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**NARRATIVE PROCEDURE OF MORAL AND POLITICAL DELIBERATION**

University of Pardubice: Centre for Ethics as Study in Human Value

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I declare:

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**Abstract:** The project *Narrative Procedure of Moral and Political Deliberation* aims to reconcile key tensions in moral and political philosophy, particularly between communitarianism and liberalism, the *good* versus the *right*, and historicism versus formal reasoning. Instead of attempting a direct resolution of the communitarian-liberal divide, this work proposes a middle ground that integrates these perspectives through a theory which is called narrative constructivism. Narrative constructivism combines two key principles: the social narrativity thesis and the psychological narrativity thesis, principles found in the communitarian framework. The social narrativity thesis holds that individuals' beliefs, values, and attitudes are embedded within societal narratives, while the psychological narrativity thesis suggests that self-identity is constructed narratively within social contexts. This dual framework enables a substantial understanding of moral and political deliberation. Incorporating constructivist principles, this theory gains the formal element to supplement the substantial one. By co-opting concepts such as reason, reason-giving procedure, and reasonableness, this thesis attains a normative direction, as well as the mentioned formal one. The project ultimately argues that narrative constructivism offers a robust foundation for moral and political discourse, bridging substantial philosophical divides by integrating narrative depth with formal reason-based procedures.

**Key words:** *Narrative, Deliberation, Constructivism, Politics, Ethics*

**Abstrakt:** Projekt *Narrative Procedure of Moral and Political Deliberation* si klade za cíl sladit klíčová napětí v morální a politické filozofii, zejména mezi komunitarismem a liberalismem, dobrem a právem a historismem a formálním uvažováním. Namísto pokusu o přímé řešení komunitaristicko-liberálního rozkolu tato práce navrhuje střední cestu, která integruje tyto perspektivy prostřednictvím teorie, jež se nazývá narativní konstruktivismus. Narativní konstruktivismus kombinuje dva klíčové principy: tezi o sociální narativitě a tezi o psychologické narativitě, tedy principy, které se nacházejí v komunitaristickém rámci. Teze o sociální narativitě tvrdí, že přesvědčení, hodnoty a postoje jednotlivců jsou zakotveny ve společenských narativech, zatímco teze o

psychologické narativě předpokládá, že sebeidentita je konstruována narativně v rámci sociálních kontextů. Tento dvojitý rámec umožňuje podstatné pochopení morální a politické deliberace. Začleněním konstruktivistických principů získává tato teorie formální prvek, který doplňuje prvek obsahový. Kooptací pojmů, jako je rozum, postup dávání důvodů a rozumnost, dosahuje tato teze kromě zmíněného formálního směru i směru normativního. Projekt nakonec tvrdí, že narativní konstruktivismus nabízí pevný základ pro morální a politický diskurz, který překonává substanciální filozofické rozdíly tím, že integruje narativní hloubku s formálními postupy založenými na rozumu.

**Klíčová slova:** *narativ, deliberace, konstruktivismus, politika, etika*

**Abstract:** Het project *Narrative Procedure of Moral and Political Deliberation* heeft tot doel belangrijke spanningen in de morele en politieke filosofie met elkaar te verzoenen, in het bijzonder tussen communitarisme en liberalisme, het goede versus het rechtvaardige, en historicisme versus formeel redeneren. In plaats van te proberen een directe oplossing te vinden voor de kloof tussen communitarisme en liberalisme, stelt dit werk een middenweg voor die deze perspectieven integreert door middel van een theorie die narratief constructivisme wordt genoemd. Het narratief constructivisme combineert twee belangrijke principes: de sociale narrativiteitstheorie en de psychologische narrativiteitstheorie, principes die terug te vinden zijn in het communitaristische raamwerk. De sociale narrativiteitstheorie stelt dat de overtuigingen, waarden en houdingen van individuen zijn ingebed in maatschappelijke narratieven, terwijl de psychologische narrativiteitstheorie suggereert dat zelfidentiteit narratief wordt geconstrueerd binnen sociale contexten. Dit tweeledige raamwerk maakt een substantieel begrip van morele en politieke deliberatie mogelijk. Door constructivistische principes te integreren krijgt deze theorie een formeel element als aanvulling op het substantiële. Door concepten als rede, argumentatieve procedure en redelijkheid te coöpteren, bereikt dit proefschrift naast de genoemde formele richting ook een normatieve richting. Het project beargumenteert uiteindelijk dat narratief constructivisme een robuuste basis biedt voor moreel en politiek discours, en

substantiële filosofische scheidslijnen overbrugt door narratieve diepgang te integreren met formele, op rede gebaseerde procedures.

**Trefwoorden:** *Narrativiteit, Deliberatie, Constructivisme, Politiek, Ethiek*

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## Introduction: Narrative Constructivism

This project strives to provide a way for reconciliation of one of the biggest tensions in the current philosophical debates on moral and political deliberation. That is to say, the primary concern of this project is to show how we deliberate in ethics and politics. This tension leads us to choose between communitarianism or liberalism, *the good* or *the right*, historicism or formalism, etc. Another important thing to stress out is that this project does not aim to address the whole discussion between the communitarians and liberals, rather, approach their disagreement from the standpoint of deliberation. In this introductory part, I would like to further expand on this tension and offer reasons why it is important. Secondly, I would like to claim that this tension can be overcome if we merged the mentioned particulars into a project that would strive to encompass both ways of thinking. The theory offered in this project will try to pave the way for discussion on how this tension can be mediated. The name of this theory is narrative constructivism, a theoretical foundation that encompasses both communitarian and liberal arguments, both moral terms of evaluation – *the good* and *the right*, as well as the historical influence and formal construction of our deliberation. Without further ado, we will dwell on the mentioned tension and analyze the main points of disagreement.

Communitarianism is famously taken as a critique of the liberal political theory that focuses on the concepts of unification, community, and the *good life*. Liberalism, in the eyes of the communitarian thinkers, is a society formed by the individuals that are in the state of constant separation and disassociation from one another.<sup>2</sup> That is to say, Michael Walzer, famously labeled as one of the most influential communitarians, notes that there are two arguments stemming from

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<sup>2</sup> M. Walzer, (1990), *The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism in Political Theory*, vol. 18., no. 1., p. 11.

communitarianism, the one about liberal practice and the one about liberal theory.<sup>3</sup>

The first argument refers to the asociality of the liberal society that is detached from the tradition and history that it encompasses.<sup>4</sup> The consequence of that is that each individual in the liberal tradition imagines him/herself as unencumbered by the constraints of society while being absolutely free. The focus point of the individuals in the liberal society, according to Walzer, is to minimize their risk of achieving their goals, strivings, and ends.<sup>5</sup> The second argument against liberalism is that it does not represent real life, that is to say, it is completely detached from how people operate in their everyday lives.<sup>6</sup> Based on this critique, people are not just individuals unencumbered by social ties, rather, they are members of their own families, neighborhoods, communities, groups, etc. Most of the values, beliefs, and attitudes that they acquire, they acquire from the environment in which they are a part of. By depriving us of this structure, communitarians argue, liberalism disables us from accessing our experience as embedded and encumbered social beings.<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, liberal thinkers have tried to defend themselves by pointing out the fact that it is a false premise that liberalism is about abstract individualism and skepticism about *the good*. Will Kymlicka has famously tried to defend liberalism (or, as he calls it, social democracy) from communitarian criticism. By referring to Marx and Rawls, he finds that both thinkers claim that we should primarily be concerned about not just accepting the already established set of social values and goals, but revising them.<sup>8</sup> According to him, beliefs, values, and attitudes come from both community and from the “inside”. Namely, he claims that a *good life*

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> W. Kymlicka, (2015.), *Liberalism and Communitarianism* in *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 18., no. 2., p. 183.

is the life lived from personal convictions, even if they are derived from the society and culture.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, two preconditions of a *good life*, in the liberal doctrine, are the following: to live a dignified life from the inside; and to be free and equal in the sense of pursuing the goals we have accepted. Ultimately, the doctrine of liberalism focuses on constant revisions and discussions about the already established social rules and social goals and focuses on the procedure of justice. The requirements of *justice*, according to Kymlicka, are there because liberalism's primary focus is, in fact, a *good life*.<sup>10</sup>

This is the roughest sketch of this discussion. By deriving the consequences of this discussion, the tension expands to encompass two key dichotomies - between *the good* and *the right*, as well as the one between historicism and reasoning. To better understand the first tension, I will refer to Sandel and his emphasis on the basic difference between communitarianism and liberalism. He finds that the liberal ideal is the one that takes priority of *the right*, while communitarianism takes priority of *the good*.

*The ideal I've described might be summed up in the claim that the right is prior to the good, and in two senses: The priority of the right means first, that individual rights cannot be sacrificed for the sake of the general good (in this it opposes utilitarianism), and second, that the principles of justice that specify these rights cannot be premised on any particular vision of the good life. (In this it opposes teleological conceptions in general.)*<sup>11</sup>

We can also see this difference in our earlier discussion. Liberal thinkers argue that prior to talking about *the good*, we need to discuss the just procedures of construction, while communitarians focus on the standards of excellence and

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 183.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p. 184.

<sup>11</sup> M. Sandel, (1984.), *The Procedural Republic and the Unincumbered Self* in *Political Theory*, vol. 12., no. 1., p. 82.

goodness that are present in the given tradition. The contrast that Sandel brings into the discussion has roots in the classical ethics of David Ross. He distinguishes *the right* from *the good* and finds the first one to be connected to duties that we are morally required to do, while the second one is concerned with what is valuable.<sup>12</sup> The theory of *the right* is often connected to Kantianism, while the theory of *the good* is connected to Aristotelianism or Utilitarianism.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the goal of human life is particularized in the theory of liberalism, often resulting in the self-constitution of our goals, while communitarians argue for the teleological constitution of our lives and emphasize the unity of our practices and goals, as well as their dependence on the societal structure.

The tension between historicism and reasoning is also an important one. Eugene Miller rightly stresses the importance of the reemergence of historicism in political theory as it sheds light on political epistemology.<sup>14</sup> Historicism brings further understanding of the evolution of our conceptual framework, and our social practices, as well as provides a way of analyzing the social changes and the reasons for those changes occurring. The claim is that the social and psychological system of values, beliefs, and attitudes does not come out of the vacuum, it is deeply rooted in the historical evolution of our communities and the practices that are a part of them. Miller attributes the methodology of historicism to Hegel and his philosophical project that emphasizes the internal logic of the epochs and tradition, as well as the development of cultural-based cognitive categories.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, historicism opens the door for the notion of goodness to be further elaborated. Namely, as John Wallach notes, if we consider goodness from a historical perspective rather than a

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<sup>12</sup> W. D. Ross, (2002.), *The Right and The Good*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

<sup>13</sup> It is also worth noting that many communitarians subscribe to the neo-Aristotelian methodology, while, on the other hand, many liberal thinkers find Kantianism to be the basis for their moral and political views. This will be a reacquiring topic throughout this project.

<sup>14</sup> E. F. Miller, (1977.), *Positivism, Historicism, and Political Inquiry* in *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 66., no. 3., p. 796.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* p. 800.

purely philosophical one, its influence on both social and personal levels can be highlighted.<sup>16</sup> In short, our vision of the good life differs depending on the moment in history, the area in which we are located, and the position that we occupy. Communitarians often embrace historicism while highlighting that the community that encumbers us has a long history of change and its values dependent on tradition.

One way of addressing the duality of the proposed theories is to refer to the faculty of human deliberation. I suspect that the core of this disagreement lies in the way in which we think about moral and political issues, assuming that the theories of communitarianism and liberalism are both moral and political doctrines. The questions that are raised are the following:

- How do we attain beliefs, values, and attitudes in relation to the world around us and to others who are a part of that world?
- How do we constitute *the self*? Is it externally or internally motivated, or does the answer lie somewhere in between?
- What is the relationship between historicism and reasoning?
- How do we reason through the external, socially influenced factors?

Both communitarianism and liberalism, based on this introduction, provide quite clear-cut answers to all these questions. This project problematizes the answers of the mentioned theories and tries to find a middle ground, while also disqualifying certain premises/conclusions of both projects. For it to be successful, we would need to provide a new theoretical foundation that is based on the philosophies of both communitarian and liberal philosophers. In this project, we will call this theory the theory of narrative constructivism. Narrative constructivism is primarily descriptive in a way in which it offers a description of how we deliberate about moral and political issues. However, it also has a normative tendency since the description begs for further elaboration on why we transform our deliberations in relation to the world

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<sup>16</sup> J. R. Wallach, (2018.), *Democracy and Goodness: A Historicist Political Theory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 19.

and others in the world. Therefore, the explanatory power of this theory is both descriptive and normative.

Furthermore, I will provide the overall outline of the project in order for the reader to be acquainted with its aims.

In short, on the one hand, we have a communitarian theory – the theory of the narrative, while on the other, we have a Rawlsian approach – constructivism. I argue that the main substance of our deliberation comes from the narrative approach and that the narrative itself is shaped by our reason-giving procedure over time, which gives it its form. The narrative approach itself has two premises – the social narrativity thesis and the psychological narrativity thesis, the first one explaining the social aspect of our lives, while another one describing how we are shaped within the constraints of the society and those living within it. The first claim is that our beliefs, values, and attitudes are shaped by the social tradition in which we are embedded in. The psychological narrativity thesis claims that our self-constitution itself depends on the narrative, as well as that the very process is narrative in nature. Reasoning, on the other hand, gives rise to a constructivist procedure that guides our narrativity in a more reasonable direction. Therefore, everything that we have in the beginning is a narrative and, afterward, this narrative is shaped into another narrative based on constructivist procedure.

I start by providing an outline of the theory of the narrative taken from MacIntyre's theoretical opus. This will be the first premise – the social narrativity thesis. However, since the project does not encompass the same goals that MacIntyre has and it directly disagrees with them, the discussion opens on how to retain the notion of the narrative and make it independent from MacIntyre's teleology and apparent naturalism. MacIntyre believes that there are three things that are at the core of our social and moral lives – practice, tradition, and narratives. Practices shape our lives and make sense (are intelligible) within one tradition. These traditions give us intelligibility in narrative form and are justified by narratives as well. In this project,

I am interested in retaining the narrative approach while discarding some of the consequences of MacIntyre's theory. I argue against MacIntyre's critique of liberalism and ethical monism. In order to do that, I am establishing a theory of moral political pluralism based on the approaches of Richard Rorty and Isaiah Berlin. By concluding that pluralism is a state of things in our current political and moral realm, we would need to reinterpret MacIntyre's notion of the narrative. One of the consequences of this view is that there is a plurality of narratives based on the ways of life. As a contrary force to MacIntyre's teleological narrativity, I am proposing narrative hermeneutics, a view that states that we derive meaning from our practices and social realm while embracing pluralism. Different practices and different social narratives breed different forms of life. By doing that, the first premise is established showing how the social world around us shapes our beliefs, values, and attitudes.

The second part of my thesis proposes the psychological narrativity thesis and deals with the notion of the narrative *self*. Political and moral deliberation is done by an agent who can morally and politically deliberate. If this deliberation comes from an agent who is encrypted by data that he/she has received from the social realm, or, a social narrative, we will need to see what is going on in the case of his/her position in the narrativity. When we ask a question "*Who am I?*", the answer that we give is the story that we speak about ourselves. The theoretical approach that I am taking here is the one proposed by Ricoeur as it is the one that is most compatible with MacIntyre's social narrative theory. Ricoeur sees *the self* as both objective and subjective and within this framework, there is a constant hermeneutical tension between the social narrative and the narrative of *the self*. In the final two subchapters, I am trying to further elaborate on the nature of the narrative *self* and defend it against the likes of Galen Strawson and his theory of episodocity. If the psychological narrativity thesis is successfully argued for, we can move to the next step of this project, testing the first two premises.

Once we have established the approaches of the social narrative and the narrative of *the self*, that is to say, social narrativity and psychological narrativity

thesis, we have a specific framework of how we constitute our moral and political deliberation. The third chapter then shows why the narrative approach is limited and why it needs to be “updated” with another theoretical view. In order to show that, the third chapter includes three sub-chapters – on the topics of nostalgia, narrative pluralism (ideology), and moral progress. These sub-chapters apply narrativity to the real world and we can see the pros and cons of it. The first sub-chapter will show the connection between the social narrative and the narrative of *the self*. If the social narrative progresses beyond the narrative embeddedness of *the self*, we feel like we have an intelligibility crisis. Intelligibility crisis in this context is taken to show that when the narrative evolves and changes, a person needs to reconstruct and re-formalize the narrative for it to make sense again. The second sub-chapter deals with narrative pluralism which is exhibited in the different forms of lives, ways of life, and ideas on life. In the political realm, these ideas develop into different ideologies since they are linked with moral and political deliberation. This is the place in which the normative theory is introduced to support narrative pluralism. The normative framework which I offer should be assessing the acceptability of the narratives held. In this sense, I propose Rawls’s theory of reasonableness which encompasses his understanding of liberty. By combining reasonableness and liberty, we are providing a framework of normative pluralism that enables the narratives to be considered as equally valid. Another claim is that the narrativity thesis on its own cannot provide standards of self-assessment. The last sub-chapter, the one on moral progress, deals with the theory of how narratives and meta-narratives(traditions) change. It is argued that the narratives are not static but in a state of constant change. By looking at the reasons for the narratives progressing, we need to provide a theory of moral and political progress. I am doing the same procedure I suggested in the previous sub-chapter, the one on reasonableness and liberty. That is to say, using this model, we can establish the view on why we consider one narrative to be progressive and why we consider some narratives to be regressive. I am also introducing the notion of the epistemic crisis, found in MacIntyre’s theory, and that suggests the constant narrative

state of change.

The consequence of the third chapter is the following – a mere narrative thesis is necessary but not sufficient to explain moral and political deliberation. The first sub-chapter provides evidence that the selves(people) who have intelligibility crises are connected to the previous narratives, the ones that are not here anymore. By reformulating the relation between the personal and the social narrative, *the self* is reinterpreting in the social narrative around him/her. Therefore, narrativism is the basis for moral and political deliberation, but something else is at play here. The second sub-chapter shows that if the narrative theory should be a foundational one, it should embrace the fact of pluralism. It should also show that, within this framework of pluralism, different narratives influence one another and promote change within the narratives themselves. If the narratives were fundamentally different and incompatible, the potential for change and coexistence would be unattainable. Again, there must be something else here at play. Finally, the last sub-chapter shows that the narratives are progressing, but the narrativity thesis itself cannot fully encompass the reasons for that change. There also must be something else at play here as well. Reasonableness is offered as the main moral principle of narrative change in every case. Further explanation of reasonableness will be provided in the fourth chapter where I differentiate between what is rational (substantial) and reasonable (formal).

Therefore, from the third chapter, I conclude that, while narrative theory is a foundation for moral and political deliberation, it offers merely a substantive account, but not a formal one. Therefore, a formal account needs to be provided in order to have a full picture.

The fourth chapter offers exactly that, a formal account based on constructivism. This theoretical approach is usually supported by the theorists that subscribe to the liberal doctrine, following John Rawls and his methodology. This chapter begins by defining what constructivism is since it is a relatively new view filled with the multiplicity of methods of research. By exploring these numerous ways of

conducting the constructivist philosophical methodology, I end up subscribing to a local, dependent, Neurathian constructivism, which recognizes the contextual and narrative-driven nature of moral and political reasoning, while emphasizing the role of reason-giving procedures in shaping deliberation. I come to that conclusion by exploring three important concepts – reasons, reason-giving procedure, and reasonableness. Reasons, both explanatory and normative, are used as the material for the reason-giving procedure. I argue that the reason-giving procedure, when rational, operates with intelligible reasons that we attain from the relationship between the social and personal narrative. Furthermore, I defend the reason-giving procedure from the philosophers who emphasize the irrationality of our reasoning. I claim that every thought and action that we make has a reason behind it, following Scanlon’s research on reasons. By expanding the view on intelligible reasons and connecting them to the reason-giving procedure, we have connected narrativity with reasoning.

The notion of reasonableness holds the most important place in this chapter. It effectively answers the question of the third chapter and provides a normative-formal standard of action. Intelligible reasons that we attain from narrativity are connected to the Rawlsian term of rationality, while reasonableness is used as a trans-narrative, quietist-realist term. Following Rawls, reasonableness is connected to the Kantian philosophical heritage, and it involves considering the perspectives, needs, and interests of others. It also emphasizes fairness, mutual respect, and the acceptance of the liberty of *the other*. Reasonableness requires balancing one’s reasons with those of others, often leading to compromises or adjustments in the rationality of the narrative. The difference between rationality and reasonableness creates a full circle in this project, seen both from the communitarian and the liberal perspective.

The fifth and final chapter of this project connect all the pieces of the puzzle. I finally provide reasons on why I am subscribing to a very particular form of constructivism while connecting it to narrativism, and I offer the connection between

the substance and the form of narrative constructivism with a Habermasian view on deliberating serving as an anchor to my position. After establishing a clear-cut connection, I conclude this project with the overall theory of narrative constructivism which I hope enriches the debate surrounding the mentioned issues.

# The First Premise: A Social Narrativity Thesis

## 1.0. Philosophical Framework and Narrative

As stated in the title of this project, narrative plays a key role in the understanding of our political and ethical deliberation. The first part of the project, therefore, elaborates on the first premise that it rests itself on – the social narrativity thesis. Sadly, the elaboration is not as straightforward as it might seem as social narrativity has been at the center of philosophical investigation for decades now. As Anthony Rudd puts it:

*Over the last two or three decades, various philosophers, including MacIntyre, Taylor, and Ricoeur (as well as psychologists, sociologists, theologians, and others) have argued that the notion of narrative has a central role to play in our thinking about personal identity and about ethics.<sup>17</sup>*

The author that will prove to have the most influence on this view is, without a doubt, Alasdair MacIntyre. Blagojević asserts that the theory of narrativity has become prominent during the 1980s, championed by MacIntyre after which similar accounts were proposed by Charles Taylor and Marya Schechtman.<sup>18</sup> The concept of narrative, both in ethical and political contexts, finds significant grounding in MacIntyre's philosophy, where it plays a central role in shaping moral identity and communal values. It is also worth noting that the account of the narrative is deeply engraved within MacIntyre's philosophical framework, however, this project distances itself from it. The reasons for that will be given after the elaboration of his

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<sup>17</sup> A. Rudd, (2007) *Kierkegaard, MacIntyre and Narrative Unity—Reply to Lippitt*, *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 50., no.5, p. 541.

<sup>18</sup> B. Blagojević, (2020) *We Have no Future: Teaching Philosophy to Narratosceptic Students* in *Godišnjak za Pedagogiju*, vol. 5, no. 2., p. 75.

notion of narrative. While MacIntyre's notion of narrative closely follows his philosophical system, I argue that it is not entirely dependent on it. One cannot speak about MacIntyre's narrative if one does not address two key methods. One is the general outlook of MacIntyre's project, while the second one is the reason for agreeing or not agreeing with the project itself. That being said, in the following parts of this chapter, I plan to analyze MacIntyre's project which he created in his book *After Virtue* with some references to *A Short History of Ethics* and *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*; the former being before *After Virtue*, while the latter being written after it. The second part of this chapter consists of deriving the concept of the narrative from MacIntyre's framework. The main goal in this chapter can be summed up by the following process: giving a general outlook on MacIntyre's philosophical system, explaining what role a conception of narrative has within it, and deriving the conception of narrative from the philosophical framework given in the first step. After we establish the notion of the narrative without MacIntyre's philosophical constraints, we will elaborate the version of the social narrativity thesis based on the theory of narrative hermeneutics.

## **2.0. MacIntyre's Project: The Revitalization of Virtue Ethics**

Following the words of Thomas D'Andrea, MacIntyre stands between continental and analytical thought and is tearing down the walls that separate them as a theorist who has incorporated an encyclopedic corpus of philosophical tradition within his philosophical project.<sup>19</sup> That is to say, MacIntyre invokes continental thought and provides an answer to the questions that have been plaguing analytic philosophy. It should be said that such a philosophical method is quite fitting for MacIntyre, considering the goal he set for himself. Namely, already at the beginning

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<sup>19</sup> T. D'Andrea, (2006.) *Tradition, Rationality and Virtue: The Thought of Alasdair MacIntyre*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, Hampshire. p. 397.

of his, probably, most famous book, *After Virtue*, MacIntyre offers one of the most interesting propositions of recent ethical theory. We have, according to MacIntyre, lost both a theoretical and an applied understanding of morality.<sup>20</sup> In a society and time determined by pluralism, we have lost something extremely important - the common good and the goal that unites us. We have lost the value system that had the power to direct us towards a common conception of good. However, what is the biggest loss of the modern understanding of morality is the fact that it prevents us from arguing about goods and goals at all. Our moral language has become so diverse that the concepts themselves have lost the meaning they once had. Pluralism leads to moral relativism and emotivism which are the ruling paradigms against which MacIntyre fights.<sup>21</sup> But how did we come to that? How did we get from a moral system that managed to unite us to a moral system in which we cannot even participate? The first part of MacIntyre's *After Virtue*, which comes as a continuation of *A Short History of Ethics*, comes down to this question. The final paragraph of that book opens a problem that plagues MacIntyre - modern moral philosophers talk about moral concepts as if they are without history and as if they are floating in a vacuum in which there is no social context and time. They build their theories without regard to the moral history of our society and without regard for moral concepts as concepts that have an entire history behind them.<sup>22</sup> If we look at MacIntyre's endeavor through these two books, we can view it as a historical project.<sup>23</sup> *A Short History of Ethics* starts from the elaboration of virtues in heroic societies to a modern ethical conception. In *After Virtue*, however, MacIntyre analyzes the history of philosophy to find an ethical tradition that has managed to encompass a common conception of good and that has managed to offer a framework in which we have the possibility of a moral discussion.

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<sup>20</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* p. 11. – 12.

<sup>22</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1990.) *A Short History of Ethics*, Touchstone, New York. p. 269.

<sup>23</sup> MacIntyre himself stresses that his project is in line with what Hegel called the history of philosophy, or, as Collingwood took all successful historical writing to be. In A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 2.

If someone has only read *A Short History of Ethics* and is only now embarking on *After Virtue*, the result will not surprise him/her. By rejecting much of the history of ethical thought, the choice boils down to two theorists - Nietzsche and Aristotle. Christopher Lutz rightly divides *After Virtue* into two parts - the argument against ethical conceptions and the argument for ethical conception.<sup>24</sup> The first part is destructive, while the second part is constructive. In this respect, Nietzsche would fit perfectly with MacIntyre's mission in the first part of *After Virtue* as a theorist who saw all the weaknesses of the Enlightenment project of morality.<sup>25</sup> However, although they have a common starting position, Nietzsche and MacIntyre differ in their goals. Nietzsche aims to destroy the foundational moral system and point out all the difficulties of modern philosophy, while, on the other hand, MacIntyre wants to offer an alternative. He, however, does not find an alternative in Nietzsche's thought. In the end, the choice comes down to one theorist - Aristotle. Thus, MacIntyre's philosophy aims to revitalize the theory of virtues in the contemporary social context.<sup>26</sup> It is certainly clear to him that the very history of the theory of virtue is determined by social frameworks; therefore, he seeks to determine the very core of the theory of virtues. What makes up a comprehensive theory of virtues are three notions - practice, narrative history, and tradition. For this project, the primary focus is to define the concept of narrative. However, it will also be necessary to briefly explain the concepts of practice and tradition since they are deeply linked with our main concept. Again, bearing in mind that the role of practice and tradition are marginal for this project, we would not dwell much on them apart from the most general outlook.

Before starting the outlook on these three concepts, the strategy for it needs to be addressed. Two ways in which we can go about this investigation are either

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<sup>24</sup> C.S. Lutz, (2012.) *Reading Alasdair MacIntyre's "After Virtue"*, Continuum, London. p. 1-2.

<sup>25</sup> G. Garrard, (2008.), *Nietzsche for and Against the Enlightenment* in *The Review of Politics*, vol. 70., no. 4., p. 596.

<sup>26</sup> J. Begley, (1995.), *The Virtue Theory of Alasdair MacIntyre* in *Pacifica*, vol. 8., no. 2., p. 220.

summarizing what MacIntyre is saying and providing a critique afterward or connecting these concepts, highlighting the part where they intersect and, afterward, removing the unnecessary weight. Roughly speaking, the strategy taken in this chapter is somewhere in between the first and the second way. A summary will be given nonetheless; however, it will be dependent on the mentioned intersection. Now, the question arises, what is this intersection? It is located in one important notion, arguably, the key motive for MacIntyre, the notion of intelligibility. This concept is ingrained with MacIntyre's main goal, the quest for unity. As it was noted, MacIntyre's main complaint is the separation of meaning and ethics that modern liberal society brings. In short, rigid individualism has detached itself from the ethical goal or, *telos*, and this brings meaninglessness to our practices which dictate our ways of life. In order to "go back on the right track", MacIntyre longs for unity of meaning and practices. One of the premises is that meaning itself is dependent on tradition and that every tradition is a narrative-based social order. Therefore, in short, MacIntyre is trying to invoke the unity of tradition, narrative, and practices which is portrayed in his emphasis on intelligibility. In the next sub-chapters, I will be summarizing MacIntyre by also expressing the importance that intelligibility has with the practices, tradition, and narrative.

### **2.1. The Conception of Practice: A Way to Acquire Virtues**

Before we focus on the analysis of the very concept of practice, it is important to offer a brief overview of the theoretical models from which MacIntyre derives the concept of practice and makes it an original contribution. First of all, we must keep in mind that MacIntyre was influenced on the one hand, by Marxism, and on the other, by Christianity.<sup>27</sup> In this respect, the notion of practice in MacIntyre's theory is

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<sup>27</sup> D'Andrea claims that MacIntyre was influenced by one particular conception of Christianity - Thomism. Namely, MacIntyre takes over the rationalist understanding of Christianity which relates to

developed from the model of Marxist philosophy and the classical theory of virtue. Let us, for now, dwell on the presence of Marxism. MacIntyre was heavily influenced by Marxist philosophy, although his interest in Marxism waned in the late 1960s after he saw the extremes of communist regimes.<sup>28</sup> However, the legacy of Marxism is still reflected in MacIntyre's writings in two ways. The first is a critique of the capitalist social system, while the second is an alternative version of social practice. Marxist *praxis* is defined as a free, universal, creative, and self-creative activity that is inherent in humans and allows them to change the social world as well as themselves.<sup>29</sup> Karl Marx's *praxis* is, therefore, a revolutionary activity through which persons transcend theory and by their action change the very frameworks of the social system. Of course, *praxis* would show the shortcomings of one system (Marx, in this instance, refers to the bourgeois social order) and thus open the way to a new one. This understanding of practice offers MacIntyre a starting position.

It was mentioned earlier that MacIntyre is a theorist who focuses on virtue ethics and, therefore, it is necessary for him to incorporate the concept of practice understood in this way within his system. In order to do that, in addition to the Marxist elements of *praxis*, he also adds the Aristotelian ones. As one of the three key elements of virtue theory, practice must contain the concept of excellence. Excellence, according to Aristotle, does something good in and of itself. This can be examined from the examples of an eye or a horse, the examples offered to us by Aristotle himself. The excellence of the eye makes both the eye and the function of the eye good; a horse's excellence makes a horse and its function good.<sup>30</sup> The function

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the Aristotelian tradition; he has kept this understanding to this day. From: T. D'Andrea, (2006.) *Tradition, Rationality and Virtue: The Thought of Alasdair MacIntyre*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, Hampshire. p. 163.

<sup>28</sup> R. Ward, (2017.) *Virtue in Practice: Alasdair MacIntyre's Concept of Virtue*, Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum, Rome. p. 16.

<sup>29</sup> G. Petrović, (1967.) *Praxis in Dictionary of Marxist Thought 2nd ed*, Harris, Laurence; Kiernan, V.G.; Miliband, Ralph, Blackwell Publishers Ltd. p. 435.

<sup>30</sup> Aristotle, (1906.) *Nichomachean Ethics*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., London. p. 44.

of the eye is, of course, to see things, while the function of the horse is to carry the rider, and so on.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the excellence of something is reflected both in the good that that something brings and in the good that it causes.<sup>32</sup> If we come across a horse that cannot perform its function, we will say that it is not excellent. The process becomes a little more complex when we determine the excellence of human activities, however, it comes down to the same procedure. In his *Politics*, Aristotle raises the question of the distribution of flutes, and wonders to whom they should belong.<sup>33</sup> The answer to that question lies precisely in the notion of excellence. The best flutes should belong to those who have excellence in playing the flute, that is, the best flute players.<sup>34</sup> Here the skill of a specific activity is associated with excellence (although that is not always the necessary case). The best flutes should belong to the best flute players because they will make the best use of those flutes.<sup>35</sup> In that respect, excellence is reflected in the very activity of playing the flute, and in the consequences that result from that. The best flute players achieved excellence in their craft. A flute played by someone who has achieved excellence in the craft of flute playing will produce better music than a flute played by someone who has not achieved excellence in the craft of flute playing. Furthermore, a player who has achieved excellence in the craft of flute playing will make better use of the best flute compared to someone who has not achieved similar excellence and therefore should have it.

In Chapter 14 of *After Virtue*, MacIntyre offers us, for the first time, his definition of practice:

*By 'practice' I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards*

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* p. 44.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* p. 45.

<sup>33</sup> Aristotle, (1999.) *Politics*, Batoche Books, Kitchener. p. 68.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* p. 68.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* p. 68.

*of excellence that are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.*<sup>36</sup>

Through this definition, we can extract a multitude of standards that activity must fulfill for MacIntyre to consider it a practice. But first, it is extremely useful to break down this abstract definition by applying it to individual examples. Let us imagine a group of friends who went camping. In addition, they brought a soccer ball and wanted to play a game with it. Considering that there is no football field or any field in the area, they set new rules for the game. This "new" game is based on the participants making a circle and kicking the ball to each other, with each of them being able to touch the ball only once. Whoever touches the ball more than once gets negative points. This game would not be a practice. On the other hand, a football match would be practice. Also, digging in the ground is not a practice, however, agriculture is. Masonry is not practice, but architecture is. The same goes for various sciences like physics, biology, psychology, etc., they are all practices.<sup>37</sup>

Why is this the case? First, this game made by a group of friends is not socially established, but an activity made solely because of the circumstances. Football is not a private activity; it is socially established and contains regulations and rules that are general and binding on everyone who plays it. Also, although this game seems to have coherent rules, they are subject to change that can be initiated by even the smallest detail. For example, if the rules requiring everyone to touch the ball at least once are too demanding for the participants, they can change those rules so that they can touch the ball twice, or more times. In retrospect, it would be hard to imagine that during a football match, the players decide that it is much more convenient to turn off the offside rule because the game would be more spectacular. However, it is worth mentioning that the rules of socially established activities also change from time to

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<sup>36</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 187.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* p. 187.

time. In the second half of 2020, it was possible to make two more changes to the matches than before due to the circumstances that followed as a result of a global pandemic. Also, in the earlier history of football, the rule of offside was changed three times - in 1863., 1925. and 1990.<sup>38</sup> But once the rules are changed due to specific circumstances or because the world organization of that sport believes that the changes would improve the game itself, the new rules immediately come into power and oblige everyone who plays that sport. Furthermore, football contains various formations, strategies, ways of cooperation, as well as various methods of improving individual skills. Does this imaginary game contain that? It would be hard to say so. Someone can be better in that game, and someone worse because of certain physical predispositions, explosiveness, speed of reactions, etc. On the other hand, football offers certain standards of excellence that a player must meet to be excellent in that sport. For that to happen, he must first master the rules of football, acquire the skills that are required of him/her, and live a life in accordance with that practice. In the end, football also points us to a certain conception of the good that is reflected in virtues. As for our imaginary game, that would not be the case. According to MacIntyre, various arts, sciences, crafts, sports, politics (Aristotelian), family management, etc., meet the standards of practice.<sup>39</sup>

The relevance of practice is crucial for the project that MacIntyre is after. Every practice defines a person who is pursuing it; it is the groundwork for both virtues and meaning. Furthermore, if we were to consider ourselves as projects, a premise which is explicit in *After Virtue*, these projects should be worked on.<sup>40</sup> The success of these projects is reliant on the activities that we conduct throughout our lives. These activities are practices. In short, MacIntyre agrees with the famous saying “*You are what you do*”; our lives are shaped by the practices that we undertake. In one of the

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<sup>38</sup> C. Williams, (2020.), *The History of the Offside Rule*, site: <https://www.colossusbets.com/blog/history-offside-rule/> accessed: 14.09.2020.

<sup>39</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 188.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* p. 174.

earlier papers, MacIntyre stresses the correlation, importance, and dependence between the individual projects and the larger projects (the communal goods).

*... they know themselves to be part of projects that extend from the past into the future in such a way that their work in the world receives its significance from its part in those larger projects.*<sup>41</sup>

This quote shows the relevance that practices have in shaping the individual in accordance with the social context and are, themselves, dependent on the social context. This dependency requires intelligibility, that is to say, the importance of the practice goes hand in hand with the needs of a tradition in which they are executed and receive their meaningfulness only inside that context. Let us consider the job of a phrenologist. At the beginning of the 1820s, this study received wide acclaim on the research of the size and the shape of the skull. The goal of it was to determine the person's personality traits and intellectual capabilities. The ones who were working as phrenologists were enjoying the status of scientists.<sup>42</sup> The scribes have also been important members of society, especially those who were copying *The Bible*.<sup>43</sup> Their work had major importance before the invention of the printing press, after which it lost its meaning. The practice of phrenology has lost its importance because of the progression of science, while the practice of a scribe would be meaningless in the technologically developed world in which we live today. If a person would do one of these jobs in the current social context, we would simply consider them irrational since such jobs are impossible to do now in their original meaning. Also, if we were to consider ourselves as a successful project, we are doing so in correlation to society's larger project. Our actions and tendencies are intelligible to the social context, tradition, or narrative in which we are stationed. The following passage from

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<sup>41</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1979.) *Seven Traits for the Future* in *The Hashtag Center Report*, vol. 9, No. 1., p. 6.

<sup>42</sup> C. E. Thompson, (2021.), *Phrenology* in *The Encyclopedia of the History of Science*, site: <https://ps.library.cmu.edu/ETHOS/article/id/482/> accessed: 15.09.2020.

<sup>43</sup> E. Tov, (2004.), *Scribes in Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert*, vol. 54, p. 7.

the beginning of *After Virtue* foreshadows the main argument that MacIntyre makes in the second part of the book and gives the concrete point that is being stressed here.

*So, such small-scale actions as the mailing of a letter or the handing of a leaflet to a passer-by can embody intentions whose import derives from some large-scale project of the individual, a project itself intelligible only against the background of some equally large or even larger scheme of beliefs.*<sup>44</sup>

Now once we have connected practice to the notion of meaning and intelligibility, let us see how it results in the subjects who are actualizing it becoming more virtuous. For us to do that, we would need to shortly consider MacIntyre's theory of the goods. Furthermore, the theory of the goods will prove to be necessary in the later criticism of MacIntyre when we introduce the notion of flourishing.

There are two types of goods that an activity provides - internal and external goods.<sup>45</sup> When we talk about external goods, we mean property, money, power, fame, etc. These goods can be the result of our skill in an activity, and they can also be the result of various coincidences, embezzlement, etc. For example, if someone is a well-paid scientist, he/she is expected to have gained a lot of knowledge and experience in his/her field of research. Also, he/she is expected to come to his/her results through his/her research, which is original, and brings a certain contribution to the scientific community. Now, we can imagine a situation in which that scientist got his/her doctorate by getting ahold of some family ties, and as far as research is concerned, he/she pays a small part of his/her salary to other scientists who provide the results that he/she presents as his/her own. He/she will have money and fame, that is, he/she acquires external goods even though he/she has never acquired

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<sup>44</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 28.

<sup>45</sup> According to Lutz, MacIntyre considers this distinction (given to us by his chess example) as one of the most important parts of *After Virtue*. From: C. S. Lutz, (2012.) *Reading Alasdair MacIntyre's "After Virtue"*, Continuum, London, p. 119.

internal goods that are specific to his/her field of research. The inner goods, on the other hand, relate to the activity itself and are acquired within the activity itself. In contrast to external goods that are the result of contingency, internal goods are the result of excellence that we have achieved within that practice. The scientist in our story would improve the inner goods when he/she acquires basic knowledge, experience, knowledge of research methods, knowledge of the situation in science, etc. By acquiring all this, the scientist is initiated into a way of life that directs him/her toward excellence within his/her practice. In this regard, it is extremely important to point out another difference between internal and external goods. External goods are typically the result of a dichotomy between winner and loser; when a winner achieves his/her victory in an activity, he/she receives individual recognition and material goods that become external goods.<sup>46</sup> Internal goods are also the result of some activity; however, they are of immense importance to every member of a practice. For example, let us consider a music band that starts writing an album by connecting several genres and creating a completely new style of music. The product of practice, that is, their album, becomes a means of inspiration for other musicians, as well as for future ones. Thus, this product of practice becomes a common good - a good that serves as an object from which all who are initiated in that practice benefit.<sup>47</sup>

The products of practice concern those activities that aim to create or produce something. For example, the product of painting is a painted picture, the product of agriculture is food, fibers, and raw materials, the product of playing music is a musical track, etc.<sup>48</sup> Through the products of practice, we can see historical progress or regress based on the context in which the product is created. Thus, each practice has its own line of development - it can be either in progress or in regress.<sup>49</sup> Those people who have already gained excellence in some practice are capable of evaluating the

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<sup>46</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 188.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, p. 190. - 191.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, p. 189.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, p. 190.

situation in the practice. Namely, if we are just starting to play music, we cannot have the same experience and the same knowledge about musical *techne*, nor *theoria* as someone who has been playing it for years. We can, hypothetically, be more talented, we can have a better sense of rhythm, play the guitar faster, and have a greater range of vocal octaves, etc., however, excellence is gained through experience.<sup>50</sup> But, probably more important for excellence in practice is the way of life. People who participate in music and have a certain degree of excellence within it live more or less by their practice as musicians.

This is the second kind of inner good that MacIntyre speaks of - living in accordance with practice.<sup>51</sup> A musician who lives a life in accordance with practice will constantly strive to experience new types of music, to perfect his/her genre, to produce new songs, etc. In that case, the musician will strive for the inner good of music and find in that the concept of a good life in accordance with practice. By living a way of life in accordance with a practice, we cultivate virtues which are a part of the internal goods of that practice. This is the biggest contribution that MacIntyre has given to the theory of virtues - internal goods of practices cultivate virtues. Each practice cultivates three basic virtues - the virtue of courage, truthfulness, and justice. Other virtues will depend on the practice and the context in which they arise, however, these three virtues are, MacIntyre argues, a part of every practice. According to MacIntyre:

*Virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods.*<sup>52</sup>

Finally, we must mention that each practice has its history. To participate in an activity means to be initiated within the practice of it.

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, p. 188 - 189.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, p. 190.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, p. 191.

So, we conclude that practices condition us towards virtues and make our characters morally excellent. What I think MacIntyre means in this instance is the following – courage, truthfulness, and justice are the virtues we attain from practices regardless of the context in which they are exhibited. These virtues would be trans-historical, in this sense. Yet, they would also need to be intelligible to the context in which they are exhibited. In this sense, they are also contextual.

## 2.2. Giving the Context: The Conception of the Tradition

Once we have finished talking about practices, the second notion arises, that of tradition. As we have stated before, tradition is the social order that dictates the way of life in terms of regulating the meaningfulness of practices. This sub-chapter will be concerned with expanding the notion of tradition and by doing that, providing a needed framework to introduce the notion of narrative.

The account of tradition has the key importance for MacIntyre's solution to the problem he has put forward in the beginning chapters of *After Virtue*. The view by which MacIntyre stands is that the moral principles by which we act are not found within the standards of reason, which is culturally Independent, but in the cultural context itself. If we were to follow his publications before *After Virtue*, we can see the development of this idea. In the paper *Can Medicine Dispense with a Theological Perspective on Human Nature*, MacIntyre provides a standard of morality connected with the death of the agent, as well as that it presupposes the intelligibility between individual action and the social context.<sup>53</sup> Afterwards, we see this argument being unfolded within *After Virtue* in which he introduces the concept of a tradition. Our moral reasoning is not a part of some context-independent process, it is always within

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<sup>53</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1977.), *Can Medicine Dispense with a Theological Perspective on Human Nature?* in *Knowledge and Belief, The Foundations of Ethics and its Relationship to Science, Volume 2*. Hastings on Hudson, New York, p. 25.-28.

one tradition, and it adheres to the rules that the tradition proposes. In his follow-up to *After Virtue, Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, MacIntyre even goes on to argue for the fact that the rationality itself is traditionally constituted. Therefore, I would like to elaborate on the ways in which MacIntyre describes the concept of tradition in his *After Virtue* and the expansion of that explanation which he offers in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*. First, of course, I would like to sketch out his view on tradition from *After Virtue* which is inherently communitarian.

*What I am, therefore, is in key part of what I inherit, a specific past that is present to some degree in my present. I find myself as part of a history and that is generally to say, whether I like it or not, whether I recognize it or not, one of the bearers of the tradition.*<sup>54</sup>

Our life begins in a specific context, we are, as Michael Sandel<sup>55</sup> would argue, encumbered within one community.<sup>56</sup>

By explaining practices, we have finished much of the work on the descriptive necessity for MacIntyre's notion of tradition. Every tradition is the holder of practices and guides them towards their *telos*, a goal that is shaped by the tradition itself. Therefore, certain practices have different weights in different traditions. It is important to remember that the role of practice is to cultivate the virtues of the members of a certain tradition. Here, we can pose a question - what virtues? Robert Paul Wolff notices that every form of a society has a main virtue - the main virtue of monarchy is loyalty, of military dictatorship - honor, of bureaucratic dictatorship - efficiency, of liberal democracy - equality, of socialist democracy - fraternity, of

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<sup>54</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 221.

<sup>55</sup> Sandel is often referenced to have a same philosophical standpoint as MacIntyre; that of communitarianism. Although there are many differences to note (possibly their whole outlook on the political theory), I believe Sandel's notion on the encumbered self is complementary to MacIntyre's view of tradition.

<sup>56</sup> M. Sandel, (1998.) *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 181.

nationalist democracy - patriotism, etc.<sup>57</sup> This is very much in line with what MacIntyre thinks of a good-ordered tradition - a tradition ordered by the argument about certain goods and goals from which we derive purpose.<sup>58</sup> Having said that, practices are in line with the main virtue of a given tradition. Traditions, however, are prone to change. MacIntyre is repeating himself in numerous instances that practices have histories, and, bearing in mind everything that was noted so far, it is clearer what that means based on their social change and that the current version of the practice is dependent on the mode of understanding of a given context.<sup>59</sup>

Let us give an example of this. Consider the practice of health care within the welfare state, free market society, and theocracy from the Middle Ages. The welfare state is guided by the principles, or, in this sense, virtues of equality; health care is provided by the institutions which are established by using public resources. Members of that society are aware that their collective taxes are used for financing the needs for the overall good of society. The rationale for that fact is found in the universal human rights which incorporates universal health care. In a free market society, we have private health institutions which provide health care to those in need of it. This society is being governed by economic regulations and the main virtue of freedom. Namely, an individual has the freedom to choose whether to spend their resources on health care or not. Justification is rationalized from the standpoint of the market. Health care in the third society was linked with the religious monasteries which held the texts on medicine which were written by the authorities at the time. The view on illness was dramatically different than the one today and the practice of health care very often had a religious connotation.

From the examples we have derived the following - traditions dictate how we perceive practices that are, as we have noted, the activities that provide us with

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<sup>57</sup> R. P. Wolff, (1965.) *Beyond Tolerance in Critique of Pure Tolerance*, Beacon Press Boston, Boston, p. 4.

<sup>58</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 222.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. p. 221.

virtues and, in correlation with that, the ways in which we live our lives. Furthermore, MacIntyre finds rationality to be constituted by tradition. Lutz portrays that in the following passage:

*Rationality itself is a practice emerging from history, or rather as an enacted form of a narrative interpretation of the events of history... Therefore, insofar as the Enlightenment understood itself as possessing "the" form of rationality, freed from all presuppositions, the Enlightenment narrative of rationality turns out to be a false myth. Rationality is not only a judge of history but a product of history.*<sup>60</sup>

This notion of rationality is in itself a critique of moral foundationalism which, in MacIntyre's opinion, is the product of the Enlightenment project,<sup>61</sup> as it has been mentioned numerous times during this topic so far. Namely, one cannot propose rationality which is independent of cultural restraints because the rationality itself is determined by them. This has led MacIntyre to argue that rationality itself is a practice. As insofar as it is a practice, we can perfect it and achieve the form of excellence in doing it. That is to say; if rationality is a practice, it is constantly being perfected and evolved. To further explain that, let us look at what MacIntyre argues in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*.

MacIntyre also offers four traditions that govern our conceptions of rationality, that is to say, the requirements of the rationality of an agent shift depending on which tradition binds the agent. Insofar as that is the case, the notions of truth and reality are also tradition-dependent.<sup>62</sup> These traditions give rise to the reasons which are used to rationalize our view on social and natural phenomena. Having said that the traditions that MacIntyre thinks are dominant in the way in which

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<sup>60</sup> C. Lutz, (2004.) *Tradition in the Ethics of Alasdair MacIntyre*, Lexington Books, Lanham, p. 46.

<sup>61</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 66.

<sup>62</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1988.) *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 169.

they prescribe moral and political ideas of justice and develop rationality for the bearers of that tradition are:

1. Aristotelian tradition - a product of the *polis*; it is based on the philosophical paradigm of the Hellenistic period which shaped the institutions based on the authoritative norms which were derived from philosophical teachings.<sup>63</sup>

2. Augustinian/Thomist tradition - as the Aristotelian tradition transformed with the change in how we perceive our social, political, and personal lives by the effect of the *Bible*, this tradition flourished in the religious societies and secular ones which have accepted the institution of the church.<sup>64</sup>

3. Scottish moral tradition (a fusion between Calvinist Aristotelianism and Hume) - a tradition which remained Scottish after the Union of 1707 and which has sustained institutions such as the church, the law, and the education system which are justified by the principles of passions and interests of the individuals who compose society.<sup>65</sup>

4. Liberal tradition - a tradition based on the economic basis of the free market. This tradition has taken the conception of the individual from the Scottish moral tradition to another level, that is to say, it has taken it as the basis for the justification of the economic model and has put the primacy on the fulfillment of the desires that the individual bears. On the other note, the conception of rationality is conceived as being independent of traditional restraints and has gained, according to MacIntyre, the illusion of being the superior conception of rationality.<sup>66</sup>

MacIntyre's vision of these traditions can be summed up under an argument that extends through time and can be seen in the progression of the views bound by

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* p. 326.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* 349.

<sup>65</sup> J. Annas, (1989.) *MacIntyre on Traditions in Philosophy and Public Affairs* vol. 18. no. 4. p. 397.

<sup>66</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1988.) *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, p. 334. - 348.

tradition. This is clearly a Hegelian stance that MacIntyre embraces in his neo-Aristotelian framework. For Hegel, the dialectic of sense-certainty, that is to say, the consciousness of truth, is nothing more than the experience unfolded in history.<sup>67</sup> For example, the Aristotelian tradition has given a lot of substance to the Augustinian/Thomist tradition which has modified the view before it. The same goes for the Scottish moral tradition which is a fusion between Aristotelianism, Augustinianism, and Renaissance. Liberalism emerged with modified principles of Scottish moral tradition that stand on an economic basis.

There is also a reason why MacIntyre considers these traditions as philosophical systems. Namely, as Christian Early puts it, these texts and voices constitute the whole tradition. MacIntyre's tradition is indeed an argument extended through time, but an argument that is formed by authoritative texts and voices.<sup>68</sup>

Furthermore, for MacIntyre, it is always the dominant tradition that prescribes the principles of justice, rationality, morality, etc. If we look at history, however, we can see that even in the dominant tradition, intersections could have occurred. Especially in times of transition. This intersection and the clash of values by contesting traditions can be particularized. It is when the beliefs, values, and attitudes are not intelligible to the agent belonging to that tradition. However, this issue shall be further explored in a later part of this project. For now, it is important to note the following:

*These traditions of course differ from each other over much more than their contending accounts of practical rationality and justice: they differ in their catalogs of the virtues, in their conceptions of the selfhood, and in their*

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<sup>67</sup> G. F. Hegel, (1977.), *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 109.

<sup>68</sup> C. Early, (2001.), *Beyond Faith and Reason: The Consequences of Alasdair MacIntyre's Conception of Tradition-Constituted Rationality for Philosophy of Religion*, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, University of Wales, p. 36.

*metaphysical cosmologies.*<sup>69</sup>

Having said that, multiple questions open, such as - how can we enter a conversation between traditions? By which standards do the traditions argue with one another? How does social change happen? Is there incommensurability at play here? To answer these questions, it is necessary to finally talk about the conception of the narrative.

### **2.3. MacIntyre's Conception of the Narrative - Unity and Worldview**

The stage is now set for the introduction of one of this project's key concepts - narrative. It is, as it has been said at the beginning of this paper, essentially sewn into the other two concepts that have been elaborated; however, the concept of narrative was also used as little as possible while talking about practice and tradition. In order to see what MacIntyre means by this notion, it would be necessary to link it with the concepts that we have explained and with an overall conception in the *After Virtue*. Secondly, it is almost obligatory to refer to one of his most influential papers, *Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science*. Within this paper, he elaborates on how narratives shape the traditional transformation and gives answers to the questions I have proposed at the end of the sub-chapter before this one.

To analyze the first task, I will refer to the paper written by Gregory Jones, as it is one of the more in-depth portrayals of MacIntyre's narrative. Namely, Jones argues that MacIntyre uses narrative in seven ways and gives a description of those instances. If we follow the words of Jones, which this project embraces, narrative is the key component of MacIntyre's project:

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<sup>69</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1988.), *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, p. 349.

*That narrative plays a central role in Alasdair MacIntyre's After Virtue claims that is at once obvious and obscure... the book is shaped as a narrative of the history of moral philosophy... and MacIntyre's central theses depend upon the cogency of his argument that traditions and individual human lives are fundamentally narrative in form. ... (It) is obscure because it is not clear what MacIntyre means when he uses the language of "narrative"; the term is used to describe different (but not unrelated) arguments.<sup>70</sup>*

Before I go into depth about what Jones derives from the use of this concept, it would be beneficial to comment on this instance. MacIntyre writes the three mentioned books I have referred to as historical narratives of moral and political development. His argument that history is seen as a conversation between traditions comes into play here. Each tradition has its narrative, a story, and a way of life that is considered virtuous. The earlier quote of MacIntyre shows what a narrative encompasses - a conception of self-hood, metaphysical cosmology, a list of virtues,<sup>71</sup> and I would add - justification of political power, perception of hierarchies, the structure of ideologies, etc. All these conceptions can be seen as social narratives within one traditional narrative that I will call a meta-narrative. MacIntyre's writing method is orchestrated in the regard of going through the traditions in one way or another and deciphering their narratives from which he derives the dominant concepts. In the *Short History of Ethics*, MacIntyre's historical approach goes from the past towards the future, in the *After Virtue*, he goes from the current era, or, better yet, current tradition towards the past ones. *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* is written in a similar regard as the *Short History of Ethics*, namely, following a narrative change from the past towards the future. I believe that this is what Jones refers to in the first sentence of the quote. The second instance, in which he talks about the

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<sup>70</sup> L. G. Jones, (1987.), *Alasdair MacIntyre on Narrative, Community, and the Moral Life in Modern Theology* vol. 4., no. 1., p. 53.

<sup>71</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1988.), *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, p. 349.

narrative form of the traditions and individual lives should be commented on further. I have given the main point of the traditional narrative in this chapter. When it comes to the individual, MacIntyre argues that a subject also conceives him/herself in the form of the narrative and that this view of *the self* is the most natural one.<sup>72</sup> Barbara Hardy, whom MacIntyre also references in *After Virtue*, thinks that everything that we do is in the form of the narrative - daydreaming, remembering, anticipating, hoping, doubting, planning, constructing, gossiping, loving, hating, learning, etc.<sup>73</sup> We are the main protagonists in our narrative, but we are also parts of other people's narratives, as well as parts of the traditional narrative, that is to say, meta-narrative. The narrative that we form is a unifying force. Our life is quite disassembled - some parts of it are distinct from others. For example, the person that we were 20 years ago and the person that we are today are completely different people. If we were to perceive them independently, there would be nothing connecting them apart from biological growth. Also, another very important instance is the practices in which we are initiated in life. We can be musicians, football players, fathers, mothers, television hosts, philosophers, novelists, physicians, computer engineers, etc. It happens that we are initiated in various practices at the same time. What is connecting those practices? What is connecting my activity in music, football, philosophy, and family life? Narrative unity is MacIntyre's solution to this question. We give weight to some practices in different regards based on the narrative *self*.<sup>74</sup> Also, we unify these practices within ourselves based on the narrative project. This view also encompasses the view that human life is a project that has a goal, or a *telos*. However, more on that will be said when we talk about the seven uses of narrative. Regarding what has been said, seven uses of narrative are, according to Jones<sup>75</sup>, the following:

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<sup>72</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 206.

<sup>73</sup> B. Hardy, (1968.) *Towards a Poetics of Fiction: An Approach through Narrative in Novel*, vol. 2., p. 5.

<sup>74</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 205.

<sup>75</sup> L. G. Jones, (1987.), *Alasdair MacIntyre on Narrative, Community, and the Moral Life in Modern Theology* vol. 4., no. 1., p. 54. - 57.

1. Narrative quality of the self.
2. Narrative as a fundamental unity.
3. Narrative as a social storytelling.
4. Narrative as a constitution of the self in the historical context.
5. Narrative as a context of historical community.
6. Narrative as a constitution of a tradition.
7. Narrative as an epistemological claim.

We have touched on a couple of these categories; however, it goes without saying that they should be explained in a more detailed way. Also, we should note that not all of these share the same importance and that all the categories intertwine. The most important uses of the narrative, as I see it, are the first, second, and seventh.

What does MacIntyre mean when he proposes that the narrative holds the quality of *the self*? The answer is contained in the following concepts - birth, life, and death.<sup>76</sup> Our narrative begins when our life begins, it lasts while our life lasts, and it ends with our deaths. If we consider the quality of *the self* as a narrative, we might look at ourselves as a character within one story.<sup>77</sup> We have our character development, we are participating in the events that shape our experience, and our perception and guide our emotive and deliberative functions in line with these events. We think and feel like beings of the narrative. While MacIntyre does focus on the social narrative much more than on the individual one, this category remains a necessary addition to any narrative theory (especially the one about deliberation) because it illuminates how the individual is shaped within one social narrative. The second chapter of this project will be written as a discussion on the narrative theory of *the self*.

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<sup>76</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 205.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.* p. 206.

One of the consequences of this view, as was noted earlier, is viewing ourselves as a project which is guided by a certain *telos*.<sup>78</sup> This *telos* is a narrative necessity for the narrative to be a unifying force. As mentioned, something needs to unify our actions in such a way that we form a narrative out of the “contingent mess” which is constituted of events, activities, and relations. Our practices are often unrelated, our relations are often unrelated, and the events that happen to us are unpredictable. How this is unified is within one narrative.

This effect of the narrative produces *intelligibility* which we have highlighted as one of the most important concepts in MacIntyre’s philosophy. We can also see the link between practice, tradition, and narrative within intelligibility and it is found in MacIntyre’s theory of human action and responsibility.<sup>79</sup> To understand an action as intelligible, we must contextualize that action within the whole state of things of one tradition. We can look at intelligibility as one framework of reason-giving that is unified with the distinct conception of *telos*.<sup>80</sup> One action presupposes the whole infrastructure of motives, beliefs, and events which are part of a given tradition. Intelligibility explains the unification of practices. Namely, our actions are guided by being connected to the context which is shaped by the practices and human/political relations. Consider the following example - I am writing a science fiction novel, and I am telling my friend about the history of an alien race I am creating for the novel. The reason for me telling my friend this story is because I feel like he/she is initiated into the same traditional narrative where these stories are considered interesting. The reason behind my desire to write the novel can be connected to my emotional attachment to the media I have consumed during my upbringing. Another reason for my decision to write the novel is the development of the practices which have influenced me to do so. The practice of literature, the practice of movie/series making, etc. have given me normative prescriptions on how one sci-fi work of art

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.* p. 217.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.* p. 208.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* p. 217.

looks like, while social acceptance, contextual narrative, etc. have equipped me with the motivation and sentiments for acting upon my desire to write a novel. We should be reminded that for the subject to attain excellence in one practice, one must be initiated in the way of life that is of that practice.

The explanation of the third function of the narrative will be briefer because we have touched on many important points in the first two characterizations. Human beings are, as can be derived from the two earlier elaborations, story-telling animals.<sup>81</sup> We derive much of what we are through the social narrative. This is what MacIntyre means when he says that, although we are not essentially story-telling animals, we become through our histories.<sup>82</sup> Social stories that we listen to, read, watch, etc. give us the account of intelligibility that guides our actions. This is what leads MacIntyre to put mythology at the heart of things.<sup>83</sup>

These narratives also have a place in which they are being told. We find ourselves to be the co-authors in the circumstances of the historical picture. For example, we have talked about the four traditions which MacIntyre proposes. They are historically oriented and are a product of the historical conversation. We find ourselves within a tradition that has a history behind it, and which proposes a specific worldview. That worldview is given to us by a community which gives rise to the context of history. When we ask ourselves who we are, we are also asking ourselves - of which history am I a part of? While being embedded within contextual histories, we are the co-authors of our lives; we are intertwined with other characters within one collective story. One might ask - well, what is the difference between fictional myths and historical narratives? History, according to MacIntyre, is the only dramatic story in which the characters are also the authors of it. When we write fiction, the characters are written by the author while the author does not participate in the affairs that his/her characters partake in. He/she does, however, shape the events

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* p. 216.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* p. 216.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* p. 216.

and shape the development of his/her characters, but he/she is not a part of that narrative. What the author is a part of is a social/historical narrative. The author can influence the social narrative with the product of his/her practice, the same as every individual who is a part of some socially established activity. Therefore, all of us are merely co-authors of our stories, side characters in other people's stories.

Now, I would argue that both MacIntyre and Jones did not give a good differentiation between the fourth, fifth, and sixth use of the narrative, that is to say, between constituting the self in the historical context, the context of a historical community, and as a constitution of a tradition.<sup>84</sup> Jones is, however, aware of the fact that MacIntyre is not very specific when it comes to the difference between the community and tradition.<sup>85</sup> Aside from that fact, let us try to propose a differentiation, nonetheless. Community is the source of the narrative identity of the individual and the story of the life of an individual is embedded in the story of the community. This is where we can see the resemblance between Sandel and MacIntyre, the one that was mentioned earlier. Being encumbered within a community is to have ties to that community. If we were to accept the view of a deontological basis (or even a utilitarian one which is based on the standard of the right) in which the moral and political agents are Independent of their ties, we will lose an important thing which is a constant empirical experience— our special obligations. Namely, Sandel argues, that understanding ourselves is understanding ourselves through the community and the bonds, allegiances, and ties we share with it. Natural obligations of human *qua* human proposed by deontological liberalism, a position which both MacIntyre and Sandel criticize, are secondary to the communal and special obligations we have with the members of our community.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Although MacIntyre did not differentiate the narrative in such a way. His conception of the narrative is all encompassing, that is to say; it has the qualities which Jones differentiates sewn into it collectively.

<sup>85</sup> L. G. Jones, (1987.) *Alasdair MacIntyre on Narrative, Community, and the Moral Life in Modern Theology*, vol. 4., no.1. p. 54. - 57.

<sup>86</sup> M. Sandel, (1998.) *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge,

On the other hand, it would seem that we have a case of super-ordination, which would solve the case of this vague differentiation. Namely, community is a subordinated concept regarding tradition, while the historical context (the fourth function of the narrative) is subordinated to the concept of the community. Implicitly, I have tried to show this in the elaboration of the fourth function of the narrative. The community seems to be much more particularized as many communities can be under one traditional narrative. Context itself is always found within one communal order, it enables us to function as bearers and the agents of the story. Traditions are, however, narrative in their nature as well. This can be observed when MacIntyre notes that the living traditions form a narrative that is connected to both the past and the future.<sup>87</sup> They are connected to the past insofar as they are a product of the traditional arguments/conversations and are connected to the future for they will bring rise to the new narrative which arises from the traditional conversation which is being conducted at present.

