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Abstract

The aim of some philosophical projects is to create a broader framework for agency that is inclusive of cognitively disabled people. On the face of it, this seems like a worthwhile and important project, because cognitively disabled people have historically been excluded from making decisions, and their autonomy was neglected and disrespected. Along similar lines, past philosophical traditions tend to neglect the way social environments can restrict or expand agency. Rather than being integrated into society and assisted with making decisions, cognitively disabled people either had their decisions made for them or were manipulated into situations that they may not have chosen. 'Agency' and 'autonomy' were narrowly understood as correlating with individuals exercising their intellectual decision-making capacities, rather than with joint projects that people can partake in together. As such, the notion 'agency' was narrowly equated with individual organism's capacity to exercise rational thought. In this article, I focus on the social environment in which cognitively disabled people exist and some contemporary philosophical literature that accounts for cognitive disability in their deliberations about agency. I present and critically appropriate a theory of mind that could provide a framework for understanding how cognitively disabled people could make decisions in their social world. According to this theory, one's mind and cognition extend into the world. More specifically, the theory implies that one's mind extends into the world to include iPhones, notebooks, and even other persons. While there is an advantage to this theory in the above project, there are also a number of problems. I will highlight a few of the problems with this theory and conclude with a promising and more modest alternative.

Keywords

Extended Mind, Cognitive Disability, Agency, Autonomy, Neuroethics

1. Introduction

The aim of some philosophical projects is to create a broader framework for agency that is inclusive of cognitively disabled people. On the face of it, this seems like a worthwhile and important project, because cognitively disabled people have historically been excluded from making decisions, and their autonomy was neglected and disrespected. Along similar lines, past philosophical traditions tend to neglect the way social environments can restrict or expand agency. Rather than being integrated into society and assisted with making decisions, cognitively disabled people either had their decisions made for them or were manipulated into situations that they may not have chosen. 'Agency' and 'autonomy' were narrowly understood as correlating with

individuals exercising their intellectual decision-making capacities, rather than with joint projects that people can partake in together. As such, the notion 'agency' was narrowly equated with individual organism's capacity to exercise rational thought. There are flaws in any theory of agency that restricts it in this way, because it does not acknowledge how cognitively disabled people exist within a social context, wherein their cognitive capacities can be improved or impaired by environmental features. There is a potential for other agents to assist cognitively disabled persons in forming and thinking about decisions, even when an individual lacks certain capacities that allow one to make decisions alone. It is important to acknowledge how a person is an agent, because if one is traditionally conceived of as always consenting, not capable of consenting, or not capable of being an agent, then there is a risk that a person will not be able to rightfully claim that their autonomy has been violated. There would be little to no legal or political means that one could take when a cognitively disabled person's autonomy has, in fact, been violated. To avoid this possibility, laws and policies should be formulated, implemented and enforced to broaden the scope of who is perceived as capable of making decisions, and who is capable of giving and withdrawing consent to medical interventions or receiving assistance for daily life tasks. Acknowledging this broader sense of agency expands the scope of who is seen as being able to make decisions and who can give and withdraw consent. In this article, I focus on the social environment in which cognitively disabled people exist and some contemporary philosophical literature that accounts for cognitive disability in their deliberations about agency. I present and critically appropriate a theory of mind that could provide a framework for understanding how cognitively disabled people could make decisions in their social world. According to this theory of mind, one's mind and cognition extend into the world. More specifically, the theory implies that one's mind extends into the world to include iPhones, notebooks, and even other persons. While there is an advantage to this theory in the above project, there are also a number of problems. I will highlight a few of the problems with this theory and conclude with a promising and more modest alternative.

2. The Conditions that will be Discussed

The conditions I wish to discuss are disorders that affect the way one makes decisions and disorders that affect one's agency and autonomy. As a brief working definition, 'agency' refers to the ability to make decisions and translate them into actions, and 'autonomy' is the ability to direct one's self or self-governance. For the sake of clarity, I will

refer to specific conditions when such information is particularly relevant. But in many cases, my claims can be generalized to all or most of the conditions I present. My primary goal is to provide a general account for as many cognitive disabilities as possible. At the same time, even when a claim can be generalized to other disorders, it is still possible that the claim may not apply to all of them. Some conditions, because of the nature, may count as an exception to one of the claims I make. Acknowledging the nuances and complexities associated with specific impairments can make the task of giving a general account of cognitive disability more difficult. However, while acknowledging the myriad of complexities around these issues, something accurate, plausible and philosophically interesting can still be said about the various groupings I consider.

The specific conditions I will be discussing are autism, severe cases of cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, Alzheimer's disease, and intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Autism, Down syndrome and cerebral palsy are neurodevelopmental conditions which occur because of an inhibition in the growth or development of the brain or central nervous system. Often, these conditions occur in infancy or childhood. More specifically, the group of conditions classified as "neurodevelopmental" include brain functions and brain systems that affect learning, memory, and emotions. In contrast, Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia are neurodegenerative and occur when there is progressive loss of brain systems and structures due to the death of cells and neurons. Intellectual disabilities include both neurodegenerative conditions and neurodevelopmental conditions. They can additionally include persons who have an intelligence quotient (IQ) lower than 70, along with persons with cognitive impairments who have a normal IQ, yet display the forgetfulness, difficulty concentrating and confusion that typically accompany brain injuries.

3. Extended Minds, Extended Agency?

First, I wish to emphasize the point that an account of agency for cognitively disabled persons needs to include the possibility of other agents helping agents exercise intellectual capacities. I lament that to ignore the appropriate social dynamics on which agency depends is to discount a particular mode that persons can be responded to and respected as agents. One promising way to account for the social dynamics of agency in care relationships is to borrow from extended mind theories that couple the mind with the environment in which it is embedded. The idea behind such theories is to match consciousness or cognition with items that exist beyond the brain, which implies that the mind includes items beyond the mere organic functioning of one's brain. In this way,

the mind is understood as extending into the world. It is additionally notable, for our purposes, that a central character of the thought experiments for extended mind theories is a person afflicted with Alzheimer's disease who uses a notepad to help him remember things (Clark & Chalmers 1998). Extended cognition theories suggest that cognition is much more than mere functioning of certain capacities of the brain, but extends beyond the brain to include iPhones, notepads, and other items in our environment.

One can broaden the extended mind theory to include other agents in the content of one's mental states. The idea behind this claim is that when we exercise certain cognitive capacities dedicated to decision making, our own agency can include other agents. If cognition includes other items featured in our environment and cognition supervenes on a wider range of factors other than one's own neural processes, then there does not seem to be any principled reason to deny that cognition can also include other agents. If cognition includes other agents, then in some cases cognition can extend into the social world. The idea of extended agency is featured in the work of Andy Clark, who presents and defends the theory. It is also applied to disability related issues in the work of James Nelson and in the joint work of Leslie Francis and Anita Silvers.

The theory of extended mind is primarily found in the pioneering works on the subject, started by David Chalmers and Andy Clark. One of the central ways that Clark and Chalmers flesh out their theory is via a thought experiment about a man who suffers from a moderately advanced case of Alzheimer's called 'Otto' (Ibid.). Otto enjoys the Museum of Modern Art, but cannot remember where the museum is located without the utilization of a notebook that contains the directions he requires. Otto has a friend named Inga who can remember the museum's location without a notebook. According to Clark and Chalmers, the different modes of performance of Otto and Inga do not matter. After all, Otto has an accurate belief about the location of the museum. Although his way of remembering how to get to the destination differs from Inga, his way of remembering is reliable as long as he has access to it. To separate Ingrid and Otto is to inappropriately privilege the brain or collections of neurons. Although it is not explicitly mentioned by Clark, this assumes that Otto retains some form of memory mediated by some degree of brain function.

In *The Extended Mind* Clark and Chalmers ask, "[w]here does the mind stop and the rest of the world begin?" (Clark & Chalmers 2010, 27). The idea behind the extended mind is that the environment plays an active role in the content of cognitive processes and it does so through causal coupling. Causal coupling refers to the idea that there is a strong interaction between internal and external systems, and modulation of one system can change the other. Referring to causal coupling, Clark and Chalmers state, "[b]

ecause they [external objects and systems] are coupled with the human organism, they have a direct impact on the organism and on its behaviour" (Clark & Chalmers 1998, 9). The so called 'parity principle' is an additional concept necessary to the extended mind theory. According to the parity principle, external elements that are causally coupled with cognitive systems associated with the brain partly constitute the mental content. Referring to the case of Otto, the notebook plays an active role and is coupled with Otto's mind. According to the parity principle, what occurs in Otto's notebook is part of Otto's cognitive system. The mind, therefore, extends into the external environment, and mental contents can be external to the person and his or her brain.

The extended mind thesis is comparable to externalist theories about meaning or so called 'semantic externalism'. According to semantic externalism, the meaning and reference of the words we use are not solely determined by an internal physical state or the ideas we associate with them. Hilary Putnam famously argued for semantic externalism with his 'Twin Earth' thought experiment (Putnam 1975). Imagine that in 1750, there was a remote planet called 'Twin Earth' which is exactly like Earth but contains no water (H_2O). Rather than H_2O, twin earth has a similar substance to water but has a different chemical compound, XYZ. The macro properties of XYZ are just like water: it tastes like water, nourishes the body like water, is found in rivers and oceans, and citizens of twin earth put their tea bags in it at tea time. In 1750, nobody on Earth or Twin Earth could distinguish between water and XYZ. It is argued that a person on Earth in 1750 who used 'water' would refer to H20 and not XYZ, even though he or she did not know that water was H20. Similarly, if he pointed to XYZ and said, "this chemical substance is water", the utterance would be false. The meaning of the word, according to semantic externalism, depends, at least in part, on the external environment the linguistic user is embedded in.

The distinction that Clark and Chalmers make between semantic externalism and extended mind theories is that extended mind theories are an *active* version of externalism. The externalism Clark and Chalmers defend extends beyond content to acts and functions. Clark and Chalmers say, "[o]thers are impressed by arguments suggesting that the meaning of our words 'just ain't in the head,' and hold that this externalism about meaning carries over into externalism about mind" (Clark & Chalmers 2010, 27). Therefore, Clark and Chalmers propose that if some process plays a role in the cognition of agents such that the process could go on inside the cognitive agent, we should count it as part of her mind, regardless of whether the process occurs in the brain or in the environment.

This theory has some implications for persons with cognitive disabilities, since the external environment that the person is embedded in could be counted as part of their mind. Otto, for example, becomes cognitively enabled through interacting with his notebook. Otto's notebook is part of his mind and himself rather than merely a simple piece of paper with etchings. In *Alzheimer's Disease and Socially Extended Mentation*, James Nelson explores how extended theories of the mind might bear on conditions and Alzheimer's disease, particularly when it comes to proxy decision makers. First, Nelson claims that the mind extends into both artifacts and people. He says,

> externalism allows, at least in principle, that our minds may extend not only into artifacts but into other people as well…Some of my memories or my evaluative beliefs may have been stored not in a notebook or an iPhone but in another person. (Nelson 2010, 235)

Presumably Nelson wants to imply that a memory could still be mine but stored in another person's brain to be utilized later. But when are memories mine and when do they belong to the other person? Or, alternatively, are they both mine and the other person's at the same time? Sadly Nelson leaves these pressing questions unanswered. Naomi Scheman similarly argues that mental states encompass and supervene on other people (Scheman 1993). Second, it is also possible, according to Nelson, for demented persons to be assisted by their caregivers or proxy decision makers. In such cases, Nelson states, "a now-demented person may be autonomously forming or consolidating new evaluative beliefs that constitute respect-worthy responses to situations unanticipated earlier in her predementia life" (Nelson 2010). There is a possibility, according to Nelson, that other agents constitute one's own agency when they are being utilized as proxy decision makers or caregivers.

Leslie Francis and Anita Silvers appear to share Nelson's intuition about other agents constituting a part of one's own agency. They argue that people in general cooperate with each other in constructing their conception of the good and depend on each other in important ways in retaining this conception. Francis and Silvers present a metaphysical theory for how persons with disabilities collaborate with a trustee to build conceptions of the good, by borrowing from a metaphysical theory of how persons use prosthetic body parts. According to this metaphysics, a prosthetic arm or leg, "executes some of the functions of a missing fleshly one without being confused with or supplanting the usual fleshly limb" (Francis & Silvers 2010, 247). Like a prosthetic limb, a trustee may not necessarily supplant the ideas or beliefs of the cognitively disabled individual. More importantly, Francis and Silvers argue that one usually attributes the functioning of the

prosthesis to the agent using them, and not a metal foot who does the walking (Ibid.). If a person were to utilize a prosthetic limb, the limb compensates for the lack of fleshy limb and gives its wearer the capacity to roll, walk or run. Comparatively, a collaborator would compensate for the cognitive deficits of the disabled person, to provide a capacity that they would otherwise lack or enhance a capacity they have to a limited degree. To utilize the extended mind terminology, the prosthetic device is coupled with the agent, and the prosthetic device becomes a part of the individual's body. The identification of the person with the device would presumably be influenced by proprioceptive and somatosensory feedback between the device and the person's brain. There are a few ethical worries, but ideally a trustee assists thinking by functioning as a prosthesis to amplify the functionality of the individual rather than being used as a separate tool. Francis and Silvers suggest that one should proceed with caution "to safeguard against substituting the assistant's standpoint for the person's own" (Ibid., 249). By utilizing the metaphysical theory of prosthesis, I take it that Francis and Silvers assume some sort of extended mind theory. In other words, I take them to be arguing that when a person utilizes a collaborator, the mind extends to the trustee, so the trustee and the capacities granted by the trustee become part of the agent.

