is not they, but their accusers, who represent human nature in a degrading light, since the accusation supposes human beings to be capable of no pleasures except those of which swine are capable" (Mill 1864, 7-8).[25] Some pleasures, Mill maintains, are more valuable than others and beastly pleasures do not satisfy a human being's conception of happiness. "It is quite compatible with the principle of utility," Mill writes, "to recognize the

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[25] It should be noted that Epicurus maintains that the best life is the simple life, one where the agent pursues the satisfaction of necessary natural desires because "everything that is natural is easily provided, while vain pleasures are hard to obtain" (Epicurus, "Letter to Menoeceus"). Simple and plain living, according to Epicurus, is conducive to health and a simple existence "also makes us more ready for the enjoyment of luxury if at intervals we chance to meet with it, and it renders us fearless against fortune" (Epicurus, "Letter to Menoeceus"). Thus, for Epicurus, "[*t*]*he truest happiness does not come from enjoyment of physical pleasures but from a simple life, free from anxiety, with the normal physical needs satisfied*" (Epicurus, "Letter to Menoeceus"). Such a life certainly excludes the perverted pleasures pursued by Porky.

fact that some kinds of pleasure are more desirable and more valuable than others" (Mill 1864, 8).

The argument from worthless pleasures, then, can be seen as motivating Mill's distinction between the *quantity* and the *quality* of pleasures. The way to discover what makes one pleasure "higher" than another, according to Mill, is to consult "competent judges" (those individuals who have experienced both) about their preferences.

> If one of the two [pleasures] is, by those who are competently acquainted with both, placed so far above the other that they prefer it, even though knowing it to be attended with a greater amount of discontent, and would not resign it for any quantity of the other pleasure which their nature is capable of, we are justified in ascribing to the preferred enjoyment a superiority in quality so far outweighing quantity as to render it, in comparison, of small account. (Mill 1864, 8-9)

Mill's claim is that even if Porky believes that his life is going well for him, he is surely mistaken and he is mistaken precisely because he has not sampled any other life than that which lends itself to his pigsty existence. According to Mill, were it the case that Porky were given the opportunity of experiencing pleasures worthy of a human being, he would discover "higher pleasures" and he would realize the absurdity of the proposition that the estimation of pleasure should depend on *quantity* alone.

Mill explains that it is true that beings with higher faculties require more to make them happy and are capable of more acute suffering than beings "of an inferior type" (Mill 1864, 9), those without higher faculties. However, no being with the capacity for higher pleasures would be willing to exchange these pleasures for beastly ones because their sense of dignity would not allow it. Mill famously writes:

> It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, are of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides. (Mill 1864, 10)

Individuals who are capable of higher pleasures, but occasionally postpone them in order to gratify lower pleasures, do so, according to Mill, due to an infirmity of character.

The distinction between "higher" and "lower" pleasures allows Mill to avoid the implications of the argument from worthless pleasures, but it comes at a price that threatens his Hedonism. Moore points out that

> if you say, as Mill does, that quality of pleasure is to be taken into account, then you are no longer holding that pleasure *alone* is good as an end, since you imply that something else, something which is *not* present in all pleasures, is *also* good as an end. (Moore 1903, 80)

By making the quality-quantity distinction, Mill appears to incorporate another source of value, other than pleasure, into the evaluation of higher pleasures. Similarly, Singer assigns greater value to forward-looking preferences than to short term interests. Although he grounds this distinction in value in his preference utilitarianism, the line he draws perfectly mirrors Mill's distinction between higher and lower pleasures.

Returning to the problem of replaceability, an analysis of Singer's own example will make the point regarding replaceability a bit clearer: when considering the replaceability of

non self-conscious sentient animals, Singer speaks of beings whose conscious states are not intentionally linked over time. He refers to such creatures as fish, for instance.

> We can presume that if fish become unconscious, then before the loss of consciousness they would have no expectations or desires for anything that might happen subsequently, and if they regain consciousness, they have no awareness of having previously existed. Therefore if the fish were killed while unconscious and replaced by a similar number of other fish who could be created only because the first group of fish were killed, there would, from the perspective of fishy awareness, be no difference between that and the same fish losing and regaining consciousness. (Singer 1993, 126)

Singer's principle of equal consideration of interests entails that the replaceability argument is as valid for other sentient species as it is for fish. Singer anticipates this problem and draws a morally significant distinction between self-conscious and non-self-conscious entities where the latter, to which fish belong, lacking temporally dependent preferences, are in principle, on preference utilitarian grounds, replaceable. Self-conscious beings form preferences, the satisfaction of which often requires time and other investments of various resources.

In the spirit of reading philosophical treatises as charitably as possible, it is important to point out that Singer's Preference Utilitarianism is not intentionally prejudiced toward individuals with severe cognitive disabilities, but rather that his account of interest satisfaction simply fails to recognize that individuals who lack future directed preferences can be harmed by death.

I take it that Singer's position on the replaceability of interests is grounded in the

utilitarian tradition of treating interests themselves as morally considerable, meaning that what is of value in the fishy awareness of a school of Bluestripe Snappers, for example, does not reside with the individual members of the schooling fish, but rather in the fishy interests each Bluestripe Snapper has the potential to satisfy. Death, in this case, if followed by prompt replacement of interests, does not affect (or somewhat awkwardly stated, *does no "harm" to*) the interests themselves since the interests themselves are replaced by identical interests and thus the total number of interests in the world remains unchanged. Singer, of course, does not say that the Bluestripe Snappers do not have an interest to live. In fact, this is precisely one of the interests that gets replaced.

The replaceability of interests only makes sense if interests are valued in isolation from the beings that have them. Otherwise, it would make little sense to say that one Bluestripe Snapper's interest to survive is equivalent to another's so much so, that it does not matter at all which of the two interests is being protected as long as the existence of one of them depends on the non-existence of the other. Of course, disembodied interests do not exists and so, what is replaceable, on Singer's account, are the bodies that house interests. However, once we acknowledge that interests are inseparably tied to the individuals that have them, the interest to live cannot be abstracted away from the being that has it, thereby making it the case that even individuals without future directed preferences can be harmed by death.

Moving from fish to infants, Singer seems to be suggesting that infants lack an interest for continued existence precisely because such interests only emerge in the context of self-awareness. However, in the same way that plants can be said to have an interest in

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living, fish and infants can certainly be said to have an interest in continued existence. The interest for continued existence is not abstract in nature and thus need not be consciously understood; it is recognizably present in such behaviours as the avoidance of pain, the communication of the need for nourishment, the consumption of food, and other bodily processes essential to survival. Why does the interest in continued existence have to be linked to self-awareness for it to be recognized?

Singer uses "The Journey of Life" metaphor to stress the value of the preferences possessed by self-conscious beings. The "journey" model of life solves one major problem stemming out of a previously considered model, the "moral ledger" model, which implies that every preference, being the yearning, aspiration, or craving for something, amounts to an unfulfilled desire and thus figures as a debit in a utilitarian calculation. A fulfilled desire/ preference, on this model, amounts to a neutral value since by being met, the preference (with its negative value) is merely met and thus neutralized. So, on the whole, we are incapable of getting a positive value and in fact, because certain preferences are bound to be unsatisfied, the total utility in the world is always somewhere in the negative range.

The "journey" model of life, on the other hand, describes self-conscious beings as developing, pursuing, and eventually satisfying preferences. Thus, the replacement of self-conscious beings is much harder to justify since the investments made in pursuit of certain preferences would transform into permanent utility debts with the death (and subsequent

replacement) of the being whose preferences remain unfulfilled.   There are problems with this model as well, but it is not my intention to delve into the issue of replaceability here.[26]

What concerns me here is that in order to save his view from a terrifying consequence, one that even Singer could not swallow, Singer makes the move that both Aristotle and Kant have made before him, namely to distinguish between beasts and humans. Although Singer tries to be subtle about this, the introduction of a hierarchy of preferences that roughly traces just such a division is quite speciesist. Moreover, in order to stay true to his principle of equal consideration of interests, Singer bites the bullet and asserts that any human being lacking the intellectual capacity to form future-oriented preferences in the way "normal" adult humans do is also a less valuable addition to the producers of the total cosmic utility than those who can formulate complex, long-term preferences.

Ironically enough, Singer's ethic denies many non-human animals the equality Singer argues for in his *Animal Liberation* and it denies severely cognitively disabled individuals as well as infants the kind of protection and impartial moral considerability he argues for in his "Famine, Affluence, and Morality." Furthermore, the vision of personhood that emerges out of his account shares the same core premise as those of his philosophical ancestors.

Singer's Preference Utilitarianism tacitly assumes the sub-humanity of human beings with severe cognitive disabilities.   Although Singer may vehemently deny that sub-humanization is entailed by his view, his account tells its own dark story.   Individuals

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[26] One problem with Singer's proposal is that if we can guarantee that person y's life will be longer than person x's (and thus more preferences will be satisfied by y than by x), then replaceability is warranted. Suzanne Uniacke writes: "Any such argument must be consistent with the preference utilitarian claim that a person's preferences can be overridden and their contravention compensated by the fulfillment of another person's preferences" (Uniacke 2002, 216).

without the right kinds of preferences are not only replaceable, but genuinely undesirable on Singer's view.

Singer may retort that lacking certain preferences, which can be linked to rationality, is far from punishable on his view. In fact, he is also likely to cite the fact that his view protects non-human animals who are incapable of having these special types of preferences. However, Singer explicitly argues that human beings with severe cognitive and other debilitating disabilities that make "life not worth living," are in principle, all other things being equal, candidates for euthanasia (Singer 1993, 181-193). This implies that such individuals would have been better off not being born at all (or, if born, that they would be better off not surviving infancy). Singer anticipates this implication and states: "[i]n any case, the position taken here does not imply that it would be better that no people born with severe disabilities should survive" (Singer 1993, 189). However, the way he finishes this very sentence is quite telling of the implications of his view: "it implies only that parents of such infants should be able to make this decision" (Singer 1993, 189). Just a page earlier, Singer is much clearer about his philosophical attitude toward the disabled:

> It may still be objected that to replace either a fetus or a newborn infant is wrong because it suggests to disabled people living today that their lives are less worth living than the lives of people who are not disabled. Yet it is surely flying in the face of reality to deny that, on average, this is so. (Singer 1993, 188)

Singer's stance is surprising for two reasons: (1) some of those individuals whose existence he assumes to consist in a constant loss of overall utility actually claim to live

good, fulfilling lives, and (2) Singer *does not*, on the same philosophical grounds, argue that

non-human animals that cannot live similarly cognitively fulfilling lives as "normal" human

beings would be better off not having been born at all. The de-personification of certain

human beings by Singer is illustratively described by Harriet McBryde Johnson, a scholar

with disabilities who has publicly debated with Singer. She writes:

> He insists he doesn't want to kill me. He simply thinks it would have been better, all
> things considered, to have given my parents the option of killing the baby I once
> was, and to let other parents kill similar babies as they come along and thereby avoid
> the suffering that comes with lives like mine and satisfy the reasonable preferences
> of parents for a different kind of child. It has nothing to do with me. I should not
> feel threatened. Whenever I try to wrap my head around his tight string of
> syllogisms, my brain gets so fried it's . . . almost fun. Mercy! It's like "Alice in
> Wonderland." (McBryde Johnson 2010, 569)

Of course, when Singer states that it would have been better if a disabled individual had not

been born, what he means to say is that it would have been better if that individual had been

born without the disabilities. However, it is consistent with this line of reasoning to state that

it would have been better if both Singer and I (and anyone else for that matter) had been born

with better genes, so as to be more resistant to diseases, enjoy longer lifespans, be physically

stronger with fewer or even no physical ailments such as chronic back aches and other

afflictions, and cognitively superior as compared to our current mental abilities. What keeps

us from being, in principle, replaceable, is the fact that our preferences are future directed (in

virtue of having certain cognitive abilities that allow for future directed preferences). We

should not feel overly confident, however, since although our preferences are indeed future

directed, if we fail to understand interests as intimately bound to the individuals who have them, even our complex future directed preferences are in principle replaceable if the cessation of our lives could bring about the existence of a being who could inherit all our preferences in all their complexity, but was better equipped to satisfy them.

3.6
The Trends Continue

Such well-known accounts of personhood as I have presented above are certainly authoritative trend setters. There are other contemporaries of Peter Singer who continue this tradition. For example, Mary Anne Warren (1973), in "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion," makes a distinction between what she calls "genetic humanity" and "moral humanity" equating the latter with personhood. She defines "moral humanity" as follows:

> the traits which are most central to the concept of personhood, or humanity in the moral sense, are, very roughly; the following:
> 1. consciousness (of objects and events external and/or internal to the being), and in particular the capacity to feel pain;
> 2. reasoning (the *developed* capacity to solve new and relatively complex problems);
> 3. self-motivated activity (activity which is relatively independent of either genetic or direct external control);
> 4. the capacity to communicate, by whatever means, messages of an indefinite variety of types, that is, not just with an indefinite number of possible contents, but on indefinitely many possible topics;
> 5. the presence of self-concepts, and self-awareness, either individual or racial, or both. (Warren 1973, 5)

Having all of the above mentioned capacities is *sufficient* to gain entry into the realm of moral humanity (i.e. personhood) and, according to Warren, lacking all of the above mentioned capacities *necessarily* excludes an individual from the realm of moral humanity. Genetic humanity alone is also not sufficient for entrance into the circle of moral humans. This is because some genetic humans, such as anencephalic infants,[27] lack all five capacities.

Individuals who are able to go through such lists and find that they can check off each carefully selected item may well be inclined to share Warren's intuitions about what sorts of individuals merit the label of personhood. However, such individuals are at risk of being unaware of the dangers as well as practical inconsistencies that arise from such accounts.

I turn to the issue of inconsistency first: many individuals who do not merit the label of personhood or moral humanhood on such ratio-centric accounts are nonetheless treated by us as persons or at least as though they were persons (i.e. we still accord them certain person-specific rights). If theory and practice are inconsistent, then either the theory is wrong or the theory is not converted into practice properly. Assuming that ratio-centric accounts of personhood are correct, the latter possibility (that the theory is not converted into practice properly) must be the case. However, if the deviation from theory, which is committed by caregivers (i.e. spouses, parents, medical professionals, etc.) does not point to a flaw in the theory, but is merely a result of sloppy or incorrect execution of the theory, then we must conclude that the caregivers who treat their charges as "moral humans" are wrongfully personifying non-persons. The implication of such a possible attempt to save a theory is that,

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[27] The literal translation from Greek to English is "no brain," but the term is also applied to infants born without the cerebral hemispheres (which includes the neocortex which is correlated with higher level cognition).

morally speaking, we should not be treating individuals with severe cognitive disabilities, children, or some of our elders, etc. with the kind of respect and care that we owe to persons. The danger of such thinking is that we may well stop treating such individuals with the kind of care we reserve for persons and start mistreating individuals who should be protected under our legal and moral principles. I am alluding here to mistreatments that countless individuals throughout North America, as well as worldwide, suffered under the various Eugenics programs, the worst of them, though not the longest lasting, being in Nazi Germany.

Why are such definitions so common and historically persistent? I think that the short answer to this question is that they are so common and historically persistent because they are partially correct (though perhaps, as Eva Kittay pointed out in a comment, such definitions are common and persistent merely because they are articulated by ratio-biased persons called philosophers). Such ratio-centric definitions, even if they contain some truth, are nevertheless too limited and too narrowly conceived to serve the purposes the term 'person' is meant to serve.

These definitions are on the right track insofar as they pick out individuals our moral theories ought to identify as being morally considerable. After all, if our moral theories did not address the needs of our species or of rational members of our species, then such theories would either be broken or not *ours*. In other words, if personhood were defined in a manner that excluded rational humans, it would be useless to us and thus greatly lacking.

Moral considerability is sometimes extended beyond the realm of moral agency and personhood (two terms that are unfortunately all too often used interchangeably). Morally

considerable non-agents are sometimes called "moral patients." What sorts of beings might be candidates for moral patient-hood? Evelyn Pluhar (1987) lists some of the following potential candidates: self-conscious beings, conscious beings, living beings, and perhaps even natural objects or systems. Moral patients, then, are beings that lack the ratio-centric capacities that would make them into moral agents, but continue to be morally relevant to some extent.   It is worth noting that there are accounts of personhood that attribute personhood to what Pluhar calls moral patient-hood. One such prominent ethical voice is that of Michael Tooley (2009) who, in "Abortion: Why a Liberal View is Correct" (pages 9 and 10), gives the following criteria for personhood: (1) a person is an entity that has experiences (not merely a potential for the capacity to have experiences); (2) a person is a persisting subject of experiences (not merely a momentary subject of experiences); (3) experiences and other mental states must be psychologically connected; (4) these psychological connections cannot be based merely on unconscious mental states. That is, at least some of these connections must involve conscious thoughts about experiences and/or other mental states; (5) a person currently has conscious desires or at least has had conscious desires in the past; (6) a person currently is self conscious or at least was self-conscious in the past; (7) an unconscious being is a person if his or her memories are stored in such a way that if the person regains consciousness, then he or she regains his or her memories along with it. Tooley's account is not ratio-centric and it lends itself to the personification of conscious humans, which naturally includes certain individuals with cognitive disabilities. However, the psychological connectedness of mental states it calls for can, as I will argue in

chapter 6, be extended beyond consciousness allowing for the personification of individuals in permanent vegetative states.

Although the distinction between moral agency and patient-hood is very helpful in some instances, maintaining a ratio-centric conception of personhood and merely ascribing moral patient-hood to all individuals we deem worthy of moral consideration, it is not an acceptable solution to the exclusiveness of ratio-centric accounts of personhood. The reason for this is that although the ascription of moral patient-hood does afford some protection, it does not demand an equal measure of moral security. To use an example from the very extreme end of the spectrum, even if we agreed to confer the status of moral patient-hood upon a natural system such as an ocean, harm done to such a system (perhaps in the form of a moral agent dumping toxins into the ocean) is not understood in the same strict morally prohibitive terms as it would be if the victim were another moral agent (i.e. person). Similarly, the killing of a sentient non-human animal, such as, for example, a mouse, is not deemed to be as serious an act as the killing of a human being. The worry is that it is all too easy for *moral patient-hood* to become a category into which we shove "genetic humans" who lack the necessary capacities to qualify for the status of "moral humanity." Given our practices of treating moral patients in a manner that reflects their inferiority when compared to moral agents (i.e. the punishment for killing a dog is trivial, if at all carried out), we run the risk of laying a theoretical grounding for the sub-humanization of some of the most fragile and helpless members of our society and our species. My worry, then, is that it is much easier to justify involuntary medical procedures, such as the thousands of involuntary sterilizations carried out between 1928 and 1972 under the Sexual Sterilization Act of

Alberta, when the individual in question is not a moral agent, but merely a moral patient. I propose that we can well maintain the distinction between moral agency and patient-hood, but that we ought to refrain from using the term 'moral agent' and 'person' interchangeably and thereby distinguish between moral agents and moral patients without undermining the kind of moral security that the term personhood can provide. There is certainly something about human beings that makes them persons. My proposal, however, is that rationality should cease to be the standard by which personhood is measured.

3.7
Psychologism and Biologism

Saturating the term 'person' solely and so completely with the concept of rationality not only limits moral considerability to certain kinds of humans and not only biases the personal identity debate toward a psychological account of diachronic identity, but also tends to spawn non-psychological alternatives to such psychological accounts. This polarizes the theoretical space. Alternatives to the psychological account, perhaps for fear of being somehow drafted into the ranks of the myriad of subtle variants of the psychological view are forced to carve out their niche (in theoretical space) at a safe and quite contrasting theoretical proximity from their psychological opponents. Thus, what to my mind is the runner-up to the orthodox (psychological) account, sits at the very polar opposite of its rival. The biological account, at least in the capable hands of Eric Olson, seems to dismiss psychology altogether in favour of an animalistic account of personal identity. Unfortunately, such

polarization conceals and tends to be dismissive of other possibilities, such as narrative as well as social accounts of personal identity.

However, even proponents of the biological account are not safe from the siren-like lure of ratio-centricity. Although much of the literature focuses on human beings, there is often a tacit assumption that some non-human animals and perhaps even non-embodied beings (if such things exist) may, at least in principle, also qualify to be referred to by the label 'person' if they meet certain standards or criteria, which boil down to consciousness and rationality. Proponents of the psychological account of personal identity are sometimes ensnared, by the very criteria of personal identity they put forward, into acknowledging the possibility of non-embodied persons. Proponents of the biological account are slightly more immune in this regard, but even they do not always shy away from such a possibility (Eric Olson is a case in point). This is because even proponents of the biological approach do not wish to bestow the title 'person' on just any persisting organism. After all, I doubt that any proponent of the biological account would deem it appropriate to personify bacteria or insects, which surely are living, unified, and persisting organisms.

Although the theoretical arena is enormous and is teeming with all kinds of accounts, the psychological account occupies a large portion of it, partly because rationality and memory have been (perhaps with good reason) central to our understanding of ourselves as persons. And, as already mentioned, even the biological accounts are not entirely immune to the lure of rationality as a criterion for personhood.   I think, however, that neither the psychological nor the biological approaches provide a complete and satisfying account of diachronic personal identity.

Chapter 4
Beyond Psychologism and Biologism

4.1
The Biological Account: Olson's Animalism

This chapter addresses the insights as well as the shortcomings of the Psychological and the Biological approaches to the problem of diachronic personal identity and sets the ground for an account of personhood and personal identity that relies on psychologically grounded features such as memory without requiring that such features be purely individualistic or that personal identity be tied exclusively to an individual's *capacity* to remember.

The biological answer to the philosophical problem of personal identity over time is perhaps best expressed by Eric T. Olson's (1997, 2003) account of personal identity, which, simply put, states that the diachronic persistence of persons depends on the survival of the functioning organism rather than psychological continuity. Olson calls this view Animalism. Olson's key argument is very simple. He claims that the view his key argument reveals solves at least three important problems facing other accounts of personal identity: (1) it explains how diachronic personal identity can be traced all the way back to the embryonic stages of human development, (2) it solves (according to Olson) the famous brain-transplant thought experiment problem, and (3) it provides a better understanding of cases of persistent vegetative states.

At first glance, Animalism offers a commonsensical and elegantly simple solution to the question of what we are and how we persist through time. "At first glance," however, the problem of personal identity also seems quite unproblematic. After all, identity, rather than being a mysterious relation, appears to be trivial and straight forward; all things, including people, are most definitely identical with themselves. A little reflection, however, reveals the complexity of the issue. Although Olson's approach to the problem of personal identity is refreshing and insightful, it ultimately falls short of capturing the full intricacy of the problem partly because Olson's account is a classic example of a view that focuses exclusively on diachronic identity (or in Schechtman's terminology, focuses on the re-identification question), while working with an incompatible account of personhood (or in Schechtman's terminology, while working with an incompatible answer to the characterization question). I turn to Olson's position presently and then I will address the shortcomings of the biological approach in the next section.

When Olson says that we are animals, he simply means that each of us is numerically identical with an animal. More simply put, "[t]here is a certain human organism, and that organism is you. You and it are one and the same" (Olson 2003, 2). Olson suggests that the reason his pleasantly simple answer has been rejected and overlooked is that most philosophers fail to ask the right questions when they contemplate the issue of personal identity. Olson explains:

> when they think about personal identity they don't ask what sort of things we are. They don't ask whether we are animals, or what we might be if we aren't animals...Or at least they don't ask that first. No one who <u>began</u> by asking what we are would hit

on the idea that we must be computer programs or bundles of thoughts or non-animals made of the same matter as animals. The traditional problem of personal identity is not what we are, but what it takes for us to persist...Many philosophers seem to think that an answer to this question would tell us all there is to know about the metaphysics of personal identity. This is not so. Claims about what it takes for us to persist do not by themselves tell us what other fundamental properties we have: whether we are material or immaterial, simple or composite, abstract or concrete, and so on. (Olson 2003, 8)

As I have already suggested, although Olson is on the right track by emphasizing the great importance of asking the right questions, I am in disagreement with him about what the right questions are. Rather than asking "what we are," I think wondering about "who we are" is more appropriate when the issue under investigation is personhood, as opposed to the question of classification of species or some other such fact about human beings. This important difference in what both Olson and I take to be the relevant question influences the very different answers we provide.

Olson does not claim that we are no different from other animals or that we have only biological or naturalistic properties. On the contrary, he insists that there is a vast psychological as well as moral gulf between human and non-human animals. We are, according to Olson, very special animals. But, for all that, we are still animals. Olson further explains that Animalism is compatible with the existence of non-animal "persons," a claim that brings his rationalistic bias to the foreground (it is precisely this bias that makes Olson's account contradictory). He writes:

It is often said that to be a person is to have certain mental qualities: to be rational, intelligent, and self-conscious, say. Perhaps a person must also be morally

responsible, and have free will. If something like that is right, then gods or angels might be people but not animals. (Olson 2003, 3)

He continues by claiming that it is also not the case that all animals, and even that all human animals, are people. "Human beings in a persistent vegetative state are biologically alive, but their mental capacities are permanently destroyed. They are certainly human animals. But we might not want to call them people" (Olson 2003, 3).

Finally, it is also compatible with Olson's view that an animal's body be fully replaced (part by part) without the animal ceasing to persist through such a complete physiological transformation. Olson, however, avoids talking about bodies and focuses on speaking in terms of people and animals (I will contemplate why in the next section.)

Olson argues that the fact that each human person starts out as an unthinking embryo, and that it is possible for a human being to end up in an equally unthinking vegetative state, proves that mental continuity is not necessary for the persistence of a human animal because no human animal is mentally continuous with an embryo or a vegetable. And since the Animalist claim is that we are fundamentally human animals, what matters for our persistence or survival over time cannot be psychological continuity.

Olson's view becomes somewhat curious when he states that in the case of the famous brain-transplant thought experiment, the *person* does not go along with the transplanted cerebrum. This is because, he argues, "[a] detached cerebrum is no more an organism than a detached liver is an organism. The empty-headed thing left behind, by contrast, is an animal" (Olson 2003, 9). Olson explains that the manner in which such a transplant ought to be viewed is by admitting that two animals are involved in such a case. One of them loses its

cerebrum and the other gains one. The surgeons simply transplant an organ from one animal into another. The curious result of Olson's position is that one human animal can be mentally continuous with another without the identity of the first being transferred to the second. I will return to this in the next section.

Olson's argument for Animalism is quite simple. It goes as follows:

(P1): There is a human animal sitting in my chair.

(P2): The human animal sitting in my chair is thinking.

(P3): I am the thinking being sitting in my chair; the one and only thinking being in my chair is me.

(C): Therefore, I am that animal and that animal is me.

Olson argues that in order to challenge the first premise (to deny that there is a human animal sitting in my chair), the opponent of Animalism must commit herself to the view that there are no human animals, which also implies that there cannot be any organisms of other sorts either. Thus, denying the first premise amounts to denying the existence of organisms, which according to Olson, is absurd. Rejecting the second premise, Olson continues, amounts to denying that a human animal with a healthy normal human brain can think. This is also less than acceptable for Olson. Moreover, it suggests that no animal can think. If a human animal is incapable of thought how can we insist that a dog is? Finally, Olson states that rejecting the third premise compels the opponent of Animalism to say that the thinking thing sitting in my chair is a distinct being from the animal sitting in my chair, which would

suggest, he argues, that there are two beings thinking the same thoughts since the animal (with a developed, normal human brain) is surely capable of thought. But if there really are two beings, a person and an animal, having my thoughts, I ought to wonder, Olson points out, which one I am. He predicts that I would certainly think that I am the person. However, the animal thinking my thoughts also certainly thinks itself to be the person (after all, both our thoughts are identical: if I am thinking that I am the person, then my animal, too, must be having the very same thought). If my animal can be mistaken about its own personhood, then I may very well be mistaken about mine. Furthermore, Olson writes, "[f]or that matter, if your animal can think, that ought to make it a person" (Olson 2003, 17). I will explore the shortcomings of Olson's argument in the next section. However, I would like to mention here that there is something strange going on in this argument.

Perhaps the problem is that Olson equivocates on 'is' when he equates 'human animal' with the 'person' sitting in the same chair.[28] Certainly, the person in the example, as Olson stresses, *is* a human being and by definition, belongs to the species *Homo sapiens*, which in turn falls under the genus *Homo*, family *Hominidae*, order *primata*, class *mammalia*, phylum *chordata* (animals with a backbone), and kingdom *animalia*, therefore, making the person sitting in the chair a human animal. However, that is not the same as saying that persons *are* human animals, which implies that all beings classified both under the species *Homo sapiens* and kingdom *animalia* are, by definition, persons. However, stating, as Olson does, that "if your animal can think, that ought to make it a person" (Olson 2003, 17), actually implies only that beings classified under the species *Homo sapiens*

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[28] I would like to thank Professor Robert A. Wilson for pointing this out in his comments on a draft of this chapter.

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(assuming that by "if *your* animal," Olson is referring to the reader whom he understands to be a human being) and kingdom *animalia*, which also happen to have the capacity for thought *are* persons. This, however, means that, on Olson's account, human animals are persons only insofar as they can think (or insofar as they have a psychological life) rather than being persons in virtue of being human animals. Thus, when Olson states that the human animal *is* the person sitting in the chair, all that means is that the thinking being, who is a person, sitting in the chair also belongs to species *Homo sapiens* and kingdom *animalia*.

Olson's final argument for Animalism questions our intuitions about fantastic cases so prominent in the personal identity literature. Olson argues that although we imagine ourselves reacting to such cases in a manner that suggests that we take ourselves to persist in virtue of mental continuity, our intuitions when faced with actual cases suggest no such thing. Olson writes:

> When someone lapses into a persistent vegetative state, his friends and relatives may conclude that his life no longer has any value. They may even conclude that he has ceased to exist <u>as a person</u>. But they don't ordinarily suppose that their loved one no longer exists at all, and that the living organism on the hospital bed is something numerically different from him--even when they come to believe that there is no mental continuity between the vegetable and the person. (Olson 2003, 20)

Assuming, for argument's sake, that Olson is correct in pinning down people's intuitions regarding vegetative states, what Olson is saying here is that even though personhood may not be attributable to an individual in a vegetative state because, by definition, such individuals lack conscious awareness, the organism, which the non-person in the vegetative state is, continues to be numerically identical to the same organism that the person, when this

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individual was a person, used to be. This, to my mind, is an unnecessarily complicated way of stating that although persons cease to exists when they enter states characterized by a persistent (or perhaps permanent) lack of conscious awareness, their bodies continue to be identified in a manner consistent with the way they were identified when the persons were in existence. I will address this problem in the next section. I think that if nothing else, this confusion on Olson's part is indicative of the difficulties the persistent vegetative state poses for philosophers working on the problem of personhood and diachronic personal identity.

4.2
Revisiting Animalism: Some Shortcomings of the Biological Account

First of all, I would like to address Olson's final argument. The most striking thing about the above stated paragraph is that Olson insists that were we to encounter someone who lapsed into a persistent vegetative state, we "may even conclude that he has ceased to exist <u>as a person</u>" (Olson 2003, 20) and in the sentence immediately following he writes that the "living organism on the hospital bed is [not] something numerically different from him" (Olson 2003, 20), where 'him,' I am assuming, refers to the *person* he once was. The question that immediately comes to mind is whether or not it is the case that the "someone" who lapsed into a persistent vegetative state continues to be a person. Does he or does he not cease to exist as a person?

I think there is a reason why Olson puts things this way and I shall explore this reason later on in this section when I rephrase his argument for Animalism. For the time being, however, I wish to point out that the case is much more complicated than Olson admits. One

may ask about the difference between someone in a persistent vegetative state altogether lacking a mental life and thus lacking mental continuity with the person he once was and a dead body, which too is altogether lacking mental states and mental continuity with the "once-living" individual? Is being alive (even being kept alive artificially) the difference that makes a difference? If not, does Olson's view suggest that there is no difference, meaning that when I die, my personhood will be traceable to my dead body?[29] When talking about personal identity, do corpses even count? Of course, the complexity here is even more overwhelming. One may also ask about the difference between someone in a persistent vegetative state and someone in a temporarily unconscious state such as a deep, dreamless sleep or temporary unconsciousness caused by head trauma, etc. As is becoming evident, the problem is not a simple one and not one I am prepared to unravel here, but I will revisit it in a later chapter. What I aim to accomplish in this chapter is to think through the biological and psychological approaches to diachronic personal identity in order to set my philosophical compass, as it were, in a more promising direction.

