Conceptualising the Person in Personal and Social Education

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to explore implications of a necessary presupposition of a theory of the person in the aims of Personal and Social Education (PSE), with the aim of furnishing a conception of the person which retains a significant concept of personal agency in light of constraints on action.

From the position that the concept of the person as agent is central to the aims of PSE, it is argued that given the tension between the conception of the person as autonomous and recognition of the plasticity of persons, the justification of the unity of persons suggests itself as a relevant and useful approach. This is held to provide a means of approaching issues of personhood which are central to the concerns of PSE and which also provides important insights into the some issues of agency.

It is argued in the second chapter that the relation between a theory of personal identity and the aims of PSE which presuppose such a theory is best understood as one of interdependence. From this position, it is argued that the conception of the person as potentially autonomous does not necessitate acceptance of a strict identity or non-reductionist theory of personal identity. It is argued, on the grounds of internal coherence and the ideals evident in discussions of PSE, that the alternative, a continuity theory is preferable.

In the fourth chapter the issue of constraints on the concept of the person and their effect on the acceptability of theories of personal identity is addressed. It is argued that certain constraints lead to the rejection of reductionism with respect to persons but do not affect the acceptability of a continuity theory or its importance. The argument supports the view that the concept of personal identity and the concept of the person are indeterminate and allow a qualified form of social ascriptivism.

Implications of the conception of the person which has been argued for, are illustrated and explored in the final two chapters, where the discussion focuses on the use of students' autobiographical writing in PSE. The argument is made that the conception of the person argued for in the previous chapters has advantages over that contained in the traditional understanding of autobiography. Consideration of narrative and its role in making sense of experience leads to supplementation and refinement of the conceptualisation of the person advocated.

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Introduction

This thesis is addressed to the defence and exploration of the implications of the claim that the central concept in PSE is the person.

The importance of this claim lies in a presupposition made by all feasible aims of PSE, the conceptualisation of the person as agent. Without exception the aims of PSE presuppose and promote a conception of the person as active. This is not to say that passive aspects of being a person, such as being the object of moral concern are not also relevant, but to point to the importance of the idea of agency as a presupposition of the ideals articulated in the aims of PSE. Consistent with the claim that PSE should be concerned with helping students further their understanding of themselves, others and the world, the idea of persons as agents is presupposed in the idea that the aims of PSE should include moral education, political education, social and personal responsibility, self-knowledge, and the promotion of autonomous personal well-being. Clearly, depending on the particular aims of PSE, the perceived ends of agency will differ. The point is that no matter the content of particular aims, an idea held in common is that persons can reflect on themselves, their social situation, their ideals and hopes, the rationality of their action, make plans and carry them out in ways that can be distinguished from 'mindless' responses to situations. Persons can choose and reflect on their choices, and are appropriately held to be responsible for actions. The idea of the person as agent is central so long as all feasible aims presuppose an active subject of experience.[1]

PSE is centrally concerned with students' relations with others, themselves and the world. The perspective on these relations involves appreciation and sensitivity to the students' own perceived needs as well as addressing needs which are perceived to be relevant to the overall task of preparation for a worthwhile personal and social life. PSE is at once concerned with the present concerns of the student and the school, and in enabling that student to pursue a worthwhile life once she has left the institution. PSE is, therefore, here taken to include that subject, or those cross-curricular activities which while heterogeneous in content are united by the questions it addresses and the attitude taken towards the lives and experiences of students. The particular subjects on a PSE syllabus are chosen and related by being responses to the question: What does it mean to live a life, and have a meaningful life as a person? PSE is distinctive in that as well as adopting this external perspective on persons the perspective of the student is taken seriously in the sense that the experiences she brings to the classroom, her conception of herself, who and what she is and who she is to become are reflected both the content chosen and the pedagogy used. PSE is addressed to persons, is for persons and, in an important sense, is

about persons both in the sense of what persons are, and what it means to live a life as a person, as well as the more personal project of fostering the students' ability to make sense of their own lives. PSE can be seen as addressing, along with other aspects of the curriculum, 'What am I?', but the particular nature of PSE is to address the question, 'Who am I?', and the closely related question: 'How shall I live my life?'

A strength of PSE thus lies in the importance it gives to students' experience and actual lives. The subjects under study are not, or are not intended to be remote from the students' lives and actual or predicted likely concerns. PSE takes as central the student herself, the fact that she is a person. In a very general sense, the choice of subject and pedagogy is guided by the idea of helping students develop their understanding of what it means to be a person.[2]

This concern with the experience of students involves recognition of the influence of social factors on the construction of experience and sense of identity. This where the problem lies. Unless students are considered to be persons for whom some concerns are not constitutive, then the characteristics of persons which enable autonomous agency are threatened by taking into account these constitutive concerns as a legitimate source of the students' sense of identity. Hence, there are at least two important givens in PSE: that students are agents who can make significant decisions about their lives, can develop self-understanding and relationships; and that they are acted upon and constituted by social influences. Thus, the aims of PSE address problems of personal agency within education which at the same time as the agency of persons is asserted, recognises the social determination of many beliefs, desires, intentions and responses to the world. While talk of persons is essential to education, and this problem is not particular to PSE, issues arising from what it means to be a person take on some urgency in thinking about the aims of PSE because of the distinctive position of PSE as an educational endeavour addressed to persons whose lived experience is respected, and whose capacities for reflecting and acting on this experience are the focus.

The relevance of this problem is illustrated by various issues which are at the forefront of educational debate. While there is some unease about the prominence of terms such as autonomy in the aims of PSE,[3] there is also concern with the increasing impersonalism, technocratic tendencies in the education system and the prominence of technical rationality.[4] In addition there is also increasing concern from within education with the problem of subjectivity and its adequate theorisation,[5] as well as increasing emphasis through innovations such as PSE on the role of education in enabling students to enjoy lives which are personally worthwhile.

The approach adopted here is concurrent with recent criticisms of liberal theories of ethics mounted from such different perspectives as communitarianism and postmodernism[6] in that it looks to the conception of the person underlying the aims of PSE. While the existence of a pluralist society and the ideal of pluralist democracy are taken as given here, it is argued that it is important to recognise problems with the notion of the person underpinning the liberal conception of ethical relations.

The issue is interpreted here as a problem of understanding the relation between the concept of the person and the aims of PSE, in particular the effect of the presupposition of a concept of the person. While there can be little doubt that a conception of the person is necessary for an educational undertaking which is concerned with issues of personal and social development, in that the content of the syllabus, the pedagogy used and the aims which inform these, all make at least implicit reference to axiological judgments about the sort or kind of person education is designed to foster, the relation between the concept of the person and the aims of PSE is not clear. One reason is a certain ambiguity in what is meant by 'person'. Clarification of the interest, or interests, in persons as evidenced by the aims of PSE is therefore of some importance. Such clarification will in turn enable a conceptualisation of the person which is adequate to these interests and, importantly, to our knowledge of persons. Motivation for investigating this issue is therefore supplied by the different interests in the concept of person, and the conflict in interpretations sketched above.

An advantage of this approach is that it serves to show that in any discussion of PSE, where the focus is on persons, there are metaphysical assumptions at work which affect practice. It is part of the argument to show that not only are such assumptions at work, but that they may conflict as a result of features of the concept of person. Our concept of the person is sufficiently elastic and indeterminate to admit of incompatible interpretations. In essence this thesis is an argument for awareness of the implications and associations of the concept of person as it is used in the aims of PSE. It is therefore primarily addressed to those interested in the aims of PSE,[7] with the discussion focusing on the aims of PSE defended in the literature. In the following sections the nature of the problem and the approach taken are discussed.

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The Problem of the Conceptualisation of the Person

In order to illustrate the problem of the conceptualisation of the person we need only look at the implications of the two dominant conceptualisations. If

some form of personal autonomy is accepted as a goal of PSE, the individual person is conceptualised as a discrete entity inessentially connected to any social concerns or roles. This model is inadequate if it is recognised that sense of identity and definition of self are responsive to factors such as gender, class and ethnicity, to take just three prominent examples of constituting elements in self-understanding and perception. On this model the constitution of the self through social relations cannot be explained. Of course, the model is only inadequate if the educational task of helping students understand themselves is interpreted as involving students' lived experience and the role of influences such as gender, class and ethnicity in making them what they are. If on the other hand social forces or language are seen as constituting the self, with the person being conceptualised as the site of multiple subjectivities rather than the disengaged subject so important to the Enlightenment tradition, then the possibility of resisting these forces is lost in the recognition of their constituting force and effect. With the loss of the possibility of resisting these forces, the possibility of autonomous agency is also lost.

Neither position is acceptable from the point of view of thinking about approaches to PSE. Our experience of persons and as persons tells us we need to include elements of both positions in the aims of PSE. The position to be defended here is that PSE should transmit or involve a theory of the person[8] which is consistent with our experience and knowledge of persons in the articulation of what is valuable about persons.

The problem arises because of the constraint placed on the formulation of the aims of PSE by the characterisation of experience as socially constituted, and internal inadequacies of the picture of the self as essentially unencumbered. This may not seem to be a problem for the aims of PSE which are framed in terms of the ideals of persons and are justified by reference to social and ethical theories of the good life. On this view, all that needs to be said in response to this problem is that we recognise that the agency of the person is presupposed by all our accounts of what the aims of PSE should be, but this is legitimate given that these accounts satisfy the minimum conditions of persons, and that we are engaged in the normative activity of promoting certain values and conceptions of personhood which are not justified by reference to the nature of persons. This type of response is not, however, adequate to the problem. If PSE, in accepting and promoting the importance of students' lived experience, is to recognise the situatedness and embeddedness of persons in their social context and the effect of this context of what it means to be a person, then the ideals of the person contained in the aims must be adequate to this condition.

There are several ways in which this problem can be approached. One is to refer to the normative nature of autonomy. It is a moral ideal, or an ideal derived

from a liberal democratic theory. This provides the justification for promoting autonomy as an aim of PSE, given the situation of PSE within a particular social context or web of social and moral concerns. Arguments against autonomy are therefore at the level of disputes between ethical theories, or between political and social analyses. This approach, as mentioned above, merely avoids the problem. The problem can, alternatively, be viewed as an instance of the traditional metaphysical problem of the relation between free will and determinism. This however also fails to address the problem as it has been posed, as Meyers (1987:27-41) for example, points out. The problem is to account for people's capacity to direct their own lives in light of the social forces acting on them. It is therefore not a question of reconciling personal autonomy with free will or determinism with the social formation of desires and beliefs.

A further approach, and the one adopted here, is to take the fundamental problem as the furnishing of a conception of the person which retains what is crucial to the conception of the person as active, the idea that the person is a subject of experience, but which does so without the attendant Cartesian epistemological theses in order that that psychological and social complexities of persons can be reflected in our theories and ideals of persons. The motivation for striving for such a conceptualisation lies in its broadly ethical implications. Posing the problem in these terms leaves two possible approaches: To present the issue as a problem of the mutually exclusive character of opposing modes of cognition or as a problem of the internal consistency of each position. While the latter approach is favoured as it keeps the interest in the question firmly in sight: the retention of the conception of the person as active, it is recognised that it has the effect of setting up the problem in the form of a dichotomy between the self-constituting and the socially constituted subject which may turn out to be a disadvantage.

The intention is to argue for centrality of the concept of the person to the aims of PSE given its association with issues of agency. This is not to say that the idea of PSE is somehow conceptually tied to the idea of person as agent. It is possible to conceive of approaches to PSE where agency is not an issue. The problem would not arise, for instance, if the students of PSE were not considered to be persons. In such a situation, having avoided the issue of agency and choice by denial of personhood, a mechanistic view could be sustained, and the aims of PSE could consistently be seen as addressing the moulding of future behaviours without the intervention of the student. It would not arise if students were considered objects but not subjects of moral concern. The problem arises because we think of ourselves and our students as agents. On our present understanding, as Harris (1989:603) reminds us, "'person' and

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'mechanism' are contradictory concepts". It is not only a question of thinking of students as agents, but the particular model of agency employed. If students of PSE were conceptualised on the model of artificial intelligence, for example, as immensely complex and sophisticated computers, then the issue of agency would not arise in the same form. As Dreyfus (1979:78) points out, if reason could be programmed into a computer this would drastically alter our understandings of ourselves, as would the converse, if it was discovered that computers could not be programmed to reason.

From a perspective which takes the conceptualisation of the person as central, it is possible to set out the problem in the following way. The value of the agency of persons finds its clearest expression in the argument that PSE should be addressed to developing autonomous capacities in the student. The ideal of autonomy is not considered to be a natural state of persons, but to be a value associated with and supported by societal or ethical norms. Thus White (1991:Ch.6) accepts and expands on Raz's (1986:390-395) argument that living in an autonomy-supporting society justifies personal autonomy as an educational aim. Pring (1987), on the other hand, while justifying his position by the adequacy of its response to social and personal realities draws more explicitly on the conditions for personhood, particularly those described by Dennett (1978) as constituting the third and fourth conditions of personhood: that a certain stance or attitude is appropriate towards persons, and that they can reciprocate when such a stance is taken. These two conditions introduce respectively the idea of persons as moral objects and moral agents. The autonomy of persons is therefore either justified by its societal support or by reference to those conditions of personhood which involve or imply the possibility of potentially self-determining thought and action. With the addition of the relevant modernist theses concerning the person as locus of moral authority as well as moral value, the emphasis is on the person as able to make choices and perform actions for which they are responsible.

The idea of personal autonomy and personhood are clearly interrelated. For persons to be seen as potentially autonomous they must be conceptualised as both unified and distinct from others. The conception of the person as autonomous has two dimensions. It requires, as Lindley (1986:6) notes "a developed self, to which one's actions can be ascribed", and freedom from external constraints. The idea of a developed self in turn requires, as Lindley (loc.cit.) says "a consciousness of oneself as a being who acts for reasons, whose behaviour can be explained by reference to one's own goals and purposes." A self or person is therefore necessarily conceptualised as a unified entity separate from other entities and persons, this being necessary both for the idea of self-determination and for the idea of making choices for oneself. The

necessity of both unity and separateness is illustrated by the distinction Hurley (1989:317) makes between horizontal and vertical divisions within a society, both of which are essential for the notion of an autonomous person. Horizontal divisions "reflect formal and substantive distinctions *within* agents" and thus allow the reflection and deliberation necessary for the element of determination in self-determination, which cannot be such that the unity of the person is problematic. Common experiences which might be thought to raise the question of the extent to which persons are unified, such as inner dialogue and conflict, cannot raise questions about how many persons are involved. The presupposition is that even in cases of severe internal conflict, there is one person involved. The extent to which this belief can be upheld in light of the extraordinary but actual cases of commissurotomy and multiple personality syndrome, will be discussed later. The point is that for the idea of the person as autonomous to be conceptually coherent, the presupposition of the person as unitary is necessary.

The vertical divisions reflect divisions between agents, and are necessary for the element of self in self-determination. In order to be a free independent enquiring chooser, a person must be both unified and continuous over time since to be capable of a degree of self-direction with respect to her thought processes the person must be understood as a discrete entity. Thus, similar to the horizontal divisions, experiences of identification cannot be understood as raising the question of how many people are involved.

Thus, it is not sufficient for autonomy that a person exercise choice, it must be the case that the person who exercises choice recognises that this is what she is doing. To be autonomous requires identifying with a particular body whose thoughts, desires and intentions are under one's control. The self-reflexive nature of autonomy demands that the boundaries between one's self and other and an awareness of the distinction between internal and external constraints be recognised. Thus, as Kupfer (1987:82) points out: "No matter how free from external restraint, an individual is not in control of his life, is not self-determining, unless he conceives of himself as such". Autonomy requires of personhood that a person is self-conscious, that a clear distinction can be made between one's self and others, and that a person is both unified and discrete.

The developed form of agency which autonomy presupposes in turn requires a developed self. It involves a recognition of what is and what is not myself, and, some notion such as a knowledge of my interests. This conception of the minimum necessary conditions for any conception of person conceived of as potentially autonomous raises the question of the justification of this unity.

Traditionally the positing of a unitary discrete subject of experience, with an implied or implicated epistemology of self-knowledge as the foundation, or

Archimedian point of all knowledge, ignores and cannot explain the role of social forces in producing the subject. The Cartesian-Lockean-Kantian tradition associated with this view, takes the self and language as transparent, with the self only contingently related to any particular social role. Clearly this is not a view of the person accepted in the aims of PSE. There is clear recognition in the aims to be considered here of the importance of social relations and the influence of social factors in the forming of a sense of identity. Nevertheless, it remains the case that the idea of personal autonomy requires a conception of the self whereby the self stands outside the construction. The self must, in some intelligible sense, be seen as constituting. This is necessary for the possibility of reflection on social forces and influences with the purpose of assessing the extent to which one identifies with particular desires, actions and so forth. The ability to reflect on situations and distance one's self from a particular role or social situation in order to reflect on it lies at the heart of the conceptualisation of the person as potentially autonomous.

It is now something of a commonplace within some philosophical and educational circles to reject the conception of the self or person presupposed by autonomy. The critiques differ in motivation but share an opposition to the idea of the unitary constituting subject associated with the Enlightenment. The basic objection to this conception of the self is that it is inadequate to account for the lived experience of persons and unable to account for or accept the legitimacy of constituting factors other than the self. Thus, Derrida claims that the assumption of a constituting subject fails to describe the role of language in the construction of meaning and self; Lacanian critiques centre on the inadequacies of the conception of a constituting self to explain the complex psychological processes whereby the self is created; and Foucault critiques the ability of a constituting self as unable to explain the role played by powerful social forces in constituting the self.

Those within educational theory who have responded positively to these critiques have rejected the conceptualisation of the self as a secure foundation on which to build either an epistemology or an ethical theory. The individual subject, as Giroux (1991:29) summaries this position, is no longer the source of self-knowledge, with her view of the world being constituted through the "exercise of a rational and autonomous mode of understanding and knowing". Rather "[s]ubjectivity is now read as multiple, layered and non-unitary" (ibid.:30). Quoting Hall (1986:56) Giroux continues, "the 'self' is seen as being "constituted out of and by difference and remains contradictory"". This position replaces the abstraction, objectivism and rationalism of modernism with particularism and contextualism stressing the actualisation of possibilities to act. Universal claims to truth of a theory of education based on, in Weiler's

(1991:469) words, "the concept of a coherent subject moving through history with a single essential identity" is called into question. Feminist pedagogies, of which Weiler's work is an illustration, focus instead on the development of "a concept of the constant creation and negotiation of selves within structures of ideology and material constraints"(loc.cit.). The Cartesian self and the modernist discourse around it are held by many to be, as Pappas and Garrision (1990:306) say "androcentrically distorted in a systematic way, one that sacrifices connection for individual self-foundation". This is to be replaced with a freedom from "the dominance of androcentric and dualistic discourse" (ibid.:313). On this view, self-determination is no longer situated in the "guarantees of transcendent phenomena or metaphysical essences" (Giroux, op.cit.:29), it is to be considered as inextricably related to forces beyond the self-consciousness of the humanist subject.

This is clearly an area of thought which is still developing. Giroux is not alone in recognising that this conception of the self raises problems for identity, intentionality and desire. However, in order to appreciate the strengths as well as some of the weaknesses of this view, it is useful to explore the position of which it is critical and the motivation for this criticism. One of the most significant positive aspects of this developing theory, which will also be emphasised here, is the importance given to lived experience and the significance accorded to everyday life. Thus, the emphasis is on the sense of identity that students have, and not on the particular form of abstraction involved in accepting the Cartesian self defined in absence of any constitutive concerns, a self constituted solely by self-awareness, a "'punctual' or 'neutral' self" as Taylor (1989:49, Ch. 9) refers to this latter conception. This view of the self, associated with Descartes but finding its modern expression in Locke, involves the disengagement or distancing of the self from ordinary experience including desires, habits or inclinations in order that they can, in Taylor's (ibid:159) phrase, be "worked on". The Cartesian self can only be contingently encumbered by any of its properties since the self cannot be constituted by the thoughts and desires which are to reworked with the aim of either strengthening or eliminating them. Whereas Descartes emphasised self-mastery and self-sufficiency, Locke extends the distancing from experience to the self with the effect that the self is not only able to adopt a stance to feelings, desires and thoughts, but can also distance itself from itself. In Descartes the emphasis is on both the unity and the continuity of consciousness with the self distanced from its ordinary embodied existence in order to gain the clarity and distinctness which is confused and obscured in our experience,[9] with the aim of arriving at truth, In other words, the aim is to achieve knowledge of how things really are (Locke, *Essay*, 1.4.23.). This can only be achieved by distancing or

disengaging from ordinary experience. Thus, what is required is not so much a different way of experiencing ourselves and the world, but a disengagement from ordinary experience.

This is the view which essentially causes the problem. The self is objectified, with all relations being seen as contingent and accidental. The self, on this view, is nothing other than the power to identify particular features, such as habits of thought and action or desires, distancing and objectifying these features with the aim of reworking or remaking them according to some standard. The self, on this view is, as Taylor (ibid:171-2) says, 'extensionless; it is nowhere but in this power to fix things as objects".

Whatever the problems there are with this account, the stance of detachment, distance and disengagement, generates our picture of ourselves as independent consciousnesses. Consciousness underpins and justifies this stance, and is the basis for our ideas of self-control and self-remaking. This conception of the self has been tremendously influential, not least in our ideas of self-control, personal responsibility and the integrity of the person, and in the acceptance of the idea of the person as the location of principles of choice, and the self as a possessive concept. This brief characterisation of the modernist view as found in Descartes and Locke, reveals its strength, as well as its weakness. Its strength lies in furnishing the conditions for autonomy, its weakness lies in its abstraction from constitutive concerns.

The strengths and weaknesses of the modernist conception correspond, unsurprisingly, to the strengths and weaknesses of the conceptions which take seriously the embeddedness of persons in their social context. In rejecting of the Cartesian model of the self, with its certainties and privileging of self-consciousness, in which Descartes found a secure foundation for a well-grounded form of knowledge, the possibility of the autonomy of the person is threatened. The rejection of the self as the foundation of knowledge involves the rejection of the concept of self-consciousness as the foundation for an autonomous existence. From Descartes to Hegel the secure foundation of self-consciousness determined philosophical method and led to the task being, as Hegel (1955:217) held, to be "to grasp the inner sphere as such, and to set aside the claims of dead externality and authority; the latter is to be viewed as out of place here". The problem involved with this move from a certainty of a Cartesian unitary indivisible self with self-consciousness performing a fundamental role in our conception of ourselves, to a 'decentred' subject, is the problem of how to conceptualise autonomy, and personal agency in general.

There have been attempts to deal with this problem particularly in feminist theory and pedagogies[10] which have a clear interest in a conceptualisation of the subject able to resist socialisation and socialising forces, while championing the

view that the person should be conceptualised as the site of multiple and potentially contradictory subjectivities rather than a unitary entity in a privileged epistemic relation to itself and the world. In rejecting the unitary self and universalising discourses, action is found in the fragmented particular historical and social identities constructed and shaped in the experience of gender, class, race and other socially defined identities.

The problem is to give an account of the subject as able to adopt a position of resistance. It is thus the problem of reconciling the idea of contested subjectivities with the idea of a person able to change while remaining the same person.[11] While feminist analyses in general point to the centrality of social factors, including language, on the construction of our sense of ourselves, the fragmented view of the person it presents struggles with the central idea of personhood and agency: the idea of change, the idea of unity as a necessary condition for action and reflection on action.

The problem, has been ably and succinctly expressed by Soper (1991:126):

> even as we acknowledge ourselves to be decentred and fragmented subjectivities, the gendered constructs of patriarchy, and the mouthpieces of a discursive ventriloquism, we also seem to rediscover a centre, the existential, angst-ridden self who must also make sense of it, and seek to reorganize desire, reread the world, adjust behaviour and so on, in the light of that awareness. As anti-humanist approaches present us as splintered, we feel a very humanist splintering between the self who acknowledges the Freudian or feminist challenge to autonomy, and the self who feels called upon to act as a morally responsible agent of self-change.

The problem is how to reconcile our knowledge and experience as socially constructed with the sense of identity necessary for agency and autonomous thought and action.

2
The Approach

The problem as posed above concerns the importance of having a conceptualisation of the person in the aims of PSE consistent with the complexity of our understanding of the constituting nature of experience and with the conception of persons as active subjects of these experiences. The focus on conceptualisation of the person and support for the conception of the person as active draws attention not only to the role of the concept of person in the aims of PSE, but provides a means of support for a personal approach to

PSE which avoids some of the more obvious pitfalls associated with the idea of a constituting self while grounding the concept in its social and psychological complexity.[12]

It is frequently argued that an important aspect of philosophy of education involves the identification of, as Soltis (1981:8) notes in introducing an edited work on fairly recent developments in philosophy of education, "an educationally important problem, issue, or phenomenon that could be illuminated by and located in the context provided by a subarea of philosophy". The educational problem identified here can be aptly described as philosophical. As Midgley (1990:11) argues, following Collingwood, philosophical problems arise from clashes and conflicts between presuppositions currently in use, and between large conceptual schemes built on these presuppositions. The problem, as already articulated, is between our experience of ourselves as capable of some form of independent and self-reflective thought and action, and the recognition of our social determination.

It would be needlessly over-dramatic as well as incorrect to claim that this conflict or tension is a result of a breakdown in the consensus of what a person is. In such a situation, as MacIntyre (1990b: Ch. IX) correctly remarks, questions of personhood naturally arise. It is not being claimed that the concept of person either is or should be undergoing radical change. What is clear, however, is that interest in the concept of person implied by or advocated in the aims of PSE is not only warranted by its taking persons and their well-being as its subject, but by changing perceptions of the roles of persons, as definitions of central roles change affecting both expectations and sense of identity. More weight is being placed on the individual as the location of authority and responsibility in a time when the authority and legitimacy of some institutions is diminishing, with a corresponding breakdown, recorded by post-structuralist, post-modernist and feminist analyses in some of the certainties of fundamental features of personhood. Concern in education with anti-racism, anti-sexism and the multiple forms which oppression takes, points to the continuing importance of the conception of the person as active, as the subject of experience, even with the pressures on persons to recognise their social construction. On this view the interest in the concept of person develops from an awareness of changes in social roles and concern over social struggles and changes, reflecting a shift in the relationships between people and society. Thus Pring (1987:5-6)writes:

> A greater responsibility ... rests on the individual to establish a
> set of values which can provide an adequate guide in a rather
> unpredictable future and which at the same time are socially
> ameliorative. Such a responsibility does of course relate to a
> shifting attitude in society towards authority. Certainly at school,

but elsewhere too, it is increasingly difficult to resolves disputes by use of power rather than through cooperation and the achievement of consensus.

We are concerned that students will be equipped to deal, as well as we can prepare them, with changing perceptions of social roles, for social change, to be able to deal with persons in authority such as doctors, to understand government and bureaucracies. Our concern is not just that they understand these social institutions in order that they may function effectively with or within them, but to give students a sense of their own agency with respect to them. As Foucault (1982:211-212) points out these relations are struggles against "the forms of subjection - against the submission of subjectivity" (ibid.:213) which question the status of the individual: "on the one hand, [these struggles] assert the right to be different and they underline everything which makes individuals truly individual. On the other hand, they attack everything which separates the individual, breaks his links with others, splits up community life, forces the individual back on himself and ties him to his own identity in a constraining way." Foucault focuses on a form of power as the objective of these struggles or endeavours, the form of power "which makes individuals subjects" (ibid.:212). While this form of power is not the focus here, Foucault's formulation of the problem of the subject in relation to power positions is relevant since it situates the problem of the subject firmly within the social world in which it operates.

What is being attempted here would not be correctly characterised as the application of a philosophically 'cleaned up' concept of the person to the world of education. The idea is rather to clarify a central problem in PSE through identification of central concepts using philosophical methods and traditional problems. The understanding of philosophy on which this approach is based recognises the importance of our ordinary concepts and their usage. It is taken as given that central concepts such as 'person' are embedded in the context of their use, and can only be understood relative to that context. Thus, attempts to abstract the concept of person and submit it to the logical tools of analysis is an approach fraught with danger, but necessary if we are to become clearer as to the meaning and utility of the concept we are using. The task is conceptualised as the application of philosophical methods to a problem in education which lends itself to such methods given the nature of the problem. The language and methods of philosophy are used, in other words, to illuminate the concerns in an area of education.

A consequence of the analysis of the concept of person, given that the concept is functional and responsive in the interests in inquiring into it, is that the results of the analysis will be prescriptive rather than descriptive. This

important implication of the nature of the concept of person allows, though it obviously does not necessitate, revisions or suggestions for changes in beliefs and attitudes concerning persons.

On this understanding of the concept of person, in the first chapter the general claim that the aims of PSE presuppose a conceptualisation of the person is explored through discussion of aims which have been proposed for PSE. The aims discussed, principally the accounts by Pring (1984, 1987) and White (1990), are chosen for their explicit recognition of the importance of agency and the social context of development. It is argued that these aims reveal theories of the person, but that they face the problem outlined here, of reconciling the importance of personal agency with the social construction of beliefs and other mental content.

There is a strong philosophical tradition that the concept of the person can be analysed in terms of the necessary and sufficient conditions for its use. While this is increasingly called into question, and will be here also, the underlying idea is that our beliefs about persons can be clarified by determination of the principles implicit in judgments about persons. This is the approach taken here. The analysis of the concept of person and of personal identity is the analysis of, as Perry (1975:7) points out, knowledge we in a sense already have. The aim is to assess the importance and utility of the concept we have, note connections with other concepts, and, if necessary suggest revisions and changes. The approach therefore is an interplay of two inquiries: into the requirements made of the concept of person in the aims of PSE considered, and what the concept of the person contributes to the aims of PSE. The approach is thus guided by the idea that the concept of the person is not something which can be definitively isolated from the practices in which it is embedded and from which it gains its meaning.

The argument that the concept of the person is central to thinking about the aims of PSE is plausible given the associations and implications of the concept. It is not, however, a concept which admits of analysis within any one discipline of philosophy.[13] The analysis undertaken here is conducted within philosophy of mind, which is not to ignore a salient fact, that our interest in the concept of the person is inextricably bound up with moral concepts. The method of philosophy of mind lends itself to forgetting that the concept of the person is normative. The argument is thus not conducted on the level of whether ethics, metaphysics or philosophy of mind can be given a position of absolute priority in discussing questions of personhood and personal identity, nor is it a question of priority of theory to practice, but a matter of working on the interconnections between the use of the concept and its clarification. The theory of the person suggested here is derived from arguments in the philosophy of mind but this

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theory is an articulation and refinement of the implications of practice and the demands of theoretical coherence, as well as normative arguments concerning its function in PSE where persons are both the subject and the object of study. Thus in the second chapter the question of which of the various related but distinct questions about persons is relevant to the problem and the interest in persons in the aims of PSE is discussed. Although there is no one concept of person to be uncovered through analysis which will apply to all contexts of its use, it is clear that the concept of person operates in the aims of PSE primarily as a forensic notion, to use Locke's terminology. The interest in the concept of person in PSE is, other words, primarily an interest in the concept as a moral notion, where this is understood broadly to include the conditions for moral personhood. Thus, while the question of personhood can be subdivided into several distinct but overlapping issues, such as the question of class differentiation, individuation and so forth, the salient question from the point of view of the problem posed above is the justification for the unity and the continuance of persons through time as a necessary condition for agency, since the concern is with agency which presupposes an understanding of personal identity expressions.

While the unity and continuity of persons is a philosophical problem which, as MacIntyre (1990b:196-198) argues, arises against the backdrop of a complex and metaphysical account of the meaning of personal identity, it is argued in the second chapter that the presupposition of the unity and continuity of persons is not innocuous, and that given the problem to be addressed the investigation of the necessary presupposition of personal identity by an explicitly normative theory of the person of person is warranted. Thus, the definition of person which is considered to be central is a Lockean notion which emphasises self-consciousness as a condition for self-reflection.[14] The justification for this move is not only to be found in the interest in the question of persons, but in the commonplace that understanding a concept is closely related to its understanding its conditions of identity. While this raises special problems in the case of persons, it is a philosophical position which is accepted here. In order to understand what is meant by person we have to know what could change and a person still be the same person. The question of personal identity is therefore of more than academic interest. It is a fundamental presupposition of agency and its importance to the idea of living a life cannot be overstressed. In the second chapter, the argument for the importance of the question of personal identity with respect to the aims of PSE is given. It is emphasised that the discussion of personal identity has procedural, not conceptual priority to other questions of personhood. What a person is, and its identity conditions are, however, connected in that the identity conditions clarify what is meant by

person, and what is meant by person in turn clarifies the conditions of identity. While this approach is philosophically justified and justified by the problem which has been isolated, namely the presupposition of agency, it raises questions about what this means for the relation between the aims of PSE and theories of personal identity. This is given some attention, with the argument being presented that the relation should be seen as one of limited interdependence. This is to say more than that the analysis of the concept of the person is constrained by ordinary usage. If the concept of the person is to be more a response to cultural practice than the reverse, i.e., if the concept of person is not solely a response to moral, legal, and psychological requirements, then clarification of the use of the concept in education, and in particular in PSE, requires more in the way of argument than appeal at the level of intuitive plausibility to compatibilities between aims and our ideas of persons. This does not avoid, or deny the relevance of the question of what is valuable about persons, and more specifically, what valued characteristics or attributes of persons should PSE promote.

One of the problems with taking personal identity as a central issue is that it is presupposed by all conceptions of the person which recognise the agency of persons. The argument for the relevance of personal identity must therefore show that there are significantly different implications for the aims of PSE from different theories of personal identity. This leads to consideration in the third chapter of the argument that the autonomous person requires a theory of strict identity, or a non-reductionist theory of personal identity. Several arguments are given to show that there is no necessary connection between the conception of the person as agent and a strict identity theory. The first argument is related to the objection to the Cartesian self given above, that it does not take into account the validity of other theories of self and senses of identity. If constitutive factors other than the constituting self are recognised then these cannot be assumed to be irrelevant to the formulation of the aims of PSE. This approach to identity serves to undermine the strict identity theory which presupposes metaphysical realism in its claim that persons are unanalysable, and that the identity conditions for persons are unlike the identity conditions for other physical entities. In addition, although a strict identity theory corresponds to certain central intuitions about persons, it is argued that it is not as plausible in terms of its internal consistency, as the alternative, a continuity theory. However, a continuity theory appears to imply a reductionism with respect to persons with the effect that the conceptualisation of persons as agents is denied.

This objection is addressed in the fourth chapter through the idea that the analysis of the concept of person and the concept of personal identity are constrained by factors other than logical adequacy. In other words, the concept

of person operates within a complex interrelationship of logical adequacy and the demands made upon it. Among the candidates considered as likely constraints are moral, pragmatic, metaphysical and epistemic. These constraints all appeal to the use of the concept of person. It is argued that, with the exception of the last which appeals to our knowledge of persons, these factors do not act as constraints in virtue of the nature of the concept of person, which it is argued is indeterminate, and cannot be used as an independent measure for the adequacy of a theory of personal identity. This reinforces the point made in the first chapter concerning the interdependence of the concept of the person and the conditions for its identity. The epistemic constraint is consistent with the continuity view of persons, but undermines the reductionist claim. This position is further strengthened by consideration of the type of reductionist claim made by Parfit (1984) which is shown to be inadequate independently of the argument from our knowledge of persons. The reductionist claim is therefore shown to be unsustainable. This leaves us in the interesting position of being able to support a continuity view, with its rejection of the unity and continuity of persons as a given, while at the same time being able to give an account of the subject of experience.

The implications of this view for practice are considered in the fifth chapter where the use of autobiography in the PSE classroom is considered from the point of view of the theory of the person endorsed. Autobiographical writing by students is a particularly clear example of the influence of theories of the person on practice and brings to the fore practical implications of the foregoing discussion. Conceptions of the self, sense of identity and implicit theories on what constitute personal identity are all in evidence in this classroom activity. Depending on the conception of the person underlying the theory and practice of autobiography, certain aspects of selfhood and personhood will be emphasised. It is argued that a continuity theory of personal identity is consistent with certain aspects of the narrative view of experience. Moreover, the refinement of Parfit's view suggested in the third chapter supplements the narrative view which either undertheorises or neglects the issue of personal agency. Further implications of the conceptualisation of the person are explored in the final chapter where some of the problems associated with the use of student autobiography are discussed with the aim of showing how the conceptualisation of the person suggested here sheds light on, and can go some way to resolving some of these difficulties.

This ties together various themes addressed throughout the thesis and addresses a recurrent problem, the problem of the reconciliation of those perspectives on persons which have seen to be central to the theoretical and practical concerns addressed in PSE.

Notes

1. The use of the concept of person to refer to issues of agency is not unduly restrictive and prescriptive in this context. Although it can be argued that that what is potentially of most value about PSE is the possibility it affords for addressing the interrelationships between different senses of 'person' and exploring how they may be integrated, this is not inconsistent with the approach taken here. It is not uncommon to find expressions of the idea that PSE deals with the person as a whole, as opposed to concentrating on those particular aspects which have traditionally been the main or overt concern in education, namely persons conceptualised as cognitive or rational. In advocating a broader conception, the Boethian idea of a person as "an individual substance of a rational nature" (Boethius *Liber de persona et duabus naturis*, in J-P Migne (Ed.) *Patrologia Latina*, lxiv, 1338-54, quoted in Gill,1990:1) is rejected for a richer conception. The emphasis on agency given here is not a circumscription of this desire to keep in mind the various aspects of what it means to be a person, or a denial that one of the aims of PSE is to furnish or retain a broad conception of the person. The form in which the problem has been posed has set the limits and raised particular problems but this should not be taken as implying that this is the extent of the interest in persons in the aims of PSE. In arguing for the importance of the concept of person as agent, it is, however necessary to note what this is taken to imply. It is likely as Teichman (1985:179) says, that the proverbial man in the street would give the sense of person as 'an individual human being'. Although our concept of the person is locally co-extensive with that of human being, this is not the only meaning of person, of course, and not the main concern in the aims of PSE. The interest in persons in PSE is not centrally either with whether persons are animals, or whether the concepts of person and human being are co-extensive, but these aspects of our concept cannot be definitively separated from the concern with persons isolated here. The fact that persons are embodied and that they are identified with individual human beings is influences our theories of personal identity. As mentioned above, it can however be taken that the primary interest in persons in education is in persons as unified centres of choice and action, the unit of responsibility, the locus and subject of experience and value. Thus the concept is essentially the Lockean idea of persons as "a thinking intelligent being that has reason and reflection and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing in different times and places" (*Essay* II, xxvii. 9) Although this concept of person is emphasised it should not be expected that it can be discussed without the influence of other ideas, such as the idea of persons as human beings.

The argument presented here is therefore to be distinguished from arguments such as Langford's (1980, 1985) in that it is not argued to become educated is to learn to be a person. In particular, while the emphasis is on the continuity and unity of persons as a precondition for agency, which in turn is presupposed by the particular aims of PSE, the concept must make reference to personal facts other than psychological which effectively undermines, in this context, talk of developing as persons as an aim. The argument advanced recognises that the concept of the person is prescriptive, and cannot be divorced from the values it contains. In this the position advanced is in some ways similar to Thatcher's (1980).

2. This should not be taken as implying that this type of concern is new to education, or that these concerns have not long been among those of education, however, its presence as a distinct subject or area of explicit educational concern and the reasons for its development bring to the fore many philosophical questions concerning the relation between persons and education.

3. See, for example, Garnett and Lang (1986), Leicester (1990) and Regis (1991). The unease seems primarily motivated by the connection between autonomy and individualism which is seen as antithetical to the purposes and methods of PSE and the lack of emphasis it gives, relative to the value of autonomy, to other values such as community.

4. Concern over technical rationality and the technocratic education are clearly distinguishable, but exhibit two major current concerns over the direction of the education system. One of the foremost critics of technical rationality and its use in citizenship education is Giroux (see, for example, 1983:176-184). The issues involved in technocratic education are various, for a useful overview see T. Lewis (1991).
5. See, for example, Henriques et al. (1984) for a theorising the subject of psychology in terms of the notion of subjectivities.
6. See, for example, Sandel (1982) and Kolb (1990)
7. The conflict between conceptualisations of the person will clearly have an effect on teaching practice. An interesting discussion of how this sort of conflict is worked out by teachers in the practical activity of teaching is to be found in Billig et al. (1988).
8. It is clearly beyond argument that the aims of PSE involve a theory of the person. It is addressed to persons and is designed to enhance the lives of persons. The debates over what the aims of PSE should be centre on . To make the theory of the person prominent, as here, is not to argue that the theory of the person is prior to questions such as what is the good for persons, and how education can facilitate the achievement of these aims, but to their interrelationship which is particularly clear when thinking about the aims of PSE.
9. In both Descartes and Locke this idea of the self is bound up with theories of rationality and epistemology, and cannot be considered in abstraction from these given that they support this view of the person as independent of psychological states which on this account are understood as contingent. Unfortunately, in this brief sketch these positions cannot be explored.
10. Feminist pedagogy draws on postmodern theory, particularly Foucault's emphasis on the connection between power and knowledge and Derrida's theory of difference with the focus being on the different meanings of oppression and the potential for simultaneous and contradictory positions of dominance and oppression. In other words, feminist pedagogy focuses on the difference in subjectivities and interests.
11. This problem is not particular to feminist pedagogies, of course. It is evident in all theories which reject the Cartesian self, whether this is from the perspective of psychoanalytic categories, as in Chodorow (1986), for example, or from the perspective of the imbrication of self in language and social structures. Theories such as Kristeva's (1984, 1987), which fall into the later category, provide complex analyses in order to reconceptualise the unitary Cartesian subject in such a way that it can take account of our complex understanding of the relation of the person to the world and herself which at the same time can provide an account of socially significant agency. Kristeva's account, in common with others which emphasise that agency is not the possession of individual selves, but the product of discursive forces which produce fragmentary and contradictory subject positions, leaves many questions unanswered. Not least among which is an explanation of our sense of identity and agency through time. Kristeva provides an interesting example of the problem of the conceptualisation of the subject since she does not attempt to somehow graft the Cartesian conception of agency onto the constituted subject, while leaving behind ideas such as epistemic privilege of the subject. To avoid the abandonment or rejection of the subject she explicates agency in terms of the relationship between the semiotic and the symbolic, looking to the different subjects which have been constituted by different forms of discourse with the subject being conceptualised as as a subject in process, its agency being constituted through the conflict between the semiotic and the symbolic. This account is based on the importance of language in the construction of the self, an idea we shall return to when the use of autobiographical writing in PSE is discused in chapter 5.
12. At this point the objection could be raised that the wrong concept has been isolated as the subject of the investigation if the concern is with how persons can be both agents and socially constructed in their actions, desires and intentions. 'Person', however, as opposed to related concepts,such as

individual, self, character, or subjectivities, has certain connotations and associations. Primary among these is the perspective it affords on agency, and on moral agency in particular. The attribution of personhood says among other things, that a certain stance is appropriate to that entity in virtue of its having certain properties or attributes, or the potential to have such. Thus, the importance of the focus on the concept of the person is that by keeping this concept and its associations and implications in mind it is possible to also keep in mind the interest in the problem, namely to retain the sense of person as agent. The privileging of the concept of person over, for example, the concept of contested subjectivities is not open to the major objection which could be raised it, that the latter provides a wide frame of reference given the implication of subjectivity in social structures, while the position taken here presumes a certain individualism, in that the person is conceptualised as a discrete entity. This, however, should be considered the point of departure for the discussion, not its end-point. The fundamental problem is not how these subjectivities are structured, but how to retain the idea of a subject in the understanding of the deep relation between ideology and domination, to put it in Althusserian terms, or of how to focus on the agency of the individual without at the same time privileging the relation between beliefs and self-determination with its attendant criticisms, not least of which is the claim of the individual to epistemological privilege. Once the construction of subjectivities is recognised it is permissible, given the context and orientation to the problem, to move back to the concept of the person with its presumption of unity to investigate its justification. The primary advantage of this approach is that it retains the value of persons, as agents, throughout. There is no opportunity to forget the purpose of the investigation.

13. The method employed essentially denies that ethics, politics, ontology and epistemology can be treated as discrete concerns. The position taken is therefore is analogous to that of recent feminist philosophy which has pointed to the problems involved in the contemporary treatment of issues within separate disciplines with discrete concerns. Not only are such divisions unable to withstand critical scrutiny but examination of these divisions exposes their political nature, as Flax (1983:248ff) for example argues. The division of ethics from philosophy of mind or the metaphysics of the person allows, for example, the idea that the analysis of concepts in the latter area can be entirely objective, and transcend political social and ethical identity. Pointing out the necessary interconnections between ontological, epistemological and political commitment in philosophical discourses is, as Gatens (1986:26) says "akin to turning over a tapestry and examining the interconnections of the threads that from the 'right' side of the fabric give the impression of discrete figures and patterns". Examining these interconnections is necessary if the ways in which philosophy has constructed fundamental concepts such as 'person' is to be explored. Such an ambitious topic is not undertaken here, however.

14. Commonly perhaps, the idea of being a person involves the idea of self-consciousness and intentionality. Persons are rational, self-conscious beings, aware of themselves as distinct beings with a past and a future. As Taylor (1985:97) says, they can make choices, hold values, can "adopt life-plans". This idea of a continuous entity which can reflect and knows its self to be itself is seemingly essential to PSE. The problem is with the attribution of a strong form of agency where persons are conceptualised, as Taylor (op.cit.:98-99) says, as beings for whom things matter, which is to say "we can attribute purposes, desires, aversions to them in a strong, original sense". The importance of having a desire in "an original sense", and thus Taylor's familiar view that persons are respondents, is that we need some account of how people can change their mind about basic things.

Chapter 1

PSE and the Conceptualisation of the Person

PSE addresses the question of which qualities, skills, dispositions should be stressed to enhance personal and social development *given that persons are agents*. It is from this perspective that PSE aims to help students make sense of themselves, others and the world.

It is clearly not the case that PSE is unique among the subjects on the curriculum in presupposing that persons are active, but it can be viewed as making a distinctive contribution in the focus it permits and encourages on students' questioning of themselves, reflecting on themselves as persons, or selves, in the asking in different ways of the question 'Who am I?' Thus although questions concerning what persons and human beings are, how they function and behave, their culture, history and social life, all form part of PSE, it is in the stimulation of self-reflection and questioning concerning the students' own lives, in the asking of what they should do, how they should live, that lies the strength and value of PSE.

The aims of PSE involve, at least, an understanding of what is valuable about persons. Whether explicitly stated or labeled as such, discussions of the aims of PSE involve an ideal, or ideals of the person, and assumptions about what it is valuable for persons to acquire. The ideal of the person which has had most influence is that of the autonomous agent. While interpreted differently and admitting of conceptual and moral problems, there can be little doubt that even if it is not considered the major aim of PSE, any feasible aim presupposes that persons are active and capable of some form of self-determination. If we take the idea that PSE is concerned with the perceptions students have of themselves, others and the world around them, while implying the development of those individual qualities, skills and dispositions considered personally and socially valuable, it also makes certain assumptions about persons in the formulation and articulation of those ideals which supply the content for the notion of personal development.

These ideals, which may or may not be moral, are determined frequently, though not exclusively by reference to theories only indirectly concerned with what persons are. In other words, arguments for what the aims of PSE should be, make use of sociological, political, psychological and ethical theories in articulation and defence of the valued qualities to be promoted, but lacking in these accounts is much attention to what is meant by the term 'person',[1] attention being directed to the determination of what is of value to both persons and society. It is the relation between these two issues - what a person is and

what is valuable about persons, and the relation of both to arguments for the aims of PSE - which is of concern here. Although the existence of these relations is occasionally made explicit,[2] more often they are implicitly invoked in arguing for an explicit conception of the person.