A recent neurological study corroborates Francis and Silver's intuitions about a prosthetic limb actually functioning as a part of the agent. According to a study by Mariella Pazzaglia and colleagues, the human brain learns to treat a prosthetic as a substitute for a non-working body part (Pazzaglia, Galli, Scivoletto, & Molinary 2013). The researchers discovered that wheelchair users with spinal cord injuries perceived their wheelchair as part of their body (Ibid. 2013). Their body's edge was perceived as flexible, and this association was particularly strong for patients who retained upper body movement (Ibid. 2013). To the brain, the prosthetic limb or device becomes a substitute for the affected body. Pazzaglia states:

> [T]he tool did not become an extension of the immobile limbs; rather, it became an actual tangible substitution of the functionality of the affected body part. These findings suggest that the brain can incorporate relevant artificial tools into the body schema via the natural process of continuously updating bodily signals. The ability to embody new essential objects extends the potentiality of physically impaired persons and can be used for their rehabilitation. (Ibid. 2013)According to Pazzaglia, the human brain literally treats prosthetic devices, including wheelchairs, as a functional and tangible part of the body.

This finding corroborates Chalmers and Clark's intuition that the mind could extend into non-organic objects in one's environment, because -assuming the brain takes a body as part the self- the brain appears to treat inorganic, environmental elements, as part of the self too.

4. Limitations of the Extended Mind Theory and Extended Agency Theory

There are limitations to the extended proxy-decision making theory. A problematic case may be presented wherein an agent, with the help of a proxy-decision maker, forms inconsistent beliefs, which also may be a part of one's mind. When one considers this problematic case, it can involve some complicated ethical decisions about which beliefs one may ethically privilege. Regarding problematic cases of inconsistent beliefs, Nelson states,

> [s]orting out how to adjudicate the conflicting implications of those beliefs for practice will, of course, often require the most careful judgment –and in selecting judges, we would do well to bear in mind that we may have real-time access to some of the very same deliberative resources by which those undergoing disease habitually achieved and sustained mature values, and sorted out their tangled practical consequences (Nelson 2010, 235).

However, Nelson's worry does not imply that extended proxy-decision making is false or fails to consider the person's best interest; nor does his worry make the theory untenable. He merely points to some ethical complexities that one should keep in mind when applying extended mind theories in contexts that include a proxy-decision maker.

A more pressing concern is presented by Fred Adams and Ken Aizawa in *Defending the Bounds of Cognition*. Adams and Aizawa argue that extended mind theorists commit the coupling-constitution fallacy by inappropriately making "an object cognitive when it is connected to a cognitive agent" (Adams & Aizawa 2010, 67). Clark and Chalmers commit the coupling-constitution fallacy by coupling Otto with his notebook, then inferring that the notebook constitutes part of his memory system. However, Adams and Aizawa point out, "coupling relations are distinct from constitutive relations, and the fact that object or process X is coupled to object or process Y does not entail that X is part of Y" (Adams & Aizawa 2010). It is argued that extended mind theories fail because there is no distinction between what the mind and cognition causally depend on and what properly constitutes the mind or cognition. While one might agree that the mind

depends on a causal coupling relationship between the brain and the environment, it is an entirely different matter to assert that the resources one uses form part of the larger cognitive system. Therefore, Adams and Aizawa conclude that extended mind theories commit a fallacy, and they deny that the mind extends into the world.

Drawing on similar intuitions of Adams and Aizawa, another objection against extended mind theory is presented by Kim Sterelny, who draws an analogy between unconscious or conscious systems and the digestive system. Sterelny notes that our digestion is supported in pervasive ways that depends on technological advances to cook and ingest food, which allows us to extract more nutritional value. Yet we are not tempted to suggest that the digestive system extends into the world. Sterelny says,

We have engineered our gustatory niche; we have transformed both our food sources and the process of eating itself. Our under-powered jaws, short gut, small teeth and mouth fit our niche because we eat soft, rich and easily digested food. Our digestive system is environmentally scaffolded. But is my soup pot, my food processor and my fine collection of choppers part of my digestive system? As far as I know, no one has defended an extended stomach hypothesis, treating routine kitchen equipment as part of an agent's digestive system. (Sterelny 2010)

Sterelny presents a less metaphysically presumptuous view than the extended mind theory and argues that the mind is environmentally scaffolded or supported by the environment. Although Sterelny does not argue that extended mind theories are false, he does present some pressing concerns for the extended mind theory through his analogy between the mind and the human digestive system and offers a more plausible option for understanding shared and helped agency than extended mind theories.

Recall that Francis and Silvers utilize metaphors about the usage of a prosthetic limb and the usage of a trustee. There seemed to be corroborating neurological evidence that the brain treats prosthetic devices as if they were part of the body; but there are limitations to this metaphor. While it might be plausible that certain inorganic objects in the environment constitute part of one's body or self, it is less obvious that the brain treats other people as a similar part of oneself. Indeed, it seems more plausible to assume that caregivers and trustees are not like a prosthetic limb, because another person has subjectivity, cognitive flaws, well-being, and a different mind. A person can't manipulate another person in the same way that person can manipulate a prosthetic device. Indeed, the brain even represents what other agents are thinking and doing, and this information is utilized to negotiate the social world and cooperate with others. Therefore, the corroborating neurological evidence may not extend to other agents. Furthermore, just because a brain treats objects as if it were part of one's own body does not imply that

a prosthetic device, in fact, constitutes part of the body. In other words, the brain may *think* that the prosthetic device is part of its body, but that does not make it so.

Finally, additional worries about the nature of Alzheimer's might complicate whether the mind or agency can be extended. Recall that Otto writes in his notebook and uses it to find his way to the museum. Alzheimer's is a progressive disorder that, at a certain point, impedes one's capacity to retrieve memories and construct meaning from those memories. In other words, at some point the notebook would be useless for Otto, because he could not properly contextualize the information in the notebook. Furthermore, Alzheimer's affects one's capacity to use and interpret language. It is, in part, a linguistic disorder, which hinders an agent's capacity to use language to write in a notebook, and hinders one's ability to negotiate in the social world in a way that communicates one's wants, needs, or desires. This suggests that the extended mind has its limitations, and how the brain functions plays a crucial role in how extended the mind can actually be, if it is extended at all.

One should be skeptical about extended theories of agency where one's own agency extends to other agents, even if the mind is extended to inorganic objects. Recall that according to extended agency theories, other agents constitute part of one's mind. It appeared to be a promising endeavor to consider caregivers and proxy-decision makers as part of a cognitively disabled individual. But, if one were to consider trustees or proxy-decision makers as part of the agency of a cognitively disabled individual, one may run the risk of losing the caregiver's autonomy. It is appropriate, at least sometimes, to consider an agent as separate from the person they are helping or assisting. When one violates another's autonomy is a strong example of when an agent is not extended to another agent. However, even when one is being assisted to make decisions, the helper still has their own subjectivity, preferences, weaknesses, desires, goals and well-being. To say that the helper is "extended" to the person they are assisting, could run the risk of ignoring a caregiver's well-being, desires, and goals at the expense of the cognitively disabled person's well-being, desires and goals. This assumption could also undermine the agency of the cognitively disabled person. This shows that combining the extended mind hypothesis with paternalism can have harmful results for the cognitively disabled person, because it fails to appreciate his or her own distinctive needs and interests. The worry I present is particularly relevant in contexts where two individuals' well-being, desires and goals conflict. In such cases, in my experience, one needs to take into account both individuals' autonomy, as separate agents, to negotiate a course of action that is in the best interests of each.

Taking account of two separate individuals' minds is more representative of the interpersonal exchanges that occur in care relationships than an extended theory. In my own life, as a severely disabled individual, I have utilized the help and assistance of caregivers. In the process, while my desires, goals, and well-being are of central importance, it seems inappropriate to perceive my caregivers as an extension of me. It is true, my own caregivers compensate for capacities I may lack, but I frequently negotiate with my caregiver(s) as a separate entity, to appropriately assess whether my requests are reasonable. Indeed, there is an operative assumption when I negotiate with another, separate agent, and this assumption plays an integral part of the interdependent nature of our care relationship. Thus, a metaphor of extended mind might be useful in some contexts that include a cognitively disabled person and their caregiver. In other contexts, a metaphor of extended mind threatens to presumptuously negate crucial aspects of the caregiver's and the disabled person's humanity and identity.

So, the ethical worry is this: extended agency theories inaccurately reflected the interpersonal dynamics of an actual care relationship. In my own care, it often involves negotiating with another agent and all of the complexities that accompany negotiating with that agent. The conceptual framework offered by extended mind theories fall short of acknowledging these complexities, because they understand the trustee as closely akin to a prosthetic or external object. The latter conceptual framework runs the risk of ignoring what can actually go on in a care relationship.

By understanding the care relationship as a joint action, as opposed to the caregiver as an extension of the disabled individual, there are implications for pressing bioethical questions pertaining to giving care. Consider controversial cases of sexual facilitation. Sarah Earle describes sexual facilitation as follows:

> 'facilitated sex'…might mean that assistance is required to attend social events such as parties, or go to pubs and clubs…or that assistance is required to negotiate the price when using the services of a prostitute. More specifically, a person might be required to facilitate sexual intercourse between two or more individuals, to undress them for such a purpose, or to masturbate them when no other form of sexual relief is available (Earle 1999, 312).

In the above description, Earle describes a continuum of activities that might enable a person with a disability to be sexual via the utilization of a caregiver or nurse. Operating under the view that the caregiver is an extension of the person they care for, one can easily understand all the activities described by Earle as morally permissible, with very

little cause for concern. After all, if the caregiver is understood as a prosthetic extension of the disabled client and the client would otherwise engage in self-pleasure, then it seems as if there would be a very small logical step to concluding that the caregiver should provide masturbatory relief to the client as an extension of their care duties. However, if the care relationship is understood as a joint action and the caregiver is understood as another agent, then there is a real moral concern as to whether the caregiver consents to providing sexual relief. Furthermore, a worry arises that an understanding of the caregiver as an extension of their disabled client or a cognitive prosthesis can encourage treating the caregiver as only a means to an end and merely instrumental to the disabled person's needs.

5. Conclusion and a Modest Alternative

Taking account of the social world in which persons with cognitive disabilities exist is important, because it provides a theoretical structure that broadens our ability to perceive cognitively disabled persons as capable of giving or withdrawing consent. This opens the possibility of acknowledging when a cognitively disabled individual's autonomy is neglected and disrespected. With this perception in place, we can begin to create guidelines, policies and laws that allow cognitively disabled persons to make decisions that are in their best interests to the best of their ability. Drawing from the literature on agency and cognitive disability, I presented an issue that is relevant for accounting for the distinctive agency of the cognitively disabled: extended mind theory.

If the mind extends into the environment, then we can use objects and other agents to carry out decision making and other cognitive tasks. Indeed, much of the literature on agency and cognitive disability draws from metaphors of extended minds. However, extended mind theories are controversial and marred with problems. It is questionable whether the mind is extended in exactly the same way that theorists presuppose, and it is even less plausible whether it can provide an adequate conceptual framework to account for the agency of persons with cognitive disabilities. With that being said, my own account is not an extended mind theory. I do not claim that extended mind theories are false, but I propose a less presumptuous view. I propose that cognitively disabled individuals are "helped" by other agents. Persons *assist* cognitively disabled individuals by helping them make decisions, by taking over for cognitive capacities that are lacked by the individual but are required to make decisions. This involves promoting or facilitating capacities that are intact in the disabled person. With that being said, I recommend

drawing a necessary distinction between persons and their caregivers but remind that both parties still interact in interesting and novel ways.

Theories about shared agency -or theories about when two agents jointly participate to carry out an action- provide a promising and useful conceptual framework for developing an account of the social nature of agency and the autonomous agency of persons with cognitive disabilities. This alternative framework would allow one to interpret care relationships, and the help that one receives when acting inside them, as a type of shared agency. I call this framework 'helped agency' or HA. HA avoids worries associated with understanding care relationship within an extended mind theory because it integrates helpers as central figures of the decision-making process. This theory includes both the cognitively disabled person and the caregiver, since both characters play integral parts in decisions and actions. Thus, it is a better framework for understanding the agency and autonomy of cognitively disabled persons, and it respects the dignity of the helper and disabled individual better than other theories presented in the literature.

As a conceptual framework, HA coheres well with feminist approaches to ethics. Nel Noddings has developed and defended an approach to ethics that places care, a value traditionally associated with women, as a central virtue to ethics (Noddings 1984). According to Noddings, ethics is about actual relationships between a person doing the caring and a person being cared for. Likewise, Eva Kittay suggests that human relationships are often between unequal and interdependent persons (Kittay 1999). She valorizes actual life that people experience on an everyday basis, and that life often consists in being in a dependent relationship on others, a relationship that consists of those in need and those who can meet those needs (Ibid.). Kittay's approach extends to theories about public policy to suggest that society ought to take care of and value its care workers, including mothers and those who care for disabled individuals (Ibid.). If society wants to be properly functional, Kittay argues that the goal of public policy should be to empower those who care for dependants (Ibid.). HA coheres well with Kittay's approach to care ethics and public policy because it acknowledges trustees and those who provide care into a conceptual framework for care in a way that does not minimize their humanity. Instead, HA theorists acknowledge the caregiver's agency, wellbeing, intentions and autonomy as a central element in its framework. I would also propose that one of the first steps towards empowering those who care for dependents is to actually acknowledge their existence as human beings with their own decision-making capacities that need to be respected.