Second, it may seem odd that in an attempt to provide a solution to the question of identity and persistence of *persons*, Olson states that we are essentially animals, but then feels a need to distinguish personhood from our animal natures. In other words, stating *what* we are (i.e. animals) seems to have less to do with what it takes for us to persist (i.e. what constitutes our *personal identities* through time) than Olson at first suggested.   Olson continuously draws the distinction between human animals and persons. A human being in a vegetative state, on his view, can cease to exist as a person since "[i]t is often said that to be a

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[29] Believing that my corpse is still *me* may be a welcome argument to those who think that corpses have rights.

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person is to have certain mental qualities: to be rational, intelligent, and self-conscious" (Olson 2003, 3) and because "[p]erhaps a person must also be morally responsible, and have free will" (Olson 2003, 3). And again, recall that Olson writes: "[h]uman beings in a persistent vegetative state are biologically alive, but their mental capacities are permanently destroyed. They are certainly human animals. But we might not want to call them people" (Olson 2003, 3). Conditions of personhood such as consciousness, moral responsibility, etc., which Olson seems willing to accept, gesture at the importance of psychological continuity, which Animalism denies. Why, then, one might ask, does Olson draw such distinctions?

In an attempt to treat Olson's view as charitably as possible, one might read Olson as saying that although he establishes that we are animals, he does not deny that there are things about us that make us special. And although what makes us persons may very well be consciousness, autonomy, etc., what, in fact, suffices for our persistence is precisely whatever suffices for the persistence of the animals with which we are identical. Thus interpreted, Olson's view seems somewhat more appealing. Unfortunately for Olson, thus interpreted, his view is also self-contradictory: distinguishing between personhood and animal-hood and then admitting that the conditions for the persistence of animal-hood may not be sufficient for the persistence of personhood amounts to an argument *against*, rather than for, Animalism since Animalism identifies personhood with animal-hood.

Next, recall Olson's argument that the fact that each human being starts out as an unthinking embryo, and that since we are obviously continuous with the embryos, implies that mental continuity is not a condition of personal identity through time. The above, Olson

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concludes, strengthens the Animalist's case. However, the mere fact that the life cycle of a human being includes the embryonic period does not establish the irrelevancy of mental continuity in determining the identity of a *person*. It seems that it could very well be argued that since the embryo is unthinking, not autonomous, etc., it is not even a person in the first place and that it is precisely the psychological features (i.e. memories, beliefs, desires for the future, etc.), which make us *persons* because these psychological features are intimately connected to such things as consciousness, autonomy, moral responsibility, etc., which, in turn, are important to the identity of a *person* over time.

Olson's answer to the brain-transplant scenario, at least to my mind, is also not fully satisfying. Olson suggests that a detached cerebrum is just an organ and that the organism cannot be transplanted with it. Hence, he concludes that in the case of such an imagined transplant, one animal (call her Miranda) loses a cerebrum and another animal (call him Bartek) gains a cerebrum, but that Miranda's body/animal retains Miranda's identity while Bartek's body/animal retains Bartek's identity. This is in spite of the fact that Bartek's body/animal would (as it is usually assumed in this type of thought experiment) speak and think as though it were Miranda. And let us not forget that Bartek's body/animal would *identify* itself as Miranda, albeit a completely different looking Miranda. It would, after all, be Miranda's consciousness puzzling over the appearance and gender of the body she (he?) possesses. I find it quite difficult to concede to Olson that the determination of someone's personal identity in such a case is a straight forward matter. Animalism does not seem to adequately respond to such puzzle cases due to the fact that it is committed to ignoring the importance of mental continuity to diachronic personal identity. Although I believe Olson is wrong in the

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manner in which he individuates *persons* in such a case, I do think that his Animalist insight

is instructive nonetheless. I shall return to the importance of his insight in a later section.

One might wish to take the above criticism of Olson's response to the brain-transplant

thought experiment a bit further.   Such thought experiments, rather than implying

Animalism, suggest that persons are something other than their bodies and perhaps even

distinct from their brains, as is apparent in the brain-state transfer thought experiment or the

Functionalist idea that if silicone chips could duplicate the function of my brain's neurones,

then my brain is not necessary for my survival.

Peter van Inwagen provides an entertaining description of the brain-state transfer

thought experiment:[30]

> Imagine a society in which...periodically a person goes into the hospital for a "body-change." This consists in his total brain-state being transferred to the brain of [an artificial duplicate of his body]. At the end of the procedure the original body is incinerated...All of the social practices of the society presuppose that the procedure is person-preserving. The brain-state recipient is regarded as owning the property of the brain-state donor, [and] as being married to the donor's spouse...If it is found that the brain-state donor had committed a crime, everyone regards it as just that the brain-state recipient should be punished for it. (van Inwagen 1997, 305-306)

The social practice of identifying persons via their psychological continuity in van Inwagen's

thought experiment certainly has intuitive (as well as practical) pull. Thus, ignoring the fact

that the brain transplant results, as it is assumed by the thought experiment, in the transfer of

an entire personality including memories and a sense of responsibility for that personality's

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[30] This description comes from Shoemaker's debate with Richard Swinburne on the subjects of personal identity and dualism.

actions, by describing the transplanted cerebrum as nothing but a *mere* organ seems a little puzzling and both surprising as well as dubious.

What of Olson's key argument itself? I propose to revisit each premise one at a time. The first premise (that there is a human animal sitting in my chair), Olson argues, can only be denied if one also denies the existence of human animals as well as animals in general. However, the most immediate response to this may be that instead of talking about animals, we can talk about bodies, which would then change the first premise to: "there is a human body sitting in my chair." And, of course, if the second premise (that the human animal/body sitting in my chair is thinking) is to lead to the conclusion that I am that animal/body, if I am identical with any part of my body, it ought to be the part that thinks. But if this is the direction we take the argument, then Olson's solution to the brain-transplant puzzle no longer makes sense (assuming, of course, that the transplant of the brain alone is sufficient for thinking). Olson, of course, anticipates this possible equivocation on the term animal and insists that he is not interested in speaking about bodies, but will rather only "talk about people and animals, and leave bodies out of it" (Olson 2003, 5). Olson's reason for this is perhaps best given in Olson's own words. He writes:

> Whether these claims about bodies are true depends on what it is for something to be someone's body. What does it <u>mean</u> to say that your body is an animal, or that someone might have a robotic body? I have never seen a good answer to this question. (Olson 2003, 5)

Thusly rejecting the terminology of 'something being someone's body,' what Olson might be after here (at least that is how I interpret him) is the notion of an embodied being,

which is not necessarily identical with its body since its body can be replaced, part by part, without the embodied being itself ceasing to exist. What I mean by an embodied being is that such a being is *essentially* (or necessarily) embodied. That is, it cannot exist without a body. Such beings can, of course, be thinkers; they just cannot be bodiless thinkers because their thinking depends on the existence of matter organized in some particular way. It seems to me that what Olson might mean by the term 'animal' is just something along these lines, in which case, changing his first premise to "there is an embodied being sitting in my chair" would not change the meaning of the original phrasing of premise (1) and it would resist the natural objection that humans are more than (or are not) animals because if anything, humans certainly are embodied.[31] I think that both the proponents of the Psychological Approach and Animalists can accept such a premise.

Having substituted 'embodied being' for 'animal,' the second premise ought to read: "the embodied being sitting in my chair is thinking" (or, if one prefers, "the embodied human being sitting in my chair is thinking"). Again, the absurd reply that human animals cannot think can be avoided since embodied beings surely can think as is apparent in our own case.

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[31] Even if one were to believe in the transmigration of souls or the immortality of spiritual substances, etc., one would still be hard-pressed to explain how it is that human beings are not embodied especially if, by definition, human beings are also mortal, which is, I would imagine, precisely because they are embodied. What, on some religious views, is immortal, then, is the soul, which, as far as I understand it, is not the human being who ends up dead in the process of the soul's vacating the body. Especially given the notion of transmigration of souls into non-human bodies, I find it quite difficult to conceive of souls as essentially human. Admittedly, I am not a theologian or even an amateur in these matters and so, my arguments in the rest of this chapter by no means hang on these contemplations. However, the little exposure to this subject matter that I am comfortable in claiming suggests to me that not even Christians believe in the immortality of souls per se. After all, the Bible suggests that there shall be a second coming upon which all will be resurrected (and both the living and dead shall be judged). There is no mention of souls coming down from heaven for the final judgment. Rather, Christianity appears to be based on the promise of bodily resurrection.

The third premise, thusly understood, also precludes the strange objection that I may not be alone while sitting in my chair and thinking since I am most certainly the thinking thing in my chair as well as the embodied being because, as a human being, I am an essentially embodied being and, to boot, one that is equipped to think (and does so at least from time to time).

If the above is an accurate interpretation of both Olson's argument and his understanding of the term 'animal,' then I think the argument is valid. If this is the case, however, why does it lead to such counter-intuitive solutions to puzzle cases and to other counter-intuitive implications? The response here might be one of the following: either (1) the intuitive solutions to the puzzle cases are simply wrong because Animalism is correct, or (2) The argument for Animalism is valid, but the implications Olson draws from his argument are wrong. If (1) is correct, then Olson is right and my own intuitions (as well as those of many others, some quite prominent philosophers among them) are plain and simply irreparably out of tune with reality. If (2) is correct, then there must be a reason why Olson's argument, though valid, implies such curious (and, to my mind, mistaken) conclusions and solutions to puzzle cases.

I think, and will argue, that (2) is the case and that the error resides in the fact that being an animal or an embodied being is one thing, but what makes that animal or embodied being a *person* is quite another. This is consistent with the Animalist view because after all, as I already mentioned in a previous section, even Animalists like Olson do not personify bacteria, insects, cats, or horses. And the reason for this is that even though such creatures are embodied beings and animals, they lack certain features that would make them 'persons.'

Of course, (1) could very well be true as well, but even if this is the case, (2) also holds, hinting at an error in the implications Olson draws from his argument.

Hence, although the question regarding "what we are" is to be answered as Olson answers it, namely, we are animals/embodied beings, the question pertaining to "who we are" has to do with our *personhood*, which, in turn, is intimately intertwined with self-reflection, memories, and other mental states, which embodied beings like ourselves, are quite capable of having and are most definitely in possession of.[32]

What I am arguing, then, is that Animalism is wrong in downplaying (and often, as Olson does, outright rejecting) mental continuity as an important criterion of personal identity over time. What I mean by "mental continuity" is precisely the kind of cognitive capacity that allows for the construction and sharing of memories and the subsequent weaving of personal narratives. Ironically enough, what I take to be Animalism's refreshing insight is its dismissal of cognitive capacities so central to the Psychological account as well as other approaches to the question of personhood and diachronic personal identity that make heavy use of the memory criterion.

4.3
The Psychological Account and Its Dangers

The danger of the psychological account lies in its sometimes tacit and at other times explicit focus on higher cognitive capacities, such as the capacity for individualistic episodic memory. This focus lends itself to downplaying the importance of bodily continuity, as well

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[32] I shall explore the degree of self-reflection required and what precisely is meant by memory later.

as social ties, interactions, and relationships, in tracking the identity of persons. Just as the Animalist's insistence on denying psychological continuity as an important element of personhood and diachronic personal identity leads to inconsistencies in the view, so the neo-Lockean's often exclusive focus on psychology entails troublesome consequences for the Psychological Account of personhood and personal identity.

Harold W. Noonan asks whether someone, like the Neo-Lockean, who assigns a significant role in her account of personal identity to psychological continuity, is also committed to the divergence between personal and bodily continuity? And if so, Noonan wonders, is this a strong objection to her position? The Animalist, of course, answers 'yes' to both of Noonan's questions.

Derek Parfit's response to the Animalist, as reported by Noonan, is that "[t]he identity of animals like us...*is* constituted by the identity of their brains, for the brain is the controlling organ, governing in several ways most of the body" (Noonan 1998, 305). Parfit, who self-admittedly was drawn into philosophy by split-brain cases,[33] is an adherent of the Bundle Theory of self, which he believes has its roots in the philosophical views of the Buddha in the form of the Buddhist teaching of *anatta* or the "no-self" view (Parfit 1987, 312). This, in turn, implies that Parfit rejects the idea that the self exists at all. In other words, Parfit is a reductionist about the self. What constitutes personhood is just the bundle of experiences. And since the relevant experiences, or so the argument might go, are had by the brain, if anything is to ensure survival of a single individual from one moment to another, it is the brain.

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[33] Parfit writes: "It was the split-brain cases which drew me into philosophy" (Parfit 1987, 310).

It must be kept in mind, however, that Parfit also thinks that survival is perfectly plausible in cases of fission and fusion of individuals. Thus, though his response to the Animalist may be what Noonan reports it as being, he is by no means committed to identifying selves with their brains since he does not think selves actually exist. He is not interested in the question of personal identity, but rather in the question of survival, for which, according to him, Psychological Connectedness is more important than Psychological Continuity (Psychological Connectedness requires the holding of direct psychological relations from one branching self to another and is a non-transitive relation, while Psychological Continuity, in contrast, requires overlapping chains of direct psychological relations and is a transitive relation) (Parfit 1971, 372). What this means is that if my psychological states could somehow be transferred (even into multiple brains), Parfit would recognize such a phenomenon as a case of my survival, while the Animalist would be busy counting the bodies whose brains Parfit would believe me (whatever *me* might mean) to be constituted by. Proponents of the psychological approach to personal identity are not nearly as fond of bodily continuity as Animalists are and thus are, as the Animalist might expect, quite ready to admit cases of divergence between personal and bodily continuity.

Let us assume, for the sake of argument, however, that the Neo-Lockean admits that persons are identical with their brains. Noonan considers one of the all-time favourite philosophical science-fiction scenarios, namely the ill-fated brain-in-the-vat. What, to my mind, makes the brain-in-the-vat "ill-fated" is that if it (the brain-in-the-vat) happens to be conscious, it must be "experiencing" quite an alarming lack of sensory input. This, to my mind, is perhaps one of the most horrific of philosophical examples (and this is saying quite

a lot given that the philosophers' fondest thought experiments seem to involve, among others, dismembering, replacement of body parts, and murder).

My own feelings about this memorable thought experiment are somewhat similar to my feeling of wonder, curiosity, and malfunctions of imagination when faced with the problem of other minds (although I am a horror movie fan, I have a hard time wrapping my mind around the concept of a zombie). However, what makes the brain-in-the-vat even more mysterious (than the problem of other minds) is that, if it is the case that it is actually capable of human thought, it could never pass the Turing test without the help of sophisticated machinery, for it has no lips (or tongue and larynx for that matter) with which to communicate its "brainy" thoughts, it has no hands or fingers to gesture with in irritation, and it has no eyes or ears with the help of which it could become aware of the surgeon's perplexed face as she attempts to determine whether there is a person inside the lump of flesh lodged in the vat before her.

Noonan suggests that the Neo-Lockean "must describe the case in which someone's brain is taken out of his skull and preserved in a vat of nutrients (the BIV case) as a case in which a person survives despite the loss of most of his body" (Noonan 1998, 304).

> But, the animalist objector to neo-Lockeanism claims, such cases are not ones in which any human animal survives, for the identity of an animal is not determined by the identity of its brain – the same animal can receive a new brain, just as the same animal can receive a new heart, and the preservation of an animal's brain no more amounts to the preservation of the animal than does the preservation of its heart. (Noonan 1998, 304)

Even if the Animalist were to accept that the brain is, in fact, important as well as unique enough to constitute the "animal," this does not appease the Neo-Lockean. In fact such proposals as the brain-state transfer thought experiment are meant to take the body altogether out of the equation (brain and all). Thus, the contrast between the biological and psychological approaches to personal identity becomes most evident on such extreme views.

At first glance, this may be just as well since perhaps one of these approaches is simply wrong. However, as is often the case in philosophy, things are not as simple as that. If we accept the Animalist thesis as it stands, then we run into various problems already explored in a previous section. The Neo-Lockean position (as it stands), however, must account for certain facts and answer certain troubling questions. For example, if I am not my body, but somehow co-exist with it, then where and what am I? And why do I feel myself to be not just in my brain or head, but also in my fingers as I am typing these words? Moreover, at this point, the Animalist can inquire of me whether I am certain that I am the person inside my animal or whether it may be possible that I am the animal erroneously assuming itself to be the person?

Many further questions and criticisms await those proponents of the psychological approach who respond by claiming that I am an immaterial Ego occupying a body. For instance, Parfit criticizes the Ego Theorist for having to "distinguish between persons and subjects of experiences, and claim that, in split-brain cases, there are *two* of the latter" (Parfit 1987, 316). Parfit argues that the Bundle Theorist's explanation, on the other hand, "can easily be extended to cover split-brain cases. In such cases there is, at any time, not one state of awareness of several different experiences, but two such states" (Parfit 1987, 316). Parfit

explains that in claiming two states of awareness, the Bundle Theorist is *not* postulating the existence of unfamiliar entities (the Ego Theorist, on the other hand, would have to postulate two separate Egos, which are not the same as the single pre-fission Ego). Thus, Parfit concludes, the Bundle Theorist is better equipped to deal with split-brain cases.

A question worth mulling over, for those who postulate non-material Egos, is how much of my personality as an embodied human being can such an immaterial Ego carry over into its immaterial (and even perhaps immortal) existence? Can it speak as I speak without vocal cords? Can it feel warmth or see red as I feel and see them without a nervous system and without eyes? Can it even remember what such things are like after even a fraction of eternity passes? How much more like the ill-fated brain-in-the-vat would such a disembodied Ego be than what it was like to be the embodied me, flesh, blood, brain, nervous system and the whole works? These questions are by no means, nor are they meant to be, knockdown arguments against the Ego Theorist. They are meant to serve as guideposts and warning-signs for those of us who are, at least somewhat, sympathetic, as I am, to the Psychological Approach. It is very important, in my opinion, to take the Animalist insight seriously when considering questions of personal identity.

The trouble with a *purely* psychological account of personal identity is precisely that it ignores what the Animalist assumes. A question worth asking, at this point, is whether the Animalist and the Neo-Lockean views (and more specifically, their objections to the other's view) can somehow be reconciled. I turn to one such attempt presently.

4.4
Noonan's Neo-Lockeanism

Before briefly exploring Noonan's proposal, it may prove illuminating to consider his rejection of Sydney Shoemaker's suggestion about the brain-state transfer thought experiment. Noonan writes:

> Shoemaker's own suggestion about the brain-state transfer case is that it shows that the neo-Lockean should accept that persons are not animals, in the sense that they are not identical with animals, but insist that, none the less, they 'are' animals in the sense that they share their matter with animals, just as statues are not hunks of bronze, in the sense of being identical with hunks of bronze, but 'are' hunks of bronze in the sense of *being constituted of* hunks of bronze. (Noonan 1998, 308)

Noonan quite forcefully announces that "Shoemaker's suggestion should be accepted only as a last resort" (Noonan 1998, 308) because it implies that animals, even those that coincide with persons, are not thinking intelligent things, but merely share their matter with thinking, intelligent things. This is because, were they intelligent thinking things, "they would, after all, be persons according to Locke's definition" (Noonan 1998, 308).

Noonan provides the following solution:

> [I]t is clear what the neo-Lockean's response to the animalist must be. He must reject Locke's original definition of a person, substitute for it the notion of the object of self-reference, and insist on a distinction between the 'I'-user and the reference of 'I'. Thus he can say that in the problematic situation in which a person and an animal temporarily coincide, the animal can indeed think 'I'-thoughts, but is not thereby constituted a person, for the reference of its 'I'-thoughts is not *itself* but the person with whom it is sharing these thoughts. (But what, then, is the rule of reference for

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'I'?   The standard one: the reference of an 'I'-thought is the person thinking the thought.   No other rule is needed, since whenever, on this account, an animal is thinking an 'I'-thought, so also is a person. (Noonan 1998, 316)

Although Noonan admits that there may seem to be a "'profound silliness' in the distinction the neo-Lockean must insist on between the thinker of an 'I'-thought and the reference of an 'I'-thought" (Noonan 1998, 316), he states that such a distinction is a necessary commitment of anyone who, like David Lewis for example, appeals to the division between persons and person-stages.   Furthermore, Noonan warns that if Neo-Lockeanism, even in the guise in which he presents it, is rejected in favour of Animalism, personal and animal identity must always and everywhere go together and our reactions to the puzzle cases are simply not in accord with this.

Noonan suggests that the options available to the philosopher of personal identity considering the relation between human beings and persons are limited to the following five:

(1) that we can reject the existence of human beings (which Noonan dismisses out of hand);

(2) that we can reject any possibility of a divergence between personal identity and animal identity (which is the Animalist thesis);

(3) that we can reject the claim that animals are ever thinking, intelligent beings, which is Shoemaker's suggestion (and which Noonan believes to be an option of last resort);

(4) that we should accept "the radical claim that the topic of personal identity is strictly speaking non-existent" (Noonan 1998, 318) (which seems counter productive);

(5) and finally, that we can accept that the utterer of 'I' need not be identical with the referent of 'I' (which is Noonan's own view).

I am not convinced that any of the above are appealing approaches to personal identity (this includes Noonan's own suggestion). After all, who or what is the referent of 'I'? Does it not sound suspiciously similar to the solution Shoemaker provides, the very solution Noonan thinks ought to be considered only as an absolutely last resort? That is, the utterer of 'I' is not the referent of 'I' insofar as it is not identical with it, but nonetheless it is identical insofar as the referent of 'I' shares its matter with the utterer of 'I'. Perhaps the only difference is that Noonan does not need to insist that the utterer of 'I' is not a thinking, intelligent thing. But even so, Noonan's proposal seems to be open to Olson's objection (which spells trouble for Noonan's view) that either we are assuming that the utterer is unintelligent and unthinking (which is quite odd given that the utterer of 'I' has a mature human brain, etc.) or we are assuming that there are two thinking things present (and, of course, we encounter the problem of which one of those two the referent actually is). Noonan, of course, insists that the referent is always the person. However, would the thinking animal (the utterer) not mistakenly assume itself to be the referent? If so, we run into the epistemic worry of ever being able to correctly identify ourselves as persons. This alone makes Noonan's view bizarre enough to make it questionable.

The only manner in which I can make sense of a distinction between the utterer of 'I' and the referent of 'I' is either (1) by assuming that the referent is a ghost in the machine or some immaterial Ego lodged in the organism, which is equipped to utter 'I'-thoughts, or (2)

by following Parfit in reducing the referent of 'I' to a bundle of experiences of the organism uttering 'I'-thoughts, but ultimately denying the real existence of the referent of 'I'. As already mentioned, (1) comes loaded with a bunch of its own problems. (2) may be a possible solution, especially since Parfit's view deals quite elegantly and extensively with many bizarre puzzle cases. However, anyone willing to follow in Parfit's footsteps must be ready to give up the notion of identity many personal identity theorists are working with in exchange for a notion that admits degrees of persistence through time. Survival, for Parfit, is not the same as identity. If Noonan is comfortable with this Parfitian reductionism, then perhaps his view is further buttressed by Parfit's own arguments. If, however, Noonan's proposal is a reductionist one, then he must explain why he feels the need to postulate the referent of 'I' and what precisely the referent of 'I' is (it cannot be a *something* if we accept Parfitian reductionism). Animalists, in turn, as far as I understand their position, are not willing to commit to identity in degrees. The very notion is incoherent and that is precisely why Parfit rejects talk of identity altogether. I understand the Animalist to be arguing for identity of persons with the animals/organisms. "There is a certain human organism, and that organism is you. You and it are one and the same" (Olson 2003, 2). I suggest that we move beyond biologism and psychologism and search for a definition of personhood elsewhere (all the while keeping in mind the insights both offer).

4.5
Resetting the Bearings: Where to Go from Here?

If we choose to follow Parfit in rejecting the notion that the self is some sort of *thing*, *entity*, or *substance*, then perhaps the referent of 'I' can be thought of, to borrow Marya Schechtman's analogy, in similar terms we use to think about locomotion. Schechtman writes regarding the mind:

> Human beings are able to locomote because of certain physical features of their composition. This capacity is, without a doubt, a property of human beings (and, as with mind, an environment is required for its execution). It would, however, be very strange indeed to say that locomotion is *located* in the human body—or anywhere else. Similarly, we may wish to say that the capacity for mental activity is a property of human beings, but is not *located* anywhere at all. Any of these readings presents a challenge to the traditional picture of the self. On none of them is the subject a unified locus of psychological life inhabiting the body. (Schechtman 1997, 162)

If Schechtman is correct and if the problems presented in this chapter so far are accurately pinned to their culprits (the views that give rise to them), then perhaps we ought to look elsewhere for our concept of a person. This further buttresses my argument that a *person*, like locomotion, is not a thing like a book or a table.[34] If this is true, then, whatever a *person* is, it is not the brain, the body, the soul, etc.

However, following the Neo-Lockean insight, personhood requires the mind, and the mind, borrowing the Animalist insight, is embodied. After all, if I am both the thinking thing and the animal, on the Animalist view, then that thinking thing must, by definition, be

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[34] The similarity with Locke's account, as illustrated by Jenny Teichman, is quite striking.

embodied. Thus, personal identity seems to be tied up with both our psychologies and our bodies (or organisms, as the Animalist may insist). Although, at first glance, it may seem as though pretty much everyone would be comfortable concurring with the fact that personal identity is tied to embodied minds, I have argued that upon a closer analysis of examples of the psychological and biological accounts, this seemingly commonsensical insight is either dismissed or not fully grasped or integrated into such accounts.

The proponent of the psychological account may well identify the mind with the brain and thus agree to the above statement by insisting that what it means for the mind to be embodied is for it to be physical and thus what it means for personal identity to be tied both to an individual's psychology and body is for it to be tied to the brain (i.e. wherever the brain goes, the person follows). A view like that, however, does not fully appreciate the Animalist insight, which hints at the possibility of tracking personhood even in the absence of brains and minds. Tracking personhood in the absence of a brain or a mind implies, as I will argue in chapter 7, that personhood can be tracked even in the absence of a self, though of course, the tracking in such cases is done by other selves. Although I think this is an important insight, I do not think Olson fully understands its importance or fully endorses the consequences of this insight. I will take the Animalist insight to its logical conclusion in Chapter 6.

The Animalist hoping to acknowledge the psychological insight can follow Olson in asserting the importance of psychology in an account of personhood and then proceed to totally divorce this account of personhood from an account of personal identity by arguing that psychological continuity has no place in tracing a person's identity through time, which,

as I have argued, leads to problems. The other option for the Animalist is to ignore the psychological insight altogether, which, in turn, results in a counterintuitive account of personhood. As is becoming clear, the psychological approach to personal identity cannot be totally abandoned; psychology does play a central role in personhood and the diachronic identity of persons. In chapter 5, I examine the limits of psychologism and suggest an alternate way forward.

To rephrase the above-stated insights, personhood turns out to be tied up with our embodied minds, though to what extent and how many minds can be involved in the formation and individuation of a person is a question I shall pursue in chapter 6 where I analyze Sue Campbell's relational account of personhood. In order to till the ground upon which I propose to erect my version of relational personhood and my account of extended identity, I proceed, in the next chapter, to argue for an externalist understanding of a person's self-conception. I shall do this via a discussion of Robert Nozick's Closest Continuer Theory.

Chapter 5
Externalizing Personhood:
Self-Conception and Externalized Meaning

5.1
The Closest Continuer Theory and the Problem of Excessive Subjectivity

In this chapter, I argue that understanding Robert Nozick's notion of a self-conception in a wider Nozickean context reveals an externalized conception of meaning as well as a narrative understanding of his notion of a self-conception. Moreover, acknowledging Peter Singer's insight that morality in its social, other-directed aspect makes human life meaningful further buttresses the notion that the kind of meaning personal self-conceptions are dependent upon is indeed externalized.

Diachronic personal identity is perhaps the most interesting, and certainly one of the most discussed, issues pertaining to identity. In its moment to moment existence, the *I*, which we introspectively identify as our self is merely a self-reflective act of being aware of one's consciousness. In this moment to moment existence, the *I* is merely awareness, but not yet the kind of self we believe ourselves to be. Self-conceptions that come in the form of personal narratives allow us to re-identify with this *I* by mapping it onto our personal narratives and thereby tracking our long-term self-conceptions through time. The heart of the personal identity debate lies precisely in understanding what makes this tracking possible and accurate.

Although there are numerous approaches to both the psychological and the biological accounts of personal identity, I wish to focus on Robert Nozick's interesting account since a deeper reading of his view reveals an externalist approach to personal identity and meaning that helps to ground the account of relational personhood and extended identity, which I develop in the following chapters. This chapter examines a problem that arises in Nozick's solution to the puzzle of diachronic personal identity, namely the problem concerning the excessive subjectivity of a person's self-conception. A deeper reading of Nozick, which takes account of his contemplations on meaningfulness and the meaning of life, reveals a way of extrinsically bounding the excessive subjectivity of the self. I argue that in the pursuit of meaning, the agent incorporates external values into his or her conception of him- or her-self, which come in the form of various networks of external relations.

The literature that grew around the problem of diachronic personal identity is filled with many difficult puzzles that invoke the merging and splitting of consciousnesses. Tracking a person's identity through time in everyday circumstances is not particularly difficult if one is equipped with even a basic psychological account. However, once we begin to imagine possible brain transplants, body switching, the splitting of the train of consciousness into two or more simultaneous streams, or the fusion of numerous streams of consciousness into one, tracking an individual's identity on the psychological approach becomes quite difficult. The literature that grew around these difficulties is permeated with thought experiments so intricate and entertaining that they could be and often have been converted into movie scripts.

One famous thought experiment is Derek Parfit's imaginative Mars tele-transportation case. Parfit writes:

> When I press the button, I shall lose consciousness, and then wake up at what seems a moment later. In fact I shall have been unconscious for about an hour. The scanner here on Earth will destroy my brain and body, while recording the exact states of all of my cells. It will then transmit this information by radio. Travelling at the speed of light, the message will take three minutes to reach the Replicator on Mars. This will then create, out of new matter, a brain and body exactly like mine. It will be in this body that I shall wake up...As predicted, I lose and seem at once to regain consciousness, but in a different cubicle. Examining my new body, I find no change at all. Even the cut on my upper lip, from this morning's shave, is still there. (Parfit 1986, 199)

Psychological accounts of personal identity are quite comfortable with cases like the one above because what matters for survival on such views is the psychological continuity and mnemonic integrity of the individual in question.

However, the tele-transporter case becomes problematic very quickly. Parfit has us imagine that the tele-transporter malfunctions and does not destroy the original body and brain before sending out the data to the replicator on Mars resulting in a perfect copy being replicated and waking up in a cubicle on Mars. Intuitively, it may still be possible to track the *original* Derek by pointing to the one whose information was initially scanned about an hour earlier in order to be replicated on Mars an hour later. It should be quite straight forward to argue that the Derek who existed continuously on Earth is the original. However, the malfunction can be even more alarming: Parfit imagines that the tele-transporter on Earth

does destroy the original body and brain, but accidentally sends the data to two locations (perhaps both on Mars, just in two different adjacent cubicles). The result is the same as in the previous malfunction, but without an intuitively compelling method of tracking the *original*. Parfit's conclusion is that identity, which breaks down in cases like this, is not required for survival, meaning that although it is now impossible to track Derek's identity, Derek still survives the replicator malfunction, but no longer as identical to the pre-teleportation Derek since identity can no longer be tracked. This means that survival, for Parfit, supervenes on psychological continuity, but disregards the integrity of the subject of the content of the particular set of continuous psychological states that matter for survival. In other words, Parfit's view promises survival without being equipped to offer an answer to the question of *who* survives because although Parfit claims that Derek survives, it is unclear (and impossible to find out) *who* Derek survives as.

Parfit's solution, therefore, is not a satisfying one for those proponents of the psychological approach who are committed to tracking diachronic personal *identity* since it denies that identity is necessary for talking about diachronic survival. Merging cases are similarly disturbing as they involve two separate persons whose identities can easily be tracked up until the merger where they both become one individual with a shared set of traits, characteristics, memories, etc. That is, perhaps person C (the merged individual) receives person A's religious inclinations and person B's political affiliations, A's impatience and B's curiosity, etc. This would presumably be the case for all beliefs, desires, and perhaps even memories to a certain extent. Parfit's conclusion that identity is not necessary for survival is again troubling for those who care about tracking a person's identity through time.