Notwithstanding concern with explicitly normative questions of personhood, the theory and practice of PSE necessarily presupposes a theory of the person. A theory of the person is necessary to making sense of PSE, as a subject on the curriculum addressed to personal and social concerns.[3] While such a theory could not be considered sufficient for either the articulation or defence of the distinctive contribution PSE makes to the curriculum, the necessary assumption of a theory of the person is important in virtue of the assumed relation it has to other matters of concern in PSE. What constitutes living well and ideas on social and personal well-being require arguments for, or assumptions about, what persons are. As Sprigge (1988:247) points out, the difficulty in answering questions such as "'How is it best that we, or how ought we, to act in the world?', lies as much in deciding what *we* really are, what *action* really is, and the *world* really is as in deciding what *ought* and *best* are." It shall be argued here that what it is to be a person, is a question which, in an important sense, has a legitimate claim of relative priority to the more obviously normative question of what is valuable about persons. This is not to claim the stronger position, that from what persons are, substantial ethical or political claims can be derived, but to begin to address a neglected connection between questions concerning the person in philosophy of mind and social, political and ethical theories drawn on in the defence of aims of PSE. Since this is a contentious position, perhaps giving the impression of putting the cart before the horse, in the first section the importance of this issue for PSE will be argued by showing that the aims of PSE, although divergent in both arguments and conclusions, have in common an underlying conception of the person.

It will be argued that at least among the aims to be considered, which are intended to be representative, the basic insight is that the person, in this context, should be conceptualised as complex. Thus, the interest in persons in PSE, it will be argued, is in the person as a complex entity which has, in particular, both active and passive aspects which need to be taken into account, and accounted for, in arguments for what the main aims of PSE should be. Although the conception of the person held in common is often implicit, it will be argued here that it is precisely this complex conception of the person which, in large measure accounts for, and provides grounds for, the value and importance of PSE as integral to the curriculum, notwithstanding the problems of coherent articulation of this conception of the person. The difficulty, of course, with this understanding of the person lies in the attempt to realise it

within the constraints of coherence and adequacy, given that it involves the adoption and reconciliation of two perspectives which are not obviously compatible. It is not at all clear that this is possible. Nevertheless, it will be argued here that a sincere attempt needs to be made to give a coherent account of the person which, similar to the aims considered in the following section, takes our ordinary understanding and experiences of persons and of being persons, seriously. In starting from our ordinary experience coupled with our interest in persons in PSE, the aim is to focus on the role played by some commonly held assumptions about what persons are in the formulation and argument for specific aims of PSE.[4]

Having argued for the importance of a complex and rich account of the person in PSE, some of the problems with accomplishing this will be examined. In the next chapter, it will be argued that the question concerning persons which is most relevant given the problem of conceptualising the person as both active and subject to social forces, is not as it may at first have appeared to be, the normative question, but rather the metaphysical question of 'what is a person?'. That this should be the case is suggested by the interest in persons in PSE, which is interpreted as addressed to the person as subject. The argument stresses the importance of making our interest in persons explicit, and draws attention to features of the concept of the person itself, raising the question of whether it is possible and what would be involved in giving a single coherent account of the person which is both consistent and useful in the context of PSE.

The discussion implies a close connection between the meaning given to the concept of the person and the context of its use, in that it implies that the former is dependent on the latter which includes the interest in inquiring about persons. This raises questions about the concept of the person and its analysis. It will be argued here that although definitive disentanglement of the meaning of 'person' from its context is neither possible, nor desirable, this does not preclude the identification of a specific conception of the person which is central to our understanding of the person as subject. This does not presume normative neutrality, but legitimates consideration of assumptions concerning the person, as at least having procedural priority to explicitly normative questions.

1

Issues Concerning the Theory of the Person and the Aims of PSE

In this section conceptions of the person contained in proposed aims for PSE will be examined with the aim of showing that despite differences, there is a common underlying conception of the person. The general aim of this section

is to lay out some of the issues involved in the attempt to determine the nature of the relation between the theory of the person necessarily contained in discussions of the aims of PSE and the aims themselves. This issue will be approached through examination of the conceptions of the person implicitly referred to, or explicitly adduced in support of arguments for the aims of PSE. These conceptions, it will be argued, are distinguishable from the question of what is valuable about persons. This provides the framework for subsequent discussion of the relation between these conceptions and the explicitly normative issue of what is valuable about persons that we wish to promote in PSE. The distinction on which this argument is based is necessarily qualified by the functional nature of the concept of person, but this does not disturb the case made for the usefulness and validity of considering the question of what a person is, in this context.

Arguments for the aims of PSE will be taken here to involve a presupposition about persons, their agency. For this reason the emphasis here is on those aims which stress this aspect of persons. Other conceptions,[5] in virtue of holding the same presupposition but not emphasising it, are considered to the extent that they reveal inadequacies in the conception of the person as autonomous. The concern is to be illustrative and representative rather than exhaustive in the examples chosen. It will be shown that despite important differences, the aims of PSE share a common goal: to embrace the idea of the person as both an autonomous and social entity. A problem in the formulating of the aims of PSE will therefore be seen to lie in the attempt to realise the basic insight held in common, that our understanding of the person is complex and that PSE should attempt to reflect this complexity in the statement of what it hopes to achieve.

This position naturally depends on a particular understanding of the problems PSE is to address. Here it will be assumed that common to all approaches is the problem of how to characterise, or how we are to understand the relation of a person to herself, and the relation between a person and the world.[6]

Since the focus is the conception of the person, a few preliminary words need to be said about the nature of the concept of the person itself. A working assumption of the approach adopted here is that the concept of the person is functional, thus is appropriately applied to any being which satisfies a given criterion in the context of its use. Thus, the philosophical commonplace, that there is no univocal concept to which all usages conform, is accepted. This argument, which has been made most forcibly by Rorty (1988), claims that the term 'person' functions as a place-holder for a plurality of different concepts, and as the focus for a complex of quite different concerns. On this view, no

single formulation can be accepted as being *the* definition of the person. Rather than it being the case that there is a determinable underlying concept of the person which is independent of our interest in person, these interests themselves inform the definitions. This requires that any account of the person must be sensitive and relevant to the context of its use. Hence, one of the criteria against which the adequacy of the analysis of the concept of the person can be measured is the extent to which it illuminates and clarifies those features of PSE which are distinctive and give it value, this being determined, in this case, by the desire to reflect and illuminate features of our experience as persons, and the ideals which reflect what is considered valuable about this experience.

Starting from this position, which will be qualified later, it is appropriate not to provide a detailed definition of the person at the outset, but to look, in the first instance at our interest in persons in this context, as what a person is considered to be will be responsive to this interest.[7] This may seem a tall order in our present context, since, it could be argued, there is no widespread agreement on what PSE is,[8] and that even if there were such agreement, the interest in persons comes not from PSE but from wider theoretical perspectives which inform the major functions of PSE. Even if this is accepted, it cannot be concluded that there is no agreement on the interest in persons, as shall be argued. All that needs to be shown for this approach to be acceptable is that there are isolatable interests in persons which are evident in PSE. The source of these interests does not affect the validity of the approach. The approach while not directly addressing the source of our interest in persons does in fact indirectly draw attention to this issue. The assumption is that by not providing a definition of person at the outset we shall, by following the arguments for the aims which have been put forward, clarify the interest in persons in PSE.

This approach has the advantage of forestalling an objection which could be raised to an inquiry which focuses on the concept of the person in arguments for specific educational aims. By looking in the first place to the stated concerns with persons in PSE and moving from this to analysis of the concept isolated we avoid the more obvious charge of misguided foundationalism, or of assuming that there is only one concept of the person which will unambiguously pick out the same entity in all contexts of its use.[9]

Fundamental to this approach is the argument that any discussion of persons starts from a particular perspective, and that lack of explicitness as to the perspective may have the consequence of making the analysis inapplicable to the particular context of its use. For example in some contexts we are concerned with persons as physical objects: as the objects of biological and anatomical inquiry. In determining whether some disease only afflicts persons, for

instance, characterising the class of persons by their possession of an immortal soul, is unlikely to be most pertinent or useful. In education, if we assume that a behaviouristic approach is being considered, it would only be useful to start from a definition of persons as essentially disembodied souls as a definition to be criticised. One must at the outset have an interest in persons, an interest which focuses the discussion and delineates the area of inquiry. From this it cannot, of course, be assumed that the interest isolated in the first instance will capture what is important about persons in that context given that many of the issues concerning persons are not only ambiguous in their first formulation, but the concerns which initially appear separate often overlap and cannot be considered in isolation from other issues.[10] Even if it were to be disputed that every discussion of persons must necessarily be undertaken from a certain perspective, it is clearly the case here, given that we are concerned with the education of persons within a specific educational and social context.

For different reasons, in outlining the various approaches to the aims of PSE, the question of similarities and differences between the principal terms used, such as person, individual and self, will not be addressed. This strategy has the advantage of keeping it as open as possible which question concerning persons is most pertinent whilst discussing the various aims that have been proposed for PSE. While it will be argued later that the concepts of person, individual and self as they are used in PSE, raise relevantly similar issues, it is important not to overlook the fact that these concepts are taken to address different issues in general,[11] and the prioritising of the concept of person effectively prejudices the argument by marginalising some issues which are properly addressed by these other concepts. This is a useful strategy as it helps show the extent to which the concept of person is central to PSE, without becoming embroiled in definitional questions at the outset. The aim is to focus on often unacknowledged beliefs about persons, and the effect of these on the formulation of the aims of PSE. The reason for proceeding in this way, is that it allows the common features of the approaches to be more easily seen, and at the same time revealing some of the complexity of the concept of person as it is used in PSE.

2
Conceptions of the Person in the Aims of PSE

In this section the conception of the person in writings on the aims of PSE is considered. Pring (1984, 1987), and White (1990) provide the focus for several reasons. Both contain clear expressions of the importance of the concept of person, and both argue for the importance of a form of autonomous thought

and action as an aim of PSE. A further reason for considering these two accounts of the aims of PSE is that they illustrate the problem with conceiving of the person as an agent, namely how to give adequate recognition to the conception of the person as active and passive.

Both argue for a privileging of the personal in PSE, although the meaning given to 'personal' is importantly different. Whereas Pring argues for a conception of the person closely connected to moral theory, White's conception relies on a conception of personal well-being which does not place the demands of an impersonal and objective morality at the centre. Although there is this crucial area of disagreement, both positions are clearly within a philosophical tradition which prizes the idea of person as the source of authority in significant areas which informs the underlying conception of the person and its importance. Although differing significantly in the basis for their position and their recommendations, they are united in their emphasis on the person as the primary location for agency, and in the importance of personal choice and action.

Pring (1987:12) argues for a "shift ... to the personal" and a "deeper concern for the person" (ibid:27) which leads to more emphasis on curricular innovation aimed directly at developing those abilities which are personally and socially desirable. This includes awareness of students' needs, and a rejection of the impersonal attitude traditionally seen as the focus of academic inquiry. This shift to the personal is justified by what it means to be a person, and by the social and cultural context within which PSE is to exist and flourish.

Among those features of the social and cultural context which Pring mentions as relevant are the unpredictable future facing students, including changing employment patterns and a certain fluidity in social roles, and the pluralism of society such that no common core of values can be assumed to hold. The conception of the person refers both to the conditions for personhood (ibid:15, 1984:12-13) and to an explicitly moral conception of the person (1984:13), with the idea of the person or self essentially connected to the idea of the good: "'persons' picks out objects that not only have a form of conscious life and engage in purposeful activities but also possess moral attributes" (loc.cit.). Drawing on the proposition that "[h]ow you treat people depends upon your concept of 'person'", Pring stresses the idea of a person as a moral being in the sense that a certain stance towards persons is appropriate and that persons can reciprocate this stance, echoing Dennett's (1978:270) third and fourth conditions of personhood. Pring's personal approach is characterised by respect for students, a sense of community and objective standards of moral decision making. Although Pring takes a neo-Kantian view of personal and social development, making use of Kohlberg and Piaget (1984:Ch. 2, 1987:16-

18), this rationalist view of persons is combined with an emphasis on the "feelings, concerns and self-perceptions" of students. The account of personal development involves "enhancement of those powers of problem-solving, of self-transcendence, of sensitivity and of imagination" (1987:12) which will have personally and socially beneficial outcomes.

The connection between being a person and the particular conception of the good he embraces, leads Pring to endorse Morrell's (1965-6, as quoted in Pring, loc.cit.) claim that the only basis for true moral discourse is the 'objectification of self'. Thus from within a personal perspective, from an interest in the actual lives of students, taking their concerns and interests seriously he takes an objectivist view of moral personhood. His views on the importance of the person in PSE are characterised by:

> a deeper concern for the person - a respect for pupils or students as persons, enabling them to articulate and to 'refine' their feelings to achieve self-esteem and sense of personal worth, to develop the capacity to engage in principled thinking, to acquire the ability to reflect upon experience, and to accept seriously the values and attitudes that they bring to school or college (1987:27).

The importance of the personal is therefore centred on the autonomy and value of the individual, with autonomy being construed as a moral ideal, in conformity with standards of rationality.

A different argument for the personal approach is to be found in a recent article by White (1989). Noting a deficiency in recent attempts to formulate the aims of PSE in terms of moral education, neglect of the Aristotelian insight that personal well-being is central to a good life, he argues that personal well-being should be a central aim of PSE. White rejects the view that persons are essentially moral agents and thus the implication that a central aim of PSE should be the promotion of moral goodness. Instead of focusing on moral obligation as central to the worthwhile life, White's account looks to the importance of the personal point of view. This cannot be accommodated, according to White, if the presumption in the aims of PSE is in favour of moral development. This leads White to argue for a redress of the balance of "self-remembering" over "self-forgetting" (ibid.:17) in favour of the former to counteract the emphasis which has traditionally been given to the latter in education.

In arguing for the importance of personal well-being as an aim of PSE, he draws attention to the motivation to be moral, the "missing element" in the promotion of moral education as a central aim of PSE. A motivation for the promotion of personal well-being as expounded is awareness of the indispensability of the personal, subjective life of the individual in a worthwhile

life PSE. In drawing attention to this aspect of morality, that it must involve the 'inside' and not just be external to the person, in the forms of demands or commitments that attach to the person, he joins a recent tradition in moral theory the most notable exponents of which are Nagel (1986) and Williams (1976, 1985). Thus, the account of personal well-being is influenced by Williams' criticism of morality as well as an Aristotelian conception of the good life. White takes seriously Williams' view that moral obligation is a form of alienation.

This is an argument for recognition of the importance of "subjective involvement in one's own ends and their interrelationships" (loc.cit.). The notion of the individual person White stresses is personal in the sense that it emphasises that distinctive aspect of being a person, the subjective, distinct from objective descriptions of what it means to be a person. Thus, White's account emphasises the importance of the idea that persons have a point of view on the world. Arguing from the importance of the subjective view of the self, he argues that the connection between the self and moral demands is such that it supports the idea that PSE should be engaged in enhancing the individual person's perception of her own well-being.

These positions on the person support White's criticism of impersonal approaches to moral education, where the impersonality of the approach is found in the emphasis on one's behaviour towards others. Situating this view of moral education in an historical context, in the idea of an education as, in part, serving others, White objects that this view of education involves the adoption of an inappropriate stance to PSE for several reasons: It is only one, if influential, view of the worthwhile life; it is based on particular cultural and historical conditions; and it neglects the basis of human motivation for action. It is only our desires which give us reason for action, so if the reasons for action are not related to our desires they remain external to us. This holds equally for moral reasons for action. White's account attempts to incorporate this theoretical perspective on the connection between individual desire and reasons for action in his articulation of personal well-being as the aim of PSE.

Pring and White provide two arguments for autonomy as the aim of PSE, two views which principally diverge on the connection between morality and the person.

The tension between the views is highlighted if we look more closely at a central claim of White's against positions such as Pring's, which emphasise the importance of moral education. White, addressing a point made by Pring (1984:68) that "some sense of moral obligation, of duty" is needed argues that unless moral demands are somehow related to the students' desires they will remain external to the student and thus alien to them. The strength of the

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argument, as presented by White, lies in the claim that "it is only our desires, I would argue, which give us reason for action" (op.cit.:9). This supplies the warrant for "start[ing] at a different place" (ibid:10), one which is not premised on the idea that moral goodness is a central aim of PSE.

Although White does not make distinctions between desires, as it stands this claim can be interpreted as having the implication that reasons for action which are not based on desires are less significant for the person performing the action than actions performed from desires. Significant in this context can mean either less motivating or less part of a person's conception of themselves. This view seems to draw on several philosophical arguments. Given White's (ibid:10) positive citing of Williams' views on morality, it is plausible to assume that Williams' objections to impartial morality developed in his earlier work,[12] and especially Williams' notion of a ground project and the absurdity of an impersonal morality, are accepted. White's account could also be seen as endorsing a Humean view of the relation between reason and passion. On either of these positions, the claim, as it stands, and the context of the argument, suggests that an important distinction is being obscured: between what makes a reason a good reason and what gives that reason force for a particular person.

It seems that White does not make this distinction because of his perspective on the person and its relation to morality. On a view other than White's, a good reason for action need not have anything to do with the desires of particular individuals. To see this we need only take the idea of action within a rule-governed practice. It can be assumed that in the absence of particular personal desires extrinsic to the goods specific to the practice, once engaged in a practice it is the goods of the practice itself, and not particular personal desires which determines reason for action, except where the practice is engaged in for the sake of goods external to the practice. In a world of practices prefacing action with 'I want' or 'it pleases me' plays only a very specific role, as MacIntyre (1982:299-301) notes. Thus, while a certain state of desire is necessary to generate action, and a practice may be engaged in for reasons other than the goods of the practice, once engaged in the practice personal desire has no role. One could only hold the contrary position if the above distinction was obscured. In rule governed practices, as MacIntyre (ibid:300-301) points out, what determines a good reason for an action are the rules defining and constituting the practice, not the desires of individuals participating in the practice. White's position, as opposed to Pring's, does not recognise good reasons for action in absence of desires. Thus, White's views on the role of desire in providing reasons for action is only applicable to the initial stance to the practice, which is all that is required for an action to be autonomous.

Borrowing from Brink (1986:432), we can say that White's worries are about morality rather than moral worries. His objection is essentially to morality as a practice which does not give sufficient importance to the personal point of view. On White's view the person or self can choose to be moral, but need not. There is nothing in what it means to be a person, in White's account which requires obedience to an impersonal moral order. A salient characteristic of persons on this account is their ability to form second order desires. This is frequently taken to be a condition of personhood,[13] as one of those characteristics which distinguish persons from other entities. For White second-order desires are characterised as arising "from the regulation of conflicts between lower-order desires" (ibid.:12). The first order dispositional desires to be inculcated in children are determined by inter-subjective agreement: "there is a broad, taken-for-granted, agreement among (nearly all of) us about what desires are worth fostering"(ibid.:11). Higher-order desires are added to these for the purpose of adjudicating conflicts between first-order desires. First order desires are thus socially constituted and non-autonomously acquired, and occupy a lower position in a desire hierarchy.

There are significant differences between this account and Taylor's (1977, 1985b, 1989) notion of strong evaluation which are instructive in this context as they concern the relation between the person and moral demands.[15] Taylor makes use of Frankfurt's distinction between first and second order desires as the basis for his distinction between strong and weak evaluation. In White's desire hierarchy "those of higher order found among our major desires" (op.cit:11) are not distinguished from first order desires in virtue of being, as in Taylor's scheme "worthier, or nobler, or more integrated" (Taylor, 1977:25). In Taylor it is not so much the capacity to override first-order desires which is important, but the reasons for doing so. The strong evaluator is distinguished from the weak evaluator by the kind of evaluation involved. Unlike White, the assessment of first order desires is carried out from a specifically ethical standpoint, where ethical is broadly understood to involve the idea of personal growth, as the growing beyond "a baser, more self-enclosed and troubled" motivation, to "a higher, more clairvoyant, more serene" one. Hence, "[i]mplicit in this strong evaluation is thus placing our different motivation relative to each other, the drawing, as it were, of a moral map of ourselves" (1985b:67). White, like Owen (1990) would argue that this account of the person overemphasises the centrality of ethical identifications in human life, and its importance to our sense of who we are. Second order desires in White are, as mentioned above, required for the resolution of conflict between first-order desires. There is no requirement for second-order desires if there is no conflict or need to prioritise desires. There is no need for reflection on desires, in other

words, if the desires are consistent. The degree of reflectiveness required can therefore be minimal in a well-ordered life. The overall aim seems to be for a form of personal harmony and integration. The conditions for autonomy are required, just in case they are needed, not because they are necessary to the living of a good life. Thus, although second order desires are more important, being higher in the desire hierarchy, their value and function is significantly different from Taylor's strong evaluations.

Although White's account is consistent with the person as a socially constructed entity, in that first-order desires are socially constructed, the person is understood as a primarily an individual with a discrete existence, with the theory of valued action being guided by the theory of the self.

Both Pring's and White's approaches retain a core idea of personal autonomy, that the autonomous person does what she really wants to do, not just what she wants to do. The two approaches are distinguishable, however, in terms of the the the standard by which actions are to be judged worthwhile. In Pring impartial rationality performs this role. This involves the 'objectification of the self' in the following of moral principles guided by a theory of rationality. In White the objective of autonomous action is achieved through 'second-order desires', with intersubjectively agreed upon values which have been internalised providing the standard.

While the avoidance of notions such as a true or authentic self seems correct, without using these or similar ideas, it is not clear how successful the shift to the personal can be. In both cases the standards are external to the student, or are only contingently internal. When a student in Pring's PSE class asks herself "Do I really want to do this?" or "Do I want to be the sort of person who does this?" the reference is "positions which are objectively defensible" (1987:13). This may seem to raise problems about choice, a notion bound up with autonomy.[14] The standards by which actions are judged are supplied by an objective morality enhanced by a developmental programme. Together these provide the source of the objectively defensible positions. In White the inculcation of intersubjectively agreed upon first-order desires according to agreed upon values, with second-order desires being fostered for the purpose of regulating conflicts between first-order desires, provide a non-arbitrary standard for judging the worthiness of desires. In both cases therefore there are standards, rationally or socially derived which provide criteria for judging whether a thought or action is autonomous.

The standards or assurances provided by objectively defensible positions, or intersubjectively agreed upon values, assure the possibility of autonomous thought and action, which brings us to the central problem. In both cases these standards, which need to be inculcated or fostered through PSE have a higher

status than the standards of any particular individual. The validation of these standards is not derived from or dependent on the individual. In the case of Pring they are standards provided by moral theory and a theory of rationality, and in White by commonly agreed upon values. It is not claimed that these standards are universal, rather both Pring and White situate their arguments for the aims of PSE firmly within the context of a particular society and set of traditions. The emphasis on the development of autonomy is motivated by, and a reflection of, these wider values.

The emphasis is therefore not on the personal in the sense that the goal is that each individual person thinks and acts according to her own independently arrived at maxims or principles. These are only sanctioned in so far as they conform to principles external to the individual. The aim, of course, is that these will become internal, that the individual will identify with these desires or principles so that they constitute what the person 'really' wants to do, but they are only contingently internal at the start of the process.

The idea at root is that persons are malleable, their desires and thoughts are influenced by factors external to themselves. On this view, a function of PSE is to foster the identification with and 'owning' of ideas, principles and desires which are justified by reference to ideals found in morality, agreed upon values and standards of rationality. The issue of identification and the owning of desires and thoughts therefore bears directly on the question of the conceptualisation of the person.

3
The Person and The Personal

Before addressing this directly, it is important to be clear what is not being claimed by Pring and White, and in the process clarify the nature of the problem. It is claimed in objection to the view that the aims of PSE should emphasise some form of autonomy, that such accounts do not sufficiently take into account the extent to which the person is socially constituted.

There is a distinction to be made here between the idea that the concept of the person is socially constituted and the idea that a person is socially constituted. According to the first idea, the definition of personhood and thus the extent of its attribution and the consequences of attribution are dependent on social context. Hence, in some societies very young human beings may be excluded, in others entities other than live human beings may be included as persons. The second idea is that desires, intentions, thoughts and so forth are socially constituted. It is from this latter position that the objection is raised to

the emphasis on the person as potentially autonomous in significant areas of her life.

This is a far more radical objection than that raised by those who object to the emphasis on autonomy in the aims of PSE. Garnett and Lang (1986), who argue for the treatment of "the individual in a collective context" which "locates self-identity in a social environment" (ibid.:163), and Regis (1991) who endorses this view, do not take a totally constructivist position on the person. Rather the objection is to the implications of the dominance of an individualist conception of the person on the individual. The objection looks to the mismatch between this conception and students' needs and social reality. On this view attachment to the idea of educating for rational choice, and its underlying theory of the person, has obscured the lack of consonance between this conception of the person and social reality, leading to undue emphasis on procedures for choice and on individual decision-making, leading to neglect of the legitimate role played by family, friends and other communities in making decisions. Thus Regis (1991.:8) points out "the young person may depend on this group for a sense of identity, and for development and maintenance of his or her self-concept." The concern expressed by this objection is that adequate recognition needs to be given to the idea that persons are necessarily social beings. Emphasis on developing autonomous thought and action, based on the individual, is considered to have harmful outcomes for the individual, by failing to recognise that social relations play a role in constituting who we are.

The objection does not, however, involve rejection of the importance of enhanced autonomy, for example, as a legitimate aim of PSE: the notion of an autonomous person is still recognised as a value. The more social orientation is perceived as a corrective to the flaws in, rather than a substitute for, the individualist conception. The idea is to elevate the importance of the social conditions for personhood, with the group of which the person is a part being given increased importance such that it is considered integral to a person's sense of identity.

This type of criticism does not raise a serious problem for positions such as Pring's and White's if the objection is understood as simply a call to include social influences on the formation of desires, concerns and orientation to problems, or if the demand is to recognise the existence of social constraints on the achievement of autonomous thought and action. Opponents to the stress on autonomy in the aims of PSE do not want to reject the idea of the person as a decision maker, which is a main plank of the approach advocated by Pring and White. Thus, there is, in principle, no problem with recognising within Pring and White's position Regis' criticism of approaches to health education which look to the self-concept, that "the self-esteem which health educators may see as

an *antidote to* social influences is in fact the *product of* social influences" (ibid:8, italics in original). This can be incorporated into the general understanding of the personal, and the stress on students' experience and needs which White and Pring both accept and promote.

The objection does not therefore constitute an alternative conception to that proposed by Pring and White, but rather is a reminder of the importance of social relations in determining who we are. This, however, may seem to be too summary a dismissal of the objection. The objection can be interpreted as making a more substantial point by drawing attention to what is perceived to be an objectionable form of individualism implicit in the approach to the person evident in Pring and White.

There can be no doubt that the personal approach is individualistic in the importance it gives to the individual person as a distinct entity, and in the belief that the individual is valued on the basis of her individual existence as a person. The person as an individual entity is the focus, with relations between persons understood in terms of separate individuals, and with the capacity for some forms of autonomous belief and action being recognised and valued. In this the personal approach is recognisably part of the liberal tradition, with the relationships between persons being represented, as Wolf (1980:131) says "extrinsic rather than intrinsic, accidental rather than essential".

From this it does not follow that the personal approach is guilty of promoting a morally objectionable individualism, such as egoism. As Stoutland (1990:122), for example, points out, egoism does not follow from the individualist claim that if something is good, there must be a particular individual whose preferences are satisfied. Egoism would only follow if the additional assumption is made that preferences of individuals must be preferences for themselves or for their own well-being. It is not necessary for the coherence of individualism that one's own preferences need have one's self as their object. White need not be committed to this type of individualism, and Pring explicitly excludes it in his argument for the importance of moral obligation.

Individualism, as is frequently noted[16] is a loosely related and complex cluster of beliefs, attitudes or habits of thought not all of which are compatible. While other forms of individualism are present, an important strand of individualist thinking which the personal approach in general accepts, is altruistic individualism.[17] Altruistic individualism includes the core belief that individual people have in themselves a unique value unconnected to their social status or the importance of their community roles. This belief is frequently linked to the Kantian principle that the relation between people, and a community and individuals should be governed by the idea that people should

be treated as ends in themselves. Altruistic individualism holds that many preferences are altruistic in that the object is not the fulfillment of one's own preferences, but the well-being of others through the fulfillment of their preferences. This is consistent with individualism in general as it takes society as being instrumental in the satisfaction of preferences, but not as constituting them. Thus in the more personal approach the assumption is that the underlying individualist belief holds, that "individual uniqueness, initiative and autonomy are more important than group identity, conformity and solidarity" (Watt, 1989:2). Egoism does not necessarily follow from this proposition. Fundamental to the individualism which characterises the personal approach is the view that the individual decides between actions, conceptions of the good, plans of life and what sort of person she will be. While there are recognised to be constraints on these choices, the possibility of personal choice in these areas is given prominence. Advocates of the personal approach recognise the close connection between autonomy and social conditions, and between personal well-being and social concerns. The basic point is that the orientation to these is from the perspective of the individual person, which is considered apart from, though intimately related to the social world.

This is consistent with the importance given to community and fellow-feeling in Pring and White. Although the starting point is the person herself, as an entity, the person need not, in these arguments, be understood as primarily motivated by self-interest. Pring stresses the idea of community and fraternity and White (op.cit.:10-11) argues for an education which "so shape[s] children's' dispositions from the start ... that they come to think of their own flourishing as inextricably intertwined with that of others". Combining the Aristotelian idea of the person as social and the importance of well-being, with the socially contingent nature of many features of well-being, and the idea of rational decision making processes made by reference to context, White integrates the idea of the person with its social context. It remains the case, however, that although the social is connected to it it is ultimately separable from the person in the sense that it is not intrinsic to the conception of the person, as a rational agent capable of self-reflection and a certain amount of independent thought.

While this is adequate to address the objection that what it means to be a person includes social relations, the objection does not look to the root conception of the person presupposed and required by the notion of autonomous thought and action, as can be seen by the wish to retain the basic idea of choice of roles in the more social conception. The choice is between "those social groups or communities with whom we may choose to align ourselves" (Regis, op.cit.:8). However, although Regis sees this as not forcing

a choice between independence and conformity understood in abstraction, it does not address the root question raised by the possibility of autonomous choice.

Pring and White use a complex conception of the person, one which embraces both passive and active aspects of being a person. Thus a person is that which is both capable of action and choice in significant areas of her life, and who is deeply affected by social factors in that they play a role in determining the particular identity of the person. Thus, as well as being active, social relations are recognised to have a role in determining personhood, and in the formation and maintenance of a sense of self. Correctly, the first aspect, that of the person as agent is emphasised as this is the aspect of being a person which PSE is to foster, the social determination of action does not function as an aim, of course, but is seen as an aspect of being a person which can be utilised, as in White.

This conception should not be confused with a characterisation of the person often found in writings about PSE. Following from the claim that what is distinctive about PSE as a subject and a source of its value is the interpretation of what it means to be a person, where 'person' is interpreted broadly to include more than the cognitive or rational aspect of being a person usually stressed in education. Education is often seen as privileging this aspect of persons, with the effect that when other aspects are dealt with they are not given the status that traditional academic aspects of the curriculum enjoy. Leicester (1990:3), for example, who refers to the holistic conception of the person in pastoral care in general, argues for a conception such that persons are "not disembodied minds but social, spiritual, sexual, emotional individuals developing in relationship with other individuals".[18] This is clearly not the conception argued to be problematic above. To note that PSE should address the holistic nature of persons is to draw attention to what may be called the multifaceted nature of persons. To note that the person is conceptualised as both passive and active is not so much a matter of being more inclusive in our definition of 'person' but to note that persons can be viewed from more than one perspective. On this view one way of characterising what is valuable and distinctive about PSE, is to describe the concern with persons as attempting to give adequate recognition to the two perspectives with which we view persons, as both subjects and objects of experience. With emphasis being placed on the person as subject of experience, persons are viewed as subjects for whom things matter, this being of educational significance in and of itself, and not something which must be taken into account pursuant to further or other ends. Rather than extending our definition of 'person' the demand is for an understanding of 'person' in the aims of PSE which does justice to two of the

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perspectives we have on persons, two perspectives which gain their relevance from the context of the aims of PSE where the explicit concern is with the possibility of agency and its promotion. The question, in other words, does not so much concern the diversity of human experience and its importance in determining who we are, but the nature of the subject itself. Thus, in an important sense, the aims of PSE should address the nature of personhood, the question of how we are to understand ourselves and others as subjects.

The problem is to give an account of the person which does justice to our ordinary experience and knowledge of persons.

4
Persons and Their Roles

The problem of providing a conceptualisation of the person adequate to our experience, knowledge of persons and one which therefore recognises both the agency and the plasticity of persons, is illustrated by considering the relation between a person and her roles. Reflection on and discussion about actual and possible social roles is a subject appropriate to a PSE syllabus as reflecting some of the social and personal concerns, such as changing roles and expectations, which PSE addresses. It is likely, therefore, that reflection on social roles will be considered to be both desirable and beneficial for the student.

In order to understand this it is necessary to make reference to how the person is conceptualised. The possibility of reflection on one's roles implies a certain relation between a person and her roles, which is not only a reflection of what we consider valuable about persons, but is also responsive to what we take persons to be. A central presupposition of the idea that reflection on actual or expected roles is possible, is the possibility of achieving critical distance from particular roles. There is no reason, in principle, why all roles should not be open to this process.[19] The central idea is that a person is in principle separable from any particular role.

The adoption of this standpoint with respect to roles is compatible with the recognition that up to the point of reflection the individual is to a large part a product of influences of the social environment. What is important is the belief that the individual is able to withdraw or distance herself from these influences and adopt an attitude towards particular roles and influences which reflects preferences which are truly the person's own, assuming that it is possible to make sense of the idea of such preferences. We need not assume that all roles are chosen, could be chosen, or that it is possible to be without a role to recognise the point being made: a person is that which can adopt differing

relations to her roles and thus can be understood as separate from them. The implication is that any particular role is not essential to a person, a person being that which is capable of choosing between them.

Any particular role, while not essential, can become essential to a person's sense of who they are after it has been owned or otherwise recognised through a process of reflection on the role and one's relation to it. At this point we can leave it moot whether this implies or requires the positing of a 'true' or 'real' self, or whether this can be understood as internalisation of the norms of an objective morality or an intersubjectively agreed upon set of values. To the extent that one's roles do not undergo this process, they are less one's own than those which have, and have thereby been 'owned', identified with, or conversely, disowned. This does not therefore preclude the unreflective student identifying with particular roles. It is clear that this view of the possibility of reflection on roles is premised on a particular view of the person, and on implicit standards and views on rationality. The advantages or benefits of reflection on roles come from the importance we give to identification, and self-knowledge or self-understanding, and are importantly responsive to what we take a person to be. The hoped for outcome of the process of reflection is that one either comes to identify oneself with the role on firmer (rational or otherwise) foundations, or one comes to understand one's relation to the role, and its function in who one takes one's self to be, and thus, it is hoped, self-understanding in general is increased. Thus, by considering the relation between one's self and one's actual or expected roles, as well as the roles themselves, it is thought that students' lives will be improved to the extent that it extends to students the possibility of greater control and increased understanding of the forces that act on their lives, as well as the possibilities for action. This process necessarily involves, in consideration of many roles, distinctions between the individual person's perception of herself, the extent to which roles determine who one is, both for oneself and for others, as well as how far it is possible and/or desirable to change them.

This view of the person seems a basic requirement for living a self-aware life which can be pursued with some measure of autonomy. It is, however, a view not without problems. It seems guilty of a certain abstractness with respect to persons, failing to take into adequate account the essential nature of at least some roles to being the person one is. This is not a criticism which can be answered by greater sensitivity by teachers of PSE to the actual lives of their students, it is a criticism of the conception of the person employed, one that privileges the process of reflection over the lived experience of the student. This general line of objection is congruent with Regis' (op.cit.:7) criticism of the emphasis on the quality rather than the content of students' decision-making

with the process of decision-making itself in abstraction from the context being given importance rather than the decisions arrived at. This is a large issue which raises questions about the context dependency of rationality and theories of argumentation, however, Regis' comments can be taken as indicative of the problem of conceptualising persons as inessentially attached to their roles, but governed by some other standard which is considered, in the context of education as more important. The implication is that if persons were identified with their roles then it would be more difficult to prioritise processes of decision making over their content. The argument can, in this way, be taken as a criticism of persons conceptualised as 'that which chooses', and the implicit view of rationality it accepts. The position Regis generally accepts would give greater weight to the view that how we think is a function of our social context. Thus, for example, the effect of inculcation into gender specific ways of thinking.

This line of criticism draws attention to other aspects of our self-conception which are in conflict with this general picture. As well as being the kind of entities able to reflect on their roles and to some extent own or disown them, however successful or not this may be in practice, we also recognise that our understanding of ourselves is dominated by the social order. Here the self is dominated by social relations, society being seen as something from which it is not possible to extract oneself, but rather, as MacIntyre (1990a:492) says "the source of an impersonal vocation inflicted upon me". This can be interpreted along a continuum from the intersubjective nature of the constitution of persons, from a Lacanian mirroring of the self in others, to a more general notion where our idea of ourselves is determined by the dominant forms or ideals of the person in a society. Pring and White recognise this aspect of the self to varying degrees: that aspect which measures itself against the standards of society and the evaluations of others.

If we turn then to our ordinary understanding of persons, based on our experience of ourselves and others, it is clear that individual persons embrace both the idea that persons are separate from their roles and the idea that who they are is determined by the reactions of others and the wider society, and thus by their roles. It is not the case, in other words, that the incompatibility of these two conceptions is relieved by being identified with two types of people who conform to either of these models: some seeing themselves as independent of the social order, able to stand back and ask what attitude they should take, and others who ask what others think of them, how they are to be evaluated by others. It is not a question of which conception is to be favoured in the aims of PSE, the question is rather recognition that within the same person there exists incompatible ideas about what it is to be person, and what a person is. It is also

clear that along with these ideas we all recognise the possibility of combining both aspects in living and understanding our lives. We live with both perspectives, with the idea of ourselves as both objects and subjects. This is an issue we shall return to, for the moment it raises the question of the extent to which the aims of PSE should be concerned with both aspects. As we have seen, arguments for autonomy are not conducted in isolation of social concerns, and indeed are often prompted by autonomy promoting or supporting social institutions. However, the recognition of these incompatible ideas about persons need to be taken into account. They explain, for example, equivocal reactions to the idea that PSE should be involved with helping students reflect on their social roles.

Encouraging persons to reflect on themselves in this way can be seen as both beneficial and detrimental to our sense of who we are. We recognise the importance of asking ourselves questions such as 'Am I really the sort of person who would do that?', and 'Do I really want to do that?'. This sort of questioning of our desires and preferences and setting them against a standard of either who we think we are, who we would like to be, or qualities we would like to have, is thought to be beneficial for ourselves and others. We also, however, are conscious that there is an important sense in which I cannot be other than what I am taken to be, that I reflect rather than initiate. We wish neither to jettison the idea that persons can think about intimate relations, such as the relation between their roles and who they are, or the idea that roles as in some sense constitutive of persons. PSE highlights the contradictions in, and importance of these two perspectives on persons.

However, as has been argued previously, the problem is not one of merely recognising the social aspect of personhood and how this affects the conception of the person as agent, but the very possibility of agency in face of powerful social forces which constitute rather than merely constrain the exercise of personhood. While it is possible to live with two perspectives on persons, the account of the person as agent stands in more need of justification. The need for such a justification is evident from problems with the conceptualisation of the person which will be addressed further in the third chapter and with the inadequacy of a social constructionist view of the person to meet minimal requirements for the possibility of autonomous thought and action.

5

Justifying Conceptions of the Person

We now need to look more closely at the conception of the person implied by the autonomous ideal. In order to begin assessing the role it plays in the aims

of PSE, it is useful to look at its role in the justification of autonomy as an aim of PSE.

While White derives the importance of autonomy from liberal democratic theory, Pring looks to the particular situation facing students. It can be taken as given that students will, in all likelihood, have to cope with several role changes in the course of their lives. The economic climate and alteration in employment patterns mean that it cannot be presumed that students will either remain in employment or in the same sphere of employment throughout their working lives. PSE has a certain responsibility to help students be aware of the relation between themselves and their employment or lack of it, and this involves thinking about their relation to their roles. Changes in the perception of the respective roles of men and women, as well as value stances with respect to these roles, also need to be, and often are, taken into account in PSE. In addition, given the concern in PSE not only with the future and the wider society, but also with the student's perception of the school as an academic and social community, reflection is required on the role of student and other members of this community.

As we have seen, the arguments for autonomy are in general derived from or make use of social, psychological and ethical perceptions and theories. Both White and Pring rely on arguments other than those directly concerned with the meaning or referent of 'person'. Both are taken as necessary to their arguments for a personal approach, but greater attention is given to the former. Particular valued qualities of persons are recognised to be responsive to social conditions, and to require certain social conditions for their realisation (see, for example, White, op.cit.:15). From this it can be assumed that the social context, whether this is the school ethos or something larger, supports the valued attributes of persons promoted in PSE. Pring and White do not imply, however, that the concept of the person itself is determined by these contexts, rather the value of certain characteristics such as autonomy are supported by the social context, or suggest themselves as necessary for a worthwhile life in a particular context. Thus the function of the mention or use of conditions of personhood is not in explicit support of more particular arguments for the attributes of persons valued, but to fulfill the condition that the account of the valued characteristics to be acquired or developed are consistent with the minimal conditions supplied by the conditions for personhood with the implication that these conditions are less contentious that the values to be promoted. The position on the theory of the person therefore is that the emphasis on the person, in the sense given by White and Pring, is responsive to a particular interest in persons which gains plausibility from the social context which supports some form of autonomy and thus respect for individuals.

The strength of White and Pring's approach lies in the emphasis on the person as a locus of value and as a self-conscious potentially self-determining entity. This is a conception of the person which any approach to PSE would not wish to lose sight of. White stresses the autonomy of the person, while Pring gives importance to the Kantian idea of the autonomy of the moral will. Essentially these positions on the importance of the person are arguments for the value of the person understood as capable of choice and action. It would be difficult to over-estimate the importance of this idea of persons in PSE. Choice and action are fundamental concepts required for the coherence of goals such as personal autonomy, moral education, self-knowledge, and personal and social well-being. If our goals include helping students deal with anticipated problems, have increased control over their lives and have the self-awareness thought necessary to do this, PSE, as an educational process designed in part to encourage and promote students' abilities to reflect on and direct their thoughts and feelings in such a way that they can maximise the achievement of these personally and socially desirable outcomes, needs a theory of the person as active. This is precisely what the emphasis on autonomy provides.

Conclusion

We are now able to reach some initial tentative conclusions. It has been argued that the concept of the person as agent is central to PSE, given its acceptance in all approaches to the aims of PSE, and as a necessary presupposition of an intuitive understanding of what PSE should be aiming for. The philosophical work has been identified as the provision of a theory of the person which responds to the understanding of PSE as concerned with the person as a subject as well as an object of experience.

Having argued for the importance of having a complex understanding of the person reflected in the aims of PSE, several issues need to be distinguished. The function of the use of 'person' in PSE, it has been determined, is to reflect at least two incompatible uses of the concept of person: as an autonomous agent, capable of self-defined and self-defining choices; and as social beings defined by their interactions with others and by the roles they enact in the context of shared lives. To this should also be added the function of the attribution of personhood stressed by Pring, that it should give us objective grounds for respect.

There are several approaches to this problem. In the literature on the aims of PSE, the problem is seen as being resolved by reference to theories other than the person. In other words, the theory of the person is seen as either insufficiently robust, or insufficient in some other way to perform the function

of reflecting this complexity. Alternatively, the complexity aimed for is seen as subservient to a dominant conception of the person as a discrete potentially self-determining individual. Either the theory of the person is thought to be held in common, or it is responsive to the other theories, psychological, sociological or ethical, which are used to support the conception of the person. The assumption that it is held in common may be interpreted as meaning either that the relevant theory of the person is uncontentious, in that it is generally accepted, or that it is too weak a theory to perform either a validating or discriminatory function.

Psychological, sociological and ethical theories are insufficient to resolve the issue precisely because they presuppose what is in question. They presuppose that the person is conceptualised as an agent, such that with respect to certain significant acts persons are capable of choice. Arguments for the importance of some form of personal responsibility can be taken as an example. In support of the position that personal responsibility should be a concern in PSE, social and political arguments are frequently used. Pring (1987:5-6), for example, argues from changing perceptions of moral authority to the need for the individual to take more responsibility for the establishment of values. While the social conditions supply the need for personal responsibility in this sense, a conception of the person is presupposed. While this form of defence of the idea of personal responsibility is not always adopted,[20] it is clearly a common one. This does not mean that it is possible to analyse the concept of the person as subject of experience in isolation, but its presupposition by theories which are used to support it is clearly insufficient if the concern is with the person as a subject of experience.

In White (op.cit.:11) and Pring (1984:19, 1987:15) reference to 'persons' is made in absence of argument that the characteristics of persons isolated are completely normative, although both recognise that their conception of the person needs to be argued at greater length. This is not to say, of course, that these characteristics do not reflect what we find of value or importance in persons, but the implication is that, unlike explicitly normative arguments which are seen as in need of defence, these characteristics are seen as relatively unproblematic, in that argument for the particular concepts of the person can be left to be developed later or in other contexts. On both accounts the assumption is that the concept the person is less problematic, and requires less argument than other parts of the theses.

The account of the person required here is a theory of the person as subject, of the person as actor who constructs and controls, the active base of social transactions. The problem is philosophical. Neither role theory in sociology nor the person as a psychological construct can provide the analysis of personal identity which is central to their explanations and descriptions. This is not

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surprising given that they are not designed to deal with this issue. In short, a theory of the person is required in PSE which supports our intuitions of what persons are, a theory of the person in which the person is understood as both being essentially social and potentially autonomous to adequately express the concern to address both the plasticity of persons and their potential autonomy within one coherent conception: persons as partially determined by their environment and as capable of autonomous thought and action in virtue of their nature as persons. What is required is an understanding of the person able to accommodate these conflicting conceptions.

Given that beyond this general level of description of the person as agent, there are serious disagreements on what a person is, an avenue to be explored is the basis for the idea of the person as agent. Noting the inability of sociological and psychological theories to provide a theory of the person as active does not, in itself, however, provide sufficient grounds for requiring examination of the presuppositions and preconditions for the idea of the person as agent or as a subject of experience. This would require showing that such a theory is not only necessary, but useful. In other words, although it may be philosophically interesting to point to the need for such a theory for the completeness of any acceptable aim of PSE, it must be shown that such a theory has material implications for the aims of PSE. For example, if it clarified the implications and limitations of attempting to retain a complex conception of the person this would be sufficient to warrant further examination of the concept. It is to the investigation of such possibilities that we now turn.

Notes

1. The point to stress is that although reference is made to persons, their needs and capacities, the concern is overwhelming with the normative aspects of personhood, as determined by reference to and extrapolation from sources which take the referent and sense of the term 'person' as unproblematic.

2. See, for example, Pring (1984:Ch.2.).

3. The idea of educating persons necessarily presupposes some understanding of the kind of entity persons are, and some, usually implicit, metaphysical position on the nature of the world and the relation of persons to it, and thus is not a stance particular or unique to PSE (see for example, Gordon and White (1979) on the influence of idealism on educational thought and practice). In PSE, however, the making of our assumptions about persons explicit takes on some urgency, given that PSE is an educational endeavour to which, it shall be argued, the concept of person is central.

4. A consequence of this argument is that plausibility of the assumption that the theory of the person implicit in arguments for the aims of PSE should be made explicit, is established.

5. A possible exception would an Aristotelian approach. The approach closest to this is White's(1990).

6. It might be objected at this stage that this identification of this general area as of concern to PSE prejudices the argument. Alternatively, it could be said that it begs the question. As to the first objection, it is clear that whatever values are promoted in PSE they are predicated on an understanding of what a person is and her relation to herself, others and the world. As phrased here, the basis of particular values are not assumed in this very general formulation, and thus it does not exclude more precise characterisations. As to whether it begs the question: from specification of the context, it does not follow that the conception of the person can be derived. Specification of the context is necessary, however, as a limitation on the issues, and as a focus, given the variety of available interpretations of what it means to be a person.

7. This approach may be thought to have the distinct disadvantage of leaving it unclear what the principal term, 'person', refers to in this context. However, this objection is not as serious as it may at first appear. An advantage of this approach is that by consideration of its use in context, coupled with our common-sense assumptions about what persons are, we shall come to a better understanding of what a person is and what is meant by its use in PSE.