The conceptual framework of HA can also expand to encompass when non-disabled people are helped. We are all equal because and we all require assistance from time to

time. We all face situations where we need another's assistance to accomplish difficult tasks. When we are young, we all require the helping care that is described by HA. As we age, we may require more assistance from others, when we begin to feel the corporeal effects of old age. Furthermore, with current advances in medical sciences that can extend our lives with treatments and not entirely cure us, the population of physically and cognitively disabled persons grows and changes. To embrace HA in the situations where we need help from others and provide assistance when needed, is to embrace at least one aspect of how we are agents and how we are autonomous in a social world. By acting with HA as a practical guide, one can respect the dignity and autonomy of persons who may struggle to make decisions alone, and respect the dignity of those who provide care. To acknowledge HA is to appreciate another way of being human that has been previously under-appreciated: being helped to accomplish tasks and helping others to accomplish their goals. HA broadens the boundaries of agency and autonomy to encompass persons with cognitive disabilities, so that policies can be formed to empower them to carry out plans of action consistent with their interests and values. With HA as an operating assumption about how persons with cognitive disabilities make decisions in a social world, policies and practices can be created so that persons with cognitive disabilities can be appropriately acknowledged and morally responded to as autonomous agents. In sum, persons with cognitive disabilities have dignity to be respected, and it is through HA that we begin to understand how we can respect it, not extended mind theories.

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The Neuroethical Role of Narrative Identity in Ethical Decision Making

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Abstract

An increasingly blurred understanding of the moral significance of narrative identity for a robust perception of self, other, and community suggests a critical need to explore the inter-relationships shared between autobiographical memory, emotional rationality, and narrative identity, particularly as it bears on decision making. This essay argues that (i) the disintegration of autobiographical memory degenerates emotional rationality; (ii) the degeneration of emotional rationality decays narrative identity; and (iii) the decay of narrative identity disables one to seek, identify, and act on the good. After demonstrating that narrative identity is best understood as the product of autobiographical memory and emotional rationality, which in turn is indispensable to substantive ethical decision making, the essay concludes by suggesting that narrative identity may be successfully employed as a justificatory framework for ethical decision making, providing both education to, and rigor for, substantive moral judgments.

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

It is a marked feature of being human to make meaning out of experiences and events by telling stories. Individuals are born into a web of narratives, and to become a self is, in large part, to locate, verify, and make sense of the stories of which one's web is comprised. Stories most adequately reveal the meaning individuals attach to their experiences, and they shape the meaning those experiences will have as the stories are told, retold, and refined (Mitchell 2014). In this way, narratives do many different kinds of moral work (Lindemann 2014). In addition to recounting phenomena from distinct perspectives, morally charged stories usually hold deep truths not easily expressed and apprehended in other ways. Such truths may include inchoate ideals of self, hidden hopes, deeper tensions, strands of ambivalence, belief in things unseen, and fears rarely stated plainly. These parcels of an individual's narrative identity are, of course, of critical moral significance, but they are rarely captured by standard ethical analyses. Inasmuch as

stories reveal values and reasons otherwise unnoticed in the context of moral reflection, narrative identity is invaluable to ethical decision making. Indeed, one's narrative identity not only provides substance for thoughtful deliberation about the right and the good, but also a way of conveying moral choices for subsequent evaluation and instruction (Mitchell 2014).

Prior to the late 1980s, the significance of narrative identity was dismissed in the medical literature as unimportant and uninteresting (Brody and Clark 2014). By 1987, clinicians and scholars became interested in how the study of narrative could enhance their understanding of health care, and the field of "narrative medicine" was developed. After a flurry of activity at the turn of the twenty-first century, interest in the practical significance of narrative identity seemed to stall. The general interest in narrative medicine continued, but with few ideas about how narrative might be employed toward moral ends. In the last decade, however, forward momentum has returned (Ibid.), but the ontology of narrative identity and its vital role in ethical decision making remains incomplete. For some, the concept of (idiosyncratic) narrative decision making is founded upon inevitably imperfect, even fabricated, recollections of reality (Lindemann 2014), and therefore lacks the objective rigor necessary for practical decision making (Arras 1997). For others, the (irresponsible) flight from narrative decision making forces individuals to deliberate as "unencumbered selves," apart from and devoid of the elements that ground moral values and commitments (Sandel 2006).

A third approach, yet to be explored in the literature, grounds the framework of the arguments posited in this essay. It concerns the individual and collective relationships shared between autobiographical memory, emotional rationality, and narrative identity in the context of ethical decision making. The interconnectedness of these concepts is essential to any productive discussion over the ethics of decision making, yet each respective interconnection remains underdeveloped.

1.2 Analytical Method

An increasingly blurred understanding of the moral significance of narrative identity for a robust perception of self, other, and community suggests a critical need to explore the inter-relationships shared between autobiographical memory, emotional rationality, and narrative identity vis-à-vis ethical decision making. To that end, the essay argues that (i) the disintegration of autobiographical memory degenerates emotional rationality; (ii) the degeneration of emotional rationality decays narrative identity; and (iii) the decay of narrative identity disables one to seek, identify, and act on the good. After demonstrating

that narrative identity is best understood as the product of autobiographical memory and emotional rationality, which in turn is indispensable to substantive ethical decision making, the essay concludes by suggesting that narrative identity may be successfully employed as a justificatory framework for ethical decision making, providing both education to, and rigor for, substantive moral judgments.

To secure the justification of these theses, the essay moves in six parts. First, it addresses the historical emergence in neuroscience of crucial categories for ethical decision making, including a specific analysis of (i) autobiographical memory judgments, (ii) emotional choice and rational choice, and (iii) narrative identity as moral self-conception and commitment. Second, it addresses the category of autobiographical memory and ethical decision making, including a specific analysis of (i) autobiographical memory and rationality, (ii) autobiographical memory and the narrative of human emotion, and (iii) autobiographical memory and the emotional nature of rational ethical decision making. Third, it addresses the category of emotional rationality and ethical decision making, including a specific analysis of (i) emotion and rationality, (ii) emotional rationality and morality, and (iii) emotional rationality and ethical decision making. Fourth, it addresses the category of narrative identity and ethical decision making, including a specific analysis of (i) narrative identity as the product of autobiographical memory and emotional rationality, (ii) the requisite unpredictability of narrative identity, and (iii) narrative neglect as threat to identity, authenticity, and ethical decision making. Finally, it addresses the justification of narrative identity as a comprehensive framework for ethical decision making, including a specific analysis of (i) narrative identity as moral education, moral methodology, and moral discourse, (ii) narrative identity as ground and object of normative ethical principles, and (iii) rigor in narrative judgments and ethical justification.

2. The Historical Emergence in Neuroscience
of Crucial Categories for Ethical Decision Making

2.1 Autobiographical Memory Judgments

The study of memory and cognitive learning arose from philosophical questions concerning the way individuals come to know themselves, others, things, and the world around them. Learning is assuredly the primary method by which one acquires knowledge, and remembering is the primary means by which one supports knowledge claims. (This is exemplified, for instance, when a court witness claims to "remember

seeing Jones at the murder scene.") While the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries were marked by empiricist philosophers such as John Locke, John Stuart Mill, Thomas Brown, and others who speculated about the numerous factors that might affect the degree or strength of particular subjective associations, it was philosophers writing in the twentieth century including Henri Bergson, Bertrand Russell, Endel Tulving, and others who first introduced to psychologists the distinction between episodic and semantic memory. However, it was not until the "everyday movement" of the final two decades of the twentieth century when researchers first argued that attention should focus primarily on the ways in which individuals use autobiographical memory in their daily tasks (Bower 2000).

There are two primary ways to query human memory. In recall tasks, one must generate a representation of a past stimulus, such as a word from memory. In memory-judgment tasks, a synthetic representation of the stimulus is presented by a facilitator, and the subject answers a specific question about it from memory. Characterized this way, the number of possible memory-judgment tasks is essentially limitless. Some judgment tasks are related to specific experiences in one's past. These include recognition judgments; judgments of membership in experimentally learned categories; judgments of presentation frequency; judgments of list membership; judgments of temporal order or recency; judgments of special order or location; and judgments of source, such as input modality monitoring (Hintzman 2000). Although individuals clearly possess conceptual knowledge relating to significant portions of their past, memories of disparate events are also "cross-indexed" in memory according to life themes, what happened, where it happened, who was involved, and what significance the event had in one's life. Some of the knowledge manifests through personal episodic memory, which is experienced in recall with imagery and emotion. In addition to these episodic memories, large portions of one's autobiography are in narrative form. As such, autobiographical memory is intimately bound up with conceptions of the self – of who and what one is. While several studies suggest that memories are often reconsolidated in light of self-serving pursuits, and that individuals often remember their actions, and therefore themselves, in a light more favorable than is deserved, these tendencies suggest that social, motivational, and personality-related factors play a vital role in the way autobiographical memory judgments are developed – and altered – over time (Bower 2000).

2.2 Emotional Choice and Rational Choice

The relationship between emotion and reason has been a major topic in Western philosophy since its genesis. The ancient Greeks had no word equivalent to "emotion," and the term commonly used in its place, *pathos,* indicated something that "happened" to a person or thing. It came to be commonly applied to affective experiences to which a person is subject, and also lasting states manifested by such affection, or initiated or altered by them. Hence it became the term traditionally applied to emotions, fleeting or dispositional, if also to many other cognitive states (Price 2010). However, the relationship between emotional choice and rational choice is a more recent concern (Elster 2010).[1] Both reason and rationality are primarily normative inasmuch as they inform agents of the options that ideally should be pursued in the effort to secure sought-after ends. Their explanatory use arises when the agent takes the normative suggestion and tests it by confronting the prescribed behavior with its observed counterpart. In economics, for instance, rational-choice explanations, based on the assumption that agents will maximize utility, was the standard understanding of behavior until 1980, when it became subject to criticism from a number of scholars who subsequently developed new models of behavior. Broadly speaking, these alternative, neurocognitively-geared models constitute what has loosely become known as the field of behavioral economics (Ibid.).

Emotions, too, have a role in behavioral economics, but a secondary one. The important work of George Loewenstein on "visceral factors" mentions the emotions, but only those pertaining to pain, thirst, intoxication, and addictive cravings, thus ignoring the neurocognitive precursor of emotions as well as the actions they have historically tended to (Ibid.). Typically, "emotions" have indicated "affect" or "arousal," thus precluding critical distinctions such as that between guilt and shame. However, a systematic account of emotional impact on cognitive precursors of action can improve the understanding of manifold forms of behavior. Insofar as (i) emotions typically cannot be chosen and (ii) rationality can only be the product of choice, emotions cannot, in the strictest sense, be considered "rational." Yet they are, by this fact, no less instrumentally useful and biologically adaptive. Indeed, emotions, differing only from rationality in the causal relation that obtains among them, undoubtedly enhance rationality indispensable for robust ethical decision making (Ibid.).

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1. This essay will not endeavor to explore the distinction between reason and rationality except to clarify that while the idea of reason is normative in purpose, rationality primarily serves to explain behavior.

2.3 Narrative Identity as Moral Self-Conception and Commitment

The formal concept of narrative identity was first postulated in the twentieth century: Sigmund Freud wrote about dream narratives, Carl Jung explored universal life myths, Alfred Adler examined narrative accounts of earliest memory, and Henry Murray identified recurrent autobiographical themes in the Thematic Apperception Test (McAdams 2008). Still, none of the traditional theories of personality in the first half of the twentieth century imagined human being as storytellers and human experience as a story to be told. The inaugural theories of narrative personality were developed in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Silvan Tompkins proposed a "script theory" of personality that conceived of the individual as a metaphorical playwright who organizes the emotional experiences of life in terms of salient "scenes" and recurrent "scripts" (Ibid.). In a somewhat similar line of thought, Dan McAdams (2008) formulated a "life-story" model of identity, suggesting that people living in modern society begin, in late adolescence and young adulthood, to understand their lives as ever-evolving stories that integrate the reconstructed past and the projected future in order to imbue life with degrees of unity and purpose. As such, these defining memories become vital components of one's narrative identity – an identity from which one is able to understand self, others, and community, and so make moral decisions in accord with the values to which one has committed.

In recent years, theories of narrative identity have tried to navigate a middle road between personal and social commitments, viewing narrative identity as both an autobiographical project and a situated performance (McAdams 2008). Neuroscientists such as Antonio Damasio (2007) have commented that consciousness begins when an individual brain secures the power of telling a story. Those stories and their storytellers appear in every culture (McAdams 2008). As Paul Ricoeur (1984) comments, stories are the best means known to human beings for communicating how and why a human agent, endowed with consciousness and motivated by intention, enacts desires and strives toward goals over time. Thus understood, narrative is the neurobiological linchpin that draws, holds, and frames together temporal events in a coherent whole. Whether factual or fictional, the narrative structure of one's conception of self is pivotal to securing meaning and identity in life (Polkinghorne 1991). Moreover, the unfolding of one's self-told story has immediate cognitive implications for the capacity to make coherent ethical decisions. As William James notes, the (conscious) self encompasses a "storytelling 'I'" whose stories about lived experience become part and parcel of a "storied 'me.'" In this way, the narrative decision-maker is both the storyteller and the stories that are told (McAdams 2008).

3. The Category of Autobiographical Memory and Ethical Decision Making

3.1 Autobiographical Memory and Rationality

The rational function of autobiographical memory is derived from its distributive property throughout manifold cortical systems. Each cortical system – from those controlling data acquisition and analysis to semantic, episodic, and working memory – is defined by the functional contribution it makes to the whole (Nyberg and Cabeza 2000). While the understanding of cortical organization endures constant revision, two general observations can be gleaned from contemporary neuroimaging techniques. The first is that prefrontal brain regions are the most acutely involved in examined memory domains, including those immediately related to rational recollection. Some imaging has shown distinct engagement in regions within the prefrontal cortex for memory operation (Ibid.). These findings hint at the heterogeneity of the prefrontal cortex, and thus further exhibit the neurological complexity of rationality. The second involves the interaction between prefrontal and posterior brain regions during the encoding and retrieval of individual memories. This indicates that the posterior regions, which store and maintain information, are refreshed by frontal regions, which consequently mediate rehearsal processes of working memory indispensable to rational cognition (Ibid.).