Robert Nozick's Closest Continuer Theory offers a novel, though not completely unproblematic, solution to these bizarre thought experiments. Nozick's account states that survival is linked to identity, but that identifying persons in such circumstances depends on locating a closest continuer and identifying a closest predecessor of the individual in question. The way one does this, on Nozick's account, is via one's own conception of oneself. That is, if person A's self conception is heavily dependent on certain beliefs person C lacks post merger, then person A does not survive the merger. If B's self conception is heavily dependent on B's desires, for example, and if C happens to inherit A's desires but not B's, then B, lacking a closest continuer in C also does not survive, meaning that C is a new person. However, if A's important beliefs happen to survive the merger while B's desires do not, then C is a continuer of A. Whether A or B survives the merger will depend on which pre-merger individual (A or B) is a closest predecessor of C, and whether C is a closest continuer of A or B. In the case of a tie, Nozick argues that neither A nor B survive the merger since C is not a *closest* continuer of any one of them.

By this very logic, Nozick also offers a definitive answer to the fission case of the malfunctioning Mars tele-transporter. Since there is a tie for continuity in that case, there cannot be a closest continuer, meaning that the original ceases to exist since his identity cannot be tracked beyond the dual replication. Although Nozick's approach is not problem free (I will examine the problem of subjectivity below), his solution to the puzzling and outlandish thought experiments entertained by Parfit claims superior explanatory power over Parfit's own solutions since Nozick's CCT avoids having to divorce the concept of *identity* from tracking an individual through time.

As already hinted at, Nozick's Closest Continuer Theory (CCT) is motivated, in part, by the problem arising from the notion of the reflexively self-referring 'I', which requires unification. In other words, since the reflexive self-reference is a discrete rather than continuous (or in slightly different terminology, a digital rather than analogue) phenomenon, the numerous instances of self-reference are in need of unification. There may be various ways of unifying the reflexive self-referring 'I', and Nozick's ingenious, if somewhat problematic, approach is to unify it by means of a subjective metric (a self's self-conception).

Simply put, Nozick's CCT identifies the time slices or stages of an individual's life by determining the closeness of a person's self-conception from one stage to another; a normal person, being a continuous entity, will have a seamlessly continuous self-conception from moment to moment. Such an individual can easily identify with her past and project herself into the future even though, in the grand scheme of her life, her self-conception may change dramatically. However, since identity depends on closest continuation from stage to stage or moment to moment, the CCT can account for drastic changes in an individual's self-conception throughout her entire life.

More technically speaking, the Closest Continuer Theory states that $X=Y$ if Y is X's closest continuer and X is Y's closest predecessor. In terms of personal identity, it is X's self-conception (or metric) that determines whether Y is X's closest continuer. The dimensions that constitute X's metric are self-ascribed and weighted in accordance with a certain self-conception. Nozick explains:

> The content of the measure of closeness, and so the context of a person's identity
> through time, can vary (somewhat) from person to person. What is special about

people, about selves, is that what constitutes their identity through time is partially determined by their own conception of themselves, a conception which may vary, perhaps appropriately does vary, from person to person. (Nozick 1981, 69)

And again, further into his chapter on personal identity, Nozick writes: "I suggest that there is not simply one correct measure of closeness for persons. Each person's own selection and weighting of dimensions enter into determining his own actual identity, not merely into his view of it" (Nozick 1981, 106). He clarifies by stating that "[w]hich continuer is closest to a person depends (partially) on that person's own notion of closeness" (Nozick 1981, 106). This means that *X*'s closest continuer depends on *X*'s self-determined metric. Thus, *X* has a special authority in determining who *X* is because *X*'s own view of what constitutes closeness to *X* specifies *X*'s identity. Therefore, the metric responsible for tracking one's closest continuer is subjective in that it is self-chosen. Moreover, the tracking of one's self-conception has to be largely narrative in nature since the mode of presentation of the self-determined metric is more easily internalized in the form of a story or a narration than as a weighted list of various categories of preferences and beliefs.

The idea of a self-conception of the self lends itself not only to the unification of the reflexive self-referring 'I', but also accounts for an agent's self-definition. The problem with a self-defined metric, however, arises when such a metric is not appropriately constrained. That is, if the metric is purely subjective and the agent is given absolute control over its content, nothing prevents such an agent from defining herself in absurd ways (i.e. as a car, or Spartacus, etc.). What reasonable constraints can be put in place in order to bar such intuitively erroneous self-conceptions while retaining the self-forming power of Nozick's

framework? Part of the reason why the content of a self-conception cannot be fully within the control of a subject's fancy is that not all self conceptions can line up with reality and thus not all self conceptions are genuine. I return to this issue in chapter 6 where I discuss Hilde Lindemann's notion of holding others in their identities.

Nozick writes: "The self's conception of itself will be, in terms of the closest continuer theory, a listing and weighting of dimensions" (Nozick 1981, 105). That is, "Persons have conceptions of themselves, of what is important about their being themselves" (Nozick 1981, 105). Thus, the dimensions are to be determined by the agent herself. This leads to the problem of excessive subjectivity hinted at above.

A possible way of constraining the subjectivity of the metric while still accounting for an agent's self-formative and self-defining ability can be found in Chapter 4 of Nozick's "Philosophical Explanations" (in his chapter on free will). According to Nozick, an agent's choices are grounded in the agent's self-conception, thereby becoming self-subsuming decisions. Such decisions become self-subsuming because the agent assigns weights to reasons and bases such assignments on a policy of tracking a previously chosen conception of oneself and one's life and so, the weightings one bestows on the various possible choices one is capable of making will result in a self-subsuming decision because the conception of herself, which the agent chooses to track includes bestowing those very weights (or at least similar weights) and choosing that very conception.

The above view, however, remains silent on the kinds of limits we wish to impose on the agent's self-conception (or metric), but the constraints on the subjectivity of the metric, I think, arise quite naturally. The conception of oneself is not arbitrarily chosen by the agent,

but rather, it is something the agent grows into. More specifically, one's genetic material and certain capacities (i.e. talents, physical and mental predispositions, etc.), social context (i.e. parental and cultural influences, etc.), and the numerous formative experiences endured throughout one's life (especially in the early, formative years), etc. all determine and contribute to the agent's self-conception. In other words, one's self-conception is strongly influenced by one's history (and, at least initially, is simply given to us by others). Such a self-conception defines the relevant dimensions by which the agent measures and picks out her closest continuer as well as identifies with her closest predecessor. Although agents have self-formative capacities, such powers develop much later in life and are constrained by various social contexts and influences.

Self-synthesis is a much longer process than (even if it is a consequence of) the initial act of reflexive self-reference. However, it is the process of self-synthesis (the formation and re-formation of one's conception of oneself) that unifies the discrete instances of reflexive self-reference. Personal identity through time, on this interpretation of Nozick, is dependent on the unity and integrity of the complex and ever-evolving self-conception of the agent. The self-conception remains subjective insofar as the agent has formative and reformative powers, but the resultant metric is constrained by the initial (though evolving) self-conception. Self-subsuming decisions, though grounded in the self-conception, remain flexible enough to account for the ever-changing self-conception, but they also restrict the types of changes that can take place (because they are grounded in the self's self-conception). The agent may change substantively over an extended period of time, but such change will typically be gradual because of the constraining influence of the agent's history

(an agent's self-conception over time).   Since self-subsuming decisions are, on Nozick's view, free decisions, they allow for self-definition, but because they must be grounded in a previously developed self-conception, they can act as constraints on the self-conception while the self-conception simultaneously constrains the types of free choices available to the agent.   This means that even though the agent has the capacity for self-formation, it is naturally constrained by the kind of person she is and thus, the agent's metric is similarly constrained.   It would appear that self-synthesis and self-formation (via self-subsuming decisions) must be parallel processes.   In fact, it may very well be the case that they are one and the same process.   Other people both influence and shape our self-conceptions thereby constraining the freedom of one's own self-conception.   Moreover, as I will argue in chapter 6, fantastic self-conceptions, being disingenuous, do not truly track a person's identity since such self-conceptions cannot be properly related to a genuine narrative of the individual in question.

In spite (or perhaps because) of its limitations, Robert Nozick's Closest Continuer Theory (CCT) is an undervalued gem of philosophical contemplation regarding the problem of diachronic identity.   Although it is mentioned in the expansive literature often enough to be familiar to anyone who has had exposure to this metaphysical problem, it is by no means a commonly held view.   Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that the CCT appears to present a view of diachronic identity that is somewhat too subjective for most philosophical tastes.   I will argue, however, that given Nozick's wider philosophical views regarding value and the meaning of one's life, the CCT can in fact be understood in both more objective (and extrinsic) as well as collective and social terms.   In short, this chapter argues that Nozick's

view regarding the source of value in an agent's life suggests an interesting and appropriate boundary condition or limit to the subjectivity of the personal metric central to the CCT's approach to the problem of diachronic identity. This boundary or limit hints at the social nature of personhood, which, I will argue in the next chapter, extends the concept of a person's diachronic identity beyond the boundaries of individual biology or psychology.

Just to recap, the Closest Continuer Theory states that what it means for x at t_1 to be identical with y at t_2 is that y is a continuer of x and that y is closer to x than any other continuer. And y must be *close enough* to x to qualify for continuer status in the first place (Nozick 1981, 40). Moreover, the relation between x and y must be symmetric insofar as x ought to be a close enough and the closest predecessor of y. Put in such general terms, however, the theory itself is not very informative. Nozick is not only quite aware of this, but is in fact open to the idea that the CCT's schematic nature must be filled in by those who employ the schema in their contemplations of diachronic identity of persons and objects respectively. Thus he writes:

> The closest continuer view helps to sort out and structure the issues; it does not, by itself, answer the question. For it does not, by itself, tell which dimension or weighted sum of dimensions determines closeness; rather, it is a schema into which such details can be filled. (Nozick 1981, 33)

If the schema is utilized to make a judgment regarding a ship's identity, as in the Ship of Theseus puzzle, the Closest Continuer Schema (CCS) becomes useful only once the dimensions to be weighed are set. For instance, if we collectively agree upon a definition that views a ship's identity as intimately related to its regular routes or functions, then the

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CCS will point to one possible candidate as the closest continuer, while if we define a ship by its planks, it will point to a different candidate. Moreover, the CCS does not discriminate between other possibilities such as, for instance, assuming a ship's identity to be tied to its name, which would make continuation merely dependent on the renaming of a vessel. This radically liberal nature of the schema may not be overly problematic when applied to objects, but it does run into serious trouble when applied to morally considerable entities. Although Nozick is not blind to this, I do not think that he adequately resolves the problem. I propose that one way of solving this issue is via a turn towards ethics and the moral life, which should be quite an unsurprising turn given the arguments of previous chapters stating that personhood is fundamentally a moral term.

When it comes to personal identity, the dimensions to be weighed are different in kind from those we might apply to objects. The problem of unbridled subjectivity in Nozick's CCS, however, does not go away in the case of people. The vagueness of the CCS inherent in the case of inanimate objects such as ships morphs into what at times seems like an unchecked subjectivism about one's own identity.

One striking example of this problem comes from J. L. Johnson's (1997) paper entitled "Personal Survival and the Closest-Continuer Theory" where Johnson asks the following question: If Annabelle, who lives a long, prosperous life, dies at time t_1 and sometime later at time t_2, a post-mortem individual calling herself Annabelle claims to be identical with the Annabelle at t_1, then can it be said that Annabelle survived her own death? Johnson claims that, given Nozick's view, if an individual is a member of a theistic interpretive community, the individual's metric can be such as to accommodate survival after

death. Johnson explains that in such a case (where Annabelle believes in the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient, and morally perfect God who could bring about a situation where her post-mortem self is continued by a living individual), (1) Annabelle$_{alive}$ would be a continuer of Annabelle$_{dead}$, (2) Annabelle$_{alive}$ would be a close enough continuer of Annabelle$_{dead}$, and (3) Annabelle$_{alive}$ would be the single closest continuer of Annabelle$_{dead}$. "According to Nozick's schema the two are identical and survival of death has taken place" (Johnson 1997, 22).

If the CCS indeed implies such continuation, then the above may well count as a *reductio ad absurdum*. However, I wish to argue that the fault does not lie with the schema itself, but rather with the radical subjectivity of the metric many people read into Nozick's view. I will suggest that given Nozick's other views (those particularly concerned with value and the meaning of life), his CCS can readily be supplemented by a much more objective and constrained conception of a personal metric without robbing the agent of the kind of subjectivity that makes the CCT attractive in the first place.

5.2
Nozick on Value and the Meaning of Life

A brief inquiry into the question of what makes life meaningful can go a long way toward an account of personhood precisely because people are meaning-makers and meaning-seekers. In Chapter 6 (entitled "Philosophy and the Meaning of Life") of his *Philosophical Explanations*, Nozick explores the connection between meaning and value.

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He concludes that the meaning of one's life (as well as meaning in general) is intimately connected to values that originate outside oneself. He writes:

> For a life to have meaning, it must connect with other things, with some things or values beyond itself...To ask something's meaning is to ask how it is connected, perhaps in specified ways, to other things. Tracking, either of facts or of value, is a mode of being so connected, as is fitting an external purpose...The phrase "the meaning you give to your life" refers to the ways you choose to transcend your limits, the particular package and pattern of external connections you successfully choose to exhibit. (Nozick 1981, 594-595)

Some examples of such meaningful and valuable external relations are children, relationships with other people, helping others, continuing and advancing a tradition, the pursuit of truth and beauty, etc. (in short, relations to others).

Nozick explains that the value of one's life attaches to the particular life within the limits of the individual's existence while the meaning of her life attaches to that life as centred in the wider value context beyond the limits of the particular life and thus, the meaning of one's life depends upon external values (Nozick 1981, 611). In short, "[t]he meaning of a life is its place in a wider context of value...It is a measure of the degree of organic unity [a person's] life brings to the realm of value" (Nozick 1981, 611).

The implications of this understanding of meaning, according to Nozick, are that the life of an ethical person has greater meaning and worth than that of a socially or psychologically isolated or alienated individual (i.e. an "un-ethical" person such as a socio- or psycho-path). This is because, "[i]n behaving ethically, we transcend our own limits and connect to another's value as value" (Nozick 1981, 612). This, then, is Nozick's account of

the pull of the ethical life. Peter Singer, in the chapter entitled "Why Act Morally?" in his *Practical Ethics* echoes precisely this kind of relationship between value and meaning of life and ethics. He writes:

> Now we begin to see where ethics comes into the problem of living a meaningful life. If we are looking for a purpose broader than our own interests, something that will allow us to see our lives as possessing significance beyond the narrow confines of our own conscious states, one obvious solution is to take up the ethical point of view... [which] require[s] us to go beyond a personal point of view. (Singer 1993, 333-334)

Both Nozick and Singer agree that the question of the meaning of someone's life (and the question of meaning and value in general) makes sense only in the context of various, and often intimate (as well as moral), interactions and relationships with others. Such interactions and relationships are necessary pre-conditions to ethics and thus the ethical life. And if Nozick and Singer are right about the source of meaning and value, then such interactions and relationships are also necessary pre-conditions for meaning-making and valuing.

The implications of Nozick's views do not stop here, but inform his closest continuer theory in a very interesting way. More specifically, Nozick's view of the relationship between value and meaning of one's life and the adoption of an ethical (or at least a socially-sensitive) point of view (i.e. the transcending beyond one's individualistic limits) favourably constricts the subjective metric central to his CCT.

5.3
The Closest Continuer Theory Extrinsically Bounded and Socially Expanded

Before undertaking the central task of this chapter, it may be helpful to briefly explain what the subjective metric is and how it is supposed to work within Nozick's CCT. Nozick explains:

> In synthesizing itself the I does not merely include certain items; it also conceives itself as (under certain circumstances) incorporating specified future items or stages. The I's self-synthesis includes a self-conception which projects itself into the future. (Nozick 1981, 105)

In terms of the CCT, one's self-conception is a dynamic and interacting listing of weightings of dimensions, which "provides, implicitly, a measure of closeness whereby the self judges various problem cases, deciding which of various future entities will be its closest continuer, will be itself" (Nozick 1981, 105). These weightings of dimensions are self-synthesized (they are decided upon by the individual herself) and thus belong exclusively to the subject. Understood in this manner, it is not difficult to see why Nozick is often interpreted in radically subjectivist terms; a person's self-conception, along with all the weightings and dimensions that constitute it, is chosen by the person herself.

Even though the weighted dimensions do indeed exclusively belong to the subject, I think that, given Nozick's wider philosophical views, the dimensions themselves (and to some extent the weightings) are heavily influenced by external pressures and values. In fact, they are influenced by the inevitable and immersive engagement with the ethical and social

life. Thus, quite literally, personhood is to a significant extent shaped, influenced, and nourished by social and ethical values.

I wish to argue that the most charitable and most plausible manner in which to understand Nozick's view is to see these external values as giving meaning to an individual's life.[35] This meaning, in turn, becomes the source of the many dimensions and their weightings the *self* synthesizes as it weaves together its subjective conception of itself as a person. The view I am arguing for implies that the kind of individuals Singer refers to as psycho- and socio-paths can be viewed as somehow incomplete or even as fractured persons.

If I am correct, then the CCS does not imply the kind of continuity Johnson hints at, and thus does not fall prey to the above-stated *reductio*. This is due to the fact that in its pursuit of meaning and its understanding of its place in the world, the self incorporates external values into its conception of itself, which come in the form of various networks of external relations.

Thus, for Annabelle$_{alive}$ to truly be continuous with Annabelle$_{dead}$ at t_2, the dimensions informed by external relations would need to correspond with the identity assertion made by Annabelle$_{alive}$. However, this is far from being likely, and perhaps even arguably impossible, since other people's conception of Annabelle would also need to concur with Annabelle$_{alive}$'s assertion. And even if bodily continuity, for example, does not feature, in Annabelle's strictly subjective (and wishful) self-conception, as one of the relevant subjectively construed dimensions that determine Annabelle's continuity, then certainly, insofar as Annabelle

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[35] It may indeed be possible to reject such values (here I have in mind Professor Wesley Cooper's example of Malala who is born into a misogynistic Taliban society), but such a rejection is heavily aided by the existence of opposing values. That is, Malala's rejection is aided by a wider context of opposing values, a context of which she must be aware of in order for it to influence her).

derives meaning and understanding of herself and her life from the world she inhabits, bodily continuity, among other things, inevitably becomes a salient dimension which constrains her self-conception. This is partly because bodily continuity is a clear criterion by which others judge Annabelle to be identical with herself from t_1 to t_2, etc. (recall Locke's admittance that tracking the forensic identity of persons exclusively via psychological continuity is practically impossible due to our inability to read other people's minds). Annabelle$_{alive}$'s insistence that she is a genuine continuer of Annabelle$_{dead}$ would, on the view proposed here, simply be the product of an individual disconnected from reality and the wider value context required for healthy, unified personhood.[36]

The proponent of an unbridled subjective metric will undoubtedly wish to object at this point. Surely, she might argue, given Annabelle's social context, Annabelle$_{alive}$ is fully justified in tracing her identity back to Annabelle$_{dead}$. This is because the thought experiment assumes that Annabelle's community does indeed believe in the possibility and likelihood of Annabelle's identity assertion. Thus, the social scaffolding meant to constrain the metric actually strengthens Annabelle's identity assertion. It seems that the CCT, even if reinterpreted in the way I suggest, succumbs to the problem of excessive subjectivity, albeit of a socially relative sort in this case.[37]

One might be tempted to turn to a more objective account of personal identity, such as some kind of an essentialist view. However, I think that the outcome of the thought experiment is as it should be. One's conception of one's personal identity ought to be

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[36] Annabelle$_{alive}$'s identity assertion is as disconnected from reality as would be someone's assertion today that he is Spartacus.

[37] Such social relativity in and of itself, in my opinion, is not too troublesome. And the view I suggest still curbs individual subjectivity, which is precisely what it is meant to do.

influenced by subjective self-conceptions and bounded by external constraints. Such a view becomes much more palatable if we take seriously John Locke's notion that personhood is a *forensic term*, the purpose of which is to track, among other things, actions, accountability, merit, etc., and thus deny that personhood must be equated with some essence or substance. Although Locke argues that punishing someone for something he cannot remember doing is like punishing an innocent individual, I think that tracking both culpability as well as personal identity ought not to be a purely subjective endeavour. After all, just because a drunk driver cannot recall hitting a pedestrian does not mean that the driver did not do it.

In addition, if the reason we undertake a philosophical exploration of personal identity is to track truth about ourselves, then perhaps imaginary and outlandish thought experiments ought not to be allowed to become theory breakers. Reflections on and implications for actual world cases should be weighted more heavily.

Furthermore, even granting Annabelle's belief-system, it is stretching the usefulness of the thought experiment to also postulate that such a community would lack some concept of parenthood or genesis, etc. that could be used to track the identity of a person more objectively and thereby constrain Annabelle's radically subjective metric. And if the community were to believe in reincarnation (as some communities do), insofar as personhood is treated as a forensic term, even $Annabelle_{reincarnated}$ should count as a different person from $Annabelle_{dead}$ (even if she counts as the same reincarnated self) since the practice of holding $Annabelle_{reincarnated}$ accountable for the crimes of $Annabelle_{dead}$ would certainly be socially damaging. Thus, there ought to be certain social values that constrain Annabelle's metric in such communities.

Even in its most radical reiteration, where Annabelle$_{reincarnated}$ is treated as a continuer of Annabelle$_{dead}$ by both Annabelle and the community in which she resides, the criteria for Annabelle's continuation are socially bounded. Annabelle$_{reincarnated}$ cannot be a self-proclaimed continuer of Annabelle$_{dead}$ without appropriate social (and likely cultural and religious) corroboration. In the same way that the spiritual leader of Tibet cannot be a self-proclaimed reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, the identity of Annabelle$_{reincarnated}$ will be socially constrained in a number of ways, effectively placing strict limits on Annabelle's self-conception.

Nozick himself hints at the sort of interpretation of the CCT I am putting forward in this chapter when he explains that there are limits on self-synthesis. He muses: "[i]f you clump yourself along any (artificial) relations around reflexive self-referring, can your demarcation of yourself include my arms, or my whole body" (Nozick 1981, 107)? He answers his own question as follows:

> Some uniformity of delimitation is achieved in a social matrix. Rewards and punishments will lead to a boundary in a particular location along given innate salient features or dimensions. Recalcitrant individuals who act on their deviant classifications wherein part of their own body includes someone else's arms, will be punished, institutionalized, or killed. Usually, the mutual compatibility of self-definitions occurs with less hardships. (Nozick 1981, 107-108)

What I wish to add to Nozick's musings is that the social matrix constrains a person's self-conception not only insofar as those with "*ab*normal" self-conceptions tend to be habituated out of such conceptions of themselves via rewards, punishments, and other social pressures or are simply (and often literally) removed from the social matrix itself, but that the

constraints of the social matrix go much deeper and penetrate the very capacity to self-conceive of oneself as a single, unified, continuing person through time. This is partly because we are born into social matrices rich with complex relationships (matrices which themselves are constrained by certain physical realities like biology, genesis, etc.), which give meaning to our lives as we develop into the *persons* we eventually become. Moreover, much of what defines us as people and much of how we see or conceive of ourselves depends on our social interactions (as well as, perhaps to some extent, on our interactions with the physical world in general). Thus, to my mind, *the very building blocks of self-synthesis emerge out of the social matrices we inhabit*.

As I will discuss in the next chapter, the relationship between social matrices and individual self-conceptions is so intimately entangled that the removal or exclusion (which is still a worldwide occurrence) of individuals with "abnormal" (or simply limited) self-conceptions from the very social contexts that sustain their narrative selves actually robs the excluded individuals of the very building blocks they require for personhood. What this brief analysis of Nozick's CCT unveils is that a person's identity is a much more socially sensitive and extended notion than most (if not all) ratio-centric accounts admit. Ratio-centric accounts tend to focus on the private self-conceptions and memories of individuals and thus tend to miss the salience of external factors in the formation and continuation of persons through time.

Chapter 6
Relational Personhood

6.1
Campbell's Relational Personhood: Ratio-Centrism Veiled in Relations?

This chapter critically examines Sue Campbell's account of relational remembering and her relational conception of personhood. It also explains the intimate entanglement between individual and collective memories and proposes an appropriate conception of memory for a relational account of personhood. I argue that memory, both individual and collective, binds the various relationships that constitute relational personhood.

The late feminist philosopher Sue Campbell argued for a relational understanding of human beings. Her first book (1997), *Interpreting the Personal: Expression and the Formation of Feelings*, argued that affective states are fundamentally relational in nature and thus that they often only emerge in the presence of others and in certain social contexts. I will return to Campbell's important work on emotions in chapter 7. Campbell is also well known for proposing a relational account of personhood in her 2003 book *Relational Remembering: Rethinking the Memory Wars*, which was meant to "give back" a voice to the testimonials of female therapy patients discredited by the "memory wars" movement, which questioned the credibility of reconstructing repressed memories during the course of therapy. Since such memories are "re-constructed" in therapy (that is, the retrieval of memories is something that happens in the course of therapy), there have been cases of unwitting suggestion or implantation of memories. Such implantation of false memories has been

successfully accomplished under experimental conditions by Elizabeth Loftus, et al. (see Loftus 2000 and Loftus, Feldman, Dashiell 1995) showing that false memories can indeed be genuinely integrated into a person's narrative, thus putting therapeutically retrieved memories into doubt.

Campbell's exceptional book on this subject forges a middle ground in this debate by acknowledging the dangers of what has come to be known as the false memory syndrome while also defending the integrity of patients who require therapy as an aid for reconstructing their pasts. She argues that memory is essentially relational, meaning that remembering is inseparably dependent on social schemas and contexts that emerge out of human interactions and relationships. For Campbell, this means that memory retrieval in therapy does not necessarily lead to falsified memories any more than regular remembering might. Following the neo-Lockean tradition, she also argues that since memory is integral to the concept of selfhood and personhood, undermining an individual's memory (and here she is especially concerned with female therapy patients) can and actually does undermine an individual's selfhood and personhood. Campbell writes:

> I argue that part of the seriousness of the current memory debates can be seen by taking into account that, in the Anglo-European tradition, memory, self, and person are historically braided concepts. It is thus possible to attack or to undermine the selfhood and personhood of others by undermining them as rememberers. I contend that on some occasions when we challenge others as competent rememberers, our intent is to undermine them as persons due various forms of respect, by calling into question how well they can function cognitively. (Campbell 2003, 27)

The virtue of Campbell's relational account of personhood is that it recognizes the role other people play in the formation and maintenance of an individual's moral status as a person. Pointing out that challenging individuals as rememberers has real repercussions and can undermine an individual's personhood reveals a salient dependency between the moral status of personhood and the obligations we owe to persons. This dependency, in turn, has normative implications, which Campbell clearly articulates, namely that we ought to respect persons in certain ways, one of such ways being that we ought to respect them as rememberers (which, in turn, echoing the virtue of Nozick's CCT, grants them autonomy over their own narratives).

Although Campbell's relational account of personhood is quite novel, interesting, and certainly on the right track, it, nonetheless, suffers from a major oversight, namely that even though it returns credence to the memories of female therapy patients, it excludes the very young, those with dementia, individuals with cognitive disabilities, and people in vegetative states from the realm of moral personhood based on limitations in their mental lives. These limitations, I shall argue, are targeted by Campbell precisely because they translate into limitations on capacities of memory construction. However, I think that the same kind of reconstruction of memories that occurs during therapy can happen socially via collective narratives, thereby securing the status of moral personhood for individuals with cognitive disabilities and other limitations in cognitive capacities. In brief, I argue that "normal" mental life need not be a prerequisite for moral personhood.

Campbell outlines the following four aspects of personhood:

(1) that the concept of person is normative; (2) that persons are socially constituted; (3) that social personhood admits of degrees; and (4) that, when examined more closely, the respect due to persons involves activities that in fact constitute persons as persons and do not merely recognize them as such. (Campbell 2003, 32)

Such a definition is pointing in the right direction insofar as it moves away from defining personhood akin to the way concrete objects are defined. To borrow an analogy from Rockney Jacobsen, Campbell's definition of personhood is closer to the way we might define citizenship than the way we might define chair-hood.[38] That is, personhood is not characterized individualistically, but rather socially. A starting point that views personhood in such terms is much closer to the kind of proposal Schechtman's narrativism makes by distinguishing between the re-identification criterion and the characterization question (see chapter 2) and is a step away from the sort of biologistic analysis Olson's animalism attempts (see chapter 4).

Regarding relational personhood, Campbell writes:

We develop and live our lives as persons within complex networks of institutional, personal, professional, interpersonal, and political relationships—both chosen and unchosen. We are shaped in and through our interactions with others in ways that are ongoing; and we develop cognitive and moral capacities and skills, including skills of moral reflection, in relational contexts that not only give these capacities and skills specific content but also offer methods of evaluation and self-evaluation. We come to understand our lives through how others respond to us, and our

[38] Rockney Jacobsen used this analogy between his definition of citizenship and Sue Campbell's account of personhood during one of the meetings of the Sue Campbell Reading Group organized by Robert A. Wilson in the summer of 2011. I am indebted to all the participants of these discussions for deepening my understanding of Campbell's work.

relational histories are significant determiners of the tenor of our responses to others. (Campbell 2003, 156)

There is a tension, however, in Campbell's laudable account of personhood. A similar intellectual strain is also present in many other famous accounts like those of Aristotle, Kant, or Singer. However, this tension is made more troublesome for Campbell in virtue of the politically inspired moves her arguments take. Part of what Campbell attempts to do in her book is to give back credence to the testimony of female therapy patients, whose credibility had been challenged in the memory wars. In the spirit of this undertaking, Campbell advances what I take to be a valuable insight, namely a relational understanding of selfhood and personhood. Her account of personhood emphasizes the fact that how we treat individuals actually translates into what kinds of beings they are. That is, one's personhood is not a matter to be decided by doctors or physicists or philosophers, but rather consists of various relationships into which individuals enter. Withdrawing or excluding an individual from a significant number of such relationships literally diminishes that individual's personhood.

I take it that the immediate implication of such a view is that, since personhood for Campbell is a normative term, we ought to treat individuals with the sort of respect we feel being a person demands by including individuals in various relationships of which we are part and by nourishing those relationships. As I will discuss in greater detail later, certain kinds of care relations are responsible for such person-nourishing and person-maintaining relationships. On such a view, thinking of individuals as persons and treating them as such are inseparably connected. That is, a male chauvinist cannot enter into nourishing

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relationships with women[39] just as a racist cannot enter into certain care relations with someone of a different race.

The problem with Campbell's account is twofold. First, although it presents itself as a relational account, it seems to stick too closely to what Campbell calls a liberal political account of personhood. And second, although Campbell's account attempts to reverse the attitudes that contribute to the de-personification of women, she pays little attention to the de-personification of people with cognitive disabilities, which is a direct result of her embracing the core of the liberal account of personhood, which she supposedly rejects.

Regarding the liberal political account of personhood, Campbell writes:

> In defending equality, liberal political theorists have generally offered or utilized a description of "persons" that focuses on what we have in common on the basis of which we should all be accorded equal concern and respect[40]...Despite the attractiveness of a view of equality supported by a reasonable appreciation of what we all share, feminist theorists have argued that we make a mistake in our approach to equality when we represent persons as generalized others and when we found discussions of substantive equality on the ability to identify with others as like ourselves. (Campbell 2003, 154-155)

Although the relational view of personhood does not, *prima facie*, represent persons as generalized others, Campbell holds fast to her commitment that certain cognitive capacities are necessary for the ascription of personhood to an individual. Early on in her book, Campbell states:

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[39] Analogously, a female chauvinist cannot enter into meaningful relationships with men.

[40] As I argued in chapter 3, defining personhood (or humanhood) in terms of what makes persons (or humans) unique is a longstanding, and sometimes dangerous, strategy dating back to antiquity.

Although it is an important plank of the ideology of personhood that all persons are equally persons, in practice we operate with diminished categories of personhood, a fact that the ideology of personhood obscures...We sometimes treat people with diminished cognitive capacities as less than full and equal persons, though we may continue to treat them well and with great respect in many ways...Because personhood is partly a matter of cognitive capacities and abilities that admit of degrees, and of various kinds of recognition and valuing that also admit of degrees, there seems little basis for the claim that we all treat each other as full and equal persons. (Campbell 2003, 33-34)

Campbell seems to be both articulating her own view as well as stating what she believes to be a common-sense articulation of the intuitions of many non-philosophers. I tend to agree with Campbell that many people do consider individuals with severe cognitive limitations to be lacking in personhood (especially when compared to "normal" individuals). Campbell's commitment to this rationalistic premise is likely an extension of her greater argument that places memory at the centre of personhood. Those cognitive capacities that I imagine might be required are precisely the ones necessary for episodic memory. As I shall argue later, I think that Campbell can rely on the memory criterion without committing to this rationalistic premise. As it stands, however, since she states that personhood is partly a matter of cognitive capacities, Campbell's relational account of personhood still relies on the notion of rationality as a litmus test for what kinds of entities are included in the club of *full* relational personhood. That is, if persons are, in part, defined in virtue of possession of certain cognitive capacities, then such a definition is uncomfortably close to being an example of a generalized other rather than of relational personhood since, in defining full or equal personhood, it looks to what a certain group of individuals share in common rather than to

the various complex relationships that constitute personhood.   However, the relational account should, and I think can, stand alone and apart from the liberal political premise Campbell rejects.