8. Although there are several definitions of PSE (see, for example, DES (1989), ILEA (1984), David (1983) and Devon CC Ed. Dept. (1982) for some of the broad definitions available) it is a subject open to various interpretations, not only as to what it involves, but its place on the curriculum. (On this latter point see, for example Pring (1989) and Nuttall (1988) for discussion of PSE as a cross-curricula subject.) While PSE should be distinguished from pastoral care (see Watkins, 1985, for example, on the relation between these two areas, and Lang (1989) for a contrasting view from a different perspective), Best's (1989:7) comment on pastoral care applies equally to PSE. It is "a complex idea and, where it has been institutionalised in schools, a complicated phenomenon. Not surprisingly there are disagreements about its precise meaning."

9. The appropriateness of objections such as these might be thought to apply given the assumed priority given to the concept of the person above. However, as will hopefully be shown, the approach adopted avoids at least the most obvious forms of this objection such as are to be found in Rorty (1988). For similar reasons a survey of available or possible candidates for the definition of the person in the context of the aims of PSE is not undertaken here.

10. This point holds in general to what we mean by the term 'person', but also to what may initially appear to the more specific questions, such as personal identity, as has been pointed out by Rorty (1976a).

11. See, for example, G. Harris (1989) and Rorty (1976b). Both argue for the importance of recognising the difference between these concepts from different perspectives.

12. The criticism of impartial morality and its relation to the person is developed in Williams (1976).

13. In Dennett (1978), for example, the sixth condition of personhood, which depends on the previous five, is a special form of consciousness, perhaps self-consciousness (ibid:281-285). This is consistent with Frankfurt's (1971) concern with persons as able to form second-order states.

14. Downie and Telfer (1971:293), and Dworkin (1988), for example, argue for choice as constitutive of autonomy. Dan-Cohen (1992), argues for a conception of 'willing' as a more appropriate conception for constructing an adequate account of autonomy.

15. Taylor's claim is that strong evaluation as a necessary condition of personhood. This privileges reflection in a way not implied by White's idea of personal well-being, even with the prominence of the idea of second-order desires. White does not claim that one is not a person if one does not have second-order desires.

16. Lukes (1978), for example, distinguishes eleven claims of individualism: i) the dignity of man; ii)autonomy; iii)privacy; iv) self-development; v) the abstract individual; vi) political individualism; vii) economic individualism; viii) religious individualism; ix) ethical individualism; x) epistemological individualism; and xi) methodological individualism. Watt (1989: Ch 1), who provides a comprehensive discussion and critique of the dominance of individualistic ways of thought in educational theory, distinguishes between egoistic and altruistic individualism. Hargreaves (1980), isolates three distinct forms of individualism in education namely, developmental, moral and meritocratic.

17. It is not necessary to identify and distinguish between all the forms of individualism evident in PSE. It only necessary for present purposes to note that the personal approach accepts a form of individualism, and that this has provided grounds for its challenge. For a specifically sociological critique of individualism in education see Hargreaves (1980).

18. Further examples include Hibberd's (op.cit.:174) characterisation of the concern of pastoral care programmes with "the 'whole man' philosophy". Andrews (1990:39) argues that PSE should be concerned with more than "the social self, the vocational self, the bodily self, and the sexual self", advocating the inclusion of the idea of the philosophical self which he equates with moral education. In general, the interest in the wide variety of personal and social experience in PSE leads to a complex view of the person.

19. This does not imply, of course, either that all roles are, or should be open to reflection in PSE, or that all roles can or should be reflected on simultaneously.

20. Lord's (1983:9) statement of the importance of educating for taking responsibility for one's life and for the general acceptance of an underlying principle of autonomy and its value, is an example of an argument for the aims of PSE to include personal responsibility where reference is not made to the social conditions encouraging this stance. While Lord's argument for the "twin goals of autonomy and rationality" is in part justified as a counterbalance to a form of social determinism, they are also justified by the concern to help students move towards taking more responsibility for their lives and recognising their own capacity for self-determination. Thus he seems to endorse a view close to McNiff's (1988), that the attitude taken to persons in PSE can be generally, if vaguely characterised as embodying "a positive vision of the intrinsic value of personhood".

Chapter 2

Personal Identity and the Aims of PSE

The most obviously relevant question about persons posed in considering the aims of personal and social education, is the normative question 'What qualities, dispositions, values and skills should be promoted?' The responses considered in the last chapter revealed a common presupposition, the concept of the person as agent. This is commonly seen as an unproblematic presupposition given that the agency of persons is a minimal requirement for any acceptable aim of PSE. It has however become problematic in light of recent challenges to the idea of the subject it presupposes. The first issue which needs to be addressed is which approach to this issue is appropriate given the aim of giving an account of the person which is responsive to both our intuitions concerning the person as able to resist, as well as being formed by social forces.

1
A Minimum Condition for Agency

If persons are to be conceived of as active, creative and potentially self-determining, persons must satisfy certain minimum conditions. Persons must be continuous through time and distinct. These conditions are necessary in order for persons to have purposes, choose between options, plan, form intentions and carry them out, and be responsible for actions. In other words, in order for persons to be the locus of agency they must be unified, continuous through time and discrete.[1] The idea of the person as an agent, presupposes that a person can be both individuated and identified, and reidentified over time. The necessary presupposition of a theory of personal identity, as a theory of the sameness of persons at a time and over time is common to the conceptions of the person we have been considering, as well as to our ordinary understanding of what it means to live a life. Thus, criteria of reidentification have an importance in thinking about the aims of PSE, which other criteria, such as those required for class differentiation do not have. The question of whether the person, x who performed some act at t^1 is the same person as y who is being rewarded for that act at t^2 is clearly more relevant than the question of what distinguishes the class of agents from the class of non-agents in this context.

As argued above, this would only be relevant if certain other conditions hold. This minimal condition for agency, that persons be conceptualised as separate and continuous functions as a background condition which all conceptions must meet. It does not perform an independent function. Its status

is, however, important. It operates as a given, and as more universal and less-normative than the propositions about persons which presuppose it.

While the criteria of personal identity, the determination of the necessary and sufficient conditions for its being the case that x at t^1 is the same person as y at t^2, are presupposed by any aim of PSE which assumes the agency of persons, it seems a particularly innocuous if not unimportant presupposition. It is probably difficult to overestimate the importance of the belief in the unitary and discrete nature of persons to our conceptions of ourselves and others, and our relation to the world. Belief in the indivisible unity of the person seems natural, indispensable, and clearly has ethical significance. Whatever aspect of personhood is stressed, whether it is responsible agency, the search for personal meaning, or the building of interpersonal and wider social relationships, some theory of the unity of persons is presupposed. It is necessary for choice and action to have meaning, and for the possibility of personal moral responsibility, for the person to be conceptualised as a decision maker, and to be capable of moral integrity. It forms a necessary precondition for self-determination and self-consciousness as it is used in modern notions of autonomy, and for the possibility of characteristically personal action. It is therefore central to the idea of being a person, and living a life as a person. Nothing seems more self-evident, or more intuitively known than I am not you and you are not me, which is essentially what these beliefs come to.

As Rorty (1976b:309) notes "[t]he idea of a person is the idea of a unified center of choice and action, the unit of legal and theological responsibility". The unity of persons, both synchronic and diachronic, allows us to attribute action to different people, to talk of different people, and to talk of persons being responsible for past actions in virtue of the fact they are the same people now. How we conceive of ourselves and our relations to others, two central concerns in PSE, makes use of the idea that persons are continuous unified entities. These beliefs are significant in that they influence our relations to others, as well as the relation between certain social and legal institutions and ourselves.

The relevance of theory of personal identity to PSE can be seen in its relation to central issues in PSE. To take just two concepts: the concept of personal responsibility or accountability for actions and personal choice. Any conception of persons as individually responsible and accountable for their actions requires that persons are continuous and separate entities. A minimum necessary condition for responsibility is the individuation and identification of the agent who performs the action, and the reidentification of the same agent as responsible: it must be possible for two persons, the one performing the action and the one responsible for the action, to be identified as the same person. Given that the question of personal responsibility and accountability for action

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can only arise within the context of a prior theory of personal identity, the two questions can not ultimately be considered in isolation from each other. A similar condition holds for the concept of personal choice. If students are to make choices which affect their own lives they must be able to identify and distinguish their lives from those of others. The individual choosing must be able to identify the individual for whom the choice is made and the individual or individuals the choices will principally affect. This is held to be central to the justification of the action. In PSE good choices are not considered in a vacuum, but are considered in the context of the students' lives. It is not choices themselves which are important but the possibility and consequences of choice in the context of particular students' circumstances and environment. This personal orientation is central to PSE, and reminds us once again, of the impossibility of avoiding the question of the conception of the person which it involves. In general, it can be said that the conception of agency required for the idea of choice and planning over time, and personal responsibility presuppose a theory of personal identity since operant in both the notion of personal responsibility and choice is the idea of 'the same person'. These concepts make implicit appeal to some of our basic beliefs about the nature of persons. Beyond these essentially third person concerns, the question of what it means to be me presupposes that I can identify myself and distinguish myself from others.

The importance of personal identity to the aims of PSE can therefore be seen as a consequence of the relevance of the concept of person. More specifically the importance of personal identity lies in its relation to central issues of PSE: present and future personal well-being, functioning as a member of a community, and moral education. However, it may be objected, all this shows is that certain important questions involve questions of personal identity, not that these questions, of responsibility, concern with one's future and so on, require a solution to the philosophical problem of personal identity. Philosophical analysis of the 'same person' is, however, appropriate given the concern with the idea of the person as active. On this understanding, the importance of personal identity is derivative. It is not personal identity itself which is of importance but its connection to other things which do matter.

To this it may be replied that the question of personal identity is a question of the identification of the criteria of identity, and therefore has little to do with what it means to live a life as a person, rather than the question of what it is to be a person. This overlooks the connection between a sense of identity which is closely connected with what it means to live a life as a person, and the criteria for personal identity, from which a sense of identity is derived since it presupposes beliefs about what constitutes personal identity, even if these latter are implicit in our conceptions of ourselves.

This understanding of the importance of the metaphysical concept of the person draws on the familiar philosophical intuition that the understanding of a concept is intimately related to the conditions for its identity over time. An account of what anything is, as Wiggins (1976:141) reminds us, recalling Aristotle, Leibniz and Frege, is in intimate relation to the elucidation of the identity conditions of that thing. The relation between a concept and the conditions of its identity is such that the concept determines the conditions for its identity through the isolation of its essential features. Understanding a concept involves both the ability to pick out individuals falling under that concept and to reidentify particular instances of it, at least in principle. If the conditions for reidentification were unknown, it would be impossible to pick out an instance of the concept as individuation cannot be complete in a moment, but is forward looking. As Wollheim (1980:301) has put it, acknowledging the debt to Wiggins' (1967) theory of spatio-temporal continuity: "The synchronic cut which is what the application of a concept at a time is, necessitates a diachronic link, which is what the application of the relevant criterion of identity over time effects." While this raises the question of the priority or precedence of diachronic over synchronic unity, and the extent to which they can be considered in isolation from each other, which will be addressed later, it is clear that personal identity is important to our understanding of what it means to be a person. What is clear is that if we wish to understand the concept of person, it is essential to grasp those conditions under which an individual x at t^1 would be the same individual as y at t^2, and under what conditions they would be different individuals. The general point being made is substantiated by the following outline of the particular discourse about persons available to philosophers, given by Ricoeur (1988:214):

> We must be capable of describing persons as basic particulars and selves as self-designating subjects of discourse in order to be able to characterize actions as intentionally-brought-forth events, and agents as the owners and authors of their actions; and we must understand what agency means in order to apply to actions a moral judgment of imputation and to call persons responsible selves.

Noting that personal identity forms a necessary precondition for the concept of agency, does not, however, show that it is necessary to determine the criteria for personal identity prior to consideration of the normative question. This would involve, inter alia, showing there are available alternative understandings of what constitutes personal identity, and these are significant in that they have implications for the explicitly normative issue of what is valuable about persons. In other words, the problem of personal identity is relevant if it can be shown that our idea of moral responsibility and choice presupposes a particular

account of the concept of personal identity over time such that if that account turned out to be incorrect, our moral concept of the person would be, on this ground, rendered less plausible.

This raises the question of the relation between personal identity and aims of PSE which make explicit use of theories and concepts which presuppose personal identity. This will be the subject of the following section.

2

The Relation Between a Theory of the Person and the Aims of PSE.

The first question to consider is the nature of the presupposition, since if it can be shown that the presupposition is innocuous this effectively stops the argument.

The concept of the person as it is used in the aims of PSE is normative, it is used to point to what we consider important about persons. The aims look to valued characteristics, attributes, skills and so forth, which are argued to be central to PSE. These are derived or supported by reference to social, political, sociological, ethical and psychological theories which either do or do not make explicit reference to what are taken to be definitive characteristics of persons.

A possible relation between personal identity and the aims of PSE is suggested by Flanagan's (1991) position on the relation between ethics and moral psychology. Flanagan argues that the former requires the latter, but it should not be presumed that moral psychology is sufficient for moral theory construction. Flanagan expresses this relation in the 'Principle of Minimal Psychological Realism' (PMPR):

> Make sure when constructing a moral theory or projecting a moral ideal that the character, decision processing, and behavior prescribed are possible, or are perceived to be possible, for creatures like us. (ibid:32)

PMPR does not impose actual limitations on moral theory construction because the deep structure of moral psychology is minimal, and the psychological capacities drawn on in moral theory assume little more than "universal capacities to desire and to believe" (ibid:161). Thus the relation is not correctly described as implicative or constraining. It is not possible, in other words, to refer to the psychology of persons to determine ethical theory, or to ethical theory to determine the psychology of persons.

It is presumed, both in the case of personal identity and the minimal conditions of moral psychology, that these are universal. Just as people are capable of belief and desire, so they are individuated and continuous. These conditions are weak and uncontentious. Any feasible theory which presupposes

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them need only be consistent with them. Rawls (1974), in arguing for the independence of moral theory and questions of personal identity can be interpreted as accepting this position. Although Rawls explicitly takes the position that moral theory and the theory of personal identity are independent, it has been argued by Daniels (1979) that he is more plausibly interpreted as claiming their limited interdependence, and can be interpreted as accepting a principle similar to PMPR in understanding the relation between moral theory and personal identity.

Rawls (op.cit.) argues that the general conditions supplied by personal identity cover a range from weaker to stronger, different moral theories requiring criteria from this range. Thus Kantianism requires stronger criteria, while utilitarianism requires weaker ones. The important question is the feasibility of the moral theory. For Rawls the criteria of personal identity alone are insufficient to determine feasibility, which is achieved by the combination of social theory and the theory of personal identity. What is especially interesting in the context of our present discussion is Rawls' argument that in situations of competing theories of personal identity which are feasible according to different moral conceptions, the theory of personal identity is insufficient even in conjunction with social theory, to determine theory selection. Theory selection is achieved through arguments within moral theory.

There is no reason to depart from Rawls' conclusion that the criteria for personal identity alone are insufficient to effect theory selection. However, the limited role he sees for the criteria of personal identity can be questioned in so far as he views the criteria as being weak enough to support such differing moral conceptions as Kantianism and Utilitarianism. The argument that the criteria are sufficiently weak to provide general conditions of adequacy for moral theory in general is based on the view that the continuities and connectedness which supply the conditions for personal identity cannot be precisely determined by philosophy of mind, that the actual continuities and connections are supplied by the social institutions of a well-ordered society. Aspects of this argument will be considered in the fourth chapter.

Rawls' argument, while reminding us of the limits of the relation between personal identity and the aims of PSE, shows that the theory of personal identity and the aims of PSE are not independent. To consider them as independent would not be to deny that personal identity functions as a necessary presupposition, it would however, have the implication that any plausible account of the criteria of personal identity would be met by any feasible aim of PSE which presupposed personal identity. Thus, the criteria of personal identity themselves would have no effect on the aims: no consequence for normative theories would follow from criteria for personal identity or vice versa. This

would effectively deny that the criteria of personal identity have normative content.

This does not seem problematic given the common-sense belief that personal identity is non-normative. This is the belief that there is a difference between you and me, and that although there are differences between myself today and how I remember myself yesterday, and even greater differences between myself today and ten years ago, these are not thought of as significant to the question of whether I am the same person. While this question may arise in extraordinary circumstances, in the normal course of events changes through time do not disturb our belief that we persist through change. These beliefs in the separateness and continuity of the persons have the appearance of reflecting 'the facts of the matter'. They do not have the appearance of reflecting something like societal norms and traditions. This is a deep-seated belief, the importance of which is such that Trigg (1988:282-3) for example, can argue that the idea of a unified continuous person is more a precondition of society than a consequence of it.

As to the dependence of the theory of the person on the aims of PSE, this would require showing the nature of persons, in particular the nature of personal identity, was either responsive to, or determined by the aims of PSE. This would be the case, for example, if the aims embodied a conception generally sanctioned by society's practices, with the understanding that what a person was was a normative concept entirely determined by, and responsive, to these and other concerns, but which denied that there was any 'fact of the matter' in addition to these. Rather than recognising that the theory of the person has normative aspects, on this view the theory of the person would be normative to the extent that any reference to the person would be normative.

To hold, as has been assumed up to this point, that the relation was one of limited dependence of the aims on the criteria for personal identity, is to claim that the criteria for personal identity while weak, are not so weak that they do not affect our beliefs about persons and our relations with others. This does not necessitate definitive disentanglement of normative and non-normative statements. It has already been recognised that 'person' is normative in both its attribution and the determination of its conditions. A relation of limited dependence has the implication that if the criteria for personal identity were other than we ordinarily believe, this would have effect certain other beliefs, i.e., those beliefs which presuppose personal identity. These include beliefs about persons which inform the aims of PSE. This is a position which Parfit (1984) for example, would accept. A stronger version of the dependent relationship would hold that the theory of the person occupies a foundational role, in that from the theory of the person substantive normative positions could

be derived. This latter thesis is open to many objections, and since it is not frequently defended, it will not be discussed further here.

The last option to consider is that the relation between the theory of personal identity and the aims of PSE is best characterised as interdependent. On this view, each side of the relation would have some effect in determining the acceptability of the other. It is accepted that there are criteria of personal identity, and that should these be other than we believe them to be, for example, this may have an effect on such things as the acceptability of the aims of PSE, but what effect they would have would be dependent on many other factors as well, including the dislocation of practices. This more cautious approach gains its plausibility from its recognition of the complex interweaving of beliefs about such matters as the nature of personal identity and our moral practices.

Pring's (1984:15-31) discussion of the relation between the idea of being a person and PSE, provides an illustration of the complexity of this issue. Pring gives three interpretations of the central concept of personal development: to become persons, to develop as persons, and to develop important personal qualities. Concentrating on the second two interpretations, he argues for the idea of personal development as developing as a person in terms of "essential" characteristics of being a person, such as the ability to pick out others as persons. If we take it that this is indeed a characteristic of persons then part of what is meant by *personal* development is the development of what is essential to persons. On this view, determination of what it is to be a person precedes characterisation of what should be developed and limits what should be developed to the results of the prior examination of the concept of the person. That this is not the whole story is clearly recognised by Pring in the stress he gives to the third interpretation of personal development, to develop personal qualities which are valued. While acknowledging the "raggedness" of this distinction, it is one to which he holds: "the distinction ... does seem a valid one. There are qualities that are important because they are intimately connected with what we mean by someone being a person (and that we identify through analysing what we *mean* by 'personhood'), and there are qualities that we cherish because of specific values that we hold" (ibid:21). Thus Pring makes a distinction between what is distinctive, and what is of value *to* persons, although the two may coincide. A clear relation is posited between what a person is and educational theory and practice: "How you treat people depends upon your concept of 'person'. It is necessary, therefore, to sort out first what it means to be a person and then what the connections are between the 'development of persons' and educating them" (ibid.:12). Although Pring makes use of both the conditions for persons and the normative use of 'person', and recognises that there is a relation between the concept and the aims of PSE,

it is not clear whether this relation is limited dependence of the latter on the former or whether it is better understood as one of independence. As Pring's argument shows, one of the difficulties in deciding this question is the nature of the concept of person itself, and in particular to what extent it is both non-normative and determinate.

White (op.cit.) implies that what persons are, in particular that they have a certain motivational structure and the capacity to form second-order desires, influences the acceptability of any aim put forward for consideration. His argument against moral education as a major aim of PSE, it will be recalled, was that it reflected a particular conception of the good life, which did not take into account an important aspect of the nature of persons. His argument therefore implies that there are statements which are true of persons which differ from statements about what constitute the good life in that they are less particular. It is unclear from White's argument whether he considers there to be universal features of persons, or whether the features of persons he isolates, our reasons for action, are particular to a given social context. He could maintain this and still claim that this conception of the person was more universal than the understanding of the person implied by or contained in the theories of moral education he criticises. The general implication is that the theory of the person, or at least that aspect of the theory which concerns the rationality of action, is prior to normative theories such as ethics.

Regis' (op.cit.) position on the relation of the theory of the person to the aims of PSE is similar to White's in that both appeal to aspects of the reality of students' lives. Thus, Regis contends that a social approach to Health Education and PSE is "a more realistic way of thinking about selfhood" (op.cit.:8),[2] in the sense that it is consistent with a social reality. He expressly denies that this a value position: "I am not arguing that it is *undesirable* to create entirely autonomous people" rather he wants to say, it is unrealistic to attempt to do this. There are few philosophers of education who would disagree with this statement, given the Regis' use of "entirely" and the close scrutiny the concept of autonomy has undergone in philosophy of education. The main point to be made here is that Regis assumes that it is possible to make reference to something other than values, in particular 'reality', in talking about persons and their relations with others.

An interesting position, which may imply the interdependence of the theory of the person and the aims of PSE is suggested by Leicester's (op.cit.) discussion of the relation between pastoral care and anti-racist education. Although she does not discuss this issue, her position implies that the theory of the person should be consistent with other educational aims which are considered valuable. Depending on the particular way in which this position is

fleshed out, it could plausibly be a version of the argument that it is not so much a question of whether practice precedes and informs the theory of the person, but of the extent to which theories need to be coherent with each other in order to be acceptable.

It could also be held that practices precede the theory of the person, and that theories should be revised in line with practices. This MacIntyrean (1990b:197-200) position might be accepted by those like Regis (op.cit.), who argue that the emphasis on autonomy in education does not take into account the reality of students' lives and how their sense of who they are is constructed by social relations. This approach would highlight the perceived discrepancy between the theory of the person and the actual practices of persons, it being open how far these are to be considered definitive of persons. One interpretation of this view is that the theory of the person is explicitly dependent on ordinary usage. A stronger version would be that our theory of the person arises from pre-theoretical practices. Again, this raises questions concerning the nature of the concept of the person, and in particular the extent to which we can talk of a determinate concept of the person, as well as questions about the extent to which a dominant theory of the person informs social 'reality', and to which extent the theory is responsive to this reality. Some of these issues will concern us later.

The differences in the approaches can be seen as resulting from (or, resulting in) different interpretations of the role of the concept of the person. This way of phrasing the problem is important in that it shows that what is being attempted is a reflection of the richness and complexity of our ordinary experience and understanding of persons. This is not to ignore the importance of social and psychological theories in determining what is valuable about persons, and the role of normative theories in determining priorities. A theory of the person as subject is still required to support inquiries into other aspects of the self which presuppose the subject.

The accounts of the relationship between aspects of personhood and the aims of PSE outlined above support the general claim that there are features of persons which are isolatable from ethical or sociological concerns and which have some effect on the feasibility of the aims of PSE. This survey of the implied relation between the theory of the person and the aims of PSE, provides some support for the view that there is a limited dependence of the aims of PSE on the theory of the person. This not imply that such a relation holds in general between theories of the person and normative theories, but it does imply that in the particular context with which we are concerned, procedural legitimacy is provided for analysis of the concept of the person. There is no need, therefore, in this context to disagree with Wiggins' (1991:103, fn. 1.):

in my opinion there is more to be learned about the self by study
of the actuality and substance of morality than there is to be
learned about morality from the application to morality of
philosophical theories of the self. I would certainly applaud
Kant's readiness to proceed in the first of these ways and would
applaud equally Hume's total disregard in his theory of morals
of the wretchedly thin metaphysics he gives elsewhere of the
self.

What is clear is that aims which emphasise some form of personal
autonomy see choice and action residing in the person which leads to an
emphasis on the individual as the locus of authority and responsibility with the
social context of the individual viewed from the perspective of the individual
person. Significance is given to the separateness of persons in virtue of the
strength of the requirement that individuals are potentially autonomous in
important areas of their lives. The social approach, on the other hand, wishes to
approach the agency of persons from their socially embedded context. On this
view less emphasis is placed on the idea of the person as a discrete centre of
action and decision making. The separateness of persons is, in other words
accorded less significance.

The notion of personal identity functions as both "glue and as scissors", as
Kolak and Martin have phrased it (1987:339). It functions to bind together the
stages of one person's life, and to separate or individuate persons. These two
functions are mutually supporting. As Parfit (1984) has argued: "The
separateness of persons is the denial that we are all the same person. If the fact
of personal identity is less deep, so is this fact's denial" (1984:339). How these
functions of personal identity are understood is fundamental to how we
conceive of ourselves and are central to the conception of the person in PSE.

We are here concerned with whether all feasible aims of PSE require the
same strength of glue, and the same degree of sharpness of the scissors. In
other words, whether the idea of the person as a subject of experience makes
certain requirements of personal identity. Our ordinary beliefs about persons
include the belief that persons are continuous over time and that they are unified
in that each person has one, and only one life and that that life is distinguishable
from other lives. If certain aspects of what it means to be a person are privileged
and a source of this privilege is thought to lie in the nature of the person as an
individual, then there seems to be a clear appeal to a particular theory of
personal identity. For example, if autonomous action as presupposed rather
than derived from the idea of persons as discrete continuous individuals is
valued, this requires a theory of personal identity in support. Such a theory

must furnish the guarantees of identity and its importance sufficient to uphold conceptions of the person, such as the conception of the person as potentially autonomous, which require the separateness of person as a necessary precondition. Such guarantees of separateness are not required by conceptions of the person where the unity is not taken to be fundamental. .

Conclusion

Although the problem of personal identity has not yet been specified in any detail, it has been argued that not only is personal identity presupposed by the conceptualisation of the person as agent, but it has been suggested that there is a relation of limited dependence of the acceptability of the aims of PSE on the analysis of this crucial concept.

In arguing for this conclusion, a distinction has been made between the explicitly normative question of which qualities or what ideals should be promoted in PSE, and the question of what beliefs about persons are presupposed in answering this question by reference to the conception of the person as autonomous. The argument has provided a means of proceeding which has some legitimacy, while not making the unwarranted assumption that those qualities which the aims of PSE fosters are necessarily coincident with the distinguishing features of persons. Rather, the position of *prima facie* priority of the question of personal identity to other questions concerning persons is based on the idea that there is a sense to the term 'person' which is drawn on in PSE which can be usefully distinguished from the explicitly normative question, and which rests on unacknowledged assumptions and beliefs about persons which need to be examined. This is important in our present context, given the concern with normative aspects of the person, which are often seen in need of defence, as it focuses attention on the background theory of the person which is often seen as unproblematic. There is no presumption that it is possible to definitively disentangle the normative and metaphysical aspects of the question. The extent to which this distinction has validity needs investigation.

Notes

1. Clearly, this is not the only condition for being an agent, other conditions, such as freedom to act, social and political contexts which define what agency consists in and therefore those acts considered valuable to perform and so on, are also necessary. The approach adopted here, however, is to start from the position of the person as subject of experience.
2. Regis cites empirical evidence and Hargreaves (1980) in support of this claim.

Chapter 3
Autonomy and the Question of Non-Reductionism

It has been claimed that a non-reductionist account of personal identity is necessarily implied and required by the conception of the person as autonomous. In this chapter, it will be argued that while the idea of the person as potentially autonomous implies a theory of personal identity and makes certain requirements of such a theory, it is both possible and desirable to reject non-reductionism with respect to persons. The importance of this claim lies in the supposition, which will be supported in this chapter, that beliefs about personal identity have implications for certain other beliefs about persons. This is of interest given that different theories of personal identity have significantly different implications for these beliefs. While these claims will be mentioned here, exploration is left to a later chapter.

The major claim is that a non-reductionist account of personal identity is a putatively non-normative claim about the constitution of persons which has the undesirable effect, from the point of view of the aims of PSE, of providing a differential base for the valuing of senses of identity. A fundamental tenet of non-reductionism: the requirement that the trans-temporal identity conditions for persons are different from those required for physical objects, has its source in a metaphysical realism about persons. If persons are real entities, individuated and reidentified by a strict or non-empiricist theory of identity, and if a person's sense of identity is derived from a theory of identity, those experiences which do not conform to the strict identity view will, on that basis be accorded a different value. While raising the issue of the role played by reports of experience in questions of personal identity, a non-normative understanding of the constitution of persons rooted in a metaphysical realism has the effect that a minimal condition for the conception of the person necessarily contained in the aims of PSE cannot be met. This condition, argued in the introduction to underlie more particular expressions of the aims of PSE, is that PSE should furnish a conception of the person which articulates ideals and values of persons consonant with their experience as persons.

After setting out the problem and its importance for the aims of PSE from the point of view of the value of autonomy and the underlying conception of the person, the strengths of the strict identity or non-reductionist thesis are assessed.

1
The nature and importance of the issue

The notion of persons as capable of agency and autonomous action seemingly requires a notion of strict identity. Following Hollis (1977:101), the requirement is for criteria "which let the self stand outside the construction", for the preservation of "what is strictly himself from one time and one role to another" (ibid:103). This requirement stems from the demand that persons have the potential for autonomous thought and action, however limited the actual practice of autonomy may be. It is, therefore, a conceptual requirement.

As previously argued,[1] the conception of the person as autonomous necessarily requires the person to be conceptualised as an distinct entity. The division between agents is necessary for the element of self in self-determination, and the unity of the person is required for the element of determination. The suggestion is therefore that this conceptualisation requires strict identity of persons since the possibility of autonomous thought and action demands of the presupposed theory of personal identity that that which constitutes personal identity can neither be a matter of decision, indeterminate or settled by appeal to criteria of connectedness or continuity between mental and physical events.

The demand made by the idea of the person as potentially autonomous of a theory of personal identity is, therefore, that the unity and separateness of the person is assured. The question to be addressed here is, what type of demand is this? The most plausible interpretation is that the demand is a response to a metaphysical realism concerning persons. In other words, the unproblematic status of the unity and separateness of persons in discussing the aims of PSE is a reflection of the idea that persons are ontological particulars. In order to see the plausibility of this suggestion it is necessary to see why the unity and separateness of the person is a problem in the context of the aims of PSE, particularly since the unity of the person operates as an unproblematic given.

In advocating autonomy as an aim of PSE, White and Pring reject the abstract individualism best exemplified by a Hobbesian picture of persons as mushrooms, "come to full maturity, without all kind of engagement to each other" (Hobbes, 1966:109). Rather the conceptions of autonomy are intertwined with a recognition of the importance of social context in determining what it means to live a life as a person. The aims of PSE that have been considered therefore recognise the social construction of beliefs and other mental content, whilst retaining for normative reasons a conception of the self with the capacity for reasoned autonomous choice. The problem is to retain a socially significant concept of the individual, of significant agency, in light of

the recognition of the plasticity of persons. This justifies the emphasis in the aims of PSE on the concept of person rather than on related concepts but raises the question of how persons in this context are to be defined.

If the concept of the person is taken as central because of its connection to agency, then what properties of the person are taken as definitive? The person, as so far conceptualised, is understood as that which chooses. While this is hardly sufficient, leaving the question of the criteria by which choices are to be made, and the question of individuation in the case of particular persons, unanswered, it provides a useful starting point, providing at least one negative condition that must be met in answer to the question of 'what is a person?': This question cannot be answered by specifying what the person is in terms of occupation of any particular social role. Persons, on this view, are not distinguished from entities which are not persons in virtue of being, say, a teacher, or even by the character the person has. To answer the question 'what is a person?' it is neither necessary or sufficient to mention these aspects of being a person. They do not provide the answer to what is definitive of a person. It is 'person' in the sense of 'that which chooses' which it must be possible to identify, and reidentify through time.

Influential though this account of the person has been, it is flawed. Under increasing criticism from a post-Cartesian perspective the idea of the person essentially characterised as the location of the capacity for choice seems both too empty and too full to meet the requirements made of it. This is the picture of the self as unencumbered, disengaged, self-fashioning, essentially nothing other than a capacity to fix and objectify with the aim of reworking or refashioning herself according to some standard of rational procedure, with the subject conceived as the premise rather than the product of its agency. It is thus recognisable as one aspect of what Rorty (1979:5) refers to as the "Cartesian-Lockean-Kantian tradition" in philosophy. While the need for the capacity for autonomous thought and action, requires that the person *is* the capacity for choice and action, recognition of the necessity of social context to being a person demands more than a self defined in abstraction from any constitutive concerns. In demands more that a "'punctual' or 'neutral' self", as Taylor (1989:49, Ch 9) refers to this conception of the person.

It is too full for the present purposes given the rejection of abstract individualism. This point can be illustrated by reference to the connection between the theory of the person or self as implied by the idea of autonomy and a theory of rationality.[2] An autonomous thought or action is characterised by its relation to the rationality of the goals pursued through the action. One means of specifying what constitutes the rationality of the ends of action is blocked with the rejection of abstract individualism, and therein lies a source of the

requirement for strict identity for persons. On a view such as Hobbes', for example, the rationality of the goals of action does not arise since it is presumed to be settled by the connection between the determination of a good reason for action, as opposed to a rational action, and a theory of what is essential to persons. The former is dependent on the latter, as part of a philosophical method which accepts a hierarchical view of philosophical disciplines. From what is essential to persons, on this view, a theory of ultimate interests is derived: the ultimate determinant of action is a question of human nature, human conduct being explained by the sorts of entities persons are.

This view unfashionably gives primacy to metaphysical questions arguing, at least, that what something is supplies grounds for determining the rationality of actions in its respect. It implies that the promotion of autonomy as a valued characteristic of persons accepts that what constitutes persons, what persons essentially are, is something there is good reason to take note of, preserve or foster.

This is not an approach taken by either Pring or White, relying as it does on arguments from, as Hollis (ibid:101) says "what is, no less than of what ought to be." However, it is not obvious that the implied connection between a metaphysical conception of what persons are, and what we have reason to do can be avoided. This is because although abstract individualism is rejected, acceptance by Pring and White that individuals are the location of choice and action implies acceptance of a form of ontological individualism. This implies a move analogous to that described above from the nature of persons to the autonomous person.

This gives grounds for supposing at least partial acceptance of the root idea that a person's ultimate interests derive from what a person essentially is, both as a person and as the particular person she is. Thus, although giving primacy to the question of what a person is, smacks of an old-fashioned philosophical method unlikely to attract many adherents in this bold form, it is not clear that something very like it is not accepted in the general acceptance of ontological individualism.

Following Watt (1989:30) ontological individualism can be defined as involving "thinking of individual people as having a more fundamental type of reality, as being the primary entities, while groups, societies, collective phenomena generally, have a derivative existence." This form of individualism, that the person is a fundamentally more real entity than any social organisation underlies individualism in general, as Watt (loc.cit.) points out. It is not the contents of consciousness, on this view, which are considered in an individualistic fashion, and thus it not part of this view that these are or could be generated by an individual person. Ontological individualism rather relies for its

persuasive force on the experience of consciousness. Persons, rather than any social entities, are centres of thoughts and feelings. Consciousness, Watt (ibid:189) says "is escapably experienced as an individual phenomenon." This gives support to the view that persons are more natural and fundamental entities than groups or social institutions. With the further assumption that the paradigm of choice and agency is the person,[3] the conclusion is that the conception of the person must have criteria for the individuation and reidentification of persons, such that the separateness and unity of persons is assured.

The unity of a person, as essential to being a person, as opposed to the value given to the unification or integrity of a person's life, is therefore taken to be of some importance for the rationality of the goals of our action, including such things as self-concern. The separateness and continuity, and thus the unity of the person is taken to be a fundamental feature of our experience, supported by its general importance to our lives.

The motivation for requiring strict identity for persons thus stems from the tension caused by the rejection of an abstract individualism, while retaining an ontological individualism. Whereas abstract individualism would provide the rationality of goals by reference to what it is rational for an agent to do in virtue of being an agent, once this is rejected, some thesis of the strict identity of persons is required for freedom of choice and action in the case of individuals. If the autonomous person acts freely by definition, where freely refers to actions performed according to good reasons as determined by the person (a Platonic authority being denied on this modernist conception of the person), these good reasons will be determined by two factors: what a person is, in the sense of what is essential to her as a person, and by what is essential to her being the person she is. Though it is important to distinguish questions of individuation, individual identification, and reidentification, they are connected in that the criteria supplied for one will undoubtedly influence or be influenced by the other, and that the criteria for individuation involve specification of essential properties, which in this case reinforces the connection between conceptions of rationality and the concept of the person.

If this argument is sufficient to show that a theory of strict identity in the case of person is required by acceptance of the idea of the person as autonomous, why should it not be accepted, and let this background assumption continue to pass unremarked upon in discussions of personal autonomy in education in general and PSE in particular?

There are several reasons why it is important to challenge the strict identity, or non-reductionist thesis. Those concerning its internal coherence will be explored in some detail in following sections. First, some of the consequences of accepting the general strict identity thesis should be noted. The most

troubling of these from the perspective of the aims of PSE concerns the status of judgments of personal identity, and the status of different senses of identity. The strict identity theory, as a theory of personal identity, is a theory about the strength of the boundaries between persons and what constitutes the persistence of persons. Views on the boundaries of persons are relevant to how experience is interpreted. Unlike continuity theories, the strict identity theory holds that the importance of the unity of the person is a function of its fundamental nature, a response to an essential irreducible feature of persons. Persons are taken to be real entities which are not reducible to more particular facts. In other words a complete description of the world would need to mention persons. On this realist view, persons as discrete entities are a feature of reality and have some importance in virtue of this status. The unity and separateness of persons is therefore taken to be a fact of some importance. This is not to deny that the aims of PSE reflect values and ideals and therefore need not be unduly concerned that the values promoted do not reflect everyone's values or experiences. The point is rather a reminder of the point of something that it is taken as a given in the aims of PSE: that students' experiences and its expression are given respect and taken seriously.

The existence or value of experiences of identification and non-identification with one's self and others, need not be denied on a strict identity thesis. The question, when thinking about the aims of PSE, is the status of these experiences relative to the status of experiences of separateness and unity, and even continuity. If the latter experiences are taken to reflect the underlying reality of persons, the implication is that they have a different value and will be considered more important given their more fundamental nature. Thus, one may educate with the aim of enhancing connections between persons, but this will be construed differently depending on whether persons are seen as fundamentally separate or not.

The issue concerns the effect of the privileging of some experiences on the basis of their more fundamental nature. In this form the question of the role played by ordinary experience in the construction and solution of the problem of personal identity is raised, allowing the role of ordinary experience to be scrutinized and the basis for privileging certain experiences to be questioned. Persons' lives admit of experiences of inner conflict and dialogue as well as identification with others. Neither these experiences, nor the more unusual but still common experiences of *akrasia* and self-deception raise questions of personal identity. It is only unusual and interpretatively problematic cases such as splitting consciousness which are considered to raise questions about our concept of the person and the justification of the importance given to unity. Nagel (1979a) provides a good example of this in his discussion of

commissurotomy, which appears to call into question the requirement for the existence of a single mental subject of conscious mental activity.[4] Splitting consciousness, if it exists, is highly unusual and is not part of our normal experience as persons. Common experiences does not raise the question of the extent to which we are both unified and in control only if our seemingly natural belief in the unity and indivisibility of the person is presupposed.Thus, normal experience does not raise the question of the extent to which the belief in the unity and discreteness of persons is justified and the importance it is given because normal experiences of disunity are not taken to be evidence of actual disunity.

Yet, experiences of disunity and identification may be of equal importance and have ethical significance corresponding to the separateness of persons. As Midgley (1990:14) points out, even if we ignore pregnancy and identification with one's child, persons' lives admit of many experiences of co-operation, such as playing in an orchestra. While co-operation can only give a qualitative sense of identity, and for most constitute relatively short-lived experiences compared with the experience of being a single entity, what Midgley and others draw attention to is that the experience of separateness and unity is not the only significant experience we have of ourselves. That questions of identification and of being other than a discrete centre of experience are not given much attention in discussions of personal identity may be a function of the traditional form in which the issue is raised, which, it can be argued, presupposes an individualist stance. Whether this type of criticism can be upheld or not, there can be little doubt that the form in which the question of personal identity is posed encourages the downplaying of the extent to which we do not consider ourselves unified discrete entities.[5] This is not to deny that most of us, most of the time do not have a problem with our unity both at a time or over time. We remember many of our past actions and intend to do things in the future, and have no problem distinguishing our own occurrent experiences from those of the person sitting next to us who may be having similar experiences. This is the case even when we are co-operating, or identifying with another person, and when we are engaged in inner dialogue or conflict. That these cases do not raise the question of whether I am more or less one person raises the question of the justification of the seemingly natural belief in our separate and indivisible unity and the justification for the presumption in favour of the unity of the person.

This line of argument, which argues from features of lived experience, is similar in form to feminist critiques which stress the gendered nature of experience in that it draws attention to experiences which do not conform to the dominant conception, and asks why these experiences have not received the status given to those that conform, and for the justification for the privileging of

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some experience. This form of argument naturally leads to consideration of the influences on the construction of the problem, suggesting that interpretation of the experience of personal identity is not unlike other experiences in that it is not unaffected by the social nature of our experience.[6] Although these issues will be of concern in a moment, the argument from ordinary experience gives some plausibility to the idea that there may be different experiences of what it means to be a person, as opposed to various senses of self,[7] and that these are socially rather than metaphysically derived and justified.

The most obvious influences upon a sense of identity are gender, culture, ethnic and religious experiences and linguistic environment. If these more particular influences, as opposed to a universalistic metaphysical realism are accepted then this supplies an argument against accepting the latter as underpinning the conception of the unity of the person as presupposed in the aims of PSE. This would not have the consequence that for as many identifiable groups as there are in a classroom, there will be a corresponding number of views on what constitute the criteria of personhood, who constitutes a person, or on the distinctness and unity of persons. Rather, it is an argument for recognising that the presupposition of a certain view on persons involved in the promotion of autonomy as a valued attribute of persons should not accept a presupposition which has the consequence that one conception is favoured on the basis of being a 'more correct' view of the underlying reality, with less prominence being given to familiar equally valuable experiences. What is clear, is that a source of the importance given to the unity of the person is beliefs about persons, and the constraints these impose on our use of the concept of person. This will be the subject of the next chapter where it will be approached through the general question of the effect of constraints such as beliefs on the acceptability of any analysis of personal identity. What is important to note at this juncture is that to recognise the validity of experiences not based on the distinctness of persons is not at the same time to exclude autonomy as an aim of PSE. The argument is not essentially against autonomy as an aim of PSE, but rather is designed to raise the fundamental issue of the relation between what a person is, and the valued attributes of persons, the development of which it is the aim of PSE to facilitate. The argument to this point has suggested that what needs to be stressed is the importance of the unity of the person for social practices and many conceptions of the self, but which does not depend on a understanding of the significance of the identity of persons as lying in the special identity conditions for persons as opposed to other entities.

It may be objected at this juncture, that such an argument is not necessary since arguments for autonomy do not rely for either coherence or support on the availability of particular criteria of personal identity because autonomy is seen as

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a value, not as definitive of, or derived from a concept of person. Thus while a conception of the person is required, there is no implication that this need be other than normative. There is no need, therefore, to deny the point made by Nagel (1970) that such a conception ultimately relies on a metaphysics of the person, but there is no need in accepting this position to also accept a hierarchy of philosophical disciplines. This latter position can be avoided by drawing attention to the interdependence of the notion of an autonomous person and the complex of social conditions and conceptions of the person which support the development of autonomous thought and action. These, it could be argued, are a more appropriate object of concern given that there are several plausible understandings of the relation between a metaphysics of the person and the development of autonomy, and the possibility of rejection of the primacy of the former in relation to autonomy.

Moreover, it could be argued that incompatibility of non-reductionism with the general ideal that PSE should be available to all students on the basis of differing senses of identity is spurious at best. The fact is, it could be argued, that non-reductionism or a strict identity theory, while a background assumption about what persons are, is more importantly an articulation of what we believe about persons. It articulates common-sense. This argument addresses the relation between certain sorts of 'facts' about persons, and our requirements and beliefs about persons, in short, the constraints on our use of the term 'person' both from what we discover, for example about the functional integration that typifies a single person and analysis of the concept, and our practices as persons. One way in which this argument may be pursued is to argue that pragmatic, psychological or social constraints are more important than the metaphysical. Evaluation of this argument must wait until what is meant by a 'metaphysical constraint' is considered. But given the connection between personal identity, our understanding of moral agency and our moral and social practices, the suggestion that metaphysical considerations are not the most relevant has *prima facie* plausibility. In its general form this argument from the constraints on the concept of person has the effect of denying the independence of metaphysical questions. However, if the argument given so far has any cogency, it seems that the theory of personal identity plays a more robust role than allowed for on this interpretation, even if this is rarely explicitly stated. How we conceive of ourselves and others, as well as the rationality of actions concerning ourselves and others, are among those beliefs that are influenced by what we believe persons to be.

The relevance of a metaphysical view of the person could, however still be challenged by rejecting the philosophical tradition of which it forms part. This leaves the theoretical status of our beliefs about what constitutes persons in

some doubt. It can be held, as MacIntyre (1990b: Ch 9) argues, that ordinary usage reflects a complex metaphysical conception which was embodied in practice long before it was articulated in theory, or that our ordinary usage reflects pre-theoretic intuitions. If this option is interpreted as positing identity as a function of social practices and institutions, then it appears the fundamental motivation behind the requirement for strict identity in the case of persons is lost in that the implication is that not only what I am but who I am is socially constructed leaving no space for autonomous action. The fundamental problem is to retain a significant concept of the person, as not totally passive and determined by social or psychological factors, in light of the recognition of the determination of many of our actions. If the conception of the person as potentially autonomous is not to be rejected then it seems that the only feasible option is that the unity of person, or what a person is, stands aside or apart from the social construction to the extent necessary for self-determination. Given this, some theory of strict identity seems necessary.

This line of argument is strengthened by seeing the connection between the notion of the autonomous person and strict identity of persons as a response to Cartesian intuitions concerning the subject of thought. The self-consciousness which is a mark of personhood, and one of the conditions of autonomy, seems to require a unity of the inner life which can only be supplied by a notion of strict identity. The alternative, that personal identity is constituted by relations of continuity and connectedness allows for an indeterminacy in the concept of the person, and thus the assurance of numerical identity of the subject of thought, of the subject of inner life is lost. A major objection to reductionism with respect to persons is that it cannot account for the natural assumption that our inner lives have an assured unity. On these grounds, clearly connected to the issue of ontological individualism, the strict identity of persons is a necessary requirement of the conception of persons as subjects.

Notwithstanding these arguments for the necessity for a theory of strict identity in the case of person, would it matter if such arguments were rejected on the grounds, for example of the irrelevancy of metaphysical questions? Would not, in other words, a qualitative sense of identity be sufficient? The concentration on the concept of the person in the aims of PSE has been defended on the grounds of the perspective it affords on agency. Thus the idea of 'character' has been rejected as not supplying the conditions for identity across characters necessary for autonomous thought and action. It may be thought, however, that the debate has been unnecessarily circumscribed by uncritical acceptance of the view that the alternatives are exhausted by non-reductionism and reductionism. The possibility of a third option will be explored subsequent to consideration of the two major alternatives.

The discussion to this point has shown that the major issue is the importance of the idea of the unity of the person. This is illustrated by Rorty (1986:121) in a discussion of some of the problems associated with self-deception and *akrasia*. She notes that for "someone to be capable of agency in the strong sense, to hold himself responsible for avoiding self-deception and *akrasia*, requires that he - or at any rate some relatively central set of his habits - reflexively underwrite his integrative processes. He must declare his various friendly neighbourhood habits to be one city, the *I*". This suggests that neither qualitative nor numerical identity is the issue, but the importance of unity.