This brings us to the seventh and final function of a narrative – a narrative as an epistemological factor. The epistemological function of a narrative shows how the traditional transition occurs, which is a very important part of MacIntyre’s project. It is also of major importance since this project deals with the theory of political and ethical deliberation which is an intersection between epistemology and moral theory. In short, narratives shape our beliefs, values, and attitudes. But, as we have noted, different traditions have different worldviews. To explore this in further detail, I will detach from *After Virtue* and concern myself with one of MacIntyre’s most well-known papers - *Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science*.

The stage is set for us to consider his main claims in this paper. The epistemic function of the narrative is, in short, a presentation of a worldview that is shaped by

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p. 179.

<sup>87</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 221.

various patterns that we perceive within the world. Namely, patterns give us coherence and certainty in our everyday lives in a given culture. These patterns are also a product of our interpretation of the social context in which we find ourselves. Instead of a pattern<sup>88</sup>, I shall use a concept that is generally accepted - schema. MacIntyre argues that one narrative is formed out of numerous infrastructures of schemata.<sup>89</sup> Schemata are generally well-known in the history of moral psychology and psychology in general. The view from a social cognitive theory which was presented by Albert Bandura states the following - the ability to even talk about social and political phenomena follows from the ability of an agent to internally represent those phenomena.<sup>90</sup> This is quite important because during our deliberation we are concerned with the political, cultural, and social phenomena. So, what are these internal representations? Nothing other than schemata. Each schema bears meaning within it which is connected to the perceived world and enables us to be intelligible with it.<sup>91</sup> When the infrastructure of our schemata is established, we use it to operate our way through the world by connecting our belief system with contextual reality.

However, when these schemata fail to explain a certain event, we change them for new ones. When this happens, MacIntyre argues, we come towards the epistemological crisis.<sup>92</sup> Epistemological crisis originates when our worldview does not give us certainty anymore and we find ourselves confused, puzzled, and befuddled. We seek new schemata to elaborate on what has happened and what has ruined our earlier system of belief. For example, let us consider that two hypothetical countries are at war and have a whole history of horrible relations. Let us call these

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<sup>88</sup> The reason why I used this notion is because I think it gives the reader a good intuition on what it represents.

<sup>89</sup> A. MacIntyre, (2006.) *Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science* in *The Tasks of Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, New York, p. 5.

<sup>90</sup> A. Bandura, (1986.) *Social Foundations of Thought and Action*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall.

<sup>91</sup> A. MacIntyre, (2006.) *Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science* in *The Tasks of Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, New York, p. 5.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.* p. 4.

hypothetical countries X and Y. Both X and Y have demonized the other through systematic education and media news. Certain events in both countries symbolize victory in some events over others. In short, both countries have put forward a social narrative that dictates to their citizens that the whole systematic unity of the other is inherently evil. Let us now look at the individual from X. He/she has lived his/her whole life having a belief that everything connected to the Y is immoral and politically unjust. However, by some turn of events, an individual from X finds him/herself in a group of people who are from Y. Let us further play with this hypothetical situation; let us imagine that a person from X knows that these people are from Y, but they do not know that he/she is from X. During the time he/she spends with that group, they form certain bonds which completely shatter the illusion under which the person from X has lived. They form communal bonds which portray a different picture of the immoral and unjust society of Y in the eyes of a citizen from X. Afterwards, the citizen from X tells them where he/she is from. All the people involved in this hypothetical situation undergo an epistemological crisis. This crisis is an indicator that triggers the change in the belief system. By changing the belief system, we seek other schemata that can explain the change in their outlook on the world. The example I have given is particular, however, the aggregate of these particular events leads to the traditional change. According to Early, we can see that MacIntyre offers us three stages of narrative development of the tradition.<sup>93</sup>

1. Following the authoritative texts and voices.
2. Incoherence of the authoritative texts and voices.
3. Recognition and reformulation of the incoherence.

The first instance shows a culture that is basing its tradition on the authoritative texts and voices that shape it. For example, the Aristotelian tradition is shaped by the texts of Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, and other authors which are

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<sup>93</sup> C. Early, (2001.) *Beyond Faith and Reason: The Consequences of Alasdair MacIntyre's Conception of Tradition-Constituted Rationality for Philosophy of Religion*, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, University of Wales, p. 36. - 37.

connected to them. Likewise, scientific contributions are linked with a metaphysical and cosmological paradigm which dictates what the scientific method is. In short, every point made on what constitutes a tradition stands here. The very tradition is directed into following the authorities which are the voice of the tradition. That voice provides a background in which the adherents of that tradition share their way of life, views on the world, and beliefs. In short, that voice produces a given narrative. It should be worth noting that every narrative should be able to question itself and remain open to change in that narrative, for it is only, according to MacIntyre, in a tradition that is dysfunctional and degenerative that the narrative is not prone to change. Those traditions have a set of epistemological defenses that prohibit the adherents of that tradition, as well as rival traditions, from questioning it.<sup>94</sup> Such traditions are the ones that are not susceptible to the principle of falsifiability<sup>95</sup>.

However, those traditions which are not degenerative are constantly in the process of a traditional conversation by discussing their narrative and the narratives of rival traditions. The authoritative voices become questioned and discussed which leads to the occurrence of the epistemological crisis. This is the second stage of narrative development - finding the incoherence in the authoritative sources. Once the incoherence is found, we cannot continue our lives in the same way. The schemata bring certainty, however, having an incoherence in that infrastructure of schemata leaves us in a state of epistemological crises. Having said that, the main goal after finding this incoherence is to revise the narrative.

This brings us to the third phase of narrative development - recognition, and reformulation of the narrative. This is, of course, not only done in intellectual terms.

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<sup>94</sup> A. MacIntyre, (2006.) *Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science in The Tasks of Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, New York, p. 12.

<sup>95</sup> To be falsifiable means that one theory or a claim can be questioned definitively or conclusively. Popper is arguing that when a theory/claim is not falsifiable, it should not be considered as a scientific/valid theory/claim. From K. Popper, (1959.) *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, Routledge, New York, p. 32.

It is done by changing the practices and beliefs. For example, one narrative demands that we sacrifice an offering for a personal deity. However, the change of narrative does not necessarily mean that we stop believing in the deity, but not to have the practice of the sacrifice because of some other belief (the sanctity of life). We are, however, consonantly bound by those beliefs and we cannot start from the position of an empty belief system. Let us look at the following quote from MacIntyre:

*Doubting is a more complex activity than some skeptics have realized. To say to oneself or to someone else "Doubt all your beliefs here and now" without reference to historical or autobiographical context is not meaningless, but it is an invitation not to philosophy, but to a mental breakdown.<sup>96</sup>*

We cannot start from a point at which we are not shaped by any beliefs. Our belief system is shaped by the tradition of which we are a part. It would be good to think about the tradition and *the self* in a circular way. Tradition gives the narrative to the individual, a starting position of beliefs, knowledge, conceptions of virtue, etc. However, through our mutual correspondence and exchange of ideas, values, and knowledge, we are changing the narrative and, regarding that, the tradition itself.

After examining the epistemological dimension of the narrative, we finished with MacIntyre's view. In this instance, it would be worth giving a couple of comments on the matter. I propose that we think of the narrative as a ladder that has seven rows and which we constantly use to get up to the top, and then get down to the bottom. Subsequently, the top of the ladder is the epistemological function of the narrative, while the bottom is the quality of *the self*. Here is where we can see how useful it is to have mentioned Jones and his differentiation between different functions of the narrative. An individual has a quality, or a tendency to perceive him/herself and the world around him/her in narrative terms. It would be even better to use the following formulation - an individual has a cognitive or mental configuration that dictates that

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<sup>96</sup> A. MacIntyre, (2006.) *Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science in The Tasks of Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, New York, p. 12.

he/she thinks in a narrative. That allows the individual to make sense of the world around him/her and to incorporate the particular and seemingly disconnected events and activities within one intelligible story. The next step is an expansion of that story, and the individual finds him/herself within one context which is a part of the communal narrative that is being dictated by the traditional one. Now, we can see this as a relation between *the self* and *the world*. When I say *the world*, I mean the social reality in which we find ourselves. The social reality is formed by the narrative shaped by the narratives of the tradition, community, context, and the relation of the people within it. The last step on the ladder, the epistemological function, makes us come back down the ladder. It is a fitting metaphor; MacIntyre's tradition gives us narrative substance and a starting position, however, during our lives, we change that tradition after which we leave that tradition in a changed state. This constant climbing up and down the ladder is how I imagine MacIntyre's historical narrative which is in the constant conversational process.

After everything that has been said about MacIntyre and his conception of the narrative, I believe that the next step should be the discussion of it. Namely, as was mentioned at the beginning of the examination, my goal is to derive the conception of the narrative from MacIntyre's system for me to proceed with my philosophical project. To do so, it would be necessary to note on which points my disagreement with MacIntyre arises and to give my reasons for not accepting MacIntyre's philosophical project/methodology.

#### **2.4. MacIntyre's Naturalist Teleology**

Now, considering that, as stated earlier, MacIntyre's theoretical foundation has many notions that could prove to be either contrary to the claim of this project, or just extra theoretical baggage. Therefore, this subchapter will focus on detaching the theoretical links from the notion of the narrative. To do so, two notions will be

argued against – the notions of naturalism and teleology. But, before we do that, we would have to portray MacIntyre’s naturalist teleology.

Like with Aristotle, MacIntyre’s virtue ethics rests upon this basis. One of the reasons that virtue ethics will not be a topic of criticism is the fact that it is a very flexible theory. Flexible in regards of being a good addition to any theory of moral contextualism (an approach taken in this project) and moral monism. This would, of course, mean that the categories of virtues are relativizable within one contextual narrative, however, this is something that is in line with MacIntyre’s thought as well.<sup>97</sup> However, what his project does not need and what leads him into certain incoherencies is the inclusion of naturalism and teleology. On that, without further ado, let us talk about his assimilation of naturalism and teleology and the reasons why this proves to be a disjointed strategy.

In MacIntyre’s philosophy, we have an amalgam that seems to be logically coherent. On the one hand, we have contextualist moral pluralism, which is located within the notion of tradition, and, on the other hand, we have a teleological account of a human being that originates from the derivative of the naturalistic perfectionism that he has inherited from Aristotle. It must be noted, however, that giving a full-fledged argument against both teleology and naturalism would be a feat that would require a whole new investigation. This critique will, in many ways, be a critique of the relational nature; relational in the regards of the narrative. First, we would need to locate naturalism in MacIntyre’s theory, connect naturalism with teleology and, after everything has been set, we can provide a critique.

It is very important to note which kind of naturalism MacIntyre endorses. When we talk about his naturalism, we should also consider his writing periods; early MacIntyre does not hold the same theoretical notions as the later MacIntyre. Be that as it may, I will try to address this issue at the very beginning. There are, of course,

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<sup>97</sup> Even if that was not always the case, see – A. MacIntyre, (1979.) *Seven Traits for the Future* in *The Hastings Center Report*, vol. 9, no. 1.

different readings of MacIntyre, and by the reading that is proposed here, MacIntyre has always endorsed a naturalistic basis. Jason Blakely proves to be of much help when talking about this topic. He provides us with the chronological portrayal of how MacIntyre's (and Charles Taylor's) views on naturalism shaped during the progress of their thought. According to Blakely, both MacIntyre and Taylor were avid critics of naturalism in the sense that naturalism is seen as a way to create an ahistorical and atomistic philosophy.<sup>98</sup> This should not surprise us, given that MacIntyre's notions of tradition and rationality are not fixed, they are ever-changing and interconnected, as it was mentioned earlier in the text. While detaching himself from Marxism, even though his early philosophical interests lay within this approach, MacIntyre began to be very critical of the notion of the fixed naturalist striving.<sup>99</sup> According to this Marxist notion, famously taken and reshaped from Hegel's thought, human practices, and our social reality strive towards one fixed goal which is governed by inevitable laws. Unsurprisingly, MacIntyre was not someone who would agree with this mechanistic approach in human agency, according to him, the intelligibility of our actions is determined by the social narrative which is traditionally constituted. This anti-naturalist theoretical tendency leads MacIntyre to conduct a historical approach which leads to, as Blakely would call it, comparative objectivity found in his theory of the narrative.<sup>100</sup> Comparative objectivity is taken in the sense that we have talked about the narrative as an exclusive method if something does not fulfill the criteria to be considered as a justified true belief within one schematic infrastructure, that something is compared with the alternative and then disregarded within one traditional narrative.

As mentioned, Blakely takes both Taylor and MacIntyre to be anti-naturalist philosophers. However, my reading of MacIntyre differs. What I want to argue in this

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<sup>98</sup> J. Blakely, (2016.) *Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor, and the Demise of Naturalism*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, p. 10.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.* p. 31.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.* p. 97.

section is that MacIntyre does incorporate naturalism, more clearly in his later writings. This is especially obvious in his book *Dependent Rational Animals*. Thomas Hibbs rightly points out that MacIntyre has retracted his earlier criticism of naturalism and teleology to provide a strengthened argument against modern liberalism.

*...argument of Dependent Rational Animals is that philosophical biases, rooted in a distinctively Western celebration of rational autonomy and a Lockean conception of the person, have led certain strains of contemporary liberalism to defend policies of unjust exclusion. In this book, MacIntyre retracts his earlier rejection of natural teleology and depicts the virtues as constituting the "form of life" appropriate "for beings biologically constituted as we are." The book seeks to recover a greater sense of the "animal conditions" of human agency and of the extent of human vulnerability.<sup>101</sup>*

I think this passage describes the main goal of MacIntyre's book. The primary rejection of Aristotle's teleological biology by modern science was very clear – it has lost its explanatory power, and it has failed to answer the questions that Darwinian biology answers. However, as Shane Glackin notes and this is of key importance, MacIntyre introduces Aristotelian teleology in the naturalistic context within the concept of flourishing.<sup>102</sup> One might ask – in what way? For something to flourish, it needs to have certain goods in virtue of its flourishing.<sup>103</sup> The category of virtues is different for different species. For example, a dog needs a specific set of virtues that are specific to its species in order to flourish; an elephant also needs a specific set of virtues that are different from the virtues of the dog in order to flourish. In short, for an individual unit of some species to flourish or not flourish, it needs to do so *qua*

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<sup>101</sup> T. S. Hibbs, (2004.) *MacIntyre, Aquinas and Politics* in *The Review of Politics*, vol. 66. No 3., p. 360. – 361.

<sup>102</sup> S. N. Glackin, (2008.) *Dolphin Natures, Human Virtues: MacIntyre and Ethical Naturalism* in *Stud. Hist. Phil. Biol. & Biomed. Sci.*, vol. 39., p. 293.

<sup>103</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1999.) *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues*, Open Court Publishing, Chicago, p. 64.

that species. The same is true with the human species. The human species can flourish or fail to do so only *by the* standards of the human species.<sup>104</sup> On the other hand, the differentiation between goods and virtues arises within practices.<sup>105</sup> If someone is training to be a powerlifter, it would be good for him/her to have a calorie intake that is much higher than that of a regular person. The sets of virtues connected to achieving excellence in the practice of powerlifting are also different than that of, let us say, philosophy. In this regard, goods and virtues are also practice-based, but they are subordinated under the goods and virtues which are generally good for all individuals of the human species, virtues, and goods that promote flourishing human species *qua* human species.

Flourishment, as seen, is the notion which encompasses both teleology and naturalism and is central to my critique. The reason why this book was mentioned is to note that MacIntyre embraces naturalistic teleology in his later writings, even though he provided avid criticisms in his earlier period from which the notion of the narrative is derived. While his earlier refutations targeted a specific kind of naturalism and teleology, I contend that he was always incorporating these ideas into his broader theoretical model. To illustrate this, let's turn to a citation from Douglass Rasmussen:

*The neo-Aristotelian view of human flourishing that has been presented appeals to human nature in two basic ways: (1) it assumes that human nature is teleological, that is, that human beings have a telos or natural function; and (2) it assumes that this natural function has moral import. That human nature is teleological is at once the most important and the most controversial assumption of this view of human flourishing.*<sup>106</sup>

Firstly, in *After Virtue*, MacIntyre explicitly embraces the notion of *telos*. For him, every life without a notion of unity, a project by which the virtues can be

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* p. 64.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.* p. 65.

<sup>106</sup> D. B. Rasmussen, (1999.) *Human Flourishing and the Appeal to Human Nature in Social Philosophy and Policy*, vol. 16, no. 1., p. 32.

combined and brought together is a life that is incomplete.<sup>107</sup> This unity of virtues is achieved by conceiving human beings as beings that strive towards an end – *telos*. Even in his famous chapter 15., MacIntyre introduces his project as the one that encompasses the notion of *telos*.<sup>108</sup> In this regard, the first requirement in Rasmussen’s citation has been ticked. The second requirement is an extension of the first. In other words, it is an extension in the regard that provides moral value to the notion of teleology. Moral value is encrypted within the notion of the goods. As we have mentioned before, practices bring virtues into the picture and every practice needs to enable the participant of that practice to achieve internal goods.<sup>109</sup> These internal goods breed virtues that are necessary for the achievement of *telos*. Practices arise from social cooperation, and they are socially determined. In this regard, one society, or, better yet, one tradition is the bearer of the arbitrary principle which determines in which direction social practices will take shape. According to MacIntyre, practices flourish<sup>110</sup> in various societies that have a different structure; but, as they can flourish, they can also be deteriorated.<sup>111</sup> Hence, MacIntyre seemingly escapes the trap of naturalist ethics by committing to the contextualist approach.

Naturalism arises when we take practices in relation to the agent of that practice. That is to say, practices are important in the regard in which they contribute to the flourishing of the individual, and, in order for that flourishing to be achieved, these practices must provide the individual with internal goods. Morality, therefore, is embedded within the practice which is justified by naturalist teleology. It is, indeed,

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<sup>107</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 202.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.* p. 205.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.* p. 188.

<sup>110</sup> MacIntyre uses this very concept in this instance in his *After Virtue*. This is important for various reasons. Firstly, it foreshadows his future writings on the flourishing of the goods, but, on the other hand, it detaches flourishing from the naturalist discourse. In this regard, flourishing is only seen as a way to promote virtues which is governed by the social forces.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.* p. 193.

much more important for MacIntyre to promote the contextualist thesis which is generated through the elaboration of his conceptions of tradition and narrative, however, when it comes to their justification, naturalism enters through the back door. In this way, naturalism is closely related to the concept of the narrative, keeping in mind that it portrays what one narrative should give to the participants of one society. I would like to argue against the principle of naturalism and provide a contextualist alternative that can be found within the narrative itself.

To propose a critique, let us recapitulate everything that has been said so far. To put everything into perspective, MacIntyre wants to paint the picture in which we have a *telos*, a goal which governs how we live our lives. Also, if we take an individual narrative, the narrative of the subject, it is conceived to have a past, present, and future. Following everything elaborated on by MacIntyre, the future would have to govern the present while the past shapes the present. The past equips us with character traits, goods that we have acquired from the practices, and experiences that constitute us, etc. Contrary to the past, the future governs those traits that the person is equipped with and leads them to some form of a good life. The goal, in this sense, is the fulfillment of potentialities that are connected to MacIntyre's conception of flourishing that he offers to us later on in his works. This individual narrative shapes itself in accordance with the social narrative. Next, the motivation for MacIntyre to introduce these conceptions is to reconstruct the virtue ethics that can unify our ways of life and make them intelligible. Although the notion of the narrative can entail moral pluralism, MacIntyre seemingly brushes it aside by promoting the Thomistic and Aristotelian morality as the best alternative which was denounced by modernity. Henceforth, modern morality lacks objectivity which virtue ethics can propose; to be more exact, in the concept of *telos* that modernity has neglected.

Joseph Kabari rightly notes when analyzing MacIntyre's case against modernity that MacIntyre is criticizing the fact that teleology has been diminished and that we have diminished the difference between the human-nature-as-it and

human-nature-as-it-ought-to-be; we have also diminished the fact that the rationality of the human *telos* offers us the unity of human life which makes it meaningful through the plurality of choices.<sup>112</sup> This points us back to the hidden naturalism of MacIntyre's thought, as well as the innate teleology of his system. When we merge the two of these notions, even though moral, and social pluralism are the necessary ingredients of MacIntyre's philosophy by being embedded within the notion of the tradition and social narrative; naturalistic teleology leads MacIntyre to conclude that there is something more objective than something else. This is where a major inconsistency lies; as Gregory Jones stresses – *MacIntyre's formal claim about the narrative quality of human life qua human life is at odds with his claim about the tradition and community.*<sup>113</sup> That is to say, the expected conclusion of MacIntyre's philosophical system which incorporates both tradition and community at the center of it should be that the understanding of a person cannot be independent of it. Nonetheless, we have argued that it is important for MacIntyre that human nature-as-it-ought-to-be becomes a central question of his cultural theory and that conjures a conceptual struggle. Jennifer Herdt also observes that many of the commentators of MacIntyre suggest that there are multiple inconsistencies in comparing traditional dependent norms and traditionally independent ones.<sup>114</sup> In the quest to tidy up this conundrum, one solution that I endorse would be to show that traditionally independent norms that stand on the grounds of naturalist teleology should be discarded from the theoretical equation of the narrative.

## 2.5. Against the Three Uses of Teleology

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<sup>112</sup> J. A. Kabari, (2009.) *Rawls, Political Liberalism and Moral Virtues*, Loyola eCommons, Loyola University Chicago, p. 118. – 119.

<sup>113</sup> L. G. Jones, (1987.) *Alasdair MacIntyre on Narrative, Community, and the Moral Life in Modern Theology*, vol. 4., no.1., p. 58.

<sup>114</sup> J. A. Herdt, (1998.) *Alasdair MacIntyre's Rationality of Traditions and Tradition-Transcendental Standards of Justification* in *The Journal of Religion*, vol 48., No. 4., p. 525.

As it was illustrated during the elaboration of the narrative, three uses of it were extremely important for this project – the narrative of *the self*, the narrative as an epistemic category, and the narrative as a social context, a tradition that invokes intelligibility of society, social institutions, and social situations. The notion of *telos* is implicit in all three of those categories of the narrative. In the following passages, I would like to address the unnecessary of *telos* in the understanding of the narrative constitution of *the self*, the need for it in our everyday deliberation, as well as its connection to the social narrative. If anything, I would like to provide a less intrusive version of teleology that does not depend on naturalism, the one that will end up being a socially dependent one. Afterward, the alternative method, narrative hermeneutics, will be provided and argued for. While arguing for this method of exploring the narrative, we will also address the needlessness of naturalism.

Let us consider two critiques that we can point to MacIntyre's teleological conception of *the self*. This notion is the key in the second chapter; however, we are dealing with the teleological influence of the social context on the individual. If we were to provide an effective critique here and now, it would prove that the social narrative, as well as the personal one, does not require strong teleology.

Firstly, we will address the psychological narrativity thesis. There need not be such a narrative conception of the person in such a way in which he/she has a perfect sense of past-present-future. As we have stated earlier, for MacIntyre, this unity is an intelligible one where the future governs both the past and the present. Is that the case, empirically speaking? It is, indeed, very rare to see that there is a complete unity and a clear-cut relation between the past, present, and future. Van der Kolk, a psychiatrist specializing in trauma, notes that our past can be transformed in the sense that our unpleasant memories become something else in our overall narrative. On the other hand, he also notes that most of his patients cannot even recreate their pasts into a story. It becomes a fragmented set of sentiments, emotions, and

images.<sup>115</sup> It would be very optimistic to think of a person who has no past trauma and even more optimistic to think of a person who can recreate their past in the perfect way. Our past does indeed shape our present selves, but it is far from clear to us in which way. However, this does not go against the claim that we still think in narratives. Even though we have certain sets of beliefs and attitudes about what happened in the past, we are constructing a narrative based on those beliefs. The point that would be raised here is that the past contributes to the way of life as much, if not more, than the future. *Telos* does not, in fact, have a universal influence on our comprehension of life. These traumas, emotions, and sentiments, and attitudes in general lead us to be selective of the social practices we wish to concern ourselves with.

Consider a musician who is very successful in his/her career. If we look at him/her through MacIntyre's philosophical system, we might say that he/she has been committed to acquiring standards of excellence in the practice of music to live a good life as a musician. This is a teleological portrayal; the future determines actions and gives them moral value. Although that might have some explanatory power, it is hard to imagine that being a full story of why the musician has taken up music in the first place. It is very unlikely that he/she has deliberated on the best possible outcome for his/her talents and committed him/herself to achieving the *telos* of music playing. Maybe the musician has been coerced by his/her parents into playing music; maybe he/she had a traumatic experience during his/her upbringing and the music was used as escapism and he/she subconsciously tends to commit him/herself to playing music etc. The story need not be grim, however, for the sake of the argument, let us leave it like this. MacIntyre might answer – it is not important how an individual has acquired the motivation to do a certain practice<sup>116</sup>, what is important is what the

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<sup>115</sup> B. v. d. Kolk (2014.) *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*, Viking Press, New York, p. 19.

<sup>116</sup> The first thing that comes to mind is MacIntyre's example of chess playing. Maybe a child who is talented at chess does not wish to play chess. However, if we motivate this child into playing chess by offering candy as a reward, the child might acquire the love for the game which will go beyond the

person does once he/she initiates him/herself within that practice. Once someone is initiated in one practice it is when one knows the *telos* of it. This *telos* is not devised to be a guiding factor for our lives as human *qua* human, rather it is particularized and individually assessed within the constraints of the narrative.

Jones sets out to give another counterexample of this view which fits my needs. Namely, there are certain cultures (more specifically - Ifugao culture or the old Tubbataha culture) that do not have MacIntyreian constitutions of their narrative quality.<sup>117</sup> As we observe their stories about themselves, individuals from the Ifugao culture do not perceive themselves from the moment they are born. When they start talking about themselves and narrating their lives, they always start with their ancestors. For example, one member of this tribe notes that:

*My great-grandfather was a wealthy man and gave my grandfather, his third child, a field from the acquired property. This field my father inherited. My mother ought to have inherited three fields, but received only two...*<sup>118</sup>

As we can see from the example, the conception of the *self* in the Ifugao culture is seen from the ancestral perspective. Their narrative does not start with their birth, it starts with the circumstances that arose even before they were born. Furthermore, we can note that some religions and cultures incorporate the notion of reincarnation. *The self* that is embedded within this cultural and religious narrative does not structure the narrative in a way that has an end, or a beginning. The narrative of *the self* would be a continuous circulation of the story which constitutes *the self*. The quality of *the self* proposed by MacIntyre's notion of the narrative is seemingly liquidated within the bigger picture of the cultural narrative which has a

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simple reward. From - A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 188.

<sup>117</sup> L. G. Jones, (1987.) *Alasdair MacIntyre on Narrative, Community, and the Moral Life in Modern Theology*, vol. 4., no.1., p. 58.

<sup>118</sup> R. F. Barton, (1963.) *Autobiographies of Three Pagans in the Philippines*, University Books, New York, p. 25.

specific metaphysical basis. MacIntyre's answer could be - that might be the case in these cultures, however, every functional tradition that has a defined general virtue will lead its community to develop a narrative which has a quality which is proposed. This would be evading the question altogether. While I do hold a position that we are constituting ourselves in a narrative form, this narrative is not shaped by the *telos*. It is an intertwinement between the past, the future, and the present. To conclude, under the premise of the social and the personal narrative, *telos* seems to be unnecessary for the constitution of the personal narrative, at least in the foundational sense used by MacIntyre.

The next question that can be raised can be directed towards the importance of the *telos* for the practices, for it is a bridge that connects the personal and the social narrative. Why would we need to put emphasis on the naturalistic *telos* of our practice? The need for deciphering the notion of *telos* arises in this instance. The *telos* can be read as the one that is directed to human life, as well as the one that governs our particular practices.<sup>119</sup> If we read this notion of *telos* as an arbitrary notion, it should be translated into this – the goal of every practice and human life in general, the goal which gives an answer to the question “what should X (X being a practice) be like?”. We can also simplify this arbitrary principle and consider it as a contextual standard of acceptance. That is to say, it can be argued that every practice receives its *telos* or a reason for its application based on a social necessity. Institutions tend to take different approaches to different social narratives and these narratives provide a context that governs how practices will develop.<sup>120</sup> In this way, *telos* always goes hand in hand with the context which is a part of the social narrative. If we accept that as true, then this goal of practice is only one way in which we can think of the practice, not the determining one. Following John Rawls, we can call this *telos* merely

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<sup>119</sup> Leading a good life, for MacIntyre, is also a practice. In this regard, this practice also has a *telos*, as do all of the other particular practices. A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 201.

<sup>120</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 194.

a form of deliberative rationality. That aside, he notes quite well that there *are broad features of human desires and needs, their urgency and cycles of recurrence, and their phases of development as affected by psychological and other circumstances...they must fit the requirements of human capacities and abilities, their maturation and growth...*<sup>121</sup>In short, Rawls rightly portrays the complexity of our pursuits which are seen in our practices.<sup>122</sup> The result of stating this complexity is that deliberative rationality is only one of the things that constitute the notion of practice. When thinking about our lives and the things that we do, we do not only conduct deliberative thinking about the goals of our actions but the reasons for our actions as well. This, itself, would incorporate both a backward and forward-looking perspective within the narrative conception of *the self*, we are not only determined by the future but by the past as well. Attaining justification for our actions and practices does come from intelligibility that they have with the social narrative in which they are embedded, but the intelligibility of the contextual nature is based on an even larger social narrative. Perceiving ourselves as selves that have a history and a future, we constitute our actions within a given context. Deliberative rationality, at its core, is rationality itself and it is, according to MacIntyre, traditionally constituted<sup>123</sup>. Teleology, in this instance, cannot fully encompass the notion of our activities, nor how we lead our lives. Our way of life is indeed determined by practices, however, it is quite doubtful that teleology can, as mentioned, fully show the complexity of our lives for it is only one side of our deliberative rationality.

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<sup>121</sup> J. Rawls, (1999.), *A Theory of Justice: Revised Edition*, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, p. 372. – 373.

<sup>122</sup> It is assumed that Rawls has a compatible term to the notion of practice. Rawls uses the term “human goods” and by them he means - *think of these goods as those activities and ends that have the features whatever they are that suit them for an important if not a central place in our life*. From – *Ibid.* p. 373.

<sup>123</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1988.) *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, p. 334. - 348.

The last thing for us to do is provide a critique of teleology being used as an arbitrary social goal. The critiques that will be considered are borrowed from Richard Rorty's portrayal of teleology and Isiah Berlin's ethical pluralism, though reasons for its implementation need to be given. To recapitulate, For MacIntyre, today's society has been thrown into confusion, it has been fragmented on the level of everyday moral discourse, and our practices are not unified.<sup>124</sup> What we need, according to MacIntyre, is one social *telos* which is a goal of all goals that gives a purposeful life mission and, in that respect, a good life.<sup>125</sup> The reason for using the phrasing "goal of all goals" is based on the contrast between the two usages of *telos*. Lyle Downing and Robert Thigpen indicate that MacIntyre's usage of *telos* is quite unclear and, if we were to better understand it, we must make a difference between *a telos* and *the telos*.<sup>126</sup>

When talking about *a telos*, we are talking about a goal that is correlated to the mentioned internal goods of the practice, it is a goal for which we strive while cultivating our virtues and attaining excellence in them. This *telos*, according to the mentioned philosophers, would be different for different people and, thus, a contingent *telos*.<sup>127</sup> If one chooses to be a botanist, a practice-specific *telos* guides his/her way of life. Likewise, if another chooses to be an architect, there is also a practice-specific *telos* guiding his/her way of life and we cannot reckon that the *telos* of a botanist and an architect are the same. The first usage of *telos* is, thus, a practice-specific goal that is not universally shared amongst the members of the same class of people. The second usage of *telos*, *the telos*, Downing and Thigpen argue, is the goal of man as such.<sup>128</sup> I think that the clear difference between, as noted earlier, human-nature-as-it-is and human-nature-as-it-ought-to-be can be seen in the usage of this

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<sup>124</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 10.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.* p. 219.

<sup>126</sup> L. Downing, R. Thigpen, (1984.) *After Telos: The Implications of MacIntyre's Attempt to Restore the Concept in "After Virtue"* in *Social Theory and Practice*, vol. 10, no. 1., p. 43.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.* p. 44.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.* p. 44.

version of *telos*. That is to say, human-nature-as-it-is is the starting, descriptive position of what constitutes us as human, yet the normative prescription of what we are supposed to strive for and to be is within *the telos*, giving meaning to the human-nature-as-it-ought-to-be. This *telos* is universal for all human beings, and it is a goal they strive for to achieve fulfillment of a good life.

We see numerous problems with these usages. The very first one arises right away; Downing and Thigpen note immediately that MacIntyre now has to prove that these two usages of *telos* can be related to one another.<sup>129</sup> The first usage of *telos* refers to socially constituted goals, while the second one is seemingly a naturalist one. It is understandable how if one person chooses to be a botanist, while another one chooses to be an architect, it can lead them to have a meaningful life through their practice. But it is hard to see how it follows that there is an objective *telos* that both of these people follow to achieve a fulfilled good life. Therefore, as Downing and Thigpen note:

*If MacIntyre is to make this distinction between the human good and social convention, he needs the concept of the telos that can play a role equivalent to the concept of nature in Aristotle's teleology. And unless he successfully makes distinction, his theory cannot lead to the rejection of emotivist philosophical assumptions.*<sup>130</sup>

Following the commentators of MacIntyre's ethics before his *Dependent, Rational Animals*, we witness this ever-repeating confusion. William Frankena, for example, is also baffled that MacIntyre has incompatibility in his conception of the *telos*, however, he argues that MacIntyre is anti-naturalist and disregards the naturalist constitution of *telos*.<sup>131</sup> It is an understandable assumption since, referring back to Blakely's historical analysis of MacIntyre's work, MacIntyre was leaning toward contextualism rather than Aristotelian naturalism. After the publication of

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<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.* p. 44.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.* p. 44.

<sup>131</sup> W. K. Frankena, (1983.), *MacIntyre and Modern Morality in Ethics*, vol. 93, p. 586.

*Dependent Rational Animals*, as we have shown, it was clear that MacIntyre did need the naturalistic notion of *the telos* for his argument to function. Even if we were to accept this step, we would still deal with a *post hoc* elaboration, and it is still not clear whether the relation between *a telos* and *the telos* is a justifiable one. I would argue that it is not. We can accept *a telos* as a part of an equation of our deliberative rationality, as we have mentioned before, but it is harder to do so with *the telos*. In the following passages, the reasons for its dismissal will be provided.

In the first place, we can consider Rorty's portrayal of teleology.<sup>132</sup> His approach is a historical one and it will provide us with very important insights into the discussion. Understanding Rorty's goal is a starting point. According to his understanding, there are two periods of ethical thinking – before Darwin and after Darwin.<sup>133</sup> When we look at the pre-Darwinian ethics, we can see monistic approaches to ethics, that is to say, ethics which denounces pluralism. Rorty finds the influence of this ethical approach in Plato and Christian theology which set out the argument that there are two things in men – the animal part and the divine.<sup>134</sup> Considering the course of history, we see this connection being questioned, but still standing upon certain grounds.

With that history in mind, we see the dangers of the idea of naturalist teleology. For Rorty, this danger is an unjustified hierarchy.<sup>135</sup> How to justify the difference between the barbarians and the Greeks? Women and men? Blacks and whites? True believers and heretics? Slaves and free men? Rorty finds the reason within the ingredients between this duality of the divine and the animalistic.<sup>136</sup> It is, for example, common knowledge that during the historical discrimination against

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<sup>132</sup> Rorty does not make a differentiation between *a telos* and *the telos*, and he never uses the term “naturalist teleology” but considering that he provides a critique of teleology which is naturalist, we can use it to support our case against *the telos*.

<sup>133</sup> R. Rorty, (1999.), *Philosophy and Social Hope*, Penguin Books, London, p. 263.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.* p. 263.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.* p. 266.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.* 266.

African Americans, they have been equated with apes and this historical dehumanization still haunts them to this day.<sup>137</sup> The justification of the social injustices was on the shoulders of this “truly human” element. But, once we start exploring this element, the state of disarray spreads. Asking the question that Rorty poses – *what step does it occupy on the “world’s great altar-stairs”, that leads away from nature to God?*,<sup>138</sup> we can find an answer in many theories, starting from Aristotle to Hegel and beyond<sup>139</sup>. And that is a big problem. If the answer to the question of such importance is given in various forms, it serves no purpose to accept it. Consider the following – someone tells a person X that there is a universal, divine-human goal towards which she/he has to strive. Then, one would expect that the person X asks the question – okay, what is that goal? If it has to be universal, surely the answer would be a widely accepted one. If a person X gets answers Z1, Z2, Z3, Z4, Z5, etc. from Y1, Y2, Y3, Y4, Y5, etc. all of which are claiming to give an objective account of *the telos*, wouldn’t that make it, at the very least, questionable?

This is where, in Rorty’s view, Darwin comes into the picture. His view that both life and intelligence might be a product of cell structures without any meaning beyond their function has directly affected the held ethical view based on naturalist teleology.<sup>140</sup> Thus, before Darwinism, we had comprehensive theories with the notion of naturalist teleology sewn into them. Yet, what are the alternatives? Rorty indicates the key point:

*...These developments have also made it possible to believe that there are many different, but equally valuable sorts of human life. They made the idea of convergence to unity less compelling.*<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Stanford News Service, *Discrimination Against Blacks Linked to Dehumanization, Study Finds*, site: <https://news.stanford.edu/pr/2008/pr-eber-021308.html> accessed: 02.24.2022.

<sup>138</sup> R. Rorty, (1999.), *Philosophy and Social Hope*, Penguin Books, London, p. 263.

<sup>139</sup> Although we still have views in ethics which are defended under the banner of naturalist teleology, they are not so frequent in the field of academic philosophy as they were before.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.* p. 264.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.* p. 266.

By not having a unified goal and by not having a concept of human-nature-as-it-ought-to-be, we shift towards pluralism of value. In this sense, we can understand that living different forms of life might lead to having a fulfilled life as opposed to having a notion that one form of life (e.g., life by knowledge, belief, art, wealth, etc.) is more virtuous than the rest. Therefore, the ethics that have followed after the Darwinian turn have focused more on institutional and social cooperation between individuals of different systems of values, rather than focusing on the old question *what is a man?*<sup>142</sup>

This conclusion is endorsed by Isaiah Berlin in two ways. He does agree with the statement that the political implications of the idea of naturalist teleology<sup>143</sup> are and have been dangerous. He finds that the implication of this belief, more than any other, is responsible for the annihilation of individuals in the name of great ideas.<sup>144</sup> This belief is characterized, by Berlin, as being *a belief that somewhere, in the past or the future, in divine revelation or the mind of an individual thinker...there is a final solution.*<sup>145</sup> Tracing back to what was written earlier on Rorty's account of the influence of this idea, we see a compatibility between the two thinkers. That is to say, historical investigation of naturalist teleology has, at certain points in time, been used to justify dreadful atrocities. The belief also encompasses the notions of value compatibility and value entailment.<sup>146</sup> That is to say, naturalist teleology assumes that all values are compatible with one key human value, a goal towards which we strive and, this goal entails all of those particular values.

Does this sound familiar? Let us go back to MacIntyre and the notion of practice. We have numerous practices within one tradition, one social narrative. The role of the practice is to make us virtuous or, in other terms, provide value in our

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<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.* p. 266.

<sup>143</sup> Like Rorty, Berlin does not use the notion of naturalist teleology.

<sup>144</sup> I. Berlin, (2002.), *Liberty*, Henry Hardy ed., Oxford University Press, New York, p. 212.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.* p. 212.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.* p. 212.

lives.<sup>147</sup> These practices shape us individually; however, they should include key elements, or key virtues – wanting justice, courage, and truthfulness.<sup>148</sup> It is a fair and compelling argument, that different practices have different ways of cultivating the necessary virtues. A football player, for example, learns how to be brave by entering the pitch in which he/she knows he/she will get ridiculed by the fans, making decisions that can decide the outcome of the whole match by tackling an opposition player, etc. On the other hand, a medical worker shows bravery by exposing him/herself to unwanted situations to treat others, from time to time, risking his/her health to provide his/her services. Examples like these can be taken from the whole array of practices. In this way, we see the concept of *telos*, an individual practice-based goal. However, MacIntyre is not happy with *a telos*, he thinks that:

*...without an overriding conception of the telos of a whole human life, conceived as a unity, our conception of certain individual virtues has to remain partial and incomplete.*<sup>149</sup>

This proves to be an instance in which MacIntyre suggests that, using Berlin's terms, all those particular values must be connected to the highest value and the highest value must entail all of those individual values. In this regard, MacIntyre's idea of naturalist teleology is a perfect example of the belief that Berlin is arguing against and the teleology that Rorty is commenting on.

The solution that this project takes is rejecting the notion of *the telos* because it is an unnecessary ingredient to the narrative basis. The implication is that we would have to reject MacIntyre's political approach as well. However, we shall talk about that after Berlin's second point.

The idea of one single value compatibility and entailment seems demonstrably false.<sup>150</sup> Not only that, there is a reason to believe that there are many (but not indefinite) values and ends that are not necessarily compatible with one

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<sup>147</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 191.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.* p. 191.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.* p. 202.

<sup>150</sup> I. Berlin, (2002.), *Liberty*, Henry Hardy ed., Oxford University Press, New York, p. 214.

another.<sup>151</sup> In this sense, Berlin, like Rorty, endorses value pluralism. One of the examples can be found in Berlin's other text, *The Pursuit of the Ideal* in which he notes that his pluralism has been influenced by Machiavellian line of thought.<sup>152</sup> Machiavelli constantly stresses the importance of *virtù* in his version of the ruler<sup>153</sup> and sees him as opposed to having the classic Christian values. That is to say, the *virtù* of the ruler is completely incompatible with Christianity. According to Berlin, that is the key importance of pluralist distinction, we have two sets of values, two kinds of lives, different constitutions of the person leading them, and the lives are not compatible.<sup>154</sup> Machiavelli does not state that the Christian way of life is flawed in any way, he is not stating that it is an invalid way of living, he just makes a case for the one he prefers.

Both Rorty and Berlin agree that modern societies operate by the standards of value pluralism. The history itself has determined who had more elaborative power in the discussion between Meno and Socrates.<sup>155</sup> Unsurprisingly, MacIntyre also agrees that pluralism is a dominant view of today's tradition, and he firmly disagrees with it.<sup>156</sup> If we follow the assessment that Rorty gives us, post-Darwinian ethics, utilitarianism, and pragmatism, all argue for plurality over monism.<sup>157</sup> All of these notions are those that MacIntyre is fighting against in both the ethical and the

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<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.* p. 214.

<sup>152</sup> I. Berlin, (2003.), *The Pursuit of an Ideal in The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in The History of Ideas*, p. 8.

<sup>153</sup> N. Machiavelli (2008.), *The Prince*, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, p. 103.

<sup>154</sup> I. Berlin, (2003.), *The Pursuit of an Ideal in The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in The History of Ideas*, p. 8.

<sup>155</sup> In Plato's *Meno*, the discussion between Socrates and Meno begins when they start asking the question of the nature of excellence. Meno gives an argument that there are many various modes of excellence in the relation of human activity, while, on the other hand, Socrates broadens the discussion in asking the question of the single excellence which encompasses the rest. From – Plato, (2005.), *Meno and Other Dialogues: Charmides, Laches, Lysis, Meno*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 99-104.

<sup>156</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 10.

<sup>157</sup> R. Rorty, (1999.) *Philosophy and Social Hope*, Penguin Books, London, p. 270.

political domain. However, the main weapon that he has is the argument of *the telos* which is crucial for the intelligibility of the particular practices, and which unifies them.<sup>158</sup> MacIntyre's political criticism of contemporary liberalism can also be summed up in two main points which are dependent on teleology. Namely, there is no overriding good, and the liberal self is too heterogeneous.<sup>159</sup> In the absence of *the telos*, everything is in a state of disarray, for MacIntyre.

In this instance, I would have to agree with the statement made by Lyle Downing and Robert Thigpen that if MacIntyre cannot solve the conundrum between the social convention and the human good, that is, between *a telos* and *the telos*, he cannot effectively reject the philosophical assumptions he is fighting against.<sup>160</sup> MacIntyre, I would argue, does not do so effectively. Galen Gorelangton tries to salvage MacIntyre from the Darwinian critique by equating his practices with socially induced teleology.<sup>161</sup> That would be true if we would only take into account *a telos*, and MacIntyre has to argue for the notion of the human good itself. Having said that, this is the major point of divergence between this project and MacIntyre. While embracing his method of inquiry and notions such as intelligibility and social narrative, I would reject his critique of modern ethics and political tradition.

After the critique of naturalist teleology, what are we left with from MacIntyre's original theory? We are still left with the notions of practice, tradition, and the narrative. The suggested approach would be to take a couple of steps to liquidate the notions of tradition and practice under the notion of the narrative.

The primary step would be to reconstruct the notion of the tradition for it to be a meta-narrative, a superordinated narrative that holds all of those subordinated

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<sup>158</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 202.

<sup>159</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1988.) *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, p. 337.

<sup>160</sup> L. Downing, R. Thigpen, (1984.) *After Telos: The Implications of MacIntyre's Attempt to Restore the Concept in "After Virtue"* in *Social Theory and Practice*, vol. 10, no. 1., p. 44.

<sup>161</sup> G. Gorelangton, (2019.), *Alasdair MacIntyre's Critique of Liberalism: An Exegesis including Refutations to Three Liberal Counterarguments*, University of Nevada, Reno, p. 33.

narratives. One of the uses of the narrative in MacIntyre is the constitution of tradition. I understand the notions of tradition and narrative, in MacIntyre to hold the same structure. For example, liberal tradition is a meta-narrative that is comprised of various particular narratives that can be found within it. Meta-narratives also dictate how the particular social narratives will be assessed. One of the examples could be medieval society. When we compare the particular narratives held within that social context, we see that the very meta-narrative has closed off pluralist narratives and has offered a more limited set of values that can be arranged to follow.

Now we have a meta-narrative, sub-narrative, and practices. It is not hard to make a direct interrelationship between practices as activities and sub-narratives. If a person X wants to be a singer, an activity which he/she finds meaningful within the narrative of which he/she is a part of, he/she needs to follow the rules of the activity. As stated earlier with an example of health care, practices are shaped in the narrative in which they are formed and, likewise, they shape the narrative themselves. In this sense, we can consider practices as narrative activities.

On the theoretical side, we have meta-narrative, sub-narrative, and narrative activities. The key product of this discussion is to consider these three notions under the banner of the social narrative. This social narrative stripped of naturalist teleology is, surprisingly, much more inclusive and it still commits to the idea of intelligibility. Even if there is no human goal beyond the scope of the social narrative, our particular goals and values are still intelligible to the meta-narrative, and they make sense because they share the same ontological foundation – the social one. The next sub-chapter will expand the topic of the narrative and provide further evidence to support it.

## **2.6. Narrative Hermeneutics and Narrative Neuroscience**

Luckily enough, as we have seen, we need not change the conception of the narrative method after leaving behind naturalist teleology. Narrative conception can work without teleology and that is the role of the conception of narrative hermeneutics. Narrative hermeneutics is a contextual-based theory that deals with the unification of human experience within the social world. This position is held by Hanna Merentoja who initially denounces MacIntyreian notion of the *telos* to propose a hermeneutical account of the narrative and her critique of MacIntyre is very similar to one given here. There is no end or a goal, according to Merentoja, which is given in our lives.<sup>162</sup> What we do have, according to her view, is the explorative search which makes sense from a multiplicity of practices.<sup>163</sup> In short, we are *shaped by certain provisional goals, aims, attachments, and values that are continually refigured in the very process of the search, which is always directed simultaneously at the past, present, and future.*<sup>164</sup>

What is, however, this search that Merentoja mentions? In short, a view of narrative hermeneutics states that the narratives are necessarily politically and socially induced and that, by that, individuals find themselves deciphering meaning within that world.<sup>165</sup> It is a contextual thesis that tends to emphasize the experience, both passive and active. Passive and active experience is the key to understanding the narrative hermeneutics. While criticizing the view of interpretation that Susan Sontag has been defending<sup>166</sup>, Merentoja emphasizes the fact that interpretation is not a directed act and that we interpret the context constantly without even intending to do so.<sup>167</sup> Interpretation is not only objectifying the narrative but also

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<sup>162</sup> H. Merentoja, (2018.), *The Ethics of Storytelling: Narrative Hermeneutics, History and the Possible*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 53.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.* p. 53.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.* p. 53.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.* p. 50.

<sup>166</sup> According to her view, the act of interpretation is a mental cognitive act which is conscious and directed towards something. From – S. Sontag, (1966.), *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, p. 5.

<sup>167</sup> H. Merentoja, (2018.), *The Ethics of Storytelling: Narrative Hermeneutics, History and the possible*,

using it as a mode of interpretation.<sup>168</sup> To put it more clearly, let us use one simple example, the activity of watching a TV series. Suppose that we are watching a famous TV series, *Bojack Horseman*<sup>169</sup>. During the time watching it, we might think about certain character motives, events that are taking place, and the state of affairs within that world; we might also pose questions such as “What if...?”, and “What will happen next?” etc. The act of thinking about these things is, indeed, a conscious act that is directed to the narrative object which, in this instance, is the series. However, for this thinking to have an effect, we must also make smaller narratives which are made by “just watching” the series, by filling in our patterns of both past experiences and current experiences. When introduced, Bojack is given a specific characterization and we pre-reflectively put him within the patterns of that characterization based on our experience. Within this example, Bojack is the washed-up actor who has turned to depression and alcoholism. We do not necessarily contemplate that fact; we immediately assume his role within our infrastructure of experience and move on. However, this is also a big part of the narrative which is shaped around that character. This is just one of the infinite number of examples that we just “take for granted”, that is, pre-reflectively interpret while watching the show. The same can be said about every situation that we experience during our daily lives. During the trip to the store, we are constantly interpreting the places, people, and spaces around us and we do not do it consciously.

This theoretical description goes well with the findings in neuroscience. Having in mind that the topic of neuroscience escapes the scope of the investigation that this project is offering, it will be only briefly mentioned. Paul B. Armstrong writes about the correlation between neuroscience and narrative theory or, as he calls it, narratology. He thinks that the basic axiom of contemporary neuroscience rests on the fact that our brains crave structural unity. He writes:

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Oxford University Press, New York, p. 44.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.* p. 44.

<sup>169</sup> *Bojack Horseman* (2014. – 2020.), Tornante Company, ShadowMachine, Netflix.

*Stories set in motion reciprocal processes of pattern-formation that are always already occurring beneath our awareness and that are fundamental to the brain's operation as a to-and-fro ensemble of neuronal assemblies that are constantly coming and going, waxing, and waning.*<sup>170</sup>

The constant progress of neuroscience has given us a large amount of data with which we can operate to understand ourselves. Naturally, this has made an immense contribution when it comes to the fields of epistemology, linguistic theory, metaphysics, etc. In many ways, this is also connected to how this project conceives the notion of the narrative. Armstrong tends to show that the neurobiological model of the narrative can shed light on the processes of neuronal and cortical nature. In the following passages, we will try to see how this investigation fits with Merentoja's notion of narrative hermeneutics. At the beginning of his claim, Armstrong states that the basic axiom of contemporary neuroscience is that our mind seeks structure.<sup>171</sup> Storytelling comes as an act to produce an equilibrium for the process that our brains constantly act on. To be more exact, our brains constantly form and dissolve neurons which form patterns that are connected to our past experiences and future tendencies.<sup>172</sup> We can connect this with the quite common paradigm which states that our brains use prior knowledge to interpret the things we are experiencing. Our future perceptions and decision-making are directly shaped by the knowledge we have already structuralized from our experience.<sup>173</sup> Following this paradigm, the brain predicts the future following the regularities it has experienced in the past. It forms patterns that are used to predict the perceptions we are making – active or passive.

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<sup>170</sup> P. Armstrong, (2019.), *Neuroscience, Narrative, and Narratology in Poetics Today*, vol. 40., no.3., p. 396.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.* p. 397.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.* p. 397.

<sup>173</sup> F.P. Lange, M. Helibron, P. Kok, (2018.), *How Do Expectations Shape Perception?*, *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, vol. 22., no. 9., p. 764.

They come from the neural mechanisms which directly depend on those regularities.<sup>174</sup>

This paradigm can serve as a counterargument against the notion of teleology for it shows that we do not operate only on future expectations, but the future expectations are determined by experience. In this regard, the position of narrative hermeneutics holds. We interpret the world based on the unity of our past, our present, and our future, and none is more important than the other. What joins these expectations and sensory experience, according to Armstrong, is our ability to form narratives – *the ability of a plot is to join concord and discord through temporal structures that order events while holding them open to a surprise...*<sup>175</sup> The role of the narrative in our perception is to connect our structures which are based on the interplay between the past and the future while constantly opting for the change in that structure. MacIntyre's notion of schemata is pretty similar to this view. Namely, we have certain schemata of belief that are expressed within a narrative, and we hold on to them until a certain change occurs after which we reform them.<sup>176</sup> Understanding actions and their meaning comes from two crucial factors – kinesic intelligence and kinesthetic sensations.<sup>177</sup> By kinesic intelligence, we mean the hermeneutic ability to form patterns from the sensory data, and by kinesthetic sensations, we are referring to this pre-reflective mode of narrating perceptual data into our already established forms of narrative. The reader might notice that this line of thinking also goes hand-in-hand with Merentoja's account of the narrative which is based on pre-reflective hermeneutics. To simplify this, we can state the following –

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<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.* p. 766.

<sup>175</sup> P. Armstrong, (2019.), *Neuroscience, Narrative, and Narratology in Poetics Today*, vol. 40., no.3., p. 399.

<sup>176</sup> A. MacIntyre, (2006.) *Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science in The Tasks of Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, New York, p. 5.

<sup>177</sup> P. Armstrong, (2019.), *Neuroscience, Narrative, and Narratology in Poetics Today*, vol. 40., no.3., p. 404.

the stories help our brains navigate between the past and the future while also constantly “uploading” data both reflectively and pre-reflectively.

It is even more interesting to take into account cognitive neurology, which is currently a hot topic in the contemporary fields of neuroscience. Our brains constantly evolve, and change based on the experience that we have as a species. This does not seem like a big claim, especially for someone accustomed to evolutionary biology, however, the implications of it are quite interesting. Michael Anderson calls this phenomenon neural re-use – the ability of our cortical regions to shift, transform, and gain uses for which they had not evolved.<sup>178</sup> Our capacities adapt as our experience shifts, and our patterns of thought change as we evolve our practices and our social interactions. As Stanislas Dehaene argues, we learn reading books of Shakespeare by adapting the evolutionary traits that our ancestors have developed in the African savannahs.<sup>179</sup>

Neuroscience is included for the following reason – providing an alternative to naturalism and emphasizing the context. Contextualism is considered important in this project because it provides a basis for how narrative is understood. We cannot fully get away from the fact that human beings are the ones who are providing the narratives, and it is within their natural capabilities to do so. However, what we can get away from is the notion that this natural capacity has a goal towards which it strives for. If our biological and neural configuration is prone to change, every concept of objective teleological flourishing is invalid. At best, it is context-based. This would, however, fit the simplified version of MacIntyre’s notion of the tradition which I understand as a dominant narrative within one period of time – a unification of the particular narratives, or as a meta-narrative. If the thesis of cognitive neurology is correct, then we are also biologically influenced by the world which is based on a contextual narrative. The notion of tradition, which is simplified, would say this – our

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<sup>178</sup> M. L. Anderson, (2010.), *Neural Reuse: A Fundamental Organizational Principle of the Brain* in *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, vol. 33, no. 4. p. 262.

<sup>179</sup> S. Dehaene, (2009.), *Reading in the Brain: The New Science of How We Read*, Penguin Publishing, New York, p. 4.

cognitive material would be given by one tradition and, therefore, we are confined within that tradition; but the fact that traditions change constantly is a fact of us changing them. When we change traditions, traditions also change us. By proposing a method of narrative hermeneutics as an alternative to the teleological line of thinking, as well as providing a neuroscientific approach as an alternative to naturalism, we are left with the contextualist notion of the narrative.

### **3.0. Overview of the Argument: Portraying the Narrative**

After all that was said and done, what are we left with? This project began from a general premise – the social narrative is the main source of our political and ethical deliberation. To show that, we took one of the most prominent theories of the social narrative – the one found in the account of Alasdair MacIntyre. Practice, tradition, and narrative unity, concepts are of major importance to MacIntyre’s project, and we have elaborated on all of them because they intertwine. By using a notion of intelligibility, we have found a part that connects all three of them and the conceptual analysis was much more effective to complete. The next step was to locate the point of divergence between this project and MacIntyre and it was found within the concept of naturalist teleology.

The second part of this chapter has been tasked with providing counterarguments against this view. It was a goal of major importance since the disagreement in this sense meant divergence from MacIntyre in both political and ethical domains. To criticize naturalist teleology, we have provided arguments from the standpoint of its necessity to the narrative theory, therefore – the narrative of *the self*, the narrative as an epistemic category, and the narrative as a social context. After showing that naturalist teleology is not sufficient nor necessary for narrative theory, we have deemed it as unable to provide what it strives for and, in its place, accepted narrative hermeneutics. To justify this theoretical move, we have shown

research from the field of narrative neuroscience which directly supported this “alternative”.

So, the question remains, what are we left with? The first chapter has shown the importance of social narrative in our lives with it being the starting point of our system of rationality and beliefs. We cannot think outside the given narrative, and we operate within it. To understand this, we have shown the system of social narrative in terms of narrative activities, sub-narrative, and meta-narrative. If we are what we do, then a perfect explanation for this is found in the notion of the practice, a narrative activity that directly influences us to conceive ourselves within one context. The sub-narrative is a context in which we operate and from which we derive meaning. Meanwhile, the meta-narrative is the holder of all sub-narratives and gives them their justification as well as limitations.

In order for this to make sense, we would need to go from the social to the personal. The main claim of this project is the explanation of political and ethical deliberation after all. Therefore, if a premise that the social narrative influences our way of perceiving the world, values, both ethical and political, should hold, we would need to consider it from a personal standpoint. That is to say, if we have an ethical narrativity thesis derived from the communitarian framework and is the bearer of rationality, we will need a psychological narrativity thesis to justify it. The second chapter of this project will do just that, provide evidence and a claim for the narrative notion of *the self*.

## The Second Premise: A Psychological Narrativity Thesis

### 1.0. Psychological Narrativity Thesis: The Narrative of *the Self*

The second part of this project will be concerned with elaborating the role of narrative in the constitution of *the self*, or, as we will call it, a psychological narrativity thesis. We have talked about how the narrative affects the way that we perceive the social, political, and metaphysical reality around us, however, the question remains - what effect does it have on us? We have also talked about MacIntyre and how he differentiates between the psychological configurations that are influenced by the traditional narrative, or, as I would call it, meta-narrative. If rationality itself is determined by the traditional constraints, there has to be a process of rationalizing the traditional “data” by the subjects who are embedded within this social context. Therefore, this chapter shall explain our ability to narrate; to “take” data from the social narrative and narrate our lives within it.

The methodology for this chapter will be somewhat similar to the one taken in the previous chapter. Namely, I will start with the exposition of the foundation for the narrative theory of the self, after which I will analyze the metaphysical basis of it. Furthermore, we also need to defend this theory from the current wave of narratoscepticism, usually associated with Galen Strawson. While talking about the narrative conception of the self and it is crucial to dive into contemporary debates with its correlation with the conception of personal identity.

In order to consider the view of the narrative self, or, as this project suggests, to establish a psychological narrativity thesis, we would need a starting point, or, an author that we will derive the theoretical basis from, similar to what was done in the first chapter. With that in mind, some of the names that should be considered while talking about this topic are - Marya Schechtman, Paul Ricoeur, Charles Taylor, and Daniel Dennett. These philosophers hold various views that overlap, yet are based on

different philosophical traditions, as well as methodologies. Furthermore, Ricoeur and Taylor are often put in the same bracket when talking about the conception of *the self*. However, reviewing them one by one would be an unnecessary goal, one which would result in an extended discourse on the topic which is unnecessary for this project. Therefore, I would like to point out one philosopher whose philosophical notion of the narrative *self* has the most explanatory power and can relate to the earlier chapter. In that regard, we shall elaborate the notion of the narrative *self* from Paul Ricoeur and correlate it with the philosophers mentioned to get one clear notion of the narrative *self* that will be used for the remainder of this project.

Firstly, I need to elaborate on the fact that I have chosen Ricoeur. Apart from his view having the most explanatory power, I would also like to argue that he is the most complimentary thinker to relate to the theoretical constraints that have been attached in the earlier chapter. Ricoeur's view is based on the hermeneutical approach, the one which is considered as a basic premise of this project, narrative hermeneutics. Following that, the contextualist basis is also one of the important factors to consider. Therefore, giving an overview of Ricoeur's position will give us more insight into how this is correlated. And, by doing so, it would also provide a way in which we can connect the first and the second chapter.

## **2.0. Ricoeur's Philosophy - Phenomenology and Hermeneutics**

Addressing Ricoeur's concept of narrative can seem daunting without an in-depth exploration of his work. Before engaging with his more intricate philosophical ideas, it is essential to begin with a foundational understanding. Paul Ricoeur is most notably recognized as a philosopher who has "fused" one of the most important philosophical traditions which was dominant during Ricoeur's time with the method that was very unlikely to be considered in the same bracket with the tradition in mind. To be more precise, Ricoeur has "fused" phenomenology with hermeneutics. Ricoeur's difference from the phenomenologists such as Heidegger, Sartre, Husserl,

Levinas etc. was the interpretation attribute given to the phenomenological account of human experience. Namely, for something to become intelligible in our lived experience, that something must come from the language we use to talk about our lived experience in the first place.<sup>180</sup>

Furthermore, speaking of the human experience and the discourses portraying them, Ricoeur finds that there is semantic dualism at play. Thomas Hünefeldt portrays this relation in much detail; that is, we can decipher two ways to talk about the *belonging in a world* - subjective and objective. Subjective discourse belongs to the scope of phenomenology while the objective discourse belongs to the scope of science.<sup>181</sup> Ricoeur identifies narration as a "third discourse," acting as a mediator between the two other forms of discourse.<sup>182</sup> This discourse, an ability to narrate, connects the discourse on the subjective and an objective *belonging in a world*. Therefore, an ability to connect the subjective *one's own world/one's own body* with an objective *external world/objective body* rests in the notion of the narrative *self*, a subject who has an ability to narrate. It should be noted that, when talking about the current issue, the scope of science narrows down to the three components, or three fields in the cognitive realm - behavioral, mental, and neural discourse, according to Hünefeldt.<sup>183</sup> These three fields give rise to the question - *what am I?* On the other hand, by living and experiencing our life in a subjective form, we give an answer to the question - *who am I?* In this regard, the mediating factor of the narration can be considered an integral part of his hermeneutics which is an integral part of his phenomenological philosophy.

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<sup>180</sup> D. Pellauer, (2002.) *Paul Ricoeur*, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, site - <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ricoeur/>, accessed: 01.02.2021.

<sup>181</sup> T. Hünefeldt, (2005.) *Semantic Dualism and Narrative Identity - Paul Ricoeur on the Cognitive Sciences in Cogn Process*, vol. 6., p. 153.

<sup>182</sup> The method of providing a "third solution", a so-called dialectical approach, is at the heart of Ricoeur's methodology. Through the remainder of the text on Ricoeur, I hope to show a lot of instances in which this can be seen.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.* p. 154. - 155.

In the goal of trying to put Ricoeur's notion of the narrative *self* into a systematic form, it is worth starting from the end of his earlier project within the *Time and Narrative vol. 3*. The problems that he explores in the three volumes of his, probably, most famous work is not dealing with what is needed in this project, the topic of the narrative *self*. However, at the finishing chapters of his final volume, he does provide us with something to think about until his later work. Namely, in the *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur writes the following:

*The self of self-knowledge is the fruit of an examined life, to recall Socrates' phrase in the Apology. And an examined life is, in large part, one purged, one clarified by the cathartic effects of the narratives, be they historical or fictional, conveyed by our culture.*<sup>184</sup>

This is to say that Ricoeur ends his *Time and Narrative* in introducing the topic which gives the reader notice that he finds that our *self* is mostly, if not fully, constituted by the narrative structure of the culture and time we find ourselves in. The quote that was given refers to his argument against the psychoanalytic psychology and the constitution of *the self* that arises from it, namely, *that the self of knowledge is not the egoistical and narcissistic ego... along with its aspects of an ideological super-structure and infantile and neurotic archaism.*<sup>185</sup> It is not surprising that Ricoeur straightforwardly rejects the view of psychoanalysis having in mind that it is not concerned with the subjective experience, as well as the narrative role of mediation between what we are and who we are. In the remaining set of conclusions which Ricoeur draws from the conception of the narrative *self* in his *Time and Narrative vol. 3*, he introduces three of the most important concepts upon which he grounds his view on the narrative *self*, the relation between the culture, history, and narrative, as well as two issues with incorporating the notion of the narrative *self*.