A cardinal element of the rational function of autobiographical memory is neurocognitive encoding and retrieval processes. Several factors are necessary to productive encoding, including motivation, strategic planning, and past knowledge. Complex networks of neurons "encode" memories of personally-experienced events, accrued knowledge, and acquired skills. These networks are responsible for the rational recollection of various life experiences. Once activated, these particular neural networks, which represent specific life experiences in coded form, permit individuals to recall and reexperience specific events or facts from personal history. On the cognitive level, such activation allows access to memory networks related to time, circumstance, location, and function pertaining to the object or event in consideration. Hence, proportionate memory encoding is causally related to rationality. Equally important is the operation by which memory is retrieved. "Forgetting" is a morally relevant concept to rational memory, and most forgotten things can be partially attributed to failures in retrieval processes. This notion leads to what is known as the principle of encoding specificity, which holds that retrieval cues are effective to the extent that information related to the cue was incorporated in the trace of the original encoding (Brown and Craik 2000). It follows, then, that rationality hinges on the dependent similarities of encoding and

retrieval operations. Indeed, it is precisely this overlap that determines the degree to which memory is able to function well (Ibid.).

Other critical constituents of the rationality of memory are the concepts of remembering and knowing. Remembering and knowing are two rational states of awareness pertaining to autobiographical memory. The concept of remembering refers to the personal experience, often intimate, of past events that recreates the awareness inherent to a thorough perception and understanding of self. The concept of knowing refers to separate experiences of past events, most notably those in which one is more impersonally aware of possessing particular general, familiar, and abstract knowledge. Unlike remembering, knowing allows individuals to be aware of events without reliving them cognitively. Remembering and knowing are thus basal to rationality. The proposal that remembering and knowing are two expressive manifestations of autonoetic and noetic consciousness suggests their dominant relation to neurological encoding and subsequent role in the apprehension of values (Gardiner and Richardson-Klavehn 2000), the driving work of which is performed by the emotions.

3.2 Autobiographical Memory and the Narrative of Human Emotion

The interconnected structures within the limbic system possess a pivotal emotional mechanism immediately related to autobiographical memory. These structures – which include hippocampal formation, fornix, mammillary bodies, the mammillothalamic tract, cingulate gyrus, and cingulum – confirm the existence of a uniform system, known as the "Papez circuit," whereby information is temporarily circulated and ultimately associated and synchronized with emotional and motivational subjective states prior to being transmitted into long-term storage areas (Markowitsch 2000). Other limbic systems, such as the amygdalar and septal nuclei, have become regarded as still more intimately associated with emotional regulation. Nevertheless, both sets of mechanistic systems temper and tone the emotional consolidation of autobiographical memory through operations of information evaluation. These sets belong to the basolateral limbic circuit, which includes the mediodorsal nucleus. Hence, disorders of memory systems that control emotions render individuals incapable of rationalizing and evaluating information, the consequence of which is significantly reduced memory capacity. This much denotes the important nature of proper emotional embedding within neurocognitive memory circuits (Markowitsch 2000).

Most individuals can, upon request, account for a significant portion of their lives thus far. These accounts are grounded in what these individuals have been told as well

as what they personally recollect from past experience. Such autobiographical memory includes manifold forms of self-related information of idiosyncratic importance. The emotional significance of momentous events, turning points, and nuclear episodes are, in fact, cognitive recollections of the most expressive scenes that comprise an individual life story. Emotions tied to influential life events are central to one's experience of self, others, and community. Indeed, memories that flow forth from emotion explain much of who one is and the values one most deeply holds to. Yet life stories are not merely the sequence of isolated events. Rather, emotional memories comprise larger narratives that attribute meaning to events by identifying them as part of the "master portrait" of one's life (Neisser and Libby 2000). This is presumably what draws Alasdair MacIntyre (2007) to conclude that the first step in seeking the good is to identify the story or stories that comprise one's history.

Since memory is greatly affected by emotions tied to autobiographical events, a clearer look at the breath of and depth to which emotions affect memory may be advantageous. The exploration of negative emotions, such as sadness, shock, or terror, has typically been spliced into three neurocognitive conceptions of recollection: (i) eyewitness memory, (ii) flashbulb memory, and (iii) memory for traumatic experiences (Schooler and Eich 2000). While each conception possesses its own set of paradigmatic blueprints, all three harmonize on the issue of whether emotions enhance or extinguish the strength of a particular memory of an event. While the impact of emotion on memory involves complex interactions among multiple variables, current neurocognitive data suggests that emotions do, for better or worse,[2] generally enhance the strength of particular memories (Schooler and Eich 2000).

3.3 Autobiographical Memory and the Emotional Nature of Rational Ethical Decision Making

Sound ethical decisions flow forth from both emotional and rational recollections of events in history. As mentioned above, two fundamental methods mark the query of human memory. The first, concerning tasks related to recall, stimulates associations related to regenerations of past memorable events. The second, concerning tasks related to autobiographical memory judgment, stimulates carbon-copy recollections of past events by way of third-party participation (Hintzman 2000), the product of which renders subjects able to answer pointed questions pertaining to a particular memory.

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2.   Broadly speaking, this suggests only the fact of enhancement, not necessarily the accuracy thereof.

These questions may apply to efforts to grade and categorize events, or to broader efforts to compare events in autobiographical history by dissecting relevant dimensions. Because both methods implicate the frontal lobes and are bound by the hippocampus, it follows that the cognitive work of autobiographical memory-judgment in the rational apprehension of emotive values is critical to substantive ethical decision making (Ibid.).

Moreover, memory retrieval networks possess problem-solving capacities valuable to rational ethical decision making. Even a fleeting examination of everyday episodic memory suggests that there is much more to remembering than plucking data from neurocognitive storage units. Related to decision making, some reports suggest that, in actual life situations, memory retrieval techniques involve complex exchanges between two distinct processing types: (i) a controlled, systematic process that guides retrieval, coordinating operations related to transient memory targets (its rational nature), and (ii) the automatic, involuntary inception and association of ideas into consciousness over the course of the exploration (its emotional nature). This interplay between deductive (rational) and inductive (narrative and emotional) processes hints at the associations and activations inherent to the effort to translate concrete memories into applications to decision making. Put simply, the task is to match deductive to inductive processes. Insofar as the memory of past events can serve to guide an instance of particular moral judgment, the subject is able to both identify the goal and the best method by which to realize it. The rational (deductive) and narrative and emotional (inductive) components of memory retrieval, then, specifically coordinate, store, and orchestrate the process of ethical decision making (Koriat 2000).

A final aptitude of memory – namely, episodic memory and autonoetic awareness – is worthy of mention insofar as it pertains both intimately and imminently to rational ethical decision making. Episodic memory is the neurocognitive system whereby one is able to experience the world autonoetically – that is, through the situation of oneself in the past through recollection. This achievement of the human mind is perhaps its most remarkable, and certainly its most important in relation to decision making. It is also the singular dimension that distinguishes it from all other systems of memory (Wheeler, 2000). Episodic and autonoetic remembering enables individuals to mentally retrace their steps, as it were, gathering together pertinent emotional experiences upon which rational knowledge is based. Thus, these systems share a close relationship with mental achievements such as introspection and anticipation, and, as such, serve well the ability to make robust ethical decisions (Ibid.).

4. The Category of Emotional Rationality and Ethical Decision Making

<u>4.1 Emotion and Rationality</u>

Neurocognitive studies within the last several years suggest that a common moral-psychological problem in contemporary society lies not in knowing, but in feeling, what is moral (Raine and Yang 2006). This feeling, frequently referred to as "moral emotion" (Prinz 2010), located in the prefrontal cortex and amygdala, is the springboard from which cognitive recognition that a particular act is immoral is translated into specific behavioral inhibition (Raine and Yang 2006). The complexity of emotion has rendered it neuroethically problematic for several reasons, many of which continue to serve as the impetus for its rejection in the realm of rationality. Hence, emotion is widely conceived as relatively useless – or at least not particularly constructive – to ethical decision making. Emotion has been critically described as overly perceptive, personal, unstable, intense, partial, and fleeting. Interestingly, the perceptivity and personal nature of emotion has been used to critique it on grounds that it is, *ipso facto,* overly subjective. Yet it seems quite contrarily the case that perceptivity and reasonable idiosyncrasy would hinder something more than prove a redeeming virtue – here, integral authenticity. What remains scantily investigated, then, is the more positive – and often overlooked – objectively-beneficial features of emotion – namely, its cognitive complementarity, evaluative faculties, motivating power, strength, and tendency to capture critical, otherwise inexplicit elements of reality (Ben-Ze'ev 2010). These uncharted features hint at the idea that emotion may inherently possess a particular, if peculiar, rationality that, in turn, renders it practically useful.

Emotional, or "axiological" (de Sousa 1987), rationality refers to the affective cognition of particular objects in time and space that activate instinctive routines and motivate specific courses of action (Morton 2010). To "emote" something is to apprehend it – that is, to positively or negatively value, to a greater or lesser extent, the object considered. de Sousa helpfully synthesizes emotion as "determinate patterns of salience among objects of attention, lines of inquiry, and inferential strategies" (de Sousa 1980, 137). The rationality derived from emotional intelligence allows insight, for example, into differentiations between good and bad, right and wrong, harmful and helpful, proportionate and disproportionate, and so forth. Whereas strictly intellectual rationality invites examination into the "whatness" of objects, and strictly deductive reasoning invites examination into the solution to logical problems, emotional rationality invites examination into the values of actions, circumstances, relationships, and the like

(Vacek 2001; Lonergan 1972). One need only consider the plagued history of human experimentation to grasp the indispensable rationality inherent to human emotion. As Tom Beauchamp and James Childress (2013) note, it was not the strictly rational scientists who first protested abusive research practices, but rather those who were able to feel compassion, disgust, and outrage.

On this basis, it is reasonable to conclude that emotions possess an epistemic quality in relation to rationality. Properly tempered by objective rationality, emotions serve as tools that perceive essential moral data and alert individuals to the presence of significant moral events (Morton 2010). Human beings are often conscious of this experience as an instance of "feeling," but this neurological process also comprehensively synthesizes causal material essential to thought and action (Ibid.). Hence, only when emotional valuation resonates with objective rationality – herein understood as the successful ability to manipulate concepts productively – can one's best thinking confidently conclude what should be done in a given instance (Solomon 1980). Central convictions grounded in emotional rationality are therefore strong blends of reasoning, argument, evidence, and valuation bound together in a coherent and comprehensive neurocognitive system. Emotional rationality is thus the preponderance of specific and general objective evidence linked with phenomenological data and accepted from a common normative source. Only after examining, analyzing, and edifying an original emotive response to a given object is it clear that objective rationality has achieved its full potential in the context of morality (Callahan 1991).

4.2 Emotional Rationality and Morality

Emotions play many roles in human life, and none more important than forming the enduring individual and social bonds necessary to secure adequate moral judgment. Although the philosophical critique of emotional rationality is often mistakenly attributed to Immanuel Kant (1996), his claim that consciousness of one's obligations depends on the capacity to feel them projects the immediate significance of emotions in the moral arena. Here, two points deserve notation. The first is that emotions play a major part in motivating moral behavior. Persons are motivated to provide assistance to others by virtue of their affection, affinity, or compassion.[3] Emotions also motivate individuals to pursue justified punishment or revenge, both of which are moralistic behaviors. As Prinz

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3. A common contextual critique is that emotions are egotistic and not genuinely altruistic; therefore, they cannot be considered "rational." The point here is not to prove or disprove this claim, but to contend that, in either case, emotions are important.

clarifies further, the motivation to punish poor behavior, as an essential element of global systems of criminal justice, is often retributive in nature, and, as such, emotional. Second, emotions are, as suggested above, critical to moral epistemology. Moral evaluation is frequently associated with perception, and this capacity is considered to possess an emotional foundation. In other words, something is considered prima facie good or bad, right or wrong in light of the emotional response it elicits. Properly tempered by objective rationality, emotions serve as tools that perceive essential moral data and alert individuals to the presence of significant moral events (Prinz 2010).

Much like beliefs, emotions are "directed" toward particular objects – that is, they possess a particular intentionality (Mulligan 2010). This process of sensory decoding is an activation of basic emotional responses by anteromedial temporal, brain stem, and basal forebrain structures, the attribution of moral-emotional significance by orbital and prefrontal structures, and the subsequent command and restriction of actions by the frontal lobes (Moll, Oliveira-Souza, and Eslinger 2003). Insofar as emotions have correctness conditions regulated by the frontal lobes, they may be said to possess constructs of potentially proportionate valuation. It is therefore possible to maintain that neurocognitive emotional regulation allows individuals to be aware of values critical to moral analysis (Tappolet 2000). In this respect, reasons to emote behave similarly to reasons to desire, act, and believe. In its barest form, emotions neither present nor represent a distinctive value. Rather, they are embodied reactions to particular "grasped" values. The formal object of moral emotion, then, is the material object of whatever neurocognitive state offers or signifies that which an individual most affectively responds to (Mulligan 2010).