With the idea that it is the importance given to the idea of unity which is pivotal in the discussion, it is now possible to turn to more detailed consideration of the alternative interpretations of what constitutes the identity of persons over time. It has been shown so far that identity through time and at a time is necessary for the unity of the person, necessary for the possibility of the strong form of agency implied by autonomous thought and action. The question is the status and importance of this requirement, and thus the nature of the relation between the conception of the person as autonomous and the concept of the person.

2
Non-reductionism

In this section, following a short discussion of the relevance of the question of personal identity and brief outline of the main positions, it will be argued that the strongest argument for non-reductionism is from the importance of the first-person point of view on experience. The non-reductionist claim that personal identity is determinate and unanalysable requires a different sense or standard[8] for the identity of persons as opposed to physical objects or artifacts. The argument for this different sense of identity relies on the importance of the idea of persons as subjects of experience. This argument does not, however, provide a means of deciding between reductionism and non-reductionism since the distinction between senses of identity cannot be unproblematically upheld. Furthermore, the non-reductionist use of the subject of experience is dependent on the use of subjective facts to determine diachronic identity in order to uphold a strict identity thesis is problematic.

Although the argument to this point has been that the issue which is of most concern is the question of personal identity, could it not be argued that the issue is what constitutes the unity of the person?[9] Issues of identity and unity while closely related need to be distinguished since it is not clear that the criteria for one will suffice for both. The question of personal identity asks for the logically

necessary and sufficient conditions for a person identified at one time being the same person as a person identified at another time. What is required are criteria in the sense of constitutive of, rather than evidence for the identity of persons. Thus, while in the ordinary course of events, evidential criteria are used in the reidentification of persons, the philosophical interest is in the meaning of claims of personal identity. The interest is in what is essential to a person, the identity conditions seen as a means to determining what is constitutive of persons. If we wish to understand the concept of person, it is essential to grasp those conditions under which an individual x at t^1 would be the same individual as y at t^2, and under what conditions they would be different individuals, where x and y refer to any person, including myself.

This question is distinguishable from the question of what constitutes the unity of the person, which asks what makes a number of simultaneous diverse physical and psychological experiences all belong to one person, and discrete bundles of such experiences belong to one person. What makes the occurrent experiences of feeling slightly hungry, hearing the noise of the traffic outside the window and a number of other feelings, emotions and other psychological experiences all mine, and other 'bundles' of similar experiences not mine? The problem of the unity of the person was put most memorably by Hume (1739: I. iv. 6):

> For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call
> myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other,
> of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I
> never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and
> never can observe anything but the perception.

A Humean bundle of perceptions has multiple relations with other such bundles in the past. The problem is to give some explanation of how some of these bundles, which have been very different, are mine, and how some of these bundles, which have been extremely similar are not mine.

Questions about personal identity and the unity of the person involve several issues. In both cases questions arise in first and third person forms and concern both synchronic and diachronic unity. Although frequently not distinguished, in that the criteria supplied in response to one issue are considered sufficient to answer the others, since it will be argued here that the strength of non-reductionism lies in its response to the first-person question, it is important to make the point that the problem of personal identity arises in different forms.

The question of synchronic unity is expressed in the first-person in the form 'What makes all these occurrent experiences mine?' As it arises in the third person it usually concerns the interpretation of controversial psychiatric and neurological cases where the question is whether there is more than one person

simultaneously 'occupying' one body. In these cases it is arguably not clear how to describe a person who seems to have several separate personalities or more than one separate centre of consciousness. Questions of diachronic unity arise in practice in the first person in a variety of situations, when concern is with liability or present feelings for some past action acknowledged to be one's own, such as continuing to feel guilty for some childhood act which one would no longer perform. It can arise when considering actions which will affect the future where it is important to determine as far as possible whether the person affected will be you.

This raises the question of the priority or precedence of diachronic to synchronic unity, and the extent to which they can be considered in isolation from each other. Since it can be argued that conditions for unity of consciousness are dependent upon forward relations between consciousness stages.[10] Thus synchronic identity is not necessarily prior to the question of diachronic unity.[11]

This leaves the question of whether the problem of the unity of a person, which asks for a unifying principle, or the problem of personal identity, which asks for the criteria for reidentification, is prior. It cannot be straightforwardly assumed that the provision of criteria for the identity of persons over time will automatically supply an answer to the question of what unifies a person. In fact, it is often argued that answering the question of personal identity presupposes an answer to the question of the unity of the person.[12] This objection is addressed to accounts of personal identity in terms of psychological continuity which hold that the unity of a person's life can be answered by personal identity. The objection is commonly formulated as a version of Butler's (1736/1975:100) criticism of Locke that these accounts are viciously circular in that "consciousness of personal identity presupposes, and therefore cannot constitute, personal identity."[13] In order to answer the question of personal identity in terms of psychological states, an answer to the question of what unifies a person is presupposed in that psychological continuity can only exist whenever the conditions, yet to be specified, of the unity of experiences are fulfilled.

This objection holds with respect to specific psychological states, drawing on the assumption that an experience in one mind cannot be psychologically continuous with an experience in another mind (i.e., one that is non-identical). The most plausible interpretation of this objection is that it is part of the meaning of words such as 'remember', and 'memory' that a person can only remember that person's experiences. Since Shoemaker's (1970/1984:24) introduction of the concept of quasi-psychological states, which have all the requirements of psychological terms such as 'memory' except the requirement of sameness of

person,[14] it has been possible to circumvent the charge of circularity, as experiences of one person need not be defined by reference to that person. We shall address the adequacy of this argument later, it is only necessary now to note that the objection that the unity of the person is prior in this sense does not obviously hold. Since this is the strongest argument for the position that the question of the unity of the person answers the question of identity, it is plausible to proceed on the assumption that the identity question will supply the conditions for the unity of the person, and that there are no impediments to considering the question of personal identity.

The problem, to reiterate, is to give an account of the person as the unified location of thought and action. The question of what constitutes this unifying function is prior to the identity question, but answered by it. Both the concept of the person, and the conditions for the unity of the person are conceptually prior to the question of identity, but the solution to the question of identity answers the question of unity, and clarifies the meaning of the concept of person.[15]

Various solutions have been suggested to the problem of personal identity, as set out at the beginning of this section. The most basic dispute is between reductionism and non-reductionism,[16] the feasible choices seen as exhausted by these two possibilities. The account under primary consideration in this section is non-reductionism, which has previously also been referred to as the strict identity theory. This is the view that personal identity is an ultimate unanalysable fact which cannot be defined in other terms. There are facts of personal identity over and above impersonal facts. Personal identity is a 'further fact'[17] irreducible to other facts. It is essentially unanalysable, indefinable in other terms, cannot admit of degrees and cannot be decided by convention. The notion of 'same person' is taken as conceptually primitive in the sense given by Ishiguro (1980:62-75),[18] that the concept is not so much simple as indispensable. The possibility of an informative synchronic or diachronic criterion of personhood is denied, in that it is denied that specification of a set of relations to be satisfied could give the identity conditions of any person, or be necessary or sufficient for the reidentification of any person.

On this account personal identity cannot be secured by the continuity of any event or state. Such continuities are criteria only in the sense that they reveal personal identity, they do not constitute it and therefore are not analyses of it. That which constitutes personal identity, on this view, is distinct from physical and psychological continuities and cannot be reduced to them, or any other observable relations or connections. The identity conditions for persons are therefore different from the identity conditions of physical objects. Personal

identity is, on this account, "something ultimate" (Swinburne, 1974.:240): our concept of personal identity is more absolute than continuity theories can allow.

Continuities and connectedness provide evidence for personal identity, but this evidence is fallible. It is explicitly claimed that personal identity is one thing and continuities and connectedness are another. Given this distinction there is no contradiction in claiming that one can exist without the other, or in accepting that analysis alone is insufficient to determine which experiences will be mine.

A reductionist account of personal identity does not make use of the concept of sameness of person in the specification of the criteria for identity, but makes use of a different set of concepts, such as psychological and/or physical concepts. Personal identity is analysable in terms of continuities and connections between mental and/or physical events and states. Where no other considerations are thought to be either necessary or sufficient for the holding of personal identity, the view is reductionist. Hence, the first claim of Parfit's (1984:210) Reductionist View: "the fact of a person's identity over time just consists in the holding of certain more particular facts", these more particular facts concern psychological and/or physical continuity. These facts can be described without either presupposing the identity of this person, or explicitly claiming that the experiences of this person's life are had by this person, or that this person exists. These facts can be described in an impersonal way. Thus the second claim of the Reductionist View: "Though persons exist, we could give a *complete* description of the world *without* claiming that persons exist" (Parfit, ibid:212). Persons exist and have experiences, but are not separately existing entities, in that a person's existence consists merely in the existence of a brain and a body, and the occurrence of an interrelated set of mental and physical states.

The distinction between reductionist and non-reductionist views of identity with respect to persons can be seen, following Brennan (1988:255-6) by consideration of the question of how much information we would need to tell us all that matters in an identity question. For a reductionist there comes a point when we know all that matters, even when we don't know what to say about identity in that situation. At the same point a non-reductionist would maintain that there is still some further fact to be ascertained, the fact of identity. For the reductionist there are situations where there is no answer to the question of identity. For the non-reductionist there are no such situations.

Both views have a long history. Butler and Reid are clear sources in modern philosophy of the idea that persons are *entio per se*, that persons must be more than a succession of mental and physical events or states. This view has recently been defended by Chisholm (1976), Madell (1981), and Swinburne (1984). The reductionist view was held by Locke and Hume, and is defended

by Mackie (1976), Perry (1975), D. Lewis (1976) and Parfit (1984) among others. In this discussion Parfit's Reductionist View will be taken as representative of the latter position, not only because of its influence on the debate, but for the explicit connections he makes between our beliefs about the nature of persons and the implications he draws for certain other beliefs. This sophisticated and persuasive modern account is a version of the psychological criterion of person identity. It thus is within the Lockean tradition, although the conclusions are more Humean than Lockean.

Consideration of our use of the concept of the person suggests acceptance of a non-reductionist or strict identity view. Whereas with entities other than persons it is possible and acceptable not to be able to answer questions such as "Is this ship the same ship that set sail last month?" with a simple yes or no answer, this is not acceptable in the case of persons. Thus while there can legitimately be no answer to the question "Is it the same car?" after a new engine has been put and/or the transmission changed, or "Is the Philosophy of Education Department the same department as it was in 1975?", we do not believe there can similarly be no answer to the question of our identity. When confronted with the question of whether or not some person in the future will be me, we believe that there must always be a determinate answer. Either it will be me or it will not. While we may reductionists with respect to cars and philosophy departments, we are non-reductionists when it comes to persons. We therefore believe that the identity conditions for persons are unlike the identity conditions for artifacts and other physical entities.

The strongest arguments for non-reductionism lie in its relation to our common-sense beliefs about persons, the importance of the first-person point of view, with additional support gained from the relation between our social and moral practices and a strict identity theory. It is frequently held that a non-reductionist thesis is required by both our use of the concept of person, our experience and our practices as persons. On these grounds it is held that a different sense of identity is required for persons as opposed to physical objects.

To uphold the belief, in what Parfit (1971:3) calls "the special nature" of personal identity, it is necessary to make a distinction between the reidentification conditions for persons and those for physical objects and artifacts, such that the transtemporal identity conditions of persons are essentially unlike those for physical objects. There are several ways in which this distinction has been made. Chisholm (1976:Ch.3) for example, distinguishes between "ontologically basic" and "ontologically parasitic" objects, with persons being the former and physical objects the latter. This is essentially a defence of Butler's distinction between "strict and philosophical"

and "loose and popular" senses of identity, with the former applying to persons and the latter to physical objects. The distinction is illustrated by Chisholm's example of the difference between the identity of a table through time and the identity of persons.

The theory relies on a distinction between mereologically variable objects, which are capable of surviving changes in their parts, and mereologically constant objects upon which mereologically variable objects are ontologically parasitic. Thus a table can be spoken of using both senses of identity. In the ordinary course of events we talk of the identity of the table using identity in the loose and popular sense, speaking of the table as a mereologically variable object. When we use identity in the strict and philosophical sense we refer to mereologically constant entities, that which constitutes the table. Thus we can speak of a table being the same even if it has changed colour because the colour of the table is ontologically parasitic on its constituents. In the case of persons it is not possible to use identity in the loose and popular sense since the mereologically variable properties of persons cannot, as with tables, be borrowed from mereologically constant objects. This can be seen in Chisholm's (ibid.:104) example of hoping for rain. If persons were *entio per alio*, or mereologically variable objects, this psychological property could only be had in virtue of some numerically distinct mereologically constant object which hopes for rain. There would have to be a stand-in reference for the person hoping for rain, and, he argues:

> There is no reason whatever for supposing that *I* hope for rain
> only in virtue of the fact that some *other* thing hopes for rain -
> some stand-in that, strictly and philosophically, is not identical
> with me but happens to be doing duty for me at this particular
> moment. (loc.cit.)

This thesis depends on a theory of ontological particulars and a theory of metaphysical primitiveness or basicness, with some objects being more basic or fundamental than others, and on the holding of a disanalogy between tables and persons. It is not clear that either need be accepted. The reductionist view that persons are constituted by experiences and psychological states or, more properly perhaps, events, does not lead to the conclusion that my hoping for rain, is equivalent to something else hoping for rain in virtue of the fact the 'hoping for rain' is a psychological event rooted in time.

The first objection, concerning the primitiveness or basicness of some objects relative to others, concerns the difference in identity conditions for persons and physical objects. When considering trans-temporal identity conditions there are several views on the relative fundamentalnesss of personal and physical identity, as Sprigge (1988:29), for example, notes. Either, the

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strongest examples of the trans-temporal identity of persons are considered to be at least as full and genuine cases of identity as the strongest cases of trans-temporal identity of physical things; or they are considered to be less full or genuine cases of identity, or, finally, personal identity is considered to be a more full or genuine case of identity than the identity of physical objects. The first claim is consistent with a reductionist account and the final claim is consistent with non-reductionism, at least as propounded by Chisholm.

3
First-Person Reference and the Unity of Consciousness

As shown by Chisholm's example of 'hoping for rain', the strength of the non-reductionist position for a different sense of identity in the case of persons lies in the nature of first-person reference. There are various positions which can be taken on this question, but they have in common the negative consequence that continuities of mental or physical events are neither necessary nor sufficient for personal identity.

Underlying non-reductionism are intuitions about subjective facts. Thus Nagel (1979b:200-1) argues that the problem of personal identity arises because of the internal idea of the self. When we ask ourselves whether some past or future experience was or will be ours, we have the sensation of "picking out something whose identity over time is well-defined" (ibid:200). This is achieved by concentrating on the subject of our present experience and temporally extending it. The general point being made by Nagel is that whether or not the identity of the self is an illusion, it is not something which can be captured by any external or objective account of personal identity in terms of psychological or physical continuity. The identity of the self seems separate from all objective accompaniments and even psychological attachments, even if in fact this is not the case.

The strength of this view, the idea of the self as detachable in this sense, and the idea that it is this which should be the concern in discussions of personal identity, lies in the plausibility of the suggestion that the question asked of an experience "Will it be mine?" is not only sensible but in answering it the subject of experience is presupposed. In addressing the question of the extent to which the problem of personal identity is the problem of the first person perspective on experience, it is important to distinguish the various senses in which this necessary unity of the self or person is to be understood. There is the sense of unity in that the self is something known, and there is the sense in which the unity of the self or person is something which is necessary for the possibility of experience. This can be interpreted as a requirement for a

sense of self, or of a substantial self, in order for there to be personal identity. A third option is that the possibility of experience presupposes the necessary unity of the self. The possibility of such various interpretations is partially due to the ambiguity in reference of unity of consciousness. It can take as its reference either the unity of conscious states, or consciousness of such a unity. In the second sense of unity of consciousness, the consciousness is of a variety of mental states as unified into a single consciousness, this consciousness being one's own.

That the two senses of the unity of consciousness are connected is associated with Kant's argument in the First and Second Paralogisms in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where it is argued that the first sense of unity of consciousness involves the second sense, self-consciousness. The focus in this argument is on the necessity of a knower, as a presupposition of apparently indispensable features of our experience, rather than on something which is known. Thus, without specifying the criteria for unity it can be argued that the positing of such a unity is required by the very possibility of experience. It is the potential confusion between the epistemological question, the knowledge we have of our own states, and the metaphysical question, of the constitution of these states and their identity, suggested by the special access we have to our own states which raises the question of the ownership of experience in a form which leads to the positing of a separate self.

The idea of persons as capable of a special form of consciousness, an awareness of themselves which we can call self-consciousness, leads to the view that there is a subject of thought which is not itself an object of consciousness. When I think 'I am aware that I am aware, that I am aware', this chain of thought seems to conclude in the idea that there is a subject of thought, in the Kantian sense of a subject which is antecedent to any particular experience and serves to unify our diverse perceptions. It provides the principle of unity by holding together the Humean bundles of diverse perceptions:

> The thought that the representations given in intuition one and all belong to me, is therefore equivalent to the thought that I unite them in one self-consciousness, or can at least so unite them; and although this thought is not itself the consciousness of the *synthesis* of the representations, it presupposes the possibility of that synthesis. In other words, only in so far as I can grasp the manifold of the representations in one consciousness, do I call them one and all *mine*. For otherwise I should have as many-coloured and diverse a self as I have representations of which I am conscious to myself." (Kant, B134)

Thus, the unity of the self which requires a subject, is not something which itself can be known or grasped through experience. It cannot be grasped empirically through introspection which is necessarily limited and can only give knowledge of myself as object of experience. Not being able to gain empirical knowledge of the subject of thought, but at the same time requiring such a subject for the possibility of experience, we left in the position of presuming that there is such a subject.

The necessity of the transcendental unity of consciousness, or, in Kant's terms, the transcendental unity of apperception is illustrated the example, given by Paton (1951:315), of hearing a clock strike twelve. In order for someone to hear this as a clock striking twelve, for the possibility of knowledge of a series of appearances in time there must be: "(a) one consciousness, and (b) a concept under which the various appearances are united". It is only when these two conditions hold that there is more than a "string of subjective sensations", when there is an object: "The object in this sense is dependent on the unity itself".

The necessary identity of the self as knowing is separate and different from the question of the identity of the self as something known. Nothing about the identity of a subject can be inferred from the logical identity of 'I'. The synthesis of data requires the identity of that which does the synthesising, but from the existence of the transcendental unity of apperception, as Kant (A349) states: "that I, as a thinking being, persist for myself ... can by no means be deduced from it". The argument does not specify, or go any way towards specification of the criteria for unity of consciousness: "empirical consciousness, which accompanies different representations, is itself diverse, and without relation to the subject" (B133). Rather the argument concerns the possibility of constructing ourselves in the sense of isolating those features of our experience which make it possible for the concept of the self to be coherent. These features exist independent of our knowledge or articulation of them, and thus the argument concerns the necessity of the presupposition of the subject as a condition of knowing anything at all: the unity of the self as a precondition of the kind of knowledge and experience we have. Without the subject our perceptions would be nothing other than a stream of disconnected representations and would be the perceptions of no one. My ability to recognise my word processor and apply the appropriate concepts to it, shows that there is one centre of consciousness, constituted by the various strands of a Humean bundle.

The transcendental argument for the unity of consciousness concerns the relation between knowledge and existence: the existence of one sort of thing as necessary as a precondition for another sort of thing. My awareness of objects around me persisting over time grounds my own identity over time, and hence

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the existence of other bodies with stable and structured features, is necessary grounding for my own identity. Hence, the interest is more in the roles played by objects and selves, than in furnishing criteria in the sense of constitutive of something, or with the question of the criteria for the empirical unity of consciousness, which are not supplied by the kind of connectedness of inner experiences provided by the transcendental unity of apperception. The concern is with the grounds for the use of the empirical concept of a subject of experience. These are supplied by the necessary unity of consciousness which while supplying the grounds for its use, is not designed to give the full conditions for its use. Thus Kant's argument is more about the question of how unity of consciousness is possible, than about what such unity is.

It is however possible to say more about this unity than that it is a necessary precondition for experience, and that it is possible only given the persistence of stable and structured objects. Kant's transcendental argument shows the necessity of the subject, not the special or inside knowledge we have of our own unity. The necessity of the subject does not privilege the first-person perspective, or the epistemological conditions with which it is easily confused. A person as subject of experience is formally required by the possibility of experience from which it does not follow that a metaphysical self is presupposed. This thought is brought about to a large extent by the role of the idea of consciousness in the idea of being a person, a point we shall turn to after consideration of the argument from the importance of the first-person point of view on experience.

The non-reductionist position on the importance of the subjective perspective provided by the first-person viewpoint, cannot therefore make reference to the transcendental unity of apperception as support for its position, since it does not deny the necessity for empirical criteria of identity, or necessitate the existence of a substantial separate self. The non-reductionist argument rather concerns the nature of subjective facts and their role in determining personal identity. The argument is, as mentioned above, that the subjective character of experience is not a fact about an entity, it is not, in other words translatable into objective facts. In addition, the relevant facts about subjective experience and the subject are only accessible from the point of view of the subject in question. Thus the subjective character of experience is defined in contrast to the objective, and is characterised by its particular form of access. Both these features are drawn on in the non-reductionist argument against continuity theories and for the thesis that personal identity, unlike the identity of other entities, is absolute and unanalysable.

If subjective facts are to have an irreducible place in judgments of personal identity these must be assumed to be third person incorrigible. They are not

correctable even in principle from a third person point of view. I may be wrong in my judgment of personal identity but this error is only correctable by me. If subjective judgments about personal identity do not admit of this special access, then it is difficult to know what marks off subjective facts about identity from objective, third-person judgments in a way which could be relevant to questions of personal identity. This position is relatively easily challenged by showing that third-person judgments can be relevant. Stephen White (1989:300) provides the example of a person who has been duplicated, but the duplicate has not been told she is not the original person. In such a case she may well mistakenly believe herself to be someone else (the original person). In this case another person, say the person who performed the duplication procedure would be in a position to correct the mistaken personal identity judgment.

The third-person incorrigibility thesis with respect to first-person judgments of personal identity draws on the special access persons have to the content of present states of awareness. This cannot, however, be unproblematically extended to cover diachronic personal identity since judgments of personal identity involve an account of the relation between states. Awareness of present tense states provides no argument for the relation between these states. The third person incorrigibility thesis cannot be extended without argument to account for the relations between states.

These problems with giving an account of subjective facts sufficient to provide an account of personal identity suggest that a more profitable area of investigation is the subject as 'owner' of experiences rather than the subjectivity of the subject. This draws on the idea that experiences are not something which can in some way become detached from their 'owners' and, as Frege (1956) memorably wrote "rove about the world without a bearer, independently". This thought is developed by non-reductionists such as Madell (1991:128) in a distinction between the content of experience and its ownership. The argument depends on the possibility that the content of our experience could have been different.[19] If we can imagine this, then, according to Madell we have made a distinction between the content and the ownership of experience. Again this argument trades on the character of first-person present states, Madell extending this to cover personal identity: "what goes for any individual experience also goes for series of experiences" (loc.cit.).

This argument from the ownership of experience to a non-reductionist position is addressed to continuity theorists, since it holds continuity is neither necessary nor sufficient for personal identity. This view not only takes the synchronic unity of the person as more basic than personal identity, personal identity being derived from it, but 'I' to be unanalysable. This accounts for unity at a time and over time.[20] On this view, to ask if some past experience

satisfies a criterion, either physical or psychological, of identity only makes sense if I already know that the experience is mine. Such a position follows from the unanalysability of 'I' and accounts for the extreme rarity of misidentification of the subject of a first-person assertion.

Non-reductionism thus draws attention to an important feature of first-person access and knowledge of our own presently occurring states and of our own identity, to which, as Brennan (op.cit.:279) writes, we have "a kind of criterionless access". A similar point is made by G. Evans (1982) in his argument that some judgments are "identification-free". Knowledge of the truth of these judgments is not dependent on an identification component. With first person judgments about memory, for example, we do not go through a series of thoughts, included among which is the thought "somebody felt embarrassed" and concluding "that somebody was me". This appears to be a strong argument in favour of non-reductionism. It supports the view that there must be a subject of experience which is identified by neither convention nor stipulation and which stands outside any construction, serving as the basis for further construction supporting the fundamentalness of personal identity relative to other objects.

This argument raises the question of the ownership of experience as the problem of the subject of experience, and in solving it denies the second claim of Parfit's Reductionist View, that a complete description of the world could be given without mentioning persons. In contradistinction to this view, non-reductionism maintains, from an inside perspective, we are not *just* that which thinks, feels and so on. This view gains plausibility from consideration of what is involved in the unity of consciousness. On the Reductionist View the unity of consciousness or mental states involves the integration, or at least the possibility of integration, where the effects produced by various mental states cohere. What is apparently required by this idea of functionally integrated states is not a substantial self, or a separate self, but self-consciousness.[21] The changing nature of experience, the addition of new experiences and the conflict between mental states such as desires and beliefs, need to be integrated, and for this to be accomplished, self-consciousness is required. Consciousness in this sense means knowledge of one's own states, desires and beliefs. This type of self-knowledge is required for integration, particularly in the avoidance or resolution of potential and actual conflicts, as far as this is possible and when it is desirable.

This appears to undermine the impersonal account of personal identity, because persons, in virtue of their capacity for self-consciousness, have a special point of view on experiences, on psychological phenomena. This inside view on experience, encourages the view that we are possessors of these

thoughts and feelings. This is much the point made by Nagel (op.cit.) that questions of personal identity posed by ourselves of ourselves, give rise to the philosophical idea that we have a subjective essence. Accounts of persons given by external analysis as merely and only a kind of object in the world lose this idea of the self as subject.

Despite its apparent plausibility, the appeal to that feature of experience referred to by Shoemaker (1984:8) as the immunity to error through misidentification relative to 'I', is not decisive against the 'no-ownership' view of Parfit's reductionism. In fact, we can make use of the access we have to our own states to support the no ownership view of personal experiences.

The strength of the non-reductionist appeal to the person as subject of experience lies in the apparent failure of continuity or reductionist theories to account for personal identity as it appears to the subject. Useful here is the distinction between the use of 'I' as object and its use as subject. It has been pointed out by Wittgenstein (1969:66-7) that the use of 'I' in first person ascriptions does not involve the identification of a person. When 'I' is used as a subject as in 'I think it will rain', as opposed to when 'I' is used as an object as in 'I have a bump on my forehead', it is not possible to make an error: "it is as impossible that in making the statement "I have a toothache" I should have mistaken another person for myself, as it is to moan with pain by mistake, having mistaken someone else for me" (ibid:67).

Strawson (1966:163) in commenting on Kant, argues that Kant exposes "a natural and powerful illusion" by which "we mistake the necessary unity of consciousness for ... an awareness of a unitary subject". A certain character of connectedness and unity in a temporally extended series of experiences "makes room for the idea of one subjective or experiential route through the world" but it does not necessitate such. It provides grounds for the empirical use of the concept of subject, but this does not support the view that there is a purely inner, and yet subject-referring use for the first-person pronoun. For Strawson, unlike Anscombe (1975), for instance, the possibility of a non-referential use of 'I' is not central given that in practice empirical criteria for 'criterionless self-ascription' are available (a human being). This allows for the subject, but does not support a non-reductionist position.

Although the strongest argument for non-reductionism lies in the nature of the first-person perspective, this is neither sufficient to show that the trans-temporal identity of persons is not accounted for by a reductionist account, or that it establishes a difference between the trans-temporal identity conditions for persons and other entities.

This is not sufficient to discount non-reductionism. The argument to this point has concentrated on the theoretical adequacy of the analysis of personal

identity in isolation from reductionism and with little attention being paid to the motivation in asking the question of personal identity. These two points are extremely important, as shall be shown. We now turn to a fuller explication of the Reductionist View, concentrating on the arguments brought against it from a non-reductionist perspective.

4
Reductionism

In this section the objection that rejection of strict identity for persons results in the denial of the capacity for persons to be agents, and therefore potentially autonomous will be addressed. It has been argued that a Non-Reductionist account of personal identity is necessarily presupposed by the concept of person as agent. In order to assess this argument it is necessary to look in more detail at the major claims of the Reductionist View. Parfit makes two claims, as outlined above (p. 15) A major claim of the Reductionist View is the denial that the subject of experiences is a separately existing entity, distinct from a brain and a body, and a series of mental and physical events (ibid:221).[22] This is the version of the Reductionist View which Parfit accepts, seeing it as using our actual concept of a person. A person's identity over time just consists in:

> Relation R - psychological connectedness and/or psychological continuity, with the right kind of cause, provided that there is no different person who is R-related to us as we once were (ibid: 216).

The concepts of psychological continuity and connectedness are logically related in that the former is defined in terms of the latter. Parfit defines psychological continuity as "the holding of overlapping chains of *strong* connectedness" (ibid:206). Psychological connectedness is the holding of particular direct psychological connections, a psychological connection existing when a psychological state is causally related, in an appropriate way, to another psychological state at an earlier time. The remembering of an experience had by some person at an earlier time, having numerically the same beliefs, desires or character traits as an earlier existing person, are examples of psychological connections. Strong psychological connectedness is stipulated by Parfit (ibid:206) to hold if the number of such particular direct connections is at least half the number that hold over every day in the lives of most actual persons.

In the normal course of time the number of direct psychological connections decrease with the effect that I may not remember any experiences I had twenty years ago, or identify with desires I had at that time. There will, however, be overlapping chains of strong connectedness which link me with that person

since I am strongly connected with myself yesterday, that person is strongly connected with a person two days ago and so on. In this way I may be psychologically continuous with myself twenty years ago although there are no direct connections between myself now and then.

Thus, Parfit's argument is addressed to two beliefs: that identity in the case of persons has a special nature, and the importance of the belief in personal identity (1971:3). Recognising that certain questions do presuppose a question about personal identity, Parfit argues that they can be freed of this presupposition and when they are "the question of identity has no importance" (ibid:4). The argument for the Reductionist View extends beyond the question of what personal identity consists in, to include the question of its significance and thereby analysis of the nature of our special concern with our own survival and well-being.

From the analysis of personal identity in terms of the more particular facts of psychological continuity and connectedness, Parfit concludes that when we consider our future it is not identity which matters, but survival. Parfit gives two central arguments for the thesis that identity is not what matters: the Argument from Division (1984: 261-266) and the Argument from Extrinsicness.

The Argument from Division is based on the intuition that the prospect of division is not equivalent to death. There is a difference between there being an end to my consciousness, as when I die, and having two streams of consciousness. If we agree that the prospect of division is as good as survival, then we cannot think that it is identity which matters when we consider our future since identity does not hold. The relations which do hold are other than identity, and it is the holding of these relations which is seen to be what is important when we consider our future. The resultant persons will be as closely connected to me as if identity had been secured. Thus, what was originally seen as an objection to continuity theories, that on this view there is no obstacle to there being two people in the future who quasi-remember my experiences, has been turned by neo-Lockeans such as Parfit to their advantage. Although in such a case there would not be identity, I have all that matters to my survival in both resultant persons.

The Argument from Extrinsicness concerns the non-branching component of continuity theories.[23] This component is held to be necessary in light of the Reduplication Argument given by Williams (1973:77-8) against psychological continuity theories.[24] The principle on which the Reduplication Objection relies is the Only x and y principle. As formulated by Noonan (1989:152) this principle holds that "whether a later individual y is identical with an earlier individual x can only depend upon facts about x and y and the relationships

between them: it cannot depend upon facts about other individuals". Thus the identity between individuals cannot be determined extrinsically, it must be determined intrinsically. Whether or not I continue to exist cannot depend on the existence or non-existence of a rival candidate. Neglect of this principle has the effect that whether A is identical with B depends on the non-existence of C. As Swinburne (1974:236) puts it, this would have the effect that "who I am depends on whether you exist". Yet identity will sometimes depend on the non-existence of a third person, as in fission cases. Parfit claims that the 'only x and y' principle, and the claim that what matters cannot depend on a trivial circumstance, cannot both be maintained on any reasonable criterion of identity. Since identity will sometimes depend on the holding of either of these two claims, Parfit is able to conclude that identity is not the thing that matters.

We have seen above that the non-reductionist takes personal identity to have a special nature. Knowing all there is to know about relations of continuity and connectedness between physical and psychological states and events is neither necessary nor sufficient for personal identity, the identity of persons being a further fact, not determinable by observation, discovery, convention, or stipulation.

We are inclined to believe that what matters when we consider our future is that essential to our desire to survive is that this very person who has this desire is the very one who survives. The natural assumption is that it is identity itself which matters in questions of survival. This is the view defended by non-reductionists. On Parfit's view our concern with identity is derivative from our concern with survival. This view has implications for the issues of rationality and morality. Parfit argues that these implications hold in virtue of the fact that what matters in contemplating one's future, if one is ideally rational, is not identity but the holding of relations of continuity and connectedness which are not one-one but which hold in varying degrees. On this argument it is irrational to have self-interested concern for one's own future if this is just based on the grounds that the future person will me. The implications for morality concern the scope and weight to be assigned to personal commitments, punishment and the scope of distributive principles.

Traditionally continuity theorists have been seen as open to two major objections. The first is the circularity objection mentioned above in distinguishing the unity from the identity question, and the second is the reduplication objection. As we have seen Parfit is able to answer both. The first by reference to quasi-psychological states and the second by reference to his theory that identity is not the relation which matters. The objection which has been of primary concern here, however, has been the dissolution of the subject. As shown above, the nature of the subject of experience does not necessarily

imply a non-reductionist view of personal identity. This brief sketch of the Reductionist View, has shown that the continuity theory itself does not pose an obstacle to the unity of experience, it merely denies its fundamentalness. In the next chapter the reductionist aspect of the Reductionist View will be considered, but for the moment it is possible to conclude that continuity theories do not constitute an obstacle to conceiving of the person as an agent and thus as potentially autonomous. What has been shown, is that this need not be based on the primitiveness and unanalysability of the concept of person and personal identity.

Conclusion

The main reason for requiring strict identity in the case of persons, is that our use of the concept of person demands it. If there is not strict identity of persons then the indeterminacy of the concept of person must be admitted. This seems to have implausible implications. In particular that there could be situations where the question 'Will it be me?' could not be answered. In the following chapter the extent to which Parfit's Reductionist View can be upheld in the face of the objection that its conception of the person conflicts with common sense and with our demands on the concept of the person will be considered. In this chapter it has been argued that strict identity or non-reductionism is only seemingly required for the conception of the person as autonomous. Investigation of the grounds of the claim have shown that it rests on arguments from the significance of the first person point of view of experience problematically extended to cover identity over time. In addition, there are serious objections to the positive non-reductionist thesis, that a different sense of identity is required for persons. The principal objection was to the central claim, that personal identity holds in virtue of some fact other than impersonal facts of psychological and/or physical continuity and connectedness. It was argued that the most plausible interpretation of this "further fact" is that it is subjective, but that this type of fact cannot provide an answer to the problem of personal identity.

If the further fact which the reductionist holds to be constitutive of personal identity cannot be satisfactorily explained, then it seems that some form of reductionism must be accepted. The potential autonomy of persons has not been undermined, except to the extent that this has been shown not to reside in the nature of persons.

Notes

1. See the Introduction and Chapter 1.
2. The connection between autonomy and rationality is familiar from Dearden's (1972) work. While the nature of this connection and its implications for education is a matter of some dispute, the point in the text is not directly addressed to these issues but concerns the relation between conceptions of rationality and conceptions of the self. On the existence of such a connection see Parfit (1982, and 1984, Part 1)
3. The concept of legal personality and its relation to individual human beings provides an interesting illustration of this point. There are connections between this idea of the person and the legal personality. The concept of legal personality is, as Tur (1987) points out, a "cluster concept" which can be extended or revoked depending on concrete laws of particular legal systems. The crucial relation is not between individual human beings and legal persons, but rather between any entity and agency: Legal persons are distinguished in that they can have actions attributed to them. Entities can be legal persons and not human beings, for example, universities and corporations, and human beings need not be legal persons, for example young people in our society. It can even be the case that an individual human being could be more than one legal person (as for example in Roman law). Thus, the relation between an individual human being and that human being's legal life or lives is only contingently one-to-one. The class of biological individual human beings would only coincide with the class of persons, where agency was attributed only to individuals.
4. In discussing the implications of commissurotomy, Nagel (1971:147) isolates the problem posed by brain bisection as being its implications for "the idea of a single person, a single subject of experience and action". He concludes, from consideration of commissurotomy patients, "the attribution of conscious, significant mental activity does not require the existence of a single mental subject" (ibid:163). Commissurotomy is, although a favourite example of philosophers of mind, interpretatively problematic. Part of its fascination in discussions of philosophy of mind, which has recently to some extent been superseded by the problem of multiple personality syndrome, is that, unlike the puzzle cases, raise 'real' questions of personal identity for 'real' people. The problem with both commissurotomy and multiple personality syndrome is the general lack of an adequate theory of consciousness, and, perhaps from the point of view of the argument here, the influence of our views of what persons should be like in the interpretation of the evidence of disunity and discrete centres of consciousness.
5. This line of argument is reminiscent of Scheman (1983), in so far as aspects of philosophy of mind are linked with individualism. The thesis here differs in that emphasis is not placed on abstract individualism, and her positive argument, for the essential indistinctness of persons following from a rejection of individualism in philosophy of mind is not accepted. Some of the reasons for not accepting the indistinctness of persons will be explored in the next chapter.
6. An implication of this general line of argument is, of course, that the universal applicability of the question of personal identity is undermined. This issue will be returned in the next chapter.
7. The concern here is not with the overtly psychological 'sense of self' frequently used in discussions of the intricate connections between people's ideas of self, their ethical ideas and their relations with others, or with the philosophical connections between the idea of self and the good. The later thesis has recently been defended by Taylor (1989), for example. On the existence and importance of connections between ideas of the self and ethical ideas, Gilligan (1982) and Lyons (1983) provide prominent examples in their work on the relation between gender and ethical thinking.
8. The non-reductionist view has its roots in Butler's distinction between two senses of identity. The idea of there being two 'senses' of identity is not clear. It has been suggested by Baxter (1988) that Butler can be interpreted as holding the belief that there are two kinds of identity (strict or loose) and that there is

one kind of identity which holds to different standards (strict or loose). Given this both sense and standard are used in the text.

9. It could also be argued that it is neither unity nor identity of the person which is the central issue, rather it is the identity of self. Clearly these questions are connected in that the criteria of personal identity end up to some extent clarifying what we mean by the self. It has, however, been argued that identity of the self, or self-identity is the more basic relation. Self-identity is concerned with, in H. D. Lewis's (1969:234) words "one's own inner consciousness of the unique being one finds oneself to be in any experience". Personal identity is not so much concerned with our knowledge of ourselves in this sense, but with our knowledge of who we are in terms of descriptions of ourselves. Self-identity is the identity of the self in the sense of knowing "myself to be myself" (ibid:244): I need not know who I am to know that I am. On Lewis's account this self-identity is more "basic" than personal identity. This argument with its Kantian echoes, will be returned to, as the strict identity thesis is explored.

10. The argument for the connection between consciousness-stages, and that the relation between person-stages forms part of the condition for the unity of a stage is argued by McInerney (1985). This effectively precludes the priority of synchronic unity. This latter position has been argued by Perry (1975:9-10) and Vesey (1974:13). In Perry's case the argument is based on the idea of person-stages, "the set of simultaneous experiences all of which belong to one person" (op.cit.:15). A person-stage is some type of unity of psychological factors at some given time, or some relatively short time. Thus, the answer to the question of what relation obtains between simultaneous person-stages that are events belonging to the same person is presupposed in answering the question of what relation obtains between person-stages that are stages of the same person (Perry, ibid:9). This only gives priority, however, if the unity of one person-stage is not dependent on the relation between stages, which, as McInerney, shows is not the most plausible interpretation.

11. Clearly this does not negate the need for an account of synchronic identity. The point being made is simply that such an account is not prior in terms of analysis to the question of diachronic identity. It should also be pointed out here that taking this position does not imply that synchronic identity statements, either of the form A = A, or of the A = B form, are not genuine statements (compared with trans-temporal identity statements), or that while necessary are not informative.

12. Vesey (op.cit.:13), for example, maintains this position.

13. Although this objection to accounts of personal identity in terms of psychological continuity is often regarded as originating in Butler's criticism of Locke there is some doubt that the criticism attributed to Butler is the one he actually made (see, for example, Penelhum, 1985: 131-2), or that the criticism he did make is convincing. This will not be addressed in the main text but is nevertheless instructive to note what Butler's criticism was and the extent to which Locke's theory of personal identity is open to it.

Butler's (1736/1975:100) criticism is that "consciousness of personal identity presupposes, and therefore cannot constitute, personal identity." Butler gives as the reason why my consciousness of events in my past cannot be what makes them part of my past, that I cannot be conscious of something that is not independently so. Hence being conscious that something is part of my past cannot be what makes it that. In other words, he argues that one cannot define what it is for it be to the case that p, in terms of what it is for it to be known that p. While there is the true claim that I have to know that I was the agent in order to remember doing the action, the claim Butler makes, that part of my experience of remembering doing something in the past is my remembering that I am the agent who did it, is implausible. While it may in fact be the case, consciousness of the fact that the remembered event belongs to my past need not, and often does not, accompany personal or experiential memory. Butler implies, contrary to this, that I cannot recall an event in my past without knowing that it is part of my past.

Locke's theory of personal identity can answer this objection by reference to his distinction between persons, human beings and thinking substances, with

thinking substances being the possessors of personal identity. The relation of personal identity, as Locke defines it, is a relation not between persons but between thinking substances. He is therefore not vulnerable to the particular circularity objection raised by Butler, as can be clearly seen in the following formulation of Locke's criterion of personal identity as given by Noonan (1989:70):

> the person in which thinking substance a thinks at time t = the person in which thinking substance b thinks at time t' if thinking substance a is conscious of the same actions and experiences as thinking substance b.

As Noonan notes, this stipulation is odd, but it is not circular. Since Butler's criticism can be answered, and since Locke's particular interpretation of the psychological criterion is not generally accepted, there is no need, in the present context, to give further consideration to this particular version of the circularity objection.

14. Shoemaker (1970/1984:25) defines quasi-remembering as:

> a kind of knowledge of past events such that someone having this sort of knowledge of an event does involve there being a correspondence between his present cognitive state and a past cognitive or sensory state that was of the event, but such that this correspondence, although otherwise just like that which exists in memory, does not necessarily involve that past state's having been a state of the very same person who subsequently has the knowledge.

Thus to quasi-remember an event is to be subject to a weaker awareness condition than if the event was remembered. Thus, to quasi-remember an event implies that someone was aware of it, not that the person who remembers it was the person who was aware of it.

15. This is essentially a reiteration of the point made above that there is a close connection between the conditions of identification and the conditions for reidentification. It is also an endorsement of the approach adopted by Locke, that we need to start with what we mean by person. It is therefore not assumed that there is not an important sense in which the concept of the person is antecedent to the conditions for its identity. In order to determine what constitutes the identity of a person we must make use of our concept of the person which is judged to be the same: the concept of the person determining what sort of change a person can undergo and still remain the same. By asking the question of identity we are attempting to clarify the concept of person we already have by attempting to separate those features of it which are essential from the inessential, these features being exposed as we consider our judgments about the continued existence of persons under situations of actual and imagined change. Thus we must already have a concept of person which is to be clarified. As McGinn (1982:106) says, our way proceeding gives the issue of personal identity "a methodological, but not a conceptual, priority". The question being asked is 'what is a person?', where we are asking what about a person could change, and we still have a person, or under what conditions would a person remain the same person. It is reasonable to assume that what something is, determines the conditions for its identity over time. Thus, if we know what kind of changes something can undergo and still persist, then we shall know what it is to be a person, in the sense of what constitutes a person: A person will be that which cannot change in some respect without ceasing to exist.

16. To phrase the most basic dispute as between reductionism and non-reductionism may be thought incorrect in that what is being referred to as reductionism is not a reductionist thesis, except as used by Parfit, but rather is reductive (see Noonan, 1989:118-122). On this view it would be more correct to use Parfit's (1971) earlier terminology, and refer to non-reductionism as the Simple View and reductionism as the Complex View. Other alternatives are to call the former, the strict identity theory and the latter continuity theories, or, in Swinburne's (1984:3) terminology call the latter empiricist theories. However, given that Parfit's Reductionist View is taken as representative of the continuity theory, and the continuity theory is taken to have reductive implications,

implications that are arguably the most problematic aspect of the theory, Parfit's later terminology, the Reductionist and the Non-Reductionist View, will be adopted until the reductionist nature of the thesis is given further consideration in Chapter 4. The main reason for adopting this terminology is to distinguish between theories of personal identity which hold that personal identity consists in a further fact (non-reductionist) and those that do not (reductionist). It is not necessary for our purposes to be explicit about, or to take a position on what this further fact involves. Thus, we can remain agnostic on the question of whether this fact is a substance, as the majority of non-reductionists maintain, or a property as Madell (1981) claims.

17. There are several interpretations of what this 'further fact' may involve. Parfit claims that it is equivalent to the holding that persons are separately existing entities. However, this is not a necessary consequence of non-reductionism. It is possible, for example, for a non-reductionist to be a functionalist, and therefore for the further fact not to involve the positing of 'separately existing entity. The choice is not exclusive between reductionism and something like a Cartesian Ego.

18. Ishiguro's explication of the primitiveness of the concept of the person concerns Strawson's use of this expression. However, the sense given to primitiveness is applicable here.

19. The argument that the content of my experience could have different expresses a sense of contingency about being the particular individual one is. The idea is that I can imagine that I could have been born in different place or at a different time. This argument is used by Madell to support his position that there are asymmetries between a first and a third person perspective and that these are important in understanding personal identity in that a person's understanding of her own identity will be irreducibly distinct from the understanding she can have of anyone else's. This argument relies on the possibility of imagining, for example, that my origin could have been different, while maintaining the necessity of origin thesis for other objects.

Of the several problems associated with this view, the use of imagination as a method of inquiry to show what something is is clearly problematic (see Hertzberg (1991), Gaita (1991) and Wilkes (1988) for differing perspectives on this issue). Aspects of this question will be addressed in the next chapter.

20. This view is more fully developed in Madell's earlier work (1981), where Madell takes McTaggart's (1927) position that 'I' is a logically proper name known by acquaintance.

21. Although the Non-Reductionist View is associated with a substance view of the self, identity holding in virtue of sameness of substance, a substance view of the self is not necessarily implied. Madell (1981:137-38), for example, following McTaggart (op.cit.) holds that the self is a property. On this view experiences are the basic particulars, and all my experiences have the simple unanalysable property of being mine. This view is open to a number of objections, one of the most persuasive is given by Unger (1986:99): the view that "an experience is one that *I* have *because* it has the *property of being mine*" is not the view we ordinarily employ.

22. In a postscript to a reprinting of 'Personal Identity' in Honderich and Burnyeat (1976:211) Parfit writes that his main claim is the denial that personal identity consists in a further fact.

23.Parfit argues that what normally counts as persisting identity is continuity and uniqueness (i.e., non-branching continuity, or being the only formal continuer of a past self), with continuity being what really matters. The continuity which constitutes personal identity is, as Korsgaard (1989:106) has argued, formal in the Aristotelian sense, and thus it is in principle possible that copies could be made of a whole person, the copies being formally continuous with the original person. Parfit's point is that in such a situation what we ought to say about personal identity may not matter, or may depend on the particular circumstances. Personal identity is not what matters in such a situation, rather it is the holding of the R-relation which can hold between myself and several other people. Thus, what matters to me in my survival is not that there is a later person who is identical with me, but that there is in the future someone

sufficiently R-related to me: someone, that is, who is related to me by certain links of psychological continuity and connectedness. In the actual world, of course, the only way to assure that there is such a survivor is to ensure that I continue to exist. In the actual world, then, what is required is that tomorrow there is someone who is identical with me. Parfit's claim is that the fact there is a survivor R-related to me does not entail that I will be numerically identical with that survivor.

24. It is frequently pointed out that the Reduplication Argument is an objection to all continuity theories, including the physical criterion.