Firstly, I would like to introduce these three concepts, after which I will mention the important relation between culture, history, and the narrative. When it

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<sup>184</sup> P. Ricoeur, (1985.) *Time and Narrative vol. 3.*, University of Chicago, Chicago, p. 247.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.* p. 247.

comes to the issues of the notion of the narrative *self*, they will be left for the part in which we discuss the notion we are left with. The conceptions which Ricoeur introduces but talks about in more detail in his later work are the following: *ipse*, *idem*, and character. In short, when referring to *ipse*, we refer to oneself as having a sense of self-hood, and when referring to *idem*, we mean sameness.<sup>186</sup> The identity is formed from the dialectic of *ipse* and *idem*. Character is the concept which is used as an “identity preserver”; that is to say, it preserves an identity through time. This, of course, is very vague and needs a lot more elaboration which will come when the spotlight is shifted towards Ricoeur’s *Oneself as Another*.

On the other note, concerning Ricoeur’s view on culture, history, and narrative, we must take into account the more systematic view that Ricoeur offers us, starting with the concept of self-constancy. That is to say; what makes a person have a constant conception of *the self* through time? The answer to this question is found in the conception of narrative temporality. Following Heidegger and his notions of time, Ricoeur’s main goal was not to explain the constitution of time, the ontological basis of time, nor to describe the physical phenomena of time; his goal lies in explaining the *meaning* of time and arriving at the question - “What is the function of time?”.<sup>187</sup> Through his *Time and Narrative* project, Ricoeur takes into the account two conceptions of time - cosmological and psychological; Aristotelian and Augustinian. It is to be expected that Ricoeur commences a dialectic approach in which he provides a third conception of time - narrative time. As Michael DeLashmutt notes, narrative temporality is a view which enables a subject to “know” time only insofar as one can articulate his/hers experiences and transitions through time using language.<sup>188</sup>

Now that we have explained one of the key components in Ricoeur’s puzzle, it is time to connect everything that has been said until now. Namely, the concepts of

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<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.* p. 246.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.* p. 245.

<sup>188</sup> M. W. DeLashmutt, (2009.), *Paul Ricoeur at the Foot of The Cross: Narrative Identity and The Resurrection of the Body in Modern Theology*, vol. 25., no. 4., p. 593.

culture, history, and narrative have a more substantial link with Ricoeur's view on phenomenology and hermeneutics. Let us start off by stating Ricoeur's ethical position, it is from that instance, I believe, that everything else can follow. When moral philosophers such as John Wall, or William Schweiker talk about Ricoeur, they find that the starting position which he takes is based on moral particularism.<sup>189</sup><sup>190</sup> That is to say, the view that Ricoeur finds the most appealing as a starting position is the one that is based on the cultural and historical determination of morality. Insofar as that is the case, Ricoeur's basis is the same as MacIntyre's, the one we have talked about earlier. By introducing the hermeneutics of morality, we are concerned with the "exegesis" of myths, symbols, language, norms, ideals, etc. from one given culture. Even thinking itself needs to be exhibited in the linguistic form that is constituted by this exegesis.<sup>191</sup> If the hermeneutics of morality is based on culturally specific circumstances, the implication of this view is moral particularism. In this instance, we can come back to the paragraph, which was quoted earlier, the one in which Ricoeur invokes Socrates. Examined life and self-knowledge are intertwined insofar as they are achieved within one cultural and historical situation. One of the bolder claims that Ricoeur makes resides within this hermeneutic project: a subject is first and foremost a linguistic being - by language, he/she relates to the world around him/her and towards *the other*.<sup>192</sup> We are, according to Ricoeur, then being who "code" and "decode" the world around us; the codes being the symbols. These symbols are complex phenomena that are constantly shaping the relation based on designatum - designator, which also gives rise to our language which is as complex.

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<sup>189</sup> J. Wall, (2001.), *The Economy of the Gift: Paul Ricoeur's Significance to the Theological Ethics in The Journal of Religious Ethics*, vol. 29., p. 253.

<sup>190</sup> W. Schweiker, (2020.), *Groundwork for the Hermeneutics of Morals: Paul Ricoeur and the Future of Ethics in Journal of Religion* vol. 100., p. 482.

<sup>191</sup> A. Zdravković, (2017.), *(Pseudo)Osobenost i granice jezika in Jezik i (pseudo)osobenost, Cezasm*, vol. 3. p. 296.

<sup>192</sup> P. Ricoeur, (1974.), *The Question of the Subject: The Challenge to Semiology in The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*, Northwestern University Press. p. 256.

According to Ricoeur, no word has only one meaning; that is to say, every word that we use in our everyday language has more meaning depending on the context of use.<sup>193</sup> One sign is a symbol; however, one symbol is not limited to being a sign. The cultural setting is, as mentioned, constituted by signs, values, norms, ideals, regulations, etc. which are, in nature, symbolic.

Those symbols, however, do arise from human practice, one tradition consists of symbols that are made for the bearers of that tradition to acquire self-knowledge. Insofar as that is the case, communities create in order to discover. The symbols which constitute our reality are, as mentioned, interpreted. Alexis D. S. Itao simplifies this view in the following way - interpretation, or hermeneutics, arises for us to make sense of the symbols which have a whole world of hidden meaning behind them; therefore, guiding us into bringing that world to light, deciphering it and understanding it.<sup>194</sup> Ricoeur presupposes an interesting metaphysical priority argument for this to be in line. It is, indeed, like Sartrean claim of existence preceding essence, however, with much more emphasis on the relation between that of *the self* and *the world*.<sup>195</sup> Douglas McGaughey derives the following – In Ricoeur’s thought, there is an ontological and temporal priority of *the world*.<sup>196</sup> Summarily, *the self*, although it is contrary to the Cartesian *cogito* theory, gains experience of itself only through the exegesis of *the world*. What we are dealing with here is a priority argument. Exegesis, or the hermeneutics of the world has ontological priority

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<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.* p. 76.

<sup>194</sup> A. D. S. Itao, (2010.), *Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutics of Symbols: A Critical Dialectic of Suspicion and Faith* in *Kritike an Online Journal of Philosophy*, p. 4.

<sup>195</sup> Neither Ricoeur, nor later philosophers who will be mentioned in the discourse on procedural hermeneutics use the terms “*the self*”, nor “*the world*”. However, I find them fitting as they are induced by the concept substance of the phenomenological tradition that very well correspond to the point Ricoeur wants to make. Therefore, when I use the concept of *the self* – I refer to the subject of the individual experience; when I use the concept of *the world* – I refer to the external reality that is perceivable by *the self*.

<sup>196</sup> D. R. McGaughey, (1988.), *Ricoeur's Metaphor and Narrative Theories as a Foundation for a Theory of Symbol in Religious Studies*, vol. 24, no. 4., p. 415.

because it is phenomenological in nature, and it has a temporal priority based on the time of experiencing *the world* and *the self*. To know *the self*, we must know *the world*. This, yet again, refers to the earlier quote I have cited from Ricoeur. By recalling Socrates's quest for an examined life, Ricoeur hopes to show his procedural hermeneutics. Namely, to answer the old Delphic maxims - *γνῶθι σεαυτόν*, or know thyself, one must have an examined life. Examined life is nothing more than getting to know yourself through the experience of the external reality that is constituted from the symbols, myths, values, metaphysical paradigms, social norms, personal relations etc. In short, knowing yourself follows from procedural hermeneutics. <sup>197</sup>

Before we grasp the experience of the *cogito*, of the *I*, we must, firstly, acquire self-knowledge of what that *I* is, and which is provided to us by the procedural hermeneutics. This critique of the *cogito*, of the *I* is partially in line with MacIntyre's critique of Descartes which was mentioned in the earlier chapter. It is also to no surprise that Ricoeur starts his task of providing an argument for the conception of the narrative *self* in his *Oneself as Another* by indulging in this discussion. It would be wise to stop on this note and conclude this overview, for the next step will be started from this instance. However, until that point, let us dwell on a couple of examples on how history, culture and narrative come to be connected.

Let us consider subject X that is a blank slate. For our purposes, we cannot take a child or a person with inefficient cognitive ability.<sup>198</sup> Let us imagine a middle-aged individual who has never experienced anything in his life before. For the sake of the argument, let us consider that he/she just "popped" into existence without any

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<sup>197</sup> Procedural hermeneutics is the notion that I will use to correlate with Ricoeur's world exegesis.

<sup>198</sup> It a discourse such as this one, it is very common to exclude a party which is not capable of reason-making. For example, when John Locke talks about the constitution of innate/empirical ideas, he is seemingly always excluding, by his own words, *children, idiots, etc.* because they do not have an apprehension of them. This method of exclusion was present before, and after Locke. From - J. Locke, (1999.) *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Pennsylvania State University, Electronic Classic Series, p. 29.

trace of knowledge, or experience. Would he/she be able to conceive himself as an *I*? As a thinking *cogito*? Certainly, but only after he/she “decodes” the contextual reality. He/she would constitute the idea of *the self* only in relation to the world around him. The world around him, as it can be derived from what has been said earlier, is a constitution formed from the mixture of symbols and myths that we learn from language, and which are culture/tradition/history specific. In that regard, the subject constitutes his/her *self* in relation to the external context. The ability to narrate that context enables one to live an examined life which gives him/her substance to answer to the Socratic task of knowing thyself. This is nicely summed up by John Wall in the following quotation:

*Such a self is not transparent to itself but, rather, a primordially lost origin of humanity that is therefore also a destiny and a hope. It is not the empty Cartesian cogito that responds to doubt but the embodied and incarnated capability of selves for creating a narrative identity in and through this broken world.*<sup>199</sup>

Following from this quotation, I believe that the stage is set for us to go into Ricoeur’s already mentioned work - *Oneself as Another*. It is within this book that we find his overall thesis on what it means for one to be a *self* and find his argument for *the self* to be constituted as a narrative being in nature.

### **2.1. *Oneself as Another* - the Constitution of the Narrative Self**

Primarily, it would be important to note the parts of Ricoeur’s discussion within the mentioned book. The book consists of ten chapters, or, as Ricoeur calls them, ten studies. Based on the topics of the studies, we can categorize them in four categories:

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<sup>199</sup> J. Wall, (2005.), *Moral Creativity, Paul Ricoeur and the Poetics of Possibility*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 26.

1. The semiology/pragmatism discussion on the speaking subject. (First, second, and part of the third study)
2. A theory of action and a theory of a moral agent. (Part of the third study and the fourth study).
3. The notion of the narrative *self*. (Fifth, sixth, and a part of the seventh study)
4. Morality as an agency - Ricoeur explores a dialectic between *the right* and *the good* (part of the seventh study, eighth, ninth, and tenth study).

As it stands, for the purpose of this project, only the third category will be considered. It was mentioned earlier that the discussion on the *cogito* and the semiology is an excellent starting position because this book starts from it. Even though I am not going to take other categories into account, it would be worth providing an overall insight into what is important to Ricoeur. His overall argument can be portrayed in the subsequent respect:

Ricoeur starts with the statement that, when talking about the conception of the subject, our starting position is the notion of the *cogito*. Now, while talking about the notion of the *cogito*, we arise with two views on it - the view of an individual *cogito* who experiences the reality from the starting perspective that the subject is a *cogito*; and the view of the *shattered cogito*.<sup>200</sup> There is, according to Ricoeur, an approach that can mediate these two viewpoints.<sup>201</sup> The view on the subject which encompasses both these views is the one on the wounded subject. While talking about the notion of the wounded subject, we are talking about a *self* which has the properties of both actuality and potentiality; that is to say, *the self* that can act and

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<sup>200</sup> This results in a dialectic battle between Descartes and Nietzsche, both championing the philosophical traditions which follow from the mentioned positions.

<sup>201</sup> In short, the conception of the *cogito* is always in extremes - when it is too strong, it proposes that *the self* can always be immediately in touch with *the self* by an absolute certainty; when it is too weak - it produces an idea that *the self* is an abstraction which does not have anything to do with the reality of the situation. The *shattered cogito* does prove to be more of a challenge to Ricoeur, however, he provides an alternative that he finds to have more explanatory power – the conception of the wounded subject/ humiliated subject which opens the door towards his hermeneutics of *the self*. From – P. Ricoeur, (1992.) *Oneself as Another*, University of Chicago press, Chicago, p. 4. – 23.

be acted upon. *The self* that is conceived in such a way proves to be a dialectical *self* between *idem* and *ipse*.<sup>202</sup> The standpoint of a wounded subject opens the door for the hermeneutics of *the self*. Hermeneutics of *the self* should start off by elaborating on one of the main aspects of *the self* – the dichotomy between the potential and the actual. The potential turns to actuality in the process of an action and, therefore, this is an important question for Ricoeur. To understand an action is to understand the circumstances in which one action is meaningful. As we have noted in the overview of Ricoeur’s thought, one would have to derive meaning from the symbols and myths; or, in this regard, language. Having said that, there is a necessary relation between an action and the language.

Now, when one considers a subject as an acting subject, that subject is considered an agent. The subject who is an agent becomes so by being intertwined in the semantics of meaning. That is to say; to be an agent, one must act; for one to act, one’s actions are intertwined in the system of semantics. We need a system that encompasses the whole infrastructure of meaningful actions. That system can be considered a narrative. *The self* which participates within a system of meaning made coherent by the narrative is the *narrative self*. Next, morality needs to answer the questions of the *obligatory* and *the good*. Now that we have notions of meaning, action, and *the self*; that is, answers to the questions of “What does it mean?”, “What am I doing?”, “Who am I?”, and “What am I?”<sup>203</sup>; we need an answer to the question “What should I do?”. To answer the question given in the last step, we need a conception of “little ethics” which encompasses both *the right* and *the good*. This would be, in short, the main topic of his *Oneself as Another*.

Ricoeur’s little ethics is devised in the following manner - *to the vision or aim of the "good life" with and for others in just institutions*.<sup>204</sup> In his conception of “little ethics”, Ricoeur tries to reconcile *the right* and *the good*. Most of what he argues for

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<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.* p. 16.

<sup>203</sup> “Who am I?” and “What am I?” are correlating to the different constitutions of the narrative *self-ipse* and *idem*. This issue will soon be tackled.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.* p. 240.

during his studies on ethics is the fact that both models of ethics – deontological and teleological (not necessarily limited to utilitarianism) are lacking in some regards; the regards in which one can help the other. And, although the discussion is rather interesting, I do not find this part to be the most important point that we can take from Ricoeur. Namely, most of the contemporary moral philosophers have a theoretical relation between *the right* and *the good*. This is also one of the more important points that I would like to argue for in this project, however, Ricoeur is not the philosopher whose conclusion on this relation I am willing to take in the equation. But I digress; this sketch is the most rudimentary outline of Ricoeur's work that will be taken as the source from which the conception of the narrative *self* is extracted.

Now, the first part of his book does not go in line with this project, therefore, it will be left only on the most basic showing. The theory of action is, without a doubt, one of the most original contributions that Ricoeur puts forward, however, again, it is not the discourse from which this project will gain any further insight. As mentioned, the final argument that he brings to the table, the one on little ethics, is very well in line with what I pursue. As a consequence of that, we are left with the third category of Ricoeur's studies, the one on the narrative *self*.

## **2.2. *The Self Between Ipse and Idem***

Covering the overall structure of the *Oneself as Another*, as well as giving an overall overview of Ricoeur's philosophy, the stage is, I believe, set for us to analyze the notions of *ipse* and *idem*. They have been mentioned numerous times throughout this presentation of Ricoeur's thought, especially made explicit in his *Time and Narrative vol.3*, where he mentions them at the most basal level. Despite that, the introduction of those notions was connected to the different sets of problems he was tackling, as he admits himself.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> In the footnote, Ricoeur adds this: *The notion of narrative identity, introduced in Time and Narrative*

In the broadest sense possible, when we talk about *ipse* and *idem*, we talk about selfhood and the sameness. In this sub-chapter, I would like to expand on these ideas which are found within Ricoeur's *Oneself as Another*, and note that this distinction, according to his words, *attains its fullest development* in that book.<sup>206</sup> Both *ipse* (identity understood as selfhood) and *idem* (identity understood as sameness) constitute the narrative *self*, or, in the light of the earlier discussion, the fragile, wounded *self*. It is fragile because it is constituted between this constant dialectic which is opposite in nature.

I would ask the reader to bear with me while I try to give a theoretical comparison in order that we make *ipse* and *idem* to be more understandable, or, at least to point out a reason for Ricoeur to introduce these notions. To my belief, Aristotle's theory of substance and *being* is a good example of how to think about this. According to Aristotle, the goal of the *first philosophy* is to explore *being* as *being*, a being that is "extracted" from its features.<sup>207</sup> That *being* can be located in his work on *The Categories*. The theory of substance dictates that everything that exists is a composition made of the primary and the secondary substance.<sup>208</sup> Let us, therefore, see what Aristotle means when he talks about these substances. Consider this example – a cat named Mimi. The individual cat, Mimi, is the primary substance. We can understand it by thinking of it in regard to the individual subject/object. When we say *this* bowl, *this* pen, *this* cat, by pointing to the existent, individual subject/object, we are pointing at the primary substance. The secondary substance is predicated on the primary substance. Namely, the second substance is concerning

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*3, responds to a different set of problems: at the end of a long voyage through historical narrative and fictional narrative, I asked whether there existed a structure of experience capable of integrating the two great classes of narratives. I then formed the hypothesis according to which narrative identity, either that of a person or of a community, would be the sought-after place of this chiasm between history and fiction. From – Ibid. p. 114.*

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.* p. 114.

<sup>207</sup> Aristotle, (1998.) *The Metaphysics*, Penguin Books, London, p. 77.

<sup>208</sup> Aristotle, (1889.) *Organon, Or Logical Treatises*, William Clowes and Sons, London, p. 6.

the species and the genera of the primary substance.<sup>209</sup> Therefore, when we think of what Mimi is (e.g., A cat, an animal, a living being etc.), we are referring to the secondary substance.

In the contemporary theory of personhood, we can distinguish two important aspects on the constitution of a person.<sup>210</sup> When we talk about, for example, a specific individual X, we must note two things. The first is that X is a person who is an individual and, in his/her individuality, unique. The second thing that we should note is that, even though X is unique, he/she is still a member of one group. In this regard, X is a human being, a person, a rational deliberator, a living being, etc. We have on one hand, uniqueness and, on the other hand, similarity, or sameness. That is to say; when we talk about the unique aspect of X, or, X-ness of an X, we talk about the individual identity. Likewise, when we talk about the sameness of an X with the other class of subjects/objects that X is a part of based on the specie/genera properties, we talk about the structural identity. In this regard, numerical and structural identity correspond on the most general level with the Aristotelian notions of the primary and secondary substance. If that is the case, what then, is distinguishing human beings from other objects or living beings? This is one of the issues that Ricoeur brings to light. We cannot, in this matter, distinguish between the question of - *who am I?* and *what am I?*<sup>211</sup>

In fact, Ricoeur finds that both numerical and structural identities fall under the traits of *idem*.<sup>212</sup> With those two identities, *idem* contains two more traits – uninterrupted continuity and permanence in time. The third trait of the *idem* identity, uninterrupted continuity can be seen through the lenses of change. Let us consider subject X during the different time periods. At t1, X was 5 years old; he/she had a specific mental and physical constitution. At t2, X is a 25-year-old adult; he/she has

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<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.* p. 8.

<sup>210</sup> G. Glas, (2003.), *Idem, Ipse, and the Loss of Self in Philosophy, Psychiatry & Psychology*, vol. 10., no. 4., p. 347.

<sup>211</sup> P. Ricoeur, (1992.) *Oneself as Another*, University of Chicago press, Chicago, p. 4. – 23.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.* p. 116. – 117.

replaced most of the cells in his/her body<sup>213</sup> and his/her mental configuration is vastly different. The experiences that have occurred during the last 20 years, X's connection to people, his/her choices have had a necessary impact on how X perceives the world at this moment. Following that, how is the X the same person as he/she was back then? How can we escape Aristippus's paradox?<sup>214</sup> This is where Ricoeur's notion of uninterrupted continuity comes into play. He states that this is a part of the *idem* identity and that it is based on "tracking back" *between the first and the last stage in the development of what we consider to be the same individual*.<sup>215</sup> This part of our *idem* identity is what enables us to have a conception of *the self* even if *the self* drastically changes during an extended time period. As Sebastian Kaufmann states - *However, relying only on continuity through time is usually not enough to ascribe identity. It is hard to ascribe identity to a thing in which I do not recognize the permanence of any characteristic*.<sup>216</sup> Naturally, this trait of the *idem* identity must be considered just a trait; that is to say, it is necessary, but not sufficient condition for us to conceive an identity.

The last dimension of identity is permanence in time. In many regards, it is quite like the idea of uninterrupted continuity, yet, as Kaufman observes, it is much more complete (he states that it is, in fact, the most complete idea of sameness).<sup>217</sup> So, what is the substance of this sense of identity which gives the most insight of the

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<sup>213</sup> Most of our cells because, as Ron Milo and Rob Philips write - *Replacement of our cells also occurs in most of the other tissues in our body, though the cells in the lenses of our eyes and most neurons of our central nervous system are thought to be special counterexamples*. From – R. Milo, R. Philips, (2015.) *Cell Biology by the Numbers*, Draft, p. 330. Later published by Garland Science, Taylor & Francis Group, LLC, New York.

<sup>214</sup> Aristippus, based on Irwin's interpretation, is one of the first philosophers to make the argument for the fact that one person is not one and the same in different time periods. From – T. H. Irwin, (1991.), *Aristippus Against Happiness* in *The Monist*, vol. 74., no. 1., p. 56.

<sup>215</sup> P. Ricoeur, (1992.) *Oneself as Another*, University of Chicago press, Chicago, p. 4. – 23.

<sup>216</sup> S. Kaufmann, (2009.) *The Attestation of the Self as a Bridge Between Hermeneutics and Ontology in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*, Dissertation, Marquette University, p. 66.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.* 67.

*idem* identity? To portray this, Ricoeur offers us an example which goes in this regard – if we think of a tool that we will use during the longer periods of time, surely, we will need to replace some of its parts.<sup>218</sup> One might think, and rightfully so, that this is the ship of Theseus, the famous argument from the metaphysics of identity, all over again! If we replace all the wooden parts from the ship with metal ones, does that ship remain the same ship? For Ricoeur, the solution to this paradox is found in the idea of structure. Namely, *the idea of structure, opposed to that of event, replies to this criterion of identity, the strongest one that can be applied.*<sup>219</sup> Temporal aspect is very important to note. Even if it is partially present in the sense of uninterrupted continuity, it takes its full shape in this instance. The structure keeps an X hold its identity as an X from t1 to t2.

This would be the four-fold constitution of the *idem* identity. Let us repeat the already mentioned – when we get asked the question of *what* we are, we are answering by providing the constitution of the *idem* identity. *What* I am is an individual member of a species with whom I share many similarities, however, I am also unique. I am also a temporal being, I am subjected to changes. Therefore, I am one and the same through time and this idea can be attained within the notion of my structure. The fusion between these things brings us to answer the question of *what* we are. What, then, to answer when someone asks *who* we are? The answer to this question can be found in Ricoeur's conception of *ipse* identity. But, before we talk about that, a "bridge" would have to be provided. A bridge that links *idem* and *ipse*. This bridge is built from Ricoeur's conception of the character. Character encompasses these four senses of *idem* identity and opens a way for selfhood to be experienced. The fact that it encompasses four dimensions of *idem* identity is never elaborated by Ricoeur himself. Even though he thinks it is clear from the case he made, it is, sadly, very vague, and open to interpretation.

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<sup>218</sup> P. Ricoeur, (1992.) *Oneself as Another*, University of Chicago press, Chicago, p. 117.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.* 117.

Following Kaufman<sup>220</sup>, we could assume that the numeric identity is embedded within the character because it is based on the uniqueness of one's character constitution. For example, our characters are formed out of experience, habits, tendencies, norms etc. This composition is unique when it comes to every individual. On the other hand, the qualitative identity is seen in the fact that we can compare two (or any amount) characters. We can say that a person X has a viler character than a person Y. We can say that X has a specific trait of character which is, say, laziness and that it is a distinctive feature; while on the other hand, Y has a distinctive character trait which is being attentive. Of course, being lazy and being attentive do not necessarily have to be comparable, but it is the case that we can distinguish them when we compare characters. Characters are also prone to change. If X was lazy in the past, he/she might not be in the present. Consider assuming, for the sake of an example, that X and Y are acquaintances and that they have not seen each other for years. Y has always thought that X was incredibly lazy and that he/she was very irresponsible. After some years had passed, X and Y met again and started spending some time together. Y has noticed that X is much more productive and proactive than he/she was years ago. The character trait that X once had has changed. It is in this case that we can notice that X is the same person, even though there have been certain changes in the overall character configuration. The permanence in time is concerned with the structure of the character. The structure of the character does not shift (even though the traits do, such as laziness in the example) and it remains the same over time.

Henceforth, the character. Starting from Ricoeur's definition of the character, we can see that it is a *set of lasting dispositions by which the person is recognized*.<sup>221</sup> Ricoeur's notion of character is very similar to Aristotle's version in many regards. Both conceptions have activities as their main integrating force. Namely, we form our

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<sup>220</sup> S. Kaufmann, (2009.) *The Attestation of the Self as a Bridge Between Hermeneutics and Ontology in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*, Dissertation, Marquette University, p. 67.

<sup>221</sup> P. Ricoeur, (1992.) *Oneself as Another*, University of Chicago press, Chicago, p. 119.

characters by means of fulfilling activities which are embedded within one society. We “scan” this tradition and form our characters from the traits that we gain from it. Although activities are the most explicit force forming our characters, there are other contributors as well. Values, ideals, and heroes are also necessary for our characters to be molded into a coherent set of dispositions. This, in fact, very complimentary to MacIntyre’s notion of the myth in which he states that the social narratives are visible in the stories that we tell and teach to form ideals.<sup>222</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising when Ricoeur finds dispositions to be a mixture of habits (which come from activities) and identifications (arising from the already mentioned values, ideals, and heroes).

Now, the important question arises – how does the character open a dialectic between *ipse* and *idem*? Some theorists argue about this instance in different manners. Bernard Dauenhauer argues that the character is only a matter of expressing *idem* identity in contrast to keeping one’s promise, which is an expression of *ipse* identity.<sup>223</sup> On the other hand, Hall argues that there is indeed a dialectic, or an overlapping of *idem* and *ipse* occurring in the notion of the character.<sup>224</sup>

This debate is, I argue, solvable if we look at one extended quote from Ricoeur:

*...Character assures at once numerical identity, qualitative identity, uninterrupted continuity across change, and, finally, permanence in time which defines sameness. I would say, barely skirting paradox, that the identity of character expresses a certain adherence of the "what?" to the "who?" Character is truly the "what" of the "who." It is no longer exactly the "what" external to the "who," as was the case in the theory of action, where one could distinguish between what someone does and the one who does... Here it is as*

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<sup>222</sup> A. MacIntyre, (2006.) *Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science in The Tasks of Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, New York, p. 7.

<sup>223</sup> B. Dauenhauer, (1997.) *Ricoeur and Political Identity*, Paul Ricoeur and Narrative Context and Contestation, University of Cagliari Press, Cagliari, p. 130.

<sup>224</sup> D. Hall, (2007.) *Paul Ricoeur and the Poetic Imperative. The Creative Tension between Love and Justice*, State University of New York, Albany, p. 27.

*a question of the overlapping of the "who" by the "what," which slips from the question "Who am I?" back to the question "What am I?".*<sup>225</sup>

Following from this quote, clearly Ricoeur states that it is within the character that *ipse* announces itself as *idem*. Through the character, the person at question expresses his/her *self* through it. So, when I look at my character, I can find an answer to the, according to Ricoeur, Cartesian question of "*what am I?*"; however, an answer to this question refers me to the question of "*who am I?*".<sup>226</sup>

Dauenhauer is right when he states that the character is the expression of the *idem* identity<sup>227</sup>, however, that is just one dimension of the character. Within it, we find the overlapping between *ipse* and *idem*. Now that we have a bridge that connects *ipse* and *idem*, let us see what Ricoeur thinks about *ipse* identity.

*Ipse* identity stands for the designation of selfhood. Contrary to the sameness of the *idem* identity, selfhood is purely subjective. It is, in the words of Glas, *a reflexive structure, a self that exists by relating to itself.*<sup>228</sup> Selfhood can be understood as a subjective feeling of ourselves. It is embedded by the values that we hold on to and promote, things that we do, our relationship with the world and people around us etc. When we are asked *who* we are, we usually reply with something along the lines as – "I am a philosopher", "I am a father", "I am X's friend", "I am an honest person". These attributes come from self-perception we have in the world around us. *Ipse* identity also comes to be known through the overlapping with the *idem* identity in our character. Going back to the very beginning and remembering the distinction that Hünefeldt illuminates, we see that there are two ways of *belonging to a world* –

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<sup>225</sup> P. Ricoeur, (1992.) *Oneself as Another*, University of Chicago press, Chicago, p. 122.

<sup>226</sup> It also stands upon the ontological difference, which was introduced by Heidegger, the one between Dasein and Vorhandenheit. Ricoeur talks about this in his last chapter of this book. Although this is an interesting topic on its own, I would firmly like to avoid opening this topic, having in mind that it brings me nothing important to add to the table in my project. From – *Ibid.* p.309.

<sup>227</sup> B. Dauenhauer, (1997.) *Ricoeur and Political Identity*, Paul Ricoeur and Narrative Context and Contestation, University of Cagliari Press, Cagliari, p. 131.

<sup>228</sup> G. Glas, (2003.), *Idem, Ipse, and the Loss of Self in Philosophy, Psychiatry & Psychology*, vol. 10., no. 4., p. 348.

subjective and objective. *Idem* identity resides in the realm of objective while *ipse* identity resides in the realm of subjective.

Just like in the *idem* identity, *ipse* identity needs a temporal principle to be extended through time. According to Ricoeur, this is seen in the act of keeping one's word.<sup>229</sup> We promote self-awareness and the choice of extending an act into the future by taking agency in keeping our word and holding our promises. As character extends the *idem* identity, keeping a promise extends *ipse* identity.

Ricoeur speaks much less about *ipse* identity than he does about *idem* identity. Henry Venema explains very well why that is the case in the following passage:

*So, what in the end does Ricoeur have to tell us about who we are? Well, not very much, and rightly so. Ricoeur can't nor should he have anything to say about who I am; only I can and those who know me. Selfhood is a practice, a project, a performative process for which I can give a semantic or narrative account. But only you can tell me your story and I can tell you mine.*<sup>230</sup>

*Ipse* is something that is unique, that is only our own. Asking someone about their *ipse* identity is asking someone for every etiquette they tend to put on themselves. Having that in mind, this is purely an individual category; a category which is constantly in a destructive dialectic with the *idem* identity. This interplay of destructivity forms a fragile subject, a wounded *self*, a narrative identity.

### **3.0. Ontological Referent of the Narrative Conception of *the Self***

Now, we should open some questions regarding Ricoeur and the narrative conception of *the self* in general. First and foremost, we should compare Ricoeur with other notable philosophers who argue for this notion and address the ways in which

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<sup>229</sup> P. Ricoeur, (1992.) *Oneself as Another*, University of Chicago press, Chicago, p. 123.

<sup>230</sup> H. Venema, (2000.) *Paul Ricoeur of Refigurative Reading and Narrative Identity in Symposium*, vol.4, no.2., p. 245.

we can still hold the narrative conception of *the self*, even if Ricoeur's theory itself cannot give a full account upon which we can answer certain counterarguments.

The first question would be concerning the existence of *the self*. What is this notion which we call *the self*? And by which means do we use it? This is, of course, a fundamental question with a metaphysical background. For Ricoeur, as we have seen, *the self* gets its meaning from the correlation with other notions which constitute his philosophical system. However, he just assumes the existence of this *self*. To answer this question, it would be useful to make a slight comparison between John Locke and Daniel Dennett. The first philosopher has explored the question of the substance of *the self*, which is quite influential to the contemporary identity debate<sup>231</sup>, while the second philosopher will prove that, even if *the self* does not have a substance or does not have its basis in reality, it does not deprive us of conceiving it in the narrative terms. After which we will turn back to Ricoeur and see how we can respond using the method of narrative hermeneutics and see if it can still stand.

Without hesitation, let us start with Locke's account on *the self* to build the argument. Locke's account of *the self* has a dimension of practicality, one which is at the center of this project. If we were to think about political and moral deliberation, we would need to put a subject which could do exactly that, deliberate about moral and political questions. Locke's account, according to Marya Schechtman, links personal identity with the practical judgments.<sup>232</sup> Before that step, Locke offers a general view – the identity of a human being is nothing else but a participation in a

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<sup>231</sup> Marya Schechtman argues that Locke's account of *the self* is very influential to the theory of the personal identity in the contemporary discussions. From – M. Schechtman, (2014.), *Staying Alive: Personal Identity, Practical Concerns and the Unity of a Life*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 10. More so, Eric Olson in his famous theory of organisms and life offers a Lockean account which proves the necessity of Locke's contribution. From – E. Olson, (2007.), *What are We? A Study in Personal Ontology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 29.

<sup>232</sup> M. Schechtman, (2014.), *Staying Alive: Personal Identity, Practical Concerns and the Unity of a Life*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 10.

life which is temporally continued, and which is organized and united within one body.<sup>233</sup>

This is but a simple claim which gives a category of continuation and structure to our lives. We also find this in Ricoeur's theory, as we have seen. On the other hand, Locke has also given a similar categorization of living organisms, such as plants. What is the key difference between the identity of a human being and a living being? Human beings are subsumed under the category of the living being, however, we still possess something which other living beings do not. According to Locke, that something is reason and reflection which is a necessary part of our consciousness.

*This being premised, to find wherein personal identity consists, we must consider what person stands for; which, I think, is a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places; which it does only by that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking, and, as it seems to me, essential to it: it being impossible for anyone to perceive without perceiving that he does perceive.*<sup>234</sup>

This also begs another distinction – between a human and a person. We can conceive the idea of a man/woman that does not have the attributes of a person.<sup>235</sup> In short, to be a person, one has to have their own identity. This brings us to a key issue in discussing Locke: the location of identity and, more broadly, the nature of identity itself. Locke is a philosopher who incorporates his version of epistemology, that is to say, he proposes an empiricist approach in which we subsume our experience under ideas. Identity, according to Locke, is nothing more than an idea itself which is used based on its application. Regarding this, identity is an idea which we attribute to something for that something to have an identity. So, identity is not

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<sup>233</sup> J. Locke, (1999.), *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Pennsylvania State University, Electronic Classic Series, p. 315.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.* p. 318.

<sup>235</sup> This distinction proves to be one of the hot topics when it comes to the ethics of responsibility and moral agency in the contemporary discourse.

the same as a human, person nor substance, it is an idea which we attain from our consciousness.<sup>236</sup> Consciousness, according to Locke, unites the spiritual and material substance into what we call a person.<sup>237</sup> And from there on, Locke opens the practical realm of the person, that is to say, he provides a theory of action. According to Locke, “person” is a forensic term which is appropriating actions and their merit.<sup>238</sup> This practical sphere, as noted by Schechtman, plays a key role in Locke’s account of a personal identity.<sup>239</sup> Important thing to note, for Schechtman is the consequence of what thinking about the person in the forensic terms brings to the table.

*...set the limits of a single person as the limits within which questions about responsibility and self-interest are appropriately raised. Here the person is considered as a “forensic unit”—a suitable target about which particular forensic questions can be raised and judgments made.*<sup>240</sup>

According to this analysis, being a person also means having judgments which are of ethical relevance. To put it into perspective, persons, in the Lockean sense, are those who are capable of moral and political deliberation. In this matter, Locke would have no problem in corresponding morality upon the idea of a *self*.

Now, the important issue arises – are we basing the whole theoretical approach on the narrative self upon merely an idea of *the self*, such as Locke sees it? Rather than giving an account of *the self* which would argue for the existence of it beyond the realm of an idea, I believe that we should embrace this Lockean heritage. Namely, Daniel Dennett does something in the similar regards in his influential paper *The Self as a Center of Narrative Gravity*. In this paper, Dennett offers a conception of the narrative self which is based on the idea of *the self*. In this matter, this project will take the standpoint which Dennett takes under his approach.

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<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.* p. 316.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.* p. 330.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.* p. 331.

<sup>239</sup> M. Schechtman, (2014.), *Staying Alive: Personal Identity, Practical Concerns and the Unity of a Life*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 13.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.* p. 14.

Dennett himself is a narrativist, however, not in the same way as the narrativist theorists that were mentioned before. Schechtman also tends to elegantly offer this differentiation by putting Ricoeur, MacIntyre and Taylor in the sphere of narrative hermeneutic philosophers, while Dennett is not in this branch.<sup>241</sup> In which way does Dennett's account differ from the philosophers who hold the approach of narrative hermeneutics? Schechtman states that Dennett's view is a more minimalist one (not bound to the quest for unity and human agency)<sup>242</sup>, and I would argue, his arguments are not opposed to the narrative hermeneutics. Dennett himself mentions narrative hermeneutic approach in this paper, noting that the philosophers concerned with this approach take *the self* to be at the center of their interpretative method.<sup>243</sup> In this paper, however, Dennett argues that *the self* is a fiction and has an ontological status of a theoretical presupposition. In this way, Dennett might differ from the philosophers taking the narrative hermeneutic approach, although, that does not mean that their outlook on the narrative self is different. I shall try to expand on this claim a bit later. But first, let us see what Dennett has to say about *the self*.

The connection between the center of gravity and *the self* is, at first glance, quite non-existent. But Daniel Dennett tends to make a very interesting connection between these two notions in a very lucid manner. Dennett introduces us to the concept of the center of gravity which is one of the concepts which Newtonian physics incorporates.<sup>244</sup> It is very useful in order to make predictions, to have it as a tool for further exploration etc. Sadly, it is only an abstractum, a theorist's assumption, a fictional object even though it has an important place in the discourse on physics.<sup>245</sup> According to Dennett, the same thing can be said about the notion of *the self*. In relation to the concept of the center of gravity, *the self* is an abstractum as well, only

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<sup>241</sup> M. Schechtman, (2011.), *The Narrative Self* in *The Oxford Handbook of the Self*, p. 396.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.* p. 398.

<sup>243</sup> D. Dennett, (1992.), *The Self as a Center of Narrative Gravity* in *Self and Consciousness: Multiple Perspectives*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale, New York, p. 105.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.* p. 103.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.* p. 104.

in, what Dennett calls, people-physics.<sup>246</sup> And this people-physics is, returning to the earlier topic, the approach taken by narrative hermeneuticist philosophers. But why do we tend to think that there is a *self* in the first place? What causes us to take this leap?

Taking Dennett's example into account, we can gain an insight into why he thinks this is a mistake. Take into consideration the relation between the real-*self* and the fictional-*self*. When we read a novel from author X about character Y, is that character Y the same as an author X? The simple answer would be a definite "no". We would assume that author X is the real *self*, while character Y is a fictional self. To take this example even further, the same can be said about the fictional characters in the movies. When, as an example, William Dafoe portrays a character "he" in the movie *Antichrist* by Lars von Trier, he is not William Dafoe.<sup>247</sup> We are not looking at the actor's real *self*, but a fictional one which actor represents. As the story unfolds, we learn about "him" and his life struggles, tendencies, goals, and relationships, not Dafoe's. Therefore, according to Dennett, we conclude that there is a difference between the real-*self* and a fictional-*self*.<sup>248</sup> But this conclusion is misleading.

Dennett asks us to imagine a machine that can write a novel<sup>249</sup> about a fictional character called Gilbert.<sup>250</sup> In regard to Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*<sup>251</sup>, the novel starts with "Call me Gilbert". This begs the following question – who is Gilbert? The answer to this question attacks two presuppositions. The first one states that there must be a real-*self* in order for a fictional-*self* to be produced. The second one being an extension of the first one that *the self* is grounded on something else rather

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<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.* p. 105.

<sup>247</sup> L. v. Trier, (2010.), *Antichrist*, Entertainment One.

<sup>248</sup> D. Dennett, (1992.), *The Self as a Center of Narrative Gravity in Self and Consciousness: Multiple Perspectives*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale, New York, p. 107.

<sup>249</sup> At the time when Dennett has written his text, this has seemed like a fictional situation. Now we can bare witness to the movies, stories and novels which are, indeed, constructed by the AI.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.* p. 107.

<sup>251</sup> Which starts with "Call me Ishmael". From H. Melville, (2008.), *Moby Dick; or The Whale*, The Project Gutenberg EBook, p. 10.

than being an abstractum. If we were to read this novel, we would consider Gilbert as a fictional-*self* and construct him based on our interpretative power which derives meaning from the text based on the author's style, the context of the text and the culture in which that text is based on. Fictional-*self* is an abstract that is a product of our interpretation, both on extrapolation and implication.<sup>252</sup>

The second claim following from the first one is that the real-*self* is also a fictional construct. *The self* is, indeed, constituted by the narrative, but constituted from the self-told one. If we consider our lives as an autobiography, *the self* is also a fictional character which we construct based on the experiences in our lives. Dennett connects this form of narration to the biological necessity of our brain, something similar to what was tackled in the first chapter of this project.<sup>253</sup> Our brain narrates the story based on the circumstances we have been a part of, as well as the experiences we have lived through. Following from that, the real-*self* and the fictional-*self* have the same ontological origin, both of them are merely ideas which we constitute by storytelling.

The difference between these two *selves* is found within, I would argue, what we will call the mode of perceiving and the mode of perception. If we follow the method of differentiating between the social and the literary narrative, we can argue that there is a different mode of perception. When we perceive the *selves* within the literary narrative, we are very much aware that the *selves* within those stories are already determined as a part of *another* story. We do constitute them based on our experience and the social narrative from which we gain that experience, however, they cannot be influenced by our actions, nor our attempts to rewrite their history. They are a product of a fantasy which has derived data from a certain social narrative for it to open the door for the perceiver to constitute that character. On the other hand, following from MacIntyre's emphasis that we are merely (and sometimes less

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<sup>252</sup> D. Dennett, (1992.), *The Self as a Center of Narrative Gravity in Self and Consciousness: Multiple Perspectives*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale, New York, p. 105.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.* p. 108.

than) the co-authors of our own stories<sup>254</sup>, we are living within the social narrative which brings us towards interaction with other *selves* which both influence us as well as the fact that we influence them. It is within these interactions that morality arises based on the intelligibility of our actions towards those who have the mode of perceiving.<sup>255</sup> The key difference, therefore, between the real-*self* and the fictional-*self* is in the perception of those *selves* being either in the social narrative, or the literary narrative and their ability to influence the story itself.

Strengths of this view emerge within the realm of the psychological. Namely, in the first chapter, we have stressed psychological phenomena which fragment the linearity of the story, such as various defense mechanisms which we use to protect ourselves from mental trauma, as well as post-traumatic phenomena. One of the more interesting ways to think about the continuity of *the self* is the terms of FMS (false memory syndrome). Even without FMS, our memories are wrong on a constant basis.<sup>256</sup> And not only that, but our memories are also prone to changing from t1 till t2. Time tends to distort our experiences, and there is also our need to transform them in order to compliment (or judge) ourselves from the current perspective. The more extreme case is, of course, FMS in which a subject X completely changes the memory of an experience in t1. FMS is a result of various reasons, and the memories can be transformed by subject X, as well as implemented by a subject Y.<sup>257</sup> This poses a challenge to the theorists who assume the capability of *the self* to navigate towards

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<sup>254</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 213.

<sup>255</sup> This does not mean that our morality is only limited to the real-*selves* who can have a mode of perception.

<sup>256</sup> A. Krauss, (2005.), *False Memories in Scientific American Mind*, vol. 16., no. 4., p. 14.

<sup>257</sup> Saul Kassin illustrates this by giving an example of Paul Ingram, a religious man accused of committing horrific crimes. After going through various investigations, procedures of hypnosis, and confessions, he was finally coerced into “recollecting” his memories of those deeds. Even though he has admitted to those acts and went to prison, the evidence was never found, on the contrary. This example is used to show that memories can be implemented in those who suffer from malleable memory or in those who are simply stressed, fatigued, or under the influence of alcohol or drugs. From S. Kassin, (1997.), *False Memories Turned against the Self in Psychological Inquiry*, vol. 8., no. 4, p. 301.

a *telos* or an action which depends on the intelligibility with the past experiences. If having fallacious memories is a general occurrence, does that mean that we are not producing the authentic autobiographical narrative? The worst-case question could be – are the people with FMS *selves*? Dennett's approach could incorporate these mental phenomena within his narrative self by stating that, even though our mental states are not always stable and most of the time it is on the contrary, we still narrate through those states. A person with FMS has a comprehensive narrative which does include false memories; however, they constitute *the self*, nonetheless. If *the self* is an abstractum, a mental phenomenon, it is constituted by mental phenomena which also include false memories. The same goes for other mental deviations.

Ricoeur's view, on the other hand, might suffer from the occurrence of mental deviations. Joan McCarthy stresses this issue in the following manner:

*Essentially, my objection to Ricoeur's position is that his delineation of "self-examination" as a mode of "self-knowledge" makes the assumption that the aims and methods of these operations are uncontested and transparent.*<sup>258</sup>

What McCarthy wants to show is that Ricoeur puts too much emphasis on the examined life which gives birth to the notion of the narrative self. However, as the author notes, our lives are quite fragmented and piecemeal to be easily taken as unities in the goal of achieving this self-examination that the examined life requires.<sup>259</sup> I will, after comparing Dennett's view with Ricoeur's, argue against this claim. Ricoeur's theory is much more flexible and can expand on Dennett's view, something that McCarthy notes in the finishing remarks of the book.<sup>260</sup>

So, what is the connection between the narrative hermeneutic view and Dennett's view? Schechtman states something on this note - *on the former view* (view of narrative hermeneutics), *there are genuine human selves whose self-conception and mode of life constitute their selfhood; on the latter* (Dennett's view) *there are no*

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<sup>258</sup> J. McCarthy, (2007.), *Dennett and Ricoeur on the Narrative Self*, Humanity Books, New York, p. 231.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.* p. 231.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.* p. 244.

*such things.*<sup>261</sup> I believe that this is true in the comparison of their philosophical approaches. The question which follows from that is – what does that leave us with? As the main philosopher chosen for this chapter is Ricoeur, as his theoretical approach of the narrative self is the most comprehensive one, he shall be taken as the main source for the narrative hermeneutics approach. I would tend to argue that Ricoeur’s theory passes Dennett’s challenge, and it embraces his concern about the ontological status of the narrative self. Ricoeur is never explicit when it comes to the ontological status of *the self* in the first place. McCarthy, when comparing the theoretical opus of Ricoeur and Dennett, favors Ricoeur’s notion of the narrative self by basing it on something which is prior to Dennett’s naturalistic approach<sup>262</sup>.<sup>263</sup> McCarthy stresses back on the distinction that Ricoeur makes between the psychological and neuroscientific approach<sup>264</sup>, or, as we have mentioned in the introductory sub-chapter, the subjective and objective, the phenomenological and scientific. With this in mind, Dennett’s objection resides in the field of the neuroscientific, that is, on the objective status of *the self*.<sup>265</sup> But, it is still hard to find an ontological basis of *the self* even if we were to embrace the purely psychological notion. Ricoeur, however, never talks about the ontological basis of *the self*, on the contrary, he embraces the ambiguity of it. Furthermore, I agree with McCarthy in his reading of Ricoeur, that is, the consequence of this reading is that, for Ricoeur, *the concept of the self does not have an ontological referent – it is not a thing, a substance, organization, or a further*

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<sup>261</sup> M. Schechtman, (2011.), *The Narrative Self in The Oxford Handbook of the Self*, p. 398.

<sup>262</sup> I would note that Dennett does indeed take a naturalistic approach since his starting position is the capability of the human brain to construct narratives. However, this approach differs from the version of naturalism we were criticizing in the first chapter by it being a much milder version.

<sup>263</sup> J. McCarthy, (2007.), *Dennett and Ricoeur on the Narrative Self*, Humanity Books, New York, p. 248.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.* p. 248.

<sup>265</sup> This objection seems very interesting since Dennett himself proposes a heterophenomenological method to distinguish between psychological language and brain sciences. Heterophenomenological method is very similar to what Ricoeur is trying to do and that is combine phenomenology with the scientific method, or, in this Dennett’s case, neurosciences. From – D. Dennett, (1991.), *Consciousness Explained*, Penguin Books, London, p. 70. – 98.

fact.<sup>266</sup> For Ricoeur, *the self* is a culturally mediated unity which is a condition of human existence. This is best seen in his description of his project in his *Intellectual Autobiography*:

*I distanced myself from a self-consciousness that would be immediate, direct, and transparent to itself, and pleaded instead for the necessity of a detour by the signs and the works displayed in the cultural world.*<sup>267</sup>

When we read this paragraph and turn back to the introductory chapter on Ricoeur, we see that *the self* is a unity between our capability to narrate our lives and the derivation of the cultural signs (or, in the words of this project, social narrative data). For further explanation, we can consider Foucault's notice that the process of self-constitution (and self-knowledge) was not the same in every tradition, or, in Foucault's words, in every *episteme*<sup>268</sup>. Foucault asks us to compare Stoic Greco-Roman process of self-constitution with the Christian monastic ones. On the one hand, Stoic Greco-Roman practice of self-constituting is by pursuing self-knowledge as the means of attaining the mastery over our minds and bodies (in short; of *the self*). On the other hand, Christian monastic practices of self-constitution were, paradoxically, based on renouncing *the self*.<sup>269</sup> Returning to the first chapter of this project, this way of perceiving *the self* would be completely in line with MacIntyre's. If rationality itself is a traditional practice, then self-constitution, as another practice, must arise from it. There is no reason to think that Ricoeur's philosophical notion of

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<sup>266</sup> J. McCarthy, (2007.), *Dennett and Ricoeur on the Narrative Self*, Humanity Books, New York, p. 248.

<sup>267</sup> P. Ricoeur, (1995.), *Intellectual Autobiography* in *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur* by L. E. Hahn, Open Court, Chicago, p. 19.

<sup>268</sup> The notion of *episteme* would be a scientifically truth-based system which is dominant in one particular point in time. From – M. Foucault, (1989.), *The Order of Things*, Routledge, London, p. 35. This would be compatible with MacIntyre's notion of tradition, both *episteme* and tradition share the same premise, that rationality is contextually dependent and that it is based on the cultural restraints which change.

<sup>269</sup> M. Foucault, (1988.), *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, p. 47.

*the self* would be opposed to it as well and, by taking it to the furthest of consequences, it would also answer Dennett's challenge.

Following from this discussion, it would be worth sketching *the self*. By having started with John Locke, we have embraced the view that *the self* is an idea. If so, then this idea must be grounded within our experience. The *self* which this project takes as a starting position corresponds to our experience of an amalgam of our capability to narrate and to derive meaning on the one hand, and our objective categorization (an expanded view of *ipse* and *idem* identity). I would embrace the fact that *the self* is a fictional idea, however, an idea which is based on our capabilities to derive meaning from the social narrative and to narrate. The capability to derive social narrative meaning gives us data to operate with, while the ability to narrate structuralizes that data. If our actions and experience are intelligible to the context, based on the contextualist assumption we have started from, then *the self* which is structured from them is tradition dependent. On the other hand, categories which are external (such as numerical identity, structural identity, uninterrupted continuity, and permanence in time) are also put into the equation. And by stressing the importance of everything that has been said, we have an idea of *the self*, of the narrative self.

#### **4.0. The Defense of the Narrative: Against Strawson's Thesis of Narratoscepticism**

Now that we have determined the nature of the narrative self which this project is considering, it would be of major importance to pose an answer to the most famous contemporary challenge to this view posed by Galen Strawson. The reason why this is the issue that needs to be addressed lies in its length and the impact it had on the contemporary academic field. If this project deals with the narrativist theory, it simply cannot leave Strawson's challenge unanswered. The first step is, therefore, for us to get familiar with his argument which has changed over the years during his

discussion with Marya Schechtman. Given the significance of the debate between narratosceptics and narrativists, it is essential to outline Strawson's position, known as narratoscepticism.

Strawson's view is primarily aimed at challenging two key positions within narrative theory – psychological narrativity thesis (PNT) and the ethical narrativity thesis (ENT), both which this project argues for.<sup>270</sup> Firstly, we shall consider Strawson's attack on the psychological narrativity thesis. The philosophers which Strawson directly mentions as endorsing the narrativist thesis are MacIntyre, Taylor, Ricoeur and Schechtman.<sup>271</sup> This critique stands on the grounds of differentiating between diachronic and the episodic notions of *the self*. By diachronic and episodic notions of *the self*, Strawson means the following:

(Diachronic) *one naturally figures oneself, considered as a self, as something that was there in the (further) past and will be there in the (further) future.*<sup>272</sup>

(Episodic) *one does not figure oneself, considered as a self, as something that was there in the (further) past and will be there in the (further) future.*<sup>273</sup>

Considering these definitions in the light of our earlier portrayal of the narrative self, one might notice that Strawson's argument attacks the continuation theory. Connecting it back to the earlier discussion, based on Ricoeur's theory, this would mean problematizing uninterrupted continuity and permanence in time. But let us expand on this a little bit later, for now, the focus will be on presenting Strawson's position.

Now, Strawson introduces the notions of the narrative and non-narrative which are correlated to the episodic and diachronic notions of *the self*. According to Strawson, diachronics are usually narrative, while episodics are usually non-narrative.<sup>274</sup> Although this is based on the given distinctions usually the case, it is not

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<sup>270</sup> G. Strawson, (2004.), *Against Narrativity in Ratio (New Series)*, vol. XVII, no. 4., p. 429.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid*, p. 434. – 437.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid*, p. 430.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid*, p. 430.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid*, p. 430.

always so. There are four models of *the self*, or, as Strawson would call them, four temporal temperaments based on the combination of the categories offered. The combinations also determine the truth value of the PNT and ENT in their relation.<sup>275</sup>

1. PNT and ENT are true. This is the idea that is endorsed within this project. If both PNT and ENT are true, then we are deeply narrative in our deliberation and the right ethical act, or a just political decision is based on the intelligibility of it within a specific narrative structure.
2. PNT is true, ENT is false. This truth value relation means that we are narrative in our thinking, but that has nothing to do with our morality. Even if we think in the narrative terms, it is by no means good (nor bad, for that matter) to act within this narrative structure. Strawson's examples for this idea are the stoics and Sartre's character Antoine Roquentin, the protagonist of *La Nausea*.
3. PNT is false, ENT is true. In this instance, we are not narrative in our thinking, however, we *should* be. The narrative in this instance becomes ideal that we need to strive for because it guides our ethical actions. The model view upon which this value relation is based is Plutarchian moralism.<sup>276</sup>
4. Both PNT and ENT are false. This position encompasses the view which Strawson endorses. If it is true, then not all people think within the narrativist terms, and we do not need a narrative for us to live a good life.

Taking into account these combinations, Strawson is arguing for combination 4. which necessarily means rejecting 1. By my reading of Strawson, the emphasis is rather put on attacking the position which states that the PNT is an objective mental state of every healthy individual and that ENT is necessary for us to live moral lives

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<sup>275</sup> G. Strawson, (2010.), *Narrativity and Non-narrativity in WIREs Cognitive Science*, p. 775.

<sup>276</sup> Plutarch is a philosopher who has developed a notion of the narrative technique, a way in which we train our ethical assessment using first-person references, apostrophes, utterances comments, references etc. from C. S. Chrysanthou, (2018.), *Plutarch's Parallel Lives: Narrative Technique and Moral Judgment*, De Gruyter, Berlin.

and not so much on episodic self/ethics. The episodic part of Strawson's theory is a byproduct of his rejection of both PNT and ENT. This is not to say that some people are not narrative in their thinking, on the contrary; Strawson admits that many of us are, indeed, deeply narrative. But what it is important to stress is the fact that some of us are not. We gain the intuition for this once we start reading the way he writes about this subject. He calls out both narrative individuals and episodic individuals for the thought process which points to the fact that we are biologically different. In his book, *The Subject of Experience*, Strawson states this:

*To be Narrative, as I will use the term, is to have a certain psychological characteristic. It is in the first instance a natural disposition, even if it's open to cultivation. Narrativity, or the lack of it, is a natural dimension of human psychological difference, whatever the possible effects of training or cultural influence.*<sup>277</sup>

This fact is deeply rooted in Strawson's metaphysics of the *I*, or, using the already established concepts of this project, the metaphysics of *the self*.<sup>278</sup> There is a differentiation in what we *are* and what *I* is. We are all human beings, that is true for all of us, however, the *I*, or *the self*, is something which deals with the inner subject of experience.<sup>279</sup> Two things are derivable from this:

1. *The self* is both biological and cultural.
2. Different people have different ways of experiencing *the self*, or better yet, the subject of their experience.

The first claim opens the door for discussing the premises upon Strawson building his theory while the second claim is probably the key claim which Strawson uses to attack narrativity. Strawson is pretty much clear on this fact – *the key claim is*

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<sup>277</sup> G. Strawson, (2017.), *The Subject of Experience*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 106.

<sup>278</sup> Whenever the concept of the "*I*" arises in Strawson's writing, I will use the concept of *the self* in order to have a coherent argumentative process since there is no clear difference between the *I* and *the self*.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.* p. 75.

that human beings differ.<sup>280</sup> He takes into consideration that we have Daniel Dennett's as the bearers of narrativity and we have Bob Dylan's as the one of the bearers of episodicity. There is a whole discussion opening which concerns both claims, but they will be left after outlining Strawson's theoretical approach.

The important thing is for us to understand in which way does Strawson defends this distinction. When we provide a theoretical outline, there is always a need for examples, and the examples that Strawson uses are – dead writers (e.g., Henry James, Samuel Hanagid etc.) and himself. His arguments for episodicity usually come from his personal perspective and the perspective of his reading of the authors mentioned. The consequence of these examples is that some of us cannot comprehend what it's like to be episodic apart from imagining this type of psychological configuration based on our experience. Strawson stresses this for himself when he reads the narrativist authors, they are, as he states, completely alien to him.<sup>281</sup> What is meant to be shown by stressing out Strawson's examples is the following – if there is a subject X that thinks of him/herself as an episodic under the premise that most of us are narrative, is it relevant to his/her view to be taken as something to consider? At best, Strawson's view could be used to limit the scope of the narrativity thesis, but could it really impact it in such a way to make it obsolete? If we, for example, state that to lead a normal ethical life, one should have a specific set of characteristics one needs to fulfil. The role of psychopaths, for example, presents itself as a critical question in the broader inquiry into general ethics. Some studies show that there are less than 1% of psychopaths when taking into consideration the world population<sup>282</sup> Do psychopaths consider morality in the same way in which the non-psychopaths do? The answer is, I believe, a clear no. Should we reconfigure our view of ethics just so we can fit in the people with psychopathic conditions? This is an important question and the answer to it has interesting

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<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.* p. 109.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.* p. 110.

<sup>282</sup> R. D. Hare, (1994.), *Predators: The Disturbing World of the Psychopaths among Us in Psychology Today*, vol. 27, p. 55-63.

implications. If the answer is “yes”, one would have to broaden up their ethical theory in a way in which the moral requirements for an ethical act are so general, they would be detached from moral richness that our moral lives entail. If the answer is “no”, one would have to carry on talking about ethics without considering the ones that have the condition which does not enable them to fulfil the requirements of a reasonable ethical agent.

This consequence of a “yes” is that we should reshape the theory of *the self* for it to encompass the episodics. This is what Strawson is after and the question which I would like to pose is – is it justified? Strawson notices the consensus in the academic sphere that the narrative notion of *the self* is currently the most powerful account.<sup>283</sup> I would argue that it is rightfully so, noting the explanatory power it has brought to the spheres of philosophy, psychology, and neuroscience in the ways in which were mentioned beforehand. Posing a challenge to this account is a necessary move, however, I’d argue that Strawson needs to be much more convincing in his hypothesis in the sense of providing evidence for his claim apart from the subjective experience of himself and the number of others. James Battersby notices the same problem with Strawson’s position, namely, he states that upon numerous readings of Strawson’s position, we can start to see that his position is not at all clear and not precisely defined.<sup>284</sup> The claims that Strawson makes, according to Battersby, are mostly supported by counterarguments against narrativity than the arguments for episodicity and he never really shows the direct alternative to the relation between the narrativity and *the self*.

We can also provide further criticism of Strawson’s claim in this instance. The critique is concerned with the premise that *the self* is both biologically and culturally dependent. In examining the biological condition of *the self*, one addresses the question of whether an individual is predisposed to be inherently narrativist or episodic. If *the self* is both biologically *and* culturally dependent, one would be able

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<sup>283</sup> G. Strawson, (2017.), *The Subject of Experience*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 107.

<sup>284</sup> J. L. Battersby, (2006.), *Narrativity, Self and Self-Representation*, in *Narrative* vol. 14, no. 1., p. 28.

to change one's natural disposition of perceiving oneself through the social means. Consider that we have a person X and a person Y. X is deeply narrative while Y is deeply episodic by their biological means. How could we change X to be episodic and Y to be narrativist? Under the assumption that there is a thing such a social narrative, a notion which has been argued for in the earlier chapter, one would need to decipher that narrative. By deciphering that narrative, we find ourselves within the social context. Our actions need to be intelligible within that context, we learn the norms and the rules which govern the morality of our actions. If our actions need to be intelligible within this context, we must understand ourselves as actors within that context. That necessarily entails the narrative constitution of *the self*. The episodic *self*, in order to be an agent whose actions are intelligible, needs to constitute him/herself as a narrative agent to be able to answer the various requests that the social context imposes on his/her moral life. Hence, subject Y can become narrativist to orient him/herself within the social world which is contextual. As Blagojević argues, narrativist account (Schechtman's account) is much more heterogeneous and can answer various conflicts that can arise within *the self* and within the context. In contrast to this, Strawson's view is quite impersonal.<sup>285</sup>

This raises another question – in which instance could a subject X become episodic? I'd argue that there are two instances in which someone can become episodic and argue against one of them. The first instance concerns traumatic experiences. Past trauma might influence us to disregard the past and may have a direct influence on our future. To sustain traumatic experience may lead an individual to find him/herself within a world that has no meaning, possibility, and progress for a goal-directed activity.<sup>286</sup> In this instance, narrating your own life becomes harmful and we become to experience ourselves as episodic.

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<sup>285</sup> B. Blagojević, (2018.), *The Narratosceptic's Argument – The Schechtman-Strawson Debate Revisited*, in *Od Narativa do Narativnosti*, p. 203.

<sup>286</sup> M. Ratcliffe, M. Ruddell, B. Smith, (2014.), *What is a "Sense of Foreshortened Future"? A Phenomenological Study of Trauma, Trust and Time*, in *Frontiers of Psychology* vol. 5, p. 7.

Secondly, the case of ideology arises. There is also criticism that Strawson's person modeled under the notion of episodicity is a perfect fit for the neoliberal capitalistic society.<sup>287</sup> If a person is detached from the past and the future and, if only the present matters, the consumerist way of life seems like the perfect fit for that kind of individual. Therefore, the episodic self is ideological rather than phenomenological.<sup>288</sup> Tracing back to our main issue, we can make a claim that a person X can become an episodic by being influenced by the neoliberal consumerist ideology. This would be a second instance in which the narrativist can become episodic.