Both unintentionally and unknowingly, the finest neuro-philosophical account of emotional-moral motivation may belong to John Rawls (1998), who sharply demonstrates how emotions underlie an adequate sense and practice of justice. In essence, Rawls interprets guilt as developing into multiple stages of (eventually) widespread moral emotion through the promotion of increasingly cultivated cognition within conditions of love and trust that subsequently aim to increase self-esteem. Rawls's account of the development of moral emotions, and thus an appropriate sense of justice, begins from a general assumption of rational, and therefore proportionate, intuitions. Beyond its exhortation to take seriously the principles of justice with which societies must requisitely comply in order to live well, it presupposes communities comprised of supportive families, peers, and other cooperative social groups who first agree to abide by these operative concepts of equality and goodness (Greenspan 2010). Because the breach of normative principles is inevitable even in well-ordered societies, Rawls introduces guilt

as the emotion that ideally serves as the guiding force to rehabilitate behavior to its intended moral state. The role of emotion in securing morality is, then, for Rawls, visibly justificatory, and it provides essential support to the operative principles of normative morality. Hence, Rawls' theory of justice provides necessary insight into the emotional framework of normative morality with the assignment of objective status to affective intuitions, which consequently hints at their evaluative capacities (Ibid.).

4.3 Emotional Rationality and Ethical Decision Making

Because the ventromedial prefrontal cortex (VPMC) is essential for decision making, and because both cognitive and emotional systems are active within the VPMC, is follows that decision making is emotionally rational by nature (Glannon 2011). Indeed, this is what leads Damasio (2007) to conclude that patients who suffer damage to and dysfunction in the VPMC are rendered impaired in both cognitive and emotional processes. Hence, emotional impairments are intimately linked with irrational moral choices. Given the scientific evidence that the thalamic-amygdala – a primitively hard-wired neurological system – may potentially function independently of cognition, philosophical arguments such as that posited by David Hume (1978) become more understandable. For Hume, reason is but the slave of emotion; hence, moral decision making is driven primarily by affection (Glannon 2011). Against this idea, Peter Singer (2005) concludes that the only way to avoid moral skepticism in decision making is to detach moral judgments that are owed to cultural history from those that possess a rational basis.

A metaphorical concept helpful in understanding emotional and cognitive systems critical for moral decision making within the VPMC is tutorship. Here, three theses merit brief mention in order to exemplify the decision making process: (i) reason judges and tutors emotion; (ii) emotion tests and tutors reason; and (iii) emotion tutors emotion. Regarding the first, prompting, educating, and regulating emotions is possible – and necessary – through rational tutoring. This is accessible through the neurocognitive exercise of imagining particular images and beliefs that shape feeling. So doing helps rationally control the strictly emotional process that may displace decision making. Regarding the second, emotions of empathy and sympathy are innate in human nature (Preston and de Waal 2002), and these affective responses fuel efforts to reconsider previously held, strictly rational judgments. Righteous anger, for example, motivates individuals to work steadfastly for social justice and necessary change. When Saint Augustine (2008) exhorted his congregation to love and do as they wished, he realized

that emotions focus, expand, and transform rational moral commitments (Callahan 1991).

Finally, regarding the third, it is a psychological fact, important to philosophy, that individuals are able to receive moral assistance from focusing attention on things that are valuable: people of heroic virtue, breathtaking art, perhaps the metaphysics of beauty itself. Human beings are naturally attached to particular persons, things, or concepts, and when an attachment grows sour it is swiftly replaced by another, redeeming emotional attachment. When emotions are tutored by other, positive emotions – say, for instance, love and a proportionate sense of justice – an individual is less subject to deformation of moral judgment, and more inclined to choose rationally. Errors in ethical decision making arise when a regressed and selfish will endures stress or conflict. Conversely, when one cares about moral truth and is committed to actualizing goodness, one is better prepared, through mature emotional rationality, to carefully attend to, clearly see, and fairly stand with moral commitments, and thus to act on them appropriately (Callahan 1991).

5. The Category of Narrative Identity and Ethical Decision Making

5.1 Narrative Identity as the Product of Autobiographical Memory and Emotional Rationality

For better or worse, the convergence of one's autobiographical memory and emotional rationality produces one's narrative identity – one's conception of self. At core, the notion of the "narrative self" centers on the innate effort of human beings to understand and interpret the world through storytelling (Sellnow 2010). Building on Martin Heidegger's (1949) claim that human beings are essentially "embodied conversations" and that the unity of conversation serves to support human existence, Walter Fisher (Technical Logic 1987) remarks that individuals experience and comprehend life as a series of narratives that possess various beginnings, middles, and ends. However, all conversations, and the narratives to which they contribute, are not equally valuable. That is, authentic narratives must be evaluated by applying the standards of "narrative rationality" – a term first employed by Fisher in 1984 – to them. Such rationality is the method by which narratives, autobiographical and emotional at core, are accorded their status as "true" (Sellnow 2010).

According to Fisher (Technical Logic 1987), human communication is tested against principles of coherence (i.e., narrative probability) and fidelity (i.e., truthfulness and reliability). Regarding the former, coherence is the degree to which a story "hangs

together" – that is, how probable or believable the story seems, both to oneself and to others, and whether the characters act in a consistent manner. Thus, coherent narratives do not possess altered facts or neglect pertinent details and have considered possible alternative interpretations to ensure veracity (Sellnow 2010). Just as individuals often arrive at firm conclusions through comparing the coherence of their stories with stories of similar detail, so too the coherence of narrative is tested when the beginnings, middles, and ends of a life story resonate with others that have trod similar ground (Ibid.). Central to the notion of narrative coherence is character. In this context, character is understood as an organized set of "actional tendencies." If such tendencies contradict one another, change significantly, or alter in ways that do not resonate with lived experience, character is called into question. Coherence, then, requires that characters behave in characteristic ways. Without such fundamental autobiographical and emotional predictability, there can be no trust, community, or rational order (Fisher, Technical Logic 1987).

Regarding the latter, fidelity is the degree to which values expressed in a story ring true with what one regards as truthful and fair. In this sense, narrative strikes a responsive, emotional cord. An autobiographical narrative possesses fidelity when it offers good reasons to accept its underlying moral, which will ultimately serve to guide one's actions in the future. These "good reasons" spring from the values inherent to the message, the pertinence of those values to the decision being made, the consequences that will foreseeably result from complying with or ignoring those values, and the degree to which those values resonate with the worldview and values of both the individual who shares the narrative and others with whom its message is exchanged. Finally, Fisher (Human Communication 1987) contends that most human beings possess an inner desire to uphold truth, beauty, goodness, wisdom, courage, justice, communion, friendship, and oneness with the cosmos. To this end, narrative fidelity exemplifies the degree to which the good reasons of one's story resonate with the ideal values by which one ought to live (Sellnow 2010).

5.2 The Requisite Unpredictability of Narrative Identity

Autobiographical and emotional history is, according to MacIntyre (2007), an enacted narrative in which the characters also serve as co-authors. This notion suggests that human beings never start *ab initio,* but rather plunge in *medias res,* the beginnings of their stories already carved out by who and what has gone before. Just as literary characters, human beings neither begin nor go on exactly where or how they please. All individuals, then, predisposed to significant segments of the narratives into which

they come to be, are constrained by the actions of others and by the social settings presupposed in their actions. Understood this way, it becomes clear that the enacted narrative of one's life is not, and cannot be, predictable. This sort of unpredictability is required for the narrative structure of human life, and the empirical data unearthed by social scientists provides an understanding of human life that is compatible with this structure (MacIntyre 2007).

The requisite unpredictability of narrative identity coexists with a second teleological characteristic of all narratives. This characteristic concerns the fact that individuals live out their lives, both individually and socially, in light of particular conceptions of a potentially shared future, a future in which certain possibilities (e.g., joy and pain, tragedy and triumph) call them forward while others repel them, some seemingly foreclosed and others inevitable. Thus understood, there is no present that is not informed by a particular image of a distinctive future. This imagined future always presents itself in the form of ends or goals toward which human beings are either progressing or failing to progress in the present. Hence, the unpredictability of both narrative and teleology coexist in life. Like characters in a fictional novel, individuals do not know what will happen next, but their lives will possess a certain form that projects itself toward the future. Thus, if one's individual and social life is to continue intelligibly, it is always the case both that there are limits on how the story can continue and that within those limits there are innumerable ways in which it can continue (Ibid.).

Here, a central thesis begins to emerge. It concerns the notion that human beings are, in both their actions and their fictions, essentially story-telling creatures. That is, through one's autobiographical and emotional history, one becomes a teller of stories that aspire to truth. This truth is rooted in a fundamental moral normativity by which the significance and meaning of life stories are made interpretable. It thus becomes clear that one can only identify what one is to do – that is, what the right, the good, or perhaps the least worse thing to do in a given instance is – if one first identifies the narrative or narratives of which one finds oneself a part. One enters human society, in other words, with one or more characters imputed – roles into which one has been drafted – and one must learn what they are in order to understand how others are to respond and how one's responses to others are appropriately construed. Hence, there is no way to gain an understanding of society except through the compilation of stories that comprise its initial dramatic resources. To be the subject of an authentic narrative that runs from one's birth to one's death and possesses both autobiographical and emotional integrity is to be accountable for the actions and experiences that compose a "narratable" life (Ibid.). Put simply, it is to be open to give a particular account of what one did, what one

experienced, and what one witnessed at any earlier point in one's life than the time at which the question is posed (Ibid.).

5.3. Narrative Neglect as Threat to Identity, Authenticity, and Ethical Decision Making

Narrative theorists from John Locke (1997) to Charles Taylor (1991) underscore that in the creation of autobiographical structures upon which self-understanding hinges, one is able to participate in the process of selecting particular memories, based on important life incidents and themes, to be stored in neural networks, which consequently produce one's sense of existence in the world (Escobedo and Adolphs 2010). This process marks the means by which individuals interpret, make sense of, and extract meaning from life events. Regaining and reforming a systematized and consistent narrative after a traumatic event remains, then, vital to the larger reconstruction of one's autobiographical narrative of authenticity in the effort to make sense of trauma and identify meaning within it (Bell 2008). In this way, autobiographical memory is equally critical to one's ability persist through time, retain moral agency, and maintain moral responsibility (Glannon 2006). If who one is depends to a greater or lesser extent upon what one does, then what one does depends to a greater or lesser extent upon what one remembers – or, put more precisely, what one remembers in light of one's narrative identity. The conclusion gleaned is that who one is depends to a greater or lesser extent upon what one remembers, and, more immediately, who one remembers oneself to be. Hence, to neglect one's narrative is to sacrifice everything else.

As implied above, the rationality of emotion is largely a sociocultural concept, which implies the idea that rationality is, in large part, embedded in respective cultures. That being said, narrative authenticity must also be partly independent from the recognition of others, since the recognition of others has the potential to be incorrect for a number of reasons. Nevertheless, the emotionally-rational authenticity inherent to autobiographical memory cannot be appropriately assessed by individuals alone. This is due to the fact that, to some extent, each individual is embedded in a sociological culture greater than oneself, and hence is perpetually confronted by the positions of others that serve to evaluate one's emotional life. Since emotion is considered authentic by virtue of its rationality,[4] neglecting emotional memories irrevocably knit together with the coherence and consistence of an individual's narrative identity will only serve to abruptly tilt an

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4. The same can be said reciprocally of rationality – that is, that every reason is considered authentic by virtue of its emotional nature.

individual life toward the inauthentic and the disintegrated. If neglected, new emotions would, at best, appear as doubtful, and so rather than effectively reinstating an individual state of being, they would de facto deconstruct it. For some contemporary philosophers of mind, authenticity is a perceptible state (Kraemer 2011). If this is persuasive, then an adequate ethics of maintaining authenticity leaves no room for narrative neglect (Taylor 1991).

Beyond threatening authentic autobiographical memory, emotional rationality, and narrative identity in less transparent ways, narrative neglect proves more sharply – and visibly – impedimentary to sound ethical decision making. Insofar as one's life story is always embedded in the story of the communities from which one derives one's identity, the attempt to cut oneself off from that past is to deform one's present relationships. This is so because one is never able to seek, identify, and act on the good solely as an individual. Individuals inherit from the past of their families, cities, tribes, and nations a variety of debts, expectations, and moral obligations. These inheritances constitute the given of one's life, one's moral starting point. It is also how life gains its own moral particularity. Ultimately, then, one finds oneself part of a particular history and, regardless of whether one prefers or recognizes it, as the bearer of a narrative greater than one's own (MacIntyre 2007).

6. The Justification of Narrative Identity as a Comprehensive Framework for Ethical Decision Making

6.1 Narrative Identity as Moral Education, Moral Methodology, and Moral Discourse

Even the most ardent devotee of analytical rigor can admit that most individuals, most of the time, learn much of what they know about morality from narratives of one kind or another (Murray 1997). To say that narrative identity contributes to ethical decision making through the providence of a particular form of moral education is hardly a controversial claim, but it is an important one nonetheless. Defenders of an ethics-as-propositions conception of decision making argue that individuals are simply too dense to grasp, remember, or learn, and that because of this society must fall back on narrative identity as a heuristic device. But narratives are not second-best instruments for representing the content of morality in a vivid, memorable way. Rather, they are themselves that content (Murray 1997). If the enterprise of moral education is understood as a pursuit of truth in all its forms, requiring a deep and sympathetic

investigation of all major ethical alternatives and the comparison of each with one's active sense of narrative identity, then it requires narrative identity and the experience of attending to it for its own completion (Nussbaum 1990).