Chapter 4

Reductionism and the Constraints of Common Usage

Since Butler and Reid's criticism of Locke, it has been argued that reductionist views are untenable because it is not possible to consistently believe and act on the thesis. This objection is one instance of a class of arguments which hold that we are constrained by factors other than logical considerations in the analysis of personal identity to accept our ordinary concept of personal identity. Since this is non-reductionist, reductionism can be at most, as Hirsch (1982:311) argues, "an occasional and sophisticated modulation of the more basic identity-related orientation."

The objection is that Parfit and others who talk of what matters in identity "are not sufficiently alive to the possibility that the way we are able to think and feel about identity, at least at the most primary and spontaneous level, may be severely restricted by psychological constraints quite unrelated to the terms of philosophical justification" (loc.cit.). Thus the Parfitian attitude, where judgments of concern are couched in terms of continuity relations rather than in terms of identity, while theoretically interesting cannot disturb our ordinary conception.

This issue will be approached through the root idea that the analysis of personal identity is essentially an attempt to understand personhood. This is based on the idea mentioned in the second chapter that there is an intimate connection between the identity conditions of something and what that something essentially is. Thus, the issue of constraints on the analysis of personal identity is connected to the wider issue of what is and should be involved in such an analysis.

The methodology of discussions of personal identity involve either the construction of puzzle cases or the interpretation of actual problematic cases. The analysis of personal identity proceeds on the assumption that it is possible to clarify ordinary usage by revealing what is essential to the concept. Thus the intention is to describe rather than prescribe the concept of personal identity. Since Locke's appreciation of the relevance of 'puzzle cases' this has primarily been achieved through the description of cases and situations which of necessity do not hold. The purpose of these puzzles is to elicit responses which either enable a definition, or explain why the questions raised by the puzzles cannot be definitively answered. The puzzles are therefore designed either to give the conditions for the correct ascription of the expression 'the same person' or give some indication of the type of fact or information needed to give such a definition, or some indication of why such a definition is not possible. The

importance of these cases is therefore in the responses they elicit. Among the conditions that must be met by puzzle cases is that they do elicit a response, and this response reveals something about our concept of personal identity, and thus about our concept of the person.

These intuitions must therefore be clear and generally held. In this way the issue of constraints on the use of the concept of person and the wider issue of what is involved in the analysis of personal identity are seen to be connected to the stability and status of our intuitions about persons. It will be argued here that problems with the analysis of the concept of personal identity arise in large measure because many of our intuitions about persons are unstable or conflict. Insufficient recognition of this obscures the fact that our concept of the person is, in essential respects, indeterminate. Thus, discussions of personal identity often proceed on the assumption that intuitions in puzzle cases are sufficiently univocal to reveal what is essential to our concept of the person, and that these intuitions can be relied upon in making judgments of personal identity. This, in turn, is based on the assumption that the nature of the concept of the person is determinate and has a relatively unambiguous reference in all contexts of its use. This problem is not restricted to puzzle cases, which clearly illustrate this problem through the explicit reference made to both imagination and intuition, the interpretation of actual problematic cases raises the same problem where the issue arises in a more subtle form. Several of the issues raised by the indeterminate nature of the concept of the person are discussed here foremost among which is the extent to which any analysis of personal identity can be descriptive in light of this feature of the concept of person. This in turn raises the interesting issue of the extent to which the concept of the person is open to revision and development, which naturally again raises the issue of the constraints operating on the analysis of personal identity.

It is argued that the structures which support the lives of persons, such as social and moral concerns, cannot in themselves be seen as a constraint on the use of the concept of the person operating in favour of non-reductionism since this implies a conventionalism rejected on the non-reductionist understanding of persons. Rather, pragmatic constraints, mentioned by non-reductionists either in support of their position or against reductionism, is argued to be an implication of the metaphysical realism of the non-reductionist position. As such it does not form an additional claim, but is essentially a re-statement of the non-reductionist position that personal identity involves a further fact. It is not, therefore, an additional condition on the acceptability of the analysis. A realist view of the person is argued to be a constraint only if the person as subject necessarily implies a realist position. Since the unity of the person can be

understood in terms of relations of continuity and connectedness there is no reason to hold that there is such a necessary relation.

It is suggested that a form of conventionalism, not withstanding non-reductionist objections, with respect to personal identity is admissible, and useful in that it points to the importance of social context in determining the boundaries of persons. Acceptance of a degree of conventionalism is warranted on the argument that the concept of person is in important respects indeterminate. This form of argument permits further investigation of what was seen in the last chapter to be a strength of the non-reductionist position, the irreducible nature of the first-person point of view on experience. In this chapter this is looked at from the perspective of a psychological continuity theory. From this vantage point it is possible to show that one of the arguments on which the unanalysability of personal identity draws, the univocal reference of the first-person pronoun across time, can be challenged with the effect that the first-person reference can support a continuity theory of personal identity.

The focus on relations between mental events occasioned by a continuity theory reveals that in virtue of the influence on connections by the content of certain, i.e., first-person states, it is necessary to take into account constraints of an epistemological nature in the analysis of personal identity. This constraint concerns our knowledge of persons. With this constraint in mind it is possible to clarify some of the problems associated with the method of puzzle cases in discussions of personal identity, particularly those which involve persons behaving in radically unperson-like ways, such as when fusion and fission are involved. The intuitions elicited in response to these cases are based on our knowledge of persons in the attempt to determine what is essential to our concept. It is therefore necessary to recognise the role that our knowledge plays in interpreting these cases. This does not have the consequence that puzzle cases are automatically ruled out when they involve persons duplicating or changing into Greta Garbo, but draws attention to some of the complexities involved in using these cases as a means of determining what is important in questions of personal identity.

The epistemic constraint on the use of the concept of person is interpreted as a version of the argument from the irreducibility of the first-person point of view. It will be argued that the Cartesian insight into the necessity of the unity of inner life can be accommodated within reductionism. Thus the root insight that the analysis of personal identity reveals important aspects of personhood, and what is important about that attribution is preserved. This is essentially a response to what is seen to be a strong objection to the second claim of Parfit's (1984:212) Reductionist View, that "though persons exist, we could give a complete description of reality without claiming that persons exist".

This impersonality thesis appears to be open to the objection that in reducing persons, as Scheffler (1982:238) asserts, to "atoms or events", our ordinary conception of ourselves is undermined to the extent that it is not clear how we should think of ourselves. This atomistic conception of persons only holds, however, if the atomistic conception of mental states on which it is predicated also holds. It will be argued that the character of mental states precludes specification in atomistic terms, and thus it is possible to meet Scheffler's objection. Obviously, though this also means that the impersonality thesis cannot be accepted if it implies a complete reduction of persons to events. This does not however affect the first claim of Parfit's Reductionist View which it will be recalled, is that personal identity just consists in relations between events. It affects neither the main claim of Parfit's argument that personal identity does not involve anything in addition to these relations, nor his claim about the importance of identity.

This conclusion is significant in that it has been held, as was argued in the last chapter, that strict identity or a non-reductionist theory was required for the notion of the autonomous person in virtue of the need for a discrete self and for an account of self-concern, particularly forward-looking self-concern. The objection commonly raised to continuity theories is that in not conforming with common-sense views it invites skepticism about morality, and fails to account for self-concern. If the arguments given in this chapter are successful, both these objections can be met without at the same time accepting a non-reductionist theory of personal identity. The Reductionist View need not therefore be considered incompatible with the conception of the person as potentially autonomous.

The argument does not, therefore, have the implication that autonomy should be rejected as an aim of PSE. What is given up is the primitiveness of the concept of personal identity. The educational implications of this move lie in the basis of the promotion of autonomy and other attributes of persons which implicitly rely on a theory of what constitutes persons. If persons are conceived of as fundamentally separate and continuous, the nature of the problems to be faced in areas of education such as PSE will be seen as importantly different from an education of and for persons where the separateness and continuity of persons are seen as important values derived from what is important to us as persons. In the latter case, the focus is on the values and importance of unity, personal, inter-personal and intra-personal, and the weight assigned to these values relative to other concerns. While this interpretation allows autonomy to retain a place as an aim of PSE it significantly alters the perception of its basis and importance relative to other beliefs about persons. The unity and integrity of

the person is seen as an important value to be promoted through social and educational practices, not as following from the nature of persons.

This discussion of the relevance of questions of personal identity to the aims of PSE does not seem to further the debate on what these aims should be. Few have claimed a metaphysical basis for autonomy, which is recognised as a normative concept. However, whether the metaphysical presuppositions of the nature of persons are explicitly acknowledged or not, it is argued here that such presuppositions are made and their examination has important implications for how the aims of PSE are stated and translated into practice. Thus whether persons are conceptualised as fundamentally separate, as on a non-reductionist view, or as relations between events but not reducible to them, as on a continuity view, will affect other of our beliefs about persons, and although not definitive in any argument between values, will be a factor in discussions between points of view. In particular it encourages or even necessitates the making explicit of the perspective taken on persons when discussing the aims of PSE. Thus, for example, whether one is privileging a view which gives prominence to the irreducibility of the first-person point of view, or whether the concern is rather with an account which stresses the importance of forging connections with one's self and/or others. The fact that metaphysical assumptions are not acknowledged is not sufficient to show that they are not effective in shaping argument. Thus although the argument presented here endorses aspects of a common-sense form of personal agency, if successful, its effects are not negligible.

1
Analysis and Its Relation to the Concept of Person: An Argument for the Existence of Constraints

The argument so far has favoured a reductionist account over the alternative, non-reductionism, on the grounds of the analyses provided of the conditions for personal identity. It can be argued, however, that these grounds are insufficient in that the analysis has inappropriately concentrated on what Wiggins (1967) refers to as the "logically constitutive" criteria for personal identity. Wiggins takes the determination of such criteria to be the aim of the analysis, by providing a logical guarantee that in its application it will not violate the laws of identity. The objection to be considered here is that this is insufficient. It is insufficient because it ignores the reason why questions of personal identity are of interest, the connection between personal identity and moral, legal and practical issues.[1] The question to be addressed in this section, therefore, is whether there are constraints other than logical considerations on the analysis of

personal identity. The existence of constraints implies that for the correct use of expressions which contain or imply personal identity, conditions of logical adequacy are insufficient because of the connection between these statements and our emotional and other attitudes as well as other factors.

The general connection between some attitudes, including moral ones, and statements containing personal identity expressions is shown by reflection on the question: Why is it important to determine the identity of a given person correctly? This shows not only the immense importance of the concept of personal identity but its intimate connection to moral and other attitudes. For example, if I assent to the proposition "Jones is not the person who promised to lend the book", then I do not think that Jones should be held responsible for the promise.

What role do concerns such as these have in the analysis of personal identity, and what role should they have? Is the connection between moral issues for example, and personal identity such that the moral issues are integral to the analysis itself, or is the role limited to that of supplying an additional criterion which must be satisfied in addition to the logical analysis of the meaning of personal identity expressions such as 'x at t_1 is the same person as y at t_2'? In short, the issue is what is or should be involved in the analysis of personal identity: What conditions need to be satisfied in order for an analysis of personal identity to be acceptable?[2]

Since our ordinary concept is non-reductionist, if there is a constraint other than the use of appropriate logical tools on the analysis of personal identity, a reductionist concept of the person is effectively precluded from being anything other than of theoretical interest. If, for example persons were constrained by psychological or pragmatic concerns to accept the ordinary concept with which we operate, it would not be possible to change our beliefs in line with the reductionist account of the importance of personal identity.

Recognition of the importance of personal identity in structuring an individual's relationship to herself and to others and to persons' lives in general, is clearly insufficient to determine the nature of the connection between the two, and the influence of the latter on the analysis of personal identity. This is illustrated by Locke's account a strength of which, as Flew (1968:155) for example notes, is its recognition of the importance of personal identity: "In this personal identity is founded all the right and justice of reward and punishment" (Locke, *Essay*, II, xxvii, 18). However, analysis of personal identity as constituted by consciousness, is accused of manifest absurdity by Butler (1736) and Reid (1985). Its absurdity lies in its effects on our concern for our own future. Reid argues that those who challenge the idea that identity in the case of persons is strict, cannot live in a manner consistent with their scepticism. Both

Reid and Butler cite in opposition to the psychological criterion of personal identity its failure to make sense of many of our ordinary moral attitudes. The objection appears to be that the role of personal identity is such that, as a practical matter, it would be unthinkable to dispense with attitudes, beliefs and practices which presuppose personal identity. This seems to demand that our conception of the self and theory of personal identity could not be other than it is.

Locke, as Alston and Bennett point out (1988: 43 ff), is a conceptual pragmatist. The concepts we have and use are chosen from the wide array of possible classifications provided by nature. We chose our concepts on the basis of their suitability to our needs and purposes. Thus, in the case of persons, the reason we employ the particular concept we do is that our interests in employing the concept of person are those of morality and law. For Locke the reason our interests lie in this direction is that I cannot be unconcerned or indifferent about punishment and reward which is to be meted out to actions which I acknowledge as mine. There is a difference in concern between actions which I consider mine and those I consider someone else's. There is therefore a clear connection between Locke's account of personal identity and his definition of the person as a "forensic term" (Locke, *Essay* II, xxvii. 26). He does not neglect the connection between personal identity and other attitudes. Indeed, as Noonan (1989:43-45) suggests, the motivation for Locke's conviction that personal identity is constituted by sameness of consciousness is to be found in his reasons for addressing the problem of personal identity, and what he thus hoped to achieve. Locke wished to give an account which made sense of the possibility of resurrection and immortality in a way that was neutral between dualism and materialism; that conformed to the facts of self-knowledge; and that makes sense of the importance personal identity has in our lives, including the special concern we have for our own past and future.

Locke's account therefore meets a condition which, it was implied above, must be met for an analysis of personal identity to be acceptable: discussions of personal identity cannot be conducted without regard to the importance of personal identity to our actual lives. Yet it is precisely this account which Reid and Butler find objectionable on the grounds, among others, that it is impossible to live consistently holding this view. One suggestion worth pursuing, therefore, is Locke is not analysing our ordinary concept of the person and of personal identity, but is engaged in conceptual innovation prompted by his several interests in the question of personal identity and his definition of the person. The implication, of course, is that this holds for all continuity theories.

Thus, it is widely recognised that the Lockean condition that personal identity is constituted by consciousness is not acceptable as it stands. Co-consciousness is neither necessary or sufficient for responsibility.[4] Moreover, not only is Locke's use of the term 'consciousness' notoriously ambiguous,[5] it is in general not clear how consciousness is to be defined. As Wilkes (1988:100) says, consciousness is a notion which covers a "diverse heterogeneity of disparate phenomena". Recent defences of a Lockean approach, as was shown in the last chapter, use a notion of wide psychological continuity and connectedness to cover psychological events other than consciousness. While this avoids some of the problems with Locke's account, it leaves the principal objection to be considered here untouched: that all continuity accounts, no matter how inclusive the psychological criterion is of psychological phenomena, do not correspond to our ordinary notion of the person, or account for our concern with our own future.

This can be seen most clearly in Locke. Locke's theory emphasises the co-consciousness of experiences and events. It is this which constitutes personal identity. Persons do not have complete recall, or complete memories, thus at any point in time, t^2, only some of the experiences and actions which were co-conscious at t^1 will be remembered. From this it follows that there is no person at t^2 who can be identified as the same person at t^1. What we have is a theory which includes two persons, one at t^1 and one at t^2, who have some items in common. The person at t^2 has, in other words, appropriated some of the items belonging to the person at t^1, but the two persons are not identical. As Mackie (1976:183) says: "It is therefore hardly a theory of personal identity at all, but might be better described as a theory of action appropriation."

Revised Lockean accounts which retain the fundamental importance of a special form of consciousness and of psychology as crucial to our understanding of persons, may be thought not to be open to this objection by using the more complex relations of continuity and connectedness between mental events. However, although relying neither on an exclusive concern with co-consciousness, or with continuity, accounts such as Parfit's Reductionist View are, of course, consistent with the first claim of reductionism that, "the fact of a person's identity over time just consists in the holding of certain more particular facts" (Parfit, 1984:210). It is the relation between events which is important, not the relation between persons, which on the Reductionist View are not fundamental entities.

In order to explore the plausibility of this suggestion, as a necessary preliminary to discussion of whether it is possible to change our beliefs about personal identity and accept this first claim of reductionism, it is useful to consider Locke's analysis in more detail, given its continuing influence on the

form of the problem and the methodology employed. Locke's argument, in his chapter 'Identity and Diversity' in the *Essay on Human Understanding*, is the first statement of the problem of personal identity in its recognisably modern formulation. As Noonan (1989:30) says, on the topic of personal identity "it can be truly said that all subsequent writing has consisted merely of footnotes to Locke". In addition, Locke's solution of the problem, in terms of consciousness, articulates some important aspects of conception of the self, and it can be seen as a source, of a prominent aspect of the thinking about persons discernable in writing on the aims of PSE.

Locke defines a person as:

> a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places; 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. (*Essay* II, xxvii. 9)

In accordance with his acceptance of the principle of the relativity of identity[6] Locke's account of personal identity begins with this definition of person: what "*person* stands for" (Locke:II. xxvii.9). Locke famously found the criteria of personal identity in consciousness: "And as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that *person*: it is the same self now it was then, and it is by the same *self* with this present one that now reflects on it, that that action was done" (Locke, ibid: II xxvii.9). Consciousness is the basis of personhood, it is this which gives our lives unity. We know that we are perceiving or willing when we do so, and it is by this reflective consciousness that we consider ourselves one persisting thinking thing. Consciousness constitutes both the synchronic and diachronic unity of the person.

Locke is able to maintain that consciousness is constitutive of personal identity in the face of obvious counterexamples in virtue in part of his adherence to a tripartite ontology. Thus he is able to uphold the idea that consciousness constitutes personal identity by distinguishing between 'man', or human being, 'person' and between these two concepts and 'soul-substances', with 'person' being defined as a "forensic term, appropriating actions and their merit." (Locke, II. xxvii. 15). It is therefore possible that the same human being over time will be different people, there being different criteria for identification in accordance with the principle of the relativity of identity. In addition, Locke makes the assumption that each concept, or sort of being only has one criterion of identity. He is therefore able to reject the idea that bodily continuity, the persistence of the human organism, constitutes personal identity, and the idea

that the identity of a soul-substance is in any way relevant to the question of personal identity.[7]

Although Locke did not originate the distinction between persons and human beings, it is clearly an influential distinction which captures an important sense of the term person, as someone responsible for their actions. It does not, however, capture probably the most common of the several interconnected senses in which the term is used. As Teichman (1985:184) for example, points out in discussing the notion of person in general, this is the sense in which person is used to refer to human beings. It can be argued, as Teichman does, that it is this sense which has moral import on the grounds that if morality exists for the sake for anything "it exists for the sake of human beings, not for the sake of a philosophically defined set of rational substances".[8]

Thus although Locke is concerned with person as a forensic notion our ordinary usage does not make a radical distinction between 'persons' and 'human beings'. Nevertheless, there is an intuitive plausibility in requiring that a person be conscious of actions for which she is held responsible, even if this is undermined by the strength of Locke's condition that sameness of person resides only in sameness of consciousness, or co-consciousness. The idea of consciousness clearly figures centrally in our idea of persons, supplying a criterion of our use of the term person and for the identity of persons.

The problem, therefore, which Locke's account graphically illustrates, and which all continuity or reductionist theories share, is that the concept they are describing is not our ordinary concept. It is not sufficient to overcome this objection to add recognition of the importance of physical or bodily continuity. It is not, in other words, sufficient to note that in the ordinary course of events consciousness alone is not sufficient for personal identity, that in our normal way of identifying and reidentifying ourselves and others evidence of 'sameness of person' is frequently given by physical characteristics. The problem concerns the wider issue of whether any continuity theory, whether it emphasises psychological or physical continuity or both, describes our ordinary concept.

2
Pragmatic, Psychological and Metaphysical constraints

Reid's objection to Locke that it is impossible to consistently act on and believe reductionism, suggests that there is either a pragmatic or psychological constraint on our use of the concept of person which precludes anything other than a theoretical acceptance of reductionism: our practices and conceptions of ourselves are such that we are constrained to accept our ordinary conception. A

pragmatic constraint looks to the relation between theories of personal identity and social practices, and principally concerns the nature of the connection between attitudes and statements involving personal identity.

Although according it different weight in the argument, all proponents of the strict identity or non-reductionist thesis, take the concurrence of non-reductionism with ordinary moral and other attitudes as relevant to its defense. One of the strongest statements is found in Madell (1981:125-6) who takes it as support for the view that personal identity is strict and unanalysable that "[i]t, and it alone, can make sense of a range of attitudes which are essential to being a human being at all."

If pragmatic considerations, such as the essential role of personal identity in structuring our relation to ourselves and others, are to be considered constraints on the analysis of personal identity, then the argument must show that particular attitudes or practices that imply a non-reductionist theory of personal identity are necessary and not contingent. An argument for a pragmatic constraint would have to show that central attitudes and practices presuppose a non-reductionist account of the person. Perhaps more importantly, a particular theory of personal identity is not something that can be chosen on the basis of its effects on our lives. Rather, it must be shown that there is a central coherence of attitudes which are non-reductionist, and that without these we could not make sense of our lives.

Unless the social practices and attitudes are taken as prior to the theory of personal identity, which is clearly unacceptable to a non-reductionist,[9] what this objection comes to is a reminder that the concept of the person is prior to the concept of personal identity, and the former is non-reductionist. This does not advance the argument. Coherence with social and moral attitudes is too weak a relation in this context, and one that is explicitly rejected by non-reductionists in the general rejection of conventionalism with respect to personal identity. Moreover, Parfit (1971:3), for example, fully recognises that our ordinary beliefs are non-reductionist. This is one of the two 'targets' of his analysis. His aim is to show that we are mistaken about the nature of personal identity and its importance. The implication is that this is significant, thus the assumption is that it is possible to change our beliefs. The difficulties of changing our beliefs, which Parfit also recognises, may point to pragmatic and psychological considerations which may be difficult to overcome, but, again, the implication is that it is possible. The non-reductionist is denying that it is possible to change our beliefs even if we thought that it would have overall beneficial effects. The argument against reductionism must show more than that it is not consistent with some beliefs. It must show that those beliefs, attitudes or practices prevent acceptance of reductionism. The possibility of believing a continuity view of

persons rests on the supposition that moral and social beliefs are not all of a piece. In other words, they do not univocally support either a reductionist or a non-reductionist view of persons. The non-reductionist position gains plausibility by adopting one perspective of persons, namely a subjective, first-person view. From this perspective the a reductionist view does indeed seem unbelievable. Nothing is more certain from this perspective than that I am not you and you are not me. The reductionist, on the other hand, gains plausibility for the suggestion that it is possible to change our beliefs by focusing on a third-person account, and arguing that the subjective point of view on persons cannot account for diachronic personal identity.

Thus, if Parfit is considered overly optimistic in his assessment of the possibility of changing our beliefs, disagreement can take place at this level, but the argument that the concept of the person itself precludes reductionism cannot rest on our non-reductionist beliefs, unless it can be shown that these are necessary, and thus acts as a constraint on our forming a different concept.

This line of argument suggests, however, that the constraint appealed to is more correctly characterised as metaphysical rather than pragmatic, in that it draws attention not to the connection between practices and attitudes and theories of personal identity, but to ideas on the nature of the person. It is not the impossibility of consistently acting or believing reductionism which is the objection, but that reductionism misunderstands the ultimate nature of the person. This is suggested by Chisholm's (1970:188) defence of a non-reductionist interpretation of a case of fission in a reply to Strawson's (1970:183-186) comments on his distinction between different uses of the expression 'is identical' with respect to persons and nonpersons. In this example there are two emergent persons, Lefty and Righty, who go off in different directions. By the principle of the transitivity of identity, both cannot be identical with the original person, yet Chisholm maintains Lefty or Righty might be identical with the original person. The identity relation which might hold does not do so in virtue of any psychological connection or continuity, this being inconsistent with the strict identity thesis, but on the presumption of something like the theory of criterionless access to first-person ascriptions of psychological states extended to cover diachronic personal identity. That such an argument does not hold was argued in the last chapter. In the absence of any further argument this leaves the presupposition of strict identity without any visible, or at least argumentative, means of support. Chisholm's (loc.cit.) response is that reflection on puzzle cases such as fission reveals certain general principles which are seen on reflection to be true. Principal among these is that if Lefty and Righty are imagined to be persons, there will be definite answers to

the questions posed by the original person, "Will I be Lefty?" and "Will I be Righty?".

Thus, it is not argument that is needed to reveal the truth of this view, rather, Chisholm claims, the truth of the strict identity theory can be seen through contemplation of cases such as fission, so long as this contemplation is of the cases themselves, uncontaminated by the importation of what he refers to as "certain related" philosophical theses into discussions of personal identity. To not see that the concept of person is determinate is a result of not contemplating the case itself. This implies that discussions of personal identity are independent of some philosophical theses, the importation of which distorts our reflection, but it cannot be independent of others. The source it is legitimate to draw on is, presumably, our ordinary concept and in particular the nature of first-person experience. It can be left open whether our deeply held moral intuitions such as that it is wrong to punish someone for something that she did not do, are legitimate influences in this context. The point is that one must assume that at least our ordinary concept is not included among the related theses which are not to be drawn on, since where else is the idea that persons are determinate to come from? Chisholm's demand that questions posed by puzzle cases should themselves be contemplated, and that reflection should not merely be of related philosophical theses suggests that he is drawing exclusively on the first-person perspective, and that the inadmissibility of other perspectives is required in order to appreciate the strength of the irreducibility of the former to the latter.

Chisholm's position can therefore be interpreted as implying a metaphysical constraint on the analysis of personal identity. On this view, the analysis of personal identity is constrained by the ultimate nature of the self. Puzzle cases which involve fission do not show that the concept of personal identity is either unimportant or indeterminate, to think that such conclusions follow is to misunderstand the nature of the person. The concept of person is determinate and unanlysable into more particular facts, and thus arguments based on puzzle cases which purport to show that persons are indeterminate cannot be correct because they depend on our prior use of the ordinary concept which precludes such an understanding. The non-reductionist view is that it follows from the determinate nature of our concept of the person that if puzzle cases involve persons, then there must be determinate answers to the question of personal identity posed of or by any person in the puzzle. If the concept of the person is determinate, then there can be no borderline cases of personal identity. This does not seem to further the argument since what is in question is presupposed. The argument relies on the further position that our ordinary concept of a persisting person necessarily precedes any concept we form of person-stages

and their interrelationship, or of any deviant concept of personal identity, and this ordinary concept is non-reductionist. As has been acknowledged, the concept of the person has conceptual priority, but analysis of synchronic unity does not necessarily have precedence over analysis of diachronic unity. The assessment of this constraint therefore depends on whether the claim of precedence of our ordinary concept is considered as an additional claim, or is part of the argument for non-reductionism.

Thus, while something like a pragmatic constraint may initially be used to argue against reductionism, its importance on this view lies in what it reveals about the nature of the person. It thereby raises the question of the extent to which our ordinary concept of the person informs the analysis of personal identity and to what extent the analysis of personal identity can clarify the use of the concept of person. The significance of the Reductionist View is called into question by its failure to concur with our common-sense beliefs about persons since an argument which purports to show that we are not what we thought we were, raises questions about the nature of the concept of person and the type of analysis and justification to which it is open.

3
Realism, ascriptivism and common-sense

As argued in the previous section, the metaphysical constraint, is essentially a realist claim about the nature of persons. A realist position on persons is implied by non-reductionism: 'person' refers to some definite entity in the world. In line with this realist position, ordinary attitudes and practices are denied a role in determining either wholly or in part an acceptable theory of personal identity.

An argument frequently made against reductionism is that it allows decisions and not discovery to determine whether personal identity holds: that in certain situations personal identity is a matter of decision.[10] Thus, there are situations where whether someone will be me or not is a decision to be made on the basis on the amount of connection between psychological events, for instance. This conventionalism is held to be inappropriate in cases of personal identity. The intention behind drawing attention to constraints is the denial that our ordinary concept of the self or person is an arbitrary convention which could be replaced. Reductionism accepts a weaker position. Because the concept of personal identity is indeterminate, there are describable cases where philosophical analysis of the concept of personal identity is insufficient to inform a person whether some or any experiences will be hers tomorrow. In such cases whether some person tomorrow will be me or not is not a matter of

discovery, but a matter of decision. It is by constructing cases where identity does not hold, as in branching teletransportation, that Parfit is able to show that it is not, contrary to our beliefs, identity which matters when we consider our future, but the holding of certain relations. Since these relations, unlike identity, hold to a greater or lesser extent, it is permissible to conclude not only that it is not identity which matters, but that in virtue of this, personal identity can be indeterminate. In some situations we may not know what to answer to the question 'Will it be me?'

There can be little doubt that our ordinary understanding of personal identity is not like this. Ordinary beliefs show that we are realists about personal identity. In contrast to the Reductionist View, we believe that the language of persons is not eliminable, or merely pragmatically useful. We do not believe that 'person' is in principle redundant. It functions to explain both agency and our unity at a time and over time, but more importantly seems to be an irreducible feature of the world. On this view, while difficult puzzle cases and actual problems such as multiple personality syndrome may seem unanswerable, in that we do not know what to say about personal identity in these cases, it does not follow that there is no answer. There is a truth to the matter, however difficult it may be to reach. There are no borderline situations where it is in principle a matter of decision or where there is legitimately more than one answer to the question asked of some future set of experiences "Will it be me?" The argument against conventionalism from the non-reductionist position thus relies for its positing of a realist position on our ordinary conception of the person as determinate and privileges aspects of our ordinary concept of the person over an analysis of the concept of personal identity which claims that there are describable situations revealing our concept of person to be indeterminate.

This is to be contrasted with reductionism which, in accepting that personal identity is indeterminate, also seems to accept conventionalism. This easy equation can be forestalled by the introduction or stipulation of a criterion which judgments of personal identity must satisfy. Shoemaker (1969) for example, argues that judgments of personal identity should match the special concern we have for our own future. The adoption of a such a criterion means that judgments of personal identity are not purely conventional, and effectively meets requirements that such judgments should be in line with relevant attitudes. Such a criterion does not, however, correspond to our common-sense realist views on personal identity which take the relevant attitudes and emotions to be based on beliefs about personal identity, not the other way round. My guilt over an act performed in childhood does not make that act mine. I feel the guilt because I believe that it was me who performed the action. It is not the

attitude I take towards some action or experience that makes it mine. On these grounds the introduction of additional criteria which must be satisfied does not address the root problem.

In this form ascriptivism seems clearly wrong. However, individual ascriptivism is not the only possible form. If social rather than individual attitudes are taken as the reference, it seems less open to objection. Such a view is defended for example by Wilkes (1984: Ch 4) and Shoemaker (1984:109-110). On this view society's attitude forms an important determinant of the meaning of personal identity expressions. Although Haksar (1991:14-16) for example, claims that both social and individual versions of ascriptivism are counter-intuitive and run counter to common-sense, the argument for ascriptivism deserves further consideration since it avoids crude conventionalism, and allows for the possibility of change in our beliefs, unlike arguments from the nature of persons.

If a form of social ascriptivism is acceptable then it negates the need to introduce an additional criterion in order to make reductionism acceptable. It also has the interesting effect of suggesting that the constraint on our concept of the person is not metaphysical or pragmatic but epistemological.

Shoemaker (op.cit.) gives the example of a society where persons regularly have their total brain-states transferred to the brains of their duplicated bodies (this being necessary because of the deterioration of their bodies due to an increase in the level of some sort of radiation). In this imagined society "all of the social practices presuppose that the procedure is person-preserving" (ibid:109). Although persons in this society operate with a different sense of person, there seems good reason to assume that the procedure is person-preserving. That it is, and that the persons in this society take it as such, depends in large part on the knowledge they have of the procedure and the supporting social structures which influences their knowledge of what constitutes a person.

The 'persons' in this example act and believe as if they are persons. They are presumably educated and brought up to consider the brain-state transfer (BST)-procedure not as if it involved their death but as a part of life. Moral practices such as promising, responsibility for action as well as attitudes which presuppose personal identity such as concern with one's future are preserved. Persons in this example cannot be considered to be irrational for acting on these beliefs.

The situation would be different if the BST-procedure was not presupposed by social structures to be person-preserving. This is analogous in a suggestive way to the position we are in. The contingent coincidence of various features of human beings is reflected in our understanding of personal identity. Thus, the

fact that human beings enjoy the uninterrupted continuous existence of human bodies from birth to death, have a memory which is relatively continuous and reliable, that they have some character traits which are relatively stable and endure, as well the endurance and stability of recognition abilities are all aspects of being a person which are contingent facts of the matter supported by communal understandings and beliefs. What is important to note is that we know that persons are like this. Persons do not branch, they undergo neither fission nor fusion. It is not part of our concept of the person that they could. This knowledge we have of persons affects our responses to puzzle cases and thought experiments, as well having an important influence on our ordinary lives. The concept of person, not unlike many other concepts, is not as Shorter (1971:167-8) says, quoting Martin (1959) "ready-made for application in *any* situation". This raises the question of the extent to which puzzle cases where 'persons' engage in radically unperson-like behaviour are intelligible, and what these cases can show about our ordinary concept. However, unless a non-reductionist definition of person is stipulated, it seems that, although there are constraints on the use of puzzle cases, cases such as that described by Shoemaker are useful in that they suggest plausible influences on our conception of person.

Shoemaker's example suggests that an important constraint on the analysis of personal identity is epistemological. The example is significant because the persons who undergo the BST-procedure have fore-knowledge of the event as well as the support of institutions and structures which presuppose personal identity. They engage in 'person-like' activities, have a point of view on their world, and in significant respects are not unlike persons as we know them. The use of the BST-procedure preserves what is important in personhood. Although the account of persons in this case would be non-reductionist, this does not seem sufficient ground to deny personhood. Shoemaker's example can therefore be interpreted as placing an epistemic condition on the acceptability of a theory of personal identity.

The relevance of this condition is seen by reflecting on the role our knowledge of persons plays in our lives, in particular our knowledge that we do not branch. As has been mentioned before, personal identity is not merely backward looking, it is also presupposed in our concern for our future. Important plans and intentions are formed on the basis that no-one else will act on these plans and intentions in the same way as I will, just as no-one remembers events and certain experiences which happened to me in the same way as I do. Personal intentions and memories implicitly trade on our knowledge that we have not branched and will not do so. Our concern for our future implicitly takes this knowledge into account, and clearly influences the

formation of our expectations. Therefore, when we are confronted with puzzle situations or thought experiments where fission or duplication takes place, as in the branching case of teletransportation described by Parfit (op.cit.:200-1), one of the problems is that we do not know how to react to the future of our duplicate. Our intentions, plans and expectations have been formed on the basis that in the future there either will or will not be a person who is me. We are not prepared for a situation where there could be two or more of each of us: we are not sure how to form intentions for a branching replica and what this would mean for the two resultant persons. This suggests that the non-branching nature of our lives supports the belief that it is identity, rather than the holding of certain relations, which is important, or what matters to us.

In a case of branching the non-reductionist will hold that only one of the resulting persons can be me since only one person can be identical with me, and that this will be the one with the reliable or normal causal connections. Branching appears to support the non-reductionist point of view, as it supports the claim that it is identity itself which is important. The importance of this example is that the psychological connectedness which persons ordinarily exhibit (i.e., non-branching) is deeply influenced by the knowledge that we do not branch. It is feasible to assume that the knowledge that we are non-branching affects our reaction to puzzle cases describing branching. This reaction, which is likely to be equivocal and unstable, can be explained by the influence of our knowledge that we are non-branching on the formation of intentions and other beliefs and attitudes which presuppose personal identity. On this view psychological connectedness is influenced by what we know about persons. This makes no reference to what persons are, but rather concerns what we learn and know about persons. In other words, forward-looking mental events such as intending are constitutive of personal identity as well as presupposing it.

What effect does this epistemic condition have, and what happens when it is built into the puzzle cases involving fission? Clearly it raises a problem for the view that the reference for 'I' is univocal over time. It was argued in the last chapter that the strongest argument for non-reductionism comes from the first-person perspective. From this perspective we believe the non-reductionist view for we think of survival as all or nothing. As was argued, this is most plausibly interpreted as the requirement that the further facts to which the non-reductionist is committed are subjective in nature, and thus persons have incorrigible access to their own diachronic personal identity. This relies on an extension of the access we have to present-tense mental states, and thus trades on the epistemology of present-tense first-person reference.

The assumption is that the first-person pronoun refers univocally over time to an inner life in virtue of its use with verbs such as 'to remember', 'to intend' and so forth. However, the connection between psychological connectedness, between two tokens of 'I' , as in "I remember finishing this before I went to work", and identity is only contingent on the Reductionist View. Any necessary connection that might be thought to be exist, for example linguistic necessity, can be circumvented by the use of 'quasi-psychological states' introduced by Shoemaker (1970), as mentioned in the last chapter. This has the consequence that 'I' can have a variable reference. Following Rovane (1990:368), the pronoun 'I*' can be introduced to express psychological connectedness without identity. The corresponds to the use of 'I' where there is identity, and thus 'I*' allows variable first-person reference in cases which involve branching. This enables a branching person to refer to a common ancestor to form forward-looking intentions and to remember. Since the branching person would have knowledge of past and future branching there would be no problem distinguishing whose experiences are quasi-remembered and whose are quasi-intended.

On this account the concern persons have with their own future can be accounted for on a reductionist or continuity theory of personal identity. Contrary to what Butler and Reid supposed, no special problem is raised for reductionism by forward-looking mental events since the concern with the personal future can be accounted for in terms of the connections between events. The objection that a continuity account of personal identity fails to make sense of our lives is primarily interpreted as the effect of such a view has on our concern with our own future. However, as Whiting (1986) has cogently argued, long term psychological connectedness can provide reasons for embracing long-term projects and these can give rise to a general concern with one's own well-being. Thus the objection from future concern can be accommodated within the first claim of the Reductionist View. There is also no problem, for the unity of the person, although the non-reductionist position that this is some further fact is not accepted, the unity of the person is intact, although the reference of 'I' is recognised to be variable. The non-reductionist position relies on the argument that the present-tense univocal reference of 'I' can be temporally extended unproblematically. On Rovane's view, this is not necessary or even warranted. Thus it is possible to have the unity of the person without strict identity. This account does, however, raise problems for the second claim of the reductionist thesis.

The objection that still remains arises from Cartesian intuitions concerning the subject of thought: the requirement for an inner unity. This addresses the

second claim of the Reductionist View: that a complete description of the world could be impersonal.

4
Reductionist Persons

It was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, that with the introduction of the idea of constraints on the use of the concept of person the Reductionist View results in a skepticism about persons with the effect that the concept of moral agency can not be sustained. This objection, due to Scheffler (1982), is concerned with the idea of persons as the subject of moral demands. If persons are just series of events, then it seems there is no subject of which moral demands can be made. As Scheffler (ibid:237) says, he has "no idea what moral demands can most plausibly be made of atoms or events". This objection to the Reductionist View holds because reductionism is a thesis about personhood as well as personal identity. Reductionism with respect to personal identity holds because a reductionist view of persons is accepted. Thus, personal identity is not ontologically basic on the Reductionist View because a "person's existence just consists in the existence of a brain and body, and the occurrences of a series of interrelated physical and mental events" (Parfit, 1984:211).

This does not constitute an objection to persons being the object of moral concern. Indeed, the fact that persons are the locus of experience events, which may be either pleasurable or painful has claim to be that feature of persons which makes it appropriate for persons to be the object of moral concern. Certainly utilitarians take this claim seriously. The problem is with moral agency, with persons as the subjects of experience, as the possessors of attributes. For persons to act morally, or in any kind of purposive way, persons cannot be conceived of as merely atoms or events. As Scheffler (op.cit.:238) points out, if the Reductionist View does undermine our ordinary conception of persons, "then it is unclear how we are even to think of *ourselves*, let alone how we are to think of morality". Clearly if this objection holds, and it seems that Parfit (1973:159) at times accepts an atomistic account of persons, then it would form a strong argument against the acceptance of reductionism. The situation is not, however, so clear cut. Parfit does not favour an extreme atomistic reductionism, and it may be possible to admit some primitive form of agency to the Reductionist View. The question is whether the limited form of agency that is admitted can generate those qualities, such as autonomy and integrity which make persons morally valuable.

It will be recalled that Parfit makes two claims: that persons are not separately existing entities over and above mental and physical events which

stand in appropriate relations; and that these facts, of a person's identity over time

> can be described without presupposing the identity of this person, or explicitly claiming that the experiences in this person's life are had by this person, or even explicitly claiming that this person exists. These facts can be described in an *impersonal* way (1984:210).

This second claim is arguably the most problematic aspect of the Reductionist View, calling into question as it does the idea of the self as the possessor of psychological attributes, as the subject of experience. It raises questions about how the experiences of persons are to be individuated if not by reference to their subjects and thereby raises the question of whether the idea of the person as the subject of moral demands and considerations is even intelligible on the Reductionist View.[11]

The complete reduction of persons to related events depends on the plausibility of the atomistic theory of mental events on which it relies. In order for Scheffler's particular objection to hold, mental events must be capable of being understood in the required atomistic fashion. In this connection Rovane's (1990:388-90) argument that there are holistic constraints on the psychological reduction of persons is relevant. Rovane argues that the events and relations to which persons are to be reduced cannot be specified atomistically. The attempt to do so faces the obstacle the specification of other mental states is always involved. Thus, for example, a behaviouristic reduction of mental types to pairs of stimulus and response is thwarted by the need to specifying other mental states in the attempt to specify the sort of stimulus which produces a given response. The interdependence of mental states thus essentially forms a constraint on a completely impersonal account of personal identity. As Rovane (ibid:390) points out this is in line with the continuity theory's claim that persons are relations of psychological continuity and connectedness. In specifying these relations the Reductionist View precludes the use of anything other than the way in which successive mental events are related. This dependence of relations on relata is consistent with Parfit's Reductionist View only if mental events can be specified independently of the psychological relations in which they stand. Therefore, if the relation of dependence is reciprocal in that the contents of mental events are dependent on the psychological connections between them it would not be possible to give a completely impersonal description of persons.

That such a reciprocal relation does exist is suggested by the argument given above concerning the influence of the knowledge that persons are non-branching on the formation of psychological connectedness with future

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persons. Not all psychological connections are influenced by this knowledge, of course. However, crucially, those events which do exert such an influence are those with first-person content. The hope for world peace does not intrinsically make use of first-person content. The hope that I will help bring about peace does. This latter intention influences the formation of other mental states and thus is instrumental in forming psychological connections. Some psychological relations are therefore dependent on mental events which have first-person content. The relations which constitute personal identity are therefore dependent on content of the related events, which are also reciprocally dependent.

Thus, the epistemic constraint, my knowledge that I will not branch, is instrumental in the formation of the content of first-personal mental events as well as being influenced by the relation between these events. If this argument is sound, if my relatedness to future persons is indeed something not only implicitly taken into account in forming forward-looking mental events but influences the formation of connections between such events, then a completely impersonal account of persons cannot be successful. The argument is, of course, importantly different from the non-reductionist point about the irreducibility of the first-person point of view, and does not lead to acceptance of a non-reductionist position. On this view the reductionist claim that branching could be regarded as about as good as ordinary survival would not be denied so long as the appropriate epistemological conditions are satisfied. The non-reductionist, on the other hand would deny that in the absence of identity branching could be considered as survival.

The constraint which is placed on our understanding of personal identity is therefore our knowledge of our uniqueness. The influence of this knowledge, beyond its effect on the content of first-personal mental states is that it inclines us towards the belief that it is identity which matters when we consider our future. It does not show that identity is what matters.

This interpretation may, however, be thought to miss the point of non-reductionist arguments, such as that advanced by Madell (1991:129), that "we do not have a notion of persons at all until we recognize that crucial respect in which persons differ from objects - in their subjectivity, their first-person perspective." There are several ways this call to account for the first-person point of view can be interpreted. On the one hand it can be seen as a Nagelian challenge to capture what it is like to be a person, since this is arguably what is important and distinctive about persons. There is a point, as was mentioned in the last chapter to the charge that reductionist theories are theories of persons as objects. The question is whether reductionism can also account for the subject of experience. What is interesting about Madell's position is that while Butler

based his opposition to Locke on a defense of the immortal soul, and both Butler and Reid argued for and saw a need to assert the existence of an ego, Madell's defense of strict and unanalysable identity for persons denies such a need on the basis of arguments which not only show that the notion of a continuing ego is likely to be incoherent but that it also tends to treat persons as though they were another kind of object, something which Madell, in common with all strict identity theorists wish to deny.

If the requirement is for a theory of the person as subject, then it is not clear that it is the Nagelian challenge which needs to be answered. As was argued in the last chapter this view depends on a theory of third-person incorrigibility for first-person access to subjective facts over time. Thus it is not clear that the answer to the question 'what is it like to be an X?' can furnish the type of knowledge required, i.e., knowledge that is significantly different to third-person knowledge. If I ask myself what it is like to be me, my answer will be a description which, it seems, will not reveal anything which can be counted as a different sort of knowledge to that which is in principle available to someone else. To hold that there is such 'private' knowledge would involve showing, *inter alia*, that knowledge by acquaintance is not knowledge under some description. Being a person may put me a privileged epistemological position with respect to many mental phenomena, but 'having personhood', does not entail 'knowing (about) personhood'. In general the subjectivity of persons, even if it furnishes subjective facts, does not seem adequate to answer the question of personal identity.

This, of course, neglects the phenomenological aspect of being a person, but again it is difficult to see how this aspect of personhood could furnish the requisite type of fact needed for personal identity. The motivation for advocating non-reductionism could perhaps be more profitably be interpreted as an implication of the necessity for the unity of the inner life of a person. A persistent criticism of views such as Parfit's is that it fails to account for the synchronic unity of the person. What seems to be left out of Parfit's reductionism is an account of direct self-reference grounded in self-awareness, and thus a recognition of the importance of the first-person perspective. The question is not the phenomenological question of personhood, but the question posed by the person considered as subject as well as an object.

As has been shown the non-reductionist position relies heavily on the priority of the synchronic unity of the person, using the incorrigibility of present-tense first-person access to mental states as the basis for the diachronic unity. As was argued in the last chapter, the continuity theorist need face no special problem with synchronic unity in virtue of connections which hold between mental states and their implication in synchronic unity. The relation

between events is not an identity relation. The deprivation of assured unity which this entails does not entail that synchronic unity cannot be accounted for. The basis for synchronic unity may, however, through the less foundational basis thus provided, seem less secure in virtue of not being secured through a substantial self which possesses or otherwise secures this relatedness. This is a separate question, and not one which influences the cogency of the argument for synchronic unity provided by a reductionist view.

In this section it has been argued that a completely impersonal description of persons is not possible because of the reciprocal dependence of the content of some mental events on the relations between such events. This was argued not to be decisive against reductionism since it was not an admission that personal identity is some further fact, but that persons, in virtue of the character of their mental events cannot be atomistically described, and that our knowledge of persons influences the formation of relations between first-person mental events, leading to rejection of the view that an account of the world could be completely impersonal.

The rejection of reductionism with respect to persons can be strengthened through consideration of the reductionist character of the argument. This argument addresses the reductionism of Parfit's Reductionist View, but shows that although reductionism is not plausible, the central claim of continuity theorists stands. In showing that a reductive analysis is not necessary it is also shown that claims about the nature of personal identity can evaluated separately from claims about its importance. In this way the consequences of holding either a continuity theory or a strict identity theory for ethics and rationality still hold, since they do not depend on the coherence of a reductive analysis.

All reductionists and continuity theorists accept that

> [1] a person's existence just consists in the existence of a brain
> and body, and the occurrence of a series of interrelated physical
> and mental events (Parfit, 1984:211).

The impersonality claim is that "though persons exist, we could give a *complete* description of reality without claiming that persons exist" (ibid:212). This holds on the claim that the following two claims are equivalent:

> [2] there exists a particular brain and body, and a particular
> series of interrelated mental and physical events

[and]

> [3] there exists a particular person (ibid:212)

The reductionist or impersonality thesis does not necessarily follow from acceptance of [1]. The two claims are distinct. The claim for the reductionist thesis lies in the equivalency of [2] and [3]. Thus, on Parfit's view either [2] or [3] could be used, it is not necessary to use both: they are "two ways of

describing the same fact" (ibid:212). While a complete description of reality would mention [2] or [3], both need not be mentioned and therefore a complete description could be impersonal.