In this instance, I would like to provide a twofold criticism. Firstly, I would address the second way in which a narrativist can become episodic. To be able to hold an ideology is to take a political stance. Referring to Michael Freeden, ideology is constituted and formed from the distinctive clusters of political concepts.<sup>289</sup> Based on the premise of this project that we derive meaning of these concepts from a contextual way of life, political ideology is shaped within one social narrative. This is also argued by Raul Lejano and Shondel Nero who find that ideologies are formed from social narratives.<sup>290</sup> As it was argued earlier, to be able to understand a social narrative is to be able to think within the notions that it offers and to act in the way which is intelligible. The neoliberal capitalist ideology is still an ideology to be held by an individual and, therefore, the individual becomes a bearer of the narrative, making the individual narrativist. However, if an individual does not hold an ideology and merely goes through, what Mark Fisher would call – depressive hedonia, a state in which someone consumes the products in order to feel pleasure without feeling

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<sup>287</sup> B. Blagojević, (2020.), *We Have No Future: Teaching Philosophy to Narratosceptic Students*, in *Godišnjak za pedagogiju*, p. 80.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.* p. 81.

<sup>289</sup> M. Freeden, (1996.), *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p. 48.

<sup>290</sup> R. P. Lejano, S. J. Nero, (2020.), *The Power of Narrative: Climate Skepticism and the Deconstruction of Science*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 23.

pleasure<sup>291</sup>, he/she can still be episodic. But that begs the question, if episodicity can be either a post traumatic psychological condition or, rather an apolitical passivity, is it truly reasonable to take it into consideration? Reminiscing on the example with psychopaths and ethics, the answer to this question would be a *no*.

The stage is set to conclude this sub-chapter which engages in an assessment and critique of Strawson's narratosceptic theory of *the self*. First and foremost, we have provided an overview of Strawson's theoretical basis, in which he argues that episodics do coexist alongside diachronics. Strawson challenges the idea that all individuals are narrative in their self-constitution, proposing instead that certain people perceive themselves as episodic subjects detached from continuous narratives. Nevertheless, this paper questions Strawson's narratosceptic theory by presenting certain challenges to it. One important critique focuses on Strawson's lack of empirical evidence as far as the notion of an episodic self is concerned. His focus is primarily on his own experiences and the experiences of literary characters and writers/artists who are no longer alive. This raises the question of the generalizability of his conclusions to a wider range of people.

Secondly, this sub-chapter also argues that episodicity can be a result of traumatic experiences or ideological factors. The argument that this sub-chapter establishes is based on Strawson's premises in his metaphysics of *the self*. If his premises are correct, then it is important to examine whether *the self* can shift from being diachronic to episodic and vice-versa. After tackling the multiple ways in which a diachronic *self* can become episodic, we ascertain that the result is rather vague. On the one hand, even if a person who has a diachronic constitution of *the self* can become episodic, those examples, as stated, are an effect of trauma. On the other hand, the second way in which *the self* can shift from being diachronic to being episodic could be a result of an ideological framework in which a person finds him/herself. After considering the multiple ways in which a diachronic *self* can become episodic, we can infer that episodicity is likely a result of a traumatic past and, thus,

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<sup>291</sup> M. Fisher, (2010.), *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?*, Zero Books, Winchester, p. 22.

it is not viable to change the dominant theory of *the self* in order to accommodate episodicity. This sub-chapter concludes that, at most, Strawson's theory only limits PNT (psychological narrativity thesis) and does not provide a well-established alternative.

### **5.0. Concluding Remarks: The Psychological Narrativity Thesis**

In retrospect, this chapter has explored the narrative notion of *the self*. Firstly, we have chosen Ricoeur's theory as a direct representative of this view. The reason for this is its compatibility with narrative hermeneutics, the view which links the social narrative with the narrative identity theory. After the outline of Ricoeur, there was a need to defend this theory in two ways. The first one is determining what is the basis of this theory (that is, where is this narrative located) and, secondly, defending it from its most prominent critique, Galen Strawson. By doing so, I believe the door is opened for the theoretical consideration of the narrative *self* and the social narrative to be taken as a unity and as a basis of the communitarian part of my theory, as well as a constitutive part of the model for rational deliberation. If the attempt to defend this unity is successful, the theory of *the right*, or, that is to say, a deontological-liberal theory of deliberation is going to enter the picture and be correlated with this unity.

## **Application of the Theory:**

### **Assessing the Limits of The Narrativity Thesis**

#### **1.0. Introduction**

Now that we have the first two premises of this project – the social narrativity thesis and the psychological narrativity thesis, we can open a chapter in order to discuss them. To recapitulate, the first premise is that the social narrative is the primary source of our deliberation data while the second premise is that we conceive ourselves as being narrativist. The investigation so far has been purely theoretical and the examples that were used were only there to portray specific points. In this chapter, I would like to use this theoretical approach to bring this theory into the realm of the political and ethical and look at how it fits with the everyday world.

The goal of this chapter is also to show us that the conception of the narrative is necessary, but not a sufficient part of the equation for ethical and political deliberation. The claim that needs to be defended in this chapter is that the narrativity thesis offers us a substantive account of moral and political deliberation, however, not a formal one. In this chapter, I will analyze how the narrativity thesis can be applied “in the field” and show the inadequacies of this view when left without a formal component. Considering the previous chapters, four topics can be of major value to analyze, and, through the analysis, we will see the need for another part of the equation which is not only based on narrative theory. These topics, which will be this chapter’s subchapters, are as follows:

1. Intelligibility crisis
2. Exploring the relation between pluralism and the narrative
3. Moral and political progress and epistemological crisis

#### 4. Passivity of the narrative approach

In this introduction, we will give a short description of the topics and then commence with substantial investigation. By investigating these topics, we will be able to apply the theoretical abstractions put forward in the first two chapters and apply them to examples from our moral and political world.

When talking about the intelligibility crisis, we are talking about the relation between the social narrative and the narrative *self*. The key point is found in the political sentiment of nostalgia. An example of this can be provided if we consider subject X in t1 and t2. Let us imagine a situation in which the subject X has felt like he/she finds a social narrative meaningful in t1, however, he/she feels like they do not belong to the social narrative in t2. Their actions and their conception of *the self* do not seem intelligible to the social narrative in t2, and this phenomenon will be called the intelligibility crisis. The description of it will exemplify the application of the theory that was assessed in the earlier chapters, as well as extending it in the political domain.

In the first chapter, we critique MacIntyre by advocating for political pluralism, a concept often linked with liberalism. This stance supports a political framework that accommodates a diversity of perspectives, allowing for coexistence within a fair and democratic society.<sup>292</sup> In examining pluralism, we will also address the diversity of narratives that shape individuals' values, beliefs, and attitudes of the world. This plurality of narratives reflects the complex, multifaceted nature of society, where different perspectives coexist and contribute to a richer, more inclusive understanding of shared political and social life. This step had two reasons for its implementation – to reject MacIntyre's critique of modernity and to argue for the multiplicity of social goals. Since this project deals with both ethical and political deliberation, this sub-chapter will deal with the current liberal tradition and offer

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<sup>292</sup> W. A. Galston (2004.), *Liberal Pluralism: The Implications of Value Pluralism for Political Theory and Practice*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 4.

more data concerning pluralism. After doing this, we will show that there needs to be something which enables us to pursue individual interests while still respecting the boundaries of our pursuits. I will propose two principles, both derived from the theoretical foundation offered by John Rawls. These principles are concerned with reasonableness and liberty. However, I will also argue that the narrativity thesis alone cannot fully grasp how do we arise to these principles. Something will be needed to fill the gap.

From the ethical and the political topics, we will turn towards the reasoning for the ethical and political claims. The main and, seemingly, simple claim of this chapter is that the reasons are incorporated within a narrative and that the historical discussion is the main culprit of this. Some reasons for justification that were used in the past have become unreasonable, or, worse, morally unthinkable. The case to be made in this sub-chapter is the one of moral and political progress. By proposing a contextual theory of moral progress which goes hand-in-hand with the theory of narrativity, I will try to show how the narrative shifts based on the notion of the epistemological crisis that was talked about in the first chapter. The main claim here is that the narratives change over time and that there is a certain principle which guides these changes.

Lastly, the result from our earlier discussion leads us into talking about the passivity of *the self* within the narrative context. If we were to take the first two premises, social narrativity thesis and the psychological narrativity thesis, as a given and apply them to the social sphere, we end up with individuals that are passive in acquiring knowledge and leading the traditional discussion forward. The claim of this sub-chapter is that, while it is true that social narrativity is the basis for both our moral and political deliberation, it is simply not enough to paint a full picture. Our deliberation itself is an active force of deriving meaning and recreating meaning at the same time. Therefore, there needs to be a formal principle to the substance acquired from the narrative, and that formal principle is found within the theory of constructivism.

By proposing these four topics, this chapter will open the door for the fourth and final chapter which will describe the formal theory of constructivism as a reason giving procedure both in ethics and in politics. However, obviously, we would need to expand these four topics in further detail.

## **2.0. Describing Intelligibility Crisis: A Case Study of Yugoslavia**

I would like to start this chapter with a purely practical example which follows from what we have talked about in the previous chapters. We will explore one historical case study in order to illustrate the implications of what will be called the intelligibility crisis. This example will portray the conditions of changing one social structure, or a social narrative and the effects of it on the individuals who have been formed under it. The content of this subchapter will rest on the premises of the social and personal narrativity thesis and their correlation within the notion of the intelligibility crisis. We have mentioned intelligibility as one of the key concepts in the first chapter, meaning, respectively, that our actions and thoughts make sense within the boundaries of one social narrative. Intelligibility, in this project, as we have established in the first chapter, means that a subject is making sense of the social situation around him/her and acting/thinking in such a way that makes sense to do within that social status. Intelligibility crisis, in this sense, will be shown as a discontinuation of that coherency. As an example, I will use the case of former Yugoslavia and provide sufficient evidence of why the intelligibility crisis was especially relevant in that situation. Afterwards, I will explore intelligibility crisis through the lens of nostalgia and show its political and moral relevance.

Therefore, as an example, we will consider someone who grew up in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. He/she has been encumbered by one social and political system, or a narrative. Assuming that the model we have provided in the first two chapters works, this person has formed his/her *self* by deriving

meaning from the social context in which he/she found him/herself to be a part of, through the process of narrative hermeneutics. This leads us to connect the narrative notion of *the self* with the social narrative in which *the self* was formed. The person who has been raised in Yugoslavia considers him/herself to be a part of the community which has social structures, rules, norms etc. that are unique to it. Yugoslavia has been a unity of autonomous areas, an alliance between nations which have shared an economic and political unity.<sup>293</sup> Let us consider a Yugoslav narrative as N2. To fulfill the requirement of portraying the social change, we will take three narratives into consideration – pre-Yugoslav narrative, Yugoslav narrative, and post-Yugoslav narrative.

Yugoslavia is the key denominator in this relation, and it would be of major importance to describe the Yugoslav project. The idea of the unified project of the southern Slavs has been in the making through the years before its formation. The notion of creating this project also brought a fresh air of freedom for the countries at hand, since they have been under the influence of the forces such as Austria-Hungary and Ottoman Empire. Dejan Djokić stresses that the creation of this state was not only reasonable, but maybe the only choice the given countries could have made after the First World War.<sup>294</sup> That is to say, the idea of many intellectual and political circles (both Serbian, Bosnian, Croatian and Slovenian)<sup>295</sup> has achieved its actualization after the First World War in the form of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians (which would later become Yugoslavia). Decades of intellectual endeavors have made it possible for the general public to accept the idea of a unified project. As Marie-Janine Calic rightfully observes, the public has been made nationally conscious by both horizontal and vertical cultural mobilization.<sup>296</sup> For it to be achievable, Austria-

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<sup>293</sup> A. Finlan (2004.), *The Collapse of Yugoslavia 1991-99*, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, p. 13.

<sup>294</sup> D. Djokić (2018.), *Vek Jugoslavije: Kako i Zašto su Srbi, Hrvati i Slovenci Stvorili Zajedničku Državu* in *Tragovi* vol. 2, no. 1, p. 30.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.* p. 32. – 34.

<sup>296</sup> M. Calic (2019.) *A History of Yugoslavia*, Purdue University Press, Indiana, p. 40.

Hungary and Ottoman Empire needed to lose their power over the mentioned countries, and this was the consequence which arose after the First World War. Therefore, there was a need for national freedom and unity, as well as the practical and economic benefit of working together after the time of war. The Yugoslav narrative was a construct of those who were craving national freedom that was not coerced by higher powers.

The major importance of the Yugoslav narrative is in the idea of national unity being created and constituted, since it needed to be based on a specific social narrative which provided the means for the people to accept living under these conditions. To understand this, we need to refer back to the singular nationalist sentiments that were always lurking in the shadows of Yugoslavia. Vesna Pešić argues that Yugoslavia was never able to accommodate multiple nationalistic ideologies which were especially fueled after World War II.<sup>297</sup> Three nationalistic ideologies are notable in this picture and, as John R. Lampe rightfully highlights, those are of Serbian nationalism, Croatian nationalism, and Yugoslav nationalism.<sup>298</sup> Prior to the official birth of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, there was a strong ideological battle in the particular nations. On the one hand, we had a strong idea of a nation, a community which is constituted on the grounds of the shared past. Stressing the importance of the past is absolutely the key and we will soon see why that is the case. Opposite to this idea, there were, as Charles Jelavich call them, idealists who believed that Slavic people should overcome their differences and rise above the factors which have divided them within one unified state.<sup>299</sup> Sociologically speaking, Serbian and Croatian nationalism were a political reality in the nineteenth century. This political sentiment of nationalism was deeply encoded in the past and

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<sup>297</sup> V. Pešić (1996.), *Serbian Nationalism and the Origins of the Yugoslav Crisis*, United States Institute of Peace, Washington, p. 3.

<sup>298</sup> J. R. Lampe (1994.), *The Failure of Yugoslav National Idea in Studies in East European Thought* in Springer, vol.46., p. 71. – 72.

<sup>299</sup> C. Jelavich (1961.) *Serbian Nationalism and the Question of Union with Croatia in the Nineteenth Century* in *Balkan Studies*, Thessaloniki, p. 1.

has never been confronted with absolute honesty. Serbian nationalism was exactly this, a force from the past, originating in medieval times in which Serbia was a great nation.<sup>300</sup> Also, it is worthy to note the importance of the historical battle present in the nationalist narrative. Serbia, according to the nationalist picture, has always battled against the foreign forces and has, through the battle of virtue and glory, overcome all of the obstacles. The same thing can be said in regard to the Croatian nationalism. According to Davorka Matić, the root of the Croatian nationalism is in the medieval “nation Croatica”, an idea used to build foundation for the notion of the Croatian political nation.<sup>301</sup> These sentiments were carried by the political parties such as the National Party (Narodna stranka) and the Party of Rights (Stranka prava).<sup>302</sup> So, keeping that in mind, we will call this pre-Yugoslav narrative N1; a narrative based on the political affiliation with the particular states.

During the period of N2, citizens born and raised in the former Yugoslavia mostly have a different sentiment linked to their understanding of the world around them. As time went on, the idea of unity became so powerful with public opinion being completely swayed by the idea of the Yugoslav nation. This is the third nationalist sentiment mentioned before, the Yugoslav one. Aleksa Djilas notes that the values based on non-alignment (or to be precise, alignment to Yugoslavia) have held the country together and have been at the center of keeping it unified.<sup>303</sup> This idea of unity and shared practices is the basis that the “neighbors” used to form an idea of one nation under the banner of Yugoslavia.

N3 would describe a narrative which is post-Yugoslav. There were multiple

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<sup>300</sup> P. J. Cohen (1996.) *Serbia's Secret War: Propaganda and the Deceit of History*, Texas A&M University Press, Texas, p. 136.

<sup>301</sup> D. Matić, (2007.) *Is Nationalism Really That Bad? The Case of Croatia in Democratic Transition in Croatia: Value Transformation, Education & Media*, Texas A&M University, Texas, p. 327.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.* p. 327.

<sup>303</sup> A. Djilas (1995.) *Tito's Last Secret: How Did He Keep the Yugoslavs Together?* In *Foreign Affairs* vol. 74., no. 4., Council of Foreign Relations, p. 121.

reasons why Yugoslavia, as a project, didn't work. The underlying economic inefficiencies, the piling of costs, the problem of getting new foreign investors, the rise in unemployment, etc. has shaken the former nation of Yugoslavia.<sup>304</sup> When the economy of one nation starts to falter, civil disappointment follows. It was not long before trust in the very institutions started to weaken and the game of blaming one another began. During the 1980s, as one might imagine, the narrative started shifting back towards the detachment of the nations and the pro-Serbian and pro-Croatian ideal.<sup>305</sup> The craving for dominance, the need for the detachment, the longing for the past greatness has culminated during the beginning of the 1990s with the bloody Balkan wars and the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

What does this show; what does this tell us? With this very broad portrayal of the history of Yugoslavia we have tried to illustrate the short time span of the drastic social and political changes. Let us now try to formalize what was happening and how the theory given in the previous chapters can be of service to our cause. Formalization can go as follows - social narratives, as stated, will be referred to as N1 (pre-Yugoslav narrative), N2 (Yugoslav narrative) and N3 (post-Yugoslav narrative). The people that constitute the social order N1 will be referred to as P1, and the same goes for P2 and P3. Since the social narrative shapes personal narratives, the emphasis must be put on the role of the people.

By addressing the people in a given narrative structure, I am assuming the connection between the social narrative and the narrative constitution of *the self*. Since *the self*, as we have shown, is formed under the social narrative which is formative for *the self*. In this sense, those who are Px are *the selves* formed under the social narrative Nx.

Of course, it is safe to assume that this is based on a broad generalization since

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<sup>304</sup> S. P. Ramet, (2002.) *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the Fall of Milošević*, Westview Press, Colorado, p. 49.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.* p. 52.

we also need to embrace the plurality of ways of life. As stated earlier, in N1 there have been groups of people who were striving for unification of the nations and those who were striving for conservation of power. Stating this might be obvious, but it needs to be addressed. Every narrative tends to shape various people who are assessing it from a specific standpoint. Some of them are against it, while some of them affirm it. The means for affirmation or negation can be various and are often located in the form of one's life. To repeat the previous claim in this context, when I talk about Px being related to Nx, it is said that Px has been shaped by Nx. Also, I am taking Px as a group of people withholding the dominant public opinion of the given narrative. Therefore, when I talk about P1, it refers to the people who have been raised in a narrative that is strictly nationalist and it is by no means saying that there was no plurality of opinions.

Now, let us continue to talk about the relation between N1, N2, N3, and P1, P2 and P3. What happened in the first place, when the Yugoslav nation appeared, was that N1 has shifted into N2. Yet, P1 has not shifted into P2; P2 were the new generations being raised by P1. The problem arises here – you take one group of people with specific sentiments and ways of life and throw them into the new social order. Let us also assume that this new social order was more just, and the institutions were operating under the premise of equal consideration of interests. It takes both parts of the equation for the narrative to function, there needs to be an equilibrium between Px and Nx. If there is no such a thing, Px will feel thrown into the unknown, new world and, most likely, they will long for the world that they have been a part of. This is what intelligibility crisis is, a sense of disorientation in one's narrative. The actions and beliefs that we held before do not seem intelligible with the new context and we feel a sense of loss, anger, intense dislike, or rage.

There are still practices and meanings transferring from one narrative to another, as James Connelly notes<sup>306</sup>. One of the replies would be that these practices

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<sup>306</sup> J. Connelly, (2016.), *Reasoning Through Crisis, Incommensurability and Belief* in *Revue Française de*

and meanings transform their intelligibility into a wider context. P1 who is working in the bureaucracy institution does not feel that his/her efforts are having the same designatum in N1 and N2. The motive changes, in N1, the goal was promoting welfare in the national borders, while in N2, it is to promote the unified good. The consequences of this individual practice might lead to an unequal reception of people. nostalgic dream.

The same can be said for P1 shifting into N2. Now they have to live in a narrative with the people with whom they do not share this sense of belonging nor the sense of unified past. More precisely, there is a new reality, with new institutions promoting a certain kind of narrative that they cannot identify with. This feeling was, arguably, a constant sentiment that has plagued Yugoslavia. Now, when we introduce P2 into the picture, the situation becomes much more chaotic. We can differentiate between P2' and P2''. P2' refers to those individuals who have been shaped in N2 and find themselves to be national residents of Yugoslavia. P2'' are those who have been shaped in N2 as well, however, they still retain the strong sense of national belonging to the nationality which was linked with the pre-Yugoslav narrative. N3 happened because of the invocation of the sentiments that were held by P2'', awakening the past and feeding of the nostalgic feeling of the times that have passed. Neo-nationalism has swayed those that were idealizing the past and has opened the ideological battle which resulted in one of the most horrible wars since World War 2. N3, in this sense, is the new N1 while N2 has perished. In N3 we have P2 and P3, some of those who, yet again long for the past, and the ones who are affirming the present. Yet again we have an intelligibility crisis of those coming from N2. P2'' have achieved the goal of nationalization, however, the investigation shows that most of them are not happy with how the things turned out and that the majority of the ex-Yugoslav citizens think that the break-up did more harm than good.<sup>307</sup> P2' are considered

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*Civilisation Britannique*, vol. XXI, no.2., p. 9.

<sup>307</sup> E. Keating, Z. Ritter, news.gallup.com, *Many in Balkans Still See More Harm from Yugoslavia Breakdown*, site: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/210866/balkans-harm-yugoslavia-breakup.aspx>

Yugonostalgics, people that have longing towards the fallen state.<sup>308</sup>

Now, let us sum up the description given in this sub-chapter. The notion of the intelligibility crisis was described in the example of the Yugoslav narrative. We have compared the Yugoslav narrative to the post-Yugoslav and the pre-Yugoslav narrative in order to show the drastic change in how we perceive social reality. I have tried to argue that one reason in the sea of reasons for the fall of Yugoslavia was in the exploitation of the past narrative. The Yugoslav narrative was compared to the pre-Yugoslav narrative while the second one has been animated by the invocation of the sentiment of nostalgia. I have also argued that in the post-Yugoslav narrative nostalgia still remains.

However, this time, nostalgia is not the pre-Yugoslav one, but a Yugoslav one. This nostalgia is a product of the world that does not make sense to us anymore and us being unable to find ourselves intelligible within the new structure of meaning. Apart from the narrative we have had an as example, countless others still stand. Many of the conservative strivings are explained by this intelligibility crisis. In this sense, many of the newer political problems and concerns make little to no sense to the people that have been embedded within the narrative of the old. The problems of the 2000s are not the same as the problems in the 1980s. The problems in 2022. are not the same as the problems we were facing in the early 2000s etc. Race issues, gender issues, and many forms of minority issues that certain groups of people are concerned with at this very moment become meaningless or are downplayed by those who have been shaped under the narrative which had their own set of problems. This has an immense impact on the overall consensus and on political choices themselves.

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accessed: 30.03.2022.

<sup>308</sup> N. Chushak, (2003.) *Yugonostalgic against All Odds: Nostalgia for Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia among Young Leftist Activists in Contemporary Serbia*, School of Social and Political Science, University of Melbourne, p. 3.

This is what I call an intelligibility crisis – a crisis occurring when those who have been formed as themselves under one social narrative do not find meaning in another social narrative.

### **2.1. Nostalgia as an Answer to Crisis**

While talking about an empirical example is very useful, we need also to talk about the theoretical foundation. In this instance, a relation between the current narrative and the past narratives shall be explored. Namely, I would like to argue that it is not possible to return to the former narrative while being embedded within the current narrative. We cannot, for example, go from the contemporary narrative (which is, according to MacIntyre, liberalism<sup>309</sup>) to the, say, Ancient Greek narrative or the medieval narrative (for MacIntyre, Aristotelian and Thomist narratives). There cannot be any way of going back. Even the narrative, which was dominant half a century ago, is foreign to us. If so, what can we do with the claim which can be often heard throughout our everyday lives? The claim that “it used to be better before!”. This claim, when deconstructed with the theoretical tools of this project that this project deals with, can be summed up in the following manner – the past narratives have more moral power than the current one. This is something which MacIntyre holds as well, seeing that his critique of liberalism comes from invoking the past narratives. With that in mind, MacIntyre does do well when merging past notions with the contemporary narrative. However, the fact still remains – the world of the past remains closed to us. This longing for past narratives is nothing more than one nostalgic feeling for something we either have never experienced before, or for something we idealize from our past which made sense to us. In the following sub-chapter, a critique of this shall be proposed. This critique affirms Bernard Williams’

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<sup>309</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1988.) *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, p. 337.

analysis that he has provided against ethical nostalgia, a description in the form of criticism which is relevant for this cause.

“I dislike the time in which we are living in! Everything is going backwards! I wish we could turn the ship around and live in the better times!” There is clearly something unsettling in this constation. Alvin Toffler, a futurist novelist, gives rather interesting notice in this regard. He sees nostalgia as an irrational view that is influenced by the overwhelming confusion that we see all around us.<sup>310</sup> It, however, should be noted that this is not a criticism of the people holding a nostalgic sentiment. On the contrary, this sentiment arises naturally and often. Having that in mind, this criticism is directed at the banality of holding nostalgia to be a valid stance, not at the people holding it in the first place.

To my understanding, it would be worth noting two issues right away. One issue is concerned with the psychological sphere of an individual, while another issue is concerned with the political picture. One might notice, and rightfully so, that these two things are dependent on one another. Nostalgia is psychological essential for some because of one's place in the political hierarchy, and this feeling, in turn, helps sustain that hierarchy. Marcos Piason Natali's paper effectively shows this mutual dependency between psychology and politics. Namely, nostalgia was the concept used primarily as a psychological problem of recreating a new world, or, as it states – *a new way of feeling or a new way of thinking about an old feeling was entering the world.*<sup>311312</sup> The concept of nostalgia, in this instance was used as a psychological issue that is linked with an individual who is recreating one “old” world in order to escape

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<sup>310</sup> A. Toffler, (1970.) *Future Shock*, Pan, London, p. 312.

<sup>311</sup> M. P. Natali, (2004.) *History and the Politics of Nostalgia*, Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies vol. 5., no. 1., p. 10.

<sup>312</sup> The author wants to show the origin of this concept through the historical conceptual analysis. When the author takes this concept into consideration in this passage, it is worth noting that this concept is illustrated by showing us in which way Johannes Hofer, a Swiss doctor who developed this concept in 1688., used it.

the current one. It is only recently, Natali writes, that we use this concept to talk about political issues which have many similarities with what the concept originally represented.<sup>313</sup> When expanding this concept into the political realm, the nostalgics tend to recreate an old narrative and judge the current events from that standpoint, as was presented in the case of Yugoslavia.

The current analysis gains a lot of explanatory power if we introduce the instrumentalization of nostalgia for political means. This is at the core of the intelligibility crisis – nostalgia which is being used in political rhetoric takes people from the point of powerlessness into the “old” world which is, as we mentioned earlier, constructed as a need for an escape. In this “old” world, the holders of nostalgia have the power which they are lacking in the “current” one. In this “old” world, things make sense, and we find ourselves at home, as opposed to the current one. Sadly, this “old” world can have a different power structure which can be very discriminatory towards the marginalized groups and quite exclusionary. We have talked about institutional injustice and racism a bit earlier, but for the sake of expanding the depiction, another example will be given. Such an example can be seen in the ambiguous phrase “*Make America great again*”. Donna M. Goldstein and Kira Hall have analyzed this phenomenon in the following regard. This phrase that should bring forth the nationalist sentiments are also encoded with discriminatory ones such as racism<sup>314</sup>, I argue, sexism, anti-LGBTQ+ wave, nationalist exclusivity, etc. as well. This implicit stratification, paradoxically, is in the service of the stagnation of social change. Fabio B. DaSilva and Jim Faught, in the line of this thought, note that *since nostalgia appeals to an undifferentiated emotion generated by an unreal, synthetic, universal image of the past it becomes, ironically, an ahistorical defense of the status quo*.<sup>315</sup> It affirms the status quo by halting future progress while trying to revive the

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<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.* p. 10.

<sup>314</sup> K. Hall, D. M. Goldstein (2017.) *Postelection surrealism and nostalgic racism in the hands of Donald Trump* in *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, vol. 7., p. 402.

<sup>315</sup> F. B. DaSilva, J. Faught (1982.) *Nostalgia: A sphere and process of contemporary ideology* in *Qual*

past, which cannot be revived. The criticism of this, however, will be given later.

Now, we should note that this is portrayed very broadly, and that the emphasis is on the negative effects that nostalgia produces. Taken as it is, we should consider this line of thought as a fallacy. From this point, this fallacy should be given a name. Luckily enough, we need not be creative in this regard, for I believe that the perfect name was given in Woody Allen's movie *Midnight in Paris*<sup>316</sup>. To characterize it briefly, the main character of this movie idealizes Paris, or to be more precise, idealizes one specific era in Paris. I shall quote the instance of the movie from which we can acquire the name for the phenomenon we have on our hands:

*Nostalgia is denial. Denial of the painful present. The name for this denial is Golden Age thinking — the erroneous notion that a different time period is better than the one one's living in — it's a flaw in the romantic imagination of those people who find it difficult to cope with the present.*<sup>317</sup>

The quote mentioned above is in line with what is argued in this sub-chapter. Therefore, we shall say that the holders of nostalgia for the past narratives are making a Golden Age fallacy.

## **2.2. Williamsian Critique - Arguments Against Ethical Nostalgia**

Bernard Williams is one of the most cited academic philosophers when it comes to the topics of moral philosophy and politics. However, strangely enough, one rather important critique has been put under the radar. This critique is, as one might imagine, a critique of nostalgia which is offered in his book *In the Beginning There*

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*Social*, vol. 5., p. 49.

<sup>316</sup> W. Allen (2011.) *Midnight in Paris*, Motion Picture.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*

*Was the Deed*. To be fair, the critique of nostalgia is not Williams's primary focus; not in his book, and not even in the chapter in which he has given this critique. Be it as it may, Williams does offer us substance to work with and his criticism of what he calls ethical nostalgia will be split into four arguments. Therefore, this sub-chapter will incorporate the Williamsian critique of the Golden Age fallacy by showing which arguments are given by those who hold nostalgia to be a relevant source of political deliberation, after which a counterargument will be provided.

The first argument that Williams puts on the table shall be called the argument of moral and political repression. We are aware that there are many theories of progress, both moral and political.<sup>318</sup> The ones who are making a Golden Age fallacy<sup>319</sup> would, according to Williams, need an inverse theory.<sup>320</sup> If the theory of progress presupposes that we are going forward when it comes to the questions of morality and politics, a theory of regress would have to show why that is not the case. To make matters even more challenging for those committing the Golden Age fallacy, this argument is merely the starting point. They must not only demonstrate that we are failing to make moral and political progress but also provide evidence that we are, in fact, experiencing regression.

The second argument shall be considered under the label of temporal desynchronicity. This is a fancy way of saying that the Golden Age fallacy does not only have a hard time locating the specifics within one metric historical time period but does not do so at all. As Williams lucidly observes, the Golden Age fallacy is not tied to the notions such as "earlier" and "later", but to the notions such as "now" and

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<sup>318</sup> Of course, we can insert many other practices and the first that comes to mind is science, however, this sub-chapter shall only be interested in moral and political progress, although many other fields directly contribute to it.

<sup>319</sup> As noted, Williams uses the term *ethical nostalgia*, however, I will persist using the term *Golden Age fallacy* because it is much more inclusive of the phenomena that were described in the first chapter.

<sup>320</sup> B. Williams, (2005). *In the Beginning there was the Deed*, Princeton University Press. New Jersey, p. 41.

“then”<sup>321</sup>. By doing so, this negates that the “later” is dependent on the “earlier”; it provides an illusion that there was a certain “then” when “them” lived in a better social order than “we” do “now”.

Argument number three concerns the experience of nostalgia and we can, therefore, call it the argument of subjective experience. Why subjective? This is, I admit, derived from Williams’s criticism of the traditionalist Golden Age fallacy. Namely, according to him, those who endorse traditionalist nostalgia blame the modern period for the decline of traditionalist values and the rise of secular ones. It is their belief that this secularization is the key culprit of everything that is wrong with the current situation. However, as Williams notes:

*Those people are not necessarily wrong. But if their repertoire is notably the same as the traditional repertoire, we have no particular reason to think that they are right; in particular, we have no reason to think that they are right because we share, if only in certain moods, their experience of nostalgia.*<sup>322</sup>

It follows from this that each one of us feels nostalgia towards a certain glorification of the past event. However, this glorification is a subjective form of longing, we can even find it as an aesthetic category.

The final argument can be named as an argument of reactivity. Williams’s claim about the Golden Age fallacy in one regard is rather extreme in one sense, however, if we were to think about the political implications of it, we can say that it is in many ways justified. He states - *all that ethical nostalgia can generate from its own resources is, literally, reaction.*<sup>323</sup>

Nostalgia, or a Golden Age fallacy, is almost always a reaction. If we are, let us say, unhappy with institution X, we are invoking the past version of that institution in

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<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.* p. 41.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.* p. 42.

<sup>323</sup> B. Williams, (2005). *In the Beginning there was the Deed*, Princeton University Press. New Jersey, p. 43.

order to criticize institution X. For example, a person X is unhappy with how institution Y works. Institution Y happens to be a law enforcement institution. Let us also say that person X thinks that institution Y has “gone soft”. Person X can, on this note, state something as “They used to cut the hands of thieves back in the Medieval ages and you didn’t see many thieves running around! Now you can steal, and nothing bad will happen to you!” This is a reactionary statement following X’s dissatisfaction with institution Y.

Having stated four arguments that Williams notes, I can bring my own critique of the Golden Age fallacy. Let us start off with the first two arguments that we have put forward. Let us consider the argument on moral and political regression and of the temporal desynchronicity. Stating that we are going backward in the moral and political sense would, in the words of Williams, undermine the authority of experience.<sup>324</sup> If we consider our history as being built by past events and as moving in the forward direction, rather than fragment it under the notions of “then” and “now”, it will negate all the past events, battles, and conversations that have contributed to modern society. The social context is, indeed, different, however, different because of the events that have unfolded. Conceiving history as “earlier” and “later” sheds light on the historical narrative that has taken shape to bring the situation in which we are now.

When it comes to the third argument, it was mentioned that it can be considered as an aesthetic category. Let us consider the following historical periods – Medieval ages, the Renaissance, Victorian Britain, Yugoslavia, the Roaring Twenties, etc. Each of these mentioned periods has a certain portrayal that correlates with the emotional longing for it to “come back”. One might learn about these periods from history books, novels, documentaries, etc. And it is certainly the case that we tend to sympathize with some periods more than with others. However, the social interactions and the social context were far different than the ones we have now. As

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<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.* p. 41.

Williams puts it in his far more famous book, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* - many outlooks that human beings have had are not real options for us now. The life of a Bronze Age chief or a medieval samurai are not real options for us: there is no way of living them.<sup>325</sup> At the end of the day, these categories remain aesthetic ones also because we were never a part of that social narrative. The outlook on those periods is done through the lenses of the present and this outlook can be either aesthetic or reactive.

Which brings us to the fourth and final argument. Golden Age fallacy is if it wants to have a practical pretension, a reactive stance. There are many reactive politics these days and many tend to correct injustice on both the social and the institutional level. However, are those with this Golden Age fallacy doing that? Again, Williams is very elegant in his explanation – let us consider a ship which is traveling to a certain destination. Reactive politics tends to change the course of that ship in a specific direction; however, nostalgia tends to try to turn the whole ship around<sup>326</sup> and no solution could be conjured merely from the sense that things are not as they used to be.<sup>327</sup>

In this section, we conclude by summarizing the key points discussed. We introduced the topic of invoking past narratives, specifically through the concept of nostalgia. Nostalgia, we observe, is a phenomenon that also significantly impacts contemporary politics, where many citizens maintain the belief that the past was preferable to the present. This perspective, I argue, reflects a Golden Age fallacy. To address this, we turned to Bernard Williams's critique of ethical nostalgia. From Williams's analysis, we derive four key arguments explaining why the Golden Age fallacy is problematic and should be understood as an aesthetic category, rather than

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<sup>325</sup> B. Williams, (2006). *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, Routledge, Abingdon, p. 161.

<sup>326</sup> B. Williams, (2005). *In the Beginning there was the Deed*, Princeton University Press. New Jersey, p. 44.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.* p. 43.

as a political or social one.

What is the consequence of this critique on the project at hand? Firstly, it shows that holding nostalgia for a different narrative which is not the one we are encumbered in is a fallacy of thinking. It also shows the relation between the personal and the social narrative, that is to say, it shows that the personal narrative is not always in accordance with the current social narrative. The narrative, following the thesis of narrative hermeneutics, is the origin of our deliberation. We can, surely, expand our narrative and perceive the past narratives from the lens of the current one, however, we cannot perceive the past one. That is to say, the social narrative which we have is the beginning and the end of our deliberative powers.

### **2.3. Intelligibility Crisis and Nostalgia - An Overview**

Finally, we can make a full case of the intelligibility crisis and nostalgia. We can define intelligibility crisis as a situation where we are unable to establish our personal narrative within the framework of the current social narrative. In an ever-changing social world, if we don't follow up with the changes, the narrative will move past us. Michele Moody-Adams, when talking about moral progress<sup>328</sup>, makes an illuminating differentiation between moral progress in beliefs and moral progress in social practices.<sup>329</sup> If we change the notion of "moral progress" into the notion of "narrative progress"<sup>330</sup> we have the same picture. One person has the beliefs which are developed within the narrative they are in, and one narrative is composed of social

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<sup>328</sup> I would refrain from opening this topic since the weight of justifying an argument for moral progress will be opened. Even though this thesis might be used to defend the idea of moral progress, and in many cases, it embraces it, the main claim is not about this topic.

<sup>329</sup> M. M. Moody-Adams, (1999.) *The Idea of Moral Progress in Metaphilosophy*, vol. 30, p. 168.

<sup>330</sup> As referred to earlier, I do not believe that our narratives necessarily become better over time, the term "progress" is used to portray the evolution and change of a certain narrative.

practices. This, of course, goes hand in hand with everything stated up until now, especially considering the personal narrativity thesis and the social narrative theory. So, consider a person X holding a specific set of beliefs in a narrative composed of a specific set of social practices. The narrative surely progresses and follows a certain line of development, and in that case, one's beliefs would likely follow this narrative. This is, of course, not always the case. When the discontinuation of beliefs happens, when the beliefs of a person X do not fit and are not intelligible with the narrative that has developed beyond the one in which a person X has formed his/her beliefs, then the intelligibility crisis arises. This intelligibility crisis is usually exhibited in the form of nostalgia for the past which makes sense. However, as has been shown, going back to the past is unavailable for us.

We might pose a question in this manner – what to do with beliefs that do not fit into the narrative anymore? The most general answer would be to reconstruct the belief system in accordance with the new narrative. But that would also mean that in a lot of situations, we need to reconstruct the moral and political beliefs we already hold. The most well-elaborated answer, I believe, is offered by the theory of moral and political constructivism. But, on that note, the reader will have to wait until the next and final chapter. The main goal that was set in this sub-chapter was to elaborate the dangers posed by the intelligibility crisis, as well as to foreshadow the limitations of perceiving the world solely by the narrative theoretical view.

### **3.0. Political Pluralism in the Terms of the Narrative: Assessing the Situation**

When we have tried to part ways with MacIntyre's naturalist teleology in the first chapter, two philosophers have been a great help in achieving this feat. Richard Rorty and Isaiah Berlin. While Rorty would appear to promote political pluralism and

pluralism of practices in his work<sup>331</sup>, it is based on his pragmatic account of truth pluralism<sup>332</sup>, a view that I would not opt to endorse in order to justify political pluralism. On the other hand, while I do provide an account of liberty later on, Berlin's take is also not something that would provide compatible model for this project. Therefore, an alternative method will be taken into consideration. The argument of this chapter shows how pluralism connects with the narrative theory since the previous chapters have shown that, after parting with MacIntyre, we need to a narrative theory that can deal with pluralism.

The main goal is to highlight the fact that one tradition encompasses many narratives, both practical and political. Therefore, the distinction between plurality of goods and plurality of ideas comes into play. The idea of the plurality of goods was explored in the first chapter and the case was made for the idea that no single conception of good is valid for all individuals. As William Galston states, the system of the goods that constitutes one political system cannot be reduced to a common conception of the good, cannot be ranked based on priority, and cannot be taken to form a harmonious whole with other goods.<sup>333</sup> When it comes to the plurality of ideas, when we frame them in the moral and political realm, they become ideologies, or, a system of ideas that are concerned with the questions of what is right and what is good. Since the current tradition, liberal one, is based on the accommodation of multiple ideologies, it establishes a framework of ideological pluralism. It is necessary to talk about ideological pluralism because we will frame ideologies as political narratives during this chapter.

By connecting ideologies and narratives, pluralism might pose the following

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<sup>331</sup> Y. Huang, (1995.) *Political Solidarity and Religious Plurality: A Rortian Alternative to Liberalism and Communitarianism* in *Journal of Law and Religion*, Cambridge University Press, p. 519.

<sup>332</sup> C. Misak, (2005.) *Pragmatism and Pluralism* in *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, Indiana University Press, p. 129.

<sup>333</sup> W. A. Galston, (1999.) Expressive Liberty, Moral Pluralism, Political Pluralism: Three Sources of Liberal Theory in *William and Mary Law Review*, vol. 40., no. 3., p. 879.

question which might be detrimental to this thesis – what do we do with a wide range of narratives? Surely there must be a larger narrative connecting the particular ones. MacIntyre’s theory of unification led him to commit to the notion of universal human *telos*.<sup>334</sup> This form of thinking was rejected in this project. Now we are left with a plurality of narratives which have specific, independent *teloi*. Surely, tradition, or a meta-narrative, is a unifying factor. Liberal, or the current tradition offers a heterogenous account of the good, something that MacIntyre has a huge issue with.<sup>335</sup> In these terms, we can state the following – current meta-narrative is constituted by various narratives which are different based on their goods and, I would add, system of ideas.

Plurality of goods necessarily entails the plurality of ideas and reasons for pursuing those goods. If the premise of my project is to be accounted for, the goods come before the ideas, but the ideas shape the goods that we will yet pursue. The most general example would be a child who has been conditioned to pursue his/her tennis career. The child then creates a system of thought which follows his/her goals that are linked to playing tennis. Experience shows us that people change their life goals multiple times throughout their lives. After spending years thinking about becoming a successful tennis player, by exploring and comparing a wide array of different practices and goods, he/she shifts from one practice and the goods that it entails to a different practice (let us say – teaching). In the terms of MacIntyrean philosophy, this person has undergone an epistemological crisis<sup>336</sup> of the individual nature. Changing goals and goods necessarily means changing the outlook that you have on yourself and your position in the social context which entails changing what is important, desirable, or even necessary. What is really important to note, however,

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<sup>334</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1981.) *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 202

<sup>335</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1988.) *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, p. 337.

<sup>336</sup> A. MacIntyre, (2006.) *Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science in The Tasks of Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, New York, p. 3.

is that the change in those goals arises after we gain sufficient reasons that are connected to our ways of thinking. When we say, “epistemological crisis”, we mean that the person has undergone a change in their belief system and is constructing a new one. In the following passages, we will talk about the questions we have framed.

### **3.1. Framing Political Pluralism – a Study of Ideology**

If we were to start talking in the terms that this project is dealing with; the terms within the ethical and political framework, the concepts take the following shape – the goods and the ideology. Ideology is a new concept that we have introduced in this project, and I want to argue that it is here for a very good reason. To see why this is the case, let us introduce a general definition of ideology proposed by Michael Freeden:

*Political ideology is a set of ideas, beliefs, opinions, and values that – exhibit a recurring pattern, are held by significant groups, compete over providing and controlling plans for public policy, that do so with the aim of justifying, contesting, or changing the social and political arrangements and process of a political community.<sup>337</sup>*

This definition can be disjointed in terms of four key aspects of what it is for something to be an ideology. Freeden is after the same goal, therefore, we can follow his analysis.

Patterns can be seen as a conjunctive chain. Liberalism, for example, has a conjunctive chain of keywords such as “liberty”, “individuality”, “rationality”, “progress” etc., while socialism, for example, is constituted by key words such as “community”, “group solidarity”, “equality”, “labor”, etc.<sup>338</sup> I use the term conjunctive

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<sup>337</sup> M. Freeden, (2003.) *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 32.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.* p. 51.

chain in order to describe the relationship between these key terms. If someone is a liberal, they are subscribing to the pattern of thought which affirms liberty *and* individuality *and* rationality *and* progress. Looking at these chains, socialism is in clear contestation with liberalism. Notions of individuality and community seem to be clearly incompatible. Today we have something a bit different. If we talk about “the end of ideology”, one of the ways in which we can talk about it, as Howard Brick notes, is by assuming that the time of rigid -isms has come to an end.<sup>339</sup> For example, since the world has become much more pluralistic in terms of our practices and beliefs, the traditional ideologies have been on the decline. Pavel Barkouski argues that the people living in the contemporary post-truth (can be described as truth pluralism) era are looking at the world through a mosaic worldview built by connecting concepts from various ideologies.<sup>340</sup> For example, social-democratic liberalism is a mixture of socialism and liberalism which breaks the conjunctive chain and establishes a new one. The pattern, however, still exists. Traditional ideologies are still there, although they are put on the Swiss table and are available for us to pick the parts from them that we find ourselves in the need of.

The second aspect of this definition states that ideologies are held by significant groups. Freeden writes the following on this matter:

*The requirement that an ideology be held by significant groups of people alludes to its origins and to its contestability in plural and contentious political world. Ideologies may, as Althusser claimed, be carried by conscious individuals, but they are, as Mannheim realized, social products.*<sup>341</sup>

Two things that stand out in Freeden’s explanation of group ideologies are the following – contestability and plurality within the terms of individual and social.

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<sup>339</sup> H. Brick, (2013.) *The End of Ideology Thesis* in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 133.

<sup>340</sup> P. Barkouski, (2018.) *Contemporary Post Ideologies: Hybrid Ideologies or New Mythologies as a Factor of Constituting of Post-Modern Social Field* in *Ideology and Politics*, vol. 3., p. 17.

<sup>341</sup> M. Freeden, (2003.) *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 33.

Ideology, a set of ideas and views about our political reality, is a product of social practices and views. On the other hand, individuals who accept a specific form of ideology hold it as a source of their political identity which can be, and usually is, contested with the other political identities held by different individuals constituting significant groups. John Gerring notes that one of the definitions of ideology links to this dualism between the individual and the collective. Namely, ideologies, according to this view, encompass group beliefs that shape the individual perception. Furthermore, the individuals who do attain a specific ideological framework identify as members of a specific social group.<sup>342</sup> Once we have the notion of social groups into play, the contested nature of the different groups, as well as the plurality are exhibited. In this regard, Freedman insists that this aspect of ideology reminds us about the political differences in values among individuals and groups.<sup>343</sup>

The third aspect of it needs to be related to public policy since ideologies are, in fact, politically motivated.<sup>344</sup> Subscribing to one ideology means that we are pushing for a vision of the social and economic policies that we deem just. When talking about politics, we talk about the interconnectedness of the social and the economic aspects of institutions.<sup>345</sup> The important aspect which should be mentioned is the correlation between the political and the moral realm. Ideology certainly is a political phenomenon; however, how does it influence our moral compass? If we accept Thomas Scanlon's influential differentiation between political theory and moral philosophy, that is, that the first one deals with the morality of institutions, while the second one deals with individual morality,<sup>346</sup> the question gains more

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<sup>342</sup> J. Gerring, (1997.) *Ideology: A Definitional Analysis* in *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 50., no. 4., p. 970.

<sup>343</sup> M. Freedman, (2003.) *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 33. – 34.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.* p. 34.

<sup>345</sup> S. L. Elkin, (2009.) *Political Theory and Political Economy* in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*, p. 1.

<sup>346</sup> T. M. Scanlon, (2016.) *Individual Morality and Morality of Institutions* in *Filozofija i Društvo*, vol.

weight. The nature of this relation has an impactful influence on the overall argument that is being given in this sub-chapter, and it is true when it comes to the overall project itself. However, there will be more words on that in the later part of this sub-chapter.

Finally, ideologies are persuasive in nature. They tend to sway those in power and those who make decisions in policy-making.<sup>347</sup> By drawing the general line between beliefs and attitudes, thinking, and feeling, holding reasons, and holding sentiments (etc.), it can be said that, for an ideology to be efficient, it needs to address both sides. Jan-Werner Muller has expressed the necessity of the emotional side of a doctrine. It brings forth a powerful way for people to subscribe to it.<sup>348</sup> Considering the contemporary political reality, we are witnessing a clash of populist ideologies. On the one hand, right-wing ideologies have always had a strong emotional appeal, while the left-wing ones have been quite mixed in this regard. Assuming that Freeden's description of conservatism is correct, it was always reactionary,<sup>349</sup> appealing to the emotions directed to the status quo rather than to a wide-arrange of progressive efforts. On the other hand, embracing progressive policies can easily lead to various conundrums between the progressive ideologies. Chantal Mouffe has been advocating left-wing populism as an adversary to the right-wing populist position that has been gaining more power in a world of constant changes.<sup>350</sup> This antagonism and contestation is inherent to the plurality of ideologies.

A lot of things have been noted when talking about ideologies. In many ways, they are a mirror for plurality within one social narrative. A further expansion of this argument leads us towards describing values, beliefs, and attitudes. This

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XXVII, no. 1., p. 4. – 5.

<sup>347</sup> M. Freeden, (2003.) *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 34.

<sup>348</sup> J.W. Muller, (2007.) *Constitutional Patriotism*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, p. 47.

<sup>349</sup> M. Freeden, (2003.) *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 80.

<sup>350</sup> C. Mouffe, (2005.) *The "End of Politics" and the Challenge of Right-wing Populism*, in *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*, Verso, London, p. 55.

differentiation is fairly common to use in applied psychological research. In spite of that, these concepts will still be given theoretical framing. After we define these concepts, we will return to the primary definition of ideology and propose a descriptive argument.

### **3.2. Belief, Value and Attitude – Framework on Disagreement**

The conversation that we can lead when talking about ideology is the conversation about contested views within one pluralist society. People with different ideological outlooks disagree. Insofar as this is the case, we have numerous disagreements on our rationality and, insofar as that is the case, our narratives. It has been stated numerous times that our values, beliefs, and attitudes vary. In this part of the project, I would propose an outlook on these concepts in order to make the distinction clearer. This sub-chapter, I would argue, is also one of the key claims in this project since it provides a constitutive aspect of our deliberation within one narrative. That being said, having a value-belief-attitude distinction shows us how narratives influence our deliberative faculties.

One of the most famous philosophers who have dealt with the notion of disagreement is certainly Charles Leslie Stevenson. Although this project rejects his outdated theoretical position of emotivism, it fully embraces his belief–altitude distinction. We will also introduce the notion of value since it is directly connected to the notion of *the good*. Therefore, we will end up with values, attitudes, and beliefs. When opening a social psychology research journal, a lot of articles seem to be about values, beliefs, and attitudes towards X. Howard Levie has pointed out that, although that is a very common area of investigation, these terms are rather blurred and sloppily used. There is simply no consensus on the usage of these notions.<sup>351</sup> The

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<sup>351</sup> W. H. Levie, (1970.) *Beliefs, Attitudes and Values: A Theory of Organization and Change* by Milton

notions that will be of concern to me are grounded within the philosophical tradition and, therefore, should be used as such. In the following passages, these notions shall be described.

Let us start with Charles Stevenson and his view on attitudes and beliefs. Kurt Baier rightfully points out Stevenson's highlighting of the concept of disagreement for the reason of exploring the fundamental ethical issues.<sup>352</sup> According to Stevenson's view, there are two main aspects of disagreements – disagreements influenced by our beliefs and disagreements influenced by our attitudes.<sup>353</sup> What is the difference between beliefs and attitudes? Beliefs express things we hold to be true. On the other hand, attitudes express the emotional sphere of our lives which is linked to the external world. According to Stevenson,

*They involve an opposition, sometimes tentative and gentle, sometimes strong... that is to say, an opposition of purposes, aspirations, wants, preferences, desires and so on.*<sup>354</sup>

To illustrate this, we will consider two separate discussions, portraying different reasons for disagreement. Person X tells person Y that the ancient Greek and Roman sculptures were originally made to be white, while person Y argues that the original sculptures were actually painted, but the color pigments have deteriorated over time. This shows a situation in which two people hold a contested fact to be true. The second situation might arise when we discuss with our partner if we were to keep our dog in the house. Both of us might hold a belief that the dog is a member of our household, however, we have different preferences in regard to where to keep it. The disagreement that we have, in this instance, is the disagreement in attitude. Sometimes these disagreements can be mild and sometimes they can be heated. It

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Rokeach, in *AV Communication Review*, vol. 18, no. 2., p. 202.

<sup>352</sup> K. Baier, (1967.) *Fact, Value and Norm in Stevenson's Ethics* in *Nous*, vol. 1., no. 2., Wiley, p. 141.

<sup>353</sup> C. L. Stevenson, (1944.) *Ethics and Language*, Yale University Press, New Haven, p. 3. – 4.

<sup>354</sup> *Ibid.* p. 4.

depends on the emotional investment that we have in the matters we are discussing.<sup>355</sup>

We have a rough idea about beliefs and attitudes. What about values? When looking at the philosophical theory of value, the most general way to look at it is through the study of axiology. Since this topic is about moral and political deliberation, we would have to narrow down our definition and assess it from this perspective. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy defines the value theory, in a moral sense, as a designated area of philosophy that deals with evaluating goodness.<sup>356</sup> In this regard, to consider something valuable, something must have the property of being *good* and we need to have reasons for seeing this something as valuable. One account which has provided an important contribution to the theory of value is certainly Thomas Scanlon's buck-passing account (BPA). In short, Scanlon's view is that we judge something good or valuable based on its physical or psychological properties, not because they are inherently good/valuable.<sup>357</sup> In this regard, reasons for responding in particular ways to an object of evaluation reside not in the goodness, but in the properties that make that object good/valuable. Roger Crisp notes that there is a negative and a positive component of this view. The negative component exemplifies that being good is not itself a reason-providing property, while the positive component states that being good is the higher-order property which has lower-order properties that make us have specific reasons directed at this

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<sup>355</sup> Stevenson's theory is portrayed as emotivism because he finds the root of disagreement within the sphere of attitudes, not beliefs. The notion of persuasion is closely interlined with attitudes and, when discussing, we want to persuade our opponents to have different attitudes about the subject, not different beliefs. For more – A. Miller, (2003.), *An Introduction to Contemporary Metaethics*, Polity Press, Cambridge, p. 49.

<sup>356</sup> M. Schroeder, (2008.), *Value Theory* on *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, site: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/value-theory/>, accessed 03.05.2022.

<sup>357</sup> T. M. Scanlon, (1998.) *What We Owe to Each Other*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 96.

object of evaluation.<sup>358</sup> However, the whole discussion about the value theory does not have the primary role in this project. The importance of Scanlon's view in this passage is to portray key aspects of finding something valuable – properties, goodness, and reasons.

For example, if I find my relationship with my partner valuable, I will have reasons to value that relationship. This relationship has specific properties that I find valuable and good. As Scanlon puts it:

*A person who values friendship will take herself to have reasons, first and foremost, to do these things that are involved in being a good friend: to be loyal, be concerned with friends' interests, to try to stay in touch, to spend time with her friends, and so on.*<sup>359</sup>

Now, how does this relate to my relationship with my partner? The relationship proposes reasons for it being considered good and reasons for the actors in it to act as good partners. We value someone and think they are good at being a specific something by giving reasons why that someone is good at a specific something. A good partner has virtues such as openness, honesty, warmth, empathy, affection etc. towards his/her partner. A relationship itself is valuable because it brings great joy, it brings forth personal relationship to a higher level, allows us to be co-dependent etc. These are the properties of a good partner/good relationship. According to Scanlon's view, we subscribe to the goodness of something because it has a list of specific properties. Those properties give us reason to value that specific something.<sup>360</sup>

When applying this into a more pluralistic context, the lines become a bit more

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<sup>358</sup> R. Crisp, (2008.) *Goodness and Reasons: Accentuating the Negative in Mind*, vol. 117., no. 466., p. 263. – 264.

<sup>359</sup> T. M. Scanlon, (1998.) *What We Owe to Each Other*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 88.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.* p. 96.

blurred. Matej Cibik, while commenting on Scanlon's theory of expectations and obligations, notes the following:

*Pluralism has a similar effect. As our societies become more and more open, duties and obligations implicit in human relations become less and less specific. Our societies now contain multiple cultures, multiple ways of life, all with different ways to structure normative commitments of personal relations—and we can choose between them.*<sup>361</sup>

Surely, obligations and expectations become more blurred in the pluralist society. We might not have the same reasons for valuing our partner. Two partners might have a completely different set of expectations in their relationship, corresponding to their way of life and the narrative that they encompass. The normativity of a specific practice dissolves and the reasons for valuing that practice become plural. The unity of practices and reasons for their value have been fragmented and this is something that MacIntyre takes issue with. However, things are not as bleak as he portrays them as being. We might value the practice of science. We find it valuable because it contributes to the maximization of the overall good within one society. The fact that scientific research has improved the quality of our lives is usually the main reason why we value science. It improved our lives both in a practical and theoretical sense. However, as plurality breeds more views, depending on the ideological spectrum that one might occupy, science is not always valued in equal regard, it can even be disvalued. Different ideological spectrums value things in different ways. Many studies show that right-wing ideology tends to disvalue, or even deny science.<sup>362</sup> Also, the reasons themselves for valuing science may vary depending on the practices that people participate in. For example, someone might value

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<sup>361</sup> M. Cibik, (2018.) *Expectations and Obligations* in *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, vo. 21., <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10677-018-9947-x>, p. 6.

<sup>362</sup> J. R. Kerr, M. S. Wilson, (2021.) *Right-Wing Authoritarianism and Social Dominance Orientation Predicts Rejection of Science and Scientists* in *Group Processes Intergroup Relations*, Sage Publishing, p. 550.

theoretical sciences more than practical ones because it goes hand in hand with their lifestyle of being more speculative. On the other hand, someone who is not very enthusiastic about theoretical knowledge might appreciate the practical contribution that science has made.

Now, with that said, we have attitudes, beliefs, and values set. Now I would like to argue that these notions are mutually dependent on each other and that they constitute our ideological framework. The key to this connection is found within the concept of reason. The primary hypothesis which will be taken as a premise of this argument is that values, reasons, and beliefs are guided by reasons, and these reasons unify them. A different way of stating this might be acceptable if reformulated in the following manner – we have reasons to believe, to feel and to value something. The correlation between reasons and values has been established and Scanlon’s view, for the sake of the argument, will be emphasized. But I would also like to establish a view which correlates reasons to beliefs and attitudes. Although, admittedly, it is not going to be an extensive view on the matter, a theoretical proposition will be given.

First, we need to establish a connection between reasons and attitudes since it is much more problematic than establishing the connection between reasons and beliefs. Connor McHugh and Johnathan Way state the following:

*But although much work on reasons focuses primarily on action and belief, there are many other responses for which there seem to be reasons. In particular, many attitudes besides belief—for example, desire, regret, admiration, contempt, fear, gratitude, and blame—seem subject to reasons.<sup>363</sup>*

It is important to note that the authors understand the notion of attitude in the same way as it is taken to be in this project. The claim that these authors argue for is that attitudes are not without reason, on the contrary, reasons shape

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<sup>363</sup> C. McHugh, J. Way, (2022.) *All Reasons Are Fundamentally for Attitudes* in *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*, vol. 21., no. 2., p. 151.

attitudes.<sup>364</sup> When we say that we *prefer* to do X, we are usually able to give reasons for our preference for that X. The same thing goes with desire, regret, fear, blame, etc. One of the more famous defenses of this position has been given by Allan Gibbard in his *Wise Choices Apt Feelings*. Gibbard stresses that a person can believe in something rationally or irrationally, act rationally or irrationally, and feel rationally or irrationally.<sup>365</sup> While attitudes are constituted by various emotions, they are not only emotions. They are an expression of our emotional appraisal of X. In this regard, they have a process of reasoning encoded in them. Gibbard stresses the fact that we usually have reasons to be angry at someone, to blame someone, etc. But there is also a difference between feeling something towards X and wanting to feel something towards X.<sup>366</sup> This opens a differentiation between descriptive reasons and normative reasons for attitudes. For example, if we say we blame ourselves because we have not been able to achieve the goals that were prescribed to us by an authoritative figure, we are giving a description of our attitude towards ourselves. When asked *how* we would like to feel about ourselves, the reason that we give is a normative one. We can say – I wish I didn't have this attitude towards myself because I am aware that I am acting irrationally. As Kelly Epley notes, normative reasons tell us which attitudes we should cultivate, maintain, or leave behind.<sup>367</sup>

The claim that we have specific reasons to believe X is very trivial. Dennis Stampe makes it quite clear that when we give reasons that arise from our beliefs, we reason from the facts as we believe those facts to be.<sup>368</sup> Let us also note that these beliefs can be either informed or misinformed. However, reasons for these beliefs are

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<sup>364</sup> The main argument is something stronger, namely, that all reasons are fundamentally reasons for attitudes. However, since it is not the topic of this discussion, refraining from opening this topic seems like a right strategy. From: *Ibid.* p. 152.

<sup>365</sup> A. Gibbard, (1990.) *Wise Choices Apt Feelings*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, p. 36.

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.* p. 37.

<sup>367</sup> K. Epley, (2018.) *Emotions, Attitudes, and Reasons* in *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 100., no. 1., p. 1.

<sup>368</sup> D. Stampe, (1987.) *The Authority of Desire* in *The Philosophical Review*, vol. 96., p. 337.

reasons, nonetheless. Someone might give a wide range of reasons to support their claim for the conspiracy theory that they hold to be true.

Now we have a claim that beliefs, attitudes, and values are reason-dependent. This dependence can be used to make a unity of these three factors. In short, we have attitudes that correspond to our beliefs and values. We value something that we believe to be good and that invokes certain positive attitudes towards that something. If we hold something to be true, if we believe in that something, we have values and attitudes attributed to it. To further illustrate this, consider the institution of a family. One might believe that the family is at the center of our moral lives. But one also might reason from different narratives. One group that sees family at the center of our moral lives, as Stephen D. Johnson and Joseph B. Tamney recognize, the one that endorses social traditionalism.<sup>369</sup> They note that the value of a family is closely linked to religious fundamentalism.<sup>370</sup> The view on the family that social traditionalists have relates to religious fundamentalism in many ways, but the most important is the legitimization of the structural hierarchy of the family which is proposed by *The Bible*. Social norms that contest this view, such as increasing rights for the LGBTQ+ community, as well as legally removing the prayer in schools, tend to make the traditionalist view even stronger because it endangers one viewpoint which is set on a specific set of values. Liberal views on the institution of family are quite varied and usually quite fragmented amongst different liberal viewpoints. Be it as it may, the justification is based on different reasoning and values. This is very well exhibited in Rawls' view on public reasons in support of the institution of a family. Rawls argues that we need to differentiate between religious arguments and secular arguments.<sup>371</sup> Secular arguments that Rawls offers are connected with maintaining the values in

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<sup>369</sup> S. D. Johnson, J. B. Tamney, (1996.) *The Political Impact of Traditional Family Values in Sociological Focus* vol. 29., no. 2., p. 125.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.* p. 128.

<sup>371</sup> J. Rawls, (2000) *The Law of Peoples*, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, p. 147.

specific political principles (principles of justice) over generations.<sup>372</sup> Also, the roles within a family have been changed in the sense in which hierarchy is not being exhibited in the traditional sense (a husband having more power over his wife).

What does this example show us? Firstly, there are fundamentally different beliefs underlying our value judgments. One set of beliefs is linked to religious fundamentalism, while another is linked with the secular movement of institutional justice. A person A might believe that *The Bible* is the source of unshakable practical wisdom and, therefore, all things should be valued in connection to the normative claims that *The Bible* makes. A person B's beliefs are more in line with secular practices and the rationality that arises from them. Now, person A might feel like a lot of instances in which the family is not constructed in the traditional sense is not valuable, while person B might feel like the traditional family is unjust based on the hierarchical model. These values that are attached to the family structure invoke specific attitudes of approval or disapproval which directly influence our emotions towards them. In this sense, one evaluation is connected to both beliefs and values. These three notions, when applied to our political thinking, become constituents of ideology, but, more importantly, constituents of our perception of the world.