As mentioned above, a method of moral reasoning grounded in narrative identity has experienced a recent resurgence (Murray 1997). Blaise Pascal's brutal yet brilliant assault on its abuses made casuistry a term of dishonor. Nevertheless, as ethicists struggled with actual cases, the case-centered approach inherent to casuistry was often employed on a variety of moral problems. In time, the restoration of a narrative-based casuistry as an intellectually respectable method of moral reasoning would gain credence. This trail was blazed by Albert Jonsen and Stephen Toulmin, whose method would gain credence by the late 1980s (Murray 1997). As Jonsen and Toulmin (1988) note, the heart of human experience does not lie in a mastery of rules and theoretical principles, however sound and well-reasoned they might appear. Instead, it is located in the practical wisdom that comes from seeing how the ideas behind rules work out in the course of one's (evolving) narrative identity – in particular, seeing more precisely what is involved in accepting (or rejecting) this or that rule in one or another set of circumstances. Only an adequate recollection of the autobiographical and emotional elements of narrative identity can equip individual agents with the tools necessary to weigh moral considerations of various kinds and resolve conflicts between those considerations.

Moral philosophers rarely behave as geometricians, forwarding axioms, definitions, or theorems in their moral discourse (Murray 1997). Rather, they typically tell stories of at least two genres. The first is the "philosopher's hypothetical," which it meant to make a particular point, usually about the plausibility or implausibility of an assertion about ethics. Judith Jarvis Thomson's (1971) violinist and Bernard Williams's (1973) traveler are well known examples of the genre. These stories function either to reinforce confidence in the proposition being forwarded or to reveal its defect (Murray 1997).[5] The second, less noted genre of narrative is intended to construct, motivate, and display the necessity of the theorist's approach. This is the method, for instance, of MacIntyre (2007), by which he describes contemporary morality as a collection of incompatible shards of earlier moralities that were more coherent. The success of MacIntyre's project is, in large part, due to its birth in and motivation by narrative identity – that is, by stories about who

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5. If it is not obviously wrong for a woman who wakes up and finds herself attached to a violinist to want to disconnect the tubes that are keeping him alive, then neither is it obviously wrong for a woman who finds herself pregnant to want to cease supporting the fetus growing inside of her body – or so Thomson's story is meant to suggest.

individuals are, what they are like, and how they came to be in their current situation. Most, if not all, moral discourse, including moral theory, is embedded in, conditioned by, and conducted through narratives (Murray 1997).

<u>6.2 Narrative Identity as Ground and Object of Normative Ethical Principles</u>

John Arras (1997) contends that narrative is an essential supplement to ethical principles. His argument is twofold: first, that narrative elements are inevitably embedded in all forms of moral reasoning; and second, that individual responses to narrative are the ground out of which principles and theories develop. For the former part of the argument, Arras relies heavily on the work of Rita Charon, who passionately calls for narrative competence in bioethics while maintaining the fundamental structure of principlism within the field. Arras thus interprets the significance of narrative identity as supplementary to principles, viewing narrative as the oil that lubricates the gears of normative principles, thereby enhancing their function. The latter part of his argument appeals to the model of reflective equilibrium, claiming that few principlists would ground their theories in a way that prohibited them from being tested against considered judgments about actual circumstances. On this view, most principlists are moral coherentists in the sense of relying on particular, considered judgments as a necessary means to test general theories. Arras points out that the cases that give rise to these considered judgments are themselves revelatory of some narrative identity: they contain either micro-narratives that describe what it means for a particular person to behave in a particular way, or macro-narratives that describe the history of a particular behavior and its particular social benefits or burdens (Arras 1997). For Arras and others, then, an ethics grounded in narrative identity is not a new approach, but rather a recognition and appreciation of the debt that principle-driven modes of discourse owe to stories (Brody 2003).

However, a much stronger case can be made for the dependence of principles on narratives, grounded in the meaning individuals attribute to the historical development of principles (Ibid.). Against Jonsen and Toulmin (1988), Childress (1997) argues that individuals learn both norms and narratives from their parents, and that without norms, it is impossible to understand and classify the narratives. For Childress, it is a mistake to view the genesis of an individual's moral development as grounded in stories, with the understanding of general norms constituting a later, more sophisticated stage of development. Yet it seems quite plausible that moral development occurs in precisely the opposite way. Consider, for example, how children learn to recognize the distribution of

goods as fair or unfair – an activity that becomes a metaphor for the principle of justice. A child watches his parents dividing goods in a particular way and witnesses the result this behavior has on his three other siblings. On another occasion the child watches his younger sister steal all the goods for herself and similarly witnesses the effect it has on all parties. Finally, the child is given the responsibility to divide and distribute the goods among his siblings and, perhaps with prompting, decides to emulate his parents and not his younger sister. (This can be understood as a new, and perhaps first, instance in which the child invokes moral judgment.) The situation reminds the child of the narratives in which he previously participated and provides criteria to determine whether the new narrative produces a fair distribution (Brody 2003).

Apart from the exercise of principles, there is another area of moral activity that underscores the foundational import of narrative identity: discussions about virtue and character (Ibid.). MacIntyre (2007) has led the way in claiming that the very notion of virtue is unintelligible without a narrative conception of what it means to live one's life. To be virtuous is, for MacIntyre, to attempt to become a particular sort of person – to live one's life in a particular way as it unfolds over time. This means not only that individuals who remain true to their narrative identity behave in certain ways, but also that they do so for certain reasons and with certain motives, and that they learn certain things from their past behavior and apply them to future behavior in certain ways. None of this makes sense in absence of a narrative conception of the self. Even Arras (1997), who is skeptical of MacIntyre's claims (about whether truth can be identified through narrative), agrees that the only way to adequately depict, understand, and assess character is by telling and retelling stories (Brody 2003).

6.3. Rigor in Narrative Judgments and Ethical Justification

A general point of agreement among narrativists is that in order to critique a story, one needs a different story, or counter-story, with which to compare it (Brody 2003). As Margaret Urban Walker (1998) explains, the task of fully normative reflection is intrinsically comparative. In other words, when individuals ask themselves what can be said for some way of life, they are asking whether it is better or worse than some other way they know or imagine. Part of the attractiveness of narrative identity is its intuitive appeal: individuals can judge the coherence of an event within the context of a story. Walker, who views ethics primarily as an exercise in accountability and responsibility, places great stress on the significance of moral reliability. For her, moral responsibility lies at the intersection of the respective narratives of relationships, identity, and values,

and forms the basis for one's identity. On this view, acts are wrong only by a judgment of radical incoherence from the standpoint of the narrator (Walker 1998). This indicates the possibility of employing narrative coherence or incoherence as a guide to moral justification for actions (Brody 2003).

Wide reflective equilibrium, as articulated by Norman Daniels (1979), locates justificatory power in coherence among three elements: particular moral judgments, general ethical principles, and background theories of human nature. One may sometimes alter a long-standing general principle because it fails to resonate with a particular case judgment. At other times one may dismiss a case judgment because it fails to cohere to an attractive general principle or theory. Circumstances determine how the equilibrium works for the best overall "fit" among the elements. Of course, any such fit is temporary, since a new case or background theory may upset the original reasoning (Brody 2003). Nevertheless, Daniels' theory has respectable roots in moral and political philosophy, and it is tempting to adopt for justification in an ethics of narrative identity. One would simply designate the particular case judgments as "narratives." Within this model, one need not reject normative principles, and one can acknowledge that at least some narrative judgments may be persuasive enough to overturn principle-based judgments on occasion. One could then use principles when they are helpful and remain focused on particular narratives as sources of moral justification (Ibid.). However, to maintain rigor, a "narrative equilibrium" must be more complex still.

On a fundamental level, narrative equilibrium is also coherentist. That is, what is ethically justified is what most accurately hangs together with everything else, acknowledging that one can seldom, if ever, provide an algorithm for deciding of what "hanging together" consists (Ibid.). As suggested above, narratives do not stand alone; they depend for their meaning on broader background narratives that are often taken for granted by those who share a common society and culture. At least some of the time, then, moral judgments and moral behavior are partially judged on grounds of coherence within and among one's narratives. On other occasions, when wider reflection is needed, it may be necessary to appeal to background theories of human nature (encompassing psychological, sociological, or anthropological aspects) or to general principles. These elements are viewed as contained within a multilevel cluster of narratives. That is, background theories of human nature, even if apparently derived from the social sciences and quantified in statistical terms, are a sort of sociocultural background narrative, providing the story of how people in a society tend to behave and why. Narrative equilibrium is a product of human activity, and those humans function within a particular sociocultural context during a particular historical movement (Ibid.).

Thus, discerning that something is the case – whether this action is cruel or that ball is red – obviously involves subsuming the case under a concept, but it does not involve reaching a belief by invoking some generalization linking premises to conclusion (Little, 2000). The question is not, therefore, how "subjective" stories can provide rigorous criticism, judgment, and justification in the context of ethical decision making, but how rigorous criticism, judgment, and justification can exist without the stories that frame one's narrative identity (Brody 2003).

7. Conclusion

This essay examined the respective relationships shared between autobiographical memory, emotional rationality, and narrative identity in support of the argument that narrative identity, as the product of autobiographical memory and emotional rationality, is indispensable to substantive ethical decision making. To secure the justification of these theses, it demonstrated that (i) the disintegration of autobiographical memory degenerates emotional rationality; (ii) the degeneration of emotional rationality decays narrative identity; and (iii) the decay of narrative identity disables one to seek, identify, and act on the good. The essay concluded by suggesting that narrative identity, inextricably rooted in autobiographical memory and emotional rationality, may be successfully employed as a justificatory framework for ethical decision making, providing both education to, and rigor for, substantive moral judgments.

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Changing a Mind: Psychoanalytic Perspectives

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Biography

Growing up in an intensely religious household, I was naturally predisposed to philosophical, particularly moral, reflection. Upon discovering philosophy, many of my beliefs have and continue to change. It's an experience I've become more comfortable with and through my writing, I hope to allow others a similar opportunity. Much of my research focuses on philosophical approaches to psychology. I find psychoanalytic theory especially fecund, as it blends the undeniable effects of religious belief, raw qualitative data, and philosophical rigor. Furthermore, various media and our relationship to them are in a constant state of evolution. As it forms a large basis of my research, I believe it would be neglectful for philosophically oriented academics to ignore this dynamic relationship.

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Changing a Mind: Psychoanalytic Perspectives

Jeffrey Ventola

Abstract

In this paper, I want to describe the process and difficulties involved in what we colloquially call "changing one's mind." This process is necessarily difficult as our beliefs are structurally interdependent, stemming from the syntactical symbolic nature of the unconscious posited by Lacan. Therefore, to change one belief is to alter the entire structure, risking a form of chaos. This is further problematized by the reality we imbue our ideas with. Jung implies, through his exposition of fantasy and directed thinking, that our conceptual realities can be reinforced by the external world. It is then through recourse to the external world that I believe we are capable of changing our minds. Specifically, certain films are capable of initiating a syntactical switch in our subconscious beliefs by displaying the world in a novel way. There is an ethical imperative to regularly revise our ideas as well. Irigaray's Ethics of Sexual Difference and Kristeva's understanding of abjection form the basis for my argument here. Society is both structured by and involved in the process of structuring the unconscious mind and therefore individuals must take upon themselves the responsibility to engage in new kinds of thought, however arduous and uncertain it may be.

Introduction

Classical psychoanalysis presents us with a linear and detailed exposition of human psychic development from infancy to adolescence, but I want to develop a theory of how the individual can change after these embryonic metamorphoses. Shifting a perspective that has settled over time requires more concentrated and persistent effort than the nascent development of the ego. I will refer to this post-adolescent, elective shift in perspective as simply "changing one's mind". I find this to be an undervalued colloquialism in our country today. To change one's mind, depending on the depth of the shift can be to radically alter many other aspects of their life. The repercussion, however, is in proportion to the extent of the change; this is to a degree, temporally conditioned. Certain beliefs have existed longer than others, and in effect, have increasing influence over newly acquired ideas and perceptions. In demonstrating the regimenting effect of existing ideas as well as the potential for a change of mind, I want to turn to Carl Jung's work on the unconscious sources of fantasy as well as the potential to direct fantasy

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through works of art. Furthermore, I will attempt to explain the nature of changing our minds via some of Jacques Lacan's descriptions of the symbolic register and unconscious.

There are pitfalls, opportunity, and imperatives to changing one's mind depending on their particular situation. To give a cursory review, in some cases a change of mind is necessary to eliminate destructive tendencies, directed either outward or toward oneself. In other cases, marginalized demographics of people are ushered into a predestined definition of self, and therefore must overcome societal hurdles as well as ingrained mental habits to become fully themselves. Furthermore, this process is not without its risks. Self-alienation, abjection,[1] and aggression are all potential outcomes of intentionally shifting one's thinking. To demonstrate some of these imperatives in their particularity I find Luce Irigaray's work concerning bias in psychoanalysis as well as Julia Kristeva's essay on abjection and Lacan's concept of aggression.

Concept Formation: Directed Thought and the Symbolic

Jung's theories of the unconscious differ quite distinctly from Freud's, but I would like to assert that they can be more encompassing because he takes into account the particular social and historical situations of individuals, and also uses these theories to describe how concept formation occurs. Furthermore, his description of fantasy allows for an understanding of it as a redemptive tool to alleviate the sedimentation of those concepts into what is essentially narrow-mindedness. After a discussion of Jung, I will turn to Lacan's theory of the symbolic to demonstrate how personally constitutive our beliefs and opinions actually are, thereby making them difficult to alter, yet I believe the potential to do so lies in what Jung calls "directed fantasy" (Jung [1921] 1990, 58).