The rationalistic liberal political premise at the heart of Campbell's account leads to an even more serious problem with her view (an issue to which I turn presently). Regarding relationships that undermine personhood, Campbell writes:

> feminist theorists have argued that in the context of substantive inequalities, we must pay particular attention to relationships that undermine persons, their self-concepts, abilities, and opportunities, and that shape values and structure continued interactions in ways that enrich, rather than ameliorate, inequalities. (Campbell 2003, 156)

Defining personhood in a manner that excludes individuals with cognitive impairments from full membership in the moral community of persons actually diminishes their life possibilities in the way Campbell has already warned against (e.g., p. 35). This reduces the status of individuals with cognitive impairments in virtue of the kinds of dismissals Campbell worries about in the first place. I find this troubling for Campbell's view of personhood. On the one hand, she seems to be trying to open the door to full membership for individuals who are being dismissed and thus excluded from social structures that foster a development of self, which is conducive to moral personhood.   On the other hand, she dismisses individuals with cognitive disabilities whom, according to her, we still ought to treat "well and with great respect in many ways" (Campbell 2003, 34).   I think that we should indeed treat individuals with cognitive disabilities well, but with all the respect accorded to *persons*, especially if by doing so, we include them in the moral community of

persons; by granting individuals with cognitive disabilities access to social support that fosters personhood, we give them the necessary social building blocks to help construct a sense of self that contributes to moral personhood.

As already mentioned, Campbell's troublesome commitment to highly developed cognitive capacities being necessary for personhood arises from the fact that she places memory at the centre of her account of how selves are constituted. She writes:

> "Sense of self" is a vague notion, but I propose that your having a sense of self requires at least the following: opportunities to understand yourself in relation to your past, opportunities to plan and to act on your intentions, and some self-regarding emotions or attitudes. In other words, a sense of yourself depends on some of your experiences becoming your memories, some of your needs or desires becoming your plans and intentions to act, and some of your pleasures and displeasures becoming self-regarding attitudes, like pride or shame. (Campbell 2003, 29)

Campbell proposes the above-mentioned conditions, but does not argue for them because she deems them to be uncontroversial.   The capacity for accurate remembering, of course, underlies the three conditions she mentions on page 29: experiences must be somehow stored in memory; in order to have long-standing intentions to act, one must remember one's needs and desires, and self-regarding attitudes could not be possible if one were to fail to recall what one ought to be proud or ashamed of.

That may be as it should be, but I think that a relational account of personhood, especially one that adopts a relational account of memory (which I will explore below), can ground personhood in the memory criterion without necessarily limiting it to a certain type of cognitive ability.

6.2
Memory: A Brief History

Gordon Bower writes that "[p]sychology as a discipline developed out of philosophical discussions regarding the nature of the mind and mental life" (Bower 2000, 3). Contemplations concerning human memory and learning were prominent among empiricist philosophers (such as John Locke). "People's ideas about the world are alleged to derive from sense impressions either as simple copies or as combinations of simple ideas...The empiricist program required some means of learning these constellations. Thus was introduced the fundamental theory of *association by contiguity*" (Bower 2000, 3).

The scientific inquiry into associationism started with the work of the German scientist Hermann Ebbinghaus who experimented on himself and published his research results in his treatise entitled *Über das Gedächtnis*, translated into English as *On Memory*. "He measured the difficulty of learning a list by the number of study trials required for him to attain one errorless recitation of it. He noted how difficulty increased disproportionately with the length of the list being learned" (Bower 2000, 5).

Charles Darwin's (1859) theory of evolution led researchers to compare human memory and learning to those of non-human animals since Darwinism suggested that learning is an adaptive mechanism supervenient on neural hardware that is biologically continuous, even if also continuously evolving, across species. Bower explains that "[t]his 'biological continuity' view justifies the many comparative studies by psychologists of behavioral adaptation and learning in lower animals" (Bower 2000, 4) and since animals cannot aid researchers by verbally communicating with them, "those studies led in turn to a strong behaviorist orientation toward learning" (Bower 2000, 4). Studies like the ones on

conditioned reflexes pioneered by the Russian psychologist Ivan Pavlov (1927) and the Behaviourism of B. F. Skinner (1953, 1957) strongly influenced the direction of memory research until the cognitive revolution of the late 1950s and early 1960s when Behaviourism gave way to Cognitive Psychology.

Informatics, with its concepts of encoding and decoding of messages, served as an impetus for Cognitive Psychology, as did the work by Allen Newell and Herbert Simon (1961, 1972) "who constructed computer programs designed to simulate details of the thought processes that people go through as they solve various kinds of problems (e.g., logic proofs, analogies, chess playing, intelligent search)" (Bower 2000, 15). Such simulations necessarily required enormous memory storage of specifically structured knowledge, which were viewed as analogous to the activities of the human mind. Memory theorists like Ulric Neisser (1967) were motivated by such research to step away from the response-stimulus theories of Behaviourism. Neisser's *Cognitive Psychology* offered an informatics-inspired account of the working of the human mind. "People were seen as taking information into a perceptual system, selectively attending to parts of it, encoding or transforming it for use by their cognitive abilities, storing it in memory, and later retrieving it from memory when an appropriate plan and retrieval cue were activated" (Bower 2000, 15).

The 1960s and early 1970s saw an increase in focus on various memory models. Short-term memory was of particular interest. The most popular model of this period was the Multi-Store Model proposed by Richard Atkonson and Richard Shiffrin (1968, 1971), which distinguished between Long- and Short-Term Memory and structured human memory

into three separate, but interrelated systems: sensory memory, short-term memory, and long-term memory.

Endel Tulving introduced the separation between Semantic and Episodic Memory in his 1972 paper titled "Episodic and Semantic Memory." He was, however, careful to state that although it is useful to make such distinctions, such differentiations need not reflect reality (Tulving 1972, 384) and need not be all or nothing, meaning that both systems can interact with one another. In light of my focus on personhood, however, what makes episodic memory distinct from semantic memory (as well as other memory systems), namely the temporal organization and self-awareness that accompanies memory retrieval, is of great importance. I turn to a brief discussion of memory systems in general before turning to the episodic memory system, which is of central interest here.

6.3
Memory Systems

Although not everyone agrees that memory is separable into numerous systems rather than being a single unified system (see Jacoby 1984; Roediger, Weldon, and Challis 1989; Masson and MacLeod 1992), most memory researchers conceive of memory as a set of various systems and subsystems rather than a monolithic, unified entity. The common function that makes all the separate systems essentially mnemonic is that "[t]hey make possible the utilization of acquired and retained knowledge" (Schacter and Tulving 1994, 1).

According to Daniel L. Schacter and Endel Tulving, memory systems are a set of correlated processes that can be distinguished via the kinds of brain mechanisms they utilize, the kinds of information they process, and their rules of operation (Schacter and Tulving

1994, 13). Memory systems are distinct from kinds of memory (such as verbal, recognition, olfactory, etc.), memory processes (such as encoding, rehearsal, activation, retrieval, etc.), and memory tasks since "a variety of different [memory] tasks can tap, to varying degrees, the functioning of different underlying systems and subsystems" (Schacter and Tulving 1994, 12). Furthermore, explicit and implicit memories are not systems themselves, even though they are psychologically and behaviourally distinguishable, but are rather ways in which the past is recollected, explicit memory being an intentional or conscious recollection while implicit memory being an unintentional or unconscious recollection of past episodes.

According to David F. Sherry and Daniel L. Schacter, memory systems can be analyzed functionally. That is, approaching the concept of a memory system from an evolutionary point of view (see Sherry and Schacter 1987) amounts to the proposal that since different systems evolved as special adaptations of storing, managing, and retrieving information, different memory systems ought to have incompatible functions. Sherry and Schacter explain:

> Although the idea of functional incompatibility is the cornerstone of our argument, we also employ the concept of *exaptation*, which describes a feature of an organism that increases fitness by some means, but was not selected for that role (Gould & Vrba, 1982). Exaptations are adaptations to one environmental problem that can be co-opted to solve a new problem. Despite our conclusion that memory is nonunitary, not every environmental problem has its own dedicated memory system, and few memory systems have only a single function...[According to Sherry and Schacter], the term *memory system* refers to an interaction among acquisition, retention, and retrieval mechanisms that is characterized by certain rules of operation. The term *multiple memory* systems refers to the idea that two or more systems are characterized by fundamentally different rules of operation. (Sherry and Schacter 1987, 440)

Although research into the number and types of memory systems is ongoing, in 1994, Schacter and Tulving proposed the following major systems of human learning and memory: (1) Procedural Memory System, (2) Perceptual-Representational Memory System, (3) Semantic Memory System, (4) Primary Memory System, and (5) Episodic Memory System. For my intents and purposes, whether or not research will uncover a multitude of other systems is not as salient as the fact that memory is best conceived in terms of various systems, one of which, the episodic memory system, proves to be integrally related to the concept of personhood. I shall return to the special nature of the episodic memory system shortly.

Procedural memory is characterized by a gradual acquisition of knowledge that is well adapted to dealing with invariances in the environment over time; the perceptual-representational memory system and its subsystems play an important role in identifying words and objects, operate at a pre-semantic level, and are typically involved in implicit expressions of memory; semantic memory is a system responsible for the acquisition and retention of factual information (i.e. our general as well as specific and both concrete and abstract beliefs about the world are dependent on semantic memory); primary, or working, memory has adapted to temporarily hold and process information; and the episodic memory system "enables individuals to remember happenings they have witnessed in their own personal past, that is, to consciously recollect experienced events as embedded in a matrix of other happenings in subjective time" (Schacter and Tulving 1994, 28).

Although the episodic memory system shares many properties with semantic memory, it nevertheless transcends semantic memory in its ability to order personal

experiences into a temporally related narrative, the retrieval of which is accompanied by conscious awareness, "a type of awareness now called autonoetic (self-knowing) awareness" (Wheeler 2000, 597). It is not surprising that the episodic memory system is so intimately related to personhood since "[i]ts contents are infused with the idiosyncratic perspectives, emotions, and thoughts of the person doing the remembering. It necessarily involves the feeling that the present recollection is a reexperience of something that has happened before" (Wheeler 2000, 597). The fact that this kind of autonoetic recollection seems to be either unique to human beings, or at least quite rare among other mammals, further adds to its suitability for demarcating an elite group of individuals whose interests are to be socially guarded.

6.4
Episodic Memory and Personhood

In distinguishing between episodic and semantic memory, Tulving noted several properties that are unique to episodic remembering:

> First, episodic memories are more susceptible to forgetting. Second, retrieval of an episodic memory is usually accompanied by an explicit or implicit reference to, and image of, the time and/or place of the episode (e.g., 'In the list you just learned, what was *king* paired with?'). Third, retrieval of any information is itself another episode that creates its own episodic memory (e.g., people can remember a test trial and how they performed). Fourth, autobiographical memories are typically dated episodic memories, although people also have many abstract generalizations about long stretches of their life that are not themselves distinct episodes (e.g., people can recall that they went to college for four years, although they may not now be recalling any specific incident). (Bower 2000, 23)

Such abstract generalizations are interwoven with actual episodic recollections, other derivative information, as well as other people's accounts of certain episodes to form personal narratives, which can be used to track one's identity over time. Ulric Neisser and Lisa K. Libby write:

> All of us can, on request, give at least some account of the course of our lives so far. That account is based on many sources of information; it includes things we have been told (e.g., our date and place of birth) as well as what we remember personally...These stories are central to our experience of self; they are one way of saying who we are...life stories are not simply concatenations of isolated events; on the contrary, we usually organize our remembered experience into a *narrative*. "Narrative is the cognitive process that gives meaning to temporal events by identifying them as parts of a plot" (Polkinghorne, 1991, p. 136), and that process is constantly at work as we recall our own experiences. (Neisser and Libby 2000, 318)

Neisser and Libby point out that such a definition of the life narrative remains silent on the fact that some memories that are incorporated into a life narrative may be vivid and meaningful and yet inaccurate. As I shall argue in a later section, accuracy does play an important part in genuine and meaningful narratives.

One interesting fact about the property of autonoetic awareness in episodic memory is that young children appear to lack it altogether. If the autonoetic nature of episodic memory is what makes the memory criterion of personhood and personal identity appealing, which I believe it is, then the orthodox accounts of personhood that deny the moral status of personhood to infants and very young children have a psychological grounding for their claims. Regarding autonoetic awareness in young children, Wheeler writes:

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Children between ages of about 1 and 5 years resemble patients with frontal lobe lesions in one important respect: they are able to report about, both facts of the world and things that have happened to them, often without being able to consciously recollect the episodes upon which that knowledge is based...Although a young child's verbal or nonverbal recall of a particular event seems like compelling proof of episodic memory, evidence from other sources suggests that for a period of at least several more months, young children are without the capacity to recollect their past in the rich, personal way that comprises episodic retrieval. (Wheeler 2000, 602-603)

What is perplexing about the orthodox memory-based accounts of personhood, however, if they are serious-minded about the memory criterion, is that whereas they may indeed be justified in denying personhood to children, such exclusion from the moral realm of persons should cease at a much earlier age, prior to the full cognitive maturity such orthodox accounts use as a measure of personhood. Since the criteria that define personhood ought also help track diachronic personal identity, the ratio-centrism of such orthodox approaches compromises the integrity of such views since accounts that base their conception of personhood (and thus personal identity) on episodic memory cannot claim that memory constitutes personhood if they deny it to individuals who are capable of forming episodic memories, but fall beyond a certain threshold on the intelligence and cognitive maturity scales. I think that memory is indeed a good criterion for diachronic personal identity as well as personhood and that the ratio-centrism memory-based accounts are often plagued with is not only unnecessary, but can undermine memory-based accounts of personal identity.

6.5
Taking Memory Seriously

To the ancient and medieval mind, an individual without memory was an entity without moral character and so, by extension, without humanity (Carruthers 1990, 13). The choice to train one's memory, Carruthers explains, for the ancients and medievals, was a matter of ethics (Carruthers 1990, 13). Such an intimate relationship between memory, morality, and personhood fits perfectly with a relational conception of personhood that is grounded in moral considerations which are themselves deeply entrenched in a variety of social relationships. A relational account of persons that takes the memory criterion seriously is a perfect candidate for the conception of personhood I propose (one inspired by Campbell, but necessarily amended). Memory, on my account, in its private and collective forms, becomes the mortar that binds the various relationships that constitute persons. Collective memory becomes quite important on such an account.

Leaning heavily on the memory criterion also has other implications for personhood. James Fentress and Chris Wickham (1992) state that to study memory as if it were an object is dangerous since it is not clear that it has an object-like character (Fentress and Wickham 1992, 2). If memory is to serve as the basis of personhood (or at least a *person's* identity through time), then personhood ought not be studied as if it were an object since it must share its character with that of memory. When we remember, Fentress and Wickham write, we represent ourselves to ourselves. Studying the way we represent ourselves to ourselves in our memories (the way we define our identities, both personal and collective) and the way we transmit these memories to others would consist, according to them, in a study of the way

we are (Fentress and Wickham 1992, 7). Fentress and Wickham argue that memory is a *social fact* insofar as it is structured by language, teaching, observation, collectively held ideas, and shared experiences (Fentress and Wickham 1992, 7). Such views of memory and personal identity complement Campbell's relational account of personhood and they lead me to understand personhood in the way Fentress and Wickham understand memory, namely as socially dependent.

Robert A. Wilson (2005), in formulating the Social Manifestation Thesis (to which I return shortly), notes a well established distinction between two kinds of memory: autobiographical memory, which is the memory of events I experienced myself and historical memory, which incorporates information about the world that is beyond my own experience. Autobiographical memory is the kind of memory that has traditionally (see Locke) been assumed to be an essential element in diachronic personal identity. Autobiographical memories contribute to the subjective and largely private narratives that constitute our identities. Historical memories are what might be called collective memories since they are public. Such memories contribute to group identities.

James Wertsch (2002) argues that memory has been viewed through the lens of two separate functions: (1) the accuracy criterion, which focuses on how memory can provide an accurate account of the past, and (2) a focus on how memory can provide a usable past (Wertsch 2002, 31). The two functions of memory, however, are not to be understood as opposing or as being in tension, but rather as both being inherent properties of memory. Understanding the two functions as being in opposition to one another is, according to Wertsch, a tendency that reflects contrasting disciplinary perspectives rather than the nature

of memory *per se*. Wertsch argues that there has been an implicit division of labour between those who study individual or personal memory and those who study collective memory. The first research program falls under the purview of psychology and cognitive science while the latter falls under the domain of sociology. However, although it may be beneficial to divide research in this manner, such division takes away from a more inclusive and accurate understanding of memory.

There are certainly reasons to be cautious when trying to understand the relations between individual and collective memories.   For example, drawing too heavily on individual memory as a model for collective memory processes is dangerous since collective memory processes are not analogous to individual memory processes insofar as collective memory cannot be understood through reference to specific psychological and brain mechanisms.   The relationship between individual and collective memory has been formulated by a number of thinkers. I turn to this formulation shortly, but presently, it may prove helpful to briefly sketch the theoretical backdrop for the ensuing discussion, namely the extended mind thesis.

The extended mind thesis is sometimes associated with, but remains importantly distinct from, the proposal that groups can host what resembles a collective thought or a group mind. The idea that groups have cognitive properties has been utilized in a number of disciplines concerned with group behaviour.

> Economists and political scientists continue to explore the relationships between individual and group rationality...Sociologists, anthropologists, and historians find it useful to express generalizations about social groups in terms of their collective

memory...Social psychologists studying problem solving and decision making in small groups increasingly embrace the view of groups as information processors...Organizational scientists study the memory and learning processes of firms and organizations...Evolutionary biologists have revived the idea that groups can evolve into adaptive units of cognition as a result of group-selection...[etc.]. (Theiner, Georg, O'Connor, Timothy 2010, 79)

The extended mind thesis argues that cognitive processes can (and often do) extend beyond the skull, but proponents of this view need not adhere to the more radical claim that groups possess mental states.   However, proponents of the extended mind do recognize that individual cognitive processes (such as memory) can in fact be socially manifested.

Following Merlin Donald, John Sutton (2010) explains that the extended mind thesis is an offshoot of functionalist cognitive science, which focuses on the mind's ability to make use of exograms or external symbols in cognitive processing. Sutton explains that what is particularly useful about this ability is that exograms last longer than engrams (which are the brain's memory traces), are easier to transmit, and are much easier to retrieve and manipulate (Sutton 2010, 189). Sutton states that "[t]he human mind is 'leaky' both because it thus extends beyond the skin to co-opt external devices, technologies, and other people, and because our plastic brains naturally soak up labels, inner objects, and representational schemes, internalizing and incorporating such resources and often redeploying them in novel ways" (Sutton 2010, 190).

What is interesting about Sutton's (and Donald's) expression of the extended mind thesis in terms of the interaction between engrams and exograms is that since exograms can be manipulated by more than one mind (since they are publicly available), cognitive processes that involve exograms can in certain contexts be instances of multiple minds

sharing external cognitive resources or even processes to perform individualized as well as synchronized computations. In other words, exograms allow people to share thoughts, ideas, as well as cognitive processes. Such extended cognition is responsible for the formation of the intimate relationship between collective and individual memories, where collective memories can be compared to various exograms that inform, interact with, and shape the individualistic engrams of particular rememberers.

The Social Manifestation Thesis is an interesting and accurate formulation of this relationship. Although individual (autobiographical) and collective (historical) memories are distinguishable, they are nonetheless in constant interaction with one another via what Wilson refers to as the Social Manifestation Thesis (SMT). The SMT "is the idea that individuals engage in some forms of cognition only insofar as they constitute part of a social group" (Wilson 2005, 229). Historical memory, Wilson argues, serves as a social framework for autobiographical memory. Wilson explains that historical memory "constitutes a kind of social framework for the functioning of individual memory, creating a social context in which one remembers the things particular to oneself" (Wilson 2005, 230). My re-interpretation of Nozick's CCT, in chapter 5, echoes precisely the kind of insight Wilson's SMT offers, namely that individual processes (whether they be memory or meaning-making processes) are intimately influenced by social or collective processes.

This intimate connection between personal (private) and social (collective) remembering has been noted by researchers studying memory at least as early as the 1930s and 1940s. For example, F. C. Bartlett (1932) argues that interests, in the broad sense, taken to mean the development of a person's mental life, are responsible for what a person

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remembers. Moreover, Bartlett argues that interests themselves have a social origin (Bartlett 1932, 256) in customs, institutions, and traditions, which constitute a lasting social schema (Bartlett 1932, 264). Put in the language of the Social Manifestation Thesis, Bartlett's argument can be rephrased as follows: remembering is private and subjective insofar as the individual doing the remembering does so privately (after all, we do not hear each other's thoughts). However, all remembering is made possible and is shaped by the social constructions and contexts in which the remembering occurs. Once again, this fits perfectly with Campbell's relational account of personhood and it makes sense for her to ground her account in memory, which she also argues is relational, but she nonetheless does not seem to fully embrace her view of memory and instead relies on what she terms uncontroversial conditions of selfhood. The bold steps Campbell takes when writing about emotions and memory should lead her to the next bold step, which I propose to take on her behalf.

To think of memory as purely individual and private is a mistake. Assuming a storehouse model of memory (see Draaisma 2000) can easily lead to a mistakenly individualistic understanding of memory. The storehouse metaphor, as the imagery in its name implies, compares memory to a storehouse or a kind of archive where memory is kept by its possessor until it is needed for something. This kind of understanding of memory drastically downplays the importance of other rememberers and the social scaffolding that influences, encourages, and facilitates remembering by suggestively comparing memories to things that can be stored and characterizing the processes involved in remembering as being independent and individualistic.[41] Maurice Halbwachs (1941) argues that if we would like to

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[41] Similarly, to think of persons in purely individualistic terms is a mistake.

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experience private remembering that is least influenced by social contexts, we should look to our dreams, which "are composed of fragments of memory too mutilated and mixed up with others to allow us to recognize them" (Halbwachs 1941, 41). He writes:

> It is not in memory but in dream that the mind is most removed from society. If purely individual psychology looks for an area where consciousness is isolated and turned upon itself, it is in nocturnal life, and only there, that it will most be found. Far from being enlarged, free of the limitations of waking life, and far from gaining in extensiveness what it loses in coherence and precision, consciousness appears severely reduced and in a shrunken state in nocturnal life. Almost completely detached from the system of social representations, its images are nothing more than raw materials, capable of entering into all sorts of combinations...The dream is based only upon itself, whereas our recollections depend on those of all our fellows, and on the great frameworks of the memory of society. (Halbwachs 1941, 42)

Halbwachs also argues that memory is a reconstruction of the past rather than a recording of it. "[T]he mind," he writes, "reconstructs its memories under the pressure of society" (Halbwachs 1941, 51). Such an understanding of memory, which is shared by many contemporary researchers such as, for instance, Daniel Schacter (1995, 1996), points away from what Douwe Draaisma (2000) refers to as the storehouse metaphor or the storage model of memory still popular today, especially in analogies with computer memories. A relational account of memory should also point away from the storehouse metaphor and yet Campbell seems to tacitly embrace a non-relational view of memory when she lists her conditions for selfhood. Even if relational remembering had been explicitly included in Campbell's list of the conditions for personhood, I doubt that she would wish to take what to me seems to be the next logical step, which is to widen the notion of personal identity beyond one's

individualistically contained self. What this amounts to is that even though the personhood being tracked is narrow insofar as the individuation of personhood is concerned, the tracking of a person's identity (via collective memories and publicly accessible personal narratives) is extended across the minds of other individuals who both shape and hold the individual in his or her identity.

A great illustration of the relationship between individual memory and collective memory, which gives rise to group identity, is Alasdair MacIntyre's (1984) observation that people are essentially storytelling animals. The narrative tools we employ to make sense of our human activity as well as our identities, are embedded in the cultural, historical, and institutional settings that constitute our social habitats. When we take memory seriously in the context of personal identity, it becomes quite clear that individual identities, just like individual memories, are intimately intertwined with collective narratives and memories. Individual memories may well serve as the vehicles for individual identities, but such memories are influenced and shaped by collective memories and narratives making individual identities heavily reliant on the collective or social contexts within which individuals exist. We not only draw meaning from the social context, which in turn influences what and how we remember, but the process of remembering itself is largely shaped by the collective scaffolding available to the rememberer; this scaffolding is built out of collective or social memories or narratives, institutional contexts within which these collective memories reside, as well as other individual rememberers whose individual memories are similarly nestled in the collective narratives and whose individual memories in part constitute such narratives. An appreciation of this relationship between individual

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rememberers and the collective narratives in which they are immersed should not only compel us to rethink our understanding of memory, but should also inform our conception of personhood, which, in cases of severe cognitive disabilities or permanent vegetative states, takes on a visibly *relational* form.

6.6
Relational Personhood

If, as Campbell is obviously doing, one grounds a relational account of personhood in memory, then it is not clear why the cognitive capacity to remember is necessary for personhood. If, as argued in the previous section, memory is dependent on the recollections of others and on the social contexts within which these others remember, then I do not see why someone reminding me of something could not count as an act of *my* remembering something. Moreover, as Carruthers argues, if language is one of the many modes of memory (Carruthers 1990, 12), then writing something down in anticipation of forgetting and later reading the *memo* should also count as remembering. Andy Clark and David Chalmers' (1998) famous thought experiment comes to mind here and serves as a motivating reason for my purchasing a day planner every year. In Clark and Chalmers' thought experiment, Otto, who suffers from Alzheimer's disease, "relies on information in the environment to help structure his life. Otto carries a notebook around with him everywhere he goes. When he learns new information, he writes it down. When he needs old information, he looks it up" (Clark and Chalmers 1998, 12). Clark and Chalmers conclude

that "the notebook plays for Otto the same role that memory plays for Inga [who recalls information as most of us do]" (Chalmers and Clark 1998, 13).

If Otto's keeping of notes in his notebook does in fact partially constitute Otto's remembering, then the Alzheimer's disease, which affects his cognitive capacity to remember does not rob Otto of his personal identity as long as the notebook continues to feed him information about himself when he needs it. After all, our own self-identifying memories are not constantly occurrent. Our self-conceptions are complex and cannot be held in a single thought or a single memory. One can identify oneself as a brandy connoisseur, a philosopher, and a climber, but it is not necessary for oneself to have the occurrent beliefs associated with all such identifications all the time in order to genuinely identify oneself in such terms. While focusing on the current state of a foothold when negotiating the next handhold on a steep rock face, one certainly is not also contemplating Kant's categorical imperative or recalling the numerous virtues of a good cognac, but one nonetheless continues to still be the philosopher and brandy drinker, though, at present, quite focused on a single aspect of his or her self-conception.

If relational personhood is to be grounded in the memory criterion and if, as argued above, memory need not be constantly present as in a storehouse, but is rather reconstructed with the aid of various social frameworks, then the status of personhood does not require that an individual be in possession of the cognitive capacities required for memory. As long as there is a social framework that keeps track of the identity of such an individual in the same manner that Otto's notebook keeps track of Otto's identity, and as long such an individual is engaged in certain "personhood-maintaining" relationships, which do not have to require

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the kinds of cognitive capacities in question, then we can certainly treat such individuals "well and with great respect" (Campbell 2003, 34), but for the same reason we treat our colleagues, friends, and other people well and with great respect, namely because they are *persons*.

In other words, if such collective remembering can maintain the narratives of individuals who lose them (i.e. amnesiacs, trauma victims, cognitively disabled individuals, etc.), then personhood can be attributed on relational grounds without the need for a cognitive prerequisite and without the need for rememberers to always have to remember. For example, if I forget who I am (because, as in the movies, I bang my head on something), my networks of relationships, those very same relationships that are responsible for my personhood on the relational account, can either remind me of who I am or literally hold me in my identity by remembering on my behalf.

Individuals lacking the ability to understand themselves as continuing entities due to, to keep with the above movie example, severe trauma to the head for instance, cannot be reminded of who they are, but the relational (social, communal) remembering of their narratives, as I will argue below, can keep their identities intact.

I think there is nothing wrong with stating that in cases of amnesia one can re-learn, re-discover, and re-claim one's identity with the aid of others. A person's identity, on such a view *does* stem from the capacity of rational beings to remember, but it is *not* limited to them. Beings in appropriate relationships with such individuals share in the realm of moral personhood in virtue of these relationships, but need not have the same cognitive capacities as the individuals in virtue of whose relationships they are persons.

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I suspect that Campbell's account of personhood is based on the idea that not all persons are created equally and that not all persons need to share equally in the concept of personhood, which means that there may indeed be room, on a relational account of personhood, to say that personhood also admits of degree if the relationships upon which personhood depends are too few or of a kind that is quite weak. Campbell's point, then, is that although individuals with certain cognitive disabilities may run the risk of being in the position where their relationships are lacking in such ways, it is likely due to exclusionary practices of others, which is just as morally inappropriate as it is de-personifying. In cases where a person lacks enough person-generating relationships due to exclusionary practices such as sexism, racism, or ableism, we are morally obligated to replenish the appropriate relationships and thus, in effect, buttress the personhood of individuals who may have trouble doing so for themselves. I concur with Campbell's suggestion that we are morally obligated to enter into care relations with individuals in danger of becoming de-personified. However, I do not think that personhood need be or is a matter of degree on a relational account.

6.7
Narratives, Extended Diachronic Personal Identity, and Care Relations

Marya Schechtman's (1996) distinction between the reidentification and characterization questions is in part a reaction to some of the largely uninformative criteria for the individuation of persons that have grown around the intricate puzzle cases and thought experiments that flavour the personal identity debate in analytic philosophy. David

Lewis (1983), for example, argues that persons are spatiotemporal objects that may share some space-time slices with other persons and are individuated via a global, rather than local, unification. This view, however, entails a commitment to a four-dimensionalist metaphysics, which makes Lewis' individuation of persons somewhat trivial considering that, on such a view, all objects are space-time worms trackable via the collection of their constitutive space-time slices. In other words, such an individuation of persons is solely geared to answer the reidentification question, but remains silent on the characterization question; it says nothing about persons *qua* persons. Schechtman proposes a narrative account of identity as a means of addressing the characterization question; narratives do not merely track diachronic identity, they track a *person's* diachronic identity. Objects like chairs, cars, and ships, while having a wide array of properties suitable for reidentification, lack narratives that characterize them; their identities consist entirely of properties that lack the type of subjectivity that is inherent in personal narratives.

Subjectivity, in and of itself, however, as Nozick (1981) aptly points out, is also insufficient for the kind of "informative" tracking of personal identity that Schechtman's narrativism proposes. Individuation via a mere momentary first-personal self-reference is just as uninformative as spatiotemporal individuation. This is why the centrepiece of Nozick's account is the self-conception, which is temporally extended and dynamically weighted, the weighting being sensitive to an overall evaluation and constant re-evaluation of one's own closest continuers and predecessors. Nozick's closest continuer theory, given the central place his notion of a self-conception occupies within it, can, and I think ought to be, understood as a sophisticated narrativist account. Although subjectivity is an essential

feature of self-conceptions, their content, as already argued in chapter 5, is significantly externalistic in nature.

Following DeGrazia (2005), László Kajtár rightly points out that theorists usually understand "narratives" as referring to stories (see Alasdair MacIntyre 1984 who argues that people are storytelling animals). Kajtár suggests that the problem with this kind of definition of narrativism is that defining narratives in terms of stories is far from helpful as both are equally vague concepts. Following Bruner (1990), Kajtár defines a narrative as "a selection of events ('the plot'), presented in a meaningful structure" (Kajtár 2012, 33). "Thus," Kajtár concludes, "a narrative consists of a plot and a mode of presentation" (Kajtár 2012, 33).