Since the ideology, in this portrayal, is a social narrative which shapes the individual narrative, and is rooted in the intelligibility of beliefs, values, and attitudes, it seems that, at first glance, it is futile to open a discussion that leads to agreement. In the following sub-chapter, I would like to propose a normative account of the political pluralism of the narrative and install some principles that would guide the discussion that is taking place. This account will address pluralism in a way that ensures compatibility with the established social narratives, emphasizing frameworks that respect the diversity of beliefs while promoting constructive dialogue.

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<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.* p. 147.

### 3.3. The Normative Principles of Political Pluralism: Reasonableness and Liberty

So far, I have only talked about the descriptive aspect of ideological studies such as the narrative structure of beliefs, attitudes, and values. In the following section, I am going to open a two-fold normative account which I find to be the most plausible account of political pluralism in the social narrative that we have today. It will also provide a way to connect the current narratively established framework with glimpses of the constructivist procedure that will be elaborated in the next chapter. The first aspect will be concerned with reasonable pluralism outlined by John Rawls, while the second account is about the analysis of liberty. Since we have talked about the plurality of the good and the plurality of ideas throughout the project, we would need to adjust them in a way in which they can co-exist without taking away the fact of plurality itself.

In this respect, let us start with the Rawlsian notion of reasonable pluralism. The attractiveness of this outlook is, according to Patrick Loobuyck, that it is acceptable for both progressive citizens, as well as conservative citizens, to those who are liberal and to those who are traditional, to non-religious citizens, and to religious citizens alike.<sup>373</sup> It is, in that spirit, a perfect candidate to be used in the discussion on ideology. Before we start explaining reasonable pluralism, we need to propose groundwork upon which this pluralism stands. In the opening of his *Political Liberalism*, Rawls notes this issue as one of the pressing ones and certainly the one with which he will be concerned throughout his book. Rawls provides the following appraisal:

*The political culture of a democratic society is always marked by a diversity of opposing and irreconcilable religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines.*

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<sup>373</sup> P. Loobuyck, (2018.), *Some Remarks on Paul Weithman's Idea of Citizenship and Public Reason in Philosophy and Public Issues (New Series)*, vol. 8., no. 1., p. 35.

*Some of these are perfectly reasonable, and this diversity among reasonable doctrines political liberalism sees as the inevitable long-run result of the powers of human reason at work within the background of enduring free institutions.*<sup>374</sup>

For Rawls, the problem arises when we hold doctrines that are reasonable, but, at the same time, incompatible with each other. Let us say that we have political subjects that adhere to doctrines ranging from the traditional ones to the progressive ones, and every doctrine in between. They can be perfectly reasonable, and usually, we have examples of persons who hold equally reasonable doctrines; however, most of the time, these doctrines are incompatible with each other. Rawls is concerned with most of what we have talked about in the previous sub-chapter and provides a project in his *Political Liberalism* to adhere to these issues. However, we will only consider two of his concepts so far, with reasonableness being one of the key concepts for this project as a whole. Now, since I am leaving room for deeper analysis of the concept of reasonableness in the final chapter of this project, I will provide just the basic description of this concept, as well as connect it to the notion of liberty that Rawls provides.

James W. Boettcher notes that the key difference between rational and reasonable, in Rawls, is that they relate to our different capacities.<sup>375</sup> This project embraces this difference. I find rationality to be a key part of narrativity and, following MacIntyre, rationality within one tradition, or, meta-narrative, is different than rationality in another. Insofar as that is the case, rationality is a substantive principle. Rawls offers us an analysis of the rational which fits this description. Rationality describes our capacity to clearly outline our conception of the good and find the right means to achieve those ends. Let us say that we are pursuing the practice of being a waiter. If we want to be a good waiter and if we find this practice to bring us certain

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<sup>374</sup> J. Rawls (1996.), *Political Liberalism*, Columbia University Press, New York, p. 3. – 4.

<sup>375</sup> J. W. Boettcher (2004.), *What is Reasonableness in Philosophy and Social Criticism*, vol. 30., p. 601.

value, we will choose the means to achieve the end of being a good waiter. Rationality has an agent-based application, and it refers to the steps needed to be taken in order to fulfill a certain goal that we find value in, and that is, based on this project, narratively induced. Rawls thinks that a rational agent, however, does not always act in accordance with their self-interest.<sup>376</sup> If a rational agent puts more weight on, for example, fulfilling their partner's goals, they will act rationally in order to achieve the means to an end for their partner. Being reasonable, on the other hand, asserts the definition that reasonableness is the capacity to assess fair terms of cooperation. According to Rawls, being reasonable is being impartial and promoting the idea of the general good.<sup>377</sup> Being reasonable is promoting the principles upon which everyone can agree, or at least strive for general agreement. The direct opposite of being reasonable is being unreasonable, that is to say, not honoring the general social principles and defying them in order to achieve benefit for oneself.<sup>378</sup> According to Shaun Young, unreasonable doctrines, held by unreasonable agents are a way to upshot interests of themselves, and the classes that they are members of and are based on the limited viewpoint of the world.<sup>379</sup>

Generally speaking, reasonableness is the capacity to consider *the other* as the bearer of autonomy towards which we have an obligation not to coerce their preferences as long as they do not coerce others.<sup>380</sup> A reasonable person, for Rawls, is a person who does not (merely) act upon the idea of the general good, but rather upon the desire for a social world in which they, free and equal, cooperate with others based on the principles that everyone can accept.<sup>381</sup> Therefore, reasonableness is the

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<sup>376</sup> J. Rawls (1996.), *Political Liberalism*, Columbia University Press, New York, p. 51.

<sup>377</sup> *Ibid.* p. 50.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.* p. 50.

<sup>379</sup> S. Young (2005.) *The (Un)Reasonableness of Rawlsian Rationality* in *South African Journal of Philosophy* vol. 24, p. 311.

<sup>380</sup> Very much akin to Mill's harm principle. From: J. S. Mill (2009.) *On Liberty*, The Floating Press, Auckland, p. 94.

<sup>381</sup> J. Rawls (1996.), *Political Liberalism*, Columbia University Press, New York, p. 50.

capacity of a person to act in a principled manner in which he/she considers every person as free and equal within one social environment, as well as acting in a way in which he/she does not coerce others.

Reasonableness is thus crucial for the idea of reasonable pluralism, where diverse individuals live together in a society governed by fair principles, they can all accept, even if they differ on the grounds of values, beliefs, and attitudes. A reasonable person respects others' rights to hold different views and is committed to fair social cooperation, which makes it possible to achieve an overlapping consensus on core political principles without requiring total agreement on all values.<sup>382</sup> This is, in a nutshell, a solution that Rawls comes up with considering the fact of pluralism that was raised in the earlier sub-chapter. That being said, reasonableness for me, as for Rawls, is a formal solution to the clash of competing plurality of narratives.

The account of liberty is much more straightforward which will also be taken from the Rawlsian standpoint. The claim that I want to make by taking liberty into equation is the following – respecting the liberty of *the other* is a necessary, but not sufficient way of showing that an individual, or a society is reasonable. Rawls seemingly thinks the same, following the passage in his *The Idea of Public Reason Revisited*:

*Thus, all reasonable doctrines affirm such a society with its corresponding political institutions: equal basic rights and liberties for all citizens, including liberty of conscience and the freedom of religion.*<sup>383</sup>

Affirming liberty is a part of what it means to be reasonable and expanding on the notion of liberty is necessary to shed light on why the normative aspect of this view is so powerful, especially in pluralist society. Equal liberty theory is a basic view that emphasizes freedom of an agent, or numerous agents to do a particular

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<sup>382</sup> J. Rawls (1996.), *Political Liberalism*, Columbia University Press, New York, p. 134.

<sup>383</sup> J. Rawls (1997.) *The Idea of Public Reason Revisited* in *The University of Chicago Law Review* vol. 64, No. 3. p. 801.

something.<sup>384</sup> The “equal” aspect of equal liberty theory is that liberty is equal insofar as it is not unequal; and it is unequal when one or more classes of people have their liberty in a lesser degree than some other class of people.<sup>385</sup> An example of a basic liberty, relevant for this case, is the freedom of thought and liberty of conscience. Insofar as a person is free in this regard, they are free to pursue their religious, moral, political, etc. interests without being coerced into not doing so.<sup>386</sup>

Now, talking about reasonableness and liberty becomes effective when considering pluralism. The normative claim of this project is that the people are free and equal to pursue their goals that their narratives encompass as long as they are doing it in a reasonable way. This normative claim, as was stated, will be further explained upon in the fourth chapter and, for now, I believe that we have noted the important basics of this normative principle.

We have opened this sub-chapter to talk about narrativity and pluralism, asserting that there is a plurality of goods and, in the same respect, a plurality of ideas. These narratives are derived from the context around us, as well as refer to ourselves, our values, needs, beliefs, attitudes etc. When we implement the moral and political dimension to the plurality of the ideas, we arise with the notion of ideologies. In this aspect, I have tried to give a descriptive and normative account of ideologies. The normative account deals with the question of how we are to live in a world with a plurality of worldviews, ideas, goals, goods, etc. In this sense, the true test comes from the fusion between reasonableness and liberty. We can decipher and conclude which ideologies are reasonable and which of them are not by seeing their influence over the liberties of others.

This also begs the question – if the narratives are the only things within, we operate in, why is it the case that some of them get shifted and transformed in order

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<sup>384</sup> J. Rawls, (1999.), *A Theory of Justice Revised Ed.*, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, p. 177.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.* p. 178.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.* p. 177.

to accommodate others? We think it is completely plausible that someone changes their worldviews and their ideology because they were not reasonable enough. How and why does this occur? Even more so, there have been various changes in the traditions themselves, on the meta-narrative level, not only in the realm of particular narratives. My suggestion is that we should think of these changes in the way of moral and political progress. This will be, as noted, explored in the following sub-chapter. What is even more-so important is that we are left with another nod to the fact that we need something more than a pure narrativity thesis in order to describe our moral and political deliberation.

#### **4.0. Moral Progress and the Narrative**

In this sub-chapter, we will talk about the theory of moral progress, and we will apply the narrativity thesis to it. I would like to argue that there is such a thing as moral progress and I argue that our moral reasons about liberty have gotten to a higher level than before. In order to argue for this fact, we would need to note what we mean when we say moral progress, and, also, we would also need to portray the theory we want to stand behind. An epistemological crisis will also take shape in this sub-chapter as this crisis promotes a shift in the narrative. After explaining why moral progress happens and by which means, we would introduce constructivist account as a necessary ingredient to support the epistemological crisis which was introduced in the first chapter.

Having said that, the simplest theory of moral progress that is on the table according to Dale Jamieson, one which would be the least demanding to justify, would be the naïve theory of moral progress:

*“Moral progress occurs when a subsequent state of affairs is better than*

*preceding one, or when right acts become increasingly prevalent.*"<sup>387</sup>

Seemingly, this is quite an intuitive account of moral progress, and it is simple to test this hypothesis on the state of affairs of social evolution. For example, we can pose a simple question of – are we treating the minorities better than we did before? By providing relevant factual information and institutional data, we can give an answer to this question. Would an answer be a “yes” or a “no” depending on it? If the answer is “yes”, we can pose a question of – can we treat minorities better than we do now? On the other hand, if the answer is a “no”, we have to revert back to the question of moral regression. Of course, the context and the narrative are different and there are still many instances of moral and political injustice within our social realm. Be it as it may, the naïve theory should be used as a basis for moral progress. Now, the true question appears – what is the nature of this moral and political progress? What are the relevant factors we need to take into consideration to pinpoint something as morally relevant? The importance of this discussion is exhibited in the connection of the theory of moral and political progress with this project.

The factors that should be considered are the externality and internality of our moral principles and actions. When/if morality progresses, does it depend on the external conditions or is it purely internal betterment of the agents? This discussion can be brought to the field of moral naturalism vs moral contextualism.

#### **4.1. The Views on Progress from the Standpoint of Moral Naturalism**

Moral naturalism puts emphasis on the natural facts and values of a specific notion of goodness and by promoting this value, we are achieving progress. According to Jamieson’s more recent paper, the first candidate of this view is the betterment of

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<sup>387</sup> D. Jamieson, (2002.), *Is there a Progress in Morality?* In *Utilitas* vol. 14., no. 3, p. 318.

biological fitness.<sup>388</sup> Biological fitness, in this aspect, is directly linked with biological altruism. Biological altruism simply refers to the "benefits" to others that improve their reproductive fitness improving their genetic contribution to the future generations. And, according to William FitzPatrick, it has nothing to do with intent or reasons.<sup>389</sup> By promoting our biological fitness, the morality will develop in the future generations. The moral progress explained by this evolutionary case seems to be portraying that every moral progress that has happened, did so by the betterment of our genes. This is an internal theory of moral progress, and it shows the goodness of biological fitness. Jamieson clearly thinks that this idea is wrong and not enough to explain moral progress as a whole. He states the following:

*“This is, of course, an implausible conception of moral progress. Whatever exactly moral progress amounts to, it certainly involves at least the following: the abolition of war and slavery, the reduction of poverty and class privilege, the extension of liberty, the empowerment of the marginalized groups and the respect for animals and nature. If these concerns are not captured by an account of moral progress, then I (and I think many of us) literally would not know what we are talking about when we talk about moral progress”*<sup>390</sup>

This quote is very important for numerous reasons, and I will refer to it throughout the remainder of this sub-chapter. Yet, in this instance, it also offers us a key criticism of the biological fitness thesis. Namely, this view is quite implausible. It completely denounces any effort put into the social and political realm and it does not contain the history of change. It would be very bizarre to claim that the

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<sup>388</sup> D. Jamieson (2017.), *Slavery, Carbon, and Moral Progress in Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, vol. 20., no. 1., p. 170.

<sup>389</sup> W. FitzPatrick (2020), *Morality and Evolutionary Biology* on *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.) site: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2021/entries/morality-biology> accessed: 01.22.2023.

<sup>390</sup> D. Jamieson (2017.), *Slavery, Carbon, and Moral Progress in Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, vol. 20., no. 1., p. 171.

progressive changes in our social environment and history came as a consequence of our biological fitness, of us improving our “altruistic genes”. This view, although it might be a valid addition to some conception of moral progress, is lacking in providing explanation about the complexity of our lives within the narrative and the relationships we have with others that are a part of that narrative.

The second view that will be considered is the view of hedonism originating from the utilitarian theory of Bentham and Mill. In short, this view promotes the value of pleasure and demotes suffering and pain. Roger Crisp argues that hedonism can be considered both internal and external. Hedonism can be internal as long as it is concerned with promoting pleasantness which is a product of consciousness, or it can be external as it consists of an attitude that is wanting or striving for something that is independent of consciousness itself.<sup>391</sup> The second account of hedonism is very well compatible with pluralism which was endorsed in this project in many ways. Wanting X that is a product of a form of life in line with a practice within one social narrative brings pleasure to the subject who wants that X. Attaining the goods and goals of a specific practice in the realm of pluralism maximizes the overall pleasure. The internalist version of hedonism is a monistic view and states that pleasantness is the only good-making property.<sup>392</sup> In the terms of moral progress, hedonism effectively elaborates on why moral progress occurs. The practices have evolved and become more morally and politically appropriate if they are promoting more pleasantness and welfare to those who are participating in these practices. Therefore, the abolition of slavery, sexual, racial, and gender equality, progression of liberty, etc. seen through the thesis of hedonism are morally progressive social developments because they maximize the welfare and pleasure of the groups that did not enjoy them beforehand.

This view, although much more compelling than the previous one, also does not encompass the full scope of our moral and political progress. Surely, wellbeing

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<sup>391</sup> R. Crisp, (2021.), *Towards Global Hedonism*, in *Oxford Studies of Philosophy of Mind*, vol. 1., p. 44.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid*, p. 47.

and pleasantness are important and maximizing them for others who have not enjoyed certain rights and liberties is a necessary ingredient for how we see our society progressing. And, yet is it the only thing that matters, and can it, by itself, explain why we have gotten from point A to point B?

Let us take the abolition of slavery for example. Owning a slave has certainly benefited a vast majority of people who have traded and shipped people from Africa during the transatlantic period. Between the years 1501 and 1867, close to 13 million African people were enslaved, traded, and put into forced labor.<sup>393</sup> The enslavement and mistreatment of these people maximized the pleasure of the vast majority of slave traders – they had a free workforce in their daily lives, some earned considerable wealth from the slave trade, and the communities that were having labor shortages began to thrive. An ever-repeating question when talking about hedonism arises – if a wrong act brings pleasure, is the act still wrong? Even if we, hypothetically, weigh out the pleasure and suffering from the practice of slavery and we see that there is, globally, more pleasure than suffering, would it be moral to continue the practice of slavery? I think that anyone who is reasonable would give a definite answer – no. In this respect, hedonism, even though it is an important part of it, cannot by itself elaborate the moral and political progress. There is a need to address the reason why do we change practices even if they benefit a greater group of people.

This brings us to the third contender for the naturalist position of moral progress – virtues. Dale Jamieson tends to think that virtue ethics can also be accommodated in the naïve conception of moral progress; that is to say, with the usage of virtue ethics we can determine the basis of moral progress.<sup>394</sup> Sadly, Jamieson does not expand much on this notion, however, we can speculate how virtue ethics can correspond to the notion of moral progress. In the first chapter of

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<sup>393</sup> Ejj.com, *American port cities from New England to New Orleans were shaped by the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, site: <https://ejj.org/reports/transatlantic-slave-trade-overview/>, accessed: 01.24.2023.

<sup>394</sup> D. Jamieson, (2002.), *Is there a Progress in Morality?* In *Utilitas* vol. 14., no. 3., p. 319.

this project, virtue ethics was noted as one of the key components of MacIntyre's philosophy and we have established numerous key notions that are a part of it. It was also mentioned that MacIntyre's version of virtue ethics is somewhere between the lines of contextualism and naturalism. The naturalist version of virtue ethics, however, rests upon the naturalist account. When a moral naturalist who has subscribed to the theory of virtue ethics talks about the notion of goodness, he/she will most likely note that virtues are good in themselves and for themselves. One of the examples certainly is Robert Merrihew Adams who, throughout his work on virtue ethics, strongly promotes the view against virtues being taken as instrumental values, but rather that they are valuable for and because of themselves.<sup>395</sup> With that in mind, Adams supports the naturalist version of virtue ethics which is also a part of moral naturalism. Expanding on this, we can look at James Wallace's claim on the correlation between virtues and society as a whole. He believes that virtues such as restraint, courage, benevolence, etc. are essential to human life and if these traits were not present within one community, then that community would not exist.<sup>396</sup> That is to say, agents of a given community need to achieve specific virtues that are good in themselves in order for them to have a just and good community. Wallace also refers to something very important concerning moral progress.

*This is not to say that a good human being invariably flourishes. Rather, the more good people there are in a community, the better life generally in the community is apt to be.*<sup>397</sup>

From this quote, Wallace does not think that attaining virtues leads to flourishing on its own. Rather than that, the more those virtues are present in society and the community, the more progress we are going to make toward flourishing as both individuals and members of a community. Even if we imagine a scenario in which

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<sup>395</sup> R. M. Adams, (2006.), *A Theory of Virtue: Excellence in Being for the Good*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 48.

<sup>396</sup> J. Wallace, (1978.), *Virtues and Vices*, Cornell University Press, New York, p. 161.

<sup>397</sup> *Ibid.* p. 161.

slavery brings more pleasure than suffering, the reason why abolishing it progresses us morally is rooted in our virtuousness. Enslaving people breeds cruelty, mistreatment of others, disrespect for the autonomy of the other etc., all of which are vices and contrary to virtues that should be cultivated. In these terms, one of the ways in which we can look at moral progress is, for example, by abolishing slavery, the members of a community are more likely to attain the virtues which would open the way for them to flourish in the virtuous community. Therefore, to conclude what moral progress is from the standpoint of virtue ethics, it can be said that we progress as long as we cultivate cardinal virtues that lead to flourishing, both on the individual and communal level.

The criticism that I would provide on the account of virtue ethics can be also linked back to the argument made in the first subchapter. That is – virtue ethics can be an important addition to some form of an ethical theory, however, on its own, it is not sufficient to be taken as an all-encompassing theory. The strength of MacIntyre's project is exhibited in its contextualization of virtues through the concept of practice.<sup>398</sup> Every meta-narrative consists of its own list of virtues and, although there might be cardinal virtues that are shared throughout the course of our history, saying that we are progressing when we cultivate those virtues is not showing the full picture. Cardinal virtues are always connected to the practices and are exhibited in different ways in different meta-narratives, or, in terms of this project, traditions. With the change in practices and our moral and political language, the correlation between the cardinal virtues and the social reality around us changes as well. Therefore, virtue ethics does have more explanatory power than the alternatives in the field of moral naturalism, however, it still lacks the contextual basis to fully grasp the notion of moral and political progress.

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<sup>398</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1981.), *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana. p. 188.

## 4.2. Contextual Reasoning and the Epistemological Crisis

Theories of moral naturalism, although argumentatively elaborated, fail to offer full comprehension of what really does happen in our social lives. They do not offer sufficient reasons why some contextual practices changed from t1 to t2. Most of the arguments that can be given by moral naturalists remain post-hoc. Namely, if a practice which was less moral than before changes from t1 to t2, a moral naturalist can say – we have made progress because we have maximized a specific value that they see as having the property of goodness. This, of course, might be true and usually makes a lot of sense considering theories we mentioned earlier. Yet, these changes have not occurred in a vacuum, but in the whole infrastructure of meaning, practices, contextual situations, or, better yet, narratives. By saying that slavery was abolished because of us cultivating virtues, maximizing pleasure, etc. would not capture the real efforts made by the social and political movements within the timeframe in which progress has occurred. Saying that we have cultivated a specific virtue after slavery has been abolished might be correct, but virtues are by no reason the primary reason for something changing for the better.

The established reasons why the views of moral naturalism are not perfect contenders for elaborating moral and political progress are the following – they do not offer sufficient reasons on why the practices shift from t1 to t2, and the uniqueness of the very context seems to go beyond their scope. Therefore, our new contender must be a contextually established theory that can affirm the pluralism of interests and reasons.

Let us get back to the quote from Dale Jamieson about what moral progress should contain in order for us to consider it as such. Social phenomena such as war, slavery, poverty, privilege, liberty, empowerment, and respect for the environment and non-human animals need to be addressed in every account of moral and political

progress.<sup>399</sup> Now, primarily, we would need to derive one concept from Jamieson's list and connect it with the previous sub-chapter. That concept is the concept of liberty. In this instance, I would like to argue that liberty can be used as a main principle of moral and political progress. In this sense, we would need to divide further between the types of liberty we are going to operate with. Earlier in this chapter, the contrast between moral and political theory that Scanlon offers us has been mentioned. That is to say, if moral theory is concerned with the morality of an individual action, political theory is concerned with the morality of institutions.<sup>400</sup> By talking about moral and political progress, we can establish two notions of liberty – individual liberty, and equal institutional liberty with the addition of equal social liberty. Moreover, we can connect these types of liberty with the notions of positive and negative liberty.

The primary goal is to make a clear contrast between individual, equal social and equal institutional liberty and describe what do they mean in this project. Individual liberty simply refers to the liberty of an individual. On the other hand, equal institutional liberty refers to the liberty of a group of individuals, or a community when it is related to the public policies generated on the institutional level. Finally, equal social liberty refers to the liberty of a group of individuals, or a community when it is related to social discrimination that is not institutionally generated. Let us, therefore, consider some examples to solidify the distinction.

One of the examples that comes to mind is the apartheid, an institutionally established system of racial segregation that officially lasted from 1948 until 1994 in South Africa. Although this is the time that the institutionalized system of governance which was based on minoritarianism, or, the rule of the minorities, has been in place,

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<sup>399</sup> D. Jamieson (2017.), *Slavery, Carbon, and Moral Progress in Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, vol. 20., no. 1., p. 171.

<sup>400</sup> T. M. Scanlon, (2016.) *Individual Morality and Morality of Institutions in Filozofija i Društvo*, vol. XXVII, no. 1., p. 4. – 5.

it has rested on the long legacy of racism.<sup>401</sup> This embedded racism has been actualized by the governing National party in terms of imposed separation of black-skinned Africans and white-skinned Africans, often imposed with great brutality.<sup>402</sup> The laws and policies have touched upon every part of everyday life ranging from the economic, political, and social structure.<sup>403</sup> Mavis Mhlauli lists legal changes that have been in place, the most noteworthy ones being: the prohibition of mixed marriage, separating black-skinned Africans and white-skinned Africans by relocating them to different areas of residence, restricting the usage of public facilities such as transport, restaurants, cinemas, facilities for recreation for the black-skinned Africans, changing the curriculum for the black-skinned students in order to render them educationally inferior etc.<sup>404</sup> Now, the importance of this example lies in the institutional aspect of racial segregation. In this state of things, the majority which constituted of the black-skinned Africans have been denied their freedom and liberty by the rules and laws established on the institutional level. One can even note that they have been denied both positive and negative liberty by a proxy of them not having equal institutional liberty.

Let us expand this example a bit further. After the apartheid was dissolved in 1994., black-skinned Africans still experienced cases of social racism, even if they were “equal” on institutional grounds. Ndangwa Noyoo finds a culprit of this situation in the inability of the post-apartheid government to deal with the already established fundamental racism that was formed through the years by the colonial and apartheid rulers.<sup>405</sup> This is where the concept of equal social liberty comes into play. If there are

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<sup>401</sup> N. L. Clark, W. H. Worger, (2013.), *South Africa: The Rise and Fall of Apartheid 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.*, Routledge, New York, p. 37.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.* p. 21.

<sup>403</sup> M. B. Mhlauli, (2015.), *Understanding Apartheid in the South Africa Through the Racial Contract* in *The International Journal of Asian Social Science*, vol. 5., no. 4., p. 205.

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.* p. 205.

<sup>405</sup> N. Noyoo, (2020.), *Resurgent Racism in Post-Apartheid South Africa and the Need to Promote Healthy Human Relationships* in *Promoting Healthy Human Relationships in Post-Apartheid South*

no laws to limit the liberty of a specific group of individuals, but liberty is still limited by the prejudicial narrative against that group of people, we can say that they are lacking equal social liberty. In post-apartheid South Africa, inequality is still looming over the lives of the black-skinned Africans and the statistics are unrelentless. Rebeca Fogel states the following:

*Today, 25 years post-apartheid, South Africa's population is over 75% black and only 9% white, yet the number of white South Africans earning more than \$60,000 a year is 20 times higher than the number of black South Africans. The majority of black South Africans still live in townships and informal housing throughout the country, and most work multiple jobs earning very little money, have little access to higher quality schools or health care for themselves and their children, and have few opportunities to move out of the townships.<sup>406</sup>*

The inequality and the lack of opportunities for the black-skinned Africans in this case is clearly not a product of the laws that discriminate against them. On another hand, the current struggle that the black-skinned Africans are dealing with is a product of the earlier narratives and political structures that have remained deeply embedded within the post-apartheid narrative. Although be it as it may, we cannot call this situation the lack of equal institutional liberty, but we can say that the black-skinned Africans are not fully enjoying the equal social liberty. The same can be said for many minorities in many other situations. Another example could be the perception of the Romani people in the Balkans. Specific statistics show that in Croatia, around 50% of Romani people have been exposed to some form of discrimination in the last 5 years,<sup>407</sup> and, based on numerous surveys, as many as 48%

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*Africa in Springer Cham*, p. 29.

<sup>406</sup> R. Fogel, (2019.) *Informal housing, poverty, and legacies of apartheid in South Africa*, site: <https://urban.uw.edu/news/informal-housing-poverty-and-legacies-of-apartheid-in-south-africa/> , accessed: 01.28.2023.

<sup>407</sup> The research was published in 2021.

of Croatian citizens think that Romani people are living off the welfare system.<sup>408</sup> Even if there was a lot of progress from the year 2013 until the year 2017 in terms of public opinion, the fact that 25.2% of Croatian citizens still think that Romani people are a danger to their property and safety (41.4% in 2013.) is a pressing issue.<sup>409</sup> Things are marginally better in Bulgaria, however, Romani people, even though they represent the third largest group of citizens in Bulgaria, still suffer from constant discrimination in the educational sphere (only 0.5% of Romani people have a higher education degree)<sup>410</sup> and social sphere in general.<sup>411</sup> Even more so, a lot of Romani people are forced to “work” as secondary raw material gatherers in order to acquire extra funds in order to live normal lives.<sup>412</sup> In Serbia, Romani people are suffering from discrimination of a similar degree. Many of the prejudices are directly correlated with Romani people being lazy and irresponsible and that are not compatible with working with the natives.<sup>413</sup>

These examples show the main difference between the notions of equal institutional liberty and equal social liberty. While, as we have seen, the denial of equal institutional liberty is grounded by the institutional laws that target a specific group of people, the denial of equal social liberty is grounded on the prejudicial narrative woven within society. This is not to say that the denial of equal institutional liberty is not grounded on the prejudicial narrative, on the contrary, it is a necessary component of it which is then actualized in the institutional realm.

Finally, we have the denial of individual liberty, which is the most straightforward example of the three. Consider the situation in which equal

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<sup>408</sup> A. Atanasov, N. Kovačević, A. Spítálszky, Ž. V. Ravlić, (2021.), *Diskriminacija Roma u Hrvatskoj i Bugarskoj: Komparativno izvješće*, Minority Rights Group Europe, p. 4.

<sup>409</sup> *Ibid.* p. 5.

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7.

<sup>411</sup> This includes discrimination by the police, employers, institutional employees etc.

<sup>412</sup> R. Kasumović, (2019.), *Kako sindikalizovati nevidljive radnike?*, Mašina, site: <https://www.masina.rs/kako-sindikalizovati-nevidljive-radnike/>, accessed: 30.01.2023.

<sup>413</sup> G. Bašić, (2021.), *Romi u Republici Srbiji: Izazovi Diskriminacije*, Minority Rights Group Europe, p. 11.

institutional and social liberty is not denied to the individual. However, this person X finds him/herself in a situation in which he/she is denied a specific form of liberty by another person or another group of people. One example could be blackmailing. If person X is being blackmailed to do a set of actions that he/she does not have a volition to act upon, that person is denied individual liberty. The examples can be numerous and if an individual is being coerced into losing his/her positive or negative liberty, that is the case with the denial of individual liberty.

After explaining the notions of liberty, we also need to address the reason why liberty is the key concept in moral progress. Again, let us refer back to Jamieson's quote. He stresses *the abolition of war and slavery, the reduction of poverty and class privilege, the extension of liberty, the empowerment of the marginalized group and the respect for animals and nature*<sup>414</sup> Abolition of war and slavery can be reduced to extending the equal social and institutional liberty within the society. Earlier examples have shown how slavery is directly correlated to the institutional and social liberty of a specific group of people being denied. Reduction of poverty is linked with maximizing the positive liberty of a specific group of people. If we deal with this issue through establishing a welfare system, we are dealing with this issue through the institutional apparatus. In this sense, we are, maximizing the equal institutional liberty of the group of people, enhancing their positive liberty. If we would address poverty by an action individual qua individual, that is to say, where people donate specific amounts of wealth to other people, through their individual actions, exhibiting individual liberty, they are enhancing the positive liberty of the individuals. The empowerment of the marginalized group is also self-explanatory. The example where we have talked about the Romani people is a perfect example of the marginalized group of people who are being denied equal liberty in the social sense. The more equal society is, the more liberty is enhanced for marginalized groups. In the same way, the reduction of class privileges means limiting, or coercing liberty of

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<sup>414</sup> D. Jamieson (2017.), *Slavery, Carbon, and Moral Progress in Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, vol. 20., no. 1., p. 171.

the one group of people. However, there is a good case to be made that it is a necessary evil. For example, the class privilege of the whites during the apartheid was minimized so that the amount of liberty in the overall society could be maximized. Now, of course, this is not always the rule of thumb and in order to minimize the liberty of a specific group of people, it needs to be justified in many accords. We are left with the abolition of war and respect for animals and nature. While one can argue that the abolition of war promotes the liberty of those who would wage it, as well as the liberty of those who would be casualties, the reasons for abolishing wars are much more complex and situational and dependent on the circumstances in which the war occurs. The respect that we give to animals and nature also cannot be considered in terms of liberty if we do not expand our notion in order to accommodate animals and nature within it. We can, maybe, use Peter Singer's theory of personhood (doctrine of the sanctity of personal life) to include animals as well<sup>415</sup>, however, that would be stretching the argument in the way in which it would make it too inclusive that it would not be very strong. Environmental issues are directly correlated to our overall welfare and, by not taking care of nature and the environment around us, we are endangering our exhibition of liberty.

The great benefit from using the notion of liberty is that it can incorporate many other views offered by the theorists of moral and political progress and, also, expand on them. For example, Ruth Macklin, in her influential paper *Moral Progress*, writes that moral progress is constituted by two principles – the principle of humanity and the principle of humanness.<sup>416</sup> While the first one dictates that one society is more morally and politically progressive as long as it has a higher degree of recognition for human and non-human others<sup>417</sup>, the second one dictates that one

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<sup>415</sup> P. Singer, (1993.), *Practical Ethics 2nd ed.*, Cambridge University Press, New York, p. 117.

<sup>416</sup> R. Macklin, (1977.), *Moral Progress in Ethics*, vol. 87, p. 371.

<sup>417</sup> To contextualize this further, we can say that one society is more progressive if it promotes less differentiation between people based on their race, wealth, gender, sexual orientation etc. and is recognizing them as autonomous agents.

society is more progressive than the other if it generates less suffering, pain, and misfortune to the members of it.<sup>418</sup> Both of these principles can be subsumed under the notion of positive and negative liberty. The first principle, the demand for autonomy and recognition can be viewed from the standpoint of promoting positive liberty on the individual, social, and institutional levels. The second principle, the rejection of pain and suffering, can be subsumed under the account of negative liberty on the individual, social, and institutional levels. Apart from encompassing Macklin's view, the liberty theory expands it further, allowing for further demonstrative ground.

To reformulate Jamieson's quote, moral and political progress should be defined as the progressive expansion of individual, social and institutional liberty over time while honing the respect we share towards the non-human others and the environment around us. But there is something lacking in this redefined definition. By highlighting the notions of liberty, we are, like moral naturalists, not taking the context into full consideration. Therefore, I would propose the second concept we have talked about in the previous chapter and that is the concept of reasonableness.

However, there is a problem with having only the notion of liberty in our explanatory toolset. By noting liberty as the key concept, as mentioned, we fall into the same trap as those who propose virtue or pleasure as the basis for moral and political progress. This view is an external account of morality. Saying that we are progressing by expanding liberty does not answer the question of why and how we are doing that. It can also be taken as a post-hoc elaboration of the changed narrative. So, how does one narrative change to a more morally progressive one?

Peter Singer suggests that this is due to our increased use of reason in circumstances where the specific community demands justifications for some practice or activity.<sup>419</sup> Apart from that, Singer stresses that this reasoning should be

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<sup>418</sup> R. Macklin, (1977.), *Moral Progress in Ethics*, vol. 87, p. 372.

<sup>419</sup> P. Singer, (2011.), *The Expanding Circle*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, p. 93.

based on disinterest.<sup>420</sup> It would do no good if a person X would reason with a person Y on account of blunt self-interest. If person X (who is, in this example, a farm owner) reasons with person Y (who is a farm worker) about how those who work on the farms should be paid less for their work and how we should maximize the benefit of the owners, it brings little to no reasonableness. In this example, the farm owner is acting on his/her own self-interest in the goal of attaining more privilege over his/her worker. If we were to have a reasonable procedure of discussing relations and policies, we would have to act out of respect for multiple preferences/interests and not just our own. Therefore, Singer offers us a model that we can use in this discussion – justification of practices and policies to the community based on a reason-giving procedure that is based on disinterest of our personal self-interest.

By putting emphasis on the expansion of liberty and reasonableness, we are also cultivating recognition of others, a true example of impartiality. We include them in our narratives and treat them as reasonable others, with whom we can have an equal ground for political and moral deliberations. Patrick Loobuyck stresses the importance of recognition putting it in front of mere tolerance.<sup>421</sup> According to Loobuyck, tolerance has been considered as a plea for equal liberty, freedom of conscience, freedom of expression, equal opportunity, and self-determination.<sup>422</sup> However, the notion of mere tolerance cannot fully encompass the expansion of liberty and respect for reasonableness of the others. We can say that, in many ways, the black-skinned South Africans were tolerated in the context of the apartheid, but they were not recognized as equals. The same story can be told about the Romani people in the already mentioned examples. Tolerance, in this case, cannot be

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<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.* p. 93.

<sup>421</sup> He is following the Walzerian request of the necessity of something other than tolerance. According to Walzer, to tolerate someone is exhibiting the act of power while being tolerated is the acceptance of weakness. In this case, in order to make the setting more equal, we need another concept. From – M. Walzer, (1997.), *On Toleration*, Yale University Press, London, p. 57.

<sup>422</sup> P. Loobuyck, (2022.), *Tolerance, Recognition, Reasonable Accommodation and Minority Rights in Contested Concepts in Migration Studies*, Routledge, London, p. 304.

accounted for as a plea for liberty. Recognition also matches better with the shift from talking about the differences in beliefs, values, and practices to talking about identities.<sup>423</sup> Recognition of others, both in the realm of practice and the realm of identity is a necessary component of reasonableness insofar as we are able to consider them as a part of the deliberative procedure in which we can take their interests and practices as a relevant part of the equation.

Going back to using Singer's model, we can easily apply it onto the previous examples we have used. How could the abolition of slavery be called a morally progressive act? Simply put, it is not reasonable, and it only benefits a specific group of people – the slave owners. We would imagine a slave owner trying to give a justification to the general community about the reasons for the practice of slavery. Many of the slave owners have tried to defend slavery by highlighting the economic problems, fundamentalist religious doctrines, racial hierarchy based on false naturalism, etc.<sup>424</sup> By stating that there are problems with the economy and that we would need to exploit a specific group of people in order to avoid inconveniences such as dried-up tobacco crop fields or rice losing its value, it becomes apparent that this line of justification is based on the deeply-rooted self-interest, lacking the recognition for slaves and not considering them as equal deliberative agents. Likewise, fundamentalist religious doctrines and racial hierarchy based on false naturalism, at their very core, are unreasonable. Therefore, to justify slavery is to base the justification on unreasonable accounts that promote self-interest and deny recognition of others.

This account can offer a solution to the abolishment of war, protecting the environment and respecting animals, the cases which were problematic for the offered liberty expansion account. Singer certainly thinks that reasoning and disinterest should be expanded onto animals as well, since they are the non-human

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<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.* p. 312.

<sup>424</sup> U.S. History, *The Southern Argument for Slavery*, site: <https://www.ushistory.org/us/27f.asp>, accessed: 02.01.2023.

others who should be encompassed as moral patients.<sup>425426</sup>

Within the philosophical tradition that I am embracing, to be reasonable presupposes disinterest and impartiality. The fact that disinterest and reasonableness were divided in the previous examples was a deliberate strategy to illustrate the necessity of disinterest in reasoning with others. Questions such as - what is important in moral and political progress and why does our morality changes over the course of our history have been answered. We have gained both external (liberty) and internal (reasonableness) aspects of moral and political change. Now, we are left with a final question, the question of *how* do moral and political changes occur? By answering this question, the contextual aspect of moral and political progress will be clarified.

If the claims that were made in the previous chapters are to be considered as true, we derive our meaning from the context in which we find ourselves, or the social narrative. The social narrative is, in part, a system of practices that give us meaning and that have meaning within the narrative in which they are a part of. Considering moral and political progress, Singer starts from this state of things. He uses the terms which are in line with MacIntyre's philosophical opus as a starting point – the terms of authority and practices. According to Singer, we all find ourselves in the situation which is dictated by authority and practices.<sup>427</sup> Authority, in this sense, can also mean (and Singer uses this term in such a way) as a moral authority of a given social context, not only the authority of the excellence within the practice.<sup>428</sup> Furthermore, in Singer's view, morality has to be based on the rationality of the practice, not the

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<sup>425</sup> Peter Singer is considered one of the most renowned philosophers of animal rights. In this sense, him expanding the morality into the sphere of the non-human others should not come as a surprise.

<sup>426</sup> P. Singer, (2011.), *The Expanding Circle*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, p. 120.

<sup>427</sup> P. Singer, (2011.), *The Expanding Circle*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, p. 100.

<sup>428</sup> Although, as we have established, MacIntyre seems to believe that by engaging in excellence of the practice, we are becoming virtuous agents, that is to say, we become more morally sensible. Insofar as MacIntyre is concerned, authority in practices is also, at the same time, a moral authority.

genericity of it.<sup>429</sup> What he means by this is that while participating in the set of practices, we do acquire morality and meaning, however, this morality and meaning has to be based on a rational basis. By analyzing the text, Singer does not make a difference between rational and reasonable, and he does, indeed, switch to using the term reasonable in the paragraph after the one in which he talks about the rationality of the practice. In this sense, I believe that it is safe to assume that Singer would accept that practices should be both rational and reasonable. Generic practices are accepted without questioning their rational or reasonable basis.

What is the point that Singer is trying to make? The practices of a given society should always be reinterpreted and questioned in order for us to provide justification for them. By reinterpreting and questioning the practices in the moral and political sense, we are reasoning about the impact these practices have on the overall society. This reasoning, as it was stated before, should be impartial. Martha Nussbaum seems to be on the same track as Singer. When writing about moral progress, Nussbaum puts a lot of emphasis on the expansion of beliefs in a given social context in order to provide a universal account.<sup>430</sup> By universal account, I presume that she means reasonableness, as can be seen from this passage:

*...creates a basis for respectful interaction among citizens, as all, notwithstanding political and social differences, might exchange ideas together in a peaceful and attentive way, searching for shared premises and weeding out overambitious claims, rather than simply trading boasts or conclusions.*<sup>431</sup>

Nussbaum, however, puts emphasis on philosophy itself and its influence over moral progress. She believes that the theory that provides reasons for change is

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<sup>429</sup> P. Singer, (2011.), *The Expanding Circle*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, p. 100.

<sup>430</sup> M. Nussbaum, (2007.), *On Moral Progress: A Response to Richard Rorty* in *The University of Chicago Review*, vol. 74, No. 3, p. 943.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.* p. 943.

always behind the change of our moral and political framework.<sup>432</sup> Since people do not live in a theory-free space, it is important to adjust our theories in order for them to better our understanding and reasoning. Here is where I take issue with Nussbaum's approach. While the theory may be and, very often, of the key importance, it is more often than not shaped by a particular struggle. At the beginning of this text, Nussbaum points to the importance of the changes in social practices. The examples she takes are the treatment of women, disabled people, and slaves.<sup>433</sup> Although she is quite critical of the opinion that moral and political progress is going progressively upward, she does believe that there is something in the world that we can recognize as the progress of humanity.<sup>434</sup>

In order to show the problem, I find with Nussbaum's emphasis on theory itself, one of her examples needs to be explored. The relations between men and women should suffice as a good example for analysis. Nussbaum, rightfully, points to the fact that the mistreatment of women came as a thoughtless product of a tradition under the banner of "this is how things should be".<sup>435</sup> She also stresses a key point that I will put my attention to, namely:

*The exposure of their behavior as what it the sheer naming of it as oppression, and the existence of widespread public argument about it, changes things for good, and is, as Kant "already a form of improvement".<sup>436</sup>*

In this sense, the point of the discussion shifts into the public realm, and we are deliberating about the relationship between men and women. Theory, I believe, is a byproduct of a struggle to find reasonable grounds. Surely, we can produce and already have many exemplary feminist theories, however, the true grounds for moral and political progress are found in the context, of the struggle for liberty. Michelle

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<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.* p. 954.

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.* p. 940.

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.* p. 939.

<sup>435</sup> *Ibid.* p. 940.

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.* p. 940.

Moody-Adams, I think, correctly expands this example by connecting her theoretical approach to the already established Singerian basis.<sup>437</sup> She believes that, although it is important to consider rational inconsistency, false belief, and ignorance, it is also important to point out the deficiency of language itself.<sup>438</sup> The example of the relation between men and women is a good one for this approach. Namely, Moody-Adams finds that the change in our language has motivated the movements that demanded the shift in this relation. The transition has started happening in the 1974 with the articulation of the notion of sexual harassment. This concept, according to Moody-Adams, became an instrument of change once governmental institutions, media, and other organizations started using it to criticize the subjugation of women to workplace harassment.<sup>439</sup> Retrospectively, the same thing has happened with the concept of apartheid. Even though it appeared in the dictionary in the 1950s, it was used in the public debate during 1947 and 1948 respectively.<sup>440</sup> The concept has been a dividing factor for those who were pro-segregation and those who were anti-segregation. During the progression of the social events of struggle, this concept has developed in such a way that it is currently used to describe something morally and politically wrong. The UN openly prohibits institutional and social apartheid, and it is under article 3 under the protection against racial discrimination.<sup>441</sup> Regarding this, we can see the struggle that has resulted in a change in our moral and political language and the perception of the struggle itself.

Going back to the basis of moral and political change, we witness the change in contextual situations. Practice-based change arises when we question and begin to

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<sup>437</sup> M. Moody-Adams, (2017.), *Moral Progress and Human Agency in Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, vol. 20., no. 1., p. 158.

<sup>438</sup> *Ibid.* p. 158.

<sup>439</sup> *Ibid.* p. 158.

<sup>440</sup> N. L. Clark, W. H. Worger, (2013.), *South Africa: The Rise and Fall of Apartheid 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.*, Routledge, New York, p. 4.

<sup>441</sup> United Nations Human Rights, *Protection Against Racial Discrimination in the EU*, Europe Regional Office, p. 14.

reason about the overall impact of the practice within one certain social narrative. The phenomenon of sexual harassment was an inherent (and in many ways, still present) part of the system of practices, embedded within the social narrative. After the political struggle of those who were affected by it and those who were supporting them, moral language changed and so did the perception of this phenomenon. Now, as Nussbaum notices, the behavior that breeds sexual harassment needs to be a conscious and malicious choice.<sup>442</sup> With the parts of the practices changing, so does the social narrative around us and, in this way, we make step-by-step progress in both moral and political sense.

By exploring the contextual realm of change which includes language and practices by promoting reasonable accounts of liberty maximization, we are also cultivating public reasoning and enhancing our values, attitudes, and beliefs, as was noted in the previous sub-chapter. The concepts that we use in our everyday lives are value-based and they are connected to our beliefs and attitudes. In short, by changing and introducing new concepts in our language and practices, we are changing the social narrative from which we derive beliefs, values, and attitudes. This forms, in MacIntyre's terms, an epistemological crisis. To recapitulate, epistemological crisis originates from our worldview not being able to give us certainty anymore, in this case, both moral and political.<sup>443</sup> Therefore, we need to establish a new system of beliefs, values, and attitudes in order to accommodate the newly established views. In this sense, our social narrative progresses further, our traditions (or meta-narratives) shift, and the newer individual narratives are formed upon the grounds of the social narrative that was left behind. If we look at all of the examples given during the course of this sub-chapter, it is obvious that the cases such as sexual-harassment, slavery, segregation etc. are not acceptable, even though they were a part of the

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<sup>442</sup> M. Nussbaum, (2007.), *On Moral Progress: A Response to Richard Rorty in The University of Chicago Review*, vol. 74, No. 3, p. 943.

<sup>443</sup> A. MacIntyre, (2006.) *Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science in The Tasks of Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, New York, p. 5

social narrative in the past. Our beliefs have changed, our values have shifted, and we have different attitudes when it comes to these social phenomena.

With this, we have constructed a powerful toolset for elaborating moral and political progress. It consists of both external and internal factors after we have provided contextual grounds. Therefore, I will expand the previous definition of moral progress by including the established analysis. The definition of moral and political progress that will be accepted in this project is, thus:

*Moral and political progress should be defined as the progressive expansion of individual, social and institutional liberty over time by changing the unreasonable system of beliefs, values, and attitudes of the given society.*

#### **4.3. Recapitulation – Moral and Political Progress**

A theory of moral and political progress has been elaborated in this sub-chapter. The relevance of it for this whole project is that it shows how the narratives change and how the epistemological crisis occurs. Since the narrativity thesis in this project is taken as a basis of moral and political deliberation, we would have to show on what grounds does it change over time. Likewise, the narrativity thesis that is being developed in this project is a contextual one and, therefore, needs to be contextually flexible, that is to say, narrativity should change in the contextual realm. In the goal of defending the contextual theory of moral and political progress, the accounts of moral naturalists should be disregarded. We have considered the basics of moral naturalist theories of moral and political progress such as biological fitness theory, hedonist theory and virtue theory. All of these theories have been discarded since, in my opinion, they are usually based on post-hoc elaboration and do not have the contextual approach to explain the changes that are happening in the social environment throughout the history of our moral and political progression. Since

we have put emphasis on the internal and external elements of the theory of moral and political progress, one of the goals of providing a theoretical account of it is to incorporate both of these elements. The internal element that is provided in this account is reasonableness, while the external element is liberty. I have proposed a theory which is based on progressive reasoning which expands the liberty of the people and opens a door for social recognition of others. By having these two elements at play, the history of moral progress can be seen from their conjunction and, I believe, that they have a strong elaborative power. However, the problem with these two principles remains the same as with the theory of moral naturalism – they can be seen only from the post-hoc situation. In order to fix this issue, we have introduced a contextual account of change. Following the analysis offered by Michelle Moody-Adams, I argue that contextual change comes as a product of a struggle. Within this struggle, we develop new concepts within our language which are value-based in order to further describe the moral and political phenomena in our narrative. What follows from these changes is the epistemological crisis, that is, a phenomenon which describes the change of beliefs, values, and attitudes that we have in a certain social narrative and, in the same way, the narrative itself is changed.

By finalizing the third sub-chapter, we have acquired the final ingredient for the introduction of constructivism in the final chapter. The ingredients that we have are intelligibility crisis, narrative pluralism, and narrative progress/narrative change. In the next sub-chapter, we will use these notions to propose the limits of the narrativity thesis and to show why the narrative view cannot fully encompass our moral and political deliberation.

### **5.0. The Limits of the Narrative: Form and Substance**

The final sub-chapter of this chapter will deal with the limits of the narrativity thesis. During the course of this project, I have defended the view of the social

narrativity thesis, as well as the psychological narrativity thesis. To connect these two claims, we have mentioned narrative hermeneutics, a theoretical view that argues that *the self* is always deriving data from the social narratives, operating within the meaning of it and its actions becoming intelligible to it. In this chapter, we have applied this theory to particular cases of political and moral phenomena, and we have tried to see if the narrativity thesis is enough to explain what is happening in the domain of our moral and political lives. I would like to argue that there is still a missing variable in how our deliberations function.

In the first sub-chapter, we talked about the intelligibility crisis, in the second sub-chapter we talked about narrative pluralism and ideologies, and, in the third sub-chapter, we have opened the topic of social evolution. I would like to argue that these cases have shown the limitations of the narrative approach, and they make it clear that there is something needed to illuminate on the picture of moral and political deliberation. Through the course of this sub-chapter, I will go through what was already established and show my reasoning on why we need a more formal approach to the narrativity thesis.

The social narrativity thesis rests upon the fact of intelligibility. That is to say, we find intelligibility within the social narrative that we are embedded in and, therefore, the social narrative holds a prescriptive and descriptive power over our substance of deliberation. Yet, the shifts in social narratives and the changes that social practices undergo change the story that one narrative creates. Therefore, the intelligibility that one narrative has provided is not compatible with the narrative that has been changed. This has been shown in the cases of nostalgia, ideological change, and social evolution. Narratives change and they do not remain the same.

By referring back to the theory of narrative hermeneutics, the theory itself offers us a tool that is not fully developed, but yet, can help us explain why our narratives are changing and for which reasons the narrativity shift occurs in the first place. In the introductory article on narrative hermeneutics, Hanna Meretoja and

Jens Brockmeier point out that the social narrativity thesis is, indeed, subjected to change. According to them:

*...humans do not take their existence for granted but are continuously engaged in making sense of it; telling and retelling their experiences and identities as well those of others, they give shape to them, or question such shape and try out different interpretations.*<sup>444</sup>

The claim here is that although narrative hermeneutics is based on deriving the substance of our deliberation from the social narrative that encompasses us, there is an effort that is required from the agents of deliberation. The effort to constantly reinterpret and reshape the acquired “data” in relational terms. The relation in this sense is between the agent and the social narrative, as well as the agent and other narrative agents. The notion of the dialogue comes into play. Namely, the authors find the dialogue to be a process that occurs when the conflict and contestation with the current social narrative, or the personal narrative of *the other* appears.<sup>445</sup> They also note that the dialogue mediates the narratives through revisions and reinterpretations of our current narratives.<sup>446</sup> Therefore, we are getting a glimpse of the efforts that one narrative agent needs to take in order for his/her narrative not to fall short in elaborating the world around us.

Furthermore, Hanna Meretoja invokes a notion of dialogic storytelling to elaborate on the case in which we reinterpret the already established stories.<sup>447</sup> Meretoja takes dialogism as a fundamental structure of human existence<sup>448</sup>, a connecting principle that links us with other storytellers around us, the other *selves*.

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<sup>444</sup> J. Brockmeier, H. Meretoja, (2014.), *Understanding Narrative Hermeneutics* in *StoryWorlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies*, vol. 6., no. 2., p. 6.

<sup>445</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6.

<sup>447</sup> H. Meretoja, (2018.), *The Ethics of Storytelling: Narrative Hermeneutics, History and the possible*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 258.

<sup>448</sup> *Ibid.* p. 269.

When we talk with other narrative agents, we are narrating our stories<sup>449</sup> By sharing our narratives with *the other*, as well as getting to know the narratives of *the other*, we are constantly providing a change within our narrative structure. This is not only bound by exchanging narratives between two narrative agents but also the narratives we receive by indulging ourselves in art, cinema, poetry, and literature, as well as reading someone's theory, opinions, newspaper articles, etc. Also, as we have mentioned numerous times, our narratives are also bound to the social narrative around us. Meretoja is clear in this, and she states the following:

*The agency of individuals consists in their capacity to initiate something new, and integral to this capacity is the reinvention of themselves through co-fabulation. This creativity necessarily takes place in relation to cultural narrative frameworks.*<sup>450</sup>

In this sense, we are doing the act of narrative reinterpretation within the boundaries of one social narrative. This social narrative directs our deliberation, yet we are constantly reinterpreting the substance of it through our constant co-fabulation.

The takeaway from this is that the narrative is the source of intelligibility, but there needs to be a reason for the narrative shift. Also, there needs to be a way for those who have lost intelligibility and are undergoing an intelligibility crisis to reconstruct their substance of deliberation in order for it to accommodate the new narrative grounds. It is my suspicion that the process of narrative hermeneutics is not the only process that guides our social and psychological constitution, but a process of construction/reconstruction.

Although Meretoja's dialogic storytelling is an interesting tool to use to explain why narrative changes in a both personal and social context, the description is just

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<sup>449</sup> Here, the concept of stories is used in the broadest possible sense. It doesn't only entail our experience, but our values, beliefs, attitudes, views on a particular matter, strivings etc.

<sup>450</sup> *Ibid.* p. 265.

too simple. Chapter 7 of her *The Ethics of Storytelling* argues for dialogic storytelling by relying on the examples from novels by David Grossman.<sup>451</sup> While this is not an argument against the overall method of Meretoja's argument for dialogic storytelling, it is worth mentioning that she is too dependent on remedying her theoretical model with Grossman's novels (or, vice versa?). It is quite convenient for her goal of portraying dialogic storytelling as the main source of narrative change by implementing specific stories in which the characters agree upon the basic rules of the dialogue. This is, empirically speaking, not always the case when we open the discussion with *the other*.

Let us convey Meretoja's concept into the political realm that we have opened throughout the course of this chapter. Those who are nostalgic, who have lost intelligibility, those who hold onto the ideologies that are coercing *the other*, those who deny the current development of moral and political progress; let us take them into the consideration. They are swayed by the fact of unreasonableness and, more often than not, by the fact of irrationality. Matej Cívik and Pavol Hardoš consider the fact of irrationality as epistemic blindness to evidence that is, in a way, disproving or against their far-fetched and problematic views;<sup>452</sup> or, in this case, narratives. In the political and ethical sphere, there are many who are unreasonable and irrational, and it would be a huge task to ask for a simple process of dialogical storytelling to provide a solution to this problem. In many ways, the simple narrative exchange will not provide a lot of grounds for someone to change their own narrative. We have established that one political and ethical view consists of values, beliefs, and attitudes. Changing someone's core values, core beliefs and core attitudes is a task that is not achievable by a simple dialogue. Again, this is considering a dialogue in the broadest possible sense. The dialogue will be considered as an antagonistic attack on the narrative identity of a narrative agent mediated by the narrative of *the*

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<sup>451</sup> *Ibid.* p. 255.

<sup>452</sup> M. Cívik, P. Hardoš, (2022.), *Conspiracy Theories and Reasonable Pluralism* in *European Journal of Political Theory*, vol. 21., no. 3., p. 8.

*other.*

This descriptive account that was provided can be blamed on the substantiality of the narrative approach. By only taking a narrative as the beginning and the end of our political and ethical deliberation, we are not and cannot be persuaded to accept the narrative that is, at its core, different from our own. Yet, dialogic storytelling and co-fabulation have their say in elaborating how the narrative change actually occurs. It is, of course, framed within the realm of substance as it deals with the substantial "data" derived from the social narrative. Beyond that, we would need to frame the formal theoretical notions upon which these concepts stand. In this sense, by co-fabulation and by dialogue, we are constructing and re-constructing the substance which was derived from the social narrative and which we deeply root in our identity. We usually give our reasons for having a narrative X or a narrative Y and we confront others by reasoning with them. Of course, reasoning does not usually end up being fruitful in the empirical realm either (especially considering the fact of unreasonableness), however, it does offer a lot of descriptive power in formal terms to the substantial theory offered throughout the first two chapters.

What do I mean by this? Back to the introduction of this project, I have noted that the theoretical model of my argument is that we need both substantial and formal theory to elaborate the full extent of our moral and political deliberation. The social narrativity thesis, as well as the psychological narrativity thesis, are based on a theoretical model that is substantial in nature. In terms of political deliberation, theoretical substance describes the "data" we receive from the social narrative which is historical and relational in nature. On the other hand, this substance is also bound by formal principles of deliberation. Therefore, in the next chapter, I would like to propose a formal principle of deliberation that "guides" us in how we perceive this "data" and how we change it or, re-narrate it. This is, I believe, found in the project of procedural reasoning that the theoretical model of constructivism entails. Throughout this chapter, it was constantly insisted that reasoning should be

highlighted in real-world politics and ethics and, as such, is necessary for the full picture that this project tends to paint.

Therefore, the next and final chapter will provide us with the theoretical background of constructivism as well as the final stage of an argument for narrative constructivism.

## **Constructivist Procedure: Reasoning and Reasonableness**

### **1.0. Introduction: What is Constructivism?**

*Moral philosophy is Socratic: we may want to change our present considered judgments once their regulative principles are brought to light. And we may want to do this even though these principles are a perfect fit. A knowledge of these principles may suggest further reflections that lead us to revise our judgments.*<sup>453454</sup>

Through the course of this project, constructivism was hinted to be a necessary part of the descriptive view on moral and political deliberation that I want to propose. The introductory quote from John Rawls suggests the nature of constructivism which has been foreshadowed throughout the third chapter. He emphasizes the importance of revision of the regulative principles on which we base our judgments, and, in the same way, our deliberations. Since I have proposed a social narrativity thesis and psychological narrativity thesis as the basis for deliberations, it is of utmost importance that the regulative and revisionary principles be incorporated into this theoretical framework since the third chapter has shown that they do need a formal principle to explain our everyday deliberations further.

However, constructivism is one of the theoretical views contested even amongst the theoreticians who endorse it themselves. The main goal of this introduction is to elaborate on what usually is taken to be constructivism. The relevance of it is to provide a range of possible theoretical foundations of constructivism which will lead me to uptake one of them as the position I will endorse

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<sup>453</sup> J. Rawls, (1971.) *A Theory of Justice*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 49.

<sup>454</sup> Rawls' reference to the procedure of reflective equilibrium.

as a formal part of this overall thesis.

Answering the question of “What is constructivism?” is not as straightforward as giving a direct and concrete answer. Mark Lebar sees constructivism as a latecomer to 20th-century philosophy when it comes to the fields of ethics and political theory.<sup>455</sup> By being so, it is still being defined and redefined. Constructivism is usually linked to John Rawls and his reading of Kant in his *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*<sup>456</sup>, which has later been expanded in his numerous papers and important book chapters. Kantian constructivism originated from Rawls and has influenced various philosophers such as Onora O’Neill, Christine Korsgaard, Thomas Scanlon, etc. Although Kantian constructivism is the original idea for constructivism in general, there have been numerous attempts to reestablish the basis for it. Namely, various philosophers support various versions of constructivism formed from the philosophical traditions offered by Hume, Hobbes, and even Aristotle. When we consider the vast plurality of constructivist views, it is easy to conclude that answering the question of what constructivism is becomes a bit more complicated.

To make matters worse, constructivism can also be seen from the standpoint of the first-order view and the second-order view. When talking about first-order views, we are talking about the field of normative ethics and practical philosophy that proposes a question of “what ought to be done”.<sup>457</sup> The second-order view is a meta-

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<sup>455</sup> M. Lebar, (2013.) *Reviewed Work(s): Constructivism in Practical Philosophy by James Lenman and Yonatan Shemmer* in *Mind*, vol. 122., no. 488., p. 1135.

<sup>456</sup> This is especially seen in chapter VI where Rawls discussed Kant’s moral philosophy. He analyzes Kant’s views from the contemporary standpoint and rejects them as being in line with either rational intuitionism or psychological naturalism. Instead, Rawls argues that Kant’s views are constructivist in nature and, therefore, begins the elaboration on the constructivist procedure that he finds Kant to be proposing in both his moral theory and mathematical theory. From: J. Rawls, (2000.), *Lectures on The History of Moral Philosophy*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 235 - 247.

<sup>457</sup> Some popular examples of first-order, normative constructivism can be seen in the works of Kenneth Westphal and Onora O’Neil. They believe that the sole guide behind normative principles is constructed reasons. from – K. R. Westphal, (2010.) *Normative Constructivism. Hegel's Radical Social Philosophy* in *SATS*; O. O’Neil, (2002.) *Autonomy and the Fact of Reason in the Kritik der praktischen*

ethical position that is descriptive at its core and, following Hudson, it's not about "what we ought to do", but more about what we talk about when we talk about "what we ought to do".<sup>458</sup>

Finally, constructivism can be differentiated between global and local constructivism. Global constructivism, the more ambitious of the two, tends to explain the whole normative sphere of our practical action by referring to the procedural constructivist account. Local constructivism, on the other hand, is less demanding than global constructivism is and, as Debbie Roberts points out, offers a constructivist account only of a particular part of a normative domain by using the other parts of it.<sup>459</sup> The difference here lies in the following – global constructivism aims to provide an overall elaborative procedure and apply it to the full scope of our moral lives. Contrary to it is local constructivism which takes one moral domain, let's say, for example, institutional justice, and applies the constructivist procedure to it while still maintaining the description of other normative domains.

What is then, constructivism? What is the *genus proximum* of everything mentioned? The fact that most constructivists agree with is that moral norms and values are not discovered in the world, nor are they revealed to us by some divine being. They are a product of deliberation between human agents; they are constructed by reason.<sup>460</sup> The reinterpretation of Hume, Kant, Aristotle, etc. in the constructivist sense has been a breath of fresh air in contemporary moral and political theory. The reasons for that can be found if we were to take a look at the historical development of moral theory. Matej Cibik notices a specific crisis in the contemporary practical philosophy; a crisis originating from the search for an alternative approach

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*Vernunft in Immanuel Kant: Kritik der praktischen Vernunft.*

<sup>458</sup> W. Hudson, (1970.) *Modern Moral Philosophy*, Macmillan Press, London, p. 1.

<sup>459</sup> D. Roberts, (2013.) *Constructivism in Practical Philosophy* by James Lenman and Yonatan Shemmer in *Analysis* vol. 73, no. 4., p. 815.

<sup>460</sup> C. Bagnoli, (2013.) *Constructivism in Ethics*, Cambridge University Press, New York, p. 1.

to the already established popular approaches.<sup>461</sup> Tracing back to the history of approaches, we had a clash between idealism, intuitionism, relativism, etc. Ranging from naïve objectivism to naïve subjectivism, the theorists in the moral landscape have been searching for a view that could be non-relativist, but, at the same time, not be naively objectivist.<sup>462</sup> This is exactly where constructivism comes into play. It is a view that connects the contextual human realm with practical objectivity I will further explain the use of these terms when I elaborate on the version of constructivism that is going to be considered in this project.