To begin with a description of concepts and their formation, "the concept . . . though it may have general and proved validity, will always be a product of the subjective psychological constellation of the investigator" (Ibid. 9). Furthermore, "the thing-likeness of the purely conceptual, . . . the 'reality' of the predicate or the abstract idea, is no artificial product, no arbitrary hypostatizing of a concept, but a natural necessity" (Ibid. 29-30). Jung succinctly captures two very important elements of the nature of concept formation; the first being the inherently subjective quality of the concept, idea, or opinion and the second is its necessary appearance as reality. We form concepts all the time. It is a natural and efficient way to categorize an otherwise innumerable list of individual experiences, but concepts are subject to a sedimentation process where

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1. I mean specifically to use Julia Kristeva's term from her work *Powers of Horror*.

they become more ingrained in an individual and adopted by society despite their potentially increasing uselessness. Ideas or concepts are formed to describe the character of what is currently occurring, and are subject to the possibility of inaccuracy and obsolescence. However, due to the material reality we imbue the idea with, as well as social reinforcements, individuals and society can take time to revise and enact new ideas.

"The product of the mind's activity is exalted above the disordered multiplicity as an *idea*" (Ibid. 36). Ideas are powerful and enforce our semblance of reality. As I mentioned, they may become too influential in the context of society, but may also become too powerful in the individual. "It may easily happen that a particularly strong and therefore particularly isolated and uninfluenceable complex becomes an 'over-valued idea,' a dominant that defies all criticism and enjoys complete autonomy . . . in pathological cases it turns into an obsessive or paranoid idea" (Ibid. 277).

Concepts that over-stay their utility can quickly become hindrances on both personal and societal scales. This occurs in several varieties socially. In some instances, naïve ignorance can prompt inconsiderate behavior or, a privileged social position can evoke apathy for the marginalized. In more sedimented versions, systemic injustice is overlooked, and outdated, maligned legislation can remain unchecked.

It becomes a difficult necessity to switch out or alter concepts when one becomes more operative within reality. "The more 'eternal' a truth is, the more lifeless it is and worthless; it says nothing more to us because it is self-evident" (Ibid. 60). Some individuals are more resistant to this idea while others only need to hear sufficient reason in order to understand and enact this necessity. It would be another entire project to attempt to define the variable that determines an individual's capacity to truly change their mind. Or to put it in question form: what allows us to change our minds? Why is it difficult or exasperating to do so? I believe part of the answer lies in the implications of Jung's ideas about directed thinking.

"Thinking with directed attention" is a special kind for Jung; it occurs in certain instances such as in finding "the solution of a difficult problem" or on the occasion it is necessary to "write down the problem, or make a drawing of it so as to be absolutely clear" (Jung [1912] 1916, 13). It is a way of thinking that "works itself out more or less in *word form* . . . directs itself wholly to the outside world . . . [and] leaves behind a corresponding exhaustion" (Ibid. 14). It is the kind of thinking that is advocated in educational systems. He opposes this to fantasy, which is a phenomenon that I will discuss at a later and more relevant occasion.

More importantly, directed thinking shapes society by redefining and circumscribing the ideas by which people operate. It is from where we derive our legal precedents,

scientific principles, nutritional information, and ability to create and operate machinery among so many possible examples. "Directed thinking" as Jung calls it "is the manifest instrument of culture, and we do not go astray when we say that the powerful work of education which the centuries have given to directed thinking has produced . . . a practical application of the human mind to which we owe modern empiricism and technic" (Ibid.19-20). The very fact of modern technology is proof that directed thinking has a cumulative effect through the function of education. Arguably, our state of technological rationality is at an historical apex and is therefore more governed by concepts than any previous time. Since we can use concepts to create materials that abide by their rationale, our conceptual apparatus believes ever more firmly in the materiality of its creations.

Furthermore, concepts can't exist socially without our ability to express them. As they are thought in and through language, they are expressed and empowered by their articulation. "The primitive, *magical power of the word*" gives concepts their imputed reality and therefore objectivity (Jung [1921] 1990, 44).[2] As we use language to designate and identify real objects and colloquially believe it to have some inherent relation to them, the same should be true for more intangible realities. Wielding language is to apply a system of codifications. We experience a perception, thought, or feeling and in order to communicate that experience we attach words to it. Repetitious use of those words solidifies their meaning to us, making them less questionable, more closed, more obvious. This occurs on individual and social levels as well.

I hope that in describing the process of directed thinking, as well as its inauguration and expression in language, I have adequately explained how concepts are formulated, wield power, and can eventually diminish in usefulness. It then becomes the responsibility of aware and intellectually involved individuals to alter concepts and when the time arrives, dispose of them.

The codification process intrinsic to language is a process of symbolization, or one of the registers that Lacan believes the subject operates on. Specifically, the symbolic constitution of the subject posited by Lacan makes our ideas (which are also conditioned by symbolic processes) particularly difficult to change and conditioned into the individual with increasing inertia. "It is the symbolic order which is constitutive for the subject" he

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2. He believes this is due to a psychological remnant of primitive man's inability to distinguish words from the reality they are describing. While I also believe the language used to describe concepts carries a certain weight, the imputed reality of concepts may have more to do with the repetitive, functional use of language.

writes at the beginning of the "Seminar on *The Purloined Letter*" (Lacan [1970] 2006, 7). Since the symbolic constitutes the subject (i.e. the transcendental being experiencing *this* version of reality), it also has the potential for different configurations and therefore can radically alter the subject. He writes, "The subject follows the channels of the symbolic," moreover this symbolic register affects subjects communally; "it is not only the subject, but the subjects, caught in their intersubjectivity, who line up . . . and, more docile than sheep, model their very being on the moment of the signifying chain that runs through them" (Ibid. 21). Symbolic understandings have a contagious effect, and concepts are perfectly articulated through language; they *are language*, or a code that runs through subjects animating them and uniting them. "The unconscious is the fact that man is inhabited by the signifier" (Ibid. 25). According to Lacan, our common constitutive element is nothing more than the ability to accept a set of signals and adapt them. Jung echoes this sentiment: "Unconscious content is to an infinitely greater degree common to all mankind than the content of the individual consciousness" (Jung [1912] 1916, 62).

It is more than the code itself that people are attuned to; Lacan argues that the syntax of symbolic organization is the basis for unconscious memory. "The remembering at stake in the unconscious . . . is not related to the register that is assumed to be that of memory . . . I will therefore go so far as to say that the burden of proof rests, rather, with those who argue that the constitutive order of the symbolic does not suffice to explain everything here" (Lacan [1970] 2006, 31). Any consistent activity in the unconscious requires a sufficient explanation. What Lacan is proposing here is a prelingual symbolic constitution of the unconscious, a structure defined by syntax.

Syntax, being the arrangement or order of words in a sentence, implies a few things about the way this unconscious mechanism operates. First, each link in the chain is individual unto itself *and* participates in a collective meaning. Second, the relations of the parts or symbols determine the overall meaning of this string. To rethink this logic, it isn't much different than how Jung approaches dream analysis. "The Deity or the Demon speaks in symbolic speech to the sleeper . . . this means that the dream is a *series of images, which are apparently nonsensical, but arise in reality from psychologic material which yields a clear meaning*" (Jung [1912] 1916, 9). Images are the currency of the unconscious. Lacan writes, "The stamp of an impression or the organization by an idea, express rather well, in fact, the roles of the image as the intuitive form of the object" (Lacan [1970] 2006, 62). The unconscious is given images that become symbols themselves, producing through conglomeration, a whole symbolic structure and meaning based on their syntax. As the dream has a whole meaning unto itself as well as meaning

for the individual parts, and its relation to past dreams, the unconscious organizes its meanings symbolically into a totality of sense.

In terms of regularity and alterability Lacan writes, "What must be kept in mind here is the rapidity with which a formalization is obtained that is suggestive both of a remembering that is primordial in the subject and of a structuration in which it is notable that stable disparities can be distinguished therein" (Ibid. 42-43). The idea of a *stable disparity* in the symbolic chain is an element of this thought that I'd like to preserve for later use. Otherwise, the unconscious or the symbolic order (both are theoretically said to constitute the subject to differing degrees) employs symbolic codes to produce meaning from the syntax of those otherwise nonsensical images.

In an attempt to continue the greater chain of thought: concepts and ideas are built through directed thought, which is cumulatively increasing via recorded history and technology. They are also communicated through language. Language is both a code that operates on the symbolic register and the way in which directed thought is formulated. By exposing the constitutive symbolic unconscious, language and ideas can install themselves as images, becoming situated in and maintaining the present syntactical meaning. There is, however, also the possibility of alteration to the constitutive syntax in such a way as to cause a new meaning to appear. If this were not a possibility, the very practice of clinical therapy and rehabilitation would be pointless.

Imperatives for Change

Undergoing a symbolic restructuring of the unconscious is difficult work full of pitfalls and downsides, but it proves to be a necessity for some individuals as well as simply prudent for many others. Irigaray's critique of Freudian principles is an exemplar of the way that ideas can come to sediment and dominate popular thought with a maligned version of the truth as well as an insight into the subjectivity of someone oppressed by the weight of those concepts. Women historically find themselves situated in such a way that they must either acquiesce to their imputed conceptual identity or find a way to reorder the symbolic chain in such a way that they can formulate their own personal character. In other cases, individuals who do not find themselves oppressed by inappropriate concepts can learn to accept and understand those who are through systematically testing and altering their own symbolic structures, in effect cultivating characteristics such as compassion and open-mindedness.

Irigaray writes, "The feminine must be deciphered as inter-dict: within the signs or between them, between the realized meanings, between the lines . . . and as a

function of the reproductive necessities of an intentionally phallic currency" (Irigaray [1974] 1985, 22). The phallic currency she describes is used to determine the validity of the signs that constitute the symbolic; in this case, Irigaray is making the argument that the feminine has been left out of this symbolic circuit and essentially misplaced. In other words, masculinity "introjects" its meanings in an over-burdening capacity to the symbolic order, over-determining and over-signifying; defining the not-male. Introjection, according to Jung means, "throwing psychological principles into material reality," which is a completely natural phenomenon (Jung [1912] 1916, 146). However, for one demographic to introject meaning for others is to impose a hegemonic system of alienated identities. Irigaray describes this inherited persona as being a mirror. "Woman will therefore be this sameness – or at least its mirror image – and, in her role as mother, she will facilitate the repetition of the same, in contempt for her difference. Her own sexual difference" (Irigaray [1974] 1985, 54).

When patriarchal definitions of femininity are introjected, a perverse conceptual understanding of what that means can arise. Irigaray points this out when she claims that according to Freud, "the point at which the 'change to femininity' has to occur, [is] with the [woman] becoming the indispensible instrument of male pleasure" (Ibid. 30). Woman's identification with the sedimented, and outdated concept of femininity is essentially a trap set before birth, a kind of original sin.

This loss of autonomy due to circumscription within a gendered hierarchy is a far-reaching effect, with multiple consequences; many of which are not at all times clearly identifiable. Irigaray writes, "She has then no *consciousness* of her sexual impulses, of her libidinal economy, and more particularly, of her original desire and her desire for origin" (Ibid. 68). Being subjected to a conceptual definition of self that is alienated from anything that one truly is can produce this disoriented mindset. Kristeva describes this in her essay on abjection; she writes, "I experience abjection only if an Other has settled in place and stead of what will be 'me'. Not at all an other with whom I identify and incorporate, but an Other who precedes and possesses me, and through such possession causes me to be" (Kristeva [1980] 1982, 10).

More so than a vague sense of alienation, abjection can be the cause of persistent self-loathing. "Thus braided, woven, ambivalent a heterogeneous flux marks out a territory that I can call my own, because the Other, having dwelt in me as *alter ego*, points it out to me through loathing" (Ibid. 10). An image of the alter ego can be immediate and intuitive; it has possessed a consciousness and commanded it to act or think in a certain way. These instructions are unbearable, as they emanate from someplace else. Kristeva describes the accompanying affect: "I give birth to myself amid the violence

of sobs, of vomit. Mute protest of the symptom, shattering violence of a convulsion that, to be sure, is inscribed in a symbolic system" (Ibid. 3). The symbolic order, as constitutive of the subject, is implicated in abjection's appearance. It is exactly the intertwining of symbols, their painful syntax, and our understanding of their overall meaning that causes this feeling of self-alienation.

Self-contemptuous abjection is only one response to the codifications of patriarchal symbolization; Irigaray describes how this brings about a lack of desire, or inability to want. She describes, "a *void*, a *lack*, of all representation, re-presentation, and even strictly speaking of all mimesis of her desire for origin. That desire will henceforth pass through the discourse-desire-law of man's desire" (Irigaray [1974] 1985, 42). In this case, male desire isn't just allowed, it becomes sanctioned and is involved in creating the sanctions themselves. "It is his desire which, come what may, prescribes the force, the shape, the modes, etc., of the law he lays down or passes on, a law that reduces to the state of 'fantasy' the little girl's seduced and rejected desire" (Ibid. 38). Male, or in the more general and abstract, conceptually based laws and regulations are issued from an individual or group that wields authority, which implies no special ontological status to the subjectivity of the authoritarians. Authority abides by its own logic, a logic of desire, the desire of the individuals with authority and is thus reified in legal and social norms.

This authority is implicated in deciding which concepts become solidified and continually utilized. Kristeva also notes the heterogeneous forms of authority and their implication when she writes, "an unshakeable adherence to Prohibition and Law is necessary if that perverse interspace of abjection is to be hemmed in . . . Religion, Morality, Law. Obviously always arbitrary, more or less; unfailingly oppressive, rather more than less; laboriously prevailing, more and more so" (Kristeva [1980] 1982, 21).