The relation of logical equivalence between [2] and [3] is a symmetric relation. [2] may be equivalent to [3] in that [2] may be substituted for [3] and this may be informative. It is not, however, a necessarily reductive relation. While the relation of logical equivalence is symmetric, a reductionist relation is asymmetric, in that the two claims are not mutually reductive, rather one claim is reducible to another. The relation between [2] and [3] could be made asymmetric, if the two statements were logically equivalent and if there were a relation of entailment from [2] to [3]. This would mean that the statement "there is a particular person" is entailed by the statement "there exists a particular brain and body, and a particular series of interrelated mental and physical events". That such a relation does not hold is shown by a possible world example used by Garrett (1991:367-8). In worlds 1 and 2 A undergoes fission into B and C. While in world 1 both B and C survive, so A is identical with neither, in world 2 C does not survive and so there is no branching (A is identical to B'). The two persons B (in world 1) and B' (in world 2) are distinct persons since A is B' in world 2 and A is not B in world 1. Yet both B and B' have the same psychological connectedness and continuity with A, from which it follows that the specification of particular interrelated mental events does not entail that a particular person exists.

This argument is about the nature of personal identity, whether or not it can be characterised in a reductionist way. If the argument given above is successful then it appears that a reductionist thesis can be rejected. This does not, however, affect the thesis that persons are nothing over and above the occurrence of certain physical and psychological events, which still holds. It will be recalled that Parfit's thesis is about the importance of personal identity. If the main claim is that personal identity does not involve a further fact, then we have yet to find an argument against this. The claim about the nature of personal identity and the importance of identity can thus be seen as separate claims: it is possible to reject Parfit's arguments for the former and accept his arguments for the latter. Thus, arguments against the reductionist nature of personal identity do not at the same time support the non-reductionist view that identity is what matters when we consider our future.

If continuity theories are not reductionist, does this not mean that the account is circular in that the analysis of same person need make reference to persons? This does not follow if the analysans contains concepts other than person. In such a case the account need not be viciously circular, and may

reveal informative interrelationships between the concepts. As Wiggins
(1980:4) points out, much may be achieved in philosophy

> by means of elucidations which *use* a concept without attempting
> to reduce it, and in using the concept, exhibit the connexions of
> the concept with other concepts that are established, genuinely
> collateral and independently intelligible.

5
Beliefs and the concept of the person

It has so far been argued that there are legitimate constraints on the analysis
of personal identity. These have been shown to be epistemic rather than
pragmatic, psychological or metaphysical. In the course of the argument it has
been shown that Parfit's main claim, that personal identity is not a further fact
can be upheld. In the course of the discussion several problems were left
unresolved. A recurring problem is the concept of the person itself, to which we
now turn.

The argument has been an attempt to uphold the view that our belief in the
indivisible unity of the person, and what our unity consists in are mistaken. If
the argument presented is valid, it does not straightforwardly follow that we
should change our beliefs, or that our beliefs are unfounded, as we have seen
from the discussion above on possible constraints on the use of the concept of
person. Thus, from the proposition that our belief in the indivisible unity is
unjustified, it follows that there are only two alternatives: our beliefs must be
defended, or they must be revised. These two options, suggested by Glover
(1988:14), are only alternatives, however, given certain interpretations of what
it means to defend beliefs about ourselves, and what would be involved in a
revision of the beliefs about persons. A third option would naturally be
suggested by a non-reductionist: if the analysis of the concept of person shows
our beliefs to be unjustified, it is not our beliefs, but the analysis which needs to
be revised. This type of response is, however, not available to the non-
reductionist as it implies conventionalism in questions of personal identity. A
more profitable line of objection to pursue is that if an analysis of personal
identity does not concur with or match our beliefs and practices, this in itself
does not provide a good reason to reject or revise those beliefs. In this section,
therefore, the question to be addressed is whether it is possible to adopt beliefs
other than the ones we have. Is it possible, in other words, to choose to become
reductionists?

The significance of our belief in the unity of the person is such that it seems
unassailable. Or, more precisely, unassailable merely by analysis of the concept

itself. Some of the many beliefs we have about persons operate at the level of common-sense, and take the form of implicit assumptions deeply embedded in our thinking about persons. Among these seemingly natural and indispensable ways of seeing ourselves and others concern beliefs about the unity and separateness of persons. We believe that we are each one person, and that each person is distinct from other people. Ways of speaking such as "she is not the person she was", where what is meant is that there have been significant changes in attitude or beliefs do not imply doubt over whether there is an important sense in which this person is the same person as the one before the changes took place.

This suggests that our beliefs about persons are not something which are open to change on the basis of philosophical argument. This appears to endorse Wilkes' claim (op.cit.:228) that the everyday understanding of real people "is only marginally contaminated (temporarily, or perhaps to some slight extent permanently) by scientific and philosophical theories". Our conceptions of ourselves and of other persons is not, on this view a theoretical position open to change on the basis of a more complete or realistic or even beneficial theory.

The reason for this, according to Wilkes, is the reality of people's lives. This does not fundamentally change: People have to survive, live with others and cope with changing environments. These 'facts of life' are relatively unaffected, or have the potential for being affected or not by philosophical theories, because, according to Wilkes (ibid.:229) the everyday understanding of real people neither explicit not realistically construed. It does not form a paradigm, and thus is not open to being overturned by a new model. Our ordinary concept of person is not rigid, it is, on the contrary, as Wilkes (loc.cit.) points out "far too tolerant of, and welcoming towards, the grossest apparent inconsistencies: everything is grist to its mill".

Wilkes' argument is essentially an appeal to what may be called our pre-theoretic intuitions. She (ibid.:228) explicitly gives this understanding wider currency than any particular theory, arguing that a present day person "would be more at home with his fellow layman 2,400 years" ago, than Aristotle would be with Descartes or Locke with Skinner. In this at least her argument is similar to MacIntyre's (1990b:197-8) claim for a "complex and metaphysical account of the identity and continuity of human beings", a conception "embodied in practice long before it was articulated as theory".

These arguments draw attention to a conception of the person which is shared by, according to MacIntyre (loc.cit.), "a great many, ... perhaps all traditional societies" and later in "urban political societies with a shared religion", and according to Wilkes (op.cit.) by laymen throughout time. This conception is contrasted to the beliefs about persons held by those such as Parfit

which MacIntyre suspects, being held on the basis of puzzle cases and such forms of argument, is a function of an ability limited to "inhabitants of one particular type of culture or subculture" (op.cit.:199). This is clearly not a claim Parfit (op.cit.:273) would accept, given that he sees his argument as applying to "all people, at all times". Parfit's argument is that the question of personal identity is fundamentally a choice between two views: reductionist and non-reductionist, a choice that is not culturally specific.[12]

The argument that our ordinary conception is pre-theoretic in a significant sense, or maybe even 'atheoretic' in that it is relatively unaffected by the plausibility of arguments adduced for or against the theory embedded in the practice raises an interesting problem. If the argument of this thesis is successful then the most adequate theory of personal identity presupposed by moral and/or personal autonomy is a continuity theory. This alters significantly the understanding of the person and the basis for autonomy. It does not demand, however, 'learning' a new theory of self which is contrary to the theory of self and person we operate with, even though it does have consequences for morality and rationality, and for central attitudes and beliefs which presuppose personal identity. As pointed out above, our concept of the person is tolerant, many of the changes consequent on acceptance of a continuity theory are consistent with intuitions concerning persons and their persistence through time, though they conflict with other intuitions. It is therefore important to remind ourselves that the central idea is the importance we give to identity and its justification. It is what matters to us which is of concern here, what matters to us as persons, when we consider such things as our concern with our own future and past.

The seemingly rather paradoxical implication of the argument so far, is that identity is not what matters, but that we believe it does. It is not the subculture of analytical philosophers who argue for a continuity theory in the Lockean tradition who are arguing for the importance of a metaphysical conception. It is to the relative irrelevancy of such considerations which Parfit's account, for example, points. What has been shown is that appeals to ordinary experience and our sense of ourselves presuppose a metaphysical realism. The point is that our ordinary concept contains the sediments of philosophical as well as other debates, including religious and scientific ones. A notable effect is that we have a concept of the person which does not produce a consistent picture when viewed from the variety of perspectives to which it is open. The Cartesian sediments and influences on which perspective should be considered crucial should come as no surprise.

An interesting parallel with our beliefs about persons is the status of individualist modes of thought. This mode of thought, distinctive of modern

Western cultures, is inescapable even when being criticised. As Lukes (1985:298-300) writes: "it indelibly marks every interpretation we give of other modes of thought and every attempt we make to revise our own. ...[w]e may reject individualistic ways of conceiving the person ... but these are the ways by which we are culturally formed and they inevitably colour our every attempt to interpret the world of others or to seek to change our own." Our conceptions of ourselves as discrete entities, or as Midgley (1990) says, as "billiard-ball-like atoms", can similarly be seen as a deeply imbibed cultural response, which while seeming self-evident and unassailable, colours responses to questions of personal identity.

These objections or obstacles to accepting a continuity theory of persons in a way that influences our actual lives and attitudes, suggests that the objection underlying Wilkes' and MacIntyre's comments above, is that the method used by Parfit and others, namely the use of "bizarre counterfactuals" is so divorced from the considerations of our ordinary lives that they are irrelevant to any actual concerns. This objection is only relevant if the aim of using carefully constructed of counterfactual situations was unobtainable because of certain features of the concept of the person. The point of constructing puzzle cases or situations is to remove or radically change features of personal identity which have been considered essential are removed or radically changed, with the aims of thereby revealing what is essential or important in our actual lives. MacIntyre can be interpreted as raising an objection to the whole methodology in his reference to the importance of communities and, by implication, communal beliefs. In forming his objection in terms of the practices, beliefs and understandings of a culture, MacIntyre draws attention to what may be an effect of the use of the methodology implied by the attempt to determine the necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of a concept in all contexts of its use: the divorce from the considerations which actually affect us when we think about persons. This objection relies on showing that our concept of person is bound up with moral and other concepts which influence our conceptions of ourselves such that imaginary cases cannot be instructed which elicit intuitions with the aim of revealing that we have certain opinions. It is not clear that objections which appeal to the contextualisation of the concept of person can succeed in showing this.

It is possible to appreciate the point that the concept of the person cannot or should not be abstracted from the context which gives it meaning, and that any attempt to do so risks resulting in conclusions which are not useful to our ordinary lives, while at the same time preserving the usefulness of puzzle cases in the analysis of personal identity. The aim is to determine what is important about the concept we actually have. If constraints of intelligibility and logical

coherence are adhered to, there is no reason to assume that wondering whether if I teletransported to Mars all that mattered to my survival would be preserved.[13]

6
Intuitions and decisions about personal identity

In dealing with the problem of personal identity the aim is to reveal what is essential to the concept of person and personal identity. Central to method used is the eliciting of intuitions in response to puzzle cases designed to reveal what is involved in judgments of personal identity. The method therefore relies on the readers of the puzzle cases having similar intuitions in similar situations. Intuitions about persons therefore play an important role in the analysis of personal identity. The assumption is made, as Collins (1982:3), notes that:

> 'the intuitions of the native English thinker' should be the arbiter
> of philosophical correctness, and that it is the conceptual and
> linguistic habits of 'common-sense' to which we should look for
> enlightenment on philosophical issues.

Collins approach is to take these intuitions and the common-sense constructed out of them as "mere problematic data". In this section the status of the intuitions brought to bear in discussions of personal identity will be addressed as a means of addressing one of the issues implicit in the objection that personal identity is deeply embedded in our practical lives and not open to change on the basis of theoretic arguments.

Reductionism and non-reductionism rely on a certain stability in our intuitions about persons, both in puzzle cases and in problematic actual cases. The importance of intuitions in this context lies in what they are thought to reveal about our concept of the person. Thus Parfit argues that our belief that personal identity involves a 'further fact' is mistaken, by appeal to our reactions to puzzle cases. These responses centrally take the form of intuitions about what is important to our survival. These intuitions challenge other intuitions, principally those concerning subjective facts. Parfit's position relies on there only being two feasible options in personal identity, thus once it is recognised that these latter intuitions should be abandoned, reductionism, as the only alternative should be accepted. This use of proof by disjunctive syllogism clearly raises questions concerning the feasibility of the proposition that the choice is exhausted by reductionism and non-reductionism in personal identity, but what is more to the point here is the question posed by Collins' challenge: the status of the intuitions brought to bear in reflecting on what we believe in puzzle cases.

Puzzle cases are constructed to elicit particular responses, either in support or against reductionism or non-reductionism. Reactions are in the form of intuitions, and by submitting these to analysis, seeing the extent to which they conform with other intuitions and principles, we come to see what we believe about persons. The argument therefore to an important extent relies on the ability to elicit clear univocal intuitions in response to puzzle cases. It is permissible that this may take the form of not knowing what to say about personal identity in any particular situation, as long as this is not the reaction to all the puzzle cases and all actual problematic situations.[14] This means that intuitions about persons must be presumed to be fairly universal and fairly stable. As Stephen White (1989:301-3) has shown it is possible to construct puzzle cases where the degree of continuity between persons is the same in each case, but where our intuitions differ. This suggests that solutions to the problem of personal identity may include more than reductionism and non-reductionism, in that if these were the only choices are intuitions concerning cases of continuity would be similar. The problem is the existence of conflicting intuitions to superficially identical puzzle cases.

A further suggestion is that the problem lies not with intuitions *per se*, but with the assumption that the object of intuitions is determinate, i.e., the concept of the person. This returns us to the conception of the person which has been the focus of this discussion is a neo-Lockean one which accepts the intuition behind the distinction between persons and human beings, that persons are essentially self-conscious. For Locke (1694/1975:27, Sections 8-28) this meant consciousness of self, from which he claimed that a person's identity ought not to be different from what she takes it to be. This strong and deniable claim need not be accepted in order to recognise that a person's identity must be accessible to that person in a sense stronger than that this must be knowable. As well as this claim, the negative claim that a person's identity should not be understood in physical terms or in terms of a Cartesian ego, form the basis of the psychological connectedness theory we have been considering. As has been shown above, the claim is not so much one about the metaphysical issues but about the importance of personal identity.

The argument from constraints is a response, in part, to the Lockean idea that person is a forensic term of moral, social and practical significance. This explains a condition of personhood, that a certain stance or attitude must be taken to towards persons, which includes, *inter alia*, the idea of persons as moral subjects[15] which holds even where there is only the potential for other conditions being met, such as very young children and severely incapacitated adults.

A problem which has recurred throughout this chapter is that the Lockean conception does not reflect our ordinary notion, which although always concerned with the forensic notion, gives more weight to the physical based accounts of identity. Thus while we can entertain thought experiments involving the migration of psychological states from one body to another, we also consider bodily continuity important. This is clear in cases such as amnesia. However, while the revised Lockean notion does not capture our ordinary concept, it is not clear that any of the alternatives do either. The question is whether we are operating with more than one concept, or whether the concept of person itself is indeterminate. The ability to move from bodily-based to psychological-based accounts of identity, suggests a general indeterminacy in the way persons are spoken and thought about. But this is not to say that our concept of personal identity is indeterminate. As has been pointed out, our ordinary concept is non-reductionist. We believe that our identity is all-or-nothing, and that it is not a matter of decision. Neither psychological nor physical continuity and connectedness seems sufficient. As Mackie (op.cit.:191) points out, our ordinary concept is "plainly, a concept of identity obeying the logic of identity, and of identity between complete persons".

Conclusion
Developments and revisions of the concept of the person

It has already been noted that the concept of the person is not ready-made for application in any context, but is it such that what is constitutive of persons is discoverable? To what extent is the concept of the person determinate, and how is this to discovered?

Although the aim of analysis of personal identity is to describe rather than prescribe, and clarify our concept of the person, what has been revealed is that there is a central indeterminacy in our concept. Locke's concept, as has been mentioned, although reflecting an important aspect of what is meant by the concept of person, does not take sufficiently seriously the importance of physical connectedness. Should Locke therefore be seen as developing our concept rather than reflecting or clarifying its use?

Our ordinary concept seems to include the following features: persons are unitary subjects of consciousness with a single point of view. This is why the prospect of splitting consciousness is such an important and controversial example, as it appears to undermine the concept of the person: our concept is tolerant enough to include Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde as the same person, with the implication that discontinuous alternating consciousness is permissible, but not co-consciousness in different bodies.

The difficulty we are now faced with is how decisions between theories of personal identity are to be made. Brennan (1988:354) points out that the problem with deciding between theories of personal identity is that there is no clear way of determining what the body of testing data is to be against which a theory can be tested. Pre-theoretic intuitions seem to be the most obvious candidates, but in the absence of any principled way of choosing between conflicting intuitions they cannot provide the requisite fixed body of data against which rival theories can be tested. One way of solving this problem is to stipulate those intuitions which are central, and in this way fulfill the requirement. In a sense that has been done here by focusing on the moral concept as central to the particular problem under consideration.

Focusing on this conception of the person is legitimate in the context of the conceptualisation of the person in the aims of PSE given the interest in persons, and provided that it is not assumed that this conception is adequate to all situations. The existence of differing perspectives is not therefore excluded. This, of course, raises the problem of the extent to which other perspectives are commensurate and, again, how disagreements are to be resolved. Clearly there will be some compatibility between any two theories on the person, given that they are both recognised to be theories of the same entity. In such a case the rival theories will be checked for coherence with other bodies of theory. In PSE this will centrally include moral theory. Arguments for coherence, however, are unlikely to be decisive given the interdependence of theories of the person and moral theory, and the conceptual indeterminacy surrounding the concept of the person.

In this situation, where neither social institutions nor intuitions are decisive in their support of a theory of personal identity, how is a decision to be made? Brennan (op.cit.: 347-356) has suggested that it is a matter of philosophical style rather than a matter of determining the facts. However, the above discussion on the admissibility of a form of social conventionalism and rejection of the idea that the phenomenon of first-person reference requires the existence of a self, suggests a more positive solution. It was argued above that social ascriptivism has a role in the determination of issues of personal identity. This modified version of conventionalism was held to have the consequence that persons in a society the institutions of which supported certain procedures as person-preserving would not be acting irrationally if they acted on the supposition that the procedures were person-preserving. The rationality of their actions and beliefs concerning persons are unaffected by whether or not these procedures would be considered person-preserving in other societies, such as ours. This relativism on the question of persons finds general support in Stephen White's (1989:322-3) argument that metapsychological facts, those

facts about personal identity, responsibility and the unity and character of the self which are presupposed rather than settled by empirical psychology, could be settled in radically different ways in different societies. The settling of metapsychological claims in these different ways would not be irrational or misinformed. On White's (ibid:323) argument we cannot decide for ourselves what counts as our continuation, any more than the kind of society we shall inhabit: "But as we determine collectively the form and shape of our society, we thereby also determine the boundaries of ourselves."

This position does not have the consequence that personal identity is a matter of individual legislation, that it is up to me to decide whether a past or future person was or will be me. This, which non-reductionists such as Swinburne see as a consequence of continuity theories does not follow. As mentioned above there is a distinction to be made between individual and social ascriptivism. What White's argument shows is that the social world plays an essential role in determining the whether personal identity holds, whether the criteria of personal identity are taken to refer to that which is constitutive of, or that which is taken as evidence for. Thus what it means to be a person is not something which can be determined solely by reference to the first-person point of view, but makes essential reference to the third person. On this view intrinsic or autonomous changes are less important than continuity of nonautonomous relations: "The perspective of others is *a* significant, if not *the* significant, component of our internalized self-image" (White, ibid: 321). Thus, the internalization of the views of others becomes a crucial factor in the alteration of social practices into personal facts which matter.

This approach need not deny central claims of theorists such as Brennan (op.cit.:289), that "[t]here is ... no well-defined concept of a person which can be analysed and put forward as *the concept* with which we all operate." Nor is the argument at odds with the idea that the various ways in which we talk about persons, as self-conscious and as human beings need not be consistent. The argument advanced here takes these aspects of the concept of person as given. What is being attempted is the exploration of the importance of the perspective on the concept of person given the particular interest in it.

The implication of the particular perspective that has been adopted, that has taken the idea of persons as a forensic notion as central, has interesting implications for how we understand the concept of the person in the context of PSE. This argument provides a means for the integration of the personal and the social, even when the personal is taken to involve the subjective point of view, in a way that avoids the question of psychological individualism in that the social is understood as an integral part of the personal even at the level of

questions of personal identity, which seemed at the outset to assume individualism.[16]

Notes

1. This line of argument seems to raise the important question of the relative priority of the concept of identity. As Quine (1972:489) says "When we do propound identity conditions for bodies, or persons, or classes, we are using the prior concept of identity in the special task of clarifying the term 'body' or 'person' or 'class'; for an essential part of the clarification of a term is clarification of the standard by which we individuate its denotata". This is not denied on this account since it is not the priority of the laws of identity which is the issue but the importance of identity when we consider our future. It is therefore the existence of constraints other than the laws of identity that are of concern here.

2. If it is recognised that questions of personal identity are connected to issues of moral and practical concern, then a third option, that of proceeding on the assumption that the necessary and sufficient conditions for personal identity provide a complete answer to the question of personal identity, is ruled out, since this would mean that there was no connection. This option would hold that determination of the necessary and sufficient conditions for the correct ascription of personal identity is not only independent of moral and practical issues, but that these latter can be determined subsequent to the conditions for personal identity.

3. Clearly these are not the only grounds on which Reid and Butler, or any other non-reductionist object to reductionism. As mentioned later, the objection from its effects on our lives is given different weight, with it generally being seen as supportive of non-reductionism. The arguments for non-reductionism and against reductionism are mainly conducted on the coherence of the criteria.

4. Consciousness is not sufficient since there are, as Flew (1987:136) points out "an abundance of possible extenuations or even of complete excuses" which would justify refraining from punishing or rewarding a person for an action acknowledged to be theirs. Locke explicitly rejects this idea. Rather than accepting that there are situations where we acknowledge actions to be our own, but also deny responsibility, Locke takes such features of experience and understanding of our relation to our actions as an argument for the implicit understanding of the distinction between persons and human beings, as witnessed by ordinary locutions such as he is "not himself, or is besides himself" (Locke, Essay II, xxvii. 20) to justify not punishing a sane man for an action committed while insane, or an insane man for an action committed while sane. As Noonan (1989:50) points out, however, to say that different persons are involved is unnecessary to justify the practice of not holding the insane accountable for their actions. They are not held accountable because it is generally recognised that accountability involves the understanding of the significance of one's actions.

Consciousness is also not necessary for responsibility. We admit that we must have done actions, and accept responsibility for them, in the absence of memory of these actions where there is sufficient other evidence. I am alone in the house, the ashtray is full but I don't remember smoking all those cigarettes, yet given the evidence and my knowledge of myself when lost in my work, I have no doubt that I have smoked all those cigarettes.

5. Flew (1968:165) among others has pointed out, that Locke's use of the term "consciousness" in *Essay*, II, xxvii, 11, is ambiguous between consciousness of self (as in his definition of a person as "a thinking intelligent being, that ... can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places"), consciousness as contrasted with complete unconsciousness ("that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking, and it seems to me, essential to it"), and consciousness which is identified with memory ("as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person"). Since the last is the more critical in discussions of self-identity and diachronic identity, Locke is usually taken to be defining personal identity in terms of memory.

6. The principle of the relativity of identity holds that the notion of identity must be joined to some substantive concept in order to have any use. Thus, the identity of an entity depends on what kind of entity it is. An entity will remain the same over time if the changes it undergoes are characteristic of that entity. Locke's concern is to give the necessary and sufficient conditions for the identity of persons over time, in accordance with this principle, thereby articulating what changes are allowed for in the use of this concept.

7. Although Locke spends a great deal of time arguing against the view that persons are soul substances, it being one of his concerns in putting forward the idea that personal identity is constituted by consciousness to show that it is possible to give a theory of identity which is neutral between materialism and dualism, this is not necessary even on Locke's own argument. As Penelhum (1985:97) points out, the irrelevancy of soul substances to the issue of personal identity is implied by his own theory of the relativity of identity. It is not therefore necessary to retain it. If Locke had not done so he could have avoided some of the confusions which are contained in his account of personal identity.

8. Teichman and others who argue that human beings are paradigm persons, take being a human animal as sufficient for being a person.

9. Non-reductionism rejects conventionalism with respect to persons. See, for example, Swinburne (1984) and Haksar (1991).

10. An example of this is Wittgenstein's claim that while in ordinary situations our ordinary determinate concept holds, in extraordinary situations we have a choice of descriptions: "Now were Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde two persons or were they the same person who merely changed? We can say whichever we like" (1969.:62).

11. While Parfit's argument is not intended to establish any moral theory, he argues that the Reductionist View is relevant to the question of moral responsibility. Those moral theories which do not take the distinctness of persons as fundamental are more plausible on this view. In this way attachment to some moral theories is weakened and other moral theories are more plausible.

12. Parfit argues that in analyzing personal identity, "when we ask what persons are, and how they continue to exist, the fundamental question is a choice between two views" (op.cit.:273).

13. To show the irrelevance of such thought experiments in general would involve showing that they are not useful or that they are unintelligible in that they are either conceptually or logically impossible. It is not sufficient to point out that they are not realised in the real world.

One reason why it may be conceptually impossible to isolate essential features of persons is suggested by Wilkes' (1988:6-12) criticism of the use of thought experiments in philosophy of mind. Using the analogy of thought experiments in science, which have the essential characteristic of specification of what remains constant as well as what is to change, she criticises superficially similar experiments in philosophy of mind for failing to supply the needed and relevant background information. Thought experiments are effective in science precisely because the fixed concepts are adequately specified. This is not, and cannot be, the case, Wilkes argues, in philosophy of mind. Thus it is impossible to draw any conclusions from them. A world in which persons were capable of amoeba-like splits would be such a vastly different world that we could not draw any conclusions for our own world. The point made by Wilkes is that the specification of the background conditions is necessary, and not possible in the case of thought experiments with persons.

Wilkes' objection concerning the indeterminacy frequently involved in philosophical thought experiments. It is notable that attention is often not paid to the mass of details which are likely to influence interpretation of the experiment. This objection is not, however, particular to thought experiments, it is also evident in interpretation of operations such as commissurotomy. Questions of imaginability and possibility are complex. However, it not clear that Parfit and other who use puzzle cases and thought experiments are guilty of violating logical or conceptual standards (see Snowdon (1991) and Hertzberg (1991) for further discussion of some of the issues involved).

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A different sort of objection is made by Quine (1972) who has argued that the use of puzzle cases in the analysis of personal identity, by seeking "what is 'logically required' for sameness of person under unprecedented circumstances is to suggest that words have some logical force beyond what our past needs have invested them with". This criticism is appropriate to the use of thought experiments designed to test the limits of concepts, as it is used in science, for example. Thought experiments central to Parfit's argument are dissimilar in an important respect. To take the thought experiment of teletransportation, it is not the limits of the concept of person which is the issue here, but the eliciting of reactions about what we believe is important about persons. The method is designed to isolate what we believe to be important about persons, such as the relation of the identity, and showing by means of thought experiments that in situations where this relation does not hold, as in the case of branching teletransportation, what matters is still preserved. The methodology of thought experiments is designed to clarify the use of the concept of the person by isolating what is essential to it, it is not designed to test the limits of the concept. Although this may be a consequence, it is not the aim of constructing such experiments. There is a distinction to be made between thought experiments designed to tease out what we actually believe, or care about, by submitting those aspects of the concept to scrutiny and those experiments which are designed to test the limits.

14. If this was the reaction to all puzzle cases it would be an effective denial of the intelligibility and usefulness of these examples. If it was the reaction to all actual problematic situations then it would show a lack of understanding of the concept of personal identity and, by implication, of the concept of person. Intuitions about persons are therefore instrumental determining whether actual cases which raise the question of personal identity such as multiple personality cases, are taken to be problematic. If it only if intuitions conflict over whether such cases involve one or more persons that there is a problem.

15. This is Dennett's (1978) third of six conditions of personhood.

16. This type of solution while avoiding the positing of an ontological individualism in the form of the question of personal identity, avoids at the same time advocation of a thesis of the "essential indistinctness of persons" as advanced by Scheman (1983) in her argument against the prevalent assumption that psychological states can be assigned and theorised about on an individualistic basis.

Chapter 5

The Nature of the Autobiography and Its Use in PSE

Autobiography is open to a variety of interpretations. The aim here is to show that the theory of person advanced in the last two chapters while at odds with the conception of the person associated the traditional conception of autobiography, as well as with its attendant epistemology and ontology, is consistent with some recent developments in thinking about autobiography. This is particularly clear in relation to recent discussions of a defining characteristic of autobiography, its ostensible referentiality. In addition, the effect of adopting a relational theory of the person is also evident in the post-structuralist preoccupation with the relation between the subject and language. It will be argued that the conceptualisation of the person argued in the previous chapters to be the most defensible, is also more appropriate than the strict identity theory as the basis for using students' autobiographical writing, given the central reasons for its use in the PSE classroom. The approach suggested can also be seen as having a contribution to make to some of the problems associated with teaching and using students' autobiographical writing[1] in the classroom. This is not to suggest that it does not give rise to problems of its own, some of which will be addressed in the next chapter.

The increasing prominence of autobiographical forms in education, from the use of students' autobiographies in the classroom, in teacher education and increasingly the use of autobiographical methods educational research, attests to increasing recognition of importance of autobiographical talking and writing as a way of knowing about the world.

In the first section the place in PSE of autobiographical writing, as a particular form of self-representation, by students is discussed, with attention being paid to the specific educational advantages of this particular form of self-presentation. In the second section the relation between the understanding of autobiography necessary to the achievement of these objectives and the theoretically problematic concept of autobiography is examined using recent work in literary theory. This leads to consideration of the place of narrative in what it means to live a life. It is shown that the narrative conception of the self complements a neo-Lockean conception of the person, although there are areas of disagreement. The most important of these is the contribution of communities or traditions of narrative to the conception and constitution of personhood. It is argued that although the conception of the person so far advocated does not take the contribution of narrative communities to be privileged to the extent the narrative conception does, this is neither because of the abstraction nor the

implicit individualism of discussions of personal identity, but rather is a result of starting with the person as self-conscious and capable of agency. The continuity theory is, however, seen to be strengthened by insights gained from the narrative account, particularly in the idea that the unity of a person is something to be achieved. When the essential role of narratives and narrative structures in making sense of experience and the world is combined with the theory of the connections between the content of first-person mental states advanced in the last chapter, a stronger and more plausible theory is generated. The narrative account of the self, and the psychological continuity theory of personal identity concur in denying the ontological priority of the self or person. The narrative account, by focusing on the importance of narrative structure in the construction of meaning strengthens the point made in the last chapter concerning the influence of the content of first-person mental states on the formation of personal identity. This enriched understanding strengthens the psychological continuity theory. The narrative conception, it is argued, admits of problems similar to reductionist theories of persons. Although not atomistic, the accent on the narrative structures which shape experience threatens the concept of person as a subject of experience. This conclusion has the advantage of avoiding the implication that all texts are extenuated autobiographies, or denying the importance of autobiography through the dissolution of the unitary subject. Whilst the existence of a unitary subject is not pre-given on this account, it remains as a value to be achieved, autobiography being one of those means.

Section 1
Autobiographical Writing in PSE

The education system of which PSE is a part reflects characteristic debates and positions on epistemology and the place of the student in the learning process. PSE is part of a general educational move away from a teacher-centred approach to learning, away from what Britton (1970:6) calls, after John Newson, the "jug and mug" method of teaching, towards a student-centred approach with the idea that pupils should have a sense of ownership, of having an active role in the creation of knowledge in the classroom. This leads to more group work, co-operation and individual work based on high-interest assignments designed to assist in the individual appropriation of meaning. In such an environment pupils' experience, thinking, writing and talking are privileged. The specific context of PSE with its emphasis on educating students for an unpredictable future in a pluralist society leads to increased emphasis on the person, as opposed to the acquisition of an impersonal body of knowledge.

Thus, Pring's (1987:27) argument for "a deeper concern for the person - a respect for pupils or students as persons" which includes accepting "seriously the values and attitudes that they bring to school or college", can be seen as an extension of this approach, through making explicit the moral dimension of personhood in the student-centred model.

The integrity of the student-centred approach depends on the interpretation of the students' experience. A person's experience can be understood as a purely personal phenomenon. Experience, as Allen (1980:10) writes, is "from one viewpoint wholly private and personal, concerned with self-expression for one's own private purposes". Experiences can also be seen as cultural: "as a result of our upbringing in a particular time and place through a particular mediating form of language and perception" (loc.cit.). Alternatively, the focus in the classroom on student experiences can be seen as providing a means of transforming the world of public and private experiences outside the classroom through the interaction of the pupils and texts within the institutional setting of the school. The school is then seen as encouraging self-expression as a means of making public the private explorations of the pupil. Both views clearly do not take the experiences of pupils outside the classroom and those within the classroom as separate, but rather what goes on in the classroom is a means of making sense of experiences inside and outside the classroom.

While sharing a commitment to education as the individual appropriation of meaning, the emphasis on students' experience is interpreted differently according to whether it is seen as the site of therapeutic intervention or as integral to the idea of cognitive growth and maturity. Although this delineation of two prominent approaches is based on the teaching of English,[2] they apply equally well to PSE.[3] The therapeutic approach, exemplified in Holbrook's approach to English teaching, leads to attention being paid by the teacher and pupil to the construction of the pupil's self, to the effect of social and cultural influences on the development of the individual, and the development of insight into the ways in which this can be come to terms with. This can take an even more ambitious turn when the aim is to understand this construction with a view to making personal choices designed to alter the situation. The alternative focuses on experience in conjunction with a theory of personal development in terms of cognitive growth. Maturation through the interaction of language and experience leads to the view that the modes of expression are influenced by and influence the nature of expression which leads to emphasis on the pupils' mode of expressing their experiences as integral to cognitive maturity.

This brief background on the importance of the pupils' experience in education enables us to see that it is almost inevitable that a student-centred approach will lead to a concern with some form of autobiographical expression.

This is not to neglect the influence of wider societal concern with the self and individualism on the growth of autobiographical writing in general, but to situate autobiographical writing within the context of an educational theory of which it is clearly a part. Thus, the use of autobiography in PSE can be seen as a natural extension of, if not integral to, the ideas underlying this theory with its concern with the role of students' experience in the learning process. Given the emphasis in PSE on the students' understanding of themselves, their actual and anticipated social and personal roles and responsibilities, the point is even stronger. It is almost to be expected that some form of autobiographical work will be part of the PSE syllabus, given that it is difficult to think of a more appropriate means of encouraging pupils to find their own voice and construct the meaning of their experience. The epistemological position which privileges students' experiences and its clarification focuses on the self as knower, placing the student at the centre of the educational process, rejecting the idea that education can be solely understood as the passing on of a body of knowledge, skills and techniques, thus provides the use of autobiography with its justification in an educational context.[4] Moreover, in taking a person's own story of their life as integral to the appropriation of meaning, the use of autobiography is not only consistent with a certain epistemological position, it is consistent with the ethical demand to respect persons in so far as this involves respecting a person's own interpretation of their experiences.

Given this background it is clear that autobiographical writing is a pliable tool in the hands of educators, and can be seen as a means of furthering diverse and not necessarily compatible aims. It can be seen as an important aid in the empowering of students in the illumination of radical possibilities embedded in their histories, along the lines of Giroux's (1983) theory of critical pedagogy. It can be seen as an important method in educational settings for marginalised groups to investigate how subjectivity is constructed along differential relations of power. Thus, it can be seen as part of the Freirean (1983) process of *conscientization*, and as a means of not only seeing how subjectivity is constructed but as a means of helping students position themselves through the self and group understanding facilitated and encouraged by autobiographical projects enabling them to envision or effect meaningful change in their lives. In contrast to this view of the social and personal value of autobiographical writing is the idea of autobiography as a kind of liberation from societal constraints, as a celebration of individuality or individualism. Thus, Weintraub (1978:1) argues that "the proper form of autobiography" is the search for the conditions of "self-conscious individuality". Or, again it can be seen as a display of the self in the expectation that this will aid in the liberation from some forms of repression, along the lines of Holbrook's approach. These various

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interpretations of the importance of autobiographical tasks are consistent with the idea that it affords the possibility of giving or enhancing the subjective meaning of a life. As part of an education which is involved in enabling and facilitating self-understanding, elements of the Sartrian (Todd, 1957:915) autobiographical motive, the desire to rescue the significance of events from 'dissolving' into objectivity, may well function in PSE as a motivation to use this form of self-representation. This draws on the importance of subjective meaning to conceptions of personal well-being, and the recognition that each person has a life which is not adequately described by the 'objective' facts of that life, or by others. If it is held to be important for each person to make sense of her life, study of its objective features is not considered sufficient. How these intertwine with the 'inner life' of the self, is revealed through autobiographical expression, which is then seen as an appropriate mediator between the objective circumstances, the setting of a life, and the personal life of the individual.[5] Among the possibilities which this perspective on the importance of autobiography to determining the meaning of one's life affords, is the appreciation it can give of the freedoms and necessities of a life.

Whatever the differences in the aims behind the use of autobiographical writing, it is clear that in all instances there is agreement that the educational benefit lies in increased self-awareness and self-understanding, with the differences lying in how self-understanding is to be understood. Thus the benefit of autobiographical writing for students in general is an extension and elaboration of the idea that writing an autobiography is, as Mandel (1980:64) observes "one of the strategies human beings have developed to make life matter." It is an expression of the importance of personal meaning to the idea of living a worthwhile life, premised on the idea that each person has a role in determining this meaning, and there is educational value in each person reflecting on the significance of events in her life as a means of making sense of that life.

Armed with this understanding of the aims autobiographical writing is designed to achieve in PSE, we turn to the question of whether autobiography as a distinct form of self-presentation can sustain the various demands made on it. To do this we turn first to what is meant by 'autobiography' in the educational context.

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Autobiography

This brief sketch of the interest in autobiography in PSE suggests that the definition of autobiography in the educational context is to some extent

counts as autobiography will be responsive to these educational concerns. For example, its very use in schools involves rejection of the convention that autobiography is something to be accomplished, if at all, near the completion of a life. Even aspects of autobiography which may be considered definitive, such as the use of 'I' in the text, may not be considered mandatory.[6] Admitting a latitude in what counts as an autobiographical text is not peculiar to the use of autobiography in the classroom. The problems with providing a generic definition of autobiography are frequently noted in literary theory,[7] for example. In education what will and will not count as autobiography is a function of a complex interplay between commonsensical understandings of what autobiography is, and the reasons for its introduction into the classroom. Thus when we introduce autobiographical writing into the classroom we have in mind more or less clear ideas of what the educational aims are, and what would count as autobiographical writing. It is not only, therefore, the formal idea of autobiography which motivates its use in education, but something more informal and universal, the idea of an autobiographical impulse, the telling of stories about ourselves. As shown above, these aims centrally include respect for students' experience and their interpretation of their lives, and helping them to come to a greater self-understanding whether this is a reflection of the general importance given to self-expression for 'mental health', appreciation of one's uniqueness and individuality, whether it is understood as integral to personal development or whether it is understood more explicitly within a larger social and political framework.

Putting on one side for the moment what the student learns from the respect given to her experience by having her interpretation of it considered a legitimate area of school work, the overt benefit stems from what the student will learn about herself and her situation from writing an autobiography. What is learnt by the autobiographical student must, therefore, to some extent be a result of something integral to, or an implication of the form of autobiography itself, otherwise other self-referential writing such as diaries could perform the same function, or the writing of biographies or the study of other people's lives could be substituted with no loss. In short, it is in the implications of the construction of personal meaning which is thought to be encouraged or facilitated by autobiographical writing that the educational benefits for the student lie.

Given that the aim can generally be characterised as greater self-awareness or self-understanding, what enables autobiographical writing to be seen as contributing to this end is that one is writing or talking about one's self. It is, in other words, the relation between the author and the subject which is important. If diaries are not held to have the same educational function this suggests that the retrospective stance distinctive of autobiographies is also necessary.

Together these conditions give us a recognisable if not definitive account of autobiography consistent with its aims in education: the author is writing specifically about her life from a particular perspective, namely the present. For the moment we can leave on one side what is involved in this stance towards her life, leaving it open what is implied by the idea, often taken to be characteristic of, if not essential to the coherence of an autobiography that the stance is in part characterised by its consistency, except to note that the stance is of necessity selective and interpretative, executed from a particular point of view. In an autobiography, as distinct from a diary for example, events in the author's life are of necessity selected according to some criterion or criteria which give these events significance and relevance within the overall structure of the autobiography. This will at least involve the implicit judgement of experiences and memories. Unlike a diary where the diarist may mention what she had for breakfast, or faithfully record her dreams, these will only be mentioned in an autobiography if they are perceived to have some significance, fit into the overall pattern of her life as she is interpreting it.[8] The student who starts her autobiography with what she had for breakfast that day would not have misunderstood the task if she, for example, used the routine or menu as a metaphor for her life. What is clear is that the aim of writing an autobiography is for the student to gain in self-understanding. This involves enhancing understanding of her present, which is not separate from the hope or expectation that this will have future beneficial effects in virtue of the meaning constructed and gained in the autobiographical task, or more generally from the demand for personal reflection and thoughtfulness the task occasions.

Thus although the stance is primarily retrospective the meaning to be achieved through autobiographical writing is meaning for the autobiographer, as she is presently situated. Taking as the subject the past self, the focus is on the narrative situation, the present. Autobiographical writing, necessarily executed from the present, the period of the autobiographical act itself, accesses the past as a function of the autobiographer's present consciousness, as Eakin (1985:22), along with most commentators, reminds us. The idea, that autobiography is, as Renza (1980:271) writes, "the writer's de facto attempt to elucidate his present rather than his past," that autobiography can function as a means of understanding life now, and how to continue, is what gives autobiographical writing educational significance. Writing autobiographically obliges "me to situate what I am in the perspective of what I have been", as Gusdorf (1980:40) notes. Among the characteristics of autobiography are, therefore, the need for a standpoint, a retrospective stance and the selection of experiences according to a criterion of significance. The educational significance is not limited to the insight gained into the present life of the author, but

crucially includes in its future effects. Stories about the past, as Rosen (1988:86) says, are, in the end, also about the future. Thus, Abbs (1974:12), in discussing the use of autobiography in teacher education, gives this future-looking aspect of autobiography the greatest significance. The "deepest achievement" of such writing is for students to be able to "seed" their experience "for a harvest that may be theirs tomorrow" (loc.cit.).

This brief outline of the essential features of autobiography takes us to the heart of the problem of autobiography, for while this understanding of the significance of autobiography for the author as presently situated and for her future justifies its use in PSE, it raises questions about how this "deepest achievement" is even conceptually possible. As Barthes (1977:121) asks: "What right does my present have to speak of my past? Has my present some advantage over my past? What "grace" might have enlightened me?" (1977:121). On what basis does the author assume authority over the subject of the autobiography, and see this as a presumption for making sense of the present?

The common-sense answer is that the achievement of meaning for the autobiographer is possible in virtue of the fact that my autobiography is about my life. It is possible for my present self to construct personal meaning for my life because my past self is just as much myself as my present self. The events which are recounted or recollected in an autobiography, have one property in common: they all belong to the life of the autobiographer. An autobiography takes as its principal subject matter, one life, the life of the author. It is about a self which, in some sense, is the same today as it was yesterday. The distinctive contribution of autobiography, which gives it relevance, is this relation between the author and the subject of the text: the positing of an existent identity as its locus, which survives any changes in the person.

The value of autobiography in the classroom is therefore a function of the relation between the author and the protagonist, distinctive of autobiography as a literary form. What is learnt is learnt because of the identification of the past self as narrated in the autobiography and narrating present self. The principal reference of an autobiographical text, which distinguishes it from biography, for example, is the identity explicitly posited between the individual exemplified in the organisation of the text and the individual to whom reference is made through its subject matter.[9] The identity of the author and the protagonist is a necessary condition for the insight or understanding gained by the author to be personally significant, at least on a common-sense understanding of autobiography. This relationship gives the author an epistemic authority over the protagonist denied to writer of a biography for example. As the author, protagonist and narrator, she takes responsibility for the creation and

arrangement of the text, and is the source of the text and its structure. It is the conjunction of the textually and logically distinct roles of author, narrator and protagonist in autobiography, "with the same individual occupying a position both in the context, the associated 'scene of writing,' and within the text itself" (Bruss, 1980:300), which, on at least one major interpretation, makes possible the aim of using autobiography in PSE, the achievement of personal meaning. This is not to say that third-person interpretations cannot be equally valid or more insightful, nor, of course, that the autobiographer is not free to recognise or incorporate these points of view. Third-person interpretations may indeed be more significant. The point is that the personal meaning given to a life by the person who is presumed to be the same throughout is valued and given a different value in virtue of the assumption that the person commenting is the same as that commented upon. It is in this sense that the author assumes epistemic authority and it is in virtue of this that personal meaning is acquired.[10] Thus, central to this form of self-representation, of the inquiry of the self into its own history, is the assumption that the person constructing the narrative is the same as that exemplified in it, this identification sanctioning the assigning of significance to events within constraints, the most notable being the verifiability of the events described in the autobiographical piece. This identification provides the warrant needed for my present interpretation of events in my past and for its special authority, giving my interpretation of those experiences, identified as mine, a significance not captured in any other account.

The question is whether this assumption of identity is integral to the idea of autobiography, as it seems to be, and whether the educational benefits are dependent on this defining assumption, given that it has been argued in the previous chapters that the identity of persons through time is most plausibly understood as relations between events, and thus not as something assured through the necessary holding of an identity relation. If the identity value of an autobiography is predicated on the pre-given unity of the person, then in light of the discussion of personal identity it must be determined whether the educational benefits make essential reference to this central feature of autobiography, and if so, whether the educational aims, or the theory of the person are in need of revision.

The main objection to the psychological criterion of personal identity came from the importance of the first-person perspective. Autobiography raises the same objection in a different form. As mentioned above, the value of autobiography is often seen as a consequence of the importance to persons of determining the subjective meaning of a life. In general terms the problem is how this fundamental presupposition of autobiography, which is arguably what makes it distinctive, is to be understood. Underlying this question is the

coherence of the autobiographical form and whether the educational aims thought to be furthered by its use are dependent on the identity relation between the narrator and the protagonist. Thus one of the questions which must be addressed is what effect different interpretations of this relation have on its perceived educational benefits.

Clearly the view that autobiography reflects the unity of the person is the common-sense understanding. The legitimacy of the authoritative stance in autobiography lies in the prior identification of the narrator and protagonist, an identification which is perceived as precedent to, and independent of, the writing of the autobiography. The separation of roles in the text is merely implied if autobiography is to achieve the task of assigning unique significance to past events from the perspective of the present. The unity of the self thus occupies a central place in our understanding of autobiography, and constitutes a fundamental philosophical presupposition of its coherence, and its role as a means of achieving personal meaning. It provides a necessary condition for the recognition of a text as an autobiography, and functions as a criterion against which it can be judged in terms of consistency and coherence, no matter the disunity or the fragmentation of the life narrated.[11]

This traditional understanding of autobiography, gains support from both philosophical positions on the nature of persons and from the contextual implications which accompany our use of language. The identification of the subject of the autobiography and its author, as a narrative by and about the same individual, mirrors the language practice that allows the same reference to the speaker and the subject of the speech. The implication of the possibility of simultaneous indication and designation of the subject of the act of speech and the subject of the proposition allowed by the English pronoun 'I', is reflected in autobiography, as Bruss (1980:301) points out. The influence of language on our understanding of the ontological status of the self is brought to the fore by consideration of the 'fit' between language and autobiography. Although interpretation and the assigning of significance to one's life is only possible through language, language itself, along with other factors, promotes the belief that the unity of self is assured prior to this construction in language. Thus, the assumption is that the self exists prior to the writing or formation of an autobiography and can be understood as being independent of it in some sense. We each live our lives and then, if we have the desire, we write or tell our autobiography. In short, life precedes the story of it, life in some sense precedes its articulation, and the content of a life shapes the form of its story. As Bruss (1980:298) says, the assumption is that: "First we have selfhood, a state of being with its own metaphysical necessity; and only then autobiography, a discourse that springs from that state of being and gives it

voice." The "ontological trick" of traditional autobiography, as Eakin (1985:181) calls it, is the belief it fosters in the existence of the self. The structure of language itself at least facilitates this belief, the particular demands of writing autobiographically promotes it. It is not only the structure of language, but the belief in the transparency of language which allows the fact that an individual is herself narrating the story of her life to be unproblematic.