From the general definition of constructivism, we can derive two things – agent-based deliberation and reason. These two notions will be of immense value for the overall argument. It will be important to provide a view on the concept of agent-based deliberation, as well as to provide elaboration on what is meant by the notion of reason. By answering these two questions, we will have a way to connect constructivism with narrativism. However, this goal will have to wait because an adequate account of constructivism is yet to be provided. Thus, in the following sub-chapters, I will try to make an argument for the usage of a specific form of constructivism in this project by rejecting the multiplicity of views that were given in this introduction.

### **1.1. The First Question: First-Order or Second-Order Constructivism?**

Selecting the right form of constructivism for this project begins with identifying the central focus of the argument: the critical role of political and ethical deliberation in shaping our understanding. In this respect, we would need to devise a version of constructivism that would be able to accommodate this notion and, in

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<sup>461</sup> M. Cíbk, (2014.) *Rawlsian Constructivism and the Conception of Human Rights by Ladislav Hejčánek* in *Ethics and Bioethics*, vol. 4, no. 1 – 2., p. 2.

<sup>462</sup> *Ibid.* p. 4.

retrospect to what has already been written, connect it to the narrative account of deliberation.

This begs the first question – are we going to talk about the first-order or the second-order form of constructivism? Since a descriptivist account of political and moral deliberation is the primary concern, with the normative aspect being secondary, the main goal is not to propose what we ought to do, but, rather, the question of how we come to deliberate the questions of individual and institutional morality. In this sense, second-order constructivism will be the much more fit for my cause at hand. To further explain the second-order view of constructivism, I will turn to Sharon Street’s paper “*What is Constructivism in Ethics and Metaethics?*”.<sup>463</sup> She starts by saying that it is quite easy to see what constructivism has to offer in the normative field of ethics, however, its influence on meta-ethics is highly contested.<sup>464</sup> Now, I will still refrain from using the term “meta-ethical constructivism” and carry on with the term “second-order constructivism” since we are still contested about constructivism being a substantial meta-ethical view. Street does, in fact, explain an important standpoint of characterization of constructivism – the practical relevance.

Meta-ethics is a field of ethics that usually deals with questions such as “What do we consider to be good?”, “What is valuable?”, “what do we mean when we say that X ought to do Y?” etc. Constructivism, according to Street, takes a purely practical standpoint behind these claims and states that - what is valuable, normative, and good, is found within the attitude of constructing from the point of view of a person who is already in the procedure of constructing.<sup>465</sup> It is practical in the sense that it evades the questions of whether value, goodness, normative truths, etc. exist, however, assumes them in the sense it is purely practical from the agent's perspective

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<sup>463</sup> The reason for considering this paper is the fact that it is a tradition-neutral form of constructivism. Namely, in this paper, she “constructs” the very basis for the constructivist theories that are emerging.

<sup>464</sup> S. Street, (2010.), *What is Constructivism in Ethics and Metaethics?* In *Philosophy Compass* vol. 5., no. 5., p. 363.

<sup>465</sup> *Ibid.* p. 367.

in a given circumstance.<sup>466</sup><sup>467</sup> The example should be given to illustrate the practical standpoint a bit further. Even before reflecting upon the existence of value, goodness, and normativity, we are taking these notions as a given within the everyday practices that we are involved in.<sup>468</sup> We do not, for the most part, pay attention to the objective existence of the mentioned notions while concerned about a particular subject, or being a member of a specific practice. We do not want to commit atrocities because we have reflected upon the existence of badness in those heinous acts, on the contrary, we attribute the value of badness to those acts because we can argue for the practicality of not committing those acts. One can say that, if act X would endanger or coerce a person Y, that act is wrong for various reasons – both consequential and deontic. Likewise, if we are a member of a specific practice, let's say, a manager, we rarely, if ever, reflect upon the existence of the intrinsic value of being a manager. We assign value to that practice because it provides us with both internal and external goods. The assessment of these practices and acts, I would argue, is purely contextual in the sense in which we assign reasons to support the decision to do X or Y in a given circumstance. Practicality is, as it seems, closely related to the reason-giving procedure, something that we will assess later.

How does constructivism differ from other meta-ethical positions? What is its own *differentia specific*? To start, it is worth pointing out that meta-ethical constructivism is best understood as a view that is within a specific normative

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<sup>466</sup> *Ibid.* p. 367.

<sup>467</sup> Street's version of practicality resonates with Rawls' title of his famous paper *Justice as Fairness – Political not Metaphysical* in which he advocates his view on justice as fairness being a practical standpoint rather than metaphysical or epistemological.

From: J. Rawls, (1985.), *Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical* in *Philosophy and Public Affairs* vol. 14., no. 3., p. 230.

<sup>468</sup> This does sound quite like intuitionism and many constructivists point out this fact. Both constructivism and intuitionism share the same basis, that of the mind-dependence of the constructivist procedure. From – R. Lemhoff, (2019.) *Intuitionism in the Philosophy of Mathematics*, from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/intuitionism/#Con> accessed. 12.13.2023.

theory.<sup>469</sup> It doesn't, for once, elaborate on the *meaning* of normative terms. If anything, it is a reason-based, practical position that is used to give further elaboration on the concepts that are being used by a specific theory. Street believes that constructivists need not and should not follow the task of giving the *meaning* of normative terms since constructivism operates in a different way. Namely, the very core of a constructivist proposal is, according to her, the truth of a normative claim depends on its practical proposal.<sup>470</sup> That itself is a substantive normative claim. I believe that, following from that, constructivism can be very flexible. Following that, in the further elaboration of constructivism, I will try to show how it differs from the classical meta-ethical positions with the goal of finding a general view of constructivism that will serve as a basis for the rest of this project.

The reader should bear in mind that multiple philosophers support multiple views of every meta-ethical position that will be mentioned. Likewise, I will also skip the overall particulars of the discussion on cognitivism vs non-cognitivism. Whether our judgments express cognitive or non-cognitive properties does, seemingly, have a lot of influence over the descriptive account of the *substance* and *form* of our political and moral deliberation. Rather, what will be discussed is the conversation held between those who consider themselves meta-ethical realists and meta-ethical contextualists<sup>471</sup>. In many ways, this discussion also encompasses the key components of the cognitivism vs non-cognitivism debate that are relevant to my project, however, taken from a different standpoint. Having that reason in mind, we will present these two major meta-ethical positions as a general view starting with realism.

Realism, as a meta-ethical view, in short, is a conjunction between realist

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<sup>469</sup> S. Street, (2010.), *What is Constructivism in Ethics and Metaethics?* In *Philosophy Compass* vol. 5., no. 5., p. 375.

<sup>470</sup> *Ibid.* p. 380.

<sup>471</sup> Sometimes called anti-realists. However, due to the status of the current debate in meta-ethics, I would prefer to use the term contextualism since it is more useful to illustrate the position.

semantics and realist metaphysics.<sup>472</sup> The first means that our evaluation is both cognitive and objective while the second means that there are objective evaluative facts. Therefore, when we say that X is wrong, the wrongness of X is an objective normative truth that is usually based on a specific version of realist metaphysics. Yet, that does not always have to be the case. Wouter Floris Kalf thinks that there are two forms of realism – robust realism and quietist realism.<sup>473</sup> Robust realism asserts that moral facts are ontologically bound. For example, naturalism is one of the examples that we can take from robust realism. If a naturalist says that X is wrong, he/she should offer a naturalist source of objective wrongness which is usually found in the physical world.<sup>474</sup> There can be various forms of robust realism, however, naturalism is taken to be a convenient example. Quietist realism, on the other hand, asserts that moral reasons are normative. The example that Kalf takes is Scanlon’s meta-ethics.<sup>475</sup> This is quite intriguing since Scanlon is usually portrayed as a restricted constructivist.<sup>476</sup> Kalf sees moral reasons as being ontologically objective and attributes them to Scanlon’s view.<sup>477</sup> In this sense, quietist realism is a view that refers to the objective norms that are found within our reasons for acting in a specific way. Is constructivism, in this regard, a form of realism? My opinion is that, if anything, Kalf’s portrayal of Scanlon shows the flexibility of constructivism. However, what Kalf misses are the grounds for a contractual situation. Scanlon puts a lot of emphasis on reasonableness as the basis for his contractualism and, in this regard, contractualism

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<sup>472</sup> G. Kahane, (2013.), *Must Metaethical Realism Make a Semantic Claim?* in *Journal of Moral Philosophy* vol. 10., p. 150.

<sup>473</sup> W. F. Kalf, (2020.) *Quietist Metaethical Realism and Moral Determination* in *Ratio* vol. 34., p. 248.

<sup>474</sup> D. Khlentzos, (2008.), *Moral Realism, Meta-Ethical Pyrrhonism and Naturalism* in *Moral Psychology Today*, p. 18.

<sup>475</sup> W. F. Kalf, (2020.) *Quietist Metaethical Realism and Moral Determination* in *Ratio* vol. 34., p. 249.

<sup>476</sup> S. Street, (2010.), *What is Constructivism in Ethics and Metaethics?* In *Philosophy Compass* vol. 5., no. 5., p. 375.

<sup>476</sup> *Ibid.* p. 368.

<sup>477</sup> W. F. Kalf, (2020.), *Quietist Metaethical Realism and Moral Determination* in *Ratio* vol. 34., p. 250.

is always exhibited within a particular context.<sup>478</sup> While reasons, in this case, are the holders of normative force, they are objective in a particular context. Be it as it may, it would, right now, be a huge leap to claim that constructivism itself could be a realist position. Constructivism itself, as we have noted, does not concern itself with the meaning of values and their ontology. It is practical, not metaphysical. Realism is a view that is, as we have stated, constituted of specific views on realist semantics and metaphysics, something that constructivism is not. Constructivism, in this sense, does not require any robust view of metaphysics nor a realist evaluation of a specific action. Like Scanlon, one can argue that reasons themselves are evaluative towards an object/action that we evaluate, yet, they say nothing about a metaphysical framework under which they operate. Therefore, I believe, that since constructivism does not fulfill two (or one) major tasks of realism, it cannot be taken as a classic realist position. After considering contextualism, we will return to this discussion and see if we can attribute realist elements to the version of constructivism that is being discussed.

If not realism, what about contextualism? Firstly, it argues against the existence of moral principles. Secondly, it argues that all our moral actions and deliberations are context-based, they are dependent on the situation in which they are exhibited. As Gunnar Björnsson notes, contextualism in meta-ethics is a view in which the meaning of the truth conditions for a moral judgment does not only depend on the act itself but also on the circumstances and the context in which that act has been committed.<sup>479</sup> This is, at first glance, quite like meta-ethical particularism and meta-ethical relativism. In the following passages, I would like to propose the main differences between contextualism, particularism, and relativism so that we have a general idea about contextualism. Afterward, I would claim that contextualism

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<sup>478</sup> T. M. Scanlon, (1998.), *What do we Owe to Each Other?*, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, p. 192.

<sup>479</sup> G. Björnsson, (2017.) *Contextualism in Ethics* in *International Encyclopedia of Ethics*, Hugh LaFollette ed., p. 1.

is quite complementary to constructivism, albeit it can only serve as an explanatory addition.

Firstly, the simplest case to make is to disassociate relativism from contextualism. Meta-ethical relativism is usually considered to be a view that assigns a truth-apt value to a particular action or object that is relative to the one that is evaluating that very action or object.<sup>480</sup> The everyday example of relativism could be described in the following way – a person X tells a person Y that an action A is wrong. Y replies to X that that might be the case for him/her, however, Y believes that action A is right. They end up agreeing that they disagree. A is wrong has an assigned truth value from the standpoint of X, while it has an assigned truth value from the standpoint of Y. This would be subjective relativism. Cultural relativism, on the other hand, takes general public values and beliefs to be relative to the society one finds oneself. In this situation, value X can be right or wrong to the people who are members of a specific culture.<sup>481</sup> Relativism itself, however, does depend on context, however, it is not contextualism. Subject X, according to relativist context, assigns truth value to a specific action/object based on the situation, his/her background, tendencies, etc. and he/she finds that to be true for him/herself. In contrast, he/she does not find it to be necessarily true for Y. Cultural relativism, on the other hand, is even more so contextualist and it is clear to see why. It can be linked to what has been said about the core of the social narrativity thesis; that is to say, we are shaped under the influence of an already established set of rules, values, ways of social interaction, metaphysical sense of reality, etc. that are derived from the social context and, thus, make up our story. Yet, taking narrativity out of the equation, cultural relativism is relativist in the sense that the social principles that shape us are ours to adhere to, but are not there to be accepted by others. Therefore, in this respect, if subject X finds an object/action A to be good, it is true for him/her because he/she has been shaped

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<sup>480</sup> M. Glanzberg, (2007.) *Context, Content, and Relativism in Philosophical Study* vol. 136., p. 4.

<sup>481</sup> J. Suikkanen, (2023.) *Subjectivism, Relativism, and Contextualism in The Bloomsbury Handbook of Ethics 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London, p. 134.

under the circumstances which determined him to find that action to be good. However, this does not mean that a person Y who is a member of a different society that is governed by different values and beliefs will find an action/object A to be good. The main difference between contextualism and relativism, as I see it, is the claim about the evaluation of values. Relativism does claim values being truth-apt. There can be contextualist relativism, but not relativist contextualism.<sup>482</sup> Relativism in many ways *must* be considered as a contextualist account since it depends on the circumstances that relativize our moral and political truths. Contextualism is, therefore, a much more minimal meta-ethical account since it does not make claims whether our assigned values are true or not. It claims that our evaluation is based on a specific context and that it is context-bound.

What about meta-ethical particularism? How is it different from the version of contextualism that is taken to be a minimal approach to meta-ethics? The difference between particularism and contextualism seems to be quite difficult to point out since they share the same premises. Namely – there are no general moral principles, and the evaluation is context-dependent. As Peter Tuck puts it, the newly established rules about contextuality have been quite persuasive and have changed the moral discourse itself.<sup>483</sup> Particularism has embraced this and has contextualized the meta-ethical domain. Jonathan Dancy, who has championed the view of meta-ethical particularism, opens up his paper by stating that the main claim is the non-existence of moral principles.<sup>484</sup> If we were to describe particularism, it would be

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<sup>482</sup> Gunnar Björnsson and Stephen Finlay, for example, defend a contextualist account of normative judgments that have been relativized. Furthermore, their account also differentiates between contextualism and relativism, yet, their version of relativism is dependent on contextualism, thus, making the same argument as I am making in this passage. From – G. Björnsson, S. Finlay, (2010) *Metaethical Contextualism Defended in Ethics* vol. 121., no. 1., p. 7.

<sup>483</sup> P. N. Tuck, (2021.) *Value and Variance: Dancy, Moore, and Scanlon* in *Department of Philosophy Manchester Metropolitan University*, p. 19.

<sup>484</sup> J. Dancy, (1983.), *Ethical Particularism and Morally Relevant Properties* in *Mind* vol. 92., no. 368., p. 530.

based on, as Dancy puts it, *prima facie* duties which state that no general moral principles can be applied to a specific situation.<sup>485</sup> The next line of this argument is that when we find ourselves in a specific situation where we choose a specific course of action, we do not have one general principle that we use to navigate the situation, but, depending on the situation itself, we chose one of many moral principles. An example that is of much use to understand particularism is the one that Dancy offers us in the same essay. Consider the following:

*In such a description, certain features will be mentioned as salient within the context of the building as a whole. There is no thought that such features will be generally salient; they matter here and that is enough. Someone offering the description is telling his audience how to see the building; he is doing this by selecting for stress just those features that must be salient if someone is to see the building the right way. He picks these features out but knows that their importance cannot be assessed or even discerned by someone who cannot see the whole building. One could not (and here is one important feature of the analogy) discover how the building was just by considering its salient features; salient features are not epistemological clues, and by the analogy, reasons are not clues either.*<sup>486</sup>

What Dancy is stressing here is that when we find ourselves in a specific context, we are focusing on the salient (or, significant) aspect of it. We do not operate based on a singular, general moral principle, but act by a principle that is right for that very situation. Like with the building, the moral agent evaluates an action/object by evaluating the specific aspects of it that he/she deems to have the highest importance within the given circumstance. Only then does the agent act by some moral principle that is applied to a given situation. This is, in short, a crude view of moral particularism. How does this differ from contextualism in this sense? It seems to me

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<sup>485</sup> *Ibid.* p. 540.

<sup>486</sup> *Ibid.* p. 546.

that philosophers who are subscribed to particularism talk about objectivity, whereas contextualists themselves point out that new values and facts regularly develop. That is to say, particularism usually does concur that there are moral principles, just not general ones, that we apply to a given context-rich situation. On the other hand, contextualists say nothing about moral principles themselves.

Therefore, we can conclude that contextualism is a view that is based on the context itself being a groundwork for moral evaluation. Both particularism and relativism leech contextualism in this sense, however, with an addition of the explanation for the truthfulness of the moral principles. Insofar as this holds, contextualism can be taken as a minimalist approach to meta-ethical questions, just as constructivism, according to Street.

Now, where is constructivism in this realist-contextualist debate? So far, it is not realist, but it is not contextualist either. We have been discussing whether quietist realism could be a valid theory to encompass constructivism. Yet, context has also been mentioned as being a necessary addition to constructivism. Let us see if we can determine where the version of constructivism I am willing to uphold stands.

When it comes to realism, the main issue is the lack of an ontological basis for its constructivist procedure. One of the strategies that we could take in this instance is to bite the bullet and say – so what? It could be, as Street claims, defended from the standpoint of practicality if we were to consider the procedure as a necessity for practical rules considering subject-subject and subject-object relationships. Supposedly, practical objectivity could be a good candidate for constructivism to be based on. If we were to assume the practical truth-dependence of the procedure, we would solve the first necessity for one theory being realist. The second issue with constructivism is the truth value of the norms, or, in this case, reasons for something. What makes reasons normative? The answer lies in what I would call the standards of the reason-giving procedure.<sup>487</sup> To refer to Rawls, we would need to establish an

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<sup>487</sup> A potential problem might arise, and this was raised by Tristram McPherson. Namely, the main

objective and common measure that every reasonable person can accept.<sup>488</sup> The procedure is the holder of the normative value of the reasons that we give for an action/object. If we were to accept this, wouldn't that make this position quietist realism? If constructivism is to be a formal guiding force for narrativity, we would simply need to accept that there are truth-apt standards of reasoning. What about the context? Context, as was mentioned earlier, is a necessary ingredient in a constructivist procedure that I am accepting. Reasons need to be directed towards some action or an object of evaluation which is always found within a particular circumstance. Therefore, when we give reasons for something, we give those reasons within a given context. While reasons themselves are holders of normative force, context is where they attain their actualization.

The version of constructivism that I will carry on with throughout the remainder of this project will be the second-order<sup>489</sup> quietist realist version which is context-bound. On this note, I also, shortly, suggest an agreement with Aaron James who proposes to distinguish *specificatory* constructivism and *explanatory* constructivism. The second one would be a take on the questions that meta-ethics deals with, while the first one seeks to support the claims about the particular claims that we make.<sup>490</sup> This part aims to offer support for the theory of deliberation, and, therefore, second-order constructivism that I take needs not turn into a full-blown meta-ethical theory. There can certainly be various versions of constructivism that do

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metaphysical issue with quietist realism is not the ontological status of the norm, but whether that norm can be made true or not. A reason-giving procedure might explain how we assign a truth value to norms; however, the ontological status must be given to the procedure itself. In: T. McPherson, (2011.), *Against Quietist Normative Realism* in *Philosophical Studies* vol. 154. no. 2., p. 229.

<sup>488</sup> J. Rawls, (1999.), *A Theory of Justice Revised Ed.*, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, p. 81.

<sup>489</sup> I am still hesitant to consider the version of constructivism that was proposed to be a full-blown meta-ethical view. This would be a different project altogether and we would need to find various answers to the problems that can arise for both the contextualist part and realist part of constructivism.

<sup>490</sup> A. James, (2007.), *Constructivism and Practical Reasons* in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* vol. 74., no. 2., p. 310.

not necessarily have to be like the one that was accepted above. Likewise, a further explanation is surely necessary, especially the need to illustrate the reason-giving procedure, to explain why reasons are based on objective practicality, to establish a stronger connection between the context and reasons, etc. All of this will be a topic in the further sub-chapters, however, now it is needed for me to have a strict position that I will embrace.

## **1.2. The Second Question: What, by What, and in What?**

The second question arises – since I am using a particular concept and applying constructivism to it, am I choosing local constructivism rather than global constructivism? The short answer is yes, however, it needs to be further argued for. In the introduction, we have merely mentioned the main difference between global and local constructivism, yet there are numerous other differences that we need to consider. Yonatan Shemmer's analysis of constructivism shows that a distinction between local and global constructivism is only the beginning. As it was established, local constructivists believe that only one aspect of our normative realm is constructed, while global constructivists believe that every aspect of our normative realm is constructed.

Now, Shemmer notes that it also depends on what guides our constructivist procedure.<sup>491</sup> If we were to use a framework of non-constructed norms to construct our normative framework, we are subscribing to dependent constructivism; while, at the same time, if we were to think that the norms that we construct are independent of the norms that are non-constructed, we are an independent constructivist.<sup>492</sup> Global constructivists are necessarily independent constructivists, and they cannot

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<sup>491</sup> Y. Shemmer, (2012.), *Constructing Coherence in Constructivism in Practical Philosophy* by James Lenman and Yonatan Shemmer, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 161.

<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.* p. 161.

be dependent constructivists. Local constructivists can be both. This is still on the abstract level and should be simplified. We can assume that we are local constructivists and believe that our, let's say, norms of special obligations towards other people are necessarily constructed. We can say that we are constructing those norms of special obligations based on our biological needs to be with one another, based on socioeconomic circumstances, based on cultural dependence,<sup>493</sup> etc. If we say this, we are dependent, local constructivists. Contrary to that, we can also say that we are constructing these norms of special obligations independently of other correlating factors, or other non-constructed norms/constructed norms. If we do say that we are an independent, local constructivist if and only if we assume that other normative domains are not constructed. Finally, by saying we are constructing norms of special obligations, it is not guided by any non-constructed norms, but it is done so within the normative domain that is being always constructed, we are independent, global constructivists.

There is also a third way in which we can be constructivists in this sense. And that is being a Neurathian or a foundational constructivist.<sup>494</sup> In short, we are “thrown” into a world that is already filled with norms in every domain that we can imagine. If we say that we are constructing<sup>495</sup> norms from the “material” that is always outside the domain of constructed norms, we are being foundational constructivists. If, on the other hand, we are constructing norms based on the already established constructivist normative realm, we are being a Neurathian constructivist.<sup>496</sup> Both local and global constructivists can be either foundational or Neurathian constructivists. Seemingly, this differentiation is quite like the last one. The main difference, as I see it, is that the difference between dependent and

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<sup>493</sup> This is, of course, assuming that some of the cultural reality in which we live is not a product of a constructivist procedure.

<sup>494</sup> *Ibid.* p. 162.

<sup>495</sup> I would be even tempted to say re-constructing.

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.* p. 162.

independent constructivism deals with the very process of construction, while the later differentiation deals with the “material” of construction that we find in the world. An example can be the following: before the procedure of norm construction, we tend to operate with a specific set of data that we will use to construct some set of norms. And let’s say that, again, we are constructing norms for the special obligations that we have towards others. A foundationalist account of constructivism will say that we need not refer to the already established set of norms to construct a normative domain. A constructivist in line with that view is surely Christine Korsgaard. On the other hand, if we believe that we are using the already established set of norms and reconstructing them during the constructivist procedure, we are a Neurathian constructivist. James Lenman and Sharon Street seemingly endorse this view.

Now, what would be the version of constructivism that this project advocates? I will expand on this when I apply constructivism to the theoretical foundation of narrative in the next sub-chapter, however, it is important to explain the constructivist nature of my formal claim. Therefore, in this passage, I will merely apply these categories of constructivism to the main notion of deliberation and see where it leads. From everything that has been said, one would think to consider me to be a local, dependent, Neurathian constructivist. If so, one would be completely right. I am focusing on one particular phenomenon, that of our moral and political deliberation. A form of constructivism does guide our deliberative process, but it is also dependent on the non-normative domain, the one that narrative theory already has encompassed. Thirdly, I do think, based on my previous assumptions, that we are Neurathian in our deliberative procedures since we are operating within the narrative in which we have been embedded. Those narratives are already normative-based since they are constituted from the various factors that are historically dependent and have been progressing/regressing over time. Thus, when we start our constructivist procedure, we focus on one particular phenomenon and are guided by both normative and non-normative factors during our reason-giving procedure within

a world that is rich in narrativity that is already present. As noted, I will expand on this further in the following sub-chapter after establishing a clear version of constructivism. So far, we have “constructed” a constructivist account which is a second-order quietist realist form of constructivism that is also local, dependent, and Neurathian.

In the next sub-chapter, we will open a topic on reasons and reasonableness as the holders of normative force. We will also introduce John Rawls and Thomas Scanlon’s version of restrictive constructivism to provide theoretical grounds for the reason-giving procedure.

## **2.0. Reasons, Reason-Giving Procedure, and Reasonableness**

The door was opened to finally introduce the core of the constructivist procedure –reasons, reasoning, and reasonableness. They were vaguely mentioned earlier in this project<sup>497</sup>, and, in some instances, a few explanations were given to give a bit of substance to the claim that was being made. Now, the project has arrived at a point where discussion about reasons, reasoning, and reasonableness will take shape. To further explain the process of reasoning, I will consult the theoretical models offered by John Rawls and Thomas Scanlon. Their projects contain, arguably, the best representation of the account of reason and reasonableness. If anything, it is certainly the most influential account of these notions in the current moral and political tradition. Both Scanlon and Rawls are perceived to be constructivists<sup>498</sup> and,

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<sup>497</sup> Specifically, in chapter 3, where Rawls’ theory on reasonableness has been discussed. However, in this instance, more substance will be given to the mere description offered before.

<sup>498</sup> Rawls, in his *Political Liberalism*, specifically, in his chapter on constructivism notes that only two philosophers (during his time of writing) understand constructivism in the same regard as he does – Thomas Scanlon and Brian Barry. In J. Rawls, (1996.), *Political Liberalism*, Columbia University Press, New York, p. 91.

in this regard, I will take their notions as a supplement to my constructivist account.

The strategy would be the following – provide a framework for three notions that will be of crucial importance for the overall project – reason, reason-giving procedure (reasoning), and reasonableness. These notions, as mentioned, will be derived from the theoretical opus of both Rawls and Scanlon. By doing so, my account of constructivism will gain a conceptual foundation and will be ready to be used as a formal principle of deliberation. Therefore, this sub-chapter will offer three important pieces of the puzzle for the third sub-chapter in which I will discuss the main claim of this overall project – narrative constructivism.

### **2.1. The First Concept: Reasons**

What is a reason? By reason, I do not mean the human faculty to conduct logical and rational judgments. By reason, in this early stage, I will refer to a justification of a specific thought, action, utterance, preference, etc. To be more precise, it is the answer we give when we are asked the question “*Why?*”. The example can be as follows:

Y asks X: Why did you play that video game? It came out 20 years ago!

X answers: Because it brought me back to my childhood days!

The answer that X has provided to Y is a reason why X did something, in this example, play an old video game. To put it more straightforwardly - X is, in this situation, describing to Y the motivation he/she had behind playing an old video game. Let us consider another example.

Y asks X: Why is the sky blue?

X answers: Because the blue light is being dispersed by the effects of tiny air molecules in the atmosphere. And since the colour blue travels in shorter waves, we

see the sky predominantly in the colour blue.

This example is seemingly different than the last one. While the last example showed how X gave a reason for his/her preference, in this example, X gives a reason for why some phenomena are considered to be factual. That is to say, facts are necessarily holders of reason since they require justification. Yet, do things and actions always have an explanation? Let us consider more examples.

Y asks X: Why did you break the glass?

X answers: I do not know.

Or

Y asks X: What causes Alzheimer's disease?

X answers: I do not know.

Or

Y asks X: What causes Alzheimer's disease?

X answers: The answer is not known.

The first example shows a situation in which X cannot give an answer to Y on account of him breaking the glass. X might have acted brashly, his emotions might have gotten the best of him/her, or he/she might have been affected by some substance. In either case, what X means is that he/she has broken the glass without having any considerations about whether to break it or not. This is not to say that X breaking a glass is a situation that has happened without a reason, it, however, does show that X him/herself is not fully aware of all the reasons that led to him/her breaking the glass. We could also introduce cognitive dissonance in the picture beyond this example. In short, cognitions are elements of knowledge that we have about our beliefs, actions, attitudes, values, environments, etc. Cognitive dissonance

occurs when two cognitions become dissonant from one another.<sup>499</sup> Having cognitive dissonance is, of course, a spectrum. Yet, a common behaviour of a person with cognitive dissonance is that they do an action that goes against their system of values, beliefs, information, etc. If a person X does an action Y which he/she believes is wrong to do, he/she has committed that action even though he/she had strong reasons not to do that action. The reasons for an action that X has done even though he/she believes is not the right action to do are often incomprehensible to him/her. Yet, even in this situation, I would argue, that reasons are independent of whether person X is aware of them or not.

The examples in which X answers the question on Alzheimer's are also quite interesting in this discussion. In the first example, X's answer means that he does not know the reason for a given phenomenon. In the second example, X states that there are no known reasons for a phenomenon in question occurring.<sup>500</sup> Here, we can make a difference between reasons that one does not know of something occurring and reasons that cannot be given based on our current understanding of the given phenomenon.

At this point, we have covered multiple situations in which reasons were given as an answer to the question "Why?". As the reader might have noticed, these reasons are necessarily descriptive, or, post-hoc. In other terms, we give reasons for something based on our experience and our understanding of something at hand. These reasons *describe* rather than *prescribe*.

A distinction between normative and explanatory reasons has been offered by Joseph Raz in his paper *Reasons: Explanatory and Normative*. According to Raz, reason-why questions seek explanations, and explanatory reasons are given to

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<sup>499</sup> J. Cooper, K. M. Smith, (2001.) *Cognitive Dissonance* in Elsevier Ltd. vol. 3., p. 2112.

<sup>500</sup> Even though we might take it for granted to explain some other phenomena. Michael Friedman notes that there are numerous phenomena that we just don't have an explanation for even though we might offer various theories/reasons for their explanation. In M. Friedman, (1974.) *Explanation and Scientific Understanding* in *The Journal of Philosophy* vol. 71., no. 1., p. 11.

answer these questions.<sup>501</sup> When we have talked about X's personal reasons for him/her doing some action, we can claim that he/she has a reason relative to his/her situation. Raz notes that every explanation in these cases depends on the uniqueness of the person who is giving that explanation.<sup>502</sup> So, the reasons that X gives for playing a video game that came out 20 years ago are relative to him/her and only to him/her. Contrary to that, explanations for a phenomenon that is akin to, for example, "*Why is the sky blue?*" are not relative to the person stating them. They can be either true or false, based on the current consensus on our metaphysical tradition. While it might be the case that in 100 years, we will have different reasons to explain something, at this moment, we can offer the most convincing reasons we have at our disposal.

Explanatory reasons will be considered to be an important aspect of this overall project at a later stage. At this instance, we would need to talk about the, arguably, more important of the two types of reasons, the normative ones. Raz takes reasons to be generally explanatory, even the normative ones, yet the normative ones also hold something else.<sup>503</sup> In short, reasons are used as terminology for the truth value of the *ought propositions*.<sup>504</sup> That is to say, reasons are used to explain why one needs or needs not do a specific action. In this respect, the main difference between explanatory reasons and normative reasons is, really, about the object of reasoning. Raz introduces another terminology that will provide a better understanding of the difference between these two types of reasons. The first type of reasons he calls epistemic reasons while the other type is called practical reasons. The first type explains beliefs while the second type explains actions with intention or purpose.<sup>505</sup> Consider a few examples that illustrate this type of reason:

#### Example 1.

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<sup>501</sup> J. Raz, (2007.), *Reasons: Explanatory and Normative* in *Oxford Legal Studies Research*, no. 13., p. 2.

<sup>502</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2.

<sup>503</sup> *Ibid.* p. 8.

<sup>504</sup> *Ibid.* p. 8.

<sup>505</sup> *Ibid.* p. 16.

Y asks X: Do you think that I ought to leave my family in order to pursue my dream of becoming a rock star?

X answers to Y: I think that you ought not to do that since it would make your wife and children suffer.

Example 2.

X tells Y: You ought to donate blood in the nearby hospital tomorrow.

Y asks X: Why would I do that?

X answers to Y: Because it is good to help those who would be in need.

Example 3.

X tells Y: I think that people ought not to be judgmental towards others

Y asks X: Why do you think that?

X answers to Y: because if everyone was judgmental towards others, there would be a lack of trust and more misery in one society.

These examples show that *ought* to be used to refer to the object of normativity which is the action of Y. In the first example, Y is inquiring about reasons for actions that deal with the immediate consequences of the action at hand. This action pertains to a situation where only Y is capable of making the decision, directly affecting known subjects who will experience its consequences. We can also describe it as a Sartrean situational choice which relates to a context in which an individual makes a decision that is only relevant to him/herself.<sup>506</sup> When this situation occurs, we provide reasons that consider the situation in which that person has found him/herself and the relevant factors around that situation. Contrary to Sartre, I believe that relevant reasons could be provided for Y do to or not to do action A. Maybe the wife and children of Y are unhappy with him being a part of their life, and

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<sup>506</sup> J.P. Sartre, (2007.) *Existentialism is a Humanism*, Yale University Press, London, p. 45.

maybe they are willing to move on. One of the possibilities is that, if Y chooses not to pursue his career as a rock star, it will bring unhappiness to every party involved. On the other hand, it might be that he is acting out of pure egoism and wants to leave his family behind for his own sake, resulting in their suffering. The reasons X can provide can be based on reasonableness of the situation, yet they might result in the maximization of unhappiness. However, reasonableness would entail that person Y has information about his family's preferences and, by that, makes a choice. He ought to act in such a way that he considers his family's preferences, freedom, and autonomy, considering their wishes in accordance with his own. This will also be mentioned in the later sub-chapter that deals with reasonableness. For now, I will call these reasons agent-relevant normative reasons (ARR).

The second example shows a recommendation that X gives to Y when it comes to the moral principle of his/her actions. In our daily experience, we will find these normative reasons to be the most frequent and common ones. Namely, considering that Y has nothing more pressing to do tomorrow, is a healthy individual, and he/she has a choice to either donate blood or not donate blood. The subjects that are affected by this choice are not known to Y and, therefore, we deal with the impartial moral choice. If the situation is as it was sketched out, Y has no reason *not* to donate blood. Y might think that it is not right to help those in need because he/she doesn't know them, but he/she is wrong. If Y has a faculty of moral understanding, as Alison Hills points out, the reasons that outweigh his/her reasons would make him/her factually wrong.<sup>507</sup> Factual, in this case, is taken as a form of reasonable choice that can be made in a specific situation. Suppose Y were to say that there is nothing obliging him/her to donate blood. He/she would be right in a way. There is nothing that coerces Y's freedom not to donate blood, however, reasons for donating blood necessarily outweigh the reasons not to, both in the domain of consequences and motivation to do right. The guiding principles for Y to donate blood are justified when referring to both the consequences and the rightness of the action. I call these

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<sup>507</sup> A. Hills, (2009.), *Moral Testimony and Moral Epistemology* in *Ethics* vol. 120., no. 1., p. 99.

reasons agent-neutral normative reasons (ANR).

The main difference between the second example and the first example is that the second example highlights agent-neutral reasons, while the first example considers agent-relative reasons in the sense that is already familiar in philosophy. This distinction is exemplified by Simuel Freeman who believes that agent-relative reasons concern the reasons that are relevant to the individual's domain of action and accountability, while agent-neutral reasons provide reasons that are independent of the individual.<sup>508</sup> Philip Pettit is another philosopher who endorses this contrast. He finds agent-relative reasons to be those that cannot be fully specified without taking into account the whole personhood and the circumstances of the person for whom the reason is relevant; while agent-neutral reasons are those that do not require such an instance in order to be specified.<sup>509</sup>

We can see the second example to be almost a bridge between the first one and the third one. The first example shows the moral requirements of an individual in a situation that is unique to him/her, the second example shows the moral requirements of an individual that are neutral to his/her situation and are linked to the realm of general principles. In the third example, X proposes a universal guiding principle based on the reason that *if* people are judgmental towards others, there would be more misery and distrust in society. X, in this case, argues that there should be specific moral principles that *everyone* should follow for society to be a better place. I did specify at the beginning of this chapter that my form of constructivism (like moral particularism) does not contain any view on moral principles or moral generalism. Pekka Väyrynen argues that moral principles as standards are theoretically interesting, but, when it comes to their application as practical guides, they end up being very unconvincing.<sup>510</sup> Yet, putting aside the conversation about the

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<sup>508</sup> S. Freeman, (1994.), *Utilitarianism, Deontology, and the Priority of the Right* in *Philosophy and Public Affairs* vol. 23., no. 4., p. 348.

<sup>509</sup> P. Pettit, (1987.), *Universality Without Utilitarianism* in *Mind* vol. 72., p. 75.

<sup>510</sup> P. Väyrynen, (2018.), *Reasons and Moral Principles* in *The Oxford Handbook of Reasons and*

plausibility of general principles, we still need to answer the question of *what X* means when he argues for a particular principle. In short, he generalizes reasons for a principle and establishes it as an all-encompassing one. If there can be at least one situation in which reasons for judging others outweigh the reasons for not doing that, then that general principle does not stand.<sup>511</sup> Yet, in our everyday language and our everyday normative claims, we do proclaim that everyone *ought* to do something. If we apply reasons to a general principle, we can call these reasons – general-principle normative reasons (GPR).

After everything has been said and done, we have arrived at the point where we can supplement this theory with three types of normative reasons – ARR, ANR, and GPR. These types of reasons will be quite relevant for the remainder of the chapter since they will be used as a basis for the normative reason-giving procedure that will be raised in the next sub-chapter.

## **2.2. The Second Concept: Reason-Giving Procedure**

The main objective of this sub-chapter is to elaborate on the process of reasoning. How do we conduct that process and what are the procedures of our reasoning about a specific action? I shall call this process a reason-giving procedure. We will continue to analyze this concept on the same note we have ended the last sub-chapter.

Now that we have made a clear distinction between explanatory and normative reasons, we can introduce the section where we analyze the normative

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*Normativity*, p. 864.

<sup>511</sup> Some examples: judgmental towards those who are unreasonable, towards those who limit other people's freedom, those who are endangering themselves, those who are promoting unreasonable values, etc.

force of these reasons on the agent him/herself. Normative reasons, as we have established, provide a rational basis for an agent to act.<sup>512</sup> When I say that we want to analyze the normative force of the normative reason on the agent him/herself, I mean the strength and sufficiency of them motivating an agent in order to act. Therefore, this section will analyze the effect of reasons in the practical realm and provide a framework for the procedure in which reasons are deliberated.

I will start this research by referring to Scanlon's view on reasons. The cause for considering Scanlon's (and not, for example, Korsgaard's) view on reasons is the fact that he, complimentary to my project, takes them as a groundwork for local constructivism. We have to take note that reasons have two aspects worthy of consideration – their strength and their optionality. Strength refers to the power that reasons have for us to do a particular X, while optionality refers to the possibility of X acting or not acting upon a reason.<sup>513</sup>

The first aspect of reasons suggests that reasons cause motivation and directly affect the agent in his/her actions. If X wants to achieve a specific desired outcome, he/she has a reason behind that outcome and a reason for achieving that outcome. When we say *desired*, we mean that X has already determined based on the specific set of reasons that a specific situational outcome will affirm his/her *wants*. Therefore, if we consider X as an agent that has reasons to want something in the first place and reasons for the outcome of that want, we are looking at reasons as a motivational force. It is also quite obvious that not all reasons have the same strength. For example, the reasons for wanting to be with our partner can be various. However, I'd reckon that reasons such as strong emotional connection, support, intimacy, sense of belonging, etc. outweigh reasons such as being with our partner due to a habit or convenience. If we ask someone if they would prefer to be in a relationship built upon a strong emotional connection or in one out of convenience, most of the time (if not

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<sup>512</sup> B. C. Postow, (1999.) *Reasons for Action: Towards a Normative Theory and Meta-Level Criteria*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Boston, p. 1.

<sup>513</sup> T. Scanlon, (2014.) *Being Realist About Reasons*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 105.

always) we will get a clear answer that a strong emotional connection trumps over convenience. The reasons for being in a strong emotional connection and reasons for achieving that strong emotional connection are, therefore, *stronger* than the reasons for being in a convenient relationship and achieving that convenience in a relationship. In this regard, we can find that there are such things as stronger and weaker reasons for something.

When it comes to the optionality of reasons, we are thinking about the modality of acting upon those reasons. X might or might not watch a movie during the evening when he/she relaxes. He/she has both reasons for and reasons against doing this particular action. If another reason does not override his/her decision-making, it would not make sense *not* to act upon it. Optional reasons dominate our daily deliberations, we are constantly in a state of possibilities, and we can either do something or do something else in a given situation. As Scanlon notes, it should not be a mystery that many reasons are optional in this sense.<sup>514</sup> It is also important to point out that although acting on certain reasons is optional, the reasons themselves are not.<sup>515</sup> We do not choose to have reasons or not, we just have them based on our rational assessment of the situation. Therefore, the optionality of reasons directly relates to the possibilities that our actions might trigger.

With that, we have two important factors in our deliberations about actions – motivation and possibilities. An important question follows – how do we decide what reasons will guide our actions? How do we deliberate between various reasons that open up our doors of possibilities, but are, ultimately, different in strength?

In normative circumstances, as it was stated, we are presented with a wide array of choices that we can make. Each of these choices is opened to us when we reason about them and, therefore, it is safe to assume that every choice has a reason behind it. The strength of reason enters this discussion once we start thinking about

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<sup>514</sup> *Ibid.* p. 106.

<sup>515</sup> *Ibid.* p. 106.

which choice would be the best choice to make in a normative circumstance. Scanlon rightly points out that the strength of reasons is an essentially comparative notion in relation to other reasons.<sup>516</sup> We necessarily weigh our options during one normative action and provide reasons for it. Now, the much-discussed question appears – are we guided only by pure reasons or is there something else at play during our reason-giving procedure?

Surely, we are bound not only by the context but by our psychological configuration. One of the more discussed questions on this topic is the role of desires in relation to reasons for an action. In his book *What We Owe to Each Other*, Scanlon has famously highlighted the importance of desires in the process of deliberating about reasons for something. He explains that:

*Desires in this sense include such things as a sense of duty, loyalty, or pride, as well as an interest in pleasure or enjoyment. It is uncontroversial that desires in this broad sense are capable of moving us to act, and it is plausible to claim that they are the only things capable of this, since anything that moves us (at least to intentional action) is likely to count as such a desire...that is to say, they do not seem to be sources of motivation but rather the motivational consequences of something else, such as the agent's recognition of something as a duty, or as supported by a reason of some other kind.*<sup>517</sup>

For Scanlon, therefore, desires are taken as a consequence of something that is prior to them. To further understand this quote, we should refer to Scanlon's view on *seeming reasons*. That is to say, for a person who's about to commit an action, there are things that seem to be reasons but are not.<sup>518</sup> For example, whenever we have the desire to do an action, upon a deeper reflection, we will see that our desire

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<sup>516</sup> *Ibid.* p. 111.

<sup>517</sup> T. Scanlon, (1998.), *What We Owe to Each Other*, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, p. 37.

<sup>518</sup> *Ibid.* p. 65.

for it is not itself a reason, but only a motivating factor.<sup>519</sup> For example, a desire for getting a new car seemingly is a reason for getting a new car, yet, this desire rests under other reasons for us getting a new car. We might value the reliability of the new model, the ecological benefits it might bring, the look and feel of the new car, etc. Those reasons “spark” our desire and, in many ways, are subsumed under it. Scanlon’s view is considerably in agreement with Donald Davidson’s view that a reason for an action must be rationalized.<sup>520</sup> Therefore, giving an explanation for action must be based on reasons themselves (based on beliefs and thoughts) and not seeming reasons.

This does, indeed, stimulate the scholarly discourse on the correlation between desires and reasons. David Copp and David Sobel question Scanlon’s rationalistic account of reasons and point out that desires themselves can be a motivating factor for an action, without having a reason based on belief or thought in the background. The central claim of their criticism of Scanlon can be summarized as follows – some actions can be motivated by states of mind that are not purely reason-based.<sup>521</sup> They provide two situations in which agents can be motivated to act – motivated by reasons he/she is unaware of<sup>522</sup> and motivated by the desire to do something they just feel like doing.<sup>523</sup> In the first example, we can consider a person who habitually checks and constantly refreshes their phone/email, even though he/she does not have any notifications. The reason for this behavior is unknown to the person that is doing this activity. He/she does not, in fact, have a reason based on belief or thought, he/she just does it. One can say that this person is motivated by an underlying desire for reassurance, fear of missing out, anxiety, etc. Even though this

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<sup>519</sup> *Ibid.* p. 66.

<sup>520</sup> D. Davidson, (1963.), *Actions, Reasons, and Causes* in *The Journal of Philosophy* vol. 60., no. 23. p. 1.

<sup>521</sup> D. Copp, D. Sobel, (2002.), *Desires, Motives, and Reasons: Scanlon’s Rationalistic Moral Psychology* in *Social Theory and Practice* vol. 28., no. 2., p. 267.

<sup>522</sup> *Ibid.* p. 267.

<sup>523</sup> *Ibid.* p. 268.

might be valid, the reason itself is not deliberated on and the agent is completely oblivious to it. Bernard Gert has noted that a rational agent can sometimes do things just because he/she felt like doing them.<sup>524</sup> This is the exact condition for this counterexample to Scanlon's rationalistic view. Namely, if we are walking back home from work and we start gazing at the sunset, we are not doing it for any particular reason other than just feeling like we should appreciate the sunset.

These examples are quite convincing in the sense that they provide motivation for action that is not reason-based.<sup>525</sup> Furthermore, I partially agree with Scanlon in the sense that desires cannot be accounted for as being reasons for an action, however, they are an important part of the reason-giving procedure that I have in mind. While it is, I believe, true that desires are *seeming reasons*, they also take part in the whole process of reasoning. In the following passages, I will try to show that by referring back to my main premises of the social narrativity thesis, as well as the psychological narrativity thesis. Doing this will also mediate Scanlon's rationalistic model of reasoning with the counterexamples that have been provided, as well as the Humean accounts<sup>526</sup> of desire that are directly at odds with Scanlon.

We are bound by our tradition; we are embedded in our context, and we form ourselves in it. This is the premise this project stands upon and this premise has been mentioned in many instances and it has a lot of explanatory force in this part of the project as well. A few key solutions are at play if we consult the researchers on this topic. Stephen Darwall thinks that we need to consider the agent as a whole when talking about the relation between desires and reasons. He points out<sup>527</sup> that the facts

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<sup>524</sup> B. Gert, (1998.), *Morality: It's Nature and Justification*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 60.

<sup>525</sup> At least, not in the rationalistic sense in which Scanlon takes them to be.

<sup>526</sup> Humean account of normativity rests on the following claim – all desires that an agent has generated reasons and reasons are generated only by our desires. From – D.C. Hubin, (2003.), *Desires, Whims and Values* in *The Journal of Ethics* vol. 7., no. 3., p. 316.

<sup>527</sup> Admittedly, contrary to Johnathan Dancy that, like Scanlon, puts moral reasoning and rationality on a higher pedestal than desires. From: J. Dancy, (1993.), *Moral Reasons*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, p. 10.

that constitute our desires, preferences, values, and moral convictions play a crucial role in forming our reasons.<sup>528</sup> Darwall seemingly suggests that certain background data forms desires, preferences, values, convictions, etc., and that data is important for our reasoning about actions. This framing leads Darwall to conclude that what is truly important to consider in this discussion is the moral agent as a whole.<sup>529</sup>

I would like to further dissect Darwall's argument and arrive at the particulars that constitute it. Darwall states that there is a clear distinction between theoretical and practical reason and that a lot of theoreticians make them analogous.<sup>530</sup> Like Kant, Darwall considers theoretical reason to be concerned with the epistemological framework, while practical one is used in the domain of action.<sup>531</sup> Now, he also suggests that the practical reason is also the bearer of the individual's perspective through which he/she leads his/her life which helps him/her define what kind of an individual he/she is.<sup>532</sup> Therefore, through acting and making choices in the environment around him/her, the agent forms him/herself. This is the key, according to Darwall, in understanding the nature of our normative reasoning.

Another author who points out the complexity of reasoning is Don Locke. He believes the following:

*So intentional action is to be explained, motivationally, not by appealing to some limited set of motivations that are held to be innate, together with the mechanisms of classical and instrumental conditioning, but by all the manifold and various ways in which beliefs, in particular sufficient reason beliefs, can be acquired, i.e. by all the techniques and mechanisms of opinion-formation*

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<sup>528</sup> S. Darwall, (2003.), *Desires, Reasons, and Causes in Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* vol. 67., no. 2., p. 438.

<sup>529</sup> *Ibid.* p. 441.

<sup>530</sup> *Ibid.* p. 438.

<sup>531</sup> I. Kant, (2015.) *Critique of Practical Reason*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 12.

<sup>532</sup> S. Darwall, (2003.), *Desires, Reasons, and Causes in Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* vol. 67., no. 2., p. 442.

*and attitude change. As a result, the framework for the psychological explanation of behavior is much more complex, and much more confusing...*<sup>533</sup>

This quote perfectly aligns with Darwall and his emphasis on the world in which the individual acts and forms him/herself. According to Don Locke, neither psychological nor philosophical simplification of our desires and reasons provides a description of the sheer complexity of our actions. To understand them, we would need to refer to the ways in which beliefs and desires are acquired in the first place. Only then are we able to accommodate the complexity of human (and animal) behavior.<sup>534</sup>

Scanlon's theory is a rationalistic one and it does provide a lot of philosophically significant insights. Yet, we cannot turn a blind eye to the wider array of research on this topic. Therefore, in the following passages, I will try to provide a more robust theory of reasoning that will encompass both the theory of desires and the theory of agency in the process of reasoning.

### **2.2.1. Narrative Reason-giving Procedure**

As I've mentioned earlier, my two primary premises will be brought into this discussion. The first one is the social narrativity thesis which claims that our beliefs, attitudes, and values are embedded in the tradition, in the context which makes them intelligible for an agent to hold them. If we were to draw the consequences of Darwall's thesis, it would perfectly align with this premise. The facts that are important for reasoning about actions are already around us. In this case, those facts are deeply embedded in the social narrative in which one finds him/herself. In the

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<sup>533</sup> D. Locke, (1982.), *Beliefs, Desires and Reasons for Action in American Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 19., no. 3., p. 248. b

<sup>534</sup> *Ibid.* p. 249. b

third chapter, where we have opened the topic of a multiplicity of narratives, we have mentioned that narratives shape our values, beliefs, and attitudes. This would, in short, determine which things we value, which beliefs we hold, and our emotional response to certain social and particular phenomena. This account will also expand Scanlon's view on reasoning and, hopefully, make it less prone to potential criticism.

We can start this argument by basing it on an intuitive claim. Throughout the history of moral and political progress, people have reasoned differently about different things. While the social narrative changes, the political and moral framework shifts into a different discourse and vice versa. The reasons that we had to believe in something "back then" are not sufficient anymore. Following Cécile Laborde, we will call these reasons intelligible reasons – reasons that are grounded in private, religious, comprehensive beliefs, doctrines, commitments, etc.<sup>535</sup> The notion of intelligible reasons is the key notion for this view.

To further elaborate this notion, let us consider a few examples. In the first example, let us consider sati, a historical Hindu funeral practice in India that entailed a widow sacrificing herself by joining her husband's funeral pyre. It was asserted that women should join their husbands in death whenever possible and, if not, they should live a humble, chaste life with no possibility of remarriage. If she would go through with the sacrifice, or, live a chaste life, she would join her husband in the afterlife; if she would reject this obligation, it would be on the contrary, she would expect punishment in the afterlife.<sup>536</sup> In Hinduism, it is considered that a man's life is incomplete without a wife and, at the same time, a woman's life is incomplete without a husband. This is a religious duty to be upheld by everyone – men to be husbands and fathers and women to be wives and mothers.<sup>537</sup> Therefore, this practice

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<sup>535</sup> C. Laborde, (2019.), *Intelligibility, Moral Loss and Injustice* in *The Journal of Applied Philosophy*, vol. 36., no. 5., p. 727.

<sup>536</sup> D. J. R. Grey, (2013.), *Creating the "Problem Hindu": Sati, Thuggee and Female Infanticide in India, 1800–60* in *Gender and History*, vol. 25., no. 3., p. 500.

<sup>537</sup> A. K. Coomaraswamy, (1913.), *Sati: A Vindication of the Hindu Woman* in *The Sociological Review*,

was strongly grounded in the religious doctrine that was the foundation of India.

The second example is the practice of harikari or seppuku<sup>538</sup> in the old Japanese culture and it stands for the honored ritual suicide of the Japanese samurai class. Following the rise of the samurai class, seppuku has risen as well. If a samurai is defeated, he is preserving his honor and his courage by suicide in order for him not to be captured by his enemies. However, during the Tokugawa period, this practice was institutionalized, and it has become a ceremonial ritual.<sup>539</sup> If a samurai commits a crime or dishonors himself, instead of being put to death by the court, he is given the privilege of taking his own life. Seppuku can also be a voluntary act (and it is often depicted as such) in which the samurai ends his life following the situation in which he feels he has disgraced himself. Why was this the case? Why did the samurai commit these mass suicides? The answer is quite simple, because of the sense of shame that underlies the Japanese society of that time.<sup>540</sup> It was deemed honorable by both the samurai and the people that were a part of that culture.

Now, being given these two examples, what are we to think about normative reasons? Surely it would not be considered rational for one to take their own life, however, if we look back at the history of various cultures, it was an expectation and an obligation to do that. We can also imagine that it was a desired outcome by those who took their own lives. What form of reasons guided their resolve?

These are the reasons that are not acceptable to some of us, yet they were part of an everyday deliberation of a certain tradition in a specific narrative. The fact that certain people in certain narratives have different reasons has to do with what

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a6(2), p. 119.

<sup>538</sup> Seppuku is the more formal term while harikari is the more colloquial term which is used outside Japan.

<sup>539</sup> T. Fuse, (1980.), *Suicide and Culture in Japan: A Study of Seppuku as an Institutionalized Form of Suicide in Social Psychiatry*, vol. 15., p. 58. b

<sup>540</sup> F. Kakubayashi, (2008.), *An Historical Study of Harakiri in Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 39., no. 2., p. 222.

MacIntyre noticed about contesting traditions. Namely, they hold different sets of virtues, values, conceptions of selfhood, and metaphysical cosmologies which, in turn, shape our domain of practical rationality.<sup>541</sup> Our actions, as it was stated, make sense only insofar as they are intelligible to a grander scheme of things.<sup>542</sup> In this sense, the actions that we do are connected to the social narrative in which we do those actions and, if every action has a reason behind it, those reasons must be linked to the social narrative itself. These are the intelligible reasons Laborde has pointed out, reasons that we have embedded within our reason-giving procedure because we have formed them within the narrative that has shaped us. If we consider these reasons, we can surely decipher the reasons behind seppuku and sati, as well as why these practices do not make sense to us anymore. As the practices shift, so do social narratives and, with them, the reasoning about actions within the given context.

There is also the question about the plurality of narratives that co-exist under a tradition, or a meta-narrative. The multiplicity of narratives entails different sets of reasons that are intelligible for those who are embedded in them. For example, during the third chapter, I mentioned ideologies being considered as narratives within the framework of meta-narratives. Yet, depending on our social and biological background, these narratives can become also more complex. For example, we will hold different values, beliefs, and attitudes depending on the ideology that we subscribe to, our sex, sexual orientation, religion, social class, country in which we were born, etc. The multiplicity of the narrative becomes even more plural when we introduce these categories into the equation. Therefore, for a simpler overview, a good strategy would be to introduce the psychological narrativity thesis. Based on our position and the perception of ourselves, we form our narrative within the context which holds a narrative.

A simple example can be given to explain what this would entail. Let us

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<sup>541</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1988.), *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, p. 349.

<sup>542</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1981.), *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Notre Dame Press, Indiana, p. 28.

consider that X (male) and Y (female) were born and raised in a country that has a high crime rate against women. During their time in that country, Y would have a stronger reason to not take a relaxing walk during the later hours than X. This reason is intelligible to the environment in which Y has found herself. Now, let us assume that both X and Y have moved to a country that has an extremely low crime rate against women. Even though Y would probably remain safe and secure during a late-hour walk, it is not hard to imagine Y still following the reasons that were already embedded in her reasoning. Be that fear, habit, a now-irrational perception of the environment around her, etc., her reason could be the same. Of course, throughout her adaptation, Y might change her reasoning and might open up to taking a walk during the late hours. Be that as it may, this example shows the power of intelligible reasons in our course of action based on our perception of ourselves concerning the context around us. Y, even though is a member of the same social narrative as X, still has different intelligible reasons based on her sex. We can expand this example into many more categories in different contexts.

Another important factor in this discussion is the relation between values, beliefs, and attitudes regarding intelligibility reasons. It was said that we value something because of the properties that something has, and, in that respect, we have used Scanlon's theory of evaluation. Values are also intelligible to the context around us. As Raz notes, values are universal given our thin understanding of them, yet they are also grounded in intelligibility.<sup>543</sup> That is to say, they are universal insofar as they contain good-making properties<sup>544</sup>, however, they are intelligible to the time, location, and situation.<sup>545</sup> While Raz is right when he states that the universality of values is based on their good-making properties, and while it agrees with my statement in the third chapter, the second aspect is even more interesting for this

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<sup>543</sup> J. Raz, (2004.), *Value, Respect and Attachment*, Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, Cambridge, p. 46.

<sup>544</sup> *Ibid.* p. 41.

<sup>545</sup> *Ibid.* p. 47.

argument. Going from it, I argue that we value something based on its intelligibility to the social narrative in which we find ourselves.

Let us trace back to what Scanlon was saying about desires as seeming reasons. We have desires about specific things because of the properties those things will bring us and the reasoning behind those properties. The example of us having a desire to buy a new car is based on the properties that we value about that car. This view would align with Ulrike Huerer's point in which he notes that judgments that describe one action as desirable can be called "value judgments".<sup>546</sup> This view would encompass our desires based on our evaluation of the goodness of a specific property that something has. This would also be, I would argue, based on intelligible reasons. Although, I would also admit that there is a naturalistic argument that is based on Bentham's utilitarianism. Bentham's first sentence of his *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* is a very well-cited one, namely, that nature has placed us under the governance of two sovereign masters – pleasure and pain.<sup>547</sup> This is taken into consideration as a naturalist counterargument to the claim that is being made in favor of the value-judgment desires based on intelligible reasons. Even though it is an important factor to consider, the claim that is being made here would likely encompass the naturalist argument and frame it into the social narrative. Things will be clearer after providing an example of what is meant in this passage.

X is a vocalist. He/she was concerned with this practice for decades and he/she has honed his/her skills to the point in which he/she can consider him/herself to have achieved excellence in the practice of being a vocalist. Both internal and external goods can be considered to be objects of desire. The desire for external goods is self-explanatory. Namely, the properties of recognition, assets, social status, etc. are desirable for various reasons in various contexts. What is interesting here are the internal goods. Internal goods of being a vocalist are specific to that practice and are,

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<sup>546</sup> U. Huerer, (2004.), *Reasons for Actions and Desires* in *Philosophical Studies*, vol. 121., p. 50.

<sup>547</sup> J. Bentham, (2000.), *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Batoche Books, Kitchener, p. 14.

for example, discipline in regulating one's breathing, working on one's pitch, tone, vowel placement, etc. By focusing on these things, one also indulges oneself in refining virtues such as discipline, perseverance, dedication, humility, honesty, etc. Now, the desire of a vocalist to achieve excellence in his/her practice is related to the internal goods of that practice, and because these goods bring the vocalist closer to achieving the excellence that he/she values and, in turn, desires, he/she values the internal goods of the practice themselves. Therefore, a vocalist will desire to have regulated breathing, to have a good pitch, tone, vowel placement, etc. because, he/she values those skills in the grand scheme of achieving excellence in the practice that the vocalist values and desires.

At the same time, we cannot expect someone from another practice, let us say, programmer to value the same things as the vocalist does. For example, we can imagine a programmer who is focused on honing the skills and goods necessary for achieving excellence in their own respected field and not considering internal goods of other practices as desirable. It also should be mentioned that there is a difference between appreciation and informed evaluation. If the programmer, however, is interested in singing, he/she may appreciate it and put more value on the skills of a vocalist, however, it is clear that he/she considers his/her skills much more valuable and desirable since he/she has chosen to pursue excellence in programming. Hereby, we can also introduce the notion of belief about a particular subject that we can value or desire since we have mentioned the notion of informed evaluation.

Following Lennart Sjoberg and Anders Biel, belief will be defined as subjective probability; that is to say, an assumption in the occurrence of the events and the existence of properties of an object of our interest.<sup>548</sup> They also find that evaluation of those objects and events leads us to find value in them.<sup>549</sup> Their thesis is complimentary to the project that is at hand, namely, it is fitting to call beliefs a

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<sup>548</sup> L. Sjoberg, A. Biel, (1983.), *Mood and Belief-Value Correlation* in *Acta Psychologica*, vol. 53., p. 254.

<sup>549</sup> *Ibid.* p. 254.

subjective assessment of possibilities since it is directly correlated with the social narrativity thesis and psychological narrativity thesis. We assess things and events based on their intelligibility with the social environment and this assessment depends on how we have been formed in that narrative. Belief gives birth to value since we need to know, or, at least, believe that we know objects and occurrences in our perception. Robert Abelson takes a step further and notes that the difference between beliefs and values is exhibited in the difference between cognitive and motivational categories.<sup>550</sup> Evaluation, according to Abelson, is based on the cognitive element that belief encompasses, however, the consequences of evaluation are motivational rather than cognitive.<sup>551</sup> This insight promotes the idea that desires are based on values of a specific set of properties that something has and, therefore, we want to achieve or obtain objects or experience the events that have those properties.

In this sense, desires do motivate us to act, and, insofar as that is correct, the Humean scholars are right only insofar as they consider this to be the case. This is not the full picture. Yet, I also argue that it is the case that these desires are based on background facts and cognitive assessment. In this sense, Scanlon is right when he notes that desires are based on reasons that provide us with motivation to act upon. These reasons are deeply intelligible within the social narrative and are being reasoned upon by an agent that was shaped within that narrative. This would be the key argument of the reason-giving procedure that this project is taking into account.

### **2.2.2. The Issues and the Solutions – States of Mind and Hedonism**

Now, there are still two problems that I need to address. The first one is the

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<sup>550</sup> R. Abelson, (1979.), *Difference Between Knowledge and Belief Systems in Cognitive Science*, vol. 3., p. 362.

<sup>551</sup> *Ibid.* p. 362.

different state of mind argument, and the second one is the naturalist pleasure-pain argument. As we have noted earlier, we sometimes do things just because we feel like it and sometimes, we do things for reasons that are inaccessible to us.

The first problem that we are encountering can be explained by the force that habits have on the agent. That is to say, we sometimes do things because we have been taught to do things in specific circumstances, no matter what the intention. Let's say that one looks at the sunset every day, or, one checking on his/her phone every now and then for, apparently, no reason, etc. As stated earlier, we do, in fact, act out of different states of mind. I do agree with this statement, however, David Copp and David Sobel miraculously disregard the effect that habits have on general human action. In order to attain a habit, we act in accordance with many reasons that influence the action that becomes a habit. In this sense, I follow Bill Pollard's thesis that habits explain actions, not just behaviors.<sup>552</sup> Behaviors, following Pollard, can mean many things, such as addiction, compulsions, and phobias.<sup>553</sup> Yet, it can also explain a certain set of actions that follow from a certain amalgam of repeated actions. This is what we will call automaticity – an action that is made before any apparent deliberative reasoning.<sup>554</sup> If we were to do a specific action, such as watching the sunset, we have done it for a reason, be it that we enjoy the aesthetic moment that the sunset brings, or that we are nostalgic for the moments that we have shared with someone looking at the sunset, seeing the sunset as a start of another period of the day, etc. The same thing can be said about us unlocking our phones and opening our email applications and messages. Even if the reason is not apparent to the subject of committing that action, the reason for the action that became a habit is there. One can be in a workplace position that is quite stressful and requires him/her to constantly check his/her phone. And, as mentioned, fears of

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<sup>552</sup> B. Pollard, (2006.), *Explaining Actions with Habits* in *American Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 43., no. 1., p. 58b.