One form of conceptual authority that grants individuals the ability to regulate the use and exclusion of ideas can be achieved through educational landmarks, and at once it becomes apparent why diversity is a necessary aspect of an effectively inclusive educational system. In making gestures toward the educational system as a source of relief for abject conceptualizations, I hope to make the path, which I will describe a little later, clearer. For now, I hope to have pointed out the necessity and imperative that changing the governing symbolic order carries for certain groups. It should be increasingly evident that those who don't bear the strain of these ideas are responsible for alleviating the burden for others where possible. This includes keeping an open mind to criticisms, truly thinking through concepts as if they will apply to material reality (as they will apply to certain psychological realities and legal domains), and challenging dominant claims due to the very fact that they have been accepted for such a long time. In following

some of these methods, I hope it is possible to create a truly open forum for communal intellectual development that leaves as few lives "based on exclusion" as possible (Ibid. 6).

Practical Personal Alteration

In this section, I would like to demonstrate how the potential to direct our thinking in new ways, or alter our symbolic unconscious memory and modify or eradicate obsolete concepts could be harnessed through fantasy. Specifically directed fantasy, which manifests objectively, in some instances, as art. Artistic expression represents and influences the time period it is produced in, and I believe the modern form of expression is film. I will then describe a few examples of films that are capable of performing the initial syntactical switch that allows for the criticism and reconstruction of concepts.

I'll begin with a brief description of dream or fantasy thinking as Jung describes it; "here, thinking in the form of speech ceases, image crowds upon image, feeling upon feeling; more and more clearly one sees a tendency which creates and makes believe, not as it truly is, but as one indeed might wish it to be" (Jung [1912] 1916, 21). This is the opposite of directed thinking in a few ways. As directed thinking brings a corollary exhaustion, with fantasy or dream thought "we no longer compel our thoughts along a definite track, but let them float, sink, and mount according to their own gravity" (Ibid. 21). Fantastic thinking occurs naturally and effortlessly, where directed thinking must be maintained and focused. What's more, directed thinking looks toward the future and builds itself accordingly where, "the material of these thoughts which turns away from reality can naturally be only the past with its thousand memory pictures" (Ibid. 21).

Pure fantasy is, in fact, not very productive or useful. It's a bit like excess thought that also expresses our innermost desires. Jung describes it as, "A lessening of interest, a slight fatigue, is sufficient to put an end to the directed thinking . . . We digress from the theme and give way to our own trains of thought . . . the poor man imagines himself to be a millionaire, the child an adult . . . we imagine that which we lack" (Ibid. 31). In other words, "*the conscious phantasies tell us of mythical or other material of undeveloped or no longer recognized wish tendencies in the soul*" (Ibid. 39-40).

While fantasy doesn't intrinsically play any decisive role in the development or cultivation of civilization, I believe it holds a good deal of potential for those who find themselves abjected. For women, according to Irigaray, "The nonsymbolization of her desire for origin, of her relationship to her mother, and her own libido acts as a constant appeal to polymorphic regressions" (Irigaray [1974] 1985, 71). The inability to identify through symbolic representation that which one truly desires, leads to regressive

symptoms. Pure fantasy in its unadulterated state is of little use here as a pure and individual expression of desire, but it does function as an expression to oneself. Armed with knowledge of one's own desire, I believe it becomes possible to create, indulge in, and disseminate works of directed fantasy that subvert and undermine patriarchal valuations.

Directed or creative fantasy appears to be an oxymoronic formulation but their functions are, as all mental functions are, intrinsically intertwined. According to Jung, "The goal of totality can be reached neither by science, which is an end in itself, nor by feeling, which lacks the visionary power of thought. The one must lend itself as an auxiliary to the other, yet the opposition between them is so great that a bridge is needed. This bridge is already given us in creative fantasy" (Jung [1921] 1990, 58-59). In my interpretation, creative fantasy is fantastic thought that abides by some of the parameters of directed thinking. Specifically, fantasy is expressed in images and I believe these images accumulate the way directed thought accumulates through language and technology. This vast collection of constructed fantasy, echoing the symbolic and collective desires of those who produce them is the history of all art. Or, as Jung states: "Aesthetics by its very nature is applied psychology and has to do not only with the aesthetic qualities of things but also – and perhaps even more – with the psychological question of the aesthetic attitude" (Ibid. 289).

I believe the artistic medium of our age, the age, which Irigaray argues is burdened by the question of sexual difference,[3] is the motion picture or film (Irigaray [1982] 2003, 5). By watching a film, audiences participate in a fictional and subjective, yet communal and real experience. Audiences' participation in these flights of fancy is not to be undervalued; the experiences communicated to cinematic audiences are done so in a way that most resembles subjectivity. We view images that move, the way our eyes move to interpret apparent motion. We hear with the cinema, not just musical scores, but the ambient noise in a scene. However, that is not to take away from the powerful effect of music in cinema. The musical element tied to narrative and the visual component is implicated in evoking a passionate response from the audience. As Jung puts it, "The power of God is threatened by the seduction of passion; a second fall of angels menaces

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3. She posits that the question of our age is one of sexual difference; I believe this is to ignore the other differences intrinsic to modern society (racial, religious, etc.). While the question of our age is some form of difference, there is seemingly an important tie to how this question is expressed in artistic mediums. In order to best understand the current age, I wish to draw from the current popular medium. These are my intentions in choosing the seemingly arbitrary medium of film for analysis.

heaven . . . the power of the good and reasonable ruling the world wisely is threatened by the primitive chaotic power of passion" (Jung [1912] 1916, 120). Films viscerally engage us on more of our sensory organs than any other medium to date and therefore I believe can elicit some of the strongest reactions, emotionally and intellectually.

Jung writes, "the relation of the individual to his fantasy is very largely conditioned by his relation to the unconscious in general, and this in turn is conditioned in particular by the spirit of the age" (Jung [1921] 1990, 53). The creative fantasies projected on the screen communicate a specific relationship to the community's subconscious, one that is determined, in part, as a reaction, to the spirit of the age. This relation is expressed, reinforced, or contradicted through cinematic imagery. Here I mean imagery in the sense Lacan does, or the intuitive form of understanding for the unconscious. The expression of those images interacts with our own symbolic chain. "The signifier's displacement determines subjects' acts, destiny, refusals, blindnesses, success, and fate, regardless of their innate gifts and instruction, and irregardless of their character or sex; and that everything pertaining to the psychological pregiven follows willy-nilly the signifier's train" (Lacan [1970] 2006, 21). The signifier's deployment in cinema, with a different syntax than what might naturally occur in us suggests a new image or syntax and through that opens the possibility for new actions, beliefs and enterprises.

The experience of film is mediated primarily through the filmmaker and technical apparatus of the cinema (which strongly resembles our own sensory apparatus), and due to this we can come as close as possible to experiencing another person's subjectivity. Through revolutionary forms of cinema, both in the aesthetically abstract and socially challenging senses of innovation, the conceptual reality dominating a time can be explored, undone, replaced, or obliterated.

I find it's only prudent to introduce a few concrete examples of films that attempt to create such a symbolic dissonance, and I would like to start with Spike Lee's *Do The Right Thing* (1989). This film attempts to bring the viewer into the actual conditions of a Brooklyn neighborhood on the hottest day of the summer, and all the tension implied therein. Narratively, the film begins with usual introductions of the characters, but attempts to avoid casting anyone as a strict antagonist. The main character is a pizza deliveryman, named Mookie, whose eyes we experience this film through. Mookie works for an Italian man named Sal who hires mostly other Italians and abides by a kind of passive racism. He allows his employees to harass Mookie and other minority customers without much trouble and he truly views a divide between himself and the community he serves.

This film seeks, above all else to acquaint the viewer, as personally as possible, with the infuriating experience of blatant racism. One infamous scene has several characters speak directly into the camera and deliver a lengthy racially hateful insult for several different ethnic groups. I found this to be a powerful cinematic technique in that it puts the audience in a position to be personally insulted and to also experience racial aggression from a detached viewer's perspective simultaneously.

Aside from techniques, the characters in this film seem to represent different perspectives on antagonistic racial relations. Mookie, for one, is a rather neutral character, he tries to assuage and change his racist coworker's mind through appeals to their common interests. He even deescalates a situation that occurs between his store's owner and a regular customer. It isn't until the end of the film, when racial prejudices overflow into violence that Mookie helps incite a riot by throwing a garbage can through his store's window. The point in this seems to be that despite what level of neutrality one hopes to assume there is only so much control an individual can exert over their circumstances and environment. When they have become truly hostile, hostility can be the only recourse. *Do The Right Thing* then allows the audience to experience, briefly and removed from other consequences, the subjective state of someone faced with racist aggression as well as the objective circumstances that must coalesce to a point of violent expression. This experience can allow those who don't otherwise participate in that symbolic interaction in their daily lives to understand how it occurs.

Another film I want to point to briefly is *The Stepford Wives* (Forbes 1975) as a similarly functioning example but instead related to the forced domestication of women. The main character of the film is Joanna, who has just moved to the Connecticut suburbs from New York City with her husband Walter and initially she finds herself somewhat out of place. I will also mention here that it can be very telling what demographic a film is trying to represent through their choice of "main character"; but Walter proves to be something of an antagonist in this instance. He joins the local men's club in Stepford and mysterious events begin occurring. For instance, Joanna's only like-minded and relatively independent friend suddenly becomes much more interested in her household duties than her friendship with Joanna. Walter begins to expect much more from Joanna in terms of "wifely duties" and the men's club seems to be mysteriously at work behind much of this. How the plot of the film develops is an articulation of its syntax. As a psychological thriller the tension and danger continually mount from the relative comfort of the initial scenes. In much the same way, marriage for a woman at the time may have proved to create a safe haven for her initially until she eventually finds herself operating like an automaton in service of the family. Similarly, the musical score is quite eerie, which

juxtaposes the calm visuals of the natural setting in suburban Connecticut. The visually apparent tranquility of family life serves only to mask the pain occurring behind closed doors.

Through my analysis of fantasy (arbitrary and constructive) as well as its interaction with the symbolic order, I hope to have shown here how films are capable of presenting us with a codified experience, mimicking our own subjective experiences to allow an audience to understand a new perspective. This codification is similar to language in their shared ability to act on the symbolic order. By granting access to otherwise unheard voices, films facilitate the breakdown of obsolete concepts by demonstrating, through narrative example, exactly where their applications become harmful. This, at once, allows audiences who are not in touch with those problems to become aware of them and grants those who may feel isolated by that situated perspective a sense of commonality.

Dangers of Alteration & Conclusion

It is here that I would like to return to Lacan's statement that the unconscious can maintain "stable disparities" in the syntax of its memory, that is, alter the code in repetitive ways. Establishing an individual change in the syntax as a precedent for instating that variant, as a new permanence, is what I referred to earlier as a stable disparity in the system. To effect a syntactical change without reinforcing it through repetition leaves the disparity unstable. The relative instability of disparities in the symbolic register can cause tremendously harmful effects for the subject. I believe an instance of this occurs when Lacan writes about the fragmentation of identity that is constitutive of aggression.

Lacan locates aggressiveness in a subjective experience, mediated by images, specifically that of "the fragmented body;" these include: "images of castration, emasculation, mutilation, dismemberment, dislocation, evisceration, devouring, and bursting open of the body" (Lacan [1970] 2006, 85). These are ways of describing experience, or representations of an internal self-relation to one's body. As a series of images, they are directly implicated in the Lacanian symbolic order as well as a kind of Jungian morbid fantasy. This unconscious self-relationship implies a social and expressive aspect as well. Lacan writes, "There is a specific relationship here between man and his own body that is also more generally manifest in a series of social practices: from tattooing, incision, and circumcision rituals in primitive societies to what might be called the procrustean arbitrariness of fashion, in that it contradicts . . . the natural forms of the human body" (Ibid. 85). The actual symptoms of such a state can vary but "the aggressive

tendency proves to be fundamental in a certain series of significant personality states, namely, the paranoid and paranoiac psychoses" (Ibid. 90).

Aggression is a structural problem that occurs during ego development. Lacan writes, "A specific satisfaction, based on the integration of an original organic chaos, corresponds to the *Urbild* of this formation, alienating as it may be due to its function of rendering foreign. This satisfaction must be conceived of in the dimension of a vital dehiscence constitutive of man and makes unthinkable the idea of an environment that is preformed for him" (Ibid. 94). Aggression is a fundamental, intrinsic aspect of ego formation. It is triggered when a person feels out of place or uncomfortable with themselves. The dehiscence of incorporating new chaos, or an irregular syntax, into an individual creates a volatile personal climate. Irregularity conditions the acceptance, on a personal and unconscious level, of erratic behavior. According to this formulation an aggressive person can be said to be constituted by a disparate semiotic. These are all potential side effects that I believe follow from my proposed rubric for a changing mind, if implemented in an unhealthy fashion.

As a final thought, I want to mention that my approach to this material is somewhat inspired by Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the Body without Organs; essentially, I wanted to develop parallel concepts for psychological development that Deleuze imputes to the body. Central to this is the individual's ability to intentionally establish new structures as the basis for novel thought, action and experience. Deleuze writes, "you make [a BwO] . . .And it awaits you; it is an inevitable exercise or experimentation, already accomplished the moment you undertake it, unaccomplished as long as you don't" (Deleuze and Guattari [1980] 1993, 149). The difference between establishing a BwO or changing one's mind is exerting the right kind of effort. Furthermore, extreme utilization of the process results in negative effects. "Staying stratified - organized," as opposed to experimenting with a BwO "is not the worst that can happen; the worst that can happen is if you throw the strata into demented or suicidal collapse" (Ibid. 161). Questioning myself and altering my unconscious symbolic structure too irregularly can lead to a paranoid aggression, yet maintaining the use of an outdated and oppressive ideal is destructive for others, thus the much-disputed question of egoism. The BwO is a means to restructure the self, through what limited semblance of autonomy we can grasp. I wanted to demonstrate that changing one's mind can be a practiced and refreshing skill, which is equally pivotal in the progression of any society as in the development of the individual.

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