The plot, then, is not a thorough listing of every detail in the history of the subject, but rather a salient selection of events. In the case of narratives (or self-conceptions), following my argument in Chapter 5, the salient selection of events that constitute "the plot" of an individual's narrative will be heavily informed by the external meaning-producing relations that help shape, inform, and maintain self-conceptions. The mode of presentation of personal narratives usually manifests itself in the form of a self-conception, which entails subjectivity and requires self-awareness. That is, the mode of presentation of the plot of a personal narrative is the self-aware, self-conceiving self. However, as I shall argue both in this section and in chapter 7, partly due to the fact that the narrative plot itself is informed and shaped by meaningful affective care relations, the mode of presentation need not rely on the narrative owner's subjectivity alone, but can rather be extended across the minds of other subjects of experience. Subjectivity and a certain amount of cognitive capacity required for remembering, narrating, and differentiating between one's own subjectively presented

narratives and the narratives of others is sufficient, and at least insofar as those who maintain the identities of others must possess such capacities, it is necessary for the maintenance of personhood, but such cognitive capacities, and perhaps even much of the accompanying subjectivity, is not necessary for the moral personification of individuals who at least at some point in their lives were in possession of narratives. This is because personal narratives can be externally realized via the remembering of others.

Kajtár concludes that "in order to be a person it is necessary to have an autobiographical self that individuates persons and that is also necessary for their persistence through time" (Kajtár 2012, 42). However, the extended account of personal identity denies this conclusion. Rather, in order to be a person, on the relational and extended accounts, it is necessary to have a narrative, which at some point requires a certain level of subjectivity conducive to either entering into care relations or being the recipient of care. Thus, I am in agreement with Schechtman, Kajtár, and the narrativist, externalist reading of Nozick that what characterizes *persons* is the possession of a narrative, which presupposes a certain level of subjectivity and self-awareness. However, the extended account of identity I propose does not make the cognitive capacities required for such narratives into a necessary condition for moral personhood. That is, on the account I propose, an entity is a person as long as somewhere in its history, though not necessarily presently, that entity could narrate.

This is not as outlandish an idea as it may at first appear. The social manifestation thesis, in both its causal and constitutive modes helps to ground the idea of extended identity. The social manifestation thesis, as part of the extended mind thesis, is usually given a constitutive role. The extended mind thesis states that cognition is physically constituted by

processes outside of the skull.   For example, in the case of Otto and his notebook, the notebook physically constitutes, rather than merely causally influences, Otto's remembering. In the account I propose, the social manifestation thesis plays both a constitutive as well as causal role. I turn to both modes of manifestation presently.

Narratives are complex, nonuniform (they differ from person to person), and dynamic (they can and constantly do undergo re-conceptualization).   What all narratives share in common, however, is that they are socially manifested. This is in part an inevitable consequence of the socially manifested nature of memory (as discussed in previous sections). That is, since a personal narrative is temporally extended, it relies on memory and remembering to keep it unified and trackable as a single continuous narrative. What and how we remember, as Bartlett (1932), Halbwachs (1941), and Wilson (2005) have suggested, depends on, is made possible, and is shaped by the social constructions and contexts in which remembering occurs.   Thus, narratives, insofar as they depend on memory for their individuation are socially manifested, where such manifestation is of a causal kind, meaning that individual processes are intimately influenced by social or collective processes.

Narratives, however, are also saliently constituted by various care relations, which are important sources of meaning. Some examples Nozick gives of meaningful and valuable relations are: relations to children, relationships with other people, helping others, and advancing a tradition. In care relational terms, the meaning of personal narratives is derived from the engagement and entanglement in various care relations with others.   These care relations, however, do more than merely instil meaning in an isolated narrative; they are literally part of the narrative.   That is, these meaning-conferring care relations constitute

personal narratives just as the pen-on-paper scribbles in Otto's notebook constitute Otto's remembering. This, as I shall argue, is precisely the reason why personal narratives and thus moral personhood can be maintained even in the absence of a self engaged in self-conceiving. Although personal narratives individuate single persons, they are widely realized in the minds of others via care relations, which are constitutive of the narratives themselves; the care relations are not merely a source of meaning, but rather an inseparable part of the meaningful content of a personal narrative.

The concept of care, being intimately tied to a future-oriented prudential interest in diachronic personal identity, is in itself a source of meaningfulness in the lives of entities who engage in caring for and about others. As we trace a person's identity through time, we track the various relational properties that instill personal narratives with meaning and thus act as a glue that binds such differential, changing, dynamic, and often unique properties into stable, trackable narratives. Because these care relational properties are literally constitutive of personal narratives, the conception of care relations as *glue* that holds an individual's temporal identity together explains why it is possible to feel like a part of us is lost when important, life shaping relationships end. The loss of close friends, parents, siblings, or one's children literally cuts into our personal narratives, leaving them less complete. Moreover, since care relations are morally relevant on a care-centric account of personhood, what is lost in cases where such care relating ceases is not merely of idiosyncratic sentimental value, but of great moral importance as well. Of course, such loss of relations can be somewhat compensated by engaging in new care relations with others. However, morally meaningful care relations are not replaceable, and, by extension, neither are the narratives that are

constituted by such unique and irreplaceable instances of relating. This is precisely what makes persons so precious and morally valuable as well as considerable.

Hilde Lindemann, in "Holding One Another (Well, Wrongly, Clumsily) in a Time of Dementia," argues that a person's identity is shaped and can be preserved by others. Although my proposal differs from the view Hilde Lindemann puts forward, Lindemann's understanding of personal identity and the view of *extended diachronic personal identity* I propose share important resemblances. Moreover, Lindemann's account of holding in identity lends itself well to fleshing out and explaining some salient aspects of my account of relational personhood.

Lindemann explains that the intimate as well as complex interactions between family members and the children of a given family are not only responsible for shaping the child's identity, but also for holding the child in it at times he or she needs it most. By treating the child in accordance with the family's collective narrative sense of him or her, the family reinforces the stories that populate this collective narrative. Moreover, identity maintenance also involves the weeding out of stories that no longer fit the family's collective narrative. "It's in endorsing, testing, refining, discarding, and adding stories, and then acting on the basis of that ongoing narrative work, that families do their part to keep the child's identity going" (Lindemann 2010, 163). If, for example, the child's narrative sense is closely tied to athleticism, then the family may strengthen this identity by encouraging physical activities, endorsing the child's participation in certain sports, etc. Moreover, if the child's narrative sense is threatened by a failure or a loss, the family may choose to gradually dispose of such stories from the collective narrative by focusing on stories of athletic success and prowess or

they can re-interpret failure and loss as a natural and pedagogically essential aspect of athletic growth, thereby reinforcing the narrative sense tied to athleticism. In this way, by weeding out some narratives and shaping others, the family can help form and reinforce the child's narrative sense and, perhaps more interestingly, the family can *hold* the child in his or her identity.

The child is also responsible for his or her identity and takes gradually more charge of it him or herself as he or she matures. However, the family reinforcement (be it positive or negative) can and often does continue to shape the child's narrative sense even into maturity. For example, when the child's "grip on herself is temporarily shaky, what she needs most is to be *held* in her identity. It is then that the adults in her immediate family have the special job of reminding her, by how they interact with her, of who she really is" (Lindemann 2010, 162). Lindemann's notion of *holding* others in their identity is certainly one way in which identity is extended. Although Lindemann does think that unborn children's identities begin to be shaped prior to birth, she does not seem to think that very severe cases of dementia lend themselves to the kind of holding she describes. It is at this point that Lindemann's view and my account diverge; the narrative and mnemonic mechanisms I put forth as driving personhood open the way to the possibility of holding individuals in advanced stages of dementia in their identities.

One interesting thing Lindemann proposes, something that has been the centrepiece of thinking about the extended mind (see Wilson 1994, Dennett 1996, Clark and Chalmers 1998), is that places play an important role in cognition. Lindemann argues that not only other people, but also familiar places (Lindemann 2010, 162-163) can hold individuals in

their identities. Daniel Dennett (1996), in "Making Things to Think With," states that the primary source of our intelligence is the habit to offload many of our cognitive tasks into the environment itself, thus extending our minds into the surrounding world where the peripheral devices we construct can store, process, and represent our meanings (Dennett 1996, 134-135). On pages 138-139, he gives the example of the elderly who are incapable of recalling simple daily routines and suffer from other memory-related deficiencies once they are housed in institutions such as nursing homes. However, many such signs of dementia are less pronounced or disappear altogether once they are returned to their own homes where they have "offloaded" many of their daily routine schedules (such as taking their medications, etc.) on items or places that "remind" them of what they have to do, how they ought to do it, and other kinds of pertinent information. Similarly, families, friends, and other important acquaintances form a social environment onto which identities can be offloaded and via which they can be retained, maintained, transmitted, and sometimes reclaimed. It is quite interesting to see the same Dennett who voices such sentiments holding a very strict ratio-centric criterion for personhood. It may be that Dennett changed his mind about what constitutes personhood by this point, but I suspect that this is not the case. Rather, I think that Dennett, just like Campbell, does not seem to take his insightful externalism to its logical conclusion.

What is interesting about Lindemann's and Dennett's externalism is that narratives seem to be only one of many other externalist modes of tracking personal identity. That is, if places and objects can play an important role in cognition, as the proponents of the extended mind thesis argue, then places and objects, and not just other people, should have the power

to maintain personal identity. Clark and Chalmers' 1998 thought experiment where Otto, an Alzheimer's patient, tracks his own memories and thus identity with the help of a notebook is an example of an object performing the function of an external narrative. Similarly, buildings, furniture, geographic locations, etc. could in principle perform the same function.

What makes the social narratives special, however, is that Otto's notebook only has the power to maintain Otto's identity as long as Otto is around and has the capacity to utilize it. The same is true for Dennett's nursing home residents; the residents' own familiar homes where various routines and identity-maintaining memories have been offloaded can only hold them in their identities as long as the residents themselves are capable of accessing and interpreting the offloaded information. Others may be able to partially reconstruct the identities of the people who offloaded portions of their identities into their environment (archeologists task themselves with just this kind of reconstruction), but in the case of social relations, the external identity tracking does not cease when the person being tracked is no longer capable of tracking his or her own identity since other minds with the capacities to remember and commemorate are the ones doing the remembering and commemorating.

Nevertheless, given enough information, perhaps with the aid of something that functions like a Rosetta Stone to a personal narrative, individual identities can in principle be preserved in external environments, albeit devoid of moral value because such narrative preservation occurs in the absence of empathic care relations since external environments in and of themselves lack the affective faculties necessary for such relations. If objects and places could in fact track the identities of persons in the absence of narratives, then narratives would only be a sufficient condition for identity maintenance. This would not undermine

extended personal identity in any way. In fact, it would only serve to broaden the modality of identity maintenance. However, since objects and places are not the kinds of things that can enter into empathic care relations with anyone or anything, they cannot by themselves function as *personal* identity preservers, but rather only as historical accounts of past persons. Thus, if genuine empathic care relations could be re-established, then personal identity could, in principle, be maintained, but it can only be truly and fully maintained by other minds since inanimate objects themselves lack the capacities required for such identity maintenance.

Lindemann rightly insists that narratives, in order to genuinely and properly track someone's identity, must be accurate enough and have to pick out something about the individual that is importantly true. For example:

> If you never went to med school, aren't licensed to practice, and don't see patients, then you aren't a doctor, and neither I, nor your doting mother, nor God himself can hold you in that identity...Good holding almost always requires stories that depict something actual about the person, so if your stories portray him as you wish to see him rather than as he actually is, you are very likely holding him wrong. (Lindemann 2010, 164)

The externalism on which the extended account of diachronic personal identity is premised is a natural consequence of the numerous mnemonic and narrative tools people employ in building, shaping, tracking, and making sense of their own identities. These tools are firmly nestled into the structure of the cultural, social, historical, and institutional contexts in which people live and therefore construct, reconstruct, and maintain their

identities. As already argued, when we take memory seriously in the context of personal identity, the inevitable conclusion is an externalized understanding of personal identity where both personal memories and individual identities are realized within the context of collective narratives (see the discussion of memory and the social manifestation thesis in this chapter).

The identities of persons, then, are widely realized, which means that tracking a person's identity over time involves many minds, including of course (at least very often), the mind of the individual being tracked. I am in agreement with Robert A. Wilson's position that "the characterization of wide realizations preserves the idea that properties with such realizations are still properties of individual subjects" (Wilson 2004, 141), which entails that whereas the identity of persons is widely realized, persons themselves are not; persons are individuated by their narratives, which are constituted, and can be maintained, by personhood-preserving care relations.

The extended account of personal identity combats the problems that stem from the individualistic ratio-centrism I argued against earlier in this dissertation. The recognition of the relational grounding of personhood and the narrative-based criteria for tracking persons through time enables a genuine maintenance of personal identity on behalf of individuals, like those with severe cognitive disabilities who lack the intrinsic cognitive capacities that underpin the remembering, and thus personal identities, of people with *normal* cognitive and mnemonic abilities.

Because ratio-centrism tends to be unpalatably exclusionary as well as disproportionally biased toward individualistic, justice-based moral theories, my starting point has been a care-centric one. The adoption of care-centrism has two major implications

on the account of personhood and personal identity I propose: (1) narratives, as already discussed above, are in part constituted by care relations, and (2) the constitutive nature of care relations and their propensity to be embedded in narratives serves as a care ethical grounding for the moral obligation to continually maintain personhood via person-maintaining care relations as well as to enter into person-preserving care relations with individuals whose personal narratives require maintenance. I will briefly discuss each here and then turn to a more detailed expansion of the second implication in chapter 7.

Since care ethics grounds morality in care relations, the external source of meaning in personal narratives (see chapter 5) is also the source of moral significance. Moreover, relations to others, particularly care relations, being constitutive of narratives, infuse personal narratives with moral relevance. Thus, although subjectivity is required for narration (there must be a subject of a narrative), much of the moral considerability associated with personhood (or entities that have personal narratives) is derived from the moral significance of what we take to be meaningful in our lives. Whereas on a ratio-centric account this externalized meaning is understood in terms of the significance it has to the subject of experience, on a care-centric account, such externalized meaning is additionally understood in terms of its moral significance. That is, meaning-conferring care relations, such as friendship, for example, are not only valuable or meaningful insofar as they enhance the experiences of the subject of a narrative, but rather they also serve to evaluate the subject of the narrative as a morally relevant entity in virtue of the fact that his or her narrative is constituted by basic moral building blocks, namely care and care relations, which serve as the foundation for care-centric ethical theories. Furthermore, since care relations are

constitutive of narratives, that is they are a real, albeit externalized part of a personal narrative, they continue to infuse the narrative with moral considerability even if the subject of experience is merely a recipient of care and perhaps even if the personal narrative is no longer narrated by its subject, but is solely externalized via the collective remembering of others. In such extreme cases, care relations, being constitutive rather than merely causal, remain fully functioning (morally significant) aspects of a person's narrative, precisely because they are external to the subject of experience who normally self-conceptualizes and internalizes the extended fibres of his or her own personal narrative.

The other interesting implication of the care-centric grounding is that since care relations are constitutive of narratives, those who are thusly related to personal narratives are in a position to maintain the narratives of those who lack the cognitive capacities required to narrate, thereby maintaining the personhood of individuals who without such maintenance would suffer de-personification due to their inability to actively narrate. What is interesting about this implication is that since, on a care-centric account, care relations constitute the foundation of morality, they generate a self-perpetuating moral obligation. That is, carers are morally obligated to continue caring as long as previously established care relations continue to be active (and as long as carers continue to be capable of caring). And since narratives are extended in the way I have suggested, both the care relations that partially constitute the narratives as well as the narratives themselves continue to be active and thus the narratives continue to be morally considerable while the care relations that constitute them continue to generate a moral obligation on the part of the carer to continue his or her caring, which further continually buttresses the moral considerability of the narrative itself.   Briefly

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restated, the narratives we helped construct are infused with the various care relations that helped inform them and, in the absence of cognitive capacities necessary to self-narrate, those care relations continue to be our link to the narratives, compelling us to continue to narrate on behalf of the individuals for whom we cared and for whom we continue to care.

I will discuss the moral obligation to fragile persons in greater depth in the next chapter where I will also explain the role of empathy as the mechanism that initiates the taking of what I refer to as the Affective Stance, which is an emotional stance taken toward individuals that are best understood in terms of an affective kinship with oneself. I borrow the notion of affective kinship from the Stoics by recasting the theory of *Oikeiosis* in care ethical terms; I reinterpret the primary attachment the Stoics assume a being has to itself in terms of a primary sense of care one has for oneself. The affective kinship is a result of expanding the notion of self-care to other-centred care via an empathic recognition of self- (and other-centred) care in the individual toward whom the Affective Stance is extended.

In this chapter, I reviewed Campbell's account of relational remembering and her relational understanding of personhood. I also examined the intimate entanglement between individual and collective memories. Moreover, I proposed a more fitting conception of memory for a relational account of personhood by arguing that memory, both individual and collective, binds the various relationships that constitute relational personhood. Finally, I argued for relational personhood, the moral significance of care relations, and an extended account of diachronic personal identity.

In the next chapter, I will argue that empathic recognitions of certain affective states in another being or in another being's narrative endows that being with moral worth and in

turn dignifies the individual. Any such individual, on my account, is a person even if the number of appropriate relations is low.   Moreover, any such individual ought to be personified. In other words, the empathic recognition of certain affective states in a being with a personal narrative morally obliges us to enter into person-maintaining care relations with such individuals due to the affective kinship that underlies a care-centric understanding of person-maintaining relating.

Chapter 7
Fragile Personhood:
Our Moral Obligations to Care About
and Personify Vulnerable Individuals

7.1
Moral Spheres:
The Moral Grounding of Personhood

This chapter sets out to consider how personhood is maintained by social interactions, which, on a care-based ethic are relational in nature. It also explores extended diachronic personal identity and its role within the relational framework responsible for person maintenance.

One way to taxonomize the world is via the following morally relevant distinctions: (1) living and non-living things, (2) non-sentient living beings and sentient living beings, and (3) non-rational sentient living beings and rational sentient living beings. There is, however, a morally relevant sphere of beings, which precedes rationality and is thus distinct from the rational sentient sphere, namely sentient living beings that have affective states. This sphere is the theoretical domain of care ethicists such as, among many others, Carol Gilligan (1982), Annette Baier (1987), Jean Grimshaw (1992), Nel Noddings (2002), etc. Prominent care theorists working within the field of bioethics, which increasingly includes concerns and issues notable in the field of Disability Studies, such as discussions pertaining to normalcy, moral standing, and justice (see Carlson 2003; Jaworski 2010; Nussbaum 2002, 2010), argue for the extension of care ethics beyond the interpersonal by focusing on more universal

dimensions of dependency and care relations and applying care to social, political, and bioethical issues. Sara Ruddick and Virginia Held, for example, argue that the relationships inherent in mothering are paradigmatic for human relationships in general (see Ruddick 1989, 1983; Held 1983). Philosophers like Eva Feder Kittay refer to dependency relations rather than mothering or maternal relations when discussing responsibilities within care relations between close relatives, friends, or care workers and care receivers who depend on such care relations not just for their moral considerability, but also for their very survival (see Kittay 1999, 2003; Lindemann 2010). These and other influential scholars have laid the Care-Centric grounding that gives rise to and enables my account of Relational Personhood.

Although Sue Campbell's (1997) work on the expression and externalized formation of feelings deals largely with emotions, her externalism is not limited to emotions, but also holds for moods and affective states, the latter being of most interest to the account of relational personhood I propose. Some authors use such terms as 'affective states,' 'emotive states,' and 'emotions' interchangeably and although I will largely refrain from doing so, I will nevertheless sometimes follow their practices since emotive and affective states are intimately related, the difference being largely temporal in nature. Moreover, since emotions can transform into affective states, as is often the case with romantic interest turning into love, emotions are often important initializers for meaningful affective states, thereby making emotions as well as affective states salient features of person-maintaining care relations. In his *The Subtlety of Emotions*, Aaron Ben-Ze'ev explains the differences between the various feelings and emotions that accompany, and often enrich, our lives.

These differences are expressed in temporal differences. Emotions and moods, which are occurrent states, are relatively short, whereas sentiments and affective traits, which are essentially dispositional, last for a longer period. Emotions typically last between a few minutes and a few hours, although in some cases they can also be described as lasting seconds or days. Moods usually last for hours, days, weeks, and sometimes even for months. Sentiments last for weeks, months, and sometimes even many years. Affective traits can last a lifetime. (Ben-Ze'ev 2000, 81)

The ratio-centric account of personhood is similar in structure to the care-based account I advocate, but the two differ with regard to the morally relevant sphere that informs the concept of personhood. The ratio-centric account defines moral agency, and thus moral considerability of persons within the bounds of the rational sphere while the care-based account defines person-specific moral considerability within the bounds of the care relational sphere, which is wider than, but encapsulates, the rational sphere.

The ratio-centric approach to personhood defines moral agency in rationalistic terms; rationality makes certain morally relevant preferences possible or serves as the central capacity enabling an individual to possess autonomy or internalize the moral law, etc. This, in turn, endows the individual with moral worth (dignity), which secures certain person-specific rights.

The care-based approach, on the other hand, understands the relationship between moral agency, patient-hood, and rights in somewhat similar terms by linking rights and moral worth to dignity, but rather than taking the rational sphere as the morally relevant starting point, it focuses on the moral sphere of entities capable of caring as being fundamental for the grounding of personhood. The moral worth of individuals who are entangled in care relations originates in part due to the fact that we protect what we love or care about; a being

capable of evoking or demanding the affective state of caring is a being that, in virtue of a genuine care relation, is valued since *caring* includes both "caring about" and "valuing."

Although the capacity to self-narrate enables personhood, which in turn endows an entity with moral worth that secures certain person-specific rights, the ability to either provide or receive care,[42] and the actual engagement in care relations, are what enables the maintenance of moral personhood even in the absence of coherent first-personal narration. The benefit of grounding personhood in the care ethical sphere is that on such an account, care relations are seen as the morally salient features of personhood (because they are important, meaning- and value-conferring constituents of personal narratives) and the establishment of care relations can have, given an extended account of personal identity, person-maintaining properties even when an individual loses capacities (e.g. the ability to self-narrate) that initiated his or her membership in the care ethical sphere.

As I will explain in this chapter, empathy plays a central role in the formation of person-maintaining care relations, making either the capacity for empathic caring or the capacity for the reception of such caring a telltale sign of a person-generating narrative. Empathy has the power to build people into groups in virtue of its ability to allow them to function as more than self-interested individuals thus serving as a morally compelling affective drive to engage in person-maintaining care relations. Personhood, then, can be maintained in virtue of an entanglement in care relations with individuals who continue to be in possession of this capacity for empathic caring. This also means that although all moral agents are persons, not all persons need to be moral agents (as long as some moral agents are

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[42] Both capacities are necessary since a care-giver has to be present in order for a care-receiver to be *cared for* and *cared about*.

around to maintain their personhood, or to use Hilde Lindemann's (2010) terminology, are around "to hold," these non-agents in their personhood and identities).

The care-based grounding of personhood ensures that the moral status of persons remains grounded in the moral sphere, making personhood a moral term. The same, of course, is true for ratio-centric accounts, like the Kantian conception of personhood, that ground personhood in moral agency where such agency is inseparably tied to rationality. The crucial difference, however, is that personhood, on the care-centric account, can be maintained relationally in virtue of the fact that care relations are at the centre of narrative identity. What it means for a person to be a particular individual has to do with his or her relations (i.e. being a mother, a sister, a friend, a colleague, etc.) partly because the individuals involved in such relations causally influence the person's narration by contributing to how events are remembered and how memories that compose the narration are generated and partly because the care relations themselves are constitutive of the narrative. Relational personhood, then, is the solution a care-centric account provides to the problem of the exclusion of fragile persons from the realm and protection of moral personhood. This is something the ratio-centric account cannot do since personhood, on such a view, is not grounded in relations, but rather in rationality, which confines it to an individualism incompatible with the kind of holding in identity or maintenance of personhood that is entailed by the relational view of persons and extended account of identity. It may be the case that proponents of ratio-centric accounts regard the inability (of ratio-centric views) to hold others in their identities as a strength rather than a weakness of such accounts, but if that is the case, then such a sentiment strikes me as quite odd especially

considering the great extent to which the personal narratives of highly rational humans are shaped, formed, and influenced by others. It only makes sense that those who causally and constitutively shape, form, and influence our personhood should be capable of holding us in it.

To succinctly encapsulate, beings with narratives that are intimately shaped and constituted by care relations are persons on the care-centric view; because such beings *do* enter into care relations, their personhood can be preserved and maintained by the relations they enter into even if the capacity to self-narrate diminishes or is lost at some point in their lives. The extended nature of relational personal identity makes person-maintenance possible even in the absence of the capacity to care for or about as long as the individual is an appropriate recipient of care (i.e. one whose narrative is saturated with affective care relations). Not only the identities of fragile persons (individuals who have to be held in their identities) are extended in this way; all our identities are thusly extended.

> All persons can and do rely on others to maintain a cohesive narrative identity. Individuals with cognitive limitations that create difficulties for their tracking their own identities, thus magnifying the problems that we all face in preserving a coherent conception of ourselves, may depend on others more deeply to maintain such cohesive narratives. This provides one way in which an externalist view of narrative identity allows individuals who have traditionally been viewed as falling below the status of personhood – namely, those with severe or increasing cognitive disabilities and limitations – to manifest personhood. And it does so without viewing their status as persons as different in kind from that of others. Like the regularly cognitively endowed, their personal identities are socially manifested properties, albeit ones that are more deeply reliant on their social context. (Wilson & Lenart, in press, Concluding Thoughts)

It is this feature of the relational account that allows the maintenance of narratives and thereby also of the relations that constitute these narratives (which, in turn, individuate the persons that can be collectively tracked via these narratives).

One might wonder whether a *potential* capacity to enter into person-maintaining care relations is sufficient for personhood just as one might wonder whether a potential capacity for rationality is sufficient for personhood. I concur with Michael Tooley that potential capacities are not sufficient and thus am compelled to maintain that actual caring is required, the reason being that in the absence of self-narration, others are necessary to keep an individual in his or her identity. This is precisely what makes the personhood of such individuals so very fragile and our moral obligations to them so much more pressing. In the abortion context, Tooley argues that potential capacities cannot serve as a basis for anti-abortion arguments because if, given the technology, it may be *possible* to reprogram a cat's brain to possess the content of an adult human person's brain, then by the mere possibility of such reprogramming, the cat should be a person, which is absurd (Tooley 2009, 30). In his second, and perhaps even more convincing, example, Tooley states that a sperm and an egg lying next to one another have the potential capacity to grow into a person, but surely such a capacity is not enough to grant the status of personhood to the sperm and the egg (Tooley 2009, 39). Thus, even if the capacity for entering into care relations as a recipient of care is sufficient for personhood, the mere possibility or potential for such a capacity is not.

The moral status of children, who are in the process of developing various capacities, is often difficult to secure on accounts that utilize the status of personhood as the grounding for moral considerability. For example, in defining personhood in terms of self-awareness

and the possession of the concept of a self as a continuous subject of experiences, Michael Tooley (1972) concludes that infants, lacking such concepts, lack the status of personhood.[43] Defining personhood in care-centric terms can also face a similar conclusion when considered apart from the relational account. Infants, and certainly neonates, are not paradigm examples of entities capable of caring (though they are paradigmatic cases of individuals in need of care). Moreover, it may certainly be the case that some affective states can only emerge in the presence of a sufficiently developed cognitive capacity because certain concepts may be prerequisites for certain affective states. In this chapter, I will argue that the relational account of personhood can help itself to an asymmetric kind of relating, which can mirror affective states in the context of appropriate care relations, which involve, as one of the relata, at least one individual with the appropriate capacities. In other words, recognizing an entity's capacity to be a recipient of care is enough to establish a morally relevant, albeit, asymmetric care relation.

Children do, however, quickly begin to emulate the various affective states their parents or guardians exhibit as they relate to their charges.[44] Parents and guardians effectively socialize children into numerous ways of relating affectively with others. Learning various ways of caring, some of which can serve as the basis of personifying others, is analogous to being habituated into virtue in the process of moral development,

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[43] This does only apply to very young children and the care-centric approach faces a similar difficulty. The relational account, however, can personify very young children in virtue of asymmetric care-relations. I will discuss this issue in the next section.

[44] Again, an account that defines personhood in terms of self-awareness (which is not ratio-centric in itself) may well follow a similar developmental model. My intention here is not to argue against other accounts, but rather to show what an account of personhood grounded in moral agency entails about the moral status of children. I do think, however, that since the capacity for caring develops much sooner than the capacity for rationality, a care-centric grounding is preferable to a ratio-centric one.

which originates in the home or a familial sphere, but continues in ever widening social spheres until the agent begins to critically think for herself and thus begins to navigate the moral world with an internalized, but continually flexible and self-regulating moral compass (see Annas 2004, 70). However, although the mature carer has a better grasp of the subtleties, realities, and obligations of caring than does a child, just as the mature virtuous agent has a better grasp of virtue than does a moral learner, both the child's caring and the moral learner's virtue are morally relevant, even though they are still developing. In fact, most, if not all people, are moral learners at varying stages of development, which means that being a moral learner is not grounds for de-personification, but rather an indicator of personhood. Thus, on the care-centric account, children, who are excellent examples of moral learners, albeit novice moral learners, are persons as soon as they begin their care-relational socialization since that is the moment at which they become moral learners.

7.2
Personalizing People

Postulating relations as the binding glue of personhood requires some clarification. After all, not every sort of relation can be person-maintaining since if that were the case, relations such as "to-the-right-of" or "larger-than" would have to have some person-preserving properties, which they in fact lack. If not all relations are person-maintaining, then which relations are so special that they preserve personhood? As already argued in chapter 5 and 6, person-maintaining relations are those that become intimately and constitutively embedded in personal narratives.

Personhood is fragile on orthodox accounts just as it is on mine, the difference being that whereas accounts that look to rationality for their criterion for personhood tend to blame the de-personified individuals for their loss of moral status. The relational account, on the other hand, points to the fact that others do in fact tend to dissociate themselves from those who are being de-personified and traces the cause of de-personification to this social alienation rather than to an intrinsic property inherent in the individual him or herself, a property that is just as fragile as the relations we foster since each one of us can lose this property (in an accident, due to an illness, or just as a natural matter of course as our cognitive capacities diminish with age), finding him or herself speedily, and often without warning, on the unfortunate side of a ratio-centric account of personhood.

Although the relational account of personhood does not require the presence of higher cognitive capacities, individuals with different cognitive capacities may have different needs. That is, some cognitive capacities may give rise to certain needs that do not emerge in individuals with limited cognitive capacities. This is analogous to the emergence of needs specific to certain biological features such as the presence of gills in fish, for example, or the specialized needs of amputees. However, although some needs that are person-specific may also be intimately tied to certain cognitive capacities such as the need to self-conceptualize or self-narrate, it is not the case that person-maintaining care relations are exclusively tied to such needs because others can hold us in previously constituted self-narrations just as others both causally and constitutively shape and inform our current self-conceptualized narrations.

Since, as established in chapter 6, relational personhood need not be limited to individuals with higher cognitive capacities, person-maintaining care relations with

meaningful affective content ought also not be limited to beings with higher cognitive capacities. For this to be the case, there must be a way of understanding affective states externally. Sue Campbell offers just such an understanding of emotions in her 1997 book *Interpreting the Personal: Expression and the Formation of Feelings*. Campbell argues that "what we feel is, by and large, what we express" (Campbell 1997, 135). Campbell offers two versions (a weaker and a stronger) of the claim that emotions are essentially expressive entities (and thus external or relational things). The weaker claim states that "feelings, to be individuated, must be expressible" (Campbell 1997, 66) while the stronger version asserts that "feelings, to be individuated, must be expressed" (Campbell 1997, 66). Although Campbell states that only the weaker of the two versions is plausible, she nonetheless thinks that emotions are normally individuated via expression. Campbell writes:

> Suppose that failing, once again, to draw a Pictionary individual that my team can recognize, I turn around and give a Dewey shrug to a teammate. That person shrugs back ("I don't see how you could possibly have done anything else either") and smiles sympathetically. I have obviously succeeded in expressing my impotence at being unable to draw. But suppose I give this same shrug and my teammate says, "Look, if you hate the game that much we'll all quit playing." Have I failed to communicate my feeling of impotence at being unable to draw or have I instead communicated my frustration or even contempt for Pictionary? It is not at all clear to me that I will be myself confident of the feeling I have formed...I might go home and actually worry about whether I had, in shrugging, perhaps inadvertently, but sincerely, expressed my contempt for Pictionary. But it is difficult to understand how your response on this occasion should confuse mine to the extent that I'm no longer sure what I was attempting to convey by my shrug. (Campbell 1997, 109)

This difficulty to explain how someone else's response may affect the understanding of one's own emotional state is best explained by an externalist notion of emotions, for which Campbell argues. She writes:

> we form our feelings through acts of expression and, in doing so, attempt to make clear to others, or even just to ourselves, the personal significance of some occasion or set of occasions of our lives...Externalists claim that the content of a mental state that individuates that state (for instance, what a belief is about individuates that belief) *cannot* be determined solely by reference to, or examination of, internal features of the person who has the mental state [but that it also requires some account of the relation of the subject to her environment]. (Campbell 1997, 131)

Campbell argues that if what we feel is indeed largely determined by what we express, then others can control what we feel. "One of the most obvious ways in which our feelings are controlled through their expression is by the power of interpreters to view the occasions of our lives and respond to our expressive acts" (Campbell 1997, 135).