<sup>553</sup> *Ibid.* p. 58b.

<sup>554</sup> *Ibid.* p. 58b.

missing out, or a desire for reassurance are also included in the mode of prior reasoning before the habit forms.

Now, once we have done an action many times in a specific circumstance, the habit itself brings out the automaticity by which we operate. Automatic actions are, as noted by Omar Lizardo, actions that are actually patterns of behavior that are triggered via environmental condition that bypasses intention.<sup>555</sup> To be more precise, this environmental condition is considered as an environmental context, as explained by Lizardo.<sup>556</sup> This would entail that the specific context, situation, or condition in which we find ourselves after we have exhibited a specific pattern of action in the same context, triggers that same action again and again.

Even though these actions do bypass our intention, we can choose to stop them, and we can choose to have an agency over them. Pollard also points out that we have a sense of control over our habitual actions, namely, we can intervene and influence the action to stop or change the course of action.<sup>557</sup> In this case, we can interrupt an action, I would say, by having a stronger reason not to do the action we have envisioned doing. Just like we can tell ourselves that we should not aimlessly scroll on our phone because we have more pressing matters to attend to, or that we should not watch the sunset because we are in a hurry, etc. Habitual actions, I would argue, explain things such as doing things just because we feel like it, or actions that we do not know the reasons for. I suggest that a more appealing argument for this is the agency that we have over those actions since we can influence them based on a stronger reason that we provide ourselves by reasoning about a specific action in a specific context. Since this is the case, habitual actions also are based on reasons once we contextualize them in real time. That is to say, we indeed do actions, as David Copp

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<sup>555</sup> O. Lizardo, (2020.), *Habit and the Explanation of Action in The Journal for the Social Theory and Behaviour*, vol. 51., no. 3., p. 16.

<sup>556</sup> *Ibid.* p. 15.

<sup>557</sup> B. Pollard, (2006.), *Explaining Actions with Habits in American Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 43., no. 1., p. 59a.

and David Sobel have stated, based on different states of mind, often automatic, and unintentional, however, we do have agency over them and can override them with stronger reasons.

In this instance, one can attack my seemingly pro-rationalist thesis and say – while that is true, what about the behaviors that entail certain psychological states of mind that we cannot have a lot of agency upon, such as addiction, traumatic responses, anxiety suspension, phobias, etc. When we want to do an action X, these things might either stop us from doing it or provide a stronger desire to do Y. Such is the thing with, for example, addiction. There is not much to be said on the matter apart from emphasizing the famous distinction offered to us by Harry Frankfurt. He believes, and this project affirms his belief, that there are two types of desires – first-order and second-order desires.<sup>558</sup> The first-order desires are exhibited in the agent’s desire to do/obtain a specific something, while the second-order desires are when one desires to have a first-order desire.<sup>559</sup> In short, first-order desire would be for an agent to desire a particular something, say, alcohol at a given moment. A second-order desire would be directed towards the first-order desire and makes an agent go through, what Frankfurt would call a self-reflective evaluation<sup>560</sup>, and desire to desire alcohol or not. Self-reflective evaluation, as I see it, would be directly correlated to reasoning about actions that we should take and desire to do. Yet, sometimes, first-order desires are stronger than second-order desires, that is to say, if a specific state of mind has a grasp over our actions, we can reason about the “right” action, however, we will often not be strong enough to go through it. Such are the cases with, as we have mentioned, addiction, phobias, post-traumatic effects, etc. In such cases, I would concur, that we cannot act in accordance with reasons, even though we (mostly) know that we are acting against what we consider to be a stronger

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<sup>558</sup> H. G. Frankfurt, (1971.), *Freedom of Will and the Concept of a Person* in *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 68., no. 1., p. 7.

<sup>559</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7.

<sup>560</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7.

reason for an action.

This would also answer another important factor when it comes to reasoning – *akrasia*. This is a term that has been present in philosophy for centuries and has its theoretical heritage in the Aristotelian thought. Although Aristotle has systematically analyzed the notion of *akrasia*, it is still a contested term when we consider his writings. Pierre Destree points out that Aristotle often uses two different versions of *akrasia* which is found in his *Nicomachean Ethics* and *De Anima*. The first one is the version that is desire-based, while the other is an intellectualized version.<sup>561</sup> The first one concerns the lack, or weakness of will for conducting a particular action, while the second one means that we have the lack of wisdom to do a particular action.<sup>562</sup> I will take *akrasia* to mean the weakness of will, in this specific project. Furthermore, Roland Polansky analyzes Aristotle's usage of *akrasia* to mean a desire that is opposing another desire.<sup>563</sup> Now, the notion of *akrasia* has been used to counter some theories that rely on reason-based accounts.<sup>564</sup>

I suggest that *akrasia* can fall under the same category as the previous examples. If we follow Aristotle's view that *akrasia* is a desire which is opposing another desire and that desire is plagued with weakness of will, then it can not be anything else than a first-order desire. Marc-Kevin Daoust also seems to support this claim when he notes that akratic agents seem to be irrational in the sense that which there is an incoherence between their first-order and higher-order attitudes (or, desires).<sup>565</sup> Suppose that X wants to go to see a movie because he/she has been looking forward to seeing this exact movie for a long time, yet, he/she doesn't have

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<sup>561</sup> P. Destree, (2007.), *Aristotle on the Cause of Akrasia in Akrasia in Greek Philosophy*, Brill Publishers, Leiden, p. 139.

<sup>562</sup> *Ibid.* p. 139.

<sup>563</sup> R. Polansky, (2007.), *Aristotle's De Anima*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 531.

<sup>564</sup> S. Broadie, (1994.), *Another Problem of Akrasia in International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, vol. 2., no. 2., p. 229.

<sup>565</sup> M. Daoust, (2019.), *Epistemic Akrasia and Epistemic Reasons in Episteme*, vol. 16., no. 3., p. 286.

enough motivation to get out of bed that evening. The reasons for him/her getting out of bed are stronger than the reasons for him/her to stay in bed. Even though that is the case, he/she chooses to remain home and not see a movie because he/she does not have the strength to get out and see the movie. The desire for him/her to stay in bed has overridden the desire to see the movie. The same thing can be said about addictions. If X has a strong second-order desire to stop smoking, yet, if the first-order desire is too strong, X will continue smoking. We can say that X, in this sense, is an akratic agent that has a weakness of will for carrying out his/her second-order desire that has stronger reasons than the first-order desire.

These instances show that the reason-giving procedure is and should be limited to a specific degree when it comes to its direct link to action. However, even if that is the case, the reasons themselves are clear to the agent and they provide a clear normative force when it comes to acting. Furthermore, even though an agent might not act in accordance with the “best” reasons he/she has for action in a given situation, the reasons that the agent has are still open for him/her to reflect upon and consider his/her actions.

Finally, an argument that deals with the thesis of naturalist hedonism. Are we, at our very core of reasoning, really only reasoning in order to promote pleasure and minimize our suffering? If this were the case, we would simply be rational deliberators in the sense that we instrumentalize the world around us to achieve our ends. Although this might be the case in a lot of our daily pursuits, it is not always the case, and I would argue, it is purely contextual. To further explain this, I would like to provide the version of hedonism which I will tackle in this part of my project – psychological hedonism. I would like to argue that, even if we were to accept the notion of psychological hedonism, we can still defend the version of the reason-giving procedure that is being offered.

Psychological hedonism is a desire-based theory that promotes the idea that the only ultimate desires that people have are the desires to promote pleasure and

avoid pain.<sup>566</sup> First, let us dissect psychological hedonism in two parts. Justin Garson offers us a two-fold distinction between two views on psychological hedonism – inferential hedonism and reinforcement hedonism.<sup>567</sup> The difference between these two types of hedonism can be understood in the light of the egoism–altruism debate. Namely, Inferential hedonism is a view in which we promote our pleasure and evade our suffering, while reinforcement hedonism is a view in which we promote pleasure and minimize the pain of another.<sup>568</sup> Following from that, inferential hedonism is a desire to promote pleasure and minimize pain that is directed towards the agent of the action, while reinforcement hedonism is a desire to promote pleasure and minimize pain that is directed towards another person/subject.

Now, we must clear our version of hedonism from the views that it does not fit with. As Ralph Piddington has stressed, there is a lot of confusion concerning psychological hedonism.<sup>569</sup> The first confusion is about the equalization between the sensualist account with the account of psychological hedonism. That is to say, pleasure and pain are seen only insofar as they are sensual.<sup>570</sup> The second confusion arises from the abused terminology used by utilitarian economists that emphasizes self-interest.<sup>571</sup> Psychological hedonism is, something else entirely, although it plays a role in what has been noted here. This view is much more minimalist, and it states that our desires for something *always* include deliberation about whether this desire will bring more pleasure and minimize pain.

If this is the case, then David Brax is right when he points out that pleasures

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<sup>566</sup> E. Sober; D.S. Wilson, (1998.), *Unto Others. The Evolution and Psychology of Unselfish Behavior*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, p. 224.

<sup>567</sup> J. Garson, (2015.), *Two Types of Psychological Hedonism* in *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Studies*, vol. 30, p. 2a.

<sup>568</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2b.

<sup>569</sup> R. Piddington, (2008.), *Psychological Hedonism* in *Australasian Journal of Psychology and Philosophy*, vol. 9., no. 4., p. 276.

<sup>570</sup> *Ibid.* p. 275.

<sup>571</sup> *Ibid.* p. 275.

are essentially evaluative experiences.<sup>572</sup> Namely, when we desire something or want to do an action, we are evaluating whether that something, or an action, has properties that will maximize pleasure and minimize pain. He also notes that these properties are something that *feels good*, rather than *being good*.<sup>573</sup>

We can assimilate this theory within the theoretical model that is being provided in this project. Primarily, psychological hedonism is, in its basis, an evaluative method. When we evaluate a particular object or an action, amongst other things, we also consider how much pleasure it will promote or how much pain it will minimize. However, that is merely one of many attributes that we evaluate about a specific action or an object. And, likewise, it is always evaluated within the specific context. For example, different social narratives give us different actions and objects that can give us pleasure and that can minimize our pain. The same thing can be said for different practices, different psychological constitutions, etc. Consider the example of a monk. The lifestyle and values that the monk chooses go beyond the notions of pleasure and pain. A monk embraces asceticism, self-discipline, and abstention from sensual pleasures. The lifestyle and the place within one narrative that the monk has chosen are based on different values than those of pleasure and pain, even though, one might say that the hedonistic values have also been considered within the evaluative judgment that a monk has taken into the account before committing to the selected life. In short, values such as religious enlightenment, assumed higher purpose, inner contemplation, etc. outweigh the values of pleasure and pain. This life also includes that the monk willingly accepts discomfort and the sacrifice of particular pleasures to fully embrace the values that were mentioned.

Other examples might include one value of the inner goods of the practice, rather than the external goods which would probably increase pleasure. This means

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<sup>572</sup> D. Brax, (2009.), *Hedonism as the Explanation of Value*, Media-Tryck Sociologen, Lund, p. 218.

<sup>573</sup> *Ibid.* p. 218.

choosing practices that one values for other reasons rather than those that bring more pleasure. Furthermore, the evaluation of pleasure and pain is *always* exhibited within a context, as it was mentioned. Namely, we are considering the possibilities that are intelligible to the narrative that we find ourselves in, as well as the people that we are. One of the examples can be choosing between buying a new computer or donating money to a good cause. Seemingly, one action might be considered more dignified than the other, yet a hedonist would say that both of them bring pleasure to the agent, just a different type of pleasure. Having that in mind, these actions have different reasons behind them and different evaluations that are not merely based on pleasure and pain, even though they are considered. Namely, we are the type of person that has a strong affection for the problem of homelessness because of the various reasons that find donating to charities for the homeless much more important than buying themselves a new computer. Vice-versa, if one person is an avid gamer, programmer, or just a technology enthusiast, buying a new computer seems to be a better choice not because it will *only* increase pleasure, but it will also provide that someone an object that he/she finds valuable for the vast variety of reasons and attributes that a new computer has. Surely, pleasure is an important factor in both of these choices, yet it is not the *only* reason that we operate with.

Finally, considering inferential and reinforcement hedonism, they are very important to consider in framing the differentiation between rationality and reasonableness that was mentioned before and that will be emphasized in the later part of this project. Namely, we can be both rational and reasonable at the same time, however, that needs not always be the case. When we are rational, but not reasonable, inferential hedonism takes priority, and we are considering our self-interest to outweigh the interest of another. Being reasonable, I would argue it is vice versa, namely, we consider other people's interests even though we do not necessarily endanger our self-interests. We can also be irrational which would entail that we are not acting in accordance with either inferential or reinforcement hedonism if and only if we are not disregarding these desires in opposition to the

value that we have considered to be of a higher order.

Having said this, I believe that hedonism can be incorporated within this framework as a part of the process of evaluation that forms our reasoning, rather than being a basis for our reasoning. Psychological hedonism is always contextually limited and needs to be considered under the limitation of intelligibility as well. Lastly, the versions of psychological hedonism do seemingly appear to be complimentary to the notions of rationality and reasonableness that are an important part of this project. Therefore, limiting hedonism can be very well incorporated within the framework that I have provided.

### **2.2.3. Attitudes in Reasoning**

We cannot finish talking about a reason-giving procedure without taking emotions into account. The first counterargument to the rationalistic model of reasoning is – what about our emotions? Anyone who is to provide an account of reasoning must, at the very least, specify their stance on the influence of emotion on reasoning. In the third chapter, I have used the term attitudes which was derived from Charles Stevenson's theory, and it encompasses not only our emotions, but also purposes, aspirations, wants, preferences, and desires.<sup>574</sup> However, the common denominator is the *feeling* that we experience when talking about these subjects. Therefore, in this subchapter, I will provide a presupposition of the influence of emotions on our reasoning. Before opening the discussion, I would put a disclaimer that I am not trying to provide a full-blown theory on emotions, but merely an overview of a position which I find to be convincing, as well as compatible with this project. Any other strategy would require a new project to be written about the topic of emotions.

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<sup>574</sup> C. L. Stevenson, (1944.) *Ethics and Language*, Yale University Press, New Haven, p. 3. – 4.

Carla Bagnoli underscores the significance of this discussion. She notes that we have a standard rationalist model according to which all moral agents have moral reasons that are based on intrinsically normative facts and they do not succumb to contingent influences of conventions, beliefs, cultures, etc.; while the standard sentimentalist approach holds that moral reasons are derived from emotions and are not based on normative facts that rationalism highlights.<sup>575</sup> Patricia Greenspan thinks that, even though the discussion is led, a lot of philosophers undermine the role of emotions in our practical reasoning.<sup>576</sup> I agree with Bagnoli on the fact that both of these views have difficulties since the first one cannot account for the influence of conflicting interests and concerns, while the second one completely disregards the special authority that reasons provide our reasoning.<sup>577</sup>

Therefore, since I am subscribing to the constructivist theory in this project, the necessity to provide a minimal outline for the role of emotions in our reasoning opens. And, insofar as I am doing that, I would also need to connect emotions with the notions of value and belief. We would, therefore, need to take emotions to be evaluative reactions to the external phenomena as the starting point.

According to D'Arms and Jacobson, the widely shared opinion in the contemporary theory of emotion is that, although there are numerous differences between them, most of them agree that emotion presents the world as having specific value-laden features.<sup>578</sup> That is to say, emotions can be considered to have an evaluative function when related to the world around us.<sup>579</sup> This model is called the

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<sup>575</sup> C. Bagnoli, (2011.), *Emotions and the Categorical Authority of Moral Reasons* in C. Bagnoli, *Morality and Emotions*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 62.

<sup>576</sup> P. Greenspan, (2011.) *Craving the Right: Emotions and Moral Reasons* in C. Bagnoli, *Morality and Emotions*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 39.

<sup>577</sup> C. Bagnoli, (2011.), *Emotions and the Categorical Authority of Moral Reasons* in C. Bagnoli, *Morality and Emotions*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 62.

<sup>578</sup> J. D'Arms, D. Jacobson, (2000.), *The Moralistic Fallacy: On the Appropriateness of Emotions* in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 1., p. 66.

<sup>579</sup> C. Tappolet, (2000.), *Emotions Et Valeurs*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, p.173.

perceptual model of emotions.<sup>580</sup> For example, when we feel a specific emotion, we connect it to the thing that triggers that emotion. If we feel angry about something, we evaluate that something as having the properties that enrage us; if we feel ashamed of something, we have done something that we consider to be an action that has properties that go contrary to our system of values, etc. We could argue that based on this view, we could connect emotions to the theory of value and belief that we have set up. Namely, we believe specific things about the world, that a particular X, be it an action or an object, has properties of some value that we evaluate.

Let's say that we are evaluating an action of animal cruelty. We believe that animals are creatures worthy of respect, and they have certain properties of personhood that we value as important. Cruelty is an action to which we attribute the value of wrongness and, if it is directed at animals, we are evaluating that action as an action that is wrong and is directed towards moral patients that we believe are not supposed to undergo such treatment. Therefore, the act of animal cruelty makes us angry, disgusted, sad, upset, etc. In this regard, our emotions are triggered by our values and beliefs, and they evaluate the phenomena that are a part of the infrastructure of our narrative, both personal and social. Desire is also, in part, emotionally motivated. When we find something that we believe is valuable, such as, say, the newest phone, we desire to buy it. If we perceive it to have properties that we value and if we believe that having it will better our lives, we have an emotional reaction to the future pleasure we would get if we were to obtain the object of our desire. The same thing can be said about actions as well. This would also fit in some neurophysiological research projects that suggest the following:

*Appraisal theory holds that emotions are elicited when an organism evaluates an event as relevant to his/her needs, goals, or values. The underlying evaluation mechanisms are specified as consisting of a sequence of appraisals*

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<sup>580</sup> M. S. Brady, (2011.), *Emotions, Perceptions, and Reasons* in C. Bagnoli, *Morality and Emotions*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 135.

*of an event's relevance, its implication, the organism's coping potential, and finally the event's significance for one's core values and social norms.*<sup>581</sup>

Now, it would be fitting to subscribe to such a theory for it compliments this project in the setup I have used. Yet, it would also be significant to raise some problems with this approach and to limit its overall impact on our reason-giving procedure. The main argument I would provide here is that reasons guide our actions, however, the emotions resonate in accordance with our actions. A hierarchy of importance for the reason-giving procedure needs to be provided. What do I mean by this? Consider the following quote from Korsgaard:

*A person's own mind does indeed impose sanctions on her: that when we don't do what we should do, we punish ourselves, by guilt and regret and repentance and remorse.*<sup>582</sup>

Following this quote, we can consider emotions, in this sense, a backward-looking appraisal of reasons. If we were to commit an action that we did not have good reasons for, emotions such as regret, guilt, shame, etc. kick in and "punish" us for that action. Since most, if not all emotions are pleasant or shameful, and they correspond to the world around us. Jerome Dokic and Stephane Lemaire propose that perhaps emotions influence us in a specific way because of the correspondence towards a particular action or an object; namely, maybe we feel ashamed because the object or an action is evaluated as it is having negative properties.<sup>583</sup>

In this sense, it would be obvious to state that emotions are deeply connected to reasons, beliefs, and values, all of the things that we have talked about. However, empirically, this is not always the case. Gerrod Parrot discusses the anecdotal

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<sup>581</sup> T. Brosch, D. Sander, (2014.), *Appraising value: The role of universal core values and emotions in decision-making in Cortex*, vol. 59., p. 203b.

<sup>582</sup> C. Korsgaard, (1996.), *The Sources of Normativity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 151.

<sup>583</sup> J. Dokic, S. Lemaire, (2013.), *Are Emotions Perceptions of Value?* in *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 43., no. 2., p. 235. – 236.

conversations that we have in our everyday lives in which people when acting irrationally, justify themselves by being more emotional than rational.<sup>584</sup> To help solve this issue, Parrot divides two questions concerning emotions – cognitive and non-cognitive.<sup>585</sup> The cognitive model aligns with the functionalist account of emotion which is complimentary to the perceptual model of emotions and finds emotions to be useful in anticipation, interpretation, and problem-solving.<sup>586</sup> The non-cognitive aspect of emotions is what is interesting in this critique. Strong emotional reactions such as trembling, feeling nauseous, hysterical laughter, freezing in place, heart racing, etc. are the non-cognitive parts of our emotional lives. There seems to be a deeper logic concerning these reactions, yet, one cannot easily say how they appraise objects and actions around us in a “rational” way. For example, we can easily see the difference between being afraid and freezing into place. The first can be considered an emotion that evaluates the situation in which danger might occur, while the second reaction is usually based on fear, but the reaction can be considered as the lack of control influenced by a strong emotional response to the appraisal of the situation.

If we were to imagine a situation in which someone found him/herself in front of the running train, we can either feel afraid since we evaluate a running train as having properties that could end our lives and we, in correlation to that, move. However, if we were to feel an intense emotional reaction at that moment and freeze, that would mean the end of our lives. An action in which we freeze and get hit by the train does not, if one is not suicidal, correspond to our reasons, beliefs, or values. Insofar as we are concerned with our reasoning, the reaction that we have in response to our emotions will directly violate those reasons. Therefore, if a person X

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<sup>584</sup> W. G. Parrot, (2009.), *But Emotions are Sometimes Irrational* in *Psychological Inquiry: An International*

*Journal for the Advancement of Psychological Theory*, vol. 6., no. 3., p. 230.

<sup>585</sup> *Ibid.* p. 231.

<sup>586</sup> *Ibid.* p. 230.

has a reason to preserve one's life and that reason is exhibited in not getting run over by a running train, freezing out of fear will directly violate that reason and it will lead us into a situation where those reasons lose their power over us. This would be the first and the weakest limitation of the perceptivity theory of emotion. Furthermore, this limitation will be considered, following Parrot, as the lack of intentionality, or self-control in response to our emotions.<sup>587</sup> This would be the weakest limitation since emotions can influence certain reactions to the events that counter our reasoning, yet it still does not limit the influence that emotions have in our reason-giving procedure, the perceptivity model still stands.

Another aspect of our emotional lives that can be considered as a limitation of the perceptivity model may be feeling mixed emotions. To feel mixed emotions is to have different emotions directed toward an object or an action that we react toward. Sometimes, we can feel completely opposite emotions when reacting to something; namely, we can feel both joy and sorrow, fear and delight, anger and relief, etc. at the same time.<sup>588</sup> In fact, it is rare to find any contemporary theory of emotion which excludes the mutual existence of opposite emotions.<sup>589</sup> Some trivial examples are as follows – watching a horror movie, having an overly aggressive reaction that we cannot control, losing a dear person who is in constant suffering, etc. When watching a horror movie, we do feel sensations such as fear, tension, and disgust, yet we experience delight from engaging in such an activity. The experience of fear and delight is a consequence of our reaction to the object that we perceive, in this example, a horror movie. Furthermore, if a person has a disposition to be overly aggressive, he/she feels relief in his/her exhibition of anger when a particular object or an action triggers the person to become outraged. Lastly, losing a person that we

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<sup>587</sup> *Ibid.* p. 232.

<sup>588</sup> J. A. Russel, (2017.), *Mixed Emotions Viewed from the Psychological Constructionist Perspective* in *Emotion Review*, vol. 9., no. 2., p. 111.

<sup>589</sup> J. T. Larsen, A. P. McGraw, (2014.), *The Case for Mixed Emotions* in *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, vol. 8., no. 6., p. 264.

care about is difficult and hard, it is to be expected of us to feel emotions such as sorrow, sadness, grief, regret, etc. However, if that person was also in a state of constant suffering, it would be understandable for a person who is bearing that loss to also feel relieved, or even happy because the person who has perished is not in the state of constant pain.

Now the question arises – does experiencing mixed emotions limit the perceptivity thesis in any way? That is to say, if our emotions do, in fact, evaluate objects and actions that they are directed towards, would the case of mixed evaluation be problematic in any way? Seemingly, it should seem dubious that a straightforward evaluation based on our emotional response can lead to conflicting values. Yet, this conundrum is also easily solvable if we were to consider the evaluation theory that we have presupposed. If every object and action has a specific set of attributes, it would seem like a necessary consequence that we have emotional reactions toward those attributes. We could even claim that there is such a thing as superordinated and subordinated attributes within one object or an action.<sup>590</sup> When feeling mixed emotions, one can say that our emotions correspond to the vast variety of attributes that we consider when evaluating an object or an action. Let us go back to the examples we have provided. A horror movie is an object, or a medium that we perceive which has specific properties such as the plot, themes designed to generate fear, suspense, reflective moment for the perceiver, etc. While we may have the emotion of fear directed to certain properties of it, we also have emotions such as delight when we feel catharsis from experiencing fear in a safe environment. Likewise, we might feel delight when we analyze the story, the characters, the scenery, the cinematography, etc. The same thing can be said about anger and the loss of a loved one. Both of these examples have numerous properties that invoke different emotions within us and, usually, they come in the form of mixed emotions.

Going back to the horror movie, we might choose to watch it because we find

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<sup>590</sup> L. Grunberg, (2000.), *The Mystery of Values: Studies in Axiology*, Rodopi B. V., Amsterdam, p. 18.

the values of catharsis, interest, aesthetic experience, etc. much more valuable than those of pure fear, suspense, and disgust. Therefore, we prefer to feel the experience of the superordinated attributes which justifies feeling the experience of subordinated attributes. Insofar as this argument holds, mixed emotions do not contradict the perceptivity thesis.

Saying that some people have disproportionate emotional reactions to objects and actions is, I believe, not a good argument to limit the perceptivity thesis. There are many ways in which one can have disproportionate emotional reactions and it would include depression, trauma, bipolar disorder, hormonal disorder, etc. The cases of emotional dysregulation are where a person finds it difficult to regulate their emotions and to deal with them in a mediated way. Many of the cases include psychological trauma<sup>591</sup>, reactive attachment disorder due to neglect from the caregiving figures<sup>592</sup>, ADHD<sup>593</sup>, PTSD<sup>594</sup>, depression<sup>595</sup>, hormonal irregularities<sup>596</sup>, etc. All of these issues are, as it can be imagined, quite common and they prove to be conductors of the vast variety of emotional disproportionalities when it comes to the reactive aspects. Even if that is the case, the reasons for our emotions being disproportionate do not limit the perceptivity thesis of emotion since the theorists from this field talk about emotions that are not dysregulated.

Yet, as we have said in the second chapter when talking about the

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<sup>591</sup> E. C. Dunn, K. Nishimi, S. H. Gomez, A. Powers, B. Bradley, (2018.), *Developmental Timing of Trauma Exposure and Emotion Dysregulation in Adulthood: Are There Sensitive Periods When Trauma is Most Harmful?* In *Journal of Affective Disorders*, vol. 227.

<sup>592</sup> G. Hornor, (2008.), *Reactive Attachment Disorder* in *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*, vol. 22., no. 4.

<sup>593</sup> N. Bunford, S. W. Evans, F. Wymbs, (2015.), *ADHD and Emotion Dysregulation Among Children and Adolescents* in *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, vol. 18.

<sup>594</sup> A. Powers, D. Cross, N. Fani, B. Bradley, (2015.), *PTSD, Emotion Dysregulation, and Dissociative Symptoms in a Highly Traumatized Sample* in *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, vol. 61.

<sup>595</sup> J. Balier, M. Witthoft, M. Erhic, D. Mier, (2017.), *Emotion dysregulation in hypochondriasis and depression* in *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, vol. 24., no. 6.

<sup>596</sup> M. M. Wirth, A. E. Gaffey, (2013.), *Handbook of Cognition and Emotion*, Guilford Press, New York, p. 69. – 85.

psychological narrativity thesis, fringe cases (if they can be called as such) such as one being a psychopath will not be taken into consideration since the only thing that they show is that our deliberation and self-perception can vary. Although that is surely true, the main purpose of this project is to provide an account that is free from these fringe cases as much as possible. Therefore, we shall assume that the emotional spectrum of a person is as proportionate as it can get.

But the thing that might limit the perceptivity thesis and put it in my framework is the differentiation offered by Michael Brady – perceptual and emotional experience.<sup>597</sup> Perceptual experiences are those experiences that constitute reasons and empirical beliefs and, insofar as they constitute beliefs, they constitute values as well.<sup>598</sup> We attain them by our faculties of understanding, thinking about the events, actions, objects, doctrines, etc. Having said that, perceptual experiences constitute our intelligible reasons for actions and beliefs since they are always formed within one social narrative. On the other hand, Brady thinks that emotions respond to those reasons, rather than form them.<sup>599</sup> I think that Brady's assessment is plausible, and it calls for a hierarchy of our faculties of reasoning. Emotions, ultimately, correspond to our experiences and beliefs. Therefore, in our reason-giving procedure, they should be put on a lower pedestal than reasons themselves which are attained by our deliberation about intelligible beliefs and values. It would also sound plausible, and a defender of the perceptivity thesis might agree, that, insofar as we establish values based on our perceptual experience, emotions should correlate to those values.

However, even if that might be the case, emotions sometimes “miss the target” when it comes to the evaluation itself. We might feel like some person has specific properties based on our previous encounters with the people who resemble this person. We might get annoyed, angry, afraid, etc. of this person, however, after

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<sup>597</sup> M. S. Brady, (2011.), *Emotions, Perceptions, and Reasons* in C. Bagnoli, *Morality and Emotions*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 135.

<sup>598</sup> *Ibid.* p. 145.

<sup>599</sup> *Ibid.* p. 145.

further examination and time spent with this person, we find that this person has a completely different set of properties, and our feelings towards him/her shift. This would be, as I would suggest, the reconfiguration of our emotional response towards a particular subject, object, event, or action. In our everyday experience, we can find countless examples of this being the case. Furthermore, to limit the perceptivity thesis, Brady also suggests that sometimes we cannot access the reasons for us evaluating a particular object as such, even though we feel like it has specific properties.<sup>600</sup> For example, listening to music. We may feel like the music that we listen to is very valuable since it makes us feel certain things based on our aesthetic evaluation. Yet, when asked why we feel it is valuable, the answer usually refers back to the feelings themselves, assuming that we are not expert musical theorists. In the first example, we could trace back the reasons for believing in something and we can reconfigure the feelings that we feel towards that particular something. In the second example, however, the feelings refer back to themselves and the reasons are inaccessible to us. Reasoning about the feelings themselves would, in this instance, make no sense.

Ultimately, what I would suggest is that the limitation of the perceptivity thesis, when it comes to reasoning, lies in its subordination to our beliefs and values, or, as Brady would call it, perceptual experience. And by having said that, the limited version of this perceptivity model would be quite compatible with this project. It would form a conjunctive model of reasoning and deliberation insofar as it is linked with beliefs and values. Emotions themselves always enter our reason-giving procedure on a daily level when it comes to moral and political questions, and, yet they are usually representative of the deeper reasons, beliefs, and values that we hold.

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<sup>600</sup> *Ibid.* p. 146.

### 2.3. Another Piece of the Puzzle – Reason-giving Procedure

Let us draw the line and note everything that has been said. We talked about the notion of reasons and then we talked about what it means to reason about reasons. We have introduced a concept of the reason-giving procedure which is the act of deliberation. The discussion has led us to “construct” the version of the reason-giving procedure which is compatible with the social and psychological narrativity thesis by introducing the notion of intelligibility reasons. Afterward, I trust that some problems that might arise from this version of the reason-giving procedure were addressed. When explaining the parts of the reason-giving procedure such as beliefs, values, and attitudes (emotions), we have made a model that encompasses all of these aspects under the notion of intelligible reasons.

Now, I have stated that my version of constructivism is based on the quietist-realist position. If we were to follow the model I have provided, it would be hard to see that any of it is even remotely realist. By putting an emphasis on the intelligibility reasons, we can arrive at practical objectivity<sup>601</sup>, however, not a realist version of objectivity. Intelligibility itself means that rationality is dependent on the tradition itself, so, objective beliefs, objective values, and objective attitudes cannot be compatible with it. Full rationality is not obtainable. Insofar as that is the case, for example, Michael Smith’s famous proposal on full rationality wouldn’t stand. He suggests the following:

*My suggestion is that to be fully rational an agent must not be suffering from the effects of any physical or emotional disturbance, she must have no false beliefs, she must have all relevant true beliefs, and she must have a systematically justifiable set of desires: that is, a set of desires that is*

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<sup>601</sup> If we follow the steps of the reason-giving procedure, we will end up with the reasons that have practical objectivity based on the “input data” that we have provided.

*maximally coherent and unified.*<sup>602</sup>

This version of absolute rationality depends on the stronger version of realism that states that our beliefs can be objectively true and that our desires and emotional status are always in perfect coordination. If we accept the model I have provided, full rationality is not compatible with the intelligibility reasons. However, my model provides one objective fact, and, in this regard, I would consider it to be a quietist-realist account. This fact is exhibited in the third piece of the puzzle – reasonableness.

#### **2.4. Reasonableness – a Quietist-Realist Account**

What do we mean when we say a person acts in a reasonable way? Admittedly, we have been discussing this in the parts on ideology and moral/political progress. My argument was that the more reasonable one is, that he/she is a person who has a potentiality to actualize actions in a way that is more moral than the person who is not reasonable. And we have also mentioned, in short lines, what it means to be reasonable in the third chapter. In this chapter, however, the full account of reasonableness will be explored. In the constructivist tradition, I believe that no philosopher has used this term in a more philosophically relevant way than the founder of Kantian constructivism – John Rawls.

This term will also be my main normative claim and the term that I will use to separate myself from being a pure contextualist. So far, as it was noted, the constructivist theory that was made to be an addition to the narrativist claim has made this project sound like a theory that could be supported by a pro-rationalist contextualist. Yet, the use of reasonableness in this project will also provide a shift, effectively installing a form of quietist realism into the picture. In short,

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<sup>602</sup> M. Smith, (1996.), *Normative Reasons and Full Rationality: Reply to Swaton in Analysis*, vol. 56., no. 3., p. 160.

reasonableness is considered to be an objectively moral term and, in this sense, the only objectively normative term that I find to be convincing.

In this sub-chapter, a descriptive account of reasonableness shall be provided, originating from Rawls' theoretical opus. Afterward, reasonableness will be given its place in this project by further elaboration on its importance. It will be the final piece of the puzzle before applying the constructivist account to the already elaborated narrativist account.

#### **2.4.1. What Does it Mean to be *Reasonable*?**

John Rawls uses reasonableness in many passages throughout his theory and, in fact, uses it in many different variations. Rawls is, in essence, a political philosopher who is concerned with the basic structure of our society. Yet, Rawls also offers much more to the fields of ethics and moral psychology than just political philosophy. Reasonableness, I argue, is one of the central concepts that govern the development of his thought.

James W. Boettcher stresses that Rawls does not use reasonableness only in the way he introduced it in his *Kantian Constructivism*, but has, since then, developed and refined it.<sup>603</sup> In the current state of my project, the strategy that I will take will be similar to what I have done with MacIntyre's notion of narrativity in the first chapter, that is to say, I will provide extensive elaboration on the Rawlsian notion of reasonableness and clear it from the theoretical "baggage" that Rawls assumes when he uses that notion. Insofar as I am successful in my goal, the notion of reasonableness will be adaptable to the current state of this project and will be an essential notion that will be able to hold my overall argument together. Therefore, we

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<sup>603</sup> J. W. Boettcher, (2004.), *What is Reasonableness?* in *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, vol. 30., no. 5-6., p. 601.

will consider reasonableness from the main political framework that Rawls finds primary to his project, as well as the one from the standpoint of moral psychology that can also be found woven within his thinking.

#### **2.4.2. Being Reasonable in a Deliberative Democracy**

As for Rawls, I believe that three concepts are of major importance for his political project – the fact of reasonable pluralism, burdens of judgment, and the public reason itself. However, Rawls’s political philosophy, grounded in *A Theory of Justice*, takes a pivotal turn in *Political Liberalism* and his later writings, where he shifts toward a less ideal theory, centering his attention on the contemporary liberal social sphere. In the following subchapter, I will try to shortly describe the Rawlsian striving after which I will derive the notion of reasonableness in terms of political philosophy.

The fact of reasonable pluralism, according to Rawls, is a basic feature of democracy and democratic societies.<sup>604</sup> It describes a society in which the citizens hold multiple incompatible comprehensive doctrines, yet they live within a unified systematic structure. Therefore, it is expected that there are reasonable people who hold reasonable comprehensive doctrines. This means that comprehensive doctrines, which are, in short, views that we hold to be true – metaphysical, religious, moral, and philosophical truths, should be guided in such a way that they do not obstruct the practice of other comprehensive doctrines.<sup>605</sup> Reasonable people will uphold the principle of reciprocity<sup>606</sup> and respect other people’s equal rights to hold their doctrines to be true and exhibit practices that come with those doctrines.

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<sup>604</sup> J. Rawls, (1997.), *The Idea of Public Reason Revisited* in *The University of Chicago Law Review*, vol. 64., no. 3., p. 765.

<sup>605</sup> J. Rawls, (1996.), *Political Liberalism*, Columbia University Press, New York, p. 59.

<sup>606</sup> *Ibid.* p. 50.

Now, in a pluralist society, it is to be expected that the citizens who subscribe to different comprehensive doctrines end up disagreeing with each other. This is where Rawls' notion of burdens of judgment comes into play, and it reinforces the other aspects of reasonableness. To put it in other terms, reasonableness also demands that we accept burdens of judgment as a principle of our relationship with others who have different comprehensive doctrines to our own.<sup>607</sup> We hold our burden of judgment towards others as seeing them as holders of comprehensive doctrines who are not in the wrong by the nature of their doctrine; that is to say, we should accept them as someone not blind to objective truths and morality, but rather people who do not share our vision of the world. As Marc Ramsay would put it:

*The burdens encourage us to accept other persons — for political purposes — as having a legitimate interest in the pursuit of their own conceptions of the good.*<sup>608</sup>

Lastly, these notions are a part of a greater concept that Rawls calls public reason which is often seen as the inseparable part of deliberative democracy. Insofar as the fact of reasonable pluralism and the burdens of judgment are established, public reason is set out to be easily conceivable. Rawls notes that the idea of public reason rests upon the family of concepts<sup>609</sup> and for that reason, we have provided elaboration on the first two concepts. When it comes to the idea of public reason itself, Rawls considers it as follows:

*The idea of public reason has a definite structure, and if one or more of its aspects are ignored it can seem implausible, as it does when applied to the background culture. It has five different aspects: (1) the fundamental political questions to which it applies; (2) the persons to whom it applies (government officials and candidates for public office); (3) its content as given by a family*

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<sup>607</sup> *Ibid.* p. 54.

<sup>608</sup> M. Ramsay, (2007.), *The Burdens of Judgment and Fallibilism in Contemporary Political Theory*, vol. 6., no. 2., p. 158.

<sup>609</sup> J. Rawls, (1997.), *The Idea of Public Reason Revisited* in *The University of Chicago Law Review*, vol. 64., no. 3., p. 773.

*of reasonable political conceptions of justice; (4) the application of these conceptions in discussions of coercive norms to be enacted in the form of legitimate law for a democratic people; and (5) citizens' checking that the principles derived from their conceptions of justice satisfy the criterion of reciprocity.*<sup>610</sup>

The first aspect of public reason is the question that it operates with – constitutional essentials and the matters of basic justice. These are the questions that are separate from the background culture<sup>611</sup> and target the basis of one society. Constitutional essentials open the questions about which political rights and liberties can be reasonably included in a written constitution; while the matters of basic justice deal with the questions of basic economic and social justice.<sup>612</sup> Secondly, the idea of public reason primarily applies to government officials such as judges, legislators, chief executives, etc. who are tasked with an obligation to explain the reasons for their support for general political principles to the general public.<sup>613</sup> The general public, on the other hand, should be concerned with the idea of public reason by thinking of themselves as legislators and acting in the way which is reasonable.<sup>614</sup> The third, fourth, and fifth aspects of public reason are connected to what we have said about the notion of the fact of pluralism and reasonableness. Since there are many comprehensive doctrines that take shape in the background culture, the questions of public reason should not be present in those spheres. On the contrary, they deal with (at least most of the time) the basic political principles that are conceived by free and equal citizens. People within the pluralist society are bound by the principles of reasonableness and by the relation that has two aspects. The first aspect is being

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<sup>610</sup> *Ibid.* p. 767.

<sup>611</sup> Background culture is a concept that refers to the wide array of practices, beliefs, values, attitudes etc. shared by the individuals that are a part of that culture. It can easily be connected to the notion of tradition in MacIntyre, or the notion of the meta-narrative in this project.

<sup>612</sup> *Ibid.* p. 767.

<sup>613</sup> *Ibid.* p. 769.

<sup>614</sup> *Ibid.* p. 769.

within one basic society while the second one is that they are considered free and equal in that society in which they exercise their collective political power.<sup>615</sup>

Rawls does provide a description of how we can differentiate between the questions of public reason and the questions of comprehensive doctrines and background culture<sup>616</sup> in his *Political Liberalism*. There is no such a thing as a private reason, yet, debating over specific social narratives such as values and beliefs falls into the second category, while the public reason is the primary source of political importance.<sup>617</sup> For example, debates on the questions of the value of educational curriculum, religious institutions, the questions of life sentence, etc. are indeed important and even crucial to be held, yet they are not the questions that public reason deals with. Public reason would deal with the questions of the rights to education, acceptance of reasonable religious doctrines, and the right to criminal rehabilitation. Generally, public reason deals with the basic political principles that all reasonable comprehensive doctrines can agree upon.

After outlining the Rawlsian conceptual structure, a view on deliberative democracy can be provided. Rawls believes that deliberative democracy should be framed in the following way:

*There are three essential elements of deliberative democracy. One is an idea of public reason, although not all such ideas are the same. A second is a framework of constitutional democratic institutions that specifies the setting for deliberative legislative bodies. The third is the knowledge and desire on the part of citizens generally to follow public reason and to realize its ideal in their political conduct.*<sup>618</sup>

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<sup>615</sup> *Ibid.* p. 769. – 770.

<sup>616</sup> Rawls uses a concept “non-public reason - in J. Rawls, (1996.), *Political Liberalism*, Columbia University Press, New York, p. 214.

<sup>617</sup> J. Rawls, (1996.), *Political Liberalism*, Columbia University Press, New York, p. 220.

<sup>618</sup> J. Rawls, (1997.), *The Idea of Public Reason Revisited* in *The University of Chicago Law Review*, vol. 64., no. 3., p. 772.

Deliberative democracy incorporates multiple layers of reasonableness, as we have seen from the analysis of public reason. To elaborate further, public reason rests upon reasonable pluralism, that is to say, openness for a reasonable disagreement based on the burdens of judgment and respect for the rights and autonomy of all the individuals. The second aspect of deliberative democracy is not of essential value to this project, however, the third surely is. Ultimately, based on my reading of Rawls, the third aspect requires the desire and the openness of the citizens to be reasonable towards one another.

The concept of reasonableness is a later concept in Rawls's philosophical career, bearing in mind that it was not a part of his *A Theory of Justice*. While writing his most recognized work, Rawls still has a blurry picture between rationality and reasonableness. As stated by Nenad Mišćević, Rawls is still working around the notions of rationality and reasonableness in his *A Theory of Justice*, it is only within his later works that he considers reasonableness as a higher form of reason-following attitudes.<sup>619</sup> However, the premise is also that he finds rationality and reasonableness to be complementary, independent ideas.<sup>620</sup>

My claim here would be that, for Rawls, at the center of both his public reason, as well as the notion of deliberative democracy as a whole, is reasonableness.<sup>621</sup> Without crafting this term, which is, admittedly, deontological<sup>622</sup>, the whole theory falls apart.

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<sup>619</sup> N. Mišćević, (2022.), *Justice and Practical Reason: Rationality, Reasonableness, and Thought-Experimenting in Rawls in Prologomena*, vol. 21., no. 2., p. 31.

<sup>620</sup> S. P. Young, (2006.), *Rawlsian Reasonableness: A Problematic Presumption?* In *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 39., no. 1., p. 163.

<sup>621</sup> Numerous renowned Rawlsian scholars would also agree with this claim, see: M. Moore, (1996), *On Reasonableness* in *Journal of Applied Philosophy* vol. 13., S. Macedo, (2000.), *In Defense of Liberal Public Reason: Are Slavery and Abortion Hard Cases?* In *Natural Law and Public Reasons*, Georgetown University Press, Washington., etc.

<sup>622</sup> Rawls calls his theory of justice as fairness a deontological theory in – J. Rawls, (1999.), *A Theory of Justice Revised Ed.*, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, p. 18.

Therefore, reasonableness, in the political sense, for Rawls, is the fairness and impartiality that rational individuals would agree upon, hold true to in their political lives, and affirm doctrines that differ from their own.

### **2.4.3. Moral Account of Reasonableness**

A Rawlsian political account of reasonableness is, by all standards, a moral basis for political judgment and political action. Based on the analysis offered by Margaret Moore, reasonableness, according to Rawls, has two aspects – the willingness to propose and abide by fair terms of cooperation and the willingness to abide by the burdens of judgment.<sup>623</sup> The second aspect has been discussed above when we have talked about reasonable pluralism and reasonable doctrines. The first aspect becomes central to the discussion of the moral element of reasonableness – willingness to abide by fair terms of cooperation. The analysis of this aspect of reasonableness seems simple enough – a moral agent needs to be willing to enter into a moral relation with other agents. Therefore, as William Galston stresses, moral personality is at the very core of moral constructivism that Rawls subscribes to.<sup>624</sup> It is safe to say that reasonableness can be considered, in both of these cases, as a virtue of a moral agent that enters a moral relation with other agents. Now, the difficult part is at hand – to analyze this moral virtue.

It is important to understand the motivation that Rawls has when he invokes Kantian grounds. Deborah Heikes describes Rawls as a philosopher who is explicit about rejecting essentialism, that is to say, universal truths about nature and the identity of a subject, yet she adapts the notion of autonomy directly derived from

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<sup>623</sup> M. Moore, (1996.), *On Reasonableness* in *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, vol. 13., no. 2., p. 169.

<sup>624</sup> W. A. Galston, (1982.), *Moral Personality and Liberal Theory: John Rawls' "Dewey Lectures"* in *Political Theory*, vol. 10., no. 4., p. 496.

Kantian ethics.<sup>625</sup> Therefore, in many ways, Rawls' moral personhood philosophy is anti-realist.<sup>626</sup> According to David Brink, it is anti-realist insofar as it is based on the premise that moral persons do not discover truths but determine them.<sup>627</sup> This aspect of Rawls can be seen in his reflective equilibrium procedure which is usually taken to be a procedure based on his affiliation as a constructivist. Namely, behind the veil of ignorance, we do not have an epistemic "revelation" of the universal principles, but we determine them based on our reasoning and "bargaining". This is also a place where the conception of practical objectivity, as mentioned, a very influential idea for contemporary constructivism, originates from. At the same time, it is also anti-realist in the sense that it tends to provide room for the fact of pluralism, accommodating multiple doctrines that have their versions of what is true. This is exhibited in the burdens of judgment that we have mentioned.

Yet, Rawls is not a relativist in any sense of the word. It has been stated numerous times that Rawls is a philosopher who embraces the Kantian legacy and applies it in his constructivist account. This is a place where we will start reading Rawls as a Kantian constructivist, a position that he shapes in his work *Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory*. The two model conceptions of justice as fairness, according to Rawls, are found in the well-ordered society and the moral person.<sup>628</sup> These conceptions are complementary to my current analysis of Rawls' account. Since *Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory* was written nine years after the publication

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<sup>625</sup> D. K. Heikes, (2018.), *Reasonableness as an Epistemic Virtue* in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Analytic Feminism*, Bloomsbury Academic, London, p. 265.

<sup>626</sup> Although that is the usual reading of Rawls, there have been attempts to provide a case of the quietism in Rawlsian thought as I have mentioned through this chapter. See – P. Mondal, (2008.), *Justice as Fairness: A Quietist Reading of Rawls* in *Politikon South African Journal of Political Studies*, vol. 35., no. 1.

<sup>627</sup> D. O. Brink, (1987.), *Rawlsian Constructivism in Moral Theory* in *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 17., no. 1., p. 76.

<sup>628</sup> J. Rawls, (1980.), *Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory* in *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 77., no. 9., p. 520.

of *A Theory of Justice*, it is also safe to assume that Rawls uses this work to expand on the second conception, the one on moral personhood. Therefore, the main goal of Kantian constructivism, admittedly, is to connect the principles of justice with a particular conception of a person.<sup>629</sup>

The claim that, apart from the procedure of constructing the principles, there are no moral facts is quite intriguing in this instance.<sup>630</sup> It seems that, for Rawls, what is of the highest importance is the morality of construction itself. Furthermore, in that case, a conception of a moral person is seen as an element of the construction procedure and Rawls highlights that this procedure should be reasonable.<sup>631</sup> To further expand on this claim, let us consider a passage from Rawls:

*What distinguishes the Kantian form of constructivism is essentially this: it specifies a particular conception of the person as an element in a reasonable procedure of construction, the outcome of which determines the content of the first principles of justice.*<sup>632</sup>

Since I am emphasizing reasonableness and, bearing in mind that my reading of Rawls suggests that he does the same, it is of crucial importance to provide further elaboration of what reasonable is when it comes to the conception of moral personhood. A moral person is the bearer of autonomy which is constituted by rationality and reasonableness.<sup>633</sup> Both rationality and reasonableness are considered in the light of social cooperation.<sup>634</sup> Rationality is the means to an end striving that individuals have in terms of social cooperation; it expresses a conception of the individual rational striving.<sup>635</sup> Reasonableness rests upon the idea of reciprocity

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<sup>629</sup> *Ibid.* p. 520.

<sup>630</sup> *Ibid.* p. 519.

<sup>631</sup> *Ibid.* p. 516.

<sup>632</sup> *Ibid.* p. 516.

<sup>633</sup> *Ibid.* p. 528.

<sup>634</sup> *Ibid.* p. 528.

<sup>635</sup> *Ibid.* p. 528.

and mutuality, that is to say, this cooperation must be fair, and, insofar as it is, each participant of this cooperation is expected to accept the terms of this cooperation, assuming that everyone else does.<sup>636</sup>

If we were to terminologically situate these notions into a moral framework, I propose that we change the term “social cooperation” for the term “relation”. This would enable us to think about individual actions, expectations, and obligations that we have towards others. By doing this, we can see a direct connection between Rawls and Kant, namely, the dichotomy between rational/reasonable and hypothetical/categorical imperatives. Tracing back to Kant, he claims that:

*Now, all imperatives command either hypothetically or categorically. The former represents the practical necessity of a possible action as a means to achieving something else that one wills (or that it is at least possible for one to will). The categorical imperative would be that which represented an action as objectively necessary of itself, without reference to another end.*<sup>637</sup>

Hypothetical imperatives determine the action to be directed at a specific good that we want to achieve. Namely, if we want an X, we will need to determine which steps to take to achieve that X. Hypothetical imperatives can be problematical and assertoric in the sense that the object of their action can be either possible or actual.<sup>638</sup> Categorical imperatives are apodictic by their nature which means that they exhibit necessity; they are not connected to any other object since they are objects to themselves.<sup>639</sup>

The connection between the hypothetical imperatives and rationality is quite clear. I would even say that they can be used interchangeably. Both of them describe

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<sup>636</sup> *Ibid.* p. 528.

<sup>637</sup> I. Kant, (1997.), *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 25.

<sup>638</sup> *Ibid.* p. 26.

<sup>639</sup> *Ibid.* p. 26.

a process of selecting the ways that are necessary for the acquisition of a particular something an individual seeks. Now, the connection between reasonableness and categorical imperatives is not as apparent as it was in the earlier case. It is sensible to deduce that reasonableness is a necessary condition for the principles of justice to be held by reasonable agents. Likewise, the principles of justice are themselves formulated in a way that would fit the apodictic nature of the categorical imperatives.<sup>640</sup>

Based on my understanding, I would agree with Lewine that the principles of justice are, indeed, formulated in such a way that they would fit the formulation necessary for them to be considered in the form of a categorical imperative. I would also propose a further elaboration based on my assessment of Kantian legacy in Rawls' theory by pointing out the aspects of the categorical imperative. By doing that, I believe, the element of the necessity of reasonableness will be more transparent.

Kant has 3 (4) formulations of the categorical imperative:

- *Act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law.*<sup>641</sup>
- *Act as if the maxim of your action were to become by your will a universal law of nature.*<sup>642643</sup>
- *So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means.*<sup>644</sup>
- *Act only so that the will could regard itself as at the same time giving*

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<sup>640</sup> A. Lewine, (1974.), *Rawls' Kantianism in Social Theory and Practice*, vol. 3., no. 1., p. 54.

<sup>641</sup> I. Kant, (1997.), *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 31.

<sup>642</sup> *Ibid.* p. 31.

<sup>643</sup> This formulation is an extension of the first one. Kant uses it to bring it closer to our intuitions.

<sup>644</sup> *Ibid.* p. 38.

*universal law through its maxim.*<sup>645</sup>

We will use these formulations to connect reasonableness with its Kantian roots. The first formulation can be depicted as acting according to the standards you would impose on others. Reasonableness is a notion that accentuates mutuality and reciprocity, following principles that we would consider fair for us to follow, assuming that everyone else does so as well. Both Rawls and Kant ask the agent to act in the way he/she would expect others to act. This is a normative claim, both reasonableness and a categorical imperative lie at the heart of the agent's morality, or moral personhood. Rawls, of course, does not premise his theory based on Kantian metaphysics, however, the result is the same.<sup>646</sup> Both of these normative requests are necessary because, without them, the theories of both Rawls and Kant crumble. Aspects of justice as fairness, such as the fact of reasonable pluralism, public reason, burdens of judgment, etc. would not be defensible if the agents were not required to affirm the principles of justice. Therefore, reasonableness is a *necessary*, an *apodictic* requirement of the agents as such.

The second formulation of the categorical imperative offers us even more clarity in considering the distinction between rationality and reasonableness. Namely, we can treat others as instruments for achieving certain goods. Insofar as we do that, we are being rational. In everyday life, if we contemplate our relationships with the people around us, we will find that these relationships have an instrumental aspect. Depending on our social relations, we “use” our professors to acquire knowledge, auto-mechanics to get our cars fixed, painters to marvel at their paintings, musicians to enjoy their music, etc. Practices have a direct instrumental value to the society in which they are considered practices. This also goes deeper into the fact that we “use”

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<sup>645</sup> *Ibid.* p. 42.

<sup>646</sup> There can be different readings on reasonableness concerning Rawls. In *Political Liberalism*, Rawls focuses more on the concrete political application of it, while in some parts of it, he does connect it to Kantianism, like in his earlier work. Therefore, my reading of reasonableness is only one of many that can be attributed to the Rawlsian tradition.

our intimate relationships such as friendships and partnerships. We “use” our friends and partners for support, personal growth, feelings of belonging, validation, healthy criticism, etc. One is rational if he/she sees the other as a means to some end. On the other hand, one is reasonable if he/she sees the other as the end of themselves. That is to say, although we choose people based on the substance that someone contains in their personhood that we value, the personhood itself is the value that is inherent to our relationships with others. Namely, apart from considering someone merely as a means to an end, we consider that someone as a holder of autonomy, character, preferences, goals, etc. In short, we should recognize the inherent dignity and worth of every human being and honor their humanity by treating them with compassion, dignity, and fairness.

The final formulation of the categorical imperative suggests that we will our wills as those providing universal laws.<sup>647</sup> Kant constructs this imperative from the *kingdom of ends*, a thought experiment situated in the hypothetical realm.<sup>648</sup> In this realm, there is a systematic union or a community of moral beings that act according to the common law dictated by the categorical imperative, abstracted from their personal differences and their rational ends. Within the constraints of this law, all of the moral beings in this hypothetical realm treat each other not merely as means, but as an end in themselves.<sup>649</sup> In Kant’s view, this realm is the *ideal* realm where moral beings give universal laws in it, but also follow them. That is to say:

*A rational being belongs as a member to the kingdom of ends when he gives universal laws in it but is also himself subject to these laws. He belongs to it as sovereign when, as lawgiving, he is not subject to the will of any other.*<sup>650</sup>

Therefore, this ideal realm is the thought experiment in which Kant considers moral beings both lawgivers and followers of the law they provide. This thought

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<sup>647</sup> *Ibid.* p. 40.

<sup>648</sup> *Ibid.* p. 41.

<sup>649</sup> *Ibid.* p. 41.

<sup>650</sup> *Ibid.* p. 41.

experiment has uncanny similarities with Rawls and his veil of ignorance model. We can refer to Rawls' claim that when we imagine ourselves behind the veil of ignorance, the agents are those that decide on the principles of justice of one society; they are, in fact, the law giving subjects for the principles which everyone would find as fair principles that they would agree on. They are providing, in Kantian terms, universal laws both as lawgivers, as well as being subjected to follow them. Before Rawls' expansion of his *A Theory of Justice*, authors have taken a strong stance on the main difference between Rawls' and Kant's notions of rationality. Authors such as Oliver Johnson have claimed that the main difference between Rawls and Kant is that Rawls takes reason in his veil of ignorance as an egoistic notion, whereas Kant, in the given passage, considers it to be a source of good-will.<sup>651</sup> However, as I have stated, Rawls has expanded his conceptual framework in his later texts and, especially in his version of Kantian constructivism. Reasonableness, instead of "egoistic" rationality, as Johnson sees it, would be a much better fit for the correlation between the hypothetical models of the kingdom of ends and the veil of ignorance. I argue, based on my reading of both Rawls and Kant, that their thought experiments are not only complimentary but are based on the same premise – reasonableness, or a categorical imperative.

This reading of Rawls' Kantianism is also endorsed by Rawls himself. Namely, in the footnote in his *Political Liberalism*, Rawls stresses the following:

*The distinction between the reasonable and the rational goes back, I believe, to Kant: it is expressed in his distinction between the categorical and the hypothetical imperative...The first represents pure practical reason, the second represents empirical practical reason. For the purposes of a political conception of justice, I give the reasonable a more restricted sense and associate it, first, with the willingness to recognize the burdens of judgment and to accept their consequences.*<sup>652</sup>

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<sup>651</sup> O. A. Johnson, (1974.), *The Kantian Interpretation in Ethics*, vol. 85, no. 1., p. 64.

<sup>652</sup> J. Rawls, (1996.), *Political Liberalism*, Columbia University Press, New York, p. 220. p. 48. – 49.

My current analysis leads me to determine reasonableness as a relational principle which is necessary for Rawls and Kant (in different terminology). In the following chapters, I will try to morph this principle in such a way that would fit my theoretical needs. That is to say, I will try to provide reasons why reasonableness should be considered as an objective moral principle. If that is successfully argued for, then the whole theoretical foundations that have been established so far will fall into place and we will be able to conclude this project.

#### **2.4.4. Attaining Reasonableness**

The point where I diverge from Rawls is most definitely in the outlook on moral facts. Namely, as it was mentioned, Rawls believes that there are no moral facts other than those of the procedure itself.<sup>653</sup> Yet, I believe there is one moral truth that comes prior to the procedure of constructing principles of justice, and that is the existence of reasonableness. Namely, in order for the procedure to even function, the agent of the procedure needs to be reasonable. For Rawls, based on my reading, the procedure *guarantees* that the agents will act reasonably, and, from that procedure, reasonableness is attained. But, at the same time, Rawls does claim that once reasonable rules are established, following them depends on the willingness of agents. Reasonableness is required both before and after the procedure. Therefore, I want to argue that reasonableness is the only moral truth that we can account for, not the procedure itself.

We can even argue that my divergence from Rawls is Kantian. If we follow Kant's order, he primarily provides the universal law formulation and the humanity formulation before continuing into the kingdom of ends thought experiment. If we were to translate Kant's method into the terms of this project, Kant would first

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<sup>653</sup> J. Rawls, (1980.), *Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory* in *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 77., no. 9., p. 519.

establish what it means to be moral, or, in this sense, reasonable, and then apply it onto the procedure. For Rawls, it is the other way around. Since I stand behind the argument that reasonableness is prior to the procedure, I would suggest that it is complementary to Kant's order.

Having said that, I would affirm the notion of reasonableness from the Rawlsian tradition with a strong foundation in Kantian theory. That is to say, reasonableness will be taken as a necessary and sufficient element for morality. Morality is relational. Since it is required of us to abide by the fair rules of cooperation with others, and, at the same time, give them an absolute value of dignity and autonomy, reasonableness is a purely relational term. Likewise, if we accept the value theory we have been mentioning throughout this project, that is, that we value things based on the reasons attained by the properties those things possess, we can take a step further when talking about reasonableness. I say absolute value because we do not only assign instrumental values when we evaluate others, we assign them values such as dignity, autonomy, respect (for personhood and preferences), etc. To be reasonable, we must follow the first two formulations of Kant's categorical imperative – universal law formulation and humanity formulation. And insofar as we are reasonable, and we expect others to be so as well, we value others and their willingness to enter fair cooperation through reciprocity and mutuality.

#### **2.4.5. Grounding Reasonableness: The Expectations of a Reasonable Agent**

Much of the text has analyzed the abstract notion of reasonableness. Grounding it into a descriptive aspect that an agent needs to have in order to be considered reasonable should provide more clarity for the reader. Krista Lawlor provides a list of "virtues" that a reasonable person has.<sup>654</sup> While this analysis is

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<sup>654</sup> K. Lawlor, (2021.), *Knowledge and Reasonableness in Synthese*, vol. 199, p. 1440.

different than the one Rawls offers, I would like to affirm it insofar as it gives us the list of “virtues” of reasonableness. Namely, the principle of reasonableness is objective, while the virtues are not. They can vary and they depend on the level of practice that we achieve in our use of this moral principle. Furthermore, it will also help us to situate reasonableness in contextual terms and test its explanatory power.

The first aspect of being reasonable, according to Lawlor, is being able to find reasons for the courses of action for, or, against something.<sup>655</sup> The second aspect is to be sensible and to be diligent when it comes to actions – a reasonable person chooses to do right rather than wrong.<sup>656</sup> Next, a person is reasonable once he/she is sensitive to what is important in a situation and shows the proportionality of his/her action in that situation.<sup>657</sup> Another aspect of reasonableness is to know the relevant information about the context.<sup>658</sup> Finally, a reasonable person will see things from another person’s perspective and show a sensible concern for others.<sup>659</sup>

I find that the analysis of this list should be provided. Lawlor does not use the term reasonableness in the same way in which is used in this project, however, her list is very much relevant. The first aspect is very important to consider since it does highlight a reason-based approach. Let us say that there is a situation in which it is expected of us to be reasonable. We cannot be reasonable in a vacuum, so, every situation begs for different courses of reasonable action. It has been established that we cannot do anything without having a reason to do so, therefore, behind every reasonable action, there has to be a reason that supplements it. To be reasonable to someone is to be able to find reasons why we should not limit someone’s preferences, liberty, or dignity. And, although reasonableness is connected to unconditional respect, this respect for autonomy “mixes” with conditional factors of our everyday lives. For example, if person X is friends with person Y and wants that

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<sup>655</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1440.

<sup>656</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1440.

<sup>657</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1440.

<sup>658</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1440.

<sup>659</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1441.

person to constantly provide attention and concern for the problems that person X has, while person X does not do the same thing, assuming that person X is able to do so and it is expected of him/her to do so, that person is acting in an unreasonable way. The reasons behind his unreasonableness in a given situation are such as expectations and obligations. If you are in a friendship with someone, that friendship is based on reciprocity – if we want someone to be concerned with our problems in a relationship such as friendship, we should be open to being concerned with the problems that another person has. It would be the governing rules of fairness that would constitute their friendship. If X has reasons to help out Y in need and does not do so, he/she is acting in an unreasonable way. If X has reasons to help out Y in need and does so, he/she is acting in a reasonable way. Therefore, every relation that people share have reasons why we ought to do something and why we ought not to do, based on the already established rules of fairness of that relation.