Thus, belief in the priority of the self, that life in some sense produces its autobiography, structures major interpretations of the autobiographical act and its significance. This understanding of the self and its relation to reality comprises a recognisable approach to autobiographical writing by both teachers and students. It is an approach which sees autobiography as a natural response to a natural phenomenon, the desire of a self which is in some sense pre-existent, to express itself. This conception of the self encourages the view that the task of knowing oneself is achieved through expressing or realising the 'true' or inner self, illustrative of the idea that whatever else an autobiography is, the presentation in autobiography has the potential for being an 'authentic' image of the author, whether this is understood as the self revealing or creating itself.[12] This view of the self privileges autobiography based on its identity value. While we may lack the certainty of autobiographers such as Rousseau that there are any guarantees that our reflections will result in interpretations which are immune to error,[13] we retain some confidence in the special status of autobiography, based on the proposition that autobiography can be distinguished by its, in De Man's phrase (1979:920) "simpler mode of referentiality,"[14] which itself rests on the prior assumption of the unity of the self over time.

This understanding of the self has the effect of directing attention to the truth-value of autobiography, as the main concern, rather than the status of the self presupposed by this model. Hence, attention is directed either to the confirmation of biographical facts, where what is of concern is the *bios* of autobiography, or the more complex issue of the truth of the *autos,* where attention is directed to the author's truthfulness in portraying historical facts. On this view, as Olney (op.cit.:20) points out, the *autos* is "taken to be perfectly neutral and adding it to "biography" change[s] nothing."

As teachers our primary concern is not with the verification of the biographical details but with the attempt by the autobiographical student to be truthful, it is thus, with the problematic idea of the truthfulness of the self, rather than the verification of biographical details that educational attention is directed. The idea that there is a truth in the *autos* revealed or created in autobiography is clearly a source of its educational value. Once the focus moves from the *bios* to the *autos,* the autobiographical act is seen as creative and

interpretive. From this turn to the 'I' of autobiography we have the idea of autobiography as both self-creation and self-discovery, furnishing the idea that it has a role to play in resolving problems to do with the nature of the individual through self-analysis and self-evaluation. The assumption that there is, as Olney (ibid:22) notes, a "completed entity, a defined, known self or a history to be had for the taking" is not inconsistent with this approach. The emphasis is on the structure of the self to be created or discovered in autobiography and not on the self as constituted in language. Whether the content of an autobiography primarily reflects a concern with the inner life of the author or not, autobiographical writing is clearly an activity which concentrates on, and involves a pre-occupation with the self. A common expression of the value of autobiography is, therefore, in terms of a search for the self, particularly for a 'real' or 'authentic' self. For Abbs (1974) at least, it is a concern with the true self which lies at the heart of its use in education. Hence, he talks of the reward of autobiography, if it can be reached, as an "enhanced affirmation of the self" (ibid:12) and of autobiography itself as "the search backwards in time to discover the evolution of the true self" (ibid:7).

Thus the conception of the self as an enduring entity which can be discovered through reflection does not stand alone in the sense that it fosters, though it clearly does not imply, belief in a 'core' or 'real' self as the reference of the autobiography, as its essence, the truth of which is discovered or revealed through introspection or reflection. It is thus allied to the familiar philosophical view whereby the self is seen as the foundation of all knowledge. As such the self is required to be a substantial entity, if for no other reason than that as the bedrock of knowledge it is required to have the ability to support other less substantial aspects of reality. To be so viewed, the self must be seen as an unambiguous entity to which reference can be made. Substance theories of the self, where the self is seen as either a dependent or independent existent, have the consequent that the self is essentially private and best known to itself, again in line with, and providing a justification for the epistemic authority of the author of an autobiography, though this, of course, is a much stronger position than that outlined above. Although substantialist theories of the self are not referred to in its use in education, the epistemic privilege of the self in relation to itself over time, implies a philosophical position which grounds the epistemic certainty of awareness of the first-person present-tense mental states in a self as a dependent or independent existent. While it is not necessary for the coherence of the concept of autobiography that the self be an entity, nor, of course is the value of autobiography dependent on belief in the existence of the self, it is nonetheless the case that the self, as subject of the autobiography, is presumed to be something of which knowledge is possible, and that this knowledge is

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available through the reflection on one's life required in constructing an autobiography. This conception of the person or self and thus the relation between the narrator and protagonist in an autobiography, is challenged by objections raised to its underlying epistemology as well as to its metaphysical stance, the conception of the person as a discrete completed entity in a particular relation to language and reality. The most obvious of these moves is to point to the historical and social genesis of autobiography as a distinctive genre at the same time as social, political and philosophical attention was directed to the person as a source of moral, religious and political authority. The effect of these inquiries into the origins of autobiography undermine the view that formal autobiographical expression is a natural or universal impulse on the part of persons but rather a result of the conjunction of a number of particular influences, and thus is best understood as a function of social context. This is not to deny the wider point that autobiographical narrative in general has wider significance in the explication of human intention in the context of action. This more informal and seemingly less culturally specific use of constructing meaning will be considered later. The point here is to raise the issue of the context which gave rise to autobiography as a genre, and which continues to give it importance in education.

The 'common-sense' view, that every autobiography refers to a self, a pre-given structure outside the text, either shaped in the process of writing an autobiography, or revealed by it, has its foundations as Sprinker notes (1980:326) in "the historical conditions which gave rise to the concepts of subject, self and author as independent sovereignties." The general historical and cultural phenomena which coalesced to supply the preconditions for autobiography as a distinct form are weighted differently by individual literary historians concerned with the origins of autobiography.[15] There is, however, some agreement on the phenomena themselves. These include the recognition of identity as simultaneously unique and dependent on social reality and cultural conventions, with the understanding that rather than the self being an ascriptive natural *donnée,* it is self-fashioning. Along with the willingness to challenge social roles and the dominant forms of inquiry, the idea of the responsibility and authority of the speaking subject is promoted. Thus we have the idea of the self as a centre of meaning and form, as opposed to simply being an exemplar of traditional roles.[16] Rooted in a specific cultural and philosophical history, autobiography can be seen as developing historically from a belief in the notion of individual identity, as Spengeman and Lundquist (op.cit.: 516) note. To deny the importance of individual identity signals for some the end of autobiography. Bruss (1976:15), for example, writes that "autobiography could simply become obsolete if its defining features, such as individual identity,

cease to be important for a particular culture". The philosophical idea of the unity of the self forms an important precondition of the conception of the person on this which this is based. The discreteness of persons, as one of the two mutually supporting functions of personal identity, is coupled with the epistemological view that the self occupies a privileged relation to a knowable empirical reality, in particular, as Elbaz (1987) notes, to that part of reality which is itself. This provides the foundations for privileging personal as opposed to social responsibility and the idea of autonomy, with certain attributes of the self, such as separateness being emphasised. On this view, the discreteness and individuality of persons are given prominence in the positing of a self grounded in a particular metaphysics. The traditional understanding of autobiography draws on the idea that, as Bruss (1980:304) says "one and only one person can have authentic knowledge of that self (and, in turn, that my self is the only self I can ever really know)." Self and others, on this view, admit of fundamental separation, such that an ultimate division can be made between the self and the world, between the inner and the outer world, and between the self and others. The basic truth of autobiography is, on this account, expressed by Spender (1980:117) in his autobiographical assertion "I am alone in the universe."

This view of the person is particular, not universal. Understood as an articulation of, in Olney's phrase (1980a) a "cultural moment," autobiography is, as Spengeman and Lundquist (op.cit.: 516) write, "inextricably bound up with cultural belief." Along with the wider cultural influences, central among these is the preoccupation with the self, its choices and their significance for the person. Autobiography and its particular expression can not be considered neutral between conceptions of the person or possible structures of self-representation.

Autobiography has evolved as a specific means of self-representation which relies on privileging certain philosophical positions on the person, embedded in the status of the autobiographical self, supplying a source of the authority and value of autobiography. This interpretation of the particularity of the autobiographical as a distinct form raises the question of the extent to which self-conceptions can differ within a cultural context, given the dependence of the former on the later. However, the dependence of self-conceptions on context disallows differing conceptions only if the context is monolithic, and does not in itself encourage or allow differing conceptions of the self. That there are differing conceptions within our cultural context is an argument frequently made by feminists in the argument that there are gender related differences in conceptions of the self. Recent work[17] in this area has pointed to identifiable differences in the self-schema of men and women. Most notably it has been

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suggested that women are relatively more likely to create 'connected' or 'communal' affective/cognitive structures which lend meaning and coherence to experience.[18] This is in contrast to self-schema where others are represented as separate and distinct. Gender is not the only relevant difference we need to consider: conceptions of self also vary across cultures. The conception of the person presupposed by the traditional understanding of autobiography is, however, the dominant model and ideal in modern Western cultures. As previously argued, the features of persons considered essential influence action. On this model, where the essential features of persons are their will and capacity for choice, persons act and strive to act autonomously and independently. Although often stated in universalistic terms this idea, as Midgley (1984:51) says "of a free independent, enquiring choosing individual, an idea central to European thought, has always been essentially the idea of a male."

The point of raising the question of differing conceptions of self, and the contextualism of the dominant model which has taken on the status of common-sense, is to point to the importance of not assuming that the dominant model is the only one. It is not to argue that metaphysical realism or belief in personal autonomy are to be identified as masculine beliefs. The argument is essentially an extension of the argument made in the second chapter, that this conception derives its importance, in part, from its universalistic status grounded in an ontology of discrete individuals. Again, this is not to argue that there are not other grounds for valuing this conception, but rather to point to the implications of a failure to give adequate recognition to the idea that autobiography is expressed in particular forms, forms rooted in social and historical traditions which draw on various philosophical positions. This may result in the unintentional promotion of the dominant ideal, namely the liberal ideal of the autonomous individuated self, and the implicit devaluing and inhibiting of other expressions. Essentially this is a plea for awareness of the differences, and for awareness of the effects of implicit philosophical assumptions about the nature of these differences. It is not a call to devalue the liberal idea of autonomy, but to recognise that the presentation of the self not in line with dominant myths of progress towards autonomy, perhaps with the stress being placed on relationships and connectedness as much as separateness, needs to at least be given the opportunity to be seen for what they may be: an alternative conception of the self. Thus, even if the argument made in the last two chapters is rejected, and it is felt that insufficient grounds have been given for preferring a psychological continuity theory of the person to a strict identity theory, this does not affect the argument that a person's sense of self is derived from a theory of personal identity. On this ground together with the recognition, for which there is ample evidence, that a person's sense of self is responsive to

various social influences gives grounds for educators to be aware of the conception of the self implicated in their theory and practice. We should remain mindful that the ideal of the autonomous person is a cultural and ethical value, and not a reflection of a particular ontological thesis of which autobiography is just one contingent means of expression. As we have seen, the position that the value of the discrete person is dependent on the thesis of persons as discrete real entities, can be upheld, but this carries with it a division and hierarchy of philosophical disciplines, and acceptance of abstract individualism.

If we want autobiography to be of value to all our students, for it to function as a means of showing respect to all students as persons with their own subjectivity, and to sanction the view that what a person says about her life is significant, not just for the general epistemological stance involved, but for the meaning it gives to the individual life, then we must, at least, recognise that their value as individuals includes their value as individuals embedded in social, cultural and historical structures and practices. If the unity of the person is taken as given, the implication is that autobiography operates in effect to give less value to some forms of narrative self-representations, i.e., those forms which challenge the idea of the self as irreducible. This could be exhibited by problematising the referentiality of the self-narrative, or of the author as authority. This raises special problems in the educational context where forms of expression which do not conform to an implicit standard may not be seen as attempts to express a sense of identity but may be interpreted as a misunderstanding of the task. This calls for increased awareness of the forms of autobiography available, and, to return to the point made at the beginning of the second section, awareness of the interplay of between what educational benefit this task is to thought to have, and the commonsensical notions of what constitutes an autobiography. As with all educational endeavours, the relation between what is to be achieved and the understanding of the task has to be sensitive to the context. This includes the position of the student in relation to the task as well as the teacher's understanding of the task.

It should be recalled that autobiography is under discussion because it is a means of expressing our sense of identity. The fact that autobiography as a form of self-representation has been held to be a means to self-understanding or self-knowledge on the presupposition of an ontological thesis about the self tied to specific epistemological positions, should not obscure this. Our sense of identity is logically and conceptually distinct from the criteria of personal identity. The thesis being advocated here accepts the general position, argued for by Harré (1983:210-12) for example, that the sense of identity is derived from the criteria of identity.

The questions raised in this section concerning the implication of language in the status of the autobiographical subject, naturally leads to further consideration of the role of language, and the influence of the narrative structure itself on the form of the autobiography, and the light this throws on realisation of the aim of self-understanding.

3
Narrative and the Self

The unproblematic identification of the author and the narrated subject is coupled with a belief in the transparency of language in the traditional conception of autobiography. The self is able to know itself, but the language which expresses this knowledge is neutral. It does not, on this view, problematise the possibility of knowledge of one's self, or affect the knowledge one gains. There is no reason to assume, however, that the language of autobiography should differ from the use of language in other contexts. It is used functionally, it is not, as Szabados (1992:6) says, unemployed: "it is not language gone on holiday".

In this section the role played by language in the assumption that the self is the focus and locus of autobiography and the autobiographical act is explored as part of the larger inquiry into the relation between personal identity, a sense of identity and the agency of persons.

Essential to the autobiographical act is the assigning of significance and meaning to experiences and selected events in the past. The investing of the self and the past with a coherence and meaning which may not have been evident previous to the autobiographical act itself, which of course is a motivation for its use in education, brings to the fore considerations of the relationship between the structure of language and its role in self-representation. Inherent in the autobiographical process are such features as the giving of a completely formed character to events and experiences in the composing of a coherent narrative. This subverts the traditional understanding of autobiography as a means of self-discovery, or self-knowledge. "Narrative smoothing," as Spence (1987:132) refers to the giving to events and experiences a logical coherence and rationalization, is, in Gusdorf's memorable phrase (1980:40-41) the "original sin" of autobiography. "The completely formed" is substituted "for that which is in the process of being formed" (loc.cit.) in the funnelling of "a multivariate reality into an ordered stream of language" (Spence, op.cit.:131). Narrative smoothing draws attention to the impossibility of a veridical report of a person's life. Autobiography is not the reporting of something completed that can now be revealed or told. In drawing attention to the necessary effect of

putting experience into language, it also draws attention to the implication of language and its structure in the construction of the autobiographical self. In other words, the giving to experience a meaning it did not have at the time does not need to subvert the idea of agency, even if it does subvert the traditional idea of veridical access to the past. The subversion of agency is left to the post-structuralists.

The imbrication of language and the subject with the consequent dissolution of the subject is found, for example, in De Man's (1979:922) claim that selfhood is "fictive". This claim is made by reference to the structural constraints and limits of the language which make the autobiographical project only apparently possible. The self is an illusion, "the manifestation, on the level of the referent, of a linguistic structure" (loc.cit.). Although the view that the self is fictive is not limited to literary critics concerned with the theory of autobiographical discourse,[19] De Man's position is obviously stronger in that he takes, as Paul Smith (1988:103) aptly describes it, the autobiographical project as a "privileged kind of impossibility". The impossibility lies in the linguistic predicament of the autobiographer. While language through its referential properties makes the autobiographical project seem possible, the illusion of the subject in language is the cause of its impossibility: "autobiography veils a defacement of the mind of which it is itself the cause" (De Man, op.cit.: 930). The bleakness of this vision for autobiography illustrates a difficulty for the use of autobiography in school. If the traditional view of autobiography, with its positing of a pre-linguistic self given in experience, known best to itself is rejected, the most obvious, if not the only move seems to be to look to the influence of structures, such as those furnished by language to construct the self. This reveals the self as a fiction, denying the subject of experience not only as independent of reality, but in any sense as knowable through language. Such a picture denies what autobiography purports to illustrate: the agency of the author.

The vertigo to which De Man refers in the double-bind of the subject or self in relation to language is the converse of the "epistemological vertigo" Bruner (1988) suggests we should feel in the reflexivity of self-narrative at the very idea of telling, writing or even thinking an autobiography, as the autobiographer undertakes the dual role of both narrator and the central figure of the narrative. Bruner's position is, however, importantly different from a post-structuralist analysis. Whereas in De Man language is privileged to the extent that it eclipses the agency of the subject, in Bruner and others who emphasise the narrative structure of our lives and importance of narrative to the meaning of living a life, there is the possibility of rescuing the subject without returning to it the

epistemic and ontological authority associated with the traditional conception of autobiography with its assumption of a pre-given unity.

We are as MacIntyre (1981:201) says, "story-telling animals." We live 'storied lives', with narrative playing a central role in structuring our experience. There is an important sense in which the possibilities of our lives are determined by the stories we tell and are told. On this view our sense of personal identity presupposes narrative intelligibility. The construction of a narrative becomes necessary for the unity and coherence of a life. Thus the unity of a life is not pre-given or justified according to a metaphysical realism, but by reference to available narrative structures. The implication, of course, is that the unity of a person, the central idea of personhood, is not a necessary feature of human beings, but something learnt and acquired with narrative language. Bruner's (1987, 1988) work on narrative and the self illustrates the importance of the structure of narrative on what it means to live a life. He argues (1987:31) that this structure is of such importance that it itself, through habituation, becomes a directive of experience. It is not the case that the patterning of a life is a sculpting process, the smoothing of rough edges to fit a pattern which is either contained in the language or the stories of the culture, the point is that the experience of life and action is structured by the narrative structures which are already present. On this view, Bruner (loc.cit.) argues, "a life as led is inseparable from a life as told, ... a life is not 'how it was' but how it is interpreted and reinterpreted, told and retold." The telling of our stories is what makes our life our life, with the telling of stories constituting what it means to live a life.

The meaning given to a life therefore includes amongst its most crucial influences existing narratives and narrative structures. Rather than it being the case that one's life has been lived and it is just there waiting to be retrieved or interpreted, on this view there is an important sense in which the self is formed in language, that autobiography is 'writing the self', that narratives are, as Carr (1986:61) says, "told in being lived and lived in being told". The experience of narrative structure is necessary for the making sense of experience. This includes the perception that the idea of a life is already structured as a narrative, highlighting the complex relationship between living a life and writing an autobiography. The potential of self-representational narratives to structure perceptual experience is explored by Bruner (op.cit.:15), in his argument for the claim that "[i]n the end we *become* the autobiographical narratives by which we 'tell about our lives'... we also become variants of the culture's canonical forms" (italics in original). You become your autobiography in the sense that as it becomes believable so it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Outside events don't affect you until you fit them into your implicit autobiography. The self has

a desire to be unified and consistent (Bruner 1988). The unity of the self is not ontologically given, but a desire.

This thesis is intelligible if we admit with Hanson (1986:103) that "we do not need a unitary object to produce a unified object". The unified self is an ideal produced by a variety of factors, but importantly including the ideal of the person promoted and promulgated in a social environment. This fits with the idea that autobiography is the construction of a life, creating rather than reporting a life. Autobiography is not about a real life out there. It is constructed or created as an act of autobiography. You become the autobiography you tell. Life is a conceptual construction (Bruner, 1988).

This interpretation gives a primary role to narrative language, which includes cultural beliefs, in forming our sense of who we are. Arguments such as Bruner's imply the universality of narrative forms, while emphasising the cultural particularity of certain forms of narrative, and thus the influence of these forms on our sense of who we are. If, as the argument has suggested, our selves are ontological fictions the meaning of which is based on the various ways the concept of the person is utilised in the public life of a society, then the construction of a narrative, the available forms this can take and its effects on how we conceive of a life, take on a new importance in PSE. The conception of the person advocated here when applied to autobiography, which takes as its reference this ontological fiction, shifts attention from the self, somehow isolated from even the influence of language, to the text and the reader in the formation of self, to the writer and the reader, to the *graphia* of autobiography, and the influence of social and historical structures on the formation, structure and constraints of the narrative. The extent to which narrative language, cognitive and linguistic processes are culturally shaped thus becomes an issue of some importance, as does consideration of the dominant patterns of a culture, and the constraints imposed by these on our understanding of autobiography as the coherent representation of a life. Hence, dominant cultural patterns such as individualism, expressed by narrative elements, including the dominant myths, which obscure the degree of the individual and group reciprocal participation, need to be considered. This serves to direct attention to the various narrative constructions our students bring to the task of writing autobiographically, and exploration of the importance of narrative structure in the construction of the subject.

The narrative conception of the self is, by implication not an individual exercise. The necessary utilisation of existing narrative means, as MacIntyre (1981:199) says, that "we are never more (and sometimes less) than the co-authors of our own narratives". It is not possible to live any life we please, we are constrained by the stories of our culture and the stories of others.

If the preexistence of narratives and narrative structures determines our lives in the way Bruner and MacIntyre describe, language is not privileged in the way it is in De Man. MacIntyre's (ibid.:197) approach, that "stories are lived before they are told - except in the case of fiction", serves to endorse the view that while narrative structure and language is essential it is not privileged to the extent that one can say that lives are not lived but told. Thus, unlike De Man's position, narrative structures a life and the self, but space is retained for agency. Thus, a narrative conception of the self while denying the authority and sole authorship of the traditional account of autobiography, retain space for the agent as having the potential to play a role in authoring aspects of her life within the constraints of narrative structure.

This can be seen in how the unity of a life is understood. It is, according to MacIntyre (ibid:203) "the unity of a narrative embodied in a single life. ... The unity of a human life is the unity of a narrative quest". The quest is for the good for persons, the unity of persons being constituted by the coherence of a life story based in such a quest.[20] Carr (1986:96), who also argues for a narrative view of the self, takes the unity of a life to be a task, a struggle to bridge the gaps between actions and to constitute one's self: "a responsibility which no one else can finally lift entirely from the shoulders of the one who lives that life". While agency is circumscribed, space is retained for the actor. As Carr (ibid:97) says: "The unity of the self, not as an underlying identity but as a life that hangs together, is not a pregiven condition but an achievement".

My sense of my identity is a function of the sense I make of what is around me. The necessity of this activity of making sense requires a sense of temporal coherence, not only in the events and people around me, returning us to the conclusions of the previous chapter. There it was argued that the concern we have for our future is influenced by the connections made between the contents of first-person mental events, such as the forming of intentions. The content of these mental events was seen to be influenced by our knowledge of persons. In that case the non-branching nature of persons was emphasised. This account can now be supplemented. The forging of connections necessary to constitute the unity of the person desired and required for agency are part of our existing narratives and our attitudes towards them. Our sense of narrative structures and devices affect our understanding of action. Action is a temporal event, which, it will be recalled, was taken to constitute an important objection to the reductionist view of persons. On the narrative view of the self, the temporality of our action is part of the narrative. Our plans to act are affected by our experience of the past which is utilised in the present to attain a future aim. The past affects the present and the future. This is consistent with our understanding of autobiography as a project of the present with future effects, and avoids the

underestimation of the complexity of our psychology often implied in psychological accounts of personal identity. On this view the temporal nature of experience directs and shapes experience.

This view does, however, obscure the self in relation to narrative. MacIntyre's position seems to be that loss of meaning in one's life is a problem akin to not being able to make out the narrative, "the narrative becomes unintelligible" (op.cit.: 202) to the person. This implies that the narrative is written and one's task is to make sense of it in order that one can make sense of one's life: my responsibility is to make sense of this narrative. Despite the idea of co-authoring the narrative, the relation to the narrative as sense giving, seems once again to determine the role of the person in the narrative rather than the person determining her role in this, or another narrative. Once again, it is the problem of finding a space for autonomous or independent action within the crowded arena of social and cultural roles in which one finds one's self.

This problem can be approached by reference to the idea of a true or authentic self, or by reference to a standard of rationality outside the role or narrative one finds oneself in. Both positions rely on the ability to move outside the context of a role. The first, the idea of a true or authentic self, must appeal to something like the Heideggerian concept of authenticity, a concept notoriously difficult to grasp. It clearly cannot be understood here as the coherence of a whole self, as Heidegger sometimes implies, since this would be met by the strict adherence to a role. Since the idea of an agent freely choosing to accept a role cannot be explained by reference to the role or to some external authority, it must come from the person herself. For this, Heidegger uses the internal call to conscience, which "comes *from* me and yet *from beyond me and over me*" (1962:320). In his later writings, as Zimmerman (1981:129-30) argues, authenticity is described as something which happens to an individual. The true self is not self-willed but is rather an openness to the temporality of Being. Once again the self disappears in the public character of time generated by temporality.[21] The concept of an authentic or true self seems better understood as the concept Sartre appropriated, where the idea of choice is central, and where once again we have the abstraction and decontextualisation of the person, although this time with no realist assumptions. This moves us back into the existentialism of the autobiographical approach of Abbs and his aim of autobiographical writing as the search for the true self. For those who continue to find this notion obscure or problematic, the idea of a rational action which is not dependent on its particular social context seems more appealing. On this latter view, whether an action is rational or not is a function of whether it conforms to standards which are more general or universal than the standards provided by the particular context of the action. The advantage of this approach

over the search for a 'real' self is that it promises something beyond the self as a standard against which the worthwhileness of an action can be measured.

I find myself in a role. For me to choose this role for myself I must be able to choose it, make it part of myself and do so for good reasons. The problem is that the good reasons for behaving according to a role, for example, for studying if one is a student, are acquired with the role. They are part of what it means to be a good student. If anyone identifies with the role of student, they have good reason to study. If, however, I am to autonomously accept the role I cannot acquire the good reasons with the role. There needs to be a rational procedure that does not make reference to the context of a role for my action to be autonomous. This again returns us to the idea of a person defined by its capacity for rational choice: defined, in other words, in the absence of any constitutive concerns.

The problem of agency in the narrative conception arises in part because the epistemic authority of the author is not guaranteed, as it is on the traditional account, given that the identity of persons over time cannot act as an ontological guarantee. This seems to deny the special authority of the author, and with it a principal reason why autobiographical writing is held to have educational advantages. If there is no guarantee that the author is the person narrated in the text, the special value and relevance of autobiography is lost. It seems the presupposed unity of persons is necessary for autobiography to be educationally useful. However, this only follows if the arguments of the previous chapter are rejected. There, it will be recalled, although the existence of a subject of experience as existing separately from psychological connections and continuities was denied, it was not denied that the person could be identical over time, and even, in the absence of identity, have all that mattered for concern with the future. If these psychological relations are important in determining survival or identity, then autobiography retains its importance as central to the idea of constructing a self, as a means of assuring a sense of identity. On this view the construction of identity is not a fact of being a person, is not complete, but is something that needs work, reflection, the forming of connections.

Similar to the points made previously concerning the influence of connections and how these connections give rise to the idea of a self, the point here is that the structure of autobiographical narrative itself reinforces or encourages belief in a unified self prior to its articulation in narrative form. While the concentration in previous chapters has been on the referentiality of the 'I' and its role in the conception of the person, autobiography highlights the role of narrative in our sense of who we are and how we know who we are.

The root of the problem is the authorship of action. This can be approached through one of the root values of autobiography: its uniqueness. This uniqueness does not reside in its special relation to the truth of the person, as we have seen. Nor, on the narrative account under consideration, can it be construed as originality. It is possible that my story has been told before and my part has been played before, as Carr (op.cit.:93-4) points out. Obviously, the coherence of my experience with the story which makes it intelligible is not a source of its uniqueness. My agency in my life is a recognition of the responsibility for action within the constraints of a tradition of authoritative stories. This bypasses an objection to which a narrative account would otherwise be open. The narrative itself is not, on this view, a closed autonomous system in which the author is the ultimate authority. Thus it is not guilty of substituting the solipsistic 'true for oneself' with the another form of solipsism. On the narrative view there is a complex interdependence of the culture's narrative store, the availability of narrative structures and the role of the person as agent in identifying with and reinterpreting the narrative in the attempt to give life a coherence and the unity necessary for purposive and relatively independent action. Thus narrative does not have the 'liberatory' effects on the continuity of a life now perceived to be illusory, as Valéry (1975:301-302) implies in his reflection that "I am aware that once my pen intervenes, I can make whatever I like out of what was".

On the narrative conception of the person, the social and the personal can be harmonised through the striving to make connections by the individual. A person's experience is not patterned by a narrative, the narrative constitutes the sense made of experience. The particular point of view of the person can only be understood in relation to this. This involves the stories one tells to one's self, the contribution of others, and the cultural fund of narratives.

The narrative account enables us to give an interpretation of a central feature or claim of autobiography, its truth-value. Pascal (1960:viii), for example, argues that autobiography is "the account of the truth of a life" and that the interesting question is "the particular form of truth to be found in autobiography" (loc.cit.). The aim of aiding students reach a greater degree of self-understanding is predicated on the idea that this self-understanding will reflect some truth or enable truths to be discovered. A self-deceptive rendition of a happy or unhappy childhood seems to pose severe problems. Beyond this there are problems for the aim of giving a true account caused by act of narrating itself, as pointed out above. The tension exists because while we have a conception of autobiography as having the potential to reflect an aspect of reality accurately, we also recognise that the necessary adoption of a stance or perspective in autobiography involves seeing autobiography as centrally a

matter of interpreting a life. Attention is thus drawn to the interpretative nature of recollection and, hence, to the central role of interpretation in autobiography, in particular the reading back into events a character, significance or meaning they did not have at the time. On the narrative account this does not lead to the author having absolute authority, but the truths to be attained lie more in the understanding of, and the forging of narrative connections in relation to one's self and others. This supplies an answer to the question of whether the relation between the narrating 'I' and narrated 'I' is one of identity, or whether the relation is better understood as one of forging and understanding relationships, without invoking the idea of epistemic privilege with respect to knowledge of the contents of first-person present-tense states temporally extended.

This may, however, be thought to undermine the authority of the author in the construction of an autobiography by denying the personal authority of the author. The act of construction, the interpretation of experiences according to standards of narrative takes the place of the authority of the autobiography effected in terms of a pre-existent self whose authority derives from its identity, so the authority is not pregiven. That the idea of the authority of the author has an important role to play in education, particularly moral education is ably illustrated in Tappan and Brown (1989). Tappan and Brown argue that the students gain a sense of their own authority and responsibility through authoring their narratives. This is seen as crucial in a moral education which includes among its aims the importance of making sense of moral demands by relating them to one's own life and experience, and thereby making moral positions one's own. Thus, Tappan and Brown make use of a general theory of narrative and its importance to the meaning of living a life, to enhance values of personal responsibility of ownership of action. Meaning and value, on this view, are expressed in a dynamic form through the activity of authoring. In this way experiences are made one's own. However, we again face the problem of what owns these experiences, how the ownership of experience is to be understood. What is the stable core which gives the perspective or stance, through which ownership is effected?

There is implicit in Tappan and Brown's privileging of the authority in authoring the problem of a pre-given self to which reference is made in the claiming or assumption of responsibility according to the perspective taken. There is a serious ambiguity in the idea of authoring/authority as used by Tappan and Brown. This is illustrated in their interpretation of Haydon White's (1981:13-14) position that "every historical narrative has as its latent or manifest purpose the desire to moralize the events of which it treats", as consistent with the their use of explicit moral narrative. In their effort to make this aspect of narrative explicit by constructing moral narratives in the form of dialogical

exchanges between students about moral dilemmas, they underestimate the effect of the authority of the moral narratives on the authority of those that interpret them. Without even mentioning the effect of the authority of the school as an institution on the stories chosen and told, more attention needs to be given to the idea that students author the stories they tell. The "freedom from the arbitrary imposition of culturally bound values and conventional stereotypes" (ibid:200-201) as students are encouraged to "authorize" their own voices, needs to be further interrogated. The important aim which seems to be behind this characterisation of the relation of narrative to moral education is similar to the theme running throughout Hunt's (1987) work, that biography, theory and practice can be viewed as relational and dialogically determined rather than as isolated and mutually exclusive through the autobiographical impulse. However, Tappan and Brown's account seems to oscillate between a strong notion of authoring, in the expressing of one's own authority and responsibility through authoring and the evidence of authorship in narratives, and the situating and circumscribing of the narrative through explicitly moral discourse in the classroom. This has the effect of reducing the ambiguity of perspective which, as we shall see, is often part of our self-presentations. The public form of dialogue has to be constructed to allow for this possibility. Tappan and Brown's (op.cit.:195) use of interview questions designed to evoke moral experience as a means of enhancing authorship is premised on the idea of audience. But the student's role as author is to "convince his audience of both the legitimacy of his moral perspective and the righteousness of his actions in the story he tells" (loc.cit.). He must know or empathise with his audience in order to "make his case most convincingly and authoritatively. This, ... is what we have called *authoring*" (loc.cit.).

If the argument given so far has any validity, then this use of narrative will not be foremost amongst those to be encouraged in writing autobiographically for the purpose of increased self-understanding. Although Tappan and Brown (ibid:197) hold that their method encourages "potentially very different moral voices and moral experiences", by not paying adequate attention to the status of the self assumed in their use of narrative it is likely that this potential will be constrained by the main concern which is to give the students' a strong sense of identity, a strength in their convictions and 'righteousness' which students may not feel. A more open-ended approach is advocated here which encourages the ambiguity persons often feel in their self-presentations. Unlike Tappan and Brown's use of narrative, a concern here has been with the role of the structure of narrative on reflection itself. This leads us to consideration of some specific problems of using autobiographical writing in the PSE classroom, but before looking at these, it is important to make explicit the connections between the

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importance of narrative, the problems it faces with retaining a subject of experience, and the continuity theory of personal identity previously considered.

The two approaches to autobiography outlined above clearly derive support from the theories of personal identity considered in previous chapters. The traditional conception of autobiography with its positing of identity, the pre-given unity of the self, the priority of the unity of the person to language, and the special epistemic relation of the self to the self, is supported by the theory of the strict identity of persons. As will be recalled this theory is associated with Butler and Reid and more recently with Chisholm (1976) and Madell (1981). On such a theory a person is more than a succession of mental and physical events and states, the identity of persons holding in virtue of facts of personal identity beyond the holding of these more particular facts. The alternative, continuity theories of personal identity, hold that, as Parfit (1984:210) says "[a] person's existence just consists in the existence of a brain and body, and the occurrence of a series of interrelated physical and mental events". On this view what matters when we consider the nature of persons over time is the holding of psychological continuities and connections which hold to a greater or lesser extent. Thus the relation of importance when we consider our future is not identity, a one-one relation. This analysis applies very much to our everyday lives where mental and physical characteristics converge to produce a seemingly single and continuous stream. Following Parfit, it would seem that the problem of change in the case of persons is better described in terms of the holding of certain relations, rather than in terms of identity.

This is clearly consistent with the narrative view of the self which takes the unity of the person to lie in the making of connections between experiences. It also supports the view that autobiography is not transparently self-referential due to the mediating effect of the reflexive language of self-narrative. There are, however, important differences. Although MacIntyre sees the connections forged by the narrative traditions of a community, he pays relatively little attention to the point Carr makes concerning the forging of connections. As we have seen, Parfit also pays relatively little attention to the active forming of connections or the relation between the contents of mental events. What MacIntyre and Parfit both underestimate, in short, is the influence of our attitudes to and about ourselves and other persons on the construction of persons and our sense of ourselves. We shall return to this point later.

Both the narrative and the continuity theories of persons face the same problem with agency, with the subject of experience. Neither denies the existence of persons. On Parfit's view, persons exist as thinkers and agents, what is denied is that the subject of experience is an entity existing separately

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from the existence of a brain and a body and a series of interrelated mental and physical events. Hence, this view is compatible with the claim that there are subjects of experience, possessors of experience, as the truth of this claim is a function of language. In Parfit's words: it "is true because of the way in which we talk" (ibid: 223). The unity of the self can then be understood as the holding of psychological connections and continuities. On this account personal identity does not have a special nature, for essential to this view is the denial of the holding of a further fact or facts, such as would be required by the unity of the self as assured prior to language.

As well as problems with agency, the narrative conception of self admits of further problems. Intuitively, the narrative conception is attractive because it restores in its form the the unity of the self, lost in the general confusion over subjectivity and the 'crisis of the self' evident not only in literature, but in the breakdown of many traditional categories in our society. Is this not, however, the promise of a chimera? Having lost the certainty of an historical unitary subject, the structure of language seems to impose the needed structure. But in doing so imposes constraints of a different kind, as we shall see as we look specifically at some of the problems the use of autobiographical writing in PSE poses.

Notes

1. The focus is on the written autobiography, although what is said also applies to oral autobiographies. It is not clear that the argument is applicable to other forms of 'autobiographical' representation (see, for example, Bruss' (1980) argument that the 'I' of the written autobiography is not commensurate with the 'eye' of the film). The use of the phrase 'autobiographical writing' rather than 'autobiography' is only intended to avoid the implication that what is referred to a completed life, and to encompass the legitimacy of the idea of autobiographical segments of a life.

2. This categorisation is based on Maguire and Washington (1983). Based on their experiences during a six-week course at the Institute of Education London University, they distinguish between two approaches to English teaching. One is associated with the Institute of Education, the "orthodoxy school", major figures of which include Britton, Dixon and Wilkinson, with the other being centred around Cambridge and is associated with the work of Abbs and Holbrook.

3. A broadly therapeutic approach to PSE is evident in Button's (1987) work on developmental group work, while the alternative more social approach is evident in arguments for the place of peace and world studies in PSE (Morrison, 1987, Stephenson, 1987). Some of the problems which can arise from failure to distinguish these two approaches are illustrated in Campbell and Ryder's (1989) article on the use of 'groupwork' and working in groups.

4. A similar point is made by Abbs (1974:5).

5. The importance of autobiography in performing this mediating function is frequently stressed. See, for example, Pascal (1960:185) and Rosen (1988).

6. Abbs (1976:162) provides a good illustration of this point. He recounts a conversation with a student who was experiencing difficulty beginning her autobiography but who is able to write once she is informed that some autobiographies have been written in the third person: "For some reason, an impersonal method of writing released her imagination and freed her memory which until then had been constricted by the direct first-person presentation we normally associate with autobiography".

The use of the third-person is only appropriate, of course, to the written expression of an autobiography. It would strike one as intuitively strange if a student used the third person in an oral presentation of an autobiographical vignette.

7. Although the problems with supplying a definitive account are perceived differently, De Man (1979:920), Olney (1980a), Sprinker (1980), and Pascal (1960), afford differing perspectives on what the issues are.

It is interesting to note that the delineation of autobiography as relatively discrete from related areas is a very recent phenomenon. As recently as the 1930s biography and autobiography were not distinguished, both falling under the general categorisation of stories of persons' lives. This is illustrated in Johnson's (1937:27) definition of biography which includes "not only formal biography, but all kinds of autobiography - letters, journals, reminiscences - for all biography is ultimately founded in a kind of autobiography".

8. This is not to deny that diaries may be interpretative and some criterion of selection used in the writing down of experiences. Many of us require or encourage journal writing in our courses, a function of which is to encourage interpretation and selection. The point is that with autobiography as it is used in education, the interpretative aspect is essential, and together with the fact that it is an interpretation of the author, is the reason why it is used.

9. The referential dimensions of autobiography are, of course, a major concern in post-structuralism. The referentiality of autobiography, although lending itself to the post-structuralist preoccupation with the subject, is a concern arising from its reflexive nature. Arguments for the centrality of the role played by the referential dimensions of an autobiographical text, are given most notably by Eakin (1985, Ch 1), Bruss (1977, 1980) and De Man (1979).

This is essentially the "identity-value" of autobiography which, according to Bruss (1976:10-11), forms one of three limited generalizations, articulated in terms of interrelated "rules", which address the referentiality of autobiographical texts. These "rules" compromise a standard that must "be satisfied by the text and the surrounding context of any work which is to 'count as' autobiography" (ibid). The second and third "rules" concern, respectively, the truth-value of an autobiography, (in that the events reported are or were, at least potentially, the case), and its sincerity (in that "the autobiographer purports to believe in what he asserts").

10. Some autobiographers have interpreted this authority as an immunity from error. Probably the most explicit statement of this is to be found at the close of Rousseau's *Confessions*:

> I cannot be wrong about what I have felt nor about what my feelings have led me to do and this is what it is all about.

For other autobiographers (Henry James, McCarthy and Sartre, for example), the identification of author and protagonist is seen as part of the problematic of reaching self-understanding.

11. It has been argued, by Spengeman and Lundquist's (1965:514) for example, that neglect of the necessary identification of the 'I' which "unites all" the autobiographer's past experiences, has adverse consequences for both the author and the reader: For the author, such neglect will result in her life appearing "fragmented and incoherent", and for the reader, it will appear "pointless and confused"(loc.cit.).

12. Porter and Smith (1989) illustrate the importance and educational implications of understanding autobiography as including elements of both self-creation and self-description or display.

13. We recognise, for example, the possibility of self-deception, the problems involved in being sincere with oneself and the problem of the genuineness of response where reflection on the past is involved. See Palmer and Champlin (1979) on the problems raised for autobiography by the possibility of self-deception.

14. Although we cannot go into the debate here, De Man's argument is interesting not least in the position he takes on the problematic issue of the relative priority of language and the self. He points to the rhetorical structure of language as creating the illusion of self. The aim of moving beyond the text to knowledge of the self is an illusion, the author's declaration of herself as the subject of her own understanding as something other than the referent of a linguistic structure fails. This position is supported by Bruss' (1980) analysis of the autobiographical 'I' and the 'eye' of the camera in 'autobiographical' film, which highlights the co-incidence between the referential properties of language and the aspirations of autobiographical writing.

15. See, for example, S. Smith (1987), Fleishman (1983), Olney (1980a), Gusdorf (1980), Weintraub (1978).

16. This situating of the origins of the importance of autobiography, and its evolution as a distinct form of expression is clearly reminiscent of A. O. Rorty's (1976b) discussion of the concepts of person, self and individual, and Taylor's (1989) understanding of the "punctual self" emptied of essential social attributes.

17. See for example, Gilligan (1982), and Markus and Oyserman (1989).

18. This gender related difference in how the self is perceived is reflected in some women's autobiographies. See Mason (1980) and Jelinek (1986), for example. An account of the relational way of knowing is found in Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986).

19. It has, for example, been taken as "a biographical fact" by autobiographers such as Sartre, McCarthy and Henry James who deliberately present the autobiographical act as an instance of self-invention traceable to a determining set of biographical circumstances, as Eakin (1985) in his study of these autobiographies shows.

For some autobiographers the fictive nature of a continuous self is revealed by reflection on the role and problem of memory, and in general, the problem of access to the past. Olney (1980b), Renza (1980) and Sprinker (op.cit.) provide

useful discussion of the problems of memory and its role in autobiography. Among the issues which are pertinent to autobiography is the distancing of the experiences recollected from the writing self, with the memory of these experiences necessarily being an interpretation of the original experience. The very act of transposing experience into words involves the imposition of some order however minimally this is understood. The interpretation of earlier experience cannot be divorced or understood outside the filtering of subsequent experience or the structures of language and storytelling.

20. Among the many questions which a narrative account raises, is what makes a good narrative? This poses the question of whether there are fundamental ethical principles by which narratives can be judged. A positive exploration of some of the issues involved in determining such principles is given by Kemp (1988).

21. Heidegger's relation between the idea of temporal authenticity and autonomous action is made more complex by his view on the public and individual character of the world. On the one hand the public character of time generated by temporality effects a public or common ordering of time, but the authentic moment (the authentic modality of the present) is realised only by an individual Being (*Dasein*). On some of the problems caused by this dichotomy for the idea of an active individual see Olafson (1987, Ch. 4) and Zimmerman (1981, Ch. 4).

Chapter 6

Writing Autobiographically in PSE: Problematic Aspects of the Task

There are several problems associated with the use of autobiographical writing by students. In this chapter some of these, namely the problem of autobiographical motivation, the problem of audience, the role of the teacher, and the students' right to privacy will be addressed. A few remarks are also made on the issue of assessment and, finally, an objection raised to the use of autobiography is discussed: its implicit individualism.

Discussion of these issues, which are engendered by the idea of writing autobiographically in a school setting, centres around how they may be interpreted in light of the understanding of autobiographical writing given in the last chapter, and aims to bring out some of the implications of the conception of the person which has been developed in this thesis. Thus, this chapter is primarily concerned with how this conception of the person can illuminate some of the problems faced in educational practice. We turn first to the problem of the motivation to write autobiographically in a school setting and some of the problems this can raise for the achievement of self-understanding.

1
The Motivation to Write Autobiographically and the Possibility of Sincerity

A salient feature of writing autobiographically in the school context, particularly in the context of compulsory schooling, is that the motivation to write does not initially come from an autobiographical impulse on the part of the student, which is not to say that students do not have an autobiographical impulse,[1] that this may not be utilised, or that the process of writing itself may not have the consequence of making the student more reflective about her life. The point is that unlike the motivation to write autobiographically outside the school context, which while various, in all likelihood comes in the first place from the person herself, the motivation in the school context is external to the autobiographer being furnished by another's perception of its educational advantages. The motivation to write autobiographically originates with the teacher or other educators. Whether or not autobiographical writing can be distinguished by its intentionality,[2] and whether or not there is a natural autobiographical impulse, unless students are allowed and encouraged to write

autobiographically only when they feel the desire to do so, the placing of motivation exterior to the autobiographer raises special problems.

Formal and public autobiographical expression is unlike the informal need to tell stories to one's self and others expressed by an autobiographical impulse, and therefore, recourse to the idea of a natural autobiographical impulse, to give accounts of one's life and experience in narrative form as a necessary aspect of giving meaning to one's life, is insufficient if the aim of writing autobiographically is to be increased self-understanding. Unlike other autobiographical expression in other contexts, the motivation to write in the classroom is to respond to a task set by teachers. The meaning of the task for the student therefore centrally includes the fact that it is school work, and only contingently includes the desire for self-understanding.

The basic idea behind asking students to write autobiographically is the hope that they will become more reflective about their lives, become aware of the importance of their own stories of their lives to understanding themselves and others, and develop their own ways of structuring and reflecting upon their experience. Essentially we are asking students to develop a self-reflective stance to their lives, to recognise and appreciate autobiography as a means of making sense of their lives.

An obstacle standing in the way of achieving this aim, which is peculiar to the educational setting, related to problem that it is externally motivated, is the fact that it is an "academic task".[3] Whether consciously or not, students respond to such tasks based on their understanding of what school work involves. The students' understanding of what autobiography is will be mediated in the educational context by the students' perception of what the teacher wants. Students will operate with the concept of autobiography they have, and respond to the task as a piece of academic work. There is therefore the danger that students will limit themselves to recording 'facts' and not interpret the meaning. In other words, the selection of past experiences will not be effected according to some criteria of significance dictated by the student herself, but by criteria implicit in the task of writing in the context of school. In such a case the influence of language on the 'I' written into the text, the effect of writing your life down on how you perceive that life, as well as further problems with the autobiographical form, risk not being explored or understood, with the effect that the occurrence of 'I' in the writing may be superficial. Some students will problematise the writing 'I', some will not.[4] Moreover, there is also the problem of the selection of the persona of the autobiography, a problem faced by all autobiographers. Selection of experiences and personae is necessary in the construction of any autobiography, there is however a danger that students will limit themselves to telling a

'student's story' in response to the autobiographical task being first of all a school task. This in itself may not be a disadvantage, but is something of which educators should be aware. Not only, of course, is the selection of the perspective, in the sense of the 'person' or personae to be represented, necessary, it is also extremely difficult. The student is placed in a difficult position, not only in trying to 'choose' the theme or persona which best reflects their life or perspective, but choosing one which will meet with approval.

These features of the use of autobiographical writing in a school setting draw attention to the role of the teacher, her appreciation of the task and its attendant difficulties for the student, as well as her explanation of what autobiography means in this context and what is expected from the students. In addition to being sensitive to how this task differs from more impersonal tasks set, the teacher also has to be aware of the influence of students' understanding of autobiographies. Fortunately, there are student autobiographies available,[5] which perform a number of extremely useful functions. They show students that it is not only the rich, famous or dead who have their autobiographies published and valued; that one's life need not be filled with extraordinary adventures and illustrious connections to be interesting; and that this is a serious task which is valued. In my own experience using autobiographical writing the most important combined effect of reading these autobiographies before and during the writing of their own autobiographies was an increase in the seriousness with which students attempted the task, the general confidence gained in the value of their own voice, with a corresponding increase in the time and effort they put into this task as opposed to some of the other work they were expected to do.