Since affective states can indeed be understood externally (and relationally), do such states have to be expressed or interpreted by both *relata*? I think that just as remembering does not require the occurrent ability of an agent to remember since collective narratives can maintain such memories and in effect maintain the identity of persons with severe temporary or permanent cognitive limitations, so can such narratives be saturated with meaningful affective expressions to be interpreted by an interpreter. What this means is that care relations between a care-giver and an individual incapable of self-conceptualization or narration can be person-maintaining precisely because the narratives that allow these care relations to exist continue to be saturated by affective expressions either as echoes from the

patient's past expressions or via the care-giver's interpretative interaction with the narratives themselves. Of course, such care relations do not have the same expressive flavour as those that are formed and maintained between two or more individuals who dynamically express and interpret one another's emotive and affective expressions, but they nonetheless belong to the person-nourishing and maintaining kinds of relations.

Care relations that lend themselves to the responding to a need in an empathic manner can help to personify the individual with whom one is relating. Empathy is the ability to recognize, understand, and share the affective states of others. Empathy can take various forms: from recognizing emotional states, through knowing what another person is feeling and having a desire to help him or her, to even blurring the boundary between the other and the self while empathically relating to another individual. Empathy plays a role in the recognition of needs that are person-specific and thus it is the medium via which one person can personify another's narrative identity.

Although Stoicism and Care Ethics are quite distant historically and theoretically, the Stoic theory of *Oikeiosis* offers the Care Ethicist a valuable insight. *Oikeiosis* is a term that refers to the drive for self-preservation: a being addresses its primary *need*, which is survival, by acknowledging that it belongs to itself. Reinterpreted in a care ethical language: we are all naturally entangled in a very intimate care relation with ourselves. What makes this care relation morally meaningful is precisely what makes other-regarding caring, and thus other relating (see chapter 5) morally meaningful, namely the affective nature of the care relation; self-love, self-trust, self-regard, and affection toward one's self are powerful mental states capable of generating self-respect and a sense of dignity. Similarly, care relations, like

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friendship for example, which are saturated with love, trust, kindness, etc. tend to generate respect for the other and tend to dignify him or her.

Diogenes Laertius records Chrysippus' understanding of this 'primary attachment' or a primal familiarity with oneself as follows: "[a]n animal's first impulse, say the Stoics, is to self-preservation, because nature from the outset endears it to itself, as Chrisippus affirms...'The dearest thing to every animal is its own constitution and its consciousness thereof'" (Laertius, n.d., 193). Hierocles explains *Oikeiosis* in terms of circles of familiarity. He writes:

> The first and nearest circle is the one which a person has drawn around his own mind…Second, further from the centre and enclosing the first one, is the one in which are placed parents, siblings, wife and children. Third is the one in which are uncles and aunts, grandfathers and grandmothers, siblings' children and also cousins. Next the circle including other relatives. And next the one including fellow-demesmen; then the one of fellow tribesmen…The furthest and largest, which includes all the circles, is that of the whole human race. (in Annas, 1993, 267)

Interpreting the Stoic notion of ever-widening circles of familiarity in care-ethical terms helps to underscore the role of empathy in the relational account of personhood I propose. Such a comparison between *Oikeiosis* and care ethics also suggests "that morality ought to be grounded in the primitive human impulse to care about that which is familiar" (Lenart 2010, 28).

Empathic identification with another being, then, signals recognition of affective kinship of a sort; recognizing care relational affective states such as love, respect, kindness, friendliness, generosity, sympathy, etc. in another being amounts to recognizing the building

blocks of personhood in him or her (since such affective states accompany person-maintaining care relations in virtue of being integral, constitutive parts of a personal narrative), thereby endowing with moral worth those individuals with whom one can identify empathically. Such affectively deep entanglement results in care relations that confer *dignity*[45] (I will define this term below) onto the individual with whom one is relating in virtue of the empathic recognition of relational affective states that are themselves the building blocks of care relations and thus are the very fibres of personhood. This empathic identification is a result of recognizing a salient similarity and thus understanding the other in virtue of one's own self-knowledge and self-identification as a person.

Dignity-conferring care relations can come in many guises. Some may be temporary while others are life-long. They can be extremely deep, meaningful, and person-defining such as those between family and friends or they can be brief and almost trivial, but even these are far from banal or insignificant. A mere gesturing via a handshake, a smile, or some other social acknowledgement can reinforce a sense of personhood and dignity because such gestures are nothing else but externalizations of an evaluation of another individual as having value and as being an entity worthy of acknowledging and being engaged in such a manner.

In most cases, people approached thusly, cannot help but to reciprocate, thereby relating to one another in various affective states like mutual respect or friendliness, etc. In fact, being ignored, unacknowledged, or avoided is one way in which people with disabilities tend to be de-personified. Similarly, the "untouchable" caste in India is an example of an

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[45] For a care-centric account of dignity, see Kittay, Eva Feder. (2003). "Disability, Equal Dignity and Care." *Concilium, International Journal for Theology, 'The discourse of dignity.'* Vol. 2. 105-115.

attempt at de-personification via the severance of social and care relations.[46] The fragility of personhood of individuals who depend on this care relational scaffolding stems precisely from this ability of others to disengage, disassociate, withdraw, and ignore. Of course, such brief engagements as smiling, exchanging pleasantries, or shaking hands are no replacement for deep, long-lasting, and intimate care relations, but they certainly help to reinforce the sense of worth, which long-lasting care relations foster and nourish. Empathy plays a central role in both such short-term encounters as well as long-term care relations.

Such empathic relations are mutually beneficial; care workers benefit just as much from empathic care relations with the patients they care for as the patients do.   Jason Rodriquez (2011), in his study of the operations of, and staff-patient interactions within, nursing homes, argues that relations of care and "attachments staff formed with residents generated pride, dignity, and added meaning that extended beyond their wages" (Rodriquez 2011, 276). Empathic care relations, then, not only personify the individuals being related to, but also reinforce the sense of personhood of those who engage in person-maintaining care relations. In other words, personal narratives and self-conceptions become richer and more meaningful as well as more valuable as the richness and complexity of the care relations that constitute them grows. Rodriquez explains that there are various reasons for such deep care relational attachments between staff and patients: staff can become attached to the people they care for due to a sharing of similar life-defining experiences, due to the sharing of similar interests, due to the sharing of similar values (i.e. religion), as well as for no apparent reason at all. I suspect that these attachments do not happen "for no reason at all," but that

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[46] Of course, personhood can be maintained within the ranks of the untouchable caste. The point, however, is that the (full) personhood of those in the untouchable caste is not recognized by those in other castes.

they occur precisely due to the kind of empathic interactions and recognitions I have pointed to, namely the recognition of familiarity or similarity of interests, values, affective capacities, etc., or simply stated, a kind of affective kinship with the other.

Identifying with another being is an empathic relation, which prompts the emergence of moral worth. Moreover, such care relations infuse both relata with dignity. Empathic relating is deeply social in nature and much akin to the kind of socialization people encounter in familial circles as they grow up. In fact, the nurses, in the nursing homes Rodriquez conducted his research, stated that as the bonds between care-giver and care-receiver grew stronger, the patients became like family as friendships between them developed and flourished. Rodriquez writes:

> There were many positive aspects of the emotional attachments staff felt toward residents. Most importantly, they gave the staff a sense of pride and dignity in their work. But emotions also came with a set of costs. When individuals they cared for died, staff members felt grief, sadness, and experienced the loss of someone they often considered a friend or "like family." Sometimes, as with Daphne, it triggered deeply personal reflections on their own lives. I asked many staff members if they felt that work would be easier if they did not care about residents, and with near uniformity they said that it is impossible not to care about residents. I expected that being around illness, disease, and death, as staff in nursing homes are, would require "detached concern" or "affective neutrality" to avoid emotional burnout (Lief and Fox, 1963; Smith and Kleinman, 1989). Yet what I found was far from detachment. I found genuine concern. Given this workplace context in which such attachments formed, the staff took full advantage of them. The staff used emotions to manage residents but, more importantly, they used emotions to manage themselves. (Rodriguez 2011, 279)

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What makes a care-relation, which is a response to a need, person-maintaining is the recognition (via empathic relating) of the presence of care-relational emotions or affective states like love, respect, kindness, friendliness, generosity, sympathy, etc. in the individual (or his or her narrative)[47] with whom one is entering into a particular care relation. Although the affective states that provide the content of care relations need not always be relational themselves, it is precisely their relational (and extended) nature that helps to personify individuals. Without extended, relational affective states (that is, without actually relating to others), an individual certainly has the capacity for personhood, but lacks the appropriate context for personhood to be truly functional, making personhood dormant in a manner of speaking.

An analogy may be useful here. Having the capacity for care relations with affective states such as love, respect, kindness, friendliness, generosity, sympathy, etc. as the care relational content, but without such affective states themselves being relational and thus extended is analogous to being a teacher without students to teach. A teacher without pupils lacks the context necessary to perform the function of a teacher even though she has the capacity to perform this function whenever the context presents itself. This still means that there is something special about the teacher, just as there is something special about a person with the affective and empathic capacity to enter into care relations, but lacking the appropriate context makes the function of the social designation inactive. Thus, in the case of the teacher, a student body and the various relations that accompany teacher-student

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[47] An empathic connection can just as well be made with a personal narrative of an individual with limited capacity for reciprocation.

relationships are necessary for the designation to be fully active, while in the case of a person, the extended, relational nature of affective states is necessary to appropriately connect to others in the kinds of care relations that are responsible for personification. In the absence of an appropriate context, both the teacher and the person remain intrinsically unchanged (i.e. they possess the same character traits, knowledge, memories, etc., which they did while immersed within the respective contexts), but the functions of the respectively social and moral designations are only active within those appropriate contexts, meaning that a person is fully realized within the social and moral context of person maintaing care relations just as a teacher is fully realized within the social context of transmission of knowledge or skill to others.

Since *dignity* does play a salient role in many accounts of personhood, including this one, a brief analysis of the term is necessary. Dignity can be best understood as the state of being worthy of respect. That is, if an individual has dignity, he or she is worthy of respect. "One general distinction is between respect simply as behavior and respect as an attitude or feeling which may or may not be expressed in or signified by behavior" (Dillon 2010, Sec. 1.1). Attitudinal respect expresses an *attitude* or a *feeling* "as when we speak of having respect for another person or for nature or of certain behaviors as showing respect or disrespect" (Dillon 2010, Sec. 1.1). "An attitude of respect is, most generally, a relation between a subject and an object in which the subject responds to the object from a certain perspective in some appropriate way" (Dillon 2010, Sec. 1.1).

One problem with utilizing dignity as a touchstone for the kind of moral considerability owed to persons is that dignity is sometimes understood in terms of a

vicarious stepping into another's shoes, as it were, meaning that lack of dignity is determined via a vicarious embarrassment on behalf of the other (that is, if the person making the moral judgment would feel embarrassment if he or she found him or herself in the position of the individual being evaluated, then that individual cannot be said to be dignified). Of course, taking what others feel vicariously embarrassed about as a reason for denying moral considerability seems somewhat arbitrary.[48]

However, I think that understanding dignity as the state of being worthy of attitudinal respect can help to steer away from morally evaluating individuals based on vicarious embarrassment if respect is understood as requiring that an object of respect be evaluated "as it really is in its own right" (Dillon 2010, Sec. 1.1) and not in terms of how one might feel about finding oneself (equipped with one's current opinions, biases, personality, etc.) in certain circumstances or endowed with certain properties. Robin S. Dillon writes:

> Respect is a responsive relation, and ordinary discourse about respect identifies several key elements of the response, including attention, deference, judgment, acknowledgment, valuing, and behavior. First, as suggested by its derivation from the Latin *respicere*, which means "to look back at" or "to look again," respect is a particular mode of apprehending the object: the person who respects something pays attention to it and perceives it differently from someone who does not and responds to it in light of that perception. This perceptual element is common also to synonyms such as regard (from "to watch out for") and consideration ("examine (the stars) carefully"). The idea of paying heed or giving proper attention to the object which is central to respect often means trying to see the object clearly, as it really is

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[48] I would like to thank Dr. Howard Nye for pointing out this problem.

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in its own right, and not seeing it solely through the filter of one's own desires and fears or likes and dislikes. (Dillon 2010, Sec. 1.1)

Dignity, then, is the state of being worthy of evaluation on one's own terms rather than based on vicarious embarrassment or pride. On a care-centric account of personhood, evaluating persons in an appropriate way (as they really are on their own terms) requires the subject of the relation to evaluate the object's capacity to participate, in some meaningful way, in affective care relations. Those who are in possession of such capacities or those who are entangled in such relations have that specific kind of dignified-ness that is unique to persons and are worthy of person-specific respect. Other beings or things can certainly be respected in a variety of ways, but if dignity is understood in person-specific terms, then the respect owed to dignified entities must be of the empathic care-relational sort, which translates to a cherishing of the object of respect in his or her own concrete affective particularity. Thus, it makes no difference whether a subject would be embarrassed or proud to find him or herself in the shoes of the object of respect; if the object or his narrative displays traces of meaningful care relations, the subject is obliged to focus on and respect that particular feature of the object, rather than relying on the subject's own feelings about what it might be like to be that object when evaluating the other's worth.

Thus understood, dignity is a relation of respect toward the person-specific interests of individuals able to enter into affective care relations. The emergence of person-specific rights is inseparably tied to the respect owed to person-specific interests of individuals who are in possession of such needs; individuals entangled in empathic care relations and individuals with the capacity for such engagements will have needs and interests arising from

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the fact that engagement in empathic care relations ensures that one treat the other with the same affective consideration one deems necessarily owed to oneself. Thus, the dignified reception of care, be it nourishment or medicine is a person-specific interest, meaning that the relation of care giver to care receiver maintains the respect toward all the individual's interests, which include being treated as an end, having autonomy over one's own body and self (where such autonomy is possible), retaining one's privacy whenever possible, maintaining one's reputation, etc.[49]

Dignity, then, in its objective aspect, is a relational property signifying moral worth or that an individual matters morally. Here I am following Arthur Schopenhauer (1851) and Herbert C. Kelman (1977) who distinguish between the objective and subjective aspects of such abstract concepts as honour and dignity. They argue that objectively speaking, such concepts as honour and dignity are relational since they are evaluations of worth attributed to us by others; subjectively speaking, such concepts are experienced as our own evaluations of the opinions of others (that is, our evaluations of others' evaluations of our worth). Regarding honour, Schopenhauer explains that it "is, on its objective side, other people's opinion of what we are worth; on its subjective side, it is the respect we pay to this opinion" (Schopenhauer 1851, Section 4). Regarding the first-personal or subjective perception of dignity, Kelman writes: "[f]rom the perspective of the individual, personal dignity can similarly be characterized by a stable sense of identity and community. To possess a sense of one's own dignity thus means to perceive one's self as valuable and to feel valued by others" (Kelman 1977, 532). The point, as Peter Baumann aptly expresses it, is

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[49] Sarah Clark Miller (2005) discusses dignity and a generally more Kantian approach to duty in care ethical terms by arguing for a duty to care, which is "an obligation that requires moral agents to respond to the constitutive needs of others" (Miller 2005, 159).

that "[h]uman dignity is not only about what individuals can experience; it is also social by nature and more objective than one might even think at first sight" (Baumann 2007, 14).

When I use the term 'dignity' here, I have in mind a specific kind of respect that is unique to persons.   There are other socially situated examples of dignity that are not as general as the usage I propose. For example, the aristocrat is endowed with a certain amount of dignity in virtue of his or her social rank, which is a result of his or her place amid a complex network of genealogical relations.   Dignity, in the way I use it here, both differs from and is analogous to the aristocratic kind or expression of the term: it differs from it insofar as the relations that serve as a subvenient base for its emergence are care relational rather than pertaining to lineage and thus the worth of an individual is tied to care-ethical rather than class relations, but it is analogous insofar as its emergence is in fact social in nature.

All beings that have the kind of moral worth I point to here are persons, which means that their needs must be accommodated in a dignified manner. Moreover, such moral worth itself may give rise to various person-specific needs insofar as these needs become dignified, such as, for example, the needs for privacy or autonomy, which correspond to person-specific rights such individuals posses in virtue of their personhood. However, even though all persons posses these rights, not everyone will have a need or desire to exercise them. Needs, then, function as a selection mechanism for the exercise of the appropriate rights from among the ranks of rights guaranteed by the moral status of personhood. In other words, although these rights are intrinsic to personhood, not all rights will be exercised, and in some cases, not all rights will be realized since not all persons will have the capacities to

exercise all such rights. Such incapacitation may be temporary or permanent, circumstantial or not, severe or mild, etc. The rights exercised by an individual are those that are related to particular needs, intimately linking such rights with person-maintaining care relations in virtue of the fact that care relations are responses to needs; needs correlated with person-specific rights call for person-maintaining care relations.

This connection between rights and needs is not as strong as the care ethical understanding of rights, which implies that needs give rise to rights. On the care ethical view, rights are inseparable from needs. For example Nel Noddings explains how needs can give rise to rights:

> Ms. A is at her wit's end with the noise in her house. Finally, getting everyone's attention, she says, "Mommy has a right to some peace and quiet!" How is this "right" justified (if it is)? Supposing that the group addressed contains at least one person old enough to understand Ms. A's claim, the argument may be laid out as follows:
> 1. There is a situation, a set of conditions, that gives rise to a need.
> 2. The need is communicated in clear terms.
> 3. At least someone in the group of hearers interprets the statement of need accurately and sympathetically. The reaction is "I can see that."...
> 4. Having acknowledged the legitimacy of the need, the group now examines its own role in producing the noise and its (potential) power to reduce it. The response is "We can do that."
> 5. The need is formally granted as a right; that is, the group of hearers recognizes the legitimacy of the need and its own power to meet the need: "*We should* meet this need." (Noddings 2002, 54)

On Noddings' account, care relations have the capacity to transform needs into rights (see the Appendix for an illustration of the care relational account of rights). Although person-

specific rights are intrinsic on my account, meaning that they are not dependent on needs, I think the care ethical insight illuminates an important relationship between rights and needs, which, for my account, entails that although personhood guarantees certain person-specific rights, individuals who lack capacities or the interest to exercise some such rights in virtue of the lack of certain needs correlated with certain rights, do not necessarily also lack the personhood that guarantees them.[50]   A person's rights, just as personhood itself, require a care relational context to become active. The care relational context that activates otherwise dispositional rights consists of one relata having and expressing the appropriate need and the other relata being in a position to satisfy it.

There is a distinction between caring for a person and caring for an object (like a car). Obviously, the latter type of caring is neither person-maintaining nor rights-conferring. So what is it about the first type of caring that makes it both person- and right-maintaining? The answer lies in the particular type of caring involved in the first case; it is a morally meaningful kind of caring. As argued in chapter 5, meaning is an externalistic phenomenon, which is socially emergent. Similarly, emotions (and affective states) have been argued to be relationally emergent and externalistic in nature.   In fact, certain care relations are meaningful precisely because they are infused with interpersonally emergent affective states. Some examples of such affectively meaningful care relations might be the relation between a mother and her child, a husband and a wife, a partner and a lover, a brother or sister and his or her sibling, two or more friends, colleagues, etc. What is meaningful about such relations

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[50] Although I call this the care-ethical insight, the relation between needs or desires and rights has been observed by other prominent philosophers. Michael Tooley, for example, writes: "it seems to be true that an individual has a right to something whenever it is the case that, if he wants that thing, it would be wrong for others to deprive him of it" (Tooley 1972, 40).

can best be captured by the kinds of affective states associated with them (i.e. love, respect, trust, kindness, friendliness, generosity, sympathy, etc.). These affective states are obviously relational in nature insofar as they supervene on the relations between the various individuals.

One may wonder, however, about the difference between humans who have lost the ability to narrate and inanimate objects. What is the difference between such an individual's narrative and a story we might try to tell about the automobile? The answer, in short, is that the automobile lacks a narrative. The reason for this is that the automobile has never, at any point in its history, narrated. There are facts about the vehicle, but they cannot evoke echoes from the car's past expressions since there have never been (and there never will be) such expressions in the case of the automobile, nor is it infused with the kinds of care-relations that the patient's narrative abounds in because it lacks a narrative that can be shaped and constituted by such care relations. Interactions that infuse an individual with dignity simply cannot occur between a car and its owner.

But why can the car owner not enter into an interpretive interaction of all the appropriate facts about the automobile that may evoke echoes of affective states?   For instance, why can I not be gratefully loving toward my car for getting me safely and warmly to work in that big blizzard last year? The reason is that although I can surely have certain emotions related to these events (and I can even express them), such states are not related to an "automobile narrative," but to those particular events, which are episodes in my own narrative.

I may enjoy my car, it may serve its purpose well (even exceed my expectations), but I cannot *love* or *respect* my car nor can I hope to detect such affective states in it in the way that I might *love* or *respect* (as well as recognize such affective states in) my parents, my spouse, or my friends. And if I thought I could, I would be deeply confused about the objective (or third-personal) and subjective (or first-personal) nature of dignity. The reason for this is that neither the car nor anything about the car is capable of relating to me in a manner that might be characterized as *love* or *respect* and it lacks a narrative that could mirror love or respect, whereas a parent, spouse, or friend is *either* capable of loving me back *or*, if incapable, is in possession of a narrative which can mirror love, respect, etc. Dignity, then, can emerge within established care relations if the individual with whom one relates *either* (i) can be a "co-author" of such relational affective states *or* (ii) can be an appropriate object of such relational affective states. In the case of a solitary individual with the capacity to self-narrate, as the care ethical reinterpretation of the Stoic theory of *Oikeiosis* suggests, the relational affective states responsible for meaning, value, and dignity are self-directed.

We can distinguish between three types of person-maintaining care relations: person-maintaining care-relations that emerge out of (1) symmetric relations of equality, (2) semi-asymmetric relations of dependence, and (3) fully asymmetric relations to personal narratives.

(1) Person-maintaining care relations that emerge out of relations of equality are of the kind where both individuals reciprocate certain affective states equally. That is, both parties feel respect for one another, both parties love each other, both parties reciprocate friendship, etc. In such person-maintaining care relations, the dignity of

each individual is acknowledged and reinforced via reciprocation. Some examples of such relations are: partnerships (such as those between husband and wife, lovers, and even business associates or other collaborations), friendships, and professional relationships between colleagues. These are the kinds of care relations that mutually (or symbiotically) shape, inform, and constitute personal narratives.

(2) Person-maintaining care relations that emerge out of relations of dependence are of a moderately asymmetric kind. In such moderately asymmetrical relations, one individual feels respect, love, friendliness, etc. toward the other without it being the case that the recipient of such affective states reciprocates them equally or with the same maturity or expressiveness. In these types of person-maintaining care relations, the dignity of the dependent individual emerges in virtue of the care-giver's role in the particular care-relation. However, although such care relations are moderately asymmetrical, the affectively less mature or expressive reciprocations of respect, love, friendliness, etc. can still be empathically recognized in the other, thereby meriting the recognition of moral worth of and thus dignity in the individual engaged in the care-relation. One example of such care relations is that between a parent and a young child. The narratives of such dependent individuals rely much more heavily on the externalized care relational mechanisms and the individuals serving as their realizers.

(3) Person-maintaining care relations that emerge out of relations to personal narratives are of a completely asymmetric kind insofar as the care-receivers are incapable of actively engaging the care-giver affectively. However, the care-giver's ability to engage with the care-receiver's narrative is sufficient for certain types of feelings of

respect, love, friendliness, etc. to be projected onto the care-receiver's narrative identity. Although the narrative does not reciprocate any affective states directly (as is the case in the symmetrical and moderately asymmetrical relations), the emotional connection the care-giver has to the narrative in virtue of being engaged in such care-relations can "mirror" or reflect the affective states. That is, when a person engages with someone's narrative in this way, he or she can experience a genuine connection with the individual's narrative, which gives rise to an empathic recognition of affective states that can only emerge out of an interaction with that narrative. The care-giver adopts what might be called an Affective Stance toward the care-receiver and although the affective states are mirrored rather than reciprocated, the mirroring can only take place in the context of the narrative, meaning that the affective state emerges in virtue of the interpreter's engagement with the narrative. The Affective Stance is meant to be analogous to Daniel Dennett's (1989) Intentional Stance, where an observer or interpreter adopts a stance that makes it easier to interpret a system's behaviour. In this case, however, the Affective Stance is an aid in interpreting a personal narrative rather than behaviour and it functions as a probe that helps to establish whether or not the narrative can mirror the affective states of the care-giver. Such mirroring can have a similar effect on the care-relation as reciprocation would. Some examples of such care relations might be between family members or friends and coma patients, as well as perhaps patients in permanent vegetative states. Although such narratives are not subjectively self-narrated, the care relational content

that is constitutive of these narratives is active in virtue of the self-narrating relata at the active ends of the constitutive care relations.

7.3

The Moral Obligations of Carers

As already argued, care relations are intimately tied to needs, but not all needs demand a commencement of an appropriate care relation. However, being endowed with the capacity to care, we are morally obliged to help satisfy needs if we are in a position to do so (I will list a variety of constraints and limits tied to the ability to aid in the satisfaction of needs shortly). For example, all things being equal, upon encountering a dog locked up in a sweltering car, obviously uncomfortable and in need of cool air and water, merely shrugging off the animal's plight would certainly be a sign of an immoral character. In other words, being *uncaring* is the mark of a vicious individual. Seeing that our very personalities and personhood are shaped and constituted by care relations, it is not surprising that it is in our nature to care.

Of course, we cannot possibly engage in care relations with every being that communicates a need. What follows are some limitations and constraints on obligations to enter into care relations.

A. One has to have the appropriate resources in order to be able to offer aid in satisfying a need. For example, if, in the midst of a survival scenario, one has only enough food to sustain oneself and one's family, then there is no compulsion to part with one's food in order to satisfy the needs of others if this is necessarily done at the

cost of failing to satisfy the needs of those to whom one is already intimately related. Time is also a resource one has to balance; entering into as many care relations as possible with as many individuals as possible ought not be required. However, when time and other resources are at one's disposal, engaging in care relations becomes part of being a moral individual (part of being a good *person*). In many cases, care relations do not cost much in terms of time and resources (though some may be quite taxing, in which case, one can be more selective in terms of which and how many other care relations one enters into).

B. One may not be in a position to satisfy every kind of need. This may be due to the fact that one lacks the necessary resources or the know-how, etc.

C. One should not have to even attempt to satisfy a need if the satisfaction of the need in question demands the sacrifice or compromise of one's own dignity or important relations with others. For example, people are not required to fulfill the sexual needs of others just because such needs exist. Similarly, we are not obliged to maintain relations with others if doing so comes at the cost of severing important family ties. Having said this, however, taking the time to offer aid to a friend, if it is within one's capacity, is not only morally laudable, but also morally compelling.

D. If the situation or context demands that one choose between engaging in care relations to help satisfy numerous, but mutually exclusive needs, then the needs of those more closely related to oneself (i.e. those with deeper, more entangled, or more numerous care relations) have priority. For example, if in the midst of a mountaineering disaster, I have to choose between helping a climbing partner or a

stranger, the needs of my climbing partner come first. This also entails that in most cases and under most circumstances, the needs of persons will have priority over the needs of non-persons. There can, however, be very strong care relational bonds between a person and a non-person that may overpower any obligations to others in situations that demand such choosing. One example might be between mothers and fetuses (if it turns out that fetuses cannot have person-status).

There are, however, certain circumstances where entering or failing to enter into a given care relation with another can literally be a matter of life or death. Such care relations carry much more moral weight and urgency than others. For example, rescuing a child from drowning in a pond is morally obligatory unless something absolutely prevents one from engaging with the child in this brief, but extremely meaningful care relation.[51] Similarly, if a stranger slips and falls on a sidewalk, it is a sign of moral callousness and perhaps moral ineptness, if one does not inquire about the stranger's wellbeing. Action is morally (as well as medically) more pressing if the stranger is or appears to be harmed.[52]

An analogous moral argument can be made for entering into person-maintaining care relations with individuals who are at risk of de-personification due to being ignored, excluded, or somehow humiliated or otherwise treated in an undignified manner. As persons, it is as much our moral duty to rescue people from de-personification as it is to rescue them from drowning. Although the case of the drowning child is certainly more pressing since a

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[51] I borrow the example of the drowning child from Singer's (1972) "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," page 231.

[52] For an insightful and interesting commentary on the inherent vulnerability of all human animals, see MacIntyre, Alasdair (1999). *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues*, where MacIntyre distinguishes between what he calls the "virtue of acknowledged dependence" from the Aristotelian "virtues of independent practical reasoners."

failure to rescue the child *now* will result in the child's drowning, while a failure to rescue a person from de-personification can be remedied at another time since the individual's life will continue in spite of the failure to prevent de-personification, we nevertheless have a moral duty to attend to both and while this moral duty is much more time-sensitive in the case of the drowning child, it is just as obliging in the case of the threat of de-personification. All the limitations and constraints stated above still apply, but in certain cases, such as with persecuted minorities, for example, entering into person-maintaining care relations can be as morally urgent as entering into life-saving care relations in the examples provided above. Thus, just as there is a moral responsibility to offer physical aid in response to physical needs, so there is a moral obligation to engage in person-maintaining care relations in response to situations or circumstances where people are being de-personified.

There can certainly be circumstances where although one may experience a moral pull to action, one may fail to act on such a compunction without being morally blameworthy for the failure to act. For example, when entire families were being evicted by the Nazis from their homes in an undignified manner or de-personified in concentration camps, the bystanders who failed to help them out of fear of suffering a similar fate or bringing a similar fate on their own families, though not exemplars of moral heroism, are not as morally culpable (perhaps not blameworthy at all) as the bystander who altogether lacked empathy and thus did not feel the moral pull of obligation to engage the mistreated individuals in person-reaffirming care relations (or did not feel even the slightest moral repulsion toward the actions of the Nazis). Such a non-empathic bystander could certainly be accused of being a vicious individual. Perhaps the empathy of such individuals is blocked by their inability to

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recognize the abused individuals as their affective kin, but the failure to recognize such affective fellowship points either to a culpable callousness or a severely underdeveloped moral faculty. People like that exist; perhaps they are even more numerous than one might suspect. However, just because there are uncaring and vicious individuals in the world and just because there are individuals who engage in and propagate all kinds of exclusionary practices does not mean that their actions are morally acceptable nor does it mean that my account of personhood is incomplete because it does not make theoretical room for such individuals.

What it does mean for the rest of us is that we must try harder to right the wrongs of those who choose to ignore their moral obligation to nourish the personhood of others. This obligation to engage with others (within the limits and constraints outlined above) is also extended to the personal narratives of others. This is because personal narratives do not merely belong to the individuals about whom they are, but are also shared, shaped, and held collectively by those who engage with them. Moreover, in virtue of the various morally meaningful care relations that are constitutive of narratives, our personal narratives are morally entangled with the narratives of those to whom we relate. Personal narratives, including our own, have moral worth in virtue of this sharing, relating, and entanglement.

7.4
Patients in Permanent Vegetative States (PVS)

The question I will address presently is whether patients in permanent vegetative states (PVS) can retain their person-status even though they lack phenomenal consciousness

and the capacity to have and express their emotional states as well as to interpret the affective expressions of others. Patients in permanent vegetative states are living, biological humans who at one point in their pasts used to self-narrate, but do not do so currently, nor will they resume to do so at a future time. Can such individuals retain their person status as well as their personal identities, and if so, what precisely are the mechanisms that might allow past narratives to continue to be morally considerable?

Intuitively, patients in PVS are still the persons we knew before the higher brain functions ceased to produce phenomenal consciousness, moods, emotions, sentiments, affective states, memories, and other similar mental states. The difference is that these "persons" are no longer aware because they are in permanent vegetative states. Ratio-centric accounts of personhood lack the philosophical tools to support this intuition and must uniformly treat patients in permanent vegetative states as non-persons.