The second aspect is pretty much straightforward, it requires a willingness to be reasonable, rather than being unreasonable. Although there are many cases in which it would be rational to act in a specific way by being unreasonable, we should always strive to be reasonable. If a person X constantly asks a person Y to lend him/her money with no regard of giving that money back, person X is acting in a rational way insofar as that will increase his/her overall benefit yet is acting in an unreasonable way towards a person Y because he/she would expect that if he/she lent someone money, they would receive that money back. A person X should strive to be reasonable, and, in that way, be fair towards Y, rather than being unfair and unreasonable.

The third aspect shows nothing more, nor nothing less than mutuality and reciprocity. If we expect a specific thing in a given relation, we should also be expecting ourselves to follow the rules of fairness. The example could entail thinking about a person X and a person Y as being in a marriage. A person X occasionally cheats on a person Y in their marriage, while expecting a person Y to stay faithful. That shows the lack of proportionality and shows unreasonableness of person X.

Furthermore, the agent's awareness of the context within the act of reasonableness is of great importance. One needs to be knowledgeable about how his/her actions, by being intelligible to the context, can influence the other. Namely, I believe that there is such a thing as unintended unreasonableness. Namely, if one is unaware of the sensitive knowledge about the situation in which he relates to the other, he/she might unintentionally be unreasonable towards another. We have a case where X and Y have agreed to do a project together. However, Y has been prolonging the process in which he is expected to deliver the results they have both agreed upon. X decides to relieve Y of his/her duties and carries on working on his/her project by him/herself. Upon further communication, X learns that Y had family issues that he/she just could not avoid. Assuming that X would demand the same treatment as Y in this context, X has acted in an unreasonable way towards Y by not knowing the information about the situation in which Y has found him/herself. In this sense, it is expected of a reasonable agent to try to be aware of the circumstances before deciding to do a specific action.

Finally, the fifth aspect of reasonableness assumes that one will act reasonably by showing sensitivity to the position another person holds that is different from his/her own. Namely, consider a case in which the two people talk about the issues concerning abortion. Also, consider that person X is pro-choice, while person Y is anti-abortion. While both of them have multiple reasons to believe in their stance, the conversation should not end in which person Y is normatively claiming that person X should not get an abortion. The reasons in this case guide our beliefs, but not reasonableness itself. By being reasonable, both persons will consider that, while they disagree on the nature of the issue, they will not require the other person to have a moral imperative to do a particular action based on their own system of values and beliefs. In that sense, both of these people will act reasonably if they assume that the discussion is held on an epistemic level and not on the level of normative action. By being aware that the other person holds different doctrines,

the burdens of judgment are exhibited in their normative (lack of) requirements towards *the other*.

What do these examples show us? We could derive many things from the examples that seemingly have a lot in common and can often be considered to be interchangeable. Based on my claim, reasonableness can be seen to contain the following things: context sensibility, a reason-based account, respect for others, and a direct distinction between epistemic disagreements and moral disagreements.

Context sensibility of reasonableness enables it to work differently in different contextual situations. What I mean by this is that the agents can change the rules of fairness based on their mutual agreement. Consider the example we have given of X cheating on Y. In the very basis of this example lies the fact that X is being unreasonable towards Y because he/she is sleeping with other people. Now, the act of sleeping with people other than your partner needs not to be morally condemned in a situation in which both parties agree that this action is permissible. If X has agreed with Y (if and only if Y was not coerced into that agreement) that both parties (or, only one party) are free to seek out other partners while being in a relationship together, then they have agreed on the rules of fairness that both parties find to be reasonable. When talking about moral contextualism, one of the key aspects of it is situatedness. According to Nuala Gormley and Liz Bondi, situatedness concerns our relationship with others and opens a door for contextualist relational ethics.<sup>660</sup> Similar to the standpoint of moral particularism, reasonableness does not install universal normative actions that can be applied to every context. Being reasonable means to be reasonable in relation to another within the boundaries of a given context.

Barry Hoffmaster notes that, while we deliberate about action, five different contextual aspects influence our deliberation – personal contextualism, situational contextualism, institutional contextualism, background contextualism, and

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<sup>660</sup> N. Gormley, L. Bondi, (1999.), *Ethical Issues in Practical Contexts in Geography and Ethics, Journeys in a Moral Terrain*, Routledge, New York, p. 252.

methodological contextualism.<sup>661</sup> Personal contextualism proceeds from the distinctive life history of an agent, situational contextualism from the current position of an agent in the environment around him/her, institutional contextualism from the institutional boundaries, background contextualism from the tradition linked to values, beliefs, and attitudes, and methodological contextualism relative to the particularity of the action itself.<sup>662</sup>

Reasonableness is, I argue, sensitive to all of these aspects of contextual influence to deliberation. I will expand more on this when I provide my overall theory of narrative constructivism. However, at this instance, I will claim that, based on the examples given in the categories of virtues that a reasonable agent needs to have, he/she is able to navigate through the context by adjusting his/her ways of reasonable action towards others. That is why it needs to be supplemented with a reason-based account. By entering in a reason-giving procedure that was already established, a reasonable agent is able to provide necessary reasons for him/herself to be reasonable in a given situation. In the examples of friendship, project agreement, and money lending, the agent has reasons on why he/she should honor his/her part of the agreement. The reasons behind values, beliefs, and attitudes in a given relation provide a certain expectation and obligation to the agent that must fulfill their end of the bargain. Yet, the agent also has reasons to be unreasonable, reasons for the exploitation of the given relation for their own benefit. In this aspect, reasonableness is like a reflective equilibrium – weighing reasons in relation to others. In this sense, an agent will have a strong intuition about when he/she is acting reasonably and when he/she is acting unreasonably.

#### **2.4.6. Discourse on Morality: Reasonableness and Disagreements**

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<sup>661</sup> B. Hoffmaster, (2017.), *From Applied Ethics to Empirical Ethics to Contextual Ethics in Bioethics*, 00, p. 4a – 5a.

<sup>662</sup> *Ibid.* p. 4a – 5a.

Finally, the procedure of reasonableness disqualifies a lot of unnecessary baggage when it comes to our moral discourse. We will use the term *deep* epistemic disagreement as a part of the fact of reasonable pluralism. Deep epistemic disagreements are worth calling *deep* insofar as they are not only deadlocked, but they are irresolvable since the subject disagreement is on a fundamental level.<sup>663</sup> As it was stated, within one liberal tradition, we have many doctrines that have a different set of metaphysical presumptions and are based on different kinds of values, beliefs, and attitudes. That being said, we can understand that people disagree on the most fundamental issues because the doctrines that they subscribe to are fundamentally different. In addition to this, Kirk Loughheed points out that it is unlikely that even two persons share the same evidence for a belief P, and, even more so, it is unlikely that they share the same cognitive resources for a belief P.<sup>664</sup>

A great example of deep disagreement is analyzed by Chris Ranalli. He provides us with a paradigmatic case of deep disagreement between a young earth creationist and a proponent of new atheism.<sup>665</sup> A young earth creationist argues for the fact that the earth is no more than 6000 years old, while the new atheist argues that it is much older than that. At first glance, this disagreement is on a factual level. The P (earth is no more than 6000 years old) is either T or not-T. Bearing that in mind, one of them is right and the other is wrong. This is, however, not a deep disagreement, but a factual disagreement. However, upon further reflection, this example shows a seemingly unsolvable problem. They do not disagree about the factual case on its own, however, they disagree about deeper beliefs rooted in their doctrines.<sup>666</sup> That is to say, one of them believes that God exists, and that the Bible is the source of belief, while the other one believes that God does not exist, and that the Bible is not a relevant source of beliefs. The age of the earth is just a proxy for

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<sup>663</sup> P. S. Smith, M. P. Lynch, (2021.), *Varieties of Deep Epistemic Disagreement* in *Topoi*, vol. 40., p. 971.

<sup>664</sup> K. Loughheed, (2018.), *The Epistemic Value of Deep Disagreements* in *Informal Logic*, vol. 38., no. 2., p. 264.

<sup>665</sup> C. Ranelli, (2018.), *What is Deep Disagreement?* In *Topoi*, vol. 40., p. 984.

<sup>666</sup> *Ibid.* p. 984.

their systematic disagreement over various claims and propositions that both of them put forward.<sup>667</sup> Deep disagreements are a direct consequence of the belief, value, and attitude distinction offered earlier in this project.

This, however, as I see it, has nothing to do with morality. This is clearly exemplified in the fifth example that I have provided on the case of abortion. While the two individuals should deliberate about the notion of abortion, it is surely not reasonable for one of them to deny the other the right to abortion. This is where Rawls' notion of the burdens of judgment kicks in – we do not know if our doctrine is supplemented with true beliefs, even though we believe in them, therefore, we allow ourselves to offer a benefit of the doubt to others who hold doctrines that are supplemented with beliefs that are contrary to our own. This, of course, does not mean that we should not discuss case-to-case beliefs. I would agree with Martha Nussbaum's claim that Rawls affirms the idea of respect which is based on the Kantian view (which is not based on emotions, nor admiration) that is closely linked with dignity and autonomy of the personhood.<sup>668</sup> Insofar as we are reasonable based on respect to dignity, what we owe to each other is to lead a discussion on the topics without claiming that our "opponent" is wrong, or that their doctrines are not "rational". On the contrary, we should argue for the content of our doctrines and deliberate with the other in both the rational and the reasonable way, giving them the utmost respect. In that case, we are not being unreasonable in our demands and our beliefs can be "corrected". That is to say, this project does not stand against rational debate about doctrines, however, it stands against the unreasonable denial of other doctrines. Insofar as we are being reasonable in our doctrines, we would not demand the other to normatively follow the values that our doctrine promotes, such as Y would demand X not to go through with the abortion.

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<sup>667</sup> *Ibid.* p. 984.

<sup>668</sup> M. Nussbaum, (2011.), *Perfectionist Liberalism and Political Liberalism in Philosophy and Public Affairs*, vol. 39., no. 1., p. 18.

This would effectively discredit a lot of discussions about morality as not being discussions about morality in the first place. The discussions on epistemic values such as abortion, euthanasia, art, cloning, genetic engineering, capital punishment, AI discourse, etc. might be reframed as discussions over empirical beliefs, logical consistencies, and the application of rationality, rather than the question of morality. Some of the discussion that we lead that seems to be about morality also boils down to aesthetic judgments. Papers and articles such as the ones on the immorality of music<sup>669</sup>, the immorality of art in general (which has been a topic since Plato)<sup>670</sup>, the immorality of tattoos<sup>671</sup>, the immorality of “indecent” dressing<sup>672</sup>, etc. These papers have different complexity of their arguments and a different outlook on the term “immorality”. Martin, for example, comes from the outlook of a Christian doctrine and condemns dress codes that are not modest as they increase temptation and embarrassment in a social environment.<sup>673</sup> This is, however, as was stated, a normative claim coming from a very particular doctrine, which does not pass the test of the burdens of judgment. Cibik, on the other hand, provides an extensive analysis of the obligations we have towards our future selves. Namely, the premise which is at the crux of his analysis is the following:

*Human beings are in an important sense temporal. We do not exist as a set of discrete time-slices. We understand ourselves as extended through time, as entities whose identity is rooted in the past and who have interests in the future.*<sup>674</sup>

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<sup>669</sup> M. A. Siddiqui, (2017.), *The Problems of Immoral and Obscene Music Trends*, site: <https://thevigilantmind.com/2017/10/29/heres-why-your-music-does-not-adhere-to-morality-and-runs-on-the-lines-of-sexuality/>, accessed: 23.05.2024.

<sup>670</sup> Z. Li, (2020.), *Immorality and Transgressive Art: An Argument for Immoralism in the Philosophy of Art* in *The Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 71., no. 3.

<sup>671</sup> M. Cibik, (2020.), *On the Immorality of Tattoos* in *The Journal of Ethics*, vol. 24., no. 2.

<sup>672</sup> H. S. Martin, (1976.), *The Hazards of Immodest Dress*, site: <https://biblehelpsinc.org/publication/the-hazards-of-immodest-dress/>, accessed: 23.05.2024.

<sup>673</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>674</sup> M. Cibik, (2020.), *On the Immorality of Tattoos* in *The Journal of Ethics*, vol. 24., no. 2., p. 195.

I share the same premise in this project, we are, in fact, narrative beings that are not just a set of time-slices. However, the uncertainty of our future value (and taste) transition should not have much to do with reasonableness in this regard, since it is a relational term. I claim that one cannot be reasonable with him/herself, only rational. Therefore, getting tattoos that one might regret later, and especially ones that hold political messages, can be considered a fact of irrationality, not unreasonableness. I suppose that irrationality is immoral insofar as it includes an aspect of unreasonableness, however, getting a tattoo which one might regret later does not coerce one's respect towards any other individual apart from him/herself. If that is the only case in which this is "immoral", it is not, therefore, immoral, just irrational.

When it comes to the immorality of art and music, the argument is mostly Platonic. Plato himself argues for the possibility of poets, rhapsodists, and other artists influencing society in such a way in which it makes it less "good".<sup>675</sup> In contemporary discourse, the claim is that the "immorality" of art directly influences its value since it promotes "immoral" behavior. I would claim that this has to deal with the responsibility of the citizens not to be influenced by the art in such a way in which they would act in an unreasonable way. Art, or the artist him/herself has no inherent responsibility to create art that would only promote values that one thinks are "objectively" good for one society. Art in its essence, is a form of expression, and be it a good quality, or bad quality art, it does not succumb to the necessities of any set of social values. That is to say, it would be unreasonable to censor art that we deem as having bad quality, or that promotes bad values since we are denying the liberty of an artist who is expressing him/herself in a specific regard.

Therefore, I believe it has been pointed out that reasonableness only has to deal with the relational aspects that the subjects share. Epistemic disagreements and aesthetic judgments should not be a part of reasonableness which I see as the only

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<sup>675</sup> Plato, (2005.), *The Republic*, ICON Group International, San Diego, p. 316.

objective principle of morality. Everything else would fall under the test of the reflective equilibrium and the burdens of judgment.

#### **2.4.7. The Principle of Reasonableness: Outline**

Building on the discussions in this sub-chapter, we can make an outline of the principle of reasonableness. The notion of reasonableness which would be compatible with the project on narrative constructivism has been derived from the Kantian constructivist tradition, the one best elaborated by John Rawls. The claim in this sub-chapter is that reasonableness is the only objective moral principle as it is based on the apodictic, categorical necessity. It can also be a virtue as there are requirements of an agent to be reasonable. This leads into yet another addition to the notion of reasonableness was the question of what it means to be reasonable and what are the requirements of a moral agent to be reasonable. Following the offered analysis, it was established that many of the seemingly moral discussions are not discussions about morality, but epistemic beliefs and aesthetic judgments.

By providing the final piece of the puzzle, the stage is set to conclude this project by making a unity out of constructivism and the first two premises – the social narrativity thesis and the psychological narrativity thesis. Insofar as the project is successful in doing that, we will have a theoretical foundation of a view which I would call a theory of narrative constructivism.

## **Narrative Constructivism: Forming a Theoretical Outlook**

### **1.0. The Position of Constructivism in Narrative Constructivism**

At the end of the sub-chapter on constructivism, it was noted that this project subscribes to a very particular version of constructivism, a (1.) second-order (2.) quietist realist form of constructivism that is also (3.) local, (4.) dependent, and (5.) Neurathian. This will be a starting point in connecting narrativist premises and a constructivist procedure.

1. Second-order constructivism rather than first-order constructivism is indirectly concerned with practical reasoning; it focuses on the justification of the procedures that we use to arrive at the first-order principles of action. Insofar as this is the case, second-order constructivism cannot be held to be a full-blown meta-ethical theory since, as it was mentioned, it does not offer a systematic analysis of the moral ontology present in our deliberation, rather, it focuses on practical objectivity. In this project, constructivism is used to justify two aspects of our moral and political deliberation – how do we navigate through the reasons given to us within one narrative context and, how do we arrive at the normativity of the principle of reasonableness? While it is true that reasonableness itself is a part of first-order constructivism, its particularities have only been mentioned insofar as to provide a further description of how it is applied. Furthermore, second-order constructivism allows me to dwell further into the aspects of what constitutes our moral and political deliberation, expanding on the theory of reasons, and a reason-giving procedure. By doing that, it offers a way for establishing a connection between the background factors constituting reasons, such as the social and psychological narrativity thesis. Therefore, since the main point of this project is to devise a descriptive account of moral and political deliberation with a normative outline, second-order constructivism serves as a justificatory aspect of it.

2. Quietist realism can be, and it is, a very difficult philosophical position

to fully analyze because of its sheer complexity and flexibility. We can define quietist realism as a view that suggests that there are moral facts and moral objectivity, yet, the existence of those properties does not have explanatory burdens, usually attributed to the metaphysical elaboration.<sup>676</sup> Scanlon, as was noted before, according to Kalf, is a quietist realist because he provides a substantive view of the objectivity of reasons, without providing a metaphysical basis for that claim.<sup>677</sup> Quietist realism in this project focuses on something else, even though this project agrees with many of Scanlon's findings. In order for us to see where that focus is, we would need to recognize the tension that is found within it. There is also a tension between practical objectivity and quietist realism that needs to be addressed. I have noted that practical objectivity is connected to intelligible reasons. Their "objectivity" is found in their connection to the metaphysical climate in the tradition in which they are exhibited. That is to say, practical objectivity deals with narrative rationality, while quietist realism deals with something else. The only principle that I find to be objective in this project is reasonableness. The metaphysical and epistemic basis of reasonableness is quietist insofar as it does not suppose a substantial theory of it, but rather rests upon the Rawlsian presumption of a basic autonomy and the conception of a moral person.<sup>678</sup> If morality itself is a relational concept, then the minimum standard for it would be based on our correspondence with others. And the most basic principle that rests upon the respect of autonomy and dignity of another of that correspondence is to be reasonable. Therefore, this project is a quietist realist insofar as it presupposes reasonableness without further providing any metaphysical and epistemic background, rather, this project focuses on what is moral and political, not metaphysical.

3. Narrative constructivism is also local, rather than global. An example of a local constructivist would be Hobbes, and Yonatan Shemmer sees him to be

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<sup>676</sup> T. McPherson, (2011.), *Against Quietist Normative Realism in Philosophical Studies*, vol. 153., p. 224.

<sup>677</sup> W. F. Kalf, (2020.), *Quietist Metaethical Realism and Moral Determination in Ratio*, vol. 34., p. 248.

<sup>678</sup> C. Brändle; M. W. Schmidt, (2021.), *Autonomous Driving and Public Reason: a Rawlsian Approach in Philosophy and Technology*, vol. 34., p. 1483.

clearly local in his constructivist procedure.<sup>679</sup> According to Hobbes, people have been made equal in the sense that they can harm one another by means of both the mind and the body. In the state of nature, which is a context-specific state that Hobbes develops, people tend to attain their ends at the expense of others.<sup>680</sup> Rationality is a result of the need for survival and security. If we do not defend or endanger another, then another can endanger our liberty, personal possession, or even our own lives.<sup>681</sup> Now, based on my reading, Hobbes finds rationality to be applied to attaining one's ends in a particular context, such as the state of nature. On the other hand, because it is not rational to be in a constant state of quarrel, ruled by competition, diffidence, and glory, the people enter a state ruled by laws that are there to protect them.<sup>682</sup> This is, in a nutshell, the classic Hobbesian social contract theory. Hobbes is a local constructivist because he finds that the norms of rationality are not constructed, but rather implemented by the context around those who are following those norms. In the state of nature, everyone has different norms of rationality depending on their position and constitution. Following from that, even a post-social contract position demands rationality to be context-based.

Insofar as that is the case, my project and my view on rationality agree with the account that Hobbes offers. Namely, if the social and psychological narrativity thesis stands, we can only construct a part of a normative domain, and not all of the norms. This was pointed out when we described intelligible reasons. Both descriptive and normative reasons concerning rationality must be based on the social narrative, as well as the meta-narrative, or a tradition, in which those reasons occur. They must be intelligible to the overall picture that we do not construct but merely derive from the context and, after an epistemic crisis, change. Rationality is based on a narrative

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<sup>679</sup> Y. Shemmer, (2012.), *Constructing Coherence in Constructivism in Practical Philosophy* by James Lenman and Yonatan Shemmer, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 162.

<sup>680</sup> T. Hobbes, (1881.), *Leviathan: or on the Matter, Forme, and Power*, James Thornton: High Street, Oxford, p. 101.

<sup>681</sup> *Ibid.* p. 102.

<sup>682</sup> *Ibid.* p. 102.

and, following the social narrativity thesis derived from MacIntyre, is tradition-dependent. Reasonableness, by contrast, is an objective moral principle, yet it consistently becomes interwoven with the realm of rationality. That is to say, when we act, we often act in a way in which we think both of the end and those that the action itself influences. Therefore, when we act, we are acting in a rational/irrational, reasonable/unreasonable way. Since rationality is narratively induced, reasonableness follows that narration, even though it stands as a regulatory principle of that rationality. Having said that, reasonableness guides our construction of a particular domain in a narrative that dictates our rationality. If that is the case, this theory must subscribe to local constructivism.

4. This project also subscribes to dependent constructivism. Dependent constructivism is inherently local, not global, because the construction process is shaped by norms that are themselves non-constructed.<sup>683</sup> Global constructivists do not hold a view that there are such norms as non-constructed norms. As was written earlier on local constructivism, the contextual (narrative) and the objective (reasonableness) are constantly intertwined in the constant tension. What is rational is not merely constructed but attained from the narrative. Another question concerns the non-constructed aspects of dependent constructivism. We have been constructing and reconstructing the norms during the course of our history, both subjective and communal. Although we do construct norms and most of them are a product of a constructivist procedure, I do not find them to be a subject of construction during the process in which we obtain them. We do use them for construction, and they might have been constructed and re-constructed throughout history, however, they are, for us, non-constructed narrative databases from which we derive beliefs, values, and attitudes by the process of narrative hermeneutics. Karl Schafer calls this constructivist procedure a subject-dependence of normative truths.

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<sup>683</sup> Y. Shemmer, (2012.), *Constructing Coherence in Constructivism in Practical Philosophy* by James Lenman and Yonatan Shemmer, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 162.

He explains it in the following way:

*This claim is, I think, best understood as a claim about what grounds the truth-value of normative judgments—that is, as the claim that their truth-value is (at least in the relevant respects) grounded in facts about the normative perspective of their subjects (or those subjects' communities).<sup>684</sup>*

I would firmly agree with this view only if the content of a normative judgment is dependent on who the subject is and in which narrative it is exhibited. We have talked about agent-neutral, agent-relevant, and general principle normative reasons in the prior sub-chapter. Dependent constructivism would highlight the importance of both ARR and ANR. The first one is based on the agent's perception of reasons within the boundaries of his/her understanding of the *self*, that is to say, it is the subjective perception of the self-narrative that guides his/her reasons towards a particular action. The procedure of construction of that action is based on his/her subjective history and experience that he/she has in the current moment. Those non-constructed parts of the process of construction influence the process of construction. On the other hand, ANR is connected to the expectations of our intelligible reasons towards the narrative in which we are found. There are specific requirements from us that are specific to the social narrative, and they are not based merely on our own personal narration, but the social narration itself. GPR was noted to be practically unconvincing, yet, theoretically interesting by Väyrynen<sup>685</sup> and many others. While I do admit that every action is dependent on the contextual ground, there is still a claim within the scope of GPR that I find to be very convincing. To be moral is to be reasonable and, before every action, we should consider the other. Now, this GPR is also dependent on the non-constructed norms and mixes with ARR and ANR. That is to say, I can only be reasonable insofar as I am being reasonable

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<sup>684</sup> K. Schafer, (2014.), *Constructivism and Three Forms of Perspective-Dependence in Metaethics in Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 89., no. 1., p. 69.

<sup>685</sup> P. Väyrynen, (2018.), *Reasons and Moral Principles in The Oxford Handbook of Reasons and Normativity*, p. 864.

within the specific situation with a specific person. Therefore, I believe, we can conclude that dependent constructivism incorporates the requirements of the reason-giving procedure and the narrativity thesis, and, insofar as it does that, it is compatible with the view of narrative constructivism.

5. Neurathian constructivism is another natural extension of this project. Namely, we do not choose at which point of history we are born in. We are, in essence, a part of the narrative, which means we are also a part of the culture, community, history, and a part of the tradition in which we are born. That said, the norms we hold in the first place are accepted based on our understanding of that narrative. Yet, after the process of the mentioned dialogic storytelling derived from Meretoja's theory, as well as the epistemological crisis, derived from MacIntyre, we morph and change the already established norms. Dialogic storytelling means that we are constantly engaged with others in the constant narration of our narratives by comparing our beliefs, values, and attitudes. During that process, we often shift our views or merely morph them into new ones. Epistemological crisis would work on another level, and it would have a huge social impact. Namely, epistemological crisis means a complete reiteration of the social narrative and changing its very core after the public system of beliefs, values, and attitudes changes. The process of the narrative change is based on the, I believe, constructivist procedures of reason-giving and reasonableness. Reason-giving procedures shift the already established norms insofar as they prove to be less rational in the system of social practices that we engage in. The procedure of reasonableness shifts and morphs those norms if they are proving to be unreasonable to some and would not be unreasonable to morph or change them.

Therefore, narrative constructivism, as mentioned, would be a second-order quietist-realist view of constructivism which is also local, dependent, and Neurathian. The importance of putting this project in the brackets is exhibited in its situatedness in the current constructivist discussions since, as was mentioned, constructivist theory is still forming, and it is contested even amongst the constructivists

themselves.

## **2.0. Narrative Constructivism: Substance and Form: Habermas: Lifeworld and Communicative Action**

It was noted that narrativist premises serve as a substance of our moral and political deliberation, while constructivism gives it form. In this sub-chapter, I will strive to, in further detail, elaborate what that means. The goal of elaborating the substance and form of our moral and political deliberation would be to essentially connect the communitarian/narrativist position with a liberal/constructivist position. Habermas' statement that communicative action is a process of argumentation in which those who are making a claim justify the validity of it before an ideally expanded audience<sup>686</sup> is a great starting point. This statement includes two important aspects: 1.) communicative action, a justification of the claim before an audience, and 2.) process of justification of the validity of a claim. The first aspect shows the social and personal relation that the process of justification needs to account for. That is to say, we are, justifying our rationality before *the other*, be it public, or an individual, within a shared framework. Secondly, rationality is justifiable insofar as the reasons behind it are made clear to *the other*.<sup>687</sup> According to Jurg Steiner, Habermas has both substance and form of deliberation within his model<sup>688</sup>, and, following from what has been said, I will show what substance and form are for Habermas and how this model

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<sup>686</sup> J. Habermas, (1996.), *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, MIT Press, Cambridge, p. 322.

<sup>687</sup> A similar account has been given by Darwall in his book *The Second-Person Standpoint*. Namely, as Darwall states, second-person reasons are grounded in the authority relations between the addresser and the addressee. in S. Darwall, (2006.), *The Second-Person Standpoint*, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, p. 4.

<sup>688</sup> J. Steiner, (2012.), *Rationality and Stories in Deliberative Justification in The Foundations of Deliberative Democracy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 57.

is compatible with my own. I will provide a rough sketch of Habermas' theory of communicative action without expanding it in further detail since I believe it has similar constitutive parts as I have outlined in the narrativity thesis.

Before analyzing communicative action, we need to provide a description of a lifeworld. Jari Niemi is right when emphasizing that both communicative action and strategic action are deeply dependent on the notion of the lifeworld.<sup>689</sup> So, what is a lifeworld, according to Habermas? In short, it is an environment of competencies, practices, and attitudes that shape one's cognitive horizons, that is to say, it shapes collective consciousness and group identity.<sup>690</sup> Lifeworld provides the subject with the background knowledge that regulates their cooperation in a consensual manner stored in the worldview.<sup>691</sup> Furthermore, lifeworld can be rationalized. Rationalizing the lifeworld of social groups means that we use language to reach an understanding, coordinate actions, and socialize with others within a given context.<sup>692</sup>

Lifeworld is constituted by three components – culture, society, and personality.<sup>693</sup> These constitutes of the lifeworld enable the subject of social action which can be defined as the following:

*Action, or mastery of situations, presents itself as a circular process in which the actor is at once both the initiator of his accountable actions and the product of the traditions in which he stands, of the solidary groups to which he belongs, of socialization and learning processes to which he is exposed.*<sup>694</sup>

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<sup>689</sup> J. I. Niemi, (2005.), *Jürgen Habermas's Theory of Communicative Rationality: The Foundational Distinction Between Communicative and Strategic Action in Social Theory and Practice*, vol. 31., no. 1., p. 515.

<sup>690</sup> J. Habermas, (1987.), *The Theory of Communicative Action: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, Beacon Press, Boston, p. 45.

<sup>691</sup> *Ibid.* p. 88.

<sup>692</sup> *Ibid.* p. 86.

<sup>693</sup> H. Baxter, (1987.), *System and Life-World in Habermas's "Theory of Communicative Action"* in *Theory and Society*, vol. 16., no. 1., p. 47.

<sup>694</sup> J. Habermas, (1987.), *The Theory of Communicative Action: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, Beacon Press, Boston, p. 135.

We shall soon return to this definition for it will serve an important purpose for linking Habermas' theory to my own. For now, we will carry on with the analysis of the components of the lifeworld. Culture is the source of knowledge from which the participants of that culture attain their "communication supply" through interpretation.<sup>695</sup> Society refers to the legitimacy of orders (or norms) that regulate social groups.<sup>696</sup> Finally, personality is a term that Habermas uses to describe competencies of speech-acts that a subject has in order for him/herself to be initiated in a position to reach an understanding and to assert his/her own identity.<sup>697</sup>

It is also important to distinguish lifeworld from a term Habermas calls a "system". This term was borrowed from functionalist sociology, and it represents a system that is dominated by power.<sup>698</sup> The system Habermas has in mind directly coerces organic communication and the need for understanding amongst the subjects within one lifeworld by subordinating these needs to market imperatives.<sup>699</sup>

Lifeworld, therefore, would be a domain of social interactions that is characterized by shared understanding, and cultural norms in which a subject can have a communicative action with others. In that regard, lifeworld would encompass both culture, society, and personality which provide the subjects with worldviews through which they understand the world around them.

With lifeworld being explained in a rough sketch, we can elaborate on what Habermas means by communicative action. One of the premises of the communicative action is Habermas' diagnosis of society from a proto-Marxist perspective. Following the analysis offered by George Ritzer, Marx is concerned with

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<sup>695</sup> *Ibid.* p. 138.

<sup>696</sup> *Ibid.* p. 138.

<sup>697</sup> *Ibid.* p. 138.

<sup>698</sup> K. D. Regmi, (2017.), *Habermas, Lifeworld and Rationality: Towards a Comprehensive Model of Lifelong Learning* in *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, vol. 36., no. 6., p. 683.

<sup>699</sup> *Ibid.* p. 683.

work, while Habermas is concerned with communication.<sup>700</sup> Carlito Gaspar asserts that:

*...Habermas claims that the primary threat to human beings is not economic exploitation or political dictatorships and ideologies, but rather the encroachment of the market system and bureaucratic authorities into their day-to-day social relationships resulting in the erosion of their characteristic human qualities.*<sup>701</sup>

This citation shows Habermas' focus on language and communication in his already-referenced book. Now, communicative action is taken as the main concept as it is also ethically and politically motivated. I will, again, try to provide a rough sketch of his action model. The important relation, in this instance, for Habermas is the actor-world relation.<sup>702</sup>

Subjects interact with one another within one contextual framework by language and actions that make sense within that framework. Habermas describes three types of "worlds" that the subject refers to when communicating with another subject – the objective world, the social world, and the subjective world.<sup>703</sup> The first one refers to the truth-validity of factual claims, the second one refers to the legitimacy of the relations and norms, and the third one refers to the experience of the subject within the lifeworld.<sup>704</sup> The first world would be connected to what we have denoted by "culture", the second world is connected to society, and, finally, the third world is connected with personality, all of them being parts of a lifeworld. The actor-world relation is exhibited in communication with *the other*. Therefore, there

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<sup>700</sup> G. Ritzer, (1997.), *Modern Sociological Theory*, The McGraw Hill Companies Inc., New York, p. 453.

<sup>701</sup> C.M. Gaspar, (1999.), *Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action in Philippine Studies*, vol. 47., no. 3., p. 407.

<sup>702</sup> J. Habermas, (1987.), *The Theory of Communicative Action: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, Beacon Press, Boston, p. 121.

<sup>703</sup> *Ibid.* p. 121.

<sup>704</sup> *Ibid.* p. 121.

are two ways in which subjects can act rationally in this world – towards success or understanding.

Communicative action arises when actors are prepared to coordinate their actions with others through internal means, pursuing their goals only insofar as they can be agreed, or negotiated with others.<sup>705</sup> Contrary to communicative action, we have strategic action which refers to those actions by the actor who is interested solely in his/her success, outcomes, consequences of that action, etc.<sup>706</sup> Both actions presuppose the rationality of an actor, however, the point of the communicative action is *understanding*, while the goal of the strategic action is to influence other actors in the pursuit of success. On the social level, parties of the communicative action seek to achieve an understanding with others seeking to reach individual goals by operating with the objective, social, or subjective world.<sup>707</sup>

Now we can return to the two important aspects of communicative action mentioned at the beginning of this sub-chapter - 1.) a justification of the claim before an audience, and 2.) the process of justification of the validity of a claim. A justification of the claim must be made in relation to *the other* within a specific social context. Since we are embedded in the lifeworld which provides us with the content of our knowledge, that knowledge is also understood by others inhabiting that lifeworld. In this regard, the claim is a culturally and socially dependent utterance that we communicate with others and, for that claim to be relational, it must be made explicit. Secondly, the process of justification of the validity of the claim is another process and requires further explanation.

For Habermas, one particular form of communication is at the heart of his project, namely, argumentation.<sup>708</sup> Ben Endres finds that Habermas has three general

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<sup>705</sup> J. Habermas, (1990.), *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, Polity Press, Cambridge, p. 134.

<sup>706</sup> *Ibid.* p. 133.

<sup>707</sup> J. Johnson, (1991.), *Habermas on Strategic and Communicative Action in Political Theory*, vol. 19., no. 2., p. 185.

<sup>708</sup> J. Habermas, (1990.), *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, Polity Press, Cambridge, p.

levels of argumentation – the logical level, the dialogical level, and the rhetoric level.<sup>709</sup> For Habermas, if one claim “passes” these levels, it is subjected to the principle of universalization.<sup>710</sup> If a claim were to pass the first level, the logical one, it needs to be stated in such a way that the one uttering the claim does not contradict him/herself and should be a part of a cogent and consistent argument.<sup>711</sup> The dialogical level takes a relational approach and requires one to consider the situation in which that claim occurs to take a hypothetical attitude prior to making that claim in the first place. That would mean that the subject puts him/herself in a hypothetical situation in which he/she considers *the other* regardless of the immediate needs of the subject.<sup>712</sup> Finally, the claim passes the rhetoric level if and only if the claim does not interfere with the decisions of *the other* in any other ways apart from the powers of reasoning.<sup>713</sup> The validity test is the key part of Habermas’ discourse ethics which he uses to connect Kantianism with pragmatism.<sup>714</sup> In other words, the ethical discourse should be led by the principle which affirms these three levels and needs to be taken as a universal guiding factor to communication arising in the ethical landscape. To cite Habermas, that would mean the following:

*If every person entering a process of argumentation must, among other things, make presuppositions whose content can be expressed in rules... and if we understand what it means to discuss hypothetically whether norms of action ought to be adopted, then everyone who seriously tries to discursively*

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<sup>709</sup> B. Endres, (1996.), *Habermas and Critical Thinking in Philosophy of Education Archive*, p. 169.

<sup>710</sup> J. Habermas, (1990.), *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, Polity Press, Cambridge, p. 57.

<sup>711</sup> B. Endres, (1996.), *Habermas and Critical Thinking in Philosophy of Education Archive*, p. 170.

<sup>712</sup> *Ibid.* p. 170.

<sup>713</sup> *Ibid.* p. 170.

<sup>714</sup> S. Lavine, (2011.), *Truth and Moral Validity: On Habermas’ Domesticated Pragmatism in Constellations*, vol. 18., no. 2., p. 244.

*redeem normative claims to validity intuitively accepts procedural conditions that amount to implicitly acknowledging.*<sup>715</sup>

The result of the ideal speech situation is to nourish undistorted communication and to build comprehension, trust, knowledge, and consent while minimizing misrepresentation, confusion, false assurances, and illegitimacy.<sup>716</sup>

With this, we have built the blocks of concepts necessary to construct an argument in which I connect narrativism and constructivism from Habermas' conceptual framework. One thing that is worth noting is the difference between Habermas's theoretical striving and my own. While Habermas is objectivist in the sense in which he assumes that there is an ideal speech situation, narrativism claims that there can be two agents that very much misunderstand each other even if they try, a situation arising from the intelligibility crisis.

With this, it will be clear what I mean when I say that the narrative offers substance and constructivism offers a form to our moral deliberation. Much of Habermas' discourse in his books was to analyze the social, linguistic, and psychological aspects of communicative action. I will, however, not dwell deeper into his theoretical opus since I have taken all the necessary parts for my descriptive analysis of substance and form of narrative constructivism.

First things first, my constructivism is deeply Kantian. We have also noted that Habermas' project is based on Kantian pragmatism, so, I would like to provide a relation between the aspects of Kantianism in Habermas so it would serve as the first link between his project and mine.

Niemi points out that Habermas has standards of both communicative and strategic rationality which would be understood as a social analogue to Kant's

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<sup>715</sup> J. Habermas, (1990.), *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, Polity Press, Cambridge, p. 92. – 93.

<sup>716</sup> W. Cukier, R. Bauer, C. Middleton, (2004.), *Applying Habermas' Validity Claims as a Standard for Critical Discourse Analysis in Information Systems Research. IFIP International Federation for Information Processing*, vol. 143., p. 239.

striving.<sup>717</sup> With that in mind, Kant is, very well, concerned with individual morality, while, on the other hand, as we have noted numerous times, Habermas' main concern is the social aspect of our communication and discourse ethics which are socially governed. Insofar as that is the case, we can connect Habermas' concepts of communicative action and strategic action with the notions of the categorical imperative and hypothetical imperative. The designated target of the communicative action is *the other*, while the designated target for the strategic action is the affirmation of the interests of the agent, even though it may, and usually does, include *the other*. Translated into Kantian terms, when treating others and the target for understanding, we are acting in the ways in which assign respect to the personhood of *the other*, while, if we treat them as a part of our strategic rationality to achieve our goals, we are treating them only as that, an instrument to our ends.<sup>718</sup> Although formally Kantian, Habermas does not subscribe to Kant's view on transcendentalism. For Habermas, as we have noted, all of us are first and foremost, socially embedded individuals within the lifeworld.

## 2.1. Narrative-Constructivist Reading of Habermas

I will provide a narrative-constructivist reading of Habermas in order to justify using his theory in this project. Primarily, I would highlight the most important notions that Habermas uses – lifeworld, communicative action, and strategic action. I find the notion of the lifeworld to be completely compatible with what I call a narrative in this project. It contains both the social narrativity thesis and the psychological narrativity thesis. A lifeworld is constituted by culture, society, and personality, the terms I would translate as social narrative, legislative and

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<sup>717</sup> J. I. Niemi, (2005.), *Jürgen Habermas's Theory of Communicative Rationality: The Foundational Distinction Between Communicative and Strategic Action in Social Theory and Practice*, vol. 31., no. 1., p. 516.

<sup>718</sup> I. Kant, (1997.), *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 38.

institutional practices, and the narrative *self*. For Habermas, culture provides us with the content of our knowledge through interpretation.<sup>719</sup> This seems nothing more than narrative hermeneutics, which claims that human understanding is mediated through socio-cultural circumstances, signs, history, and language.<sup>720</sup>

Society, as was mentioned, is connected to the system of rules and norms that regulate how people interact with one another.<sup>721</sup> Legislation and legitimacy, as I see it, are institutional practices that must be intelligible to the social narrative in which they are exhibited. The rules and regulations in one narrative often have different constitutions than they have in another. For example, even today, some countries maintain civil law, some common law, some customary law, religious law, etc.<sup>722</sup> The US, for example, maintains a common law system that emanates from British rule; most of Europe and South America subscribe to the civil law system that is based on the comprehensive legal codes deeply interwoven in how the country is run. Religious systems are mostly present in Middle Eastern countries like Saudi Arabia which bases its system on the Sharia law. This disparity shows that different social narratives influence different legislative practices that regulate the relations between the people living within them.

Finally, personality, I believe, is nothing more than a psychological narrativity thesis in which an individual forms his/her perception of *the self*. A subject asserts his/her own identity within the lifeworld, or, in this translation, the narrative in which he/she forms him/herself. It is a balance between *ipse* and *idem* identity which exhibits itself in the relation towards *the other* and to the content that forms this

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<sup>719</sup> J. Habermas, (1987.), *The Theory of Communicative Action: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, Beacon Press, Boston, p. 138.

<sup>720</sup> J. Brockmeier, H. Meretoja, (2014.), *Understanding Narrative Hermeneutics* in *StoryWorlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies*, vol. 6., no. 2., p. 4.

<sup>721</sup> J. Habermas, (1987.), *The Theory of Communicative Action: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, Beacon Press, Boston, p. 138.

<sup>722</sup> Openstrax.org, *Types of Legal Systems Around the World*, site: <https://openstax.org/books/introduction-political-science/pages/11-3-types-of-legal-systems-around-the-world> , accessed: 20.07.2024.

relation. The subject manifests his/her identity in terms of attained beliefs, values, and attitudes in co-relation with *the other* that has done so as well. This opens a door for communicative action and discourse ethics, or what I would call a reason-giving procedure and reasonableness.

Next, we have the notions of strategic action and communicative action. Strategic action is nothing else than acting rationally within the given narrative, without having the motivation to act in a reasonable way.<sup>723</sup> A system, insofar as it is considered to be dominated by strategic actions, is a post-liberal narrative that establishes a specific set of values such as external goods that become the primary source of motivation. MacIntyre would call this a fact of liberal tradition; a tradition dominated by free market economy.<sup>724</sup> Communicative action, on the other hand, is something I would deem as being a reasonable tendency towards others. However, it is not only that, but it also has a more distinct usage. It is always exhibited in a social environment, and it is shaped by the lifeworld. However, it has a formal mechanism as well. We have stated that the main part of a communicative action is the argumentative aspect of it – namely, the utterance of the statement, which is logical, dialogical, and rhetorical. With that in mind, the logical level is grounded on the intelligibility of our terms and language within the narrative structure. We *have* to use the notions and concepts that are intelligible and coherent in relation to *the other*. Now, dialogic and rhetoric levels are connected to reasonableness. Habermas himself notes that his universalization principle can be understood on the model of Rawls' reflective equilibrium as the underlying and impartial judgment of our everyday intuitions.<sup>725</sup> This is exactly what connects the communicative action to the principle of reasonableness if my reading of Rawls was to be accepted. Secondly, the

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<sup>723</sup> Even though, sometimes, we can, by acting in a rational way, act also in a reasonable way without it being our primary motivation. We could call this type of an action accidental reasonableness.

<sup>724</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1988.) *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, p. 334.

<sup>725</sup> J. Habermas, (1990.), *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, Polity Press, Cambridge, p. 116.

rhetoric level is linked with our will not to install our preferences on *the other* and focus purely on the powers of reasoning.<sup>726</sup> If that is the case, then the rhetoric level surely falls under the umbrella term of reasonableness.

Lifeworld also offers us the possibility of co-fabulation. Co-fabulation, as we have seen in the third chapter, is the narrative exchange by two narrative agents, as well as participating in the products of narrativity of others. By setting up the communicative grounds built on the common language, common culture, and common understanding, co-fabulation becomes a possibility that is guided by the principles of communication – be it a strategic action, or a communicative action.

Another strong point in my connection between Rawls and Habermas is the existence of Kantianism in both of their theoretical strivings. The primary reason for elaborating the connection between Rawls and Habermas is the descriptive power that it offers. Namely, both Rawls and Habermas have a similar project at hand with different consequences. If we take the main notions from both and connect them, it will provide more insight in the changes I make when it comes to both of their theoretical approaches.

For example, rationality and strategic action fall under hypothetical imperatives since the goal of both of them is to affirm a rational striving. On the other hand, both communicative action and reasonableness fall under the term of a categorical imperative for we are assigning *the other* as the main target of our communication, or an action as we assign them with the attributes of dignity and autonomy. However, the strength of these views is exhibited in their independence from Kant's need for transcendental metaphysical claims. Habermas himself states, when talking about Rawls, that the view of hypothetical situatedness is not burdened with Kant's *a priori* transcendental deduction.<sup>727</sup>

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<sup>726</sup> B. Endres, (1996.), *Habermas and Critical Thinking in Philosophy of Education Archive*, p. 170.

<sup>727</sup> J. Habermas, (1990.), *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, Polity Press, Cambridge, p. 116.

With this, we have a narrative-constructivist reading of Habermas on our hands. I would, furthermore, carry on with my proposal that this theoretical constitution is exactly what would be used to show the form and substance of narrative constructivism. This will be seen in the next sub-chapter.

## **2.2. Getting the Substance and Putting it in a Form**

The main purpose of showing that narrative constructivism has both substance and form is two-fold. Firstly, I claim that it connects the claims of the theorists from both communitarian/narrativist tradition and those from a liberal/constructivist tradition. Secondly, it makes these claims intertwined and co-dependent. I do not think we could imagine a person who is not a product of his/her society, culture, tradition, history, or, in short, narrative. But at the same time, we should not discredit the formalists who think that independently of the narrative, we have the faculty of procedural reasoning. This is exactly what narrative constructivism tends to mediate – the historical approach and the formalist approach.

Habermas, following the lines of Kohlberg, makes a differentiation between the content and form of moral judgment.<sup>728</sup> He believes that empirical diversity of our moral judgments can be put into the notion of content, while, on the other hand, we have universal forms that tend to universalization.<sup>729</sup> He also believes that formal normativity eliminates the non-generalizable content of particular lives and forms of life.<sup>730</sup> Now, I digress with Habermas in this instance, I believe that formalization without content is a pure potentiality. That is to say, we are given the faculty of formalization, in this case, of reasoning and reason-giving procedure, however, for those types of formalization to work, we would need content to put into the

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<sup>728</sup> *Ibid.* p. 117.

<sup>729</sup> *Ibid.* p. 117.

<sup>730</sup> *Ibid.* p. 121.

procedure itself. The very claim is that we need both substance and form to deliberate about moral and political questions.

If we follow Habermas, the content is found within the lifeworld, while the form is found in the principle of universalization, or communicative action. In my terms, narrative provides us with substance, while constructivism gives us form. In which way? By deriving the current beliefs, values, and attitudes from the narrative in which we are situated, we attain the content of our deliberation. Yet, we also evaluate that content both intersubjectively and subjectively. In relation to *the other* and in relation to *the self*, we provide reasons for action and belief of the narrative substance. By reasoning about the already derived substance, we are putting it in a form – both rationalizing it and using it to relate to others – be it rationally, reasonably, or both. From everything that has been said so far, Habermas' theory is the perfect representation of what it means to have both historical and social content, as well as the formalist approach in the aspect of our social communication. This project, however, focuses on the ways of thinking that the subject engages in when dealing with moral and political questions. And, insofar as that is the case, while accepting the terminological differences, I am affirming Habermasian striving while expanding it in the different traditional framework. This is, I argue, enough to describe the form and substance of narrative constructivism.

### **3.0. Narrative Constructivism: The Theory, Pros, and Cons**

All of the pieces are on the chessboard. In this final subchapter of this project, I will provide an overall analysis of what we have argued for so far and establish a link between the notions used. By doing this, we will arrive at an overall description of what I find narrative constructivism to be – a historical-formalist theory of moral and political deliberation that rests on both descriptive and normative aspects. I will provide a step-by-step description of every chapter we analyzed in this project and connect it to a theoretical foundation.

In the first chapter, the main concept provided was the one of the social narrative, a premise I call a social narrativity thesis. This concept was derived from MacIntyre's philosophical project in which it, arguably, plays a central role.<sup>731</sup> The social narrative, in this project, provides the contextual framework in which we, as deliberative agents, operate in. Social narrative is also determined by the tradition which will be used as an umbrella term – meta-narrative. Namely, every tradition itself is constituted by the narratives that pour into the social aspects of our lives. MacIntyre himself stresses that traditions are bearers of the accounts of virtues, conceptions of selfhood, metaphysical cosmologies, etc.<sup>732</sup> So, in this regard, meta-narratives orchestrate the social narratives that we inhabit. Social narratives, however, offer something essential for our contextual rationality, and that is intelligibility. Through intelligibility, we connect our beliefs, values, and attitudes toward social phenomena, as well as political and moral institutions. In order to even talk about the contextual reality around us, we must be able to internally represent that reality. This reality is shaped by the authoritative voices that are connected by the link between institutional practices such as research, law enforcement, politics, education, etc. Within this social reality shaped by authoritative voices, we find a source that dictates our way of life, beliefs, views on the world, etc.<sup>733</sup> Finally, the main point of the social narrativity thesis is that it is the main origin of rationality. This is, in many ways, the main point of MacIntyre's book *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, that is to say, that the tradition, or, in my terms, meta-narrative, is where rationality resides.<sup>734</sup> Rationality is the first moral term that is necessary to have in the dictionary of narrative constructivism. As I see it, we cannot operate if we

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<sup>731</sup> L. G. Jones, (1987.), *Alasdair MacIntyre on Narrative, Community, and the Moral Life in Modern Theology* vol. 4., no. 1., p. 53.

<sup>732</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1988.), *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, p. 349.

<sup>733</sup> A. MacIntyre, (2006.) *Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science in The Tasks of Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, New York, p. 12.

<sup>734</sup> A. MacIntyre, (1988.), *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana.

do not operate with a reason-giving procedure. When I have talked about the intelligible reasons for an action or a statement, I have talked about the reasons that we find within the narrative in which we are embedded.

Therefore, the position that I am taking, within the scope of the social narrativity thesis, is the one of narrative hermeneutics. This is where I am detaching from MacIntyre's system which has an innate naturalist-perfectionist standpoint that is related to the Aristotelian notion of the *telos*. Narrative hermeneutics states that there is no end goal of our lives that is in any way based on naturalism, rather, we achieve it through searching for it in the multiplicity of practices that are within one social narrative.<sup>735</sup> From that being said, I also claim that we "derive" all of the information about ourselves and the reality of the world in which we live from the narrative that encompasses us. With that information, we create values, beliefs, and attitudes that also shape our way of life and our strivings in life. This is what I call a social narrativity thesis.

The second premise of this project is the psychological narrativity thesis, or the narrative theory of *the self*. Out of all the projects on the theory of the narrative *self*, Ricoeur's theory seemed like the most viable option because this approach is based on hermeneutics. By introducing the hermeneutics of morality, we are concerned with the "exegesis" of myths, symbols, language, norms, ideals, etc. from one given culture, which is also called ethical particularism.<sup>736737</sup> Furthermore, Ricoeur's hermeneutics presupposes a particular epistemic priority argument, that is to say, in order to learn more about *the self*, we must get to know the world in which that *self* is formed. For Ricoeur, the *self* is also a unity between our capability to

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<sup>735</sup> H. Meretoja, (2018.), *The Ethics of Storytelling: Narrative Hermeneutics, History and the Possible*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 53.

<sup>736</sup> J. Wall, (2001.), *The Economy of the Gift: Paul Ricoeur's Significance to the Theological Ethics*, *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, vol. 29., Blackwell Publishing, p. 253.

<sup>737</sup> We need to consider that philosophers distinguish this version of particularism from the more recent, more modern meta-ethical position.

narrate our lives and the derivation of the signs that are part of a social narrative.<sup>738</sup> Another important aspect of forming the psychological narrativity thesis is Ricoeur's insistence on differentiating between two parts of *the self* – *ipse* and *idem*.<sup>739</sup> In other words, self-hood and sameness. This distinction emphasizes our narration with others in correlation to ourselves, as was argued in the second chapter. Namely, there is a personal, unalienable part of what makes one *self* a *self*, as well as the part that is constantly intertwined with others and the context which forms *the self*.

After elaborating on Ricoeur's notion of *the self*, this project embraces it as its other premise. The second step would be to make a stance on the ontological stance of *the self*. Namely, the question that arises after claiming the psychological narrativity thesis is whether *the self* is merely a construct or does it have its basis in reality. To answer this question, I employ the analysis which stems from Dennett's theory of the narrative *self*. In many ways, Dennett's claim is linked to that of Locke who claims that *the self* is nothing else than a practical term to describe a continuous participation in a life.<sup>740</sup> Dennett's emphasis on practicality leads him to conclude that *the self* is merely a theoretical presupposition, just like the center of gravity in physics.<sup>741</sup> That is to say, we need to mentally construct this notion in order for us to be able to imagine ourselves as a being that is "deriving data" from the narrative, as well as shaping ourselves as continuous narrative beings. In short, *the self* is the biological necessity of a brain to narrate *the self*.<sup>742</sup> This project embraces Dennett's claim of the practical necessity of *the self* and connects it with the hermeneutic approach of Ricoeur. This is, in short, the psychological narrativity thesis.

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<sup>738</sup> P. Ricoeur, (1995.), *Intellectual Autobiography* in *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur* by L. E. Hahn, Open Court, Chicago, p. 19.

<sup>739</sup> P. Ricoeur, (1992.) *Oneself as Another*, University of Chicago press, Chicago, p. 116.

<sup>740</sup> J. Locke, (1999.) *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Pennsylvania State University, Electronic Classic Series, p. 315.

<sup>741</sup> D. Dennett, (1992.), *The Self as a Center of Narrative Gravity* in *Self and Consciousness: Multiple Perspectives*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale, New York, p. 105.

<sup>742</sup> *Ibid.* p. 105.

Furthermore, the only task left would be to defend this premise from the philosopher who has dedicated a lot of effort to criticize this claim, Galen Strawson. Strawson points out that the narrativist thesis fails to portray those with an episodic perception of themselves.<sup>743</sup> I claim that episodocity is rather problematic and that we should question the validity of this notion. The first step in this goal is to decipher Strawson's basis of *the self* which is an amalgam between the cultural and social and is perceived differently by different people.<sup>744</sup> Afterward, I try to use the claims derived from Strawson's basis and apply the critique of his method. I pose a question about the relationship between episodic and diachronic and, ultimately, argue that both culturally and biologically, assuming the diachronic aspect of the self is necessary, apart from the very small number of cases. In this sense, the main conclusion is that Strawson's thesis is limiting but does not pose a valid alternative to the narrativist identity thesis.

The third chapter will be summarized after the constructivist framework, which is the fourth chapter, is highlighted, adopting a different approach from the one presented in the first two chapters. Originally, the third chapter aimed to place limits on the narrativity thesis by highlighting certain moral and political scenarios that it could not fully encompass. Now, however, following a discussion on how constructivism broadens the explanatory power of the narrativity thesis, we will revisit those scenarios through the lens of narrative constructivism. This approach will demonstrate why narrative constructivism may offer a more effective means of addressing these complex issues.

Now that we have the narrativity thesis, which, as we have shown, provides substance to our understanding of ourselves and the world around us, we would need to provide mechanisms that show how we deliberate about moral and political questions. In short, we need to supply the form to the already entrenched substance.

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<sup>743</sup> G. Strawson, (2004.), *Against Narrativity in Ratio (New Series)*, vol. XVII, no. 4., p. 429.

<sup>744</sup> G. Strawson, (2017.), *The Subject of Experience*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 106.

Constructivism is, ultimately, used to provide three important parts to this project – a theory of reasons, a reason-giving procedure, and a theory of reasonableness. Bearing this in mind, I am subscribing to a very particular constructivist approach, following Shemmer’s analysis of constructivism.<sup>745</sup> My analysis opens by clearly stating that this project subscribes to a second-order, quietist realist form of constructivism that is also local, dependent, and Neurathian. The reasons for this are given throughout the fourth chapter, yet the main reason is that this form of constructivism is in complete convergence with both the social and the psychological narrativity thesis. By framing my constructivist approach in these frames, I can introduce the theory of reasons and reason-giving procedure which is intelligible within the social context in which one finds him/herself. Namely, based on Raz’s theory of reasons<sup>746</sup>, I make a difference between explanatory and normative reasons. Explanatory reasons give answers to the question of “why is something as it is”, while normative reasons are used to justify actions, or, to provide reasons for actions. In the case of a reason-giving procedure, I claim that we use both of these reasons in an intelligible way. Following Laborde I call these reasons intelligible reasons.<sup>747</sup> I believe that all reasons are grounded in the narrative which shapes our values, beliefs, and attitudes. That is to say, when we claim that X is something, we are giving a reason that X is something based on a doctrine of a meta-narrative that is most convincing to that subject at the time of the claim. On the other hand, normative reasons are also intelligible to the narrative as they require an agent to act in a rational and/or reasonable way.

That being said, reasonableness is the most important concept coming from the constructivist deliberation procedure. It is derived from the Rawlsian framework

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<sup>745</sup> Y. Shemmer, (2012.), *Constructing Coherence in Constructivism in Practical Philosophy* by James Lenman and Yonatan Shemmer, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 161.

<sup>746</sup> J. Raz, (2007.), *Reasons: Explanatory and Normative* in *Oxford Legal Studies Research*, no. 13., p. 2.

<sup>747</sup> C. Laborde, (2019.), *Intelligibility, Moral Loss and Injustice* in *The Journal of Applied Philosophy*, vol. 36., no. 5., p. 727.

and used as a normative principle in this project, the only one we can claim to be a necessary and sufficient principle for a moral action. In many ways, the tension between being rational and being reasonable shows the difference between the substance and the form of our deliberation. We derive rationality from the narrative around us, that is to say, we act in a way that is contextually determined. This is where both the social and psychological narrativity thesis falls into the same bracket. Yet, we can act rationally, however, not reasonably. Reasonableness, I claim, is beyond rationality and the confounds of our narrative. Following Rawls, a moral person is the bearer of autonomy which is constituted by rationality and reasonableness.<sup>748</sup> Reasonableness, as I see it, is a normative principle that is found in the Kantian philosophical tradition and refers to the unconditional respect that we give to the autonomy of other subjects. This is, I would argue, the key point of this project – making a differentiation between reasonableness and rationality. While rationality is narrative-dependent, it shifts and changes based on the meta-narratives, narratives, and micro-narratives. What is rational depends on the situation and the society that we are a part of. However, reasonableness is trans-narrative. I do argue that reasonableness is a trans-narrative normative principle that we “mix” into the already established intelligible reasons and we find ways in which can act reasonably while being bound by the context. While reasonableness is also a principle, it can also be considered a virtue. In this project, I also write about how one needs to act in order to be considered a reasonable agent. The difference between reasonableness as a principle and reasonableness as a virtue is the factor of objectivity. The principle of reasonableness, as I see it, is an objective moral principle, while the virtue of reasonableness is purely contextual that we acquire from the practices and the relationships that we have with each other.

Ultimately, the addition of constructivism in many ways “clears” up our perception on moral and political deliberation. Many of the discussions that we have

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<sup>748</sup> J. Rawls, (1980.), *Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory* in *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 77., no. 9., p. 528.

on what we consider moral are not, in fact, conversations about morality in the first place, rather, they are conversations about deep epistemic disagreements that are a part of different rationalities. These epistemic disagreements are “deep” insofar as they are based on a fundamental level.<sup>749</sup> As we have established, narratives form the system of values, beliefs, and attitudes; the reasons that we have, both explanatory and normative, depend on the intelligibility of those reasons to the narrative that encumbers us. These reasons can change through co-storytelling, yet, they have to be guided by a formal principle. The formal principle I have in mind is, of course, the principle of reasonableness. This principle “blends” in the intelligible reasons and guides them towards the most reasonable outcome in the deliberative situation.

With this in mind, we can return to the third chapter of this project, where I have, through the analysis of applied politics and ethics, shown that in the real world, narrativity, by itself, does have a lot of difficulties. I will not go into a deeper analysis of the examples I have given; I will merely mention them as they were given. Narrativity finds problems when explaining the intelligibility crisis, micro-narrative co-existence and their change, and moral evolution. An example of the intelligibility crisis is exhibited through the use of communal change and nostalgia. One aspect of nostalgia is that it can be a response to the loss of intelligibility and a plea for the intelligibility to return. The narrative thesis can provide reasons for the communal change through co-storytelling, however, the intelligibility crisis should be addressed by a reason-giving procedure that re-installs a narrative subject within society that has changed. If we apply reasonableness into the picture as well, constructivism can offer a procedure of reestablishing the intelligibility for the narrative subject.

Furthermore, the co-existence of micro-narratives is explained through political ideologies. Freeden notes that ideologies can also be considered to be, based

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<sup>749</sup> P. S. Smith, M. P. Lynch, (2021.), *Varieties of Deep Epistemic Disagreement in Topoi*, vol. 40., p. 971.

on their constitution, narratives.<sup>750</sup> If we follow this analysis, we can consider ideologies as micro-narratives that are a part of a social-narrative which is a part of a meta-narrative. With this being said, micro-narratives take different shapes and forms to the social narratives. They are particular narratives that are created under the umbrella phenomenon that is a social narrative. For them to be able to co-exist, they should be, based on my underlying claim, reasonable. The part of their rationality is shown in the process of a power struggle, yet, for the aspect of their reasonableness is exhibited in their co-existence and, at often times, mixtures. These mixtures are called, as Barkouski states, mosaic ideologies.<sup>751</sup>

Finally, when it comes to moral progress, I have excluded many views of it in the third chapter. The view on moral progress that this project endorses is very sympathetic to Jamieson's requirement - *the abolition of war and slavery, the reduction of poverty and class privilege, the extension of liberty, the empowerment of the marginalized group and the respect for animals and nature.*<sup>752</sup> All of these requirements, as was shown, fall under the concept of reasonableness. I have particularly talked about liberty while discerning it from the notion of reasonableness. Yet, as we have shown, to be reasonable is to respect the autonomy of the other subject, and that includes the liberty that he/she possesses. I claim that, with the evolution of reasons and beliefs, moral progress is, in fact, the progress of reasonableness. Narrativity itself has problems answering how progress occurs if we do not put a formal guiding principle in the equation.

With this, we have rounded up the theoretical system of narrative constructivism. Effectively, this theory is descriptive with a normative tendency. It

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<sup>750</sup> From M. Freeden, (2003.) *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 48.

<sup>751</sup> P. Barkouski, (2018.) *Contemporary Post Ideologies: Hybrid Ideologies or New Mythologies as a Factor of Constituting of Post-Modern Social Field* in *Ideology and Politics*, vol. 3., p. 17.

<sup>752</sup> D. Jamieson (2017.), *Slavery, Carbon, and Moral Progress* in *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, vol. 20., no. 1., p. 171.

shows how a subject deliberates moral and political questions by including both the substantial and formal aspects of his/her deliberation. Furthermore, it connects the theory of *the good*, narrativism, with the theory of *the right*, constructivism. *The good* is exhibited in our rationality, while *the right* is exhibited in our reasonableness. On the final note, I would like to add the pros and cons of this theory.

The pros of narrative constructivism are the following – it includes a historical approach, as well as a theory of reasoning. It tries to provide a common ground to the battle of the centuries between Kant and Hegel, transcendentalism, or formalism, and historicism, or substantialism. For Kant, principles are derived from reason alone, and, for Hegel, reason is seen in the spirit of historical change.<sup>753</sup> Narrative constructivism suggests that both of these strivings are necessary for a theory of moral and political deliberation. It is also a recent development in the sense that it deals with the current contemporary trends in ethics and political theory. Both narrativism and constructivism are relatively new fields that have been formed in the last fifty years. Insofar as these theoretical fields progress, both aspects of narrative constructivism can strengthen. This would also bring me to the cons of this theory. The assumptions that are taken for this project to work are numerous. Both the social and psychological narrativity thesis can be put under scrutiny from the critiques I have tried to defend it against. Likewise, the procedure of constructivism is also another strong assumption that the whole project rests on. And not only that, since constructivism itself is very contested, all of the parts of it I have subscribed to can also fall under scrutiny. Therefore, this thesis is vulnerable as much as the parts of it are, and it has numerous assumptions that rest on the various theoretical strivings. Regardless, the main goal of this project was to provide a theory that I hope is worth considering in the future discourse on deliberation, social theory, political theory, and ethics. It is because of the tensions in this discourse, due to reasons of mediation,

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<sup>753</sup> S. Sedgwick, (2010.), *Reason and History: Kant versus Hegel in Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, vol. 84., no.2., p. 46.

that this theory was created, a theory of narrative constructivism.

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