As already argued in chapter 6, collective memories (or what I have called narratives in a previous section) can maintain certain relations (or in Lindemann's terminology, they can be used to "hold" an individual in his or her identity). However, the question now is whether narratives are able to support person-maintaining care relations?

Terri Schiavo and the legal battle surrounding her case serve as a real-life example of the complexities that can arise when different interpretations of an individual's narrative are in tension and competition. Terri suffered massive brain damage due to oxygen deprivation after she collapsed in full cardiac arrest on February 25, 1990. After two and a half months of being in a coma, Terri was diagnosed as being in a vegetative state. For the next few years, doctors tried speech, physical, and other experimental therapy, but to no avail.

Because Terri did not have a living will, her husband's decision to remove her feeding tube was contested by Terri's parents, Robert and Mary Schindler. Following over a dozen appeals, motions, petitions, and hearings in the Florida Court system, Terri's husband, Michael, convinced the courts to sanction the removal of Terri's feeding tube. She died on March 31, 2005. One of the unpalatable consequences of this particular case is that different interpretations of Terri's narrative resulted in a struggle over the removal of the right to life of an individual who, on my account, may very well have such a right.

Before analyzing the Terri Schiavo case, it may be useful to sketch a possible framework for engaging the narratives of patients in permanent vegetative states as well as identifying and tracking possible ongoing needs that could activate rights in the context of morally meaningful care relations. I turn to this task presently. Patient (P), prior to being in a vegetative state, may have had the need and right to enter into dignified care relations. In fact, if P has a need for dignity, then P certainly desires to be treated with dignity even during a dreamless sleep. Thus, P's need to be treated in a dignified manner must also be understood counterfactually as a need or desire to be treated with dignity even if P is in a permanent vegetative state. Patient (P*), already in a PVS, can no longer express her need for such relations and treatment.[53] Given narratives (or the collective memory) about P, P*'s identity is a direct result of P's life (meaning that P and P* are the same person). Any agent (A) interacting with P*, who is aware of P's narrative, has interpretive access to some of P*'s ongoing needs, namely the needs P would have expressed on behalf of her vegetative self (P*). In other words, what "ongoing needs" refers to are needs that A can assume P would

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[53] As I will argue, just because P* can no longer express her needs does not mean she no longer has needs.

have wished to express or that A knows P expressed on behalf of her vegetative self P*

before P became P*. It is certainly both plausible and appropriate to assume that such needs

would continue to be tied to the moral worth P was endowed with and the dignity P enjoyed

in the past.   This assumption can well be made simply based on the fact that P had

consistently expressed such needs in the past through her actions, verbal requests, or other

forms of expressions (one being the fact that P did not desire dignity only during self-aware

episodes of introspection, but also during non-conscious periods of dreamless sleep). Thus,

P* has the right to dignified treatment by A and anyone else who has the capacity to interpret

P*'s narrative in this manner.

Even if someone who does not know the details of P's history (and thus P*'s

ongoing narrative identity) ends up taking care of P*, like a hospital nurse (N) for instance,

he can still work under the assumption that P*'s narrative, whatever it might be, presents

interpretive opportunities to form certain right-maintaining care relations, which in turn

oblige the nurse to acknowledge and enter into such care relations. The reason for this is that

the kinds of narratives that carry P's identity exist in abundance all around N (including N's

own narrative, meaning that N is able to empathically interpret P*'s narrative).   N, as an

interpreter, is always better off adopting the Affective Stance toward P*. In other words, N is

better off assuming that P*'s identity is a product of some such narrative and thus assuming

that P* has certain rights that stem directly from her status as a person (unless and until N is

contradicted by those who stand in a more intimate relationship to P, and therefore also P*).

The reason why N is better off assuming that P*'s identity is tied to a past individual, P,

whose narrative is filled with right- and person-generating relations is that although it may be

possible that P* spontaneously materialized, like the swamp thing, as a result of some odd quantum event, a statistically more plausible explanation is that P* is continuous with P.

Naturally, individuals in permanent vegetative states will lack certain interests that are shared by average conscious adults, such as, for example, the need for freedom of thought. Thus, certain rights, such as the right to freedom of thought, will not play an active role in the interactions between individuals in PVS and their family members and friends or care takers (who may well be family members and friends).[54] This means that individuals in PVS may not actively benefit from every right to which normal, self-narrating persons are entitled. Nevertheless, the rights that continue to be active, such as the right to receiving care in a dignified manner, the right to reputation, or the right to be treated as an end, for example, would have to be guaranteed by the same moral considerability owed to *persons*. This is because the interests underlying these rights are to be respected in a manner that is appropriate to the concrete individual to whom they belong, namely a being with whom one can, and thus ought to, engage in empathic, dignity-conferring, care relations. This means that the reason we ought to respect the kinds of interests mentioned above is that we respect the personhood of those whose interests they are. Therefore, violating a vegetative patient's right to receiving dignified care, for example, may very well be as morally wrong as violating an average conscious adult's right to receiving dignified care and the violation of such a right in both cases would be morally wrong for the same reason.

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[54] Prior opinions, beliefs, and thoughts, which were freely conceived, however, do continue to be binding (such as pre-PVS wishes, advance directives, etc.). Moreover, if the vegetative state is not permanent, the right to freedom of thought, which is continually present, but inactive, emerges as soon as the capacity and thus interest for freedom of thought is restored.

Since rights and needs are intimately related, one may wonder whether individuals in permanent vegetative states truly have needs in a morally relevant sense, rather than merely "needs" or "interests" in the sense that all organisms have needs, such as the need plants have for water, for example. The needs of individuals in permanent vegetative states are admittedly much more limited in scope than those of average conscious adults, but the point is that there continue to be certain interests that are morally relevant, such as the above mentioned interest to be cared for in a dignified manner, the interest to retain an untarnished reputation, or the interest to be treated as an end rather than merely a biologically functioning corpse. All such interests continue to be active during the course of the vegetative state, even if such a state is permanent and all such interests are morally relevant because they are needs that are explicitly related to dignity, which is a product of affective care relations, making the needs person-specific and not merely to be understood in the sense that all organisms have certain interests.

Interpreting the narrative of a patient in a vegetative state to be possessed of a particular self-conception from which certain ongoing needs might be derivable can be extremely difficult. Advance directives are one way of ensuring that one's will is clearly understood since they can inform narratives and help interpreters understand them appropriately. Things get more complicated in cases where advance directives are not issued and this is why it may be necessary to rely on individuals who have an intimate knowledge of the person in question in order to make decisions on behalf of the vegetative patient. Of course, this is not always possible and hard decisions as well as difficult interpretations of such narratives will always pose a problem.

What is particularly interesting about the Terri Schiavo case is that her personal narrative lends itself to more than one genuinely possible interpretation, the reason being that the various care relations, which constitutively inform her narrative can lead, and apparently have led, to contradictory interpretations of what her self-conception might have been and what needs and wishes ought to be derivable from this self-conception. Terri's parents, having been related to her via one set of care relations, whatever those might have been, shaped, informed, and understood Terri's narrative differently than did her husband, who was related to her via another set of care relations, whatever that may have entailed in this particular context. In a very real sense, then, Terri's personal narrative fissioned as the differing and mutually exclusive interpretations of her narrative were being applied in an attempt to reconstruct her own, no longer existent, self-conception of herself along with the various needs, desires, and rights that ought to accompany it. On the one hand, the constitutively integrated care relations revealed a narrative saturated with the right to life, while on the other, a narrative flavoured with the desire to cease living (perhaps due to the undignified nature of persisting in a vegetative state) emerged out of a competing care relational framework. (I am, of course, assuming genuine good will on behalf of each interpreting party).

Some such mutually exclusive and contradictory interpretations may never be fully reconcilable. However, far from hinting at the inadequacy of the account I propose, cases such as the one just examined reveal the explanatory power of the account on offer. Ratio-centric accounts lack the philosophical resources to engage this kind of problem with the same sensitivity and moral subtleness inherent in the approach I propose. Even in clear cases

where advance directives are issued, ratio-centric accounts cannot help themselves to the powerfully compelling moral motivations entailed by the moral status of personhood to, for example, respect an individual's "do-not-resuscitate" orders or a patient's wishes to remain on life support. Ratio-centric accounts necessarily remain silent on the Terri Schiavo case (beyond, of course, the principled proclamation that Terri's personhood and thus moral considerability were extinguished along with her self-awareness), which has left us all, and not just her immediate family, morally shaken because the contemplations and the eventual decision to cease life support was far from trivial. The relational account provides a robust explanation of what precisely makes such choices difficult and offers reasons to take such decisions seriously.

Relational personhood and the account of extended diachronic identity do not guarantee that every vegetative patient will have a personal narrative (the permanent vegetative state is characterized by a complete absence of a narrator or self-conceiver and without the appropriate relational support, not even a partial narrative can exist), nor do they entail that every vegetative narrative will be or ought to be interpreted in life-preserving terms (not every self-conception will be consistent with a "post-vegetative-state life-preserving" narrative just as not every vegetative patient will be engaged in person-maintaining care relations). The claim I am making, however, is that the account I propose offers resources to explain and justify person-specific treatment of patients in vegetative states and it captures the complexity of what is truly at stake in cases like that of Terri Schiavo. Ratio-centric accounts are compelled to dismiss authentic moral dilemmas and difficult choices as mere irrational sentimentality reflective of the layperson's confusion

about moral values rather than understanding them as a grieving family's genuine struggle with a real moral problem. If nothing else, my account treats this moral struggle seriously while acknowledging the difficulty moral learners (even very advanced moral learners) encounter while navigating such perplexing and terrifying questions as whether or not it is morally permissible, justifiable, or even obligatory to either end a loved one's life or prolong it artificially.

7.5
Summary

I have engaged in the project of grounding personhood in care-centric rather than ratio-centric terms because the orthodox, ratio-centric definition tends to exclude certain groups of individuals from the protective, right conferring, status of personhood. Our practices often contradict this orthodox understanding of personhood; the fact that our intuitions are far from uniform with regard to young children, individuals with severe cognitive disabilities, and individuals in permanent vegetative states is a partial motivator for engaging in this project. Although there is a general tendency to dismiss the claim to personhood of such individuals, we nevertheless continue to smuggle person-specific treatment into our interactions with them and feel indignation toward those who fail to treat these individuals with dignity, which is a treatment we generally reserve for persons. For example, children eat at tables even though they spill their food, individuals with cognitive disabilities are given choices whenever their capacities allow for choices to be made, and individuals in permanent vegetative states are clothed even though they lack the ability to

care about such things. The other, perhaps more pressing, motivation for engaging in this project is the fact that stripping fragile persons of their personhood, as the ratio-centric accounts tend to do, serves as a theoretical grounding toward changing our practices of treating fragile individuals with dignity, resulting in a principled strategy for discrimination and mistreatment that has been utilized by various groups throughout human history.

Although common intuition runs parallel to the orthodox definition of personhood in excluding such fragile individuals as young children, the cognitively disabled, and those in vegetative states from the realm of persons, we would be morally outraged at the thought of feeding children on the floor at the side of the family cat while *persons* ate at the table. We would be horrified at the thought of forcing food, sleep, and exercise on individuals with cognitive disabilities via mechanized means (where such means are unnecessary) such as intravenously delivering nutrients, drugging them with medication at a designated bedtime, and electrically stimulating muscles instead of taking walks in the neighbourhood in order to prevent contact with the community. And we would feel moral dis-ease at the notion of keeping patients in vegetative states naked in crammed climate-controlled pods that would allow for more efficient storage and hygiene. I argued that the reason for this is that we ascribe dignity to such individuals and the thought of stripping them of this dignity is morally repulsive to us. I further argued that the reason these individuals have dignity is that they are, in fact, persons.

Personhood has traditionally been defined as part of a moral program and thus should be understood as a moral term. The orthodox definition of personhood has been a ratio-centric one, meaning that what makes individuals morally considerable and dignified

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has traditionally been thought to be the capacity for rationality. The relational account of personhood I proposed also conceives of personhood as a moral term, but I defined personhood in relationally narrative terms where the ability to engage in care relations, rather than rationality, is person-maintaining even in the absence of the capacity for self-narration.

The problem of diachronic personal identity also reveals this tension between the orthodox, ratio-centric, account of personhood and the problem of excluding entire groups of human beings from the realm of persons. In fact, the polarization of the theoretical landscape into psychological and biological accounts of diachronic personal identity unveils this problem. Whereas biological accounts such as Olson's Animalism can assign personhood to children and patients in vegetative states in virtue of the ability to track such individuals through time even in the absence of psychological continuity, they nonetheless fail to track *persons* in cases where counting or tracking bodies is no longer possible. Psychological accounts, on the other hand, are quite capable of tracking personal continuity even in cases that are today relegated to the realm of science fiction, but fail to track identity in the mundane, real life cases of individuals who lose their memories or lack psychological continuity altogether. I proposed to extract the insights offered by each approach and synthesize them into a neo-Lockean solution with the aid of the insights of the Extended Mind Thesis (and more specifically Robert A. Wilson's Social Manifestation Thesis) and Sue Campbell's notion of relational remembering, personhood, and emotions. I laid the grounding for these discussions in my externalist interpretation of Robert Nozick's Closest Continuer Theory.

I argued for an extended account of personal identity, which allows for the tracking of personal narratives via the minds of others. The tracking of identity and maintenance of personhood via other minds helps to keep individuals whom we endow with dignity in practice within the realm of personhood in theory, thus mending theory and practice. Such externalized tracking and maintenance of personhood is impossible on the individualistic approach to which ratio-centric accounts are committed. A care-centric grounding, however, is a viable theoretical framework for the account I propose. Thus, the care-ethical insight that morality ought to be understood in terms of care relations serves as a natural theoretical soil for the grounding of extended personal identity and relational personhood.

The relational account of personhood I propose, then, is grounded in the care-centric sphere via a care ethical understanding of moral considerability, which differs from the ratio-centric understanding of moral agency in that it defines moral considerability in terms of the ability to engage in meaningful, affective care relations rather than rationality. I have argued that empathy, in addition to being a source of dignity as well as a central affective state, allows for the recognition of familiar affective states (and thus dignity) in others. Empathy is also central in the formation and maintenance of care relations. Care relations, being, in a manner of speaking, social molecules ultimately responsible for the various social contexts that shape how and what we remember, ground the personal narratives of individuals in the collective memories that emerge within the social contexts and groups to which these individuals belong. In this manner, care relations become a medium for the externalization and extension of personal narratives and identities. Personhood is thusly maintained in virtue of the empathic caring and interpreting of moral agents who stand in relation to the personal

narratives of fragile individuals who themselves have lost the ability to narrate their own self-conceived histories. Other narrators, in virtue of the constitutive nature of affective care relations, literally hold vulnerable individuals in their personhood and in their personal identities.

Chapter 8
Questions, Objections, and Replies

8.1
The Problem of Mistaken Identity

Before addressing the problem of mistaken identity, it may be good to clarify whether the appeal to relational narratives, which makes an extended account of identity possible, provides an answer to the question of what makes someone a person or to the question of diachronic identity. The answer is that the appeal to relational narratives actually does both insofar as relational personhood is a prerequisite for extended identity. That is, the relational account postulates that personal narratives are socially manifested both in a causal as well as a constitutive manner. Personal narratives, then, are relational insofar as (1) they are embedded in social and institutional contexts that exert a causal influence on what and how a person remembers and therefore on how he or she self-conceives and narrates, and (2) they are partially constituted by the morally relevant care relations, which inform and shape them. A narrative entanglement in care relations, which, in virtue of other rememberers and carers, can persist even if self-narration ceases, can be tracked through time by others, and, due to the care relational content embedded within the narrative, the moral personhood of the individuals being tracked can be externally maintained. Insofar as the relational account proposes the criteria for personhood (the possession of a narrative), it is an answer to the question of *what* makes an individual a person. However, the nature of the relational account also has implications on how such persons are tracked through time, namely via their narratives, which are both influenced and in part maintained by others, thereby making the

identity of such persons quite literally extended across the minds of others; the narratives people use to track their own identities exist, in part, outside of their own minds and are shaped by external factors such as social and cultural contexts as well as other individuals who comprise, influence, and are themselves influenced by such contexts.

It may be objected that the relational account is susceptible to instances of mistaken identity where the collective narrative concerning an individual X misidentifies him or her as an individual Y. This can be an instance of a genuine mistake or be done purposefully and with premeditation. To some extent, this kind of identity confusion, be it merely accidental or fraudulent, cannot be fully avoided in practice no matter what account of personhood or personal identity one adheres to. However, there are safeguards against such cases of mistaken or fraudulent identity on the extended account of diachronic personal identity. As already mentioned in a previous chapter, collective narratives, in order to genuinely track someone's identity, must pick out something that is saliently true about the individual they are tracking and so, they must live up to a certain standard of factual accuracy. If narratives get twisted, confused, or otherwise become distorted, there can indeed result cases of mistaken identity or, worse yet, if such narratives are purposefully mutilated or altered, there may be cases of fraudulent identity.

The issue of mistaken or fraudulent identity is not a new issue nor is it unique to my account of personal identity. It is a ubiquitous problem, which is evident in the multitude of various cases of identity theft that plague our contemporary society. It is also not a byproduct of the digital age: Shakespeare satirized the problem of fraudulent identity by having his characters dress above or below their social rank or disguise their genders, and

such identity fraud certainly pre-dates Shakespearean theatre. Other accounts of diachronic personal identity are open to the possibility of mistaken identity as well. Psychological accounts that rely on memory as a criterion for tracking personal identity are particularly at risk since false memories can be confabulated, either naturally, as is the case with many early childhood memories, or artificially with the aid of others, as demonstrated by Elizabeth Loftus (see Loftus 1995, 2000). This, however, is not so much a theoretical problem pertaining to such accounts as it is a practical consequence of the malleability of memory. Proponents of memory-based accounts of personal identity do not have to abandon their views, but rather incorporate their understanding of the fragile nature of memory into their accounts.

The fact that a person's identity, as Lindemann remarks, can be held clumsily and badly is precisely at the core of this worry about inaccuracies or outright fraudulence of personal narratives and identities. My notion of extended identity, just as her idea of holding in identity, requires a certain amount of correspondence with reality. In other words, remembering a patient X who is currently in a permanent vegetative state as Colonel Y is only appropriate if X truly was (and thus continues to be) a colonel in the army. However, if X never served in any army, then this addition to X's narrative is both misleading and inappropriate. If such an attribution has been made purposefully (in order to gain certain benefits, for instance), then we have a case of a fraudulent identity, which may well be a legal issue for the courts to unravel. If, on the other hand, patient X is mistakenly identified as Colonel Y (perhaps X and Y swapped uniforms before an explosion killed Y and disfigured X), then we have a case of mistaken identity. In this latter case, family members

will be burying the body of Y believing him to be X while Y's family will be visiting the biological body of X believing him to be Y.

What is interesting about the latter case, and where I believe the extended account is better equipped than most others to underscore it, is that although the case features a body mix-up, the identities of each are kept intact and the narratives attributed to each identity are still accurate, thereby making the tracking of each identity appropriate. The problem is that the beliefs of the respective families are false since X is in fact alive, but in a vegetative state, while Y was killed by the explosion. No account of diachronic personal identity, however, can safeguard against this practical possibility. In theory, however, the extended account, given the constraint that a genuine history must be tracked in order for a person to be held properly and well in his or her identity, is not inferior to individualistic accounts in both the psychological and biological forms. In fact, the benefit of the extended account is that the identity of a person can be tracked in contexts and circumstances where individualistic accounts fail.

8.2
The Great Apes and Feral Children

What does the relational account say about non-human animals, such as the Great Apes, that have relatively highly developed cognitive capacities and social skills, but are not part of our social structures? The extension of personhood, which would entail certain moral protection, to the four non-human members of the Great Ape family (bonobos, chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans) has been advocated by a number of prominent figures including the

primatologist Jane Goodall, the scientist Richard Dawkins, and the philosopher Peter Singer. The question, then, is whether the relational approach could support such efforts.

Part of the reason why Singer can argue for the status of personhood on behalf of the Great Apes is that Preference Utilitarianism does elevate cognitive capacities above sentience and since many Great Apes have higher intelligence than some humans, Singer can argue that the status of the Great Apes be at least on par with the status of the humans whose cognitive capacities are matched by bonobos or chimpanzees.

The question the relational account must postulate is whether or not members of the various Great Ape species, or any other non-human animal species for that matter, narrate. If some non-human primates or other animals have narratives and self-conceptions, then they are persons. The question of whether such beings have person-specific rights when fully isolated from human society will depend on whether they are able to empathize and enter into morally meaningful care relations with one another. The reason for this is that rights can only be fully active within a moral context, which, on the care ethical view, means that rights can only be fully realized within the context of care relations where the needs of one relata are appropriately engaged with by the other relata. This is why the primatologist's approach, rather than Singer's, is much more akin to the reason some Great Apes, assuming that they are narrators and self-conceivers, might, on the relational view, enjoy proper rights within their own ranks. Some Great Apes, particularly the ones studied by primatologists, certainly enter into care relations with humans, which, if they indeed are narrators, ought to personify them even if they lose the ability to self-narrate. If the ability to self-narrate is something that exclusively emerges within an ape-human social context, then those particular

individuals become persons and are guaranteed the right to care relational person-maintenance, meaning that the ape-human social context ought not to be dissolved as it would result in the de-personification of a morally considerable member of the community of persons.

Assuming bonobos, chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans self-narrate, the question of the moral status of such Great Apes living in isolation from humans, then, depends on whether or not they are capable of empathy and able to enter into care relations, which would secure person-specific rights, a number of which would be active or realizable in the presence of correlated needs. The harder question to answer, however, is whether the Great Apes, within their own ranks, possess the necessary cognitive tools for extended personal identity. It is unclear whether such identity preservation could take place in a social context devoid of humans even if the Great Apes are the subjects of some primal personal narratives. Beings with the capacity for the maintenance of narratives are a necessary component of extended identity, which means that certain cognitive capacities are necessary for the maintenance of personhood, though they are not necessary for a particular individuation of a person. This means that although extended identity supervenes on the cognitive capacities of those individuals doing the holding or maintaining of identity, those held in their identities (or on whose behalf identity is being maintained) need not be in possession of these capacities.

It would certainly be interesting if primatologists discovered that the Great Apes enter into person-maintaining care relations with one another and that they commemorate and track the identities of the members of their social groups. If this were the case, then such

groups could, in principle, share in our moral realm of care and valuing, albeit befitting their own societal/cultural conventions and idiosyncrasies even in the absence of any contact or relations to us. If that were the case, we would have a moral obligation to respect their persons, habits, as well as their particular brand of caring just as we do within our own moral and social circles. The worry with this scenario, however, may be that it is unlikely that such groups would themselves be utilizing the concept of personhood or a concept similar to it. Nonetheless, this ought not dissuade a proponent of the account I propose from attributing personhood to groups of Great Apes that do exhibit both personal narratives and affectively saturated person-maintaining care relations (even if such groups do not themselves explicitly utilize the concept of personhood).[55]

Being members of a species that enters into person-maintaining care relations, feral children present an interesting case because being feral, they exist outside of the social sphere where care relational opportunities are abundant. What is of interest is that feral children may lack the kind of socialization that naturally evolves into a robust personal narrative and accords person status to children who grow up in families populated by persons. It may be the case that they lack the appropriate institutional, cultural, social, and familial context to develop narratives rich in affective states and other socially and morally meaningful relational traits, which might only emerge in social contexts. If that is the case, then entering into empathic care relations with such individuals may be difficult or, if such capacities are lacking altogether, impossible. Individuals who lack the appropriate affective states as well as appropriate narratives fail to stand at the recipient end of person-maintaining

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[55] For an excellent discussion of empathy in Apes, see de Wall, Frans. (2009). *The Age of Empathy: Nature's Lessons for a Kinder Society*. New York, NY: Harmony.

care relations (I will address such individuals in section 8.5, titled "The Question of Emotionless Rational Humans").

It is certainly the case that feral children, just as bonobos, can enter into the appropriate kinds of care relations. What is distinctive of feral children, however, is that they are born to persons and more likely than not, certain care relations are already part of their narratives making their re-introduction into person-maintaining social structures that much easier and smoother. The myth of the feral neonate is just that, a logical rather than a physical possibility, meaning that a realistic inquiry into the personhood of feral children ought to deal with very socialized, albeit abandoned, individuals who have at least limited self-conceptions embedded in at least simple or primitive narratives.

Although as far as I know, there have never been documented cases of second generation feral children (where two feral children have a child while remaining outside the social sphere of civilized humans) such cases are certainly a logical possibility. The question of personhood in such cases can be addressed similarly to the way the relational account approaches the question of the personhood of groups of Great Apes who do not interact with humans. If such groups of feral humans were authors of, shared personal narratives, and engaged in care relations, then they would be persons even if they themselves lacked the linguistic sophistication to verbalize their own moral status. The worry here, as was the case with the Great Ape scenario, is that since such groups may not have the concept of personhood, they may not have the moral tools to understand that such a status enshrouds its barer with dignity and person-specific rights. This, however, should not prevent other beings

capable of understanding the implications of this moral status from treating such groups in accordance with the status they possess.

Two interesting questions regarding "unsocialized" humans remain to be examined. As I engage in this abstraction (largely for the benefit of analytic philosophers), my imagination begins to fail me. Thus, rather than pretending to be dealing with the case of feral children, which the ensuing discussion is not reflective of, I explicitly turn to the abstract, and highly unrealistic, logical possibility of unsocialized humans as a means of testing the limits and boundaries of my account of personhood.

I turn to the two problems presently. First, if an unsocialized human becomes embedded in a society whose members refuse to enter into empathic care relations with her, then is she barred from person-specific rights in virtue of others' refusal to enter into care relations with her? Second, if the unsocialized human never interacts with anyone and is never embedded in society, does he have person-specific rights?

If the unsocialized human has a narrative, but is not related to others in any way, then those who interact with her are morally obligated to enter into such care relations. Of course, they may refuse to do so and instead torment and ridicule her, but such behaviour, though certainly possible, is morally abhorrent and wrong since the unsocialized individual's personal narrative is enough to engage her tormentors in a person-specific manner. Thus, the refusal to acknowledge her needs and interests, many of which would be communicated in attempts to engage the tormentors affectively, amounts to the refusal to respect the unsocialized individual's person-specific rights. If the unsocialized individual lacks the capacity for empathic care relations, which is possible even if unlikely, then she can still

occupy the recipient end of a care relation, meaning that tormenting the unsocialized individual would still be wrong.

Regarding the second question, if the unsocialized individual has no contact with others and thus is not related in any way with others, then he is not in any position to exercise his rights even if he is in possession of them in virtue of having a narrative and person-specific interests. However, any contact with others is accompanied with the emergence of a social and moral context in which any interests he may have become morally relevant. Even if the unsocialized individual never had the need to be treated as an end, for example, that need would emerge along with the empathic identification of the kinds of affective states that make such interests possible. Thus, a first encounter would be enough to generate person-specific interests and rights.

What if, however, the encounter occurred at a great distance in a manner that left the unsocialized individual unaware that it was even occurring? For example, what if a sniper spotted the distant figure and decided to fire at him? Since no care relation had been established and since the unsocialized individual has no other such relations to morally lean on, it would seem that the sniper's decision to fire would be morally irrelevant.

The question is asking whether or not the sniper, in taking a shot, would be firing at a *person*. That is, does the unsocialized individual have a right to life in this situation? The answer is somewhat complicated, but what is clear is that the sniper is certainly relating to the unsocialized individual, albeit in a violent and aggressive manner. If the sniper is under the impression that he is aiming at a person (in virtue of interpreting facial expressions, body language, or some other kind of non-verbal communication of affective states), then he ought

to treat his target with all the respect personhood demands. If the sniper is too far away to discern signs of personhood or if the unsocialized individual is not, at the moment, displaying his ability to narrate, then the sniper's firing, though tragic, since it fails to respect the interest to continued existence of an entity that has a right to life, is an accident insofar as it was not the sniper's intention to kill a *person*. The context of aiming at his target with an intention of killing it coupled with the unsocialized individual's capacity to narrate and enter into care relations makes the target's interest to continued existence morally relevant and morally binding.[56]

If the unsocialized individual did not have the capacity to narrate, then the sniper's distant interaction with him would and could not be of a person-specific kind (even though, when in doubt, we are always better off erring on the side of caution by assuming that an entity that appears to have the capacity to narrate or self-conceive and to enter into care relations *does* have such a capacity even if this is not entirely clear).

8.3
The Problem of Context Dependence and the Absence of Inclusive Narratives

The relational account of personhood states that an individual's personhood is dependent on that individual's involvement in meaningful affective care relations when that individual's personhood becomes fragile, since such care relations act to buttress the individual's personhood. However, this view is open to the objection that there can be two individuals, perhaps identical twins, who are exactly alike in all ways except that one has the

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[56] This is equivalent to a hunter shooting at a noise in the bushes, mistakenly believing the noise to be a deer, but accidentally firing at a fellow hunter.

good fortune of being entangled in person-maintaining care relations while the other is not as fortunate (perhaps due to the fact that one of the twins was lost in the wilderness as an infant and was never socialized). It may be objected that if this is the case, then the relational account suggests that individuals who do not differ in any morally relevant way can be or even should be treated differently.

There are two things that must be clarified. First, it is not the case that the two individuals are exactly alike in a morally relevant way because one of them is lacking person-maintaining care relations, which is a central morally relevant feature that her twin possesses. Second, just because there is this morally relevant difference between the two otherwise identical individuals, does not mean that we can or should treat the less fortunate twin any differently once we encounter her unless, and only unless, she is truly incapable of entering into care relations (assuming both twins have lost their narrative powers, in which case, that would be a second morally relevant difference between the twins). *Ceteris paribus*, we are morally obligated to acknowledge her need for the kinds of care relations her twin is enjoying and enter into empathic care relations with her.

One may further object that we certainly cannot and do not have an obligation to enter into care relations with every single individual we encounter, which includes this particular twin, as that would be unduly onerous. However, as argued in chapter 7, although we do not have the moral obligation to enter into care relations with as many individuals as we possibly can just as we do not have a moral obligation to save as many drowning children as we possibly can, when we are presented with an emergency, such as a child drowning, and neither proximity nor other obligations (i.e. one's own son or daughter is drowning as well)

prevent us from engaging the drowning child, then our moral obligation to appropriately interact with that child becomes compulsory. Analogously, when faced with the unfortunate twin (whose narrative self is struggling with the maintenance of personhood), we have a moral obligation to enter into empathic care relations with her in order to buttress her fragile personhood.

Of course, if the abandoned twin is the author of a personal narrative or has the capacity to be a recipient of care in affectively saturated care relations, then she also has the status of personhood even in the absence of an understanding of such a status (this is the case for all children, including the fortunate twin, who begin developing socially and emotionally as early as the first month of life). What happens, however, if the unfortunate twin is discovered and brought back to civilization shortly after she lapsed into a permanent vegetative state? In such a scenario, her capacity for narration as well as her ability to engage in care relations (even if only as a recipient of care) is gone along with her own narrative history and there are no others who are related to her in any way prior to her discovery. Her narrative history is not extended because there are no other minds that have ever tracked it. Can the twin's personhood be maintained by post-vegetative care relations without a proper (i.e. genuine) possibility of maintaining her personal identity (since her narrative is not only inaccessible, but is also fully devoid of any care relations)?

The care-givers tasked with the preservation of the unfortunate twin's life may enter into interpretive care relations with an imagined narrative, but they can only guess that her narrative would be that of a being once capable of narration or self-conception (which, in this aspect, would be similar or akin to their own personal narratives). The interpreters can also

imagine the care relation between the twin and her mother that most likely existed prior to the twin's removal from the social sphere. However, not much beyond such possible facts can be genuinely attributed to the twin's narrative. It is not clear that what can genuinely be attributed is quite enough for the maintenance of personhood, especially since the interpreters do not really know if there ever existed a mother-child care relation or if the unfortunate twin was truly capable of personal narration. Moreover, it is very difficult to imagine what the unfortunate twin would have wanted for her vegetative-self since it is unlikely that a strong conception of dignity would have accompanied her self-conception. The interpretation, however, is still a valid one, even if it is possible that it might be erroneous. In such unlikely cases, erring on the side of caution is not only permissible, but morally prudent. Prudence instructs that the interpreters should adopt an Affective Stance (see chapter 7) toward the vegetative unfortunate twin.

I do not think this scenario points to a weakness of the relational account. In fact, ratio-centric accounts de-personify all patients in permanent vegetative states, including those with a plethora of various care relations, whereas the care-centric account runs into difficulties only in such highly unlikely cases (and even then, the interpreters can adopt the Affective Stance in order to enter into an asymmetric care relation, albeit a very weak and basic one). Moreover, this scenario points to the fragility of personhood and the importance of entering into, as well as the morally compelling reason for the maintenance of, person-maintaining care relations. This, to my mind, is a strength of the account.

8.4
The Problem of Exclusionary Narratives

The possibility of appealing to exclusionary narratives, one may object, can undermine the fragile personhood of individuals lacking the capacity to maintain their own personhood, whom the relational account is meant to protect. There certainly are many exclusive narratives, which include some, but not others into the realm of considerability. The objection, then, states that while appealing to the narrative capacities of others in establishing diachronic identity and while appealing to relations with others in buttressing moral personhood of vulnerable individuals *does* expand the scope of personhood in appropriate ways, such appeals might also cut the other way, given the exclusionary narratives and views that already exist.

What the relational account suggests is that it is possible to de-personify an individual via such exclusionary narratives. Is there something about those special person-maintaing care relations that can combat the negative effect of exclusionary narratives? Insofar as person-maintaining care relations need not be occurrent once they are formed, they do not simply disappear, effectively leaving a narrative rich with person-maintaining relations for a potential interpreter to engage. Individuals with exclusionary agendas may purposefully misinterpret such narratives and avoid connecting with their subjects in appropriate ways, and although that may indeed be damaging to the excluded individual, in most cases, such individuals will have other care relations holding them in their identities and personhood.

There is, of course, the risk of the absence of any care relations as discussed in the previous section. Such cases coupled with exclusionary narratives are certainly dangerous because they have the power to de-personify, but, as argued previously, the relational account does have tools to deal with such rare possibilities. Thus, cases where, due to exclusionary narratives, a carer, such as a medical practitioner, for example, mistreats a patient whose narrative is devoid of care relations are, in fact, instances of morally repulsive behaviour. This is because even if the individual's narrative was devoid of any person-maintaining care relations, the medical practitioner should attempt to interpret the narrative in an appropriate manner by, at least initially, adopting the Affective Stance toward the patient. A genuine attempt at such an interpretation could fail (perhaps because the patient is not a person), but it ought to be attempted.

The exclusionary narratives themselves may be inauthentic, meaning that interpreting a member of a group through such inauthentic narratives is an instance of holding a person badly, in fact maliciously, in an inauthentic identity. An exclusionary narrative is certainly inauthentic if the members of an excluded group do, within their own ranks, engage in empathic caring, personal narrative tracking, and other such person-generating and person-maintaining social activities. The "untouchable" caste is one such example (Jews within Nazi ghettos are another) of a malicious attempt at the de-personification of an entire group of *persons* based on an obviously inauthentic exclusionary narrative.

8.5
The Question of Emotionless Rational Humans

One can imagine human beings who do not harm anyone, but who are incapable of love, kindness, friendliness, generosity, sympathy, empathy, or any other affective states. I have in mind individuals who lose their emotional capacities due to brain injury or individuals with sociopathic tendencies that manifest themselves in difficulties identifying with and empathically engaging other people. In both such cases, it is difficult to imagine someone who has never, in their entire life history, cared for or about another individual or felt affection, kindness, friendship, or love toward another being at least temporarily and sporadically. Thus, once again, I engage in a philosophical abstraction for the sake of testing the theoretical limits of my account of relational personhood and extended identity. What does the care-centric relational account have to say about such cases? Assuming that such individuals are rational, it seems odd to exclude them from the sphere of personhood. Certainly, if they have self-narratives, then they are persons. However, could their personhood be maintained upon the cessation of their self-narrative capacities?

Since, as argued in chapter 5, morality is a source of great personal meaning, which, on a care-centric account, becomes an integral part of an individual's personal narrative, it is worth asking whether an emotionless rational human can act morally. Although someone who is incapable of care and whose moral life is devoid of such affective states as love, kindness, friendliness, empathy, etc. may not harm other people and even refrain from doing so by following accepted social rules, such an individual is nevertheless not internalizing the care-ethical source of morality that governs his or her actions, meaning that his or her

narrative must be devoid of the kind of external as well as intrinsic morally meaningful relations that dignify persons. It is conceivable that an alternate and equally self-consistent set of rules that does not entail the prevention of harm to others could seem equally adoptable to such an individual as is the set he or she currently utilizes to navigate the social world; this alternative rule-set could, given a shift in context, be, rationally speaking, an even better fit than the previous, but it need not be morally better. Here I have in mind cases where adopting prejudices towards minorities, as was the case with Jews for centuries in many European countries, may be socially advantageous, but morally wrong. Although the capacity to care does not necessitate proper moral conduct (as is evident by the moral inequalities that stain most of human history), the capacity to care does provide an inner moral compass, one that could only enrich and deepen our imagined individual's moral agency; without such a moral compass, the emotionless, rational individual could never empathize with members of excluded minorities and thus would not be open to a compelling non-rational justification for abandoning the rule-set that governs his or her socially prejudiced actions. In other words, rationality without empathy (or care) is insufficient for a mature internalization of morality.

Although morality is often understood in rationalistic terms, or as Annette Baier (1987) observes, with justice as the supreme virtue, there is more to the moral life than such rational activities as utility maximization or rule following. These, to be sure, play an important role in moral deliberation, but a being capable only of measuring utility outcomes or applying rules is lacking something morally salient, namely the capacity to care. I agree with Baier that "the best moral theory...has to harmonize justice and care" (Baier 1987, 56),

where care, following Michael Slote (2007), is understood as a central moral virtue equated with a motivational attitude of empathy.

Jean Grimshaw (1992) argues that although the domestic sphere of home and family (which is intimately linked to care) is, wrongly, understood as a mere backdrop for justice oriented moral theories, it is nonetheless highly praised as the bedrock of social life by the very thinkers who demote it to the status of a backdrop (Grimshaw 1992, 224). It seems odd to think of morality as separable from caring, especially since care, and thus the capacity for it, has to motivate both Utilitarian calculations as well as Kantian maxims. That is, Utilitarians want to maximize utility because they *care*[57] about overall wellbeing while Kantians follow maxims because they *care* about acting in accordance with duty and a good will.

Due to the difficulty I encounter while straining to imagine a human being whose entire life is devoid of *care*, I propose to focus on a possible rational non-human being that is lacking in care-based affective states. Assuming that artificial intelligence is a possibility and assuming that such an entity is rational, but emotionally barren, could or should it be endowed with the status of personhood? Proponents of a ratio-centric account of personhood could certainly argue that such an entity satisfies the criteria for personhood and ought to be accorded the status just as a proponent of the relational account could accept such a being into the realm of persons as long as it possessed an authentic personal narrative. The difference, however, is that whereas on the ratio-centric account, identity tracking would take place in the usual psychological manner, on the relational, extended account, the constitutive,

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[57] Again, I am using the word 'care' to refer to both "caring about something," as well as "valuing something."

care relational aspect of diachronic identity would be missing. The consequence of this is that following a systemic disturbance or malfunction resulting in a considerable reduction in, or full annihilation of, the requisite self-narrative capacities, the narrative of such an artificial system would be morally inert along with the system's capacity for self-narration. Without the necessary constituent care relational content, the barren narrative could not support person-maintaining relations with others. A past narrative could still be remembered, but it would be wholly inactive and entirely incapable of generating any kinds of rights. Such narratives would be lacking something that is central to personal narratives, namely the constitutive care relational content that both endows personal narratives with meaning and value and ensures the maintenance of moral personhood even in the absence of self-narration.

The same ought to be true for human beings who are altogether and completely devoid of the capacity to care. However, this is not true for human beings who have at some point in their lives been capable of caring, but, due to accident or disease, have lost this capacity. The reason why such individuals do not lose their personhood is because their personal identities can be held and maintained by others, namely those who stand in certain care relations to the person now lacking the capacity to care. Such individuals have the ability to receive and uptake care in a subjectively active manner.

Does this mean that, on the care-centric account, human beings born without the capacity to care are precluded from personhood once they lose their narrative capacities? Before answering this question, I would like to point out that the ratio-centric approach runs into an analogous problem. That is, on the ratio-centric view, human beings born without the

capacity for rationality, as well as individuals who lose this capacity later in life (individuals who nonetheless can have the capacity to care), are precluded from personhood. The difference is that whereas it is unclear how the ratio-centric account can deal with its own version of this problem, the care-centric relational account does have resources at its disposal to offer a solution.

Before exploring the solution to this problem, it is important to understand the nature of the moral efficacy of personhood. If personhood is understood as a moral term, then its efficacy is restricted within the moral sphere, which (especially on the care-ethical perspective) is bound to the social context. Because social isolation precludes the kinds of situations where the moral status of personhood would serve as a guide to appropriate interactions with others, a solitary individual has no need for the protection the label of personhood affords. Personhood does not necessarily disintegrate outside of the social and thus the moral sphere, but it becomes inefficacious and thus as good as non-occurrent, making the above mentioned twins, if both find themselves lacking in the capacity to self-narrate and subsequently both are removed from the social sphere, morally indistinguishable in practice, though perhaps not in principle.

For example, although the fortunate twin continues to posses person-status in virtue of a complex network of care relations populating her personal narrative, while she is abandoned and totally isolated in the wilderness, she has no need of this moral status on such occasions. Neither the inanimate dangers nor the wildlife that may stumble across her can treat or interact with her any differently than would be the case for the unfortunate twin under such circumstances. Her moral status as a person simply has no meaning outside of

the context in which it emerges (see chapter 5 for a discussion of externalized meaning). A bear will maul her with just the same amount of savageness regardless of whether or not she is capable of entering into care relations and regardless of the fact that she is socially and morally related to others back in civilization. However, when she finds herself in contexts where empathic care relations are possible, her moral status becomes an important and efficacious part of her. For instance, if she encounters other people, it matters that she is a person because that label prevents these others from mistreating her and indeed prescribes a certain manner of interacting with her. Within this newly formed social context, the people she encounters are obliged to help her escape the bear or help her return to the safety, protection, and care of those who hold her in her personal identity even though they have no such obligations toward a non-person such as a marmot, which might find itself in identically perilous difficulties as the fortunate twin.

I presently return to the question of whether, on the care-centric relational account, a human being born without the capacity to care is precluded from personhood upon losing the capacity to self-narrate. As already mentioned in chapter 7, Daniel Dennett (1989) proposes what he calls the Intentional Stance and explains that it is a stance one adopts in order to be better able to predict a system's behaviour. Because an observer would be unable to predict the behaviour of a system merely from either the Physical or the Design Stance, even though a system is, in principle, predictable from the design and physical stances, the observer adopts the Intentional Stance and assumes that the system she is trying to predict and understand has intentional states.

Analogously, an interpreter confronted with a previously rational (and thus no longer self-narrating), but affectively barren human being is best able to navigate the social and moral landscape by adopting what might be called an Affective Stance, which one adopts in order to be better able to evaluate an individual's moral status. Unlike Dennett's Intentional Stance, however, the Affective Stance is not merely a means of understanding another's behaviour, but is a way to test for the potential of entering into morally relevant empathic care relations. In the case of the previously rational, but affectively barren human being (as well as in the case of other kinds of fragile persons, such as the severely cognitively disabled), the Affective Stance is a means of testing for traces of morally relevant care relations or for entry points into such relations.

If a previously rational, but affectively barren human being is incapable of becoming a recipient of care and thus is unable to enter into care relations, perhaps because he or she has lapsed into a permanent vegetative state, then his or her personhood cannot be maintained. If, however, the previously rational, but affectively barren human being engages others, then relations inevitably form. The mere taking of an Affective Stance toward such a being generates an affective potential. As soon as the previously rational, but affectively barren human being attempts to actualize this potential by entering into the initiated care relation, whatever affective state underlies the relation becomes relationally expressed.

This happens in virtue of interpreting the previously rational, but affectively barren individual's willful entrance into the relation as a behavioural sign of affective connection with a recipient of care who, at a previous time, was the author of a personal narrative, albeit one that was care-relationally empty. This is enough for the formation of a genuine care

relation, which can personify the previously rational, but affectively barren individual because even though the individual is affectively barren, the interpreter does not have epistemic access into the emotional life of the individual in question and thus the interpretation, even if somewhat erroneous, is used to establish a care relation. It is not absolutely clear to me, however, whether the previously rational, but affectively barren individual is truly affectively barren if she attempts to enter into an affectively motivated care relation. If emotions and affective states are, as Campbell argues, expressive in nature (and thus externalistic), then the previously rational individual's mere attempt to enter into the care relation, in virtue of being a response to an initiation of such a care relation, should suffice in transforming the previously rational (but up to that moment affectively barren) individual into a genuine co-realizer of the affective state.[58]

To make the example somewhat more concrete, if a stranger, call him John, comes across an individual in need of aid, call her Jane, whose inner emotive life (or in Jane's case, lack thereof) is epistemically closed to John, then John, in virtue of taking the Affective Stance, can attempt to establish a care relation, perhaps one expressing the affective state of kindness, with Jane. If Jane reacts to John's kindness appropriately (that is, if Jane attempts to receive John's kindness), then Jane, in spite of her previously affectively barren inner life, has successfully entered into a care relation and is successfully co-realizing the relational affective state of kindness performing the function of the recipient of care in a care relation where John's function is that of the care giver. I doubt that it would be accurate to describe Jane as affectively barren once such a relational affective state is thusly co-realized.

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[58] Making one's Affective Stance sufficiently wide and sensitive (so as to identify emotional states that are not being expressed skillfully or normally) may require practice just as habituating oneself into a virtuous character requires practice and repetition.

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Admittedly, Jane's affective state may be fully dependent on John's ability to initiate it, but the expression of the affective state is co-realized by Jane.

One may wonder if personhood should be understood as a moral term in the first place? For example, when defining personhood ratio-centrically, it could be argued that stating that only entities, which are capable of rational thought at some point in their lives are persons and that further building moral content into the term *person* is unnecessary, unwarranted, or even to be avoided.[59]

If, however, we refuse to understand the term *person* morally, then where does the moral status the term is supposed to bestow upon its bearer originate? A proponent of the ratio-centric account of personhood may well answer that the worth associated with the special moral status of persons resides in the capacity for rationality itself. This is because if *personhood* is not that which bestows moral worth on a person, which is the consequence of refraining from defining *personhood* in moral terms, then there must be something else about persons that makes them morally worthy. This something must be that which makes an individual a person since we consider persons to be morally worthy. On a ratio-centric account, this something is going to be rationality. But does this mean that rationality has built-in moral content? The answer is no. Rationality, however, is a pre-requisite for moral agency, which in turn is the source of the moral law that accords moral agents with moral worth. Of course, this places the proponent of a ratio-centric view in distinguished company of such eminent names and renowned minds as those of Aristotle and Immanuel Kant. The problem with this approach, however, as I have argued is that although it does reveal the

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[59] I would like to thank Michael Tooley for bringing this issue to my attention.

special value we do and ought to place on rationality, it unfortunately also excludes morally worthy individuals from the protection of the moral status of personhood.

The virtue of a care-centrically grounded relational account of personhood is precisely that it builds moral content into personhood itself. The reason why this is a virtue of the account is that personhood itself has moral worth, which endows any being that is labeled as a person with the protection that comes with this moral status. This also means that although the capacity for empathic caring is just as central to the moral worth of moral agents as is the capacity for rationality on the ratio-centric account, the moral worth of persons is not tied to or derived from this capacity, making it possible for individuals who lack these capacities to both be personified and endowed with the moral worth that is built into the term *personhood*. Moreover, just as the proponent of the ratio-centric view is in eminent company, so is the proponent of the care-centric approach since the relational account follows the likes of John Locke, Sue Campbell, and Michael Tooley in understanding personhood in moral terms. Locke defines personhood forensically. Campbell follows Locke in her definition. She writes: "[a] person is a being who can be held responsible and who can take responsibility for his or her actions. Because of this connection to responsibility, the idea of a person presupposes moral discourse" (Campbell 2003, 32). Tooley's understanding of personhood comes closest to mine in that it treats personhood as a purely moral concept. Tooley writes: "[h]ow is the term 'person' to be interpreted? I shall treat the concept of a person as a purely moral concept, free of all descriptive content. Specifically, in my usage the sentence 'X is a person' will be synonymous with the sentence 'X has a (serious) moral right to life'" (Tooley 1972, 40).

8.6
Personhood and Permanent Vegetative States

If individuals in permanent vegetative states do in fact, at least under some narrative interpretations, retain their personhood in virtue of a properly maintained extended identity, then, such individuals should be in possession of person-specific rights. However, the objection continues, it seems *prima facie* implausible to think that such individuals could have a right to life, for example. Before addressing this objection, it is important to be clear about what kinds of individuals fall under the label "vegetative state." As outlined in chapter 1 (section 1.3), the permanent vegetative state differs from the minimally conscious state in that there is no awareness and no neurological underpinning for neo-Lockean personhood (i.e. for episodic memory) in patients in permanent vegetative states. Vegetative states differ from brain death in that whereas brain death includes the cessation of involuntary activity necessary to sustain life, the vegetative state (even in its permanent variant) is marked by the continuation of involuntary life-maintaining brain activity, as well as the continuation of sleep-wake cycles and behaviour such as moving one's eyes, seemingly scanning the room or grunting, etc. Such behaviour is absent in brain dead patients, but it nevertheless is not thought to be the product of conscious states in vegetative patients.

It is important then, to differentiate between those individuals whose personality traits and thus identities have not been destroyed in virtue of the remaining and salvageable neurological basis of memories (these are individuals in minimally conscious states or even comas) and those individuals whose brains have irreversibly ceased to function (this includes involuntary activity necessary for life). Individuals in vegetative states sit somewhere in the middle, between life and death. If my account is successful in personifying at least some

individuals in permanent vegetative states, then the first group (individuals with salvageable neo-Locken personalities) also get automatically annexed into the realm of personhood.

Do patients in permanent vegetative states have the right to life? As already argued, if they are persons, then they certainly have person-specific rights. The care ethical insight about rights, however, does help make sense of inactive rights by linking the moral efficacy of rights to the relational concept of needs. Thus, if a patient in a permanent vegetative state has needs for a certain, likely truncated, set of rights, then these rights can be said to be active and thus morally obliging and binding. If, however, certain particular needs are lacking, then the rights, especially in cases where communication with the individual is impossible, can be considered forfeited. But, the objection continues, is it not the case that individuals in permanent vegetative states, in virtue of lacking conscious awareness, simply do not have needs and therefore even if they are persons, have no active rights? And if this is the case, then in what sense does personhood do any moral work where there are no possible rights it could protect?

The answer is that individuals in permanent vegetative states continue to have needs, but that such needs must be interpreted by the care taker who occupies an important position and plays a crucial role in the care relation responsible for the patient's personification. Some such needs are biological while others are morally relevant. All such morally relevant needs stem from the patient's past personhood coupled with the carer's ability to engage the patient's narrative. For example, the carer can assume that the patient has certain needs if the patient left an advance directive regarding such needs. However, as became evident in the Terri Schiavo scenario, this is not always the case. The carer can infer such needs from the

patient's narrative even if the carer is unfamiliar with the narrative details of the patient, such vague and seemingly uninformative facts like the fact that the patient was a person in the past are enough to compel the carer to infer certain needs. Here we are talking about needs the patient would have expressed about his or her future vegetative self, needs he or she imagined him or herself to have if he or she happened to be in a vegetative state, as well as needs or interests, such as the interest to be treated as a person (with dignity).

The full force of the objection is the claim that it is highly unlikely that anyone believes they will have any needs in a permanent vegetative state. This, of course, could be true in cases where someone leaves an advance directive stating that he or she does not wish to be treated as though he or she has any needs, which itself would nonetheless constitute a need or desire, albeit a singular one. However, there are certain person-specific, and thus morally relevant, rights that many would not want to forfeit even while in a permanent vegetative state, such as the right to be treated with dignity. And although such needs may not be shared by all, a carer, unless specifically aware of a preference to not be treated in a dignified manner, is better off postulating such needs on the patient's behalf.

What about the right to life? In virtue of being persons (as argued in Chapter 7), individuals in permanent vegetative states possess all person-specific rights, where only those that can be tied to needs are active, meaning that we are allowed to let people die if we have good reason to believe that no needs associated with living remain. However, this also means that a person's narrative history (in the form of personal or religious beliefs) or an explicit request prior to the vegetative state can ensure that a desire to live even with the aid of feeding tubes or intravenous nourishment and hydration can be interpreted on behalf of the

patient. In such cases, the right to life is realized and must be respected to the same extent and with the same moral strength as that possessed by any normal adult human being.

If, under appropriate circumstances, such as when, for instance, an explicit request to continue living is made, the right to life of an individual in a permanent vegetative state is as strong and morally binding as the right to life of a conscious person, then that would mean that there is no moral difference between saving the life of someone in a permanent vegetative state instead of the life of a person who will certainly have many more experiences. This, however, the objection goes, is counter intuitive. If, for example, the hospital wing housing a patient in a permanent vegetative state catches fire and there is time to save only one individual, a patient in a permanent vegetative state or the nurse who happens to be on his shift, then, the objection continues, the *prima facie* intuition is that one ought to save the nurse who will continue to have thoughts, experiences, and many satisfied current and future preferences instead of the vegetative patient who will have no greater nor any lesser amount of future experiences than he or she had prior to the fire. However, if this is the case, then it would seem that the patient in a permanent vegetative state does not have as strong a right to life as the conscious person.

I think that in many cases, the objection's point is well taken and that it may be permissible to sacrifice the right to life of a person in a permanent vegetative state in order to save another person with the same right to life. Such cases certainly take numerous factors into consideration and are dependent on the existence of extremely limited resources, such as a lack of time, energy, and other circumstances that might prevent an agent from saving both individuals. Moreover, as already contemplated in chapter 7, not every vegetative narrative

ought to be interpreted as possessing a right to life just as not every vegetative narrative will be interpreted in person-maintaining terms. For the sake of this objection, I assume that the narrative in question is interpreted in both person-maintaining and right-to-life preserving terms.

The objection, of course, argues that individuals in vegetative states, no matter how narratives are engaged or interpreted, do not actually have as strong a right to life as do non-vegetative, conscious individuals because if they did, then there would be cases where saving the vegetative patient would be the morally preferable action. I think there in fact are such cases, just as I think there are cases where, given extreme circumstances such as the ones described in the thought experiment, we would be morally permitted to choose between two normal, conscious individuals both with the capacity for potential future experiences. Some examples of the latter scenario may involve choosing to save a sibling over a friend or a climbing partner over a stranger.

The problem with the objection is not that it fails to identify a real issue because it, in fact, points to a genuine moral dilemma. The problem lies in the objection's assumption that moral relevance of an individual's life can be measured solely by the amount and/or quality of the individual's conscious experiences. I have argued that the moral status of *personhood* we assign to some individuals, a status so important and so valued that the name we gave it has become interchangeable with self-identification,[60] is grounded in care ethical considerations rather than rational thought, preference satisfaction, or conscious experience. Thus, the reason that, on the account I propose, there are circumstances where one can

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[60] We identify with our moral status in various ways, even to the point that we often use the term *person* interchangeably with the word *self*, as in the sentence: "I volunteer my person for this task."

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justifiably value the life of a sibling over that of a friend or a climbing partner over that of a stranger is that one is more intimately related to the sibling or the climbing partner than one is to a friend or another climber who also happens to find herself in trouble on the mountain. Of course, one may be more intimately related to a friend than to a sibling in which case, the friend's life may be morally more relevant. Rather than calculating the number of total preferences that might be satisfied or the number of potential positive experiences an individual might have, I propose to evaluate the number, strength, quality, and kind of empathic care relations one finds oneself entangled in with the individual in question. Both climbing partner and the stranger on the mountain have a right to life, but if it is possible to rescue only one, then it is justifiable to rescue the one with whom one is more intimately related even if the stranger is considerably younger than the climbing partner.

To respond to the objection, then, the case will play out differently depending on who is involved and what kinds of relations exist between the participants. If both the nurse and the vegetative patient are one's family members or friends and both are equally entangled in similarly strong care relations, then, as a means of avoiding the deplorable fate of Buridan's Ass, the decision of whom to save could be based on other, also quite salient considerations such as life expectancy or potential for future experiences. However, if the choice is between a conscious stranger and a loved one (e.g. one's own child or a dear friend) in a permanent vegetative state, then it is not at all unthinkable that one might be morally compelled and justified to rescue the loved one, especially in cases where the right to life of the loved one is activated by a previously communicated interest in which the right is grounded. When the care relational bonds between a carer (be it a family member or a

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friend) are constitutive of a narrative that is clearly interpretable, and subsequently interpreted, in life-preserving terms, the narrative of a patient in a permanent vegetative state is held in its personhood, which accords the subject of the narrative the moral status of personhood along with all pertinent accompanying person-specific rights (including the right to life) even if the subject of the narrative is incapable of narration.

Conclusion

I have argued that personhood cannot be understood in the same way we understand chair-hood because persons are not the kinds of things that can be tracked through time in the way we track the identity of other objects since personhood is essentially relational and therefore social and moral in nature. I also argued that the moral grounding of personhood should be framed in a language of care, which lends itself well to a relational account of personhood. The problem with many approaches to personhood is that *moral agency* is often assumed to be the essential feature of *personhood*. I have argued that by defining moral agency in ratio-centric terms, most accounts of personhood considerably narrow the scope of personhood and thereby exclude a great number of individuals from the community of persons.

Chapter 1 argued that the orthodox approach to personhood is ratio-centric and that this orthodox approach de-personifies individuals who should be protected. In chapter 2, I argued that personhood is a moral term and that our motivation for tracking personal identity is also moral in nature. Chapter 3 built on the argument that personhood is a moral term by sketching influential moral accounts of persons via a historical survey of selected moral theories. I argued that the ratio-centrism proposed in chapter 1 is present in theories as temporally distant and theoretically distinct as Aristotle's virtue ethics, Immanuel Kant's deontology, and Peter Singer's preference utilitarianism, making the problem that ensues (due to ratio-centrism) historically and theoretically ubiquitous. Chapter 3 also argued that this inherent ratio-centrism naturally lends itself to the adoption of John Locke's

psychological account of personal identity (as well as to a polarized response to neo-Lockeanism in the form of the biological account).

In chapter 4, I have explored psychological and biological approaches to the problem of diachronic personal identity and extracted the main insights of each view while sketching out their major shortcomings. The major insight of the biological account is that psychological properties such as rationality, intelligence, or even individual memory are neither necessary nor sufficient for tracking a person's identity through time. The shortcoming of this view, however, is its absolute rejection of the importance of psychological continuity. The major insight of the psychological approach is precisely that it underscores the salience of memory (and psychology more generally). However, its narrow focus on individualistic psychological features leads to various intractable identity problems and reflects the ratio-centric bias. Since I think that the psychological approach to diachronic personal identity is on the right track insofar as it invokes the memory criterion for tracking persons through time, in chapter 5, I turned to Robert Nozick's closest continuer theory as it offers a novel expression of the psychological approach that solves many of the identity puzzles for which the literature is famous. This chapter examined the limits of psychologism and suggested an alternative way forward: I have argued that Nozick's closest continuer theory is best understood by acknowledging that the values that shape an agent's self-conception originate outside the agent in her social environment. This reading of the closest continuer theory alleviates the problem of subjectivity, which plagues Nozick's account. I used this reading of Nozick to open the door to a *relational* conception of personhood and an *extended* understanding of diachronic personal identity.

In chapter 6, I examined Sue Campbell's account of relational remembering and her relational conception of personhood and I argued that the reason she holds on to the ratio-centric bias is that she understands the self in ratio-centric and individualistic terms and thus fails to apply her notion of relational remembering to her account of relational personhood. I took Campbell's relational accounts of memory and personhood to its logical conclusion by arguing for an extended account of diachronic personal identity. In chapter 7 I argued for the social and fragile nature of personhood, as well as for a care-based externalized mode of personhood maintenance, while chapter 8 explored questions and possible objections to the relational account of personhood and an extended understanding of personal identity.

Personhood is a narrative construction heavily influenced by, entangled, and embedded within interactions and relations between individuals. These interactions take the form of care relations, which instil the individual being related to with dignity. These care relations are saturated with empathy, which allows a carer to assume the Affective Stance in an attempt to recognize affective states such as love, respect, kindness, friendliness, generosity, sympathy, etc. in others. All such affective states are what make these relations *care relations*. All care relations that serve as the subvenient base for the emergence of dignity (in both its objective and subjective instantiations), which itself is a relational property, are fundamentally moral in nature and subsequently person-maintaining. Person-specific rights are directly derived from the dignity of the individual engaged in these person-maintaining care relations.

Diachronic personal identity is based in episodic memory, which, according to the social manifestation thesis, is fundamentally social in nature. The content of episodic

memory is influenced and shaped by others. *Who* we are depends in a real way on who we associate with; *who* we are is the product of the care relations in which we engage and in which we are entangled. Moreover, personal identity is extended over other minds as well as places and objects. An account of memory understood through the extended mind thesis implies that other minds, places, and objects can hold people in their identities while the insight of the social manifestation thesis entails that other minds, social schemas, care relations etc. influence, shape, and even constitute the identities of persons. Places and objects can be interpreted by others in order to reconstruct an individual's identity or help a person re-member his or her identity. Similarly, personal narratives, which are extended over the minds of others can be interpreted by others to instil and retain dignity (which gives rise to person-specific rights) in virtue of a care relational entanglement between an individual's personal narrative and the person who engages the other's narrative via such care relations.

The fact that other people can literally hold fragile persons in their personhood and in their personal identities in virtue of the constitutive nature of affective care relations, which are morally relevant on the care-centric account, entails that we have a moral obligation to care for and value vulnerable individuals. In other words, the constitutive nature of affective care relations literally weaves narratives together, thereby morally compelling us to hold fragile individuals in their *personal* identities. Part of the moral preciousness of persons is the fact that their personal narratives are absolutely unique and irreplaceable, making their protection and sustenance a moral prerogative.

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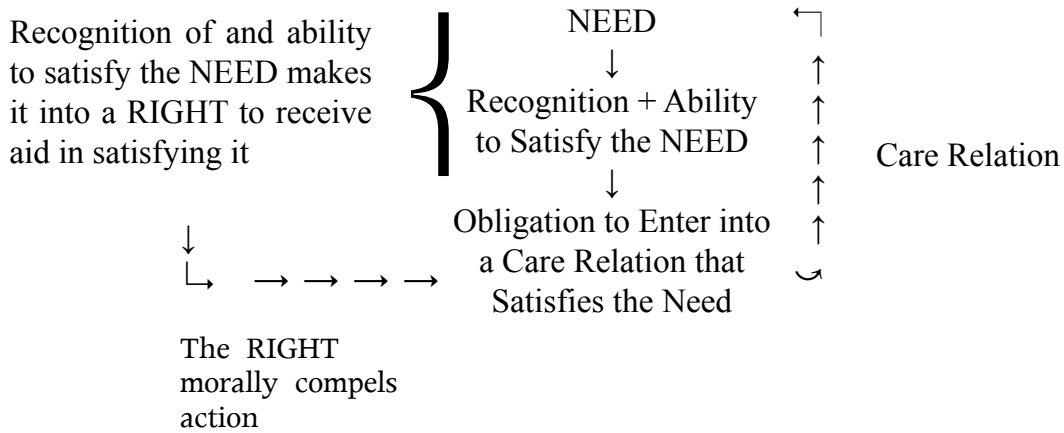
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Appendix

Recognition of and ability to satisfy the NEED makes it into a RIGHT to receive aid in satisfying it

}

NEED
↓
Recognition + Ability to Satisfy the NEED
↓
Obligation to Enter into a Care Relation that Satisfies the Need

Care Relation

↓
↳ → → → →

The RIGHT morally compels action

A common domestic example of a right-generating care relationship is the feeding ritual pet owners engage in with their pets. Pets communicate their needs in various ways (i.e. by barking, by meowing, by guarding the food dish, etc.), which often idiosyncratically emerge in the context of a given household. The pet owners, because they are immersed in these respective contexts, have the ability to both recognize and satisfy the needs being expressed by their pets. The need for food becomes a right to be fed. Once the need the pet is communicating is recognized, the pet owner has a moral obligation to enter into a care relation with the pet and aid in satisfying his or her need (especially since it is often the case that the pet cannot get the food for itself). This care-relational bond is not a one-time occurrence, but an ongoing dependency.