This leads to consideration of the role of certain attitudes in both student and teacher towards the autobiographical task, and the student-teacher relationship. While these are clearly not going to be particular to the use of autobiographical writing in schools, they seem essential to the successful undertaking of an autobiographical exercise. This issue is therefore appropriately approached through consideration of what counts as a successful autobiography.

What counts as a successful autobiography will clearly be dependent on the aims one hopes to accomplish in writing autobiographically. If one's motivation is self-aggrandisement, self-justification, the desire to convert, confess or impress, or to please the teacher, success depends on how believable or convincing the work is to its audience. Whether the author is sincere is only relevant to the extent that it makes the work more convincing. To hold otherwise would be to claim that it is a necessary condition for persuasion that the person persuading believes what she purports to. It is clearly possible to write and to intend to write a convincing autobiography even if one does not

believe it. Where the motivation is other than self-understanding, criteria for success are therefore framed in terms of reader response. In an important sense they are written for the reader. Augustine's *Confessions* would be successful if its readers are reinforced in their Christian faith. Augustine's own faith is not necessary to its success, the reader's belief in it is.

Criteria for success in the case of autobiographies motivated by the desire for self-understanding are importantly different. The task is not primarily set or undertaken with reader response in mind, except in so far as the author is also a reader. This is not to say that reader response may not be crucial, but rather the point is that what counts as success lies with the author in terms of the degree of self-understanding gained. This returns us to the question of the interpretation of 'self-understanding' since how this is understood will affect what successful autobiographical writing is taken to involve.

As mentioned at the beginning of the last chapter, self-understanding is open to various interpretations. On the 'mental health' model the question of self-deception and the operation of various psychoanalytic categories will obviously be an issue. This raises a number of difficult issues, it leads, for example to the idea of teacher as therapist. While all teachers, and particularly those involved in pastoral care, face the issue of their therapeutic role in some form at some time, there is an important difference between a semi-therapeutic situation which arises as a result of personal interaction between students and teachers in a school, and those required by an academic task. If an academic task requires a therapeutic stance, it is not too strong to suggest that it does not have a place in the ordinary classroom with teachers who are not therapists and with students who are not voluntarily in therapy. Is this mental health model, however, a necessary consequence of introducing autobiography with the aim of encouraging greater self-understanding, and to what extent are problems such as self-deception endemic to the idea of writing autobiographically?

If self-understanding is the aim, then a necessary condition for a successful autobiography is the sincerity of the author. The author must intend to be sincere. As we have seen above, this is not primarily understood as faithfulness to biographical facts. While our complicated understanding, or at least our intimations of the complexity of the human psyche as well as the more obvious complications of memory, lead us to reject the idea of certainty in our first-person interpretations of past events, something like the idea of personal truth which comes from reflection on and interpretation of past experiences forms the basis of the educational value of autobiography. The possibility of sincerity, of believing what one purports to, is therefore paramount.

This naturally raises the question of whether one can be sincere with one's self. The question is complicated once the traditional picture of privileged first-

person access to the content of mental states with the rejection of incorrigible authority over first-person psychological utterances, is rejected. With this rejection autobiography loses its privileged character. If the picture of the self as a knowable aspect of reality, known to itself and valued on the basis of epistemic privilege, is rejected, so is Rousseau's (1953:262) confident assertion that while he may be wrong about dates and such things, "I cannot be wrong about what I have felt, or about what my feelings have led me to do: and these are the chief subject of my story".

For us the possibility of epistemological guarantees, as well as the theological guarantees appealed to by Augustine to underwrite his sincerity are not available, or at least with the latter we can not presume that they are available to all students. Both of these underpinnings of traditional autobiography are absent, and so autobiography, in the absence of its anchor, becomes unmoored. To assume that these guarantees are still there would be as Szabados (1992:3) says, to exhibit or invite bad faith or remarkable naiveté.

If the possibility of guarantees of sincerity are not available to us, is the teacher exhibiting bad faith in encouraging students to be sincere? The emphasis seems to shift back to biographical facts as the only aspect of autobiography which have the possibility of being true reports, yet it is precisely this aspect which is educationally uninteresting, and uninteresting from the point of view of the autobiographer seeking self-understanding, where the focus is intended to be on autobiographers' interpretations and construction of the meaning of their experience. On the traditional understanding of autobiography and the conception of the self on which it draws, sincerity, although no doubt difficult to achieve is not, in principle, impossible. The self is transparent to itself and self-knowledge, through reflection and introspection is possible: though hidden, the self can be known and is best known to itself. On the conception of the person advocated here what is meant by sincerity is importantly different. If a sense of identity is derived from the conditions of personal identity, and if these conditions are as described here, then the connections between experiences gain in importance, as does the idea of identification. Identification is a difficult notion and clearly needs to be further investigation. As was argued in the fourth chapter, it cannot solely be a matter of individual legislation, and as Griffin (1986:377-378) argues, ultimately rests on fuller explication of what is meant by psychological continuity. This understanding of the person does, however, provide a coherent perspective from which to view Wittgenstein's (Bowsma, 1986:70) remark that "[i]t is one's attitudes towards one's own actions and the explanations of them that are certain to introduce a false note." While the conceptualisation of the person suggested here does not deny this, or paper over the insight by demanding that the person work harder at making

one's autobiography consistent, it gives an account of what matters when we consider our past, present and future which allows for the ambiguity in one's description of one's self. Thus, it is consistent with Wittgenstein's (loc.cit.) comment on the problem of adopting the consistent and coherent stance characteristic of autobiography: the autobiographer writes "'I am a spiteful person'; he reflects about this self-ascription and then retracts it, saying 'I am not a spiteful person.' No account of himself can stand before his own attitude towards it".

Is this impossibility of a consistent or unambiguous attitude towards one's self a reason to be wary of using autobiographical writing to aid students' in their understanding of themselves? It is clearly a rejection of the idea that there is any direct access, or mirror to which introspection provides faithful access or which gives a consistent reflection. But at the same time it draws attention to the situatedness of the author, of the importance of the present perspective on events. There can be no illusion that one is studying with detachment another person to whom one has privileged access in virtue of identity. This concentration on the present context of the author, has the added effect of reinterpreting the objectification and alienation of the self in the attempt to write it. If the stance is reflective, the imposition of a complete description such as 'I am spiteful' will immediately be perceived as inaccurate, as will its converse. It becomes clear that the implication of separation of the narrated and the narrator is not a separation in the sense of that the narrator is disengaged. The narrator is incorrectly on this view, depicted as an observer on a life, rather she is the liver of a life.

The ambiguity and instability in the perspective of the author does not herald the end of autobiography, but rather directs attention back to the function of narrative, and the role played by the perceived need to fashion a coherent story. It leads in particular to exploration of different forms of narrative. The variety of narrative forms to be experimented with, their effects on the perception of the life described are all fertile areas for exploration where autobiographical writing is used in the PSE.

On the relation between self, others and language advocated here, the ambiguity of the relation of the self to itself, is something to be explored and encouraged, which is not to say that it is to be prescribed. For example, it is no part of the current concern to judge harshly the autobiography of the student who is completely unambiguous, a Rousseauesque character, who retains a faith in the truthfulness of her reports of what she thought and felt. The point is not to 'correct' students' sense of self, but to allow the possibility of exploration of the relation between language and the sense of self.[6] A strength of the conceptualisation of the person suggested here is that it recognises the

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value of different conceptions of self, including the ideal of unity, and in and of itself does not prescribe substantial ethical stances, such as the unity and harmonisation of the self. It does, however, allow for such stances. The controversy is over the basis of such claims. As Parfit (1984:446) notes, on the Non-Reductionist View:

> the deep unity of each life is automatically ensured, however, randomly, short-sightedly, and passively this life is lived. On the Reductionist View, the unity of our lives is a matter of degree, and is something that we can affect. We may want our lives to have a greater unity, in the way that an artist may want to create a unified work. And we can give our lives greater unity, in ways that express or fulfil our particular values and beliefs.

This possibility of valuing unity is therefore admitted, and while there may be problems with this view,[7] it denies that unity is a value based on the ontological status of the self.

2
Privacy and Audience

At the beginning of the last chapter the respect shown to students' lives and experiences was mentioned as one of the benefits of encouraging students to write autobiographically. By respecting the stories of their lives, a measure of dignity and respect is afforded to the students. However, this seems to be undermined by the charge that in requiring autobiographies from students educators overstep their authority and misuse their power by requiring students to disclose personal details and experiences. In short, it could be argued that the use of autobiographical writing does not respect the student, but shows disrespect for students as persons, by encouraging them to disclose what they have a right to keep private. This objection can be overstated, but the root issue concerns personal disclosure by students as a requirement of their compulsory education. Clearly one option is not to make it compulsory. But for this to be a viable option, genuine alternatives must be available which do not prejudice the child in any way, and which contain no element of coercion. This is a tall order, and almost beside the point if autobiographical writing is thought to be of genuine educational benefit. The question is whether the student's right to withhold aspects of their personal lives is infringed by the request to write autobiographically.

The important point in relation to the privacy of the person and the autobiographical task as set in a school is that there is no necessary connection such that infringement of any right to privacy follows. The conception of the

self suggested here does not give the importance to privacy which the traditional conception of the person as private and hidden and known best to itself implies, or the right to privacy associated with autonomy.[8] On the conception of the self suggested here there is nothing to suggest that the significance given to events and experiences need not be something which the student regards as a private matter.[9] While the concern may legitimately shift, on this view, towards concern with contextual constraints and implications of any autobiographical assertion, it remains the case that a student's sense of privacy will be threatened. Clearly, the issue of the right of the student to not reveal herself should not be infringed. Some light is shed on this matter, however, if autobiography is not approached as primarily a matter of student privacy. An emphasis on privacy has the effect of devaluing social relationships and their implication in the formation of an autobiography. Thus, while privacy is an issue of which teachers and students should remain mindful to overemphasise it may well have a detrimental effect on the production of an autobiography. It may increase the sense of isolation autobiographers frequently refer to and promote the feeling of separateness engendered by the concentration on the subjective self which autobiography can foster.[10]

The problem of the privacy of the student and how this is to be reconciled with the autobiographical task is clearly an issue closely related to student perception of the task, which, unfortunately is not always positive,[11] and the role of teacher in intervening in the autobiographical process as well as her role in assessing autobiographical work.

The account of autobiography favoured here, consistent with the conception of the person argued for in previous chapters gives explicit recognition to the influence of language and narrative structure, as well as experience on both the form and content of an autobiography. This raises the question of influence of the teacher's perception of the task on her response to students' work. Some of the issues involved are highlighted once the social influences on a person's sense of identity and sense of self is recognised. As mentioned above, one of the advantages of the approach to autobiography advocated is that it does not prejudice different conceptions of self based, for example, on gender. But does this not substitute one idea of what a person is with another which is presumed to be more correct? To what extent will the teacher's perception of what is appropriate for a female working class student to express in her autobiography affect the teacher's assessment of the work, influence her comments, suggestions and so forth? This raises the further question of the extent to which the teacher, the author, and other readers can or should be neutral on these cultural questions. The fault in the past may well have been the neglect of differences, the fault with the approach suggested here, which has taken

seriously some aspects of a post-modern critique of the unitary self and social implications of the narrative view of self, may be to elevate the importance of categories, class, gender and race, to which students belong, and institute implicit criteria reflective of the teacher's perception of appropriateness of self-expression of these groups. To some extent, of course, once these questions and problems have been made explicit and the teacher is sufficiently reflective about the criteria she uses in assessing a 'good' autobiography, these problems will be mitigated, particularly so the issues are shared with the students. This may in fact be the extent to which the problems raised by the cultural assumptions involved in writing and responding to autobiography can be met. What is important to note is that once the focus moves to the construction of self, to the social influences on the formation of a sense of self, these issues will be more important than if the idea of autobiography is to reveal the truth of a pre-given self.

The readership of a text is something which always needs to be taken into account. In their autobiographies students should be encouraged to adopt the role of critic. Authors, as well as readers, need to be encouraged in self-conscious discussion of the selections made, the possible alternative stories, and other limitations which are made possible by viewing the text from the distance of a critic. This involves explicit recognition of the objectification of the self, the distancing occasioned by the very act of writing autobiographically, of the effect of reflection on the meaning and significance of experiences. In passing, it is interesting to note that the distancing of the author from the subject of the text, which of necessity occurs in the writing of an autobiography, means that the subjective meaning is gained through the objectification of subjective experience. This distancing, on the theory of the person advanced here, is part of the construction of the self, in the identification and non-identification with earlier periods of a life and with future aspects of it. As mentioned above, this is not a matter of individual legislation. The fact that I am not very proud of a period of my past may lead me to distance myself from it, but a negative attitude to it is not sufficient for me to say that it not me. The consequences of this possibility of identification and non-identification, consequent on the continuity aspect of the Reductionist View, need to be further explored.

This leads to consideration of the assessment of autobiographical writing. The teacher is the instigator of the task, and will be called upon to assess it, no matter how informally this is done. In setting the task the teacher has a responsibility to respond. It should not be forgotten that not only is the task of writing autobiographically difficult but it places the student in a vulnerable position.[12] If the task is to have a possibility of achieving its function there must be a relationship of trust between the teacher and the students.[13] Given the

special nature of autobiographical writing, as opposed to impersonal writing required of students, a consequence for some students may be that the task will never be meaningful. This situation is exacerbated by the desire of the student to please the teacher, but is mitigated if there a relationship of trust between teacher and student. In general, for any reader of a student's autobiography, the appeal Augustine made to the charity of his readers,[14] holds. One could go so far as to say that the student, having complied with the request to write autobiographically, has the right to have her work received charitably. While this holds for all readers, it does little to address a principal area of concern, the differential power relation between the student and the teacher. Among the audience of the student's autobiography the teacher is likely to be privileged if for no other reason than she is presumed to be more of an authority, and have more authority than other members of the class.[15]

On the model of autobiography so far advocated, assessment should be consistent with the aim of directing students to explore the effects of a writing a life. To this end dialogue with the student and dialogue between students is appropriate since autobiography is no longer conceived on a model of an individual attempting to retrieve or reflect a self, to express the truth found, but a more ambiguous activity in which others have a role. The criteria of assessment will be a response to the aims to be achieved and the nature of the autobiographical task. Thus they will clearly not involve giving primary importance to the impossible task of verifying the events depicted in the autobiography, nor will the primary concern be with the extent to which the author reveals or creates a true self. Concern is more likely to be directed to creating an atmosphere where students will be able to explore questions of what it means to be sincere with one's self. The problem of assessment will not therefore involve putting the teacher and other readers in the position of assessing another person's life in terms of the independent verifiability of events described, or the 'truthfulness' of the author, nor with consideration of the psychological impediments of particular autobiographers which stand in the way of gaining 'true' insight into one's character or personality. Rather than concentrating on these aspects of autobiography, the interest is always on the significance given to events for the student's self-understanding. This again raises the issue of truthfulness and the problem of what the autobiography is to be truthful of, or to. This will touch on the psychological aspects of autobiography just mentioned, but it is suggested that these should not be the focus. The teacher's role in these exercises is to facilitate, aiding in the structuring of the narrative, and providing support.

Although a full account of the likely criteria of assessment cannot be given here, the account of autobiographical writing in PSE outlined above, gives

some indication of the type of issues which any assessment will need to consider. Given the concern with language in 'writing the self', aspects of the literary form increase in importance, while others will assume less significance. For example, that aspect of the literary form, the character[16] with its dual personae in the form of the subject of the text and the author, would not constitute a major concern. The conventions surrounding the presentation of the author's 'self-portrait', as Howarth (1980:86) refers to this aspect of autobiography, has been a major issue here. If the argument has any validity then violation of some of these conventions, such as that of separation, would not constitute a major problem for the student autobiographer. Those aspects of the narrative form which are likely to increase in importance are the technique (style, imagery and structure), and the theme of the autobiography.

If the style of an autobiography is not subservient to the content, but rather is responsive to the conditions of the genre, as Starobinski (1971) and Howarth (op.cit.) have argued, and has been implied here, then aspects of style represent criteria for assessment, since they have direct meaning in the work. If those assessing the autobiography, the author and readers, are looking to the efficacy of the work as a vehicle for the articulation of personal meaning, then the choice of theme will also clearly be significant. Here, awareness of the variety of narrative forms on which students can draw, the stories, myths and metaphors of the self that are available, is clearly relevant. Part of the role of the teacher should be to make these resources available, along with their cultural context. The style and theme of an autobiography will thus compromise criteria of assessment. This involves, among other things, discussion of the extent to which choice in these areas is possible and feasible, and experimentation with style and theme. Relating to the work and the reader they involve assessment of the method, and the autobiographer herself gauging the extent to which the meaning given to events and experiences is significant for her own understanding of her life.

3
Individualism and The Aims of Autobiographical Writing in PSE

To this point the use of autobiography has not itself been questioned. Interpretations of the autobiographical task have been taken to be consistent with a student-centred approach and with the specific concerns in PSE, which have been understood generally as a concern with increasing self-understanding as a value to be promoted as an important aspect of personal and social well-being. In this final section, we turn to an objection to the use of autobiography.

It can be argued that the use of autobiography in PSE implies an individualism or is an instance of a generally individualist approach in PSE. There are two objections here, the first is that autobiography is inherently or essentially individualist, and the second is that autobiography will be used in an individualist way in PSE because of individualist tendencies within PSE. Although it has been alleged that there is an implicit individualism at the core of its practice. Barnes (1987:8), for example, argues that there is "always" found at the centre of PSE courses "a concern to influence at some depth the attitudes and behaviour of the students" with stress being placed on the individual's reflection on his or her strategies for living. This objection will not be considered here since whether or not the practice of PSE reflects these individualist tendencies, it is clearly not the case either that there is something in the idea of PSE itself which necessitates such an approach or that such an individualist approach is universally accepted.

The objection to be addressed, therefore, is that autobiography is essentially an individualist exercise. It is important to be clear what form of individualism is thought to be implied by autobiography. The most obvious is that it promotes an unhealthy concern with the self. That this could be a result of the use of autobiography would be a result of the interplay between the interpretation of autobiography as a genre and its usefulness in achieving the aims which prompt its use. This returns us to the point made at the beginning of the last chapter: that the definition and approach to autobiographical tasks will be a response to the aims to be achieved.

These were roughly delineated according to the view taken on the rationale for the focus on personal experience of students. On the one hand there is the therapeutic model, which takes the importance of reflection on experience as being necessary for 'mental health', and on the other hand, the social model, which looks to reflection as revealing connections between modes of expression and thus is essentially a more social and impersonal view. Thus while there is a common stress on the importance of reflection on experience as a means to self-understanding, the views diverge on the status of the individual. This disagreement is based on different conceptualisations of the self or person. If the self or person is considered a discrete entity, which is best known to itself, this may promote a more individualist approach. If on the other hand, the individual's sense of self is seen in large part as a construct, which is remade and developed through language, and is to a significant extent constituted through social relations, importance is likely to be given to the more social implications of autobiography.

Neither approach is likely to be so clearly delineated in practice, where aspects of both are likely to be found within a single approach. It is particularly

likely, given both the teacher-student relationship and concern with the self, that the therapeutic model will always be present, even if in an attenuated form. It is not even clear that the two aims need be incompatible. Certainly there have been attempts to reconcile wider social concerns with 'a return to the subjective' and the attempt to mark out a place for individualism within a generally social approach, extending to the advocation of forms of individualism within socialist theory.[17] The general concern with theorising subjectivity is evident in psychology of education,[18] where the importance of understanding the person as the site of multiple subjectivities is stressed in opposition to a generally individualistic approach.

In a fairly facile way, the therapeutic model can be aligned with the conception of self implied by and reinforced by the traditional conception of autobiography. Both reinforce the importance of the separateness and discreteness of persons, and a corresponding sense of self, with the values of personal authority, autonomy and independence being emphasised. The idea of autobiography as revealing a self, that there is a truth of the self which can be known by this method is consistent with the idea that there is a true self. This view, with the identification of the narrator and protagonist at the centre, is part of what Howarth (1980:84) has referred to as "the evolutionary bias" of autobiography. This view is more clearly open to the charge of individualism than the account which stresses the dependence of the idea of the unity of the person on the existence of narrative structures and the implication of others in the construction of autobiographical tasks, which supports the social approach with its emphasis on the influence of students' mode of expression on the construction of experience.

This alignment seems, however to avoid the salient issue. Do both approaches imply an individualism which cannot be avoided, an individualism rooted in the autobiographical task? As mentioned above in connection with the use of autobiography in PSE, autobiography is an activity which involves a pre-occupation with the self. The question is whether this need necessarily be given an individualist interpretation.

The autobiographical task seems to conform to the norms of modern individualism in, as Weintraub (1978:1) argues, the "inwardness" of the activity. This naturally leads to an emphasis on self-discovery or self-revelation. While not conceptualised as an activity which can be accomplished in isolation, in that the form and content will always to some extent be a reflection of influences outside the self, this concern with the self leads to the form of autobiography being guided, as Gunn (1982:23) points out, by the myth of Narcissus. It is perhaps the inwardness and self pre-occupation suggested by autobiography motivated by the desire for understanding one's self, that

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prompts the accusation of individualism, with a narcissistic concern with who one really is.

The value of the individual is the major premise of autobiography. An appreciation of the importance of individual lives to a culture,[19] together with the value assigned to the subjective and the role of agency in human life, functions to give autobiographical expression a place in PSE, given that PSE professes similar beliefs in the importance it attaches to the personal interpretation of experience, and its focus on the individual as a source of meaning and value. Appeal to autobiographical writing as a means of addressing the self-esteem and self-confidence of students through awareness of each person's unique relationship to the world and, in particular, their own situation, circumstance and life, can be seen as falling under this umbrella belief in the value of the individual.

If autobiography is used in PSE as a means of helping students to see value and significance in their own lives, then it must be presumed that the focus on the self, on "the self searching quest" which, according to Weintraub (1978:2) is the result of "genuine autobiographic activity," at least has the potential for resulting in such insights, given that it is one's own subjectivity, the meaning of living one's own life which is at issue. Understood as the search for the self, it may therefore seem easy to dismiss autobiographical writing as yet another instance of the emphasis on the personal in PSE in isolation from the influences of wider societal factors. As we shall see, however, this would be to tell less than half the story.

Gunn makes the interesting suggestion that rather than Narcissus, the myth of Antaeus, with the idea that contact with the earth is essential to life, would be a preferable model. This would involve substituting the question of 'who am I' as the question of the autobiographer with 'where do I belong?' Much as the myth of Narcissus may be an inappropriate one for education, the question 'who am I?' does, however, seem to be the question that is, and should be asked. Gunn's objection to this question lies in its 'unworldly' stance, and its affiliation with a view of the self as separate and inessentially connected with the world. But is it not possible to give the question a non-individualistic interpretation in the unfolding of autobiographical expression? That such an interpretation is possible is suggested by the role of narrative language. As has been stressed throughout this chapter, the structure of language tempts the positing of a discrete subject, the priority of the doer to the deed.[20] The narrative view rejects the idea of a pre-linguistic subject, unitary and discrete, and so rejects the necessity of a narcissistic view of autobiography, and in accepting the self as a linguistic construction is consistent with Parfit's view, mentioned

above, that persons are not entities which exist separately from their thoughts and actions.

As we have seen throughout, this raises the question of agency. For this reason, it is important to retain the question of 'who am I?' at the centre of genuine autobiographical activity in the classroom. The question 'where do I belong?' is in some ways similar to the question 'what am I?', except that whereas the question of 'what am I?' can be completely impersonal in that it can be answered by a list of roles occupied, the question of where do I belong, reintroduces the idea of a self looking for a situation. The question 'who am I?' can be answered narcissistically, but it can also be answered by the story of the questioner's life, which need not be given this individualistic interpretation. In fact if the argument above on the importance of narrative language for idea of selfhood has coherence, then Arendt's (1981:186) claim that we can only know who someone is by knowing the story "of which he is himself the hero" is plausible. There is no selfhood outside of language. While it is possible to give this interpretation, it is important not to let the pendulum swing the other way, and allow the importance of language to obscure the agency of the autobiographer. This reintroduces the problem of the connection between self and others in autobiographical expression, for it seems in rejecting the absolutism of modernism with its universal formulations, that which is substituted has the effect of negating the personal, rather than, as first appeared to be the case, the glorification and elevation of the personal. Thus, by placing the student at the centre of the educational process, an individualism is not necessarily implied. It is not the individual student, isolated in her self-reflection on which the gaze is directed.

Autobiographical work in PSE seems appropriate if for no other reason than that it enables the student to give a unique interpretation of her life. As mentioned, this does not mean original, nor, of course, is there any connotation that this account will reflect the truth, either in the biographical facts or in its interpretation of motivation, intention and other psychological states, better than someone else's. The uniqueness seems to be, in light of this investigation in the understanding the person gains for herself of her life. It is in the meaning given, the understanding gained of the influences on, and the way she has influenced events which is important.

Again the problem of autobiography reinforcing an individualist stance to the person can be seen as symptomatic, in part, of what is taken to be a definitive characteristic of autobiography, its ostensible referentiality. If the value of autobiography at least partially lies in the expression it allows of different lives, of the value of living different lives, then it seems we can approach autobiography from at least two perspectives. The first looks to the

importance of the separateness of persons, giving this aspect of personhood great weight, emphasising the ownership of experience. The second approach looks to the uniqueness of the person in terms of the interpretation given to experiences, supporting, for example, Rosen's (1988) understanding of the "autobiographical impulse": the ways in which we use our own stories to connect with and make sense of the stories of others. This is part of the attraction of autobiographical writing, it is a means of realising communalities and connections between students' stories, through its very emphasis on the subjective. Again this emphasises the mutual function of theories of personal identity, and thus our sense of identity, serving both to 'glue' together the different parts of our lives and to keep us separate. Autobiographical writing contains at its heart the possibility of, as Howarth (1980:113) phrases it, the "merg[ing]" of the self and others, even though these may be perceived as "diametrically opposed." A sense of isolation may, as Yeats[21] noted, lie at the centre of the project, yet for many, an important aspect of the autobiographical project is the expression of connections not only with one's own past but with others. One of the features of autobiographical writing is that it is open to such a variety of interpretations. It can emphasise a sense of isolation, or it can transform the author's experience so that as Spender (1980:117) says: "It is no longer the writer's own experience: it becomes everyone's."

Although this interpretation of the autobiographical project is consistent with how autobiography has been perceived by some autobiographers,[22] stressing the connections between the self and others seems secondary to the main emphasis in autobiography, the continuity and unity of the self. This would only be so, however, if the continuity and unity of the self is understood as based in the metaphysical and epistemological positions outlined above which inhibit giving the connections which the autobiographical self may have with others a more prominent role, by an understanding of the autobiographical self which is privileged in its epistemic position, supported by its ontological status. Once it is recognised that autobiographical writing need not conform to this understanding of selfhood, the wider issues raised by the use of autobiography in PSE can be addressed more comfortably, with emphasis on the meaning of human experience.

On this view, the individualist tendencies in autobiography are undermined by adoption of a notion of person where the unity of the person over time is seen as a matter of continuities and connectedness. An important consequence of Parfit's views on personal identity follows from his claim that "a person's life is less deeply integrated than most of us assume" (ibid.:336) on the grounds that "a person's identity over time just consists in the holding of certain more particular facts" (ibid:210). If the unity of a life is a matter of degree, then it can

plausibly be argued that the unity of a life is less deep than would be the case if a strict or absolute view of personal identity were true. This does not mean, of course, that the unity of the person is not important, but rather that it is not fundamental in that it is not grounded in a metaphysical realism. What is denied is that what makes us uniquely distinct individuals is not as important as we may have thought. This is to be contrasted with the Non-Reductionist View where identity is taken to involve a deep fact according to which all of a person's life is as much her life, and thereby the boundaries between lives take on a greater ethical importance. The idea that we may be less integrated than we thought means that autobiographical writing can still function in giving a sense of self, and at forging connections, but less emphasis is placed on some past experiences as being mine, and the importance of connections with others is given a different type of emphasis. If the unity of the self is not pre-given, the autobiographical project does not fail, in that the success of the principal reference is no longer assured, but is given less weight. Although the claims that the separateness of persons is to be given less importance, and that parts of each life are less deeply unified, may seem to undermine the autobiographical project with its emphasis on the continuity and sameness of the self, this does not mean the end of autobiography. The identification of the protagonist and narrator, on this view, is no longer a pre-linguistic given of which autobiography is a report or reflection, a structure outside the narrative of the self, but a response to a belief in individual identity. Thus the unity and continuity of a life can still be admitted as values. What is denied is that they have a metaphysical foundation in some fact of personal identity. The interpretation of the self given here, supported by the theory of personal identity advocated in previous chapters, supplemented by a narrative view of the self, and also by versions of social constructionism[23] and aspects of deconstructionism, sees the uniqueness and value of autobiography as residing more in the particular interpretation and structure each self-narrative takes, than in the importance of the separateness of persons. This enables an understanding of the significance and function of autobiography compatible with the pluralist nature of the PSE classroom, by giving value to the diverse articulation of experiences available.

Autobiography, understood as a cultural and historical artifact, responsive to particular conceptions of persons, can encourage reflection by the autobiographer on the influence this has on the formation and understanding of her life as she constructs an autobiography. Thus we can recognise the connections made necessary by the autobiographical contract and those required by certain conceptions of the self, these aspects of autobiography gaining more importance on this interpretation. The move is away from concentration on the

self as something, which can be isolated in terms of its autonomy, away from autobiography as a choice of self-expression in which the significance of choices made are the focus, towards a more inclusive understanding retaining the value of autobiography as a means of giving recognition to the specificity of experience.

It can be concluded that individualism, in the sense of promoting a self-concern in a way that is detrimental to appreciation of social connections and the extent to which they are integral to living a life, is not inherent to the autobiographical project, though as Olney (1980a:23) says, our fascination with it may lie with the "lure of the self". A further issue, which this discussion prompts, with its emphasis on both the idea of autobiography as the articulation of, in Olney's (1980a) phrase, a "cultural moment", is the phenomenon of at least two very different conceptions of the self, and the option we have of adopting either perspective. If autobiography as a distinct genre is a response to social and historical conditions, then the various views on the nature of the person, the self and the concept of the author, which have been given a very different interpretation to the traditional view, should cause us to look at the wider social factors which have given rise to this situation. It suggests, for example, a disruption in the practices and traditions which supported the traditional conception and in which it was embedded. Unfortunately, this ambitious suggestion can not be followed up here, save to remark that the situation is neither so abstract nor so elitist in its implications as may at first sight appear. The conception of the self suggested here is not completely alien to our experience. In line with the tolerance of our concept of the person for embracing a variety of incompatible understandings of what it means to be a person, this idea of the person as not necessarily identical throughout time is contained in many of our self conceptions. What is interesting about the use of autobiography in PSE is that it provides one means of exploring our conceptions of the person.

Conclusion

Several basic points have been made in this chapter. An underlying idea has been that one of the principal reasons for encouraging students to write their autobiographies, as well as some of the perceived problems, result from the valuing of a particular conception of the person. This is consistent with Weintraub's (1975:834) argument, for example, that the way the nature of the self is conceived, "largely determines the form and process of the autobiographic writing". The valued conception of the person as unified, discrete and potentially autonomous is a source of our understanding and

valuing of autobiography as a work of special authority and significance. The value of autobiography therefore goes beyond valuing the particular person and her interpretation of the story of her life, being an expression of an ideal of persons. Failure to recognise this obscures certain questions about the status of the self as the focus of the narrative whilst privileging others. The important point is that the traditional autobiographical project is a particular way of helping students to see themselves as persons in accordance with the dominant ideas of personhood. Consistent with the arguments made in the previous chapters, this conception, although operating at one level as common-sense, is seen as grounded in the cultural and historical practices from which it has arisen and from which it continues to derive support. This is not to undermine the legitimacy of the various perspectives we have on persons, but to draw attention to the cultural influences which encourage the privileging of one perspective over another. Although, as Blits (1989:299) says, "since it seems better known than anything else, what is self-evident forestalls reflection", the conception of the person highlighted here provides a space for such reflection and highlights the importance of the choice of perspective from which we view ourselves.

It has been argued that there are conceptions of the self which may differ in the significance given to relationships and the connections between self and others. If the use of autobiographical writing in PSE is premised on the concern to allow full expression and exploration of the variety of experience brought to the classroom the existence of these conceptions needs to be accommodated in any understanding of autobiography employed, thereby reducing the risk of prejudicing forms of self-representation because they fail to conform with privileged conceptions of personhood. Thus, the most important reason for advocating the approach outlined above is that it accommodates what we wish to achieve by the use of autobiography and extends it, in that allows for and gives opportunity for the negotiation of different narrative forms which reflect the various experiences of our students, and so supports a wider expression and interpretation of what it means to live a life.

The position advocated here, with its implication that the conception of autobiography should be such as to allow these different expressions of what it means to live a life without privileging some expressions on the basis of their more accurate reflection of an underlying reality, gives priority to the concerns of PSE over the definition of autobiography. Autobiography, as a distinct genre, is not clearly defined, although it may be argued that the only remaining live issue is whether it should be understood as fictive or not. Whatever the problems of definition are, it is clear that the conceptualisation of the self is central, and this is open to the interpretations given here. The view argued for here has philosophical as well as educational advantages. It does not assume the

transparency of the self to the self, or the transparency of language. It requires neither the existence of the self as an entity, not the priority of self to language. The unity of the person has been interpreted as something which is be to achieved, rather than something which is given. For this to be achieved, the function of language in constraining as well as a potentially liberatory force, needs to be emphasised. This interpretation does not undermine the idea that autobiography is of value to the author through the construction of personal meaning. The achievement of the aims of autobiographical writing are not dependent on the acceptance of any of the beliefs rejected in this chapter.

If the interpretation of autobiography and the conception of the person given here are acceptable, then a distinctive feature of autobiography, that it is, as Bruner (1988) has remarked, "drenched in agency", someone is at the center of things, is not denied. While the idea that the self is an 'ontological fiction' has been accepted, it has been possible to retain the idea of an active subject of experience. There is however, the problem of the posing the issue, as has been the case here, as a convenient dichotomy of views. In essence, it has been argued that the concept of autobiography can be used either with the presupposition of a pre-given unity of the self which assures the priority and independence of the self, or with the underlying assumption that the self is in some sense a fiction constructed through the autobiographical act, along with other linguistic and social practices. Beyond the fact that such clear cut dichotomies are intuitively suspicious, it is not clear that in this case it exhausts the possibilities. By posing the problem as either a privileging of language or the self, the tensions within each view have most likely been obscured. The argument has pointed to the importance of the narrative conception, in line with the view on the importance of personal identity in the previous chapters. The suggestion is that this conception is more acceptable given the context in which autobiographical writing is to be used, rather than that definitive arguments for the choice of one conception over the other have been provided.

The argument has shown that the value of autobiography as a means of determining meaning rests on metaphysical positions on the person which admit of problems, notwithstanding their support from social and cultural practices. That it can continue to play this role has not been denied. All that has been suggested is that the emphasis move from autobiography as a means of achieving personal meaning, understood as the revelation or creation of the truth of a life, based on the idea of ownership of a life, to autobiography as a means to greater understanding of the meaning of living a life, based on increased awareness of the contextual implications of autobiography, including the responsibilities of authorship and the responsibilities peculiar to the autobiographical act itself, those which give rise to the coherence of an

autobiography and the unity of a life through its construction. The main suggestion is that this aspect of autobiography receive greater attention, in order to increase the likelihood that the task be potentially meaningful, and of benefit to all our students. This suggests that the use of autobiography in PSE should be accompanied by teachers' awareness of the complexities of the issues surrounding the conception of the person, or conceptions of the person which will necessarily be promoted. It also suggests that this would be a valuable subject for discussion in the classroom.

We have concentrated on the conception of the self at the centre of the endeavour to tell, and retell earlier experiences as we reflect on later ones. The conception of the person suggested, which moves from a concentration on the evolution of the 'true self' or the discovery of such a self, to the imbrication of language and social structures in the construction of the self, and what it means to live a life, suggests a less individualist stance towards the writing of an autobiography. This approach includes exploration of the implications and problems of identification, the possibility of identifying as well as not identifying with past events, and identification with others. This goes beyond the liberatory effects of 'authoring' experience, although it does have implications for how we understand the authority of the author, as on this view, the authority emanates from the interpretation of experience, and is not effected in virtue of the identity of the person. The emphasis on the conception of the self has hopefully shown that the structures surrounding the autobiographical act, and those that constitute it, need to be made explicit and the narrative structure itself needs to be given attention in PSE if it is to be capable of yielding educational benefits consistent with the pluralist nature of the classroom and to act as a tool in helping students to become more aware of themselves as 'becoming', rather than as completed selves, and to be aware of the role of personal narratives in determining their sense of identity, who they are.

Notes

1. As Maguire and Washington (op.cit.: 25) learnt from their experience at the Institute of Education: "All children are fluent in autobiographical story-telling".

2. Pascal (1960), for example, argues for this position.

3. The use of the phrase "academic task" is intended to correspond to Doyle's (1983). Doyle's work on the effects of student perception of an academic task on the achievement of educational aims is relevant in this context, although he does not discuss the use of autobiography.

4. The idea that writing autobiographically should encourage explorations of this sort is only relevant, of course, if the aim is increased self-understanding. Buley-Meissner's (1990) exploration of the variety of student responses to the autobiographical task illustrates the point in the text. I would suggest, unlike the Buley-Meissner, however, that the variety of responses illustrates the varying perceptions of the academic task within a formal education setting as much as it reveals the extent to which students are prepared to raise existential questions about the nature and meaning of their lives.

5. Obvious examples are the ILEA English Centre publications, *Our Lives* and its sequel. In my experience as an English teacher these books were enormously helpful, as well as being some of the most popular reading in the class, in helping students see that their own autobiographical work was valued. The initial incredulity amongst my students in Norfolk that someone would actually make a book of ordinary students' autobiographies is a small example of the point made in the text.

6. Although the purpose of this discussion is not to advise on pedagogical strategies, a strategy used by Grumet (1976:160) provides an illustration of how the ambiguity in an autobiography can be developed. In a teacher education course, Grumet asked students to rewrite a paragraph of their autobiographies, "reversing every assertion, conviction, interpretation it expressed". These accounts were shared, and the fact that both accounts contained truths explored.

7. As Schultz (1986:744) for example, points out the understanding of the value of the unity of a life may lend itself to a sort of perfectionism where only those with the appropriately unified lives would be the object of certain moral concerns, since only they have the appropriate sort of agency. Unfortunately, we can explore this, and similar implications here.

8. See Kupfer (1987), for example, for the argument that privacy is a necessary condition for the development of an autonomous self.

9. I owe this point to Patricia White.

10. This is supported by Unger's (1986:92-3) point concerning the effect of adopting the subjective point of view on experience. From this perspective:

> each of us is utterly distinct from anyone else and from anything else. On this view, this distinctness is a brute, fundamental fact of reality. We are *not* distinct in *virtue of* any *other* facts, or in virtue of anything at all. The differences between us people are metaphysically basic. So these differences loom large in our thoughts about ourselves and others: they appear greatly important.

11. Evidence of students' dislike for personal writing is given in Barnes, Barnes and Clarke (1984:133). The variety of student's negative responses is summarised as showing a "conflict with sub-cultural values, a desire for privacy, and conflict with some young people's self-images" (loc.cit.).

12. Pagano (1991:195-196) gives a good illustration of this point. Commenting on an autobiographical essay she submitted as part of her tenure dossier, she writes "Nothing I've ever written, including my Ph.D. dissertation, was ever so difficult for me as that autobiographical essay. Never had I felt more vulnerable."

13. Grumet's (1976) report on her experience of using autobiographical expression, including writing, in teacher education, includes the hostile reaction of many students. Part of the resentment and hostility was clearly due to the fact that they were not comfortable with this type of task, but also because they could not see its immediate applicability to their primary concern, their

upcoming teaching practice. These causes of resentment are not likely to be applicable to PSE where conventional academic tasks are interspersed with more personal work. However, the general point she makes about the importance of trust is applicable.

14. Addressing himself to God, Augustine (1961:208) makes an appeal to the charity of his readers: "charity believes all things ... which are spoken by those who are joined as one in charity". It is not the verifiability of the events described which is important, but the attitude of the readers: "For although I cannot prove to them that my confessions are true, at least I shall be believed by those who ears are opened to me by charity".

15. An important point, though only indirectly related to the issue addressed in the text, is the general problem of the status of PSE in the curriculum. Given recent changes in the examination system, the argument that personal writing was associated with and required more of CSE students rather than O' level students may no longer be appropriate. Without extensive empirical research it is hard to know whether the association of personal writing with 'less' academic' students is a factor in its presentation by teachers and reception by students. The more general point is the receptiveness of students to this form of expression, and their response to it. There is some evidence that the "deep criteria" (Barnes et al., 1984:70) which influence teacher's response to personal writing are more available to middle class students. These criteria, unlike surface ones such as the form of autobiography and its correct grammatical execution with attention to spelling and so on, are difficult to teach and seem to rely on certain cultural assumptions. Thus, deep criteria concern such ineffables as the atmosphere and tone of the piece. The difference in what Bourdieu (1974:32) refers to as the "cultural capital" brought to the classroom influence both teacher reception and student response to tasks such as writing autobiographically.

16. This account of the elements of the contexts and relationships guiding the writing of autobiography draws on Howarth's (1980:86) interpretation of Northrop Frye (1957:52-73). The three elements are: character, the "image or self-portrait" (Howarth, op.cit.:87); technique, the devices used to build the self-portrait; and theme, the ideas and beliefs that give the autobiography its meaning.

17. See, for example, Leadbeater (1988) who argues for a "socialist individualism".

18. Henriques et al. (1984) illustrate the attempt to move from assumptions in psychology concerning the unitary, rational nature of the subject to a subjectivity theorized as multiple, not purely rational and potentially contradictory.

19. It can be argued that the value assigned to the autobiography, as a distinct genre, is a reflection of this idea. See, for example, discussions on the historical origins of autobiography such as Smith (1987: Ch.3) and Gusdorf (1980).

20. This idea finds clear expression in Nietzsche (1968:631): "The separation of the 'deed' from the doer ... this ancient mythology established the belief in cause and effect after it had found a firm form in the functions of language and grammar".

21. "[I]n his moments of lofty speech, he himself was alone no matter what the crowd".

22. See, for example, discussions in Howarth (op.cit) and Mason (op.cit.).

23. In social constructionism, of course, we also find arguments for the view that 'self' is a concept which has sense but no reference. See, for example, Harré (1988).

Conclusion: What Matters?

The thesis began with the claim that the conceptualisation of the person as agent was central to all feasible aims of PSE. Whether this conception is promoted explicitly through the advocation of some form of autonomy or less obviously in the promotion of other valued personal and social attributes, the aims of PSE presuppose that students are able to act on the world, and themselves, in significant ways.

The importance of this fairly uncontentious claim lies in the suggestion made here that investigation of a minimum necessary condition for this conception of the person provides a means of diffusing a tension evident in philosophical treatments of the aims of PSE. This tension is between student-centred aims and approaches, and the conception of the person as agent. The interpretation of agency and appreciation of students' actual experience potentially results in incompatible conceptions of the persons involved. On the one hand, respect for students' experience in writings on PSE extends beyond the idea that students are owed respect in virtue of being persons, to include the valuing of their particular experience and view on the world. On the other hand, the conception of agency drawn on in the aims of PSE, conceptualises persons as able to choose between actions, where the choice between actions is not to be explained solely by reference to the occupation of a particular role, or by reference to a character trait. Thus, the conception of agency centrally includes the possibility of reflecting on and challenging roles and character. The values promoted in the aims of PSE presuppose the ability of persons to raise questions of the form: "Do I want to be a teacher?" and "Do I want to be the sort of person who would do that?" These questions, although raised from an encumbered perspective, are also asked from the perspective of the person conceptualised as agent. The aims of PSE recognise both perspectives, but privilege the latter, from which persons are conceptualised as 'that which chooses'.

The tension is therefore between the person conceptualised as the occupant of several roles, which are integral to being the particular person one is, and as able to free one's self from any one of these attachments in order to reflect on the extent to which actual or contemplated actions conform to some ideal, either of rationality or personhood. The tension arises because while students' experience is valued, the value of these experiences is recognised to partially consist in their role in making one the person one is. In short, the person is viewed as both essentially and contingently encumbered.

Although this tension is evident in the philosophical treatment of the aims of PSE considered here, namely the work of Pring (1984, 1987) and White

(1990), this problem is of more than theoretical interest. Conceptions of the person are not only contained in theoretical works on education but are part of the practice of education. This is especially so in PSE where the educational concern is with the promotion of personal and social values which are to be of benefit to the actual lives of students. Teaching PSE involves promoting conceptions of the person. The conception of the person promoted may be explicit, but it is more likely to operate as one of the background assumptions that inform practice. An educational activity where this is made explicit is autobiographical writing by students. For a number of reasons, writing autobiographically is likely to form part of PSE whether PSE is implemented as a separate subject, or is conceived as consisting in cross-curricular activities. The thesis therefore aims to illuminate problems both at the level of the aims of PSE and problems that arise at the level of teaching activities which involve a conception of the person.

The work is undertaken from the perspective that although the presupposition of the person as active is held in common, the tension outlined above can profitably be approached through a necessary presupposition of this conception of the person, namely the presupposition of personal identity. In order to show the value of this way of approaching the issue in the first chapter the importance of making explicit the conception of the person implicit in the aims of PSE was argued. This was achieved through discussion of Pring and White. These accounts of the aims of PSE recognise the importance of the conception of the person, but reveal the tension between the conception of person as potentially autonomous and as being constituted in significant respects by powerful social forces. It has been argued in the first chapter that this problem should not be conceptualised as how the necessary social context of action can be grafted onto the conception of the person as agent. The problem is not how to fit a conception of the person as legitimately influenced by family, peers and the larger community, into the conception of the person as 'free' to resist or challenge social forces. The problem has been conceptualised as providing a conception of the person as agent adequate to our knowledge of persons. It was argued that Pring and White can meet objections raised to the promotion of autonomy as a major aim of PSE, if these objections are, as they seem to be, merely calls to recognise the legitimacy of social concerns on the formation of a sense of identity.

The problem needs to be posed as a problem of the conceptualisation of the person as agent, given that the criticisms of autonomy are very careful not to abandon the idea of agency. Thus, the impression is that criticisms of autonomy take aim at a position which few would accept or advocate, and one which is certainly rejected by Pring and White, namely that there is such a thing as 'pure'

autonomy, where persons are conceived of, or valued, as being independent of all influences. The position taken here has acknowledged the criticism, that an adequate conception of the person must recognise the legitimacy and value of social influences and determinants of thought and action, but it has been argued that this is not a criticism to which White and Pring are open. As mentioned above, the problem lies in the conception of the person as agent. This was illustrated by distinguishing White's and Pring's positions on the basis of their conception of the person. The distinction showed that although in both cases the agency of persons is privileged, White privileges the idea of personal agency, and Pring privileges the idea of agency according to some objective standards. That these two conceptions of the person are possible, and that both can be valued has been interpreted as a consequence of features of the concept of person. In particular, the idea that the concept of person affords differing perspectives. In addition to seeing the person as both passive and active, the person is also subject in the sense of being subject to, and subject of experiences and social forces. On this way of construing the distinction between Pring and White, Pring can be seen as stressing the idea of the person as subject to moral demands, though being a locus of moral value and authority, and White can be seen as stressing the importance of the subjective self.

This distinction should not be overstressed, however. In the fourth section of the first chapter, the commonalities in the two positions were shown to be equally important to the conceptualisation of the person. In this section the essentially modernist idea of the person as only contingently attached to social roles was argued to be central to both conceptions, and a source of the persuasiveness and well as some of the ambivalence engendered by views such as Pring's and White's. Having distinguished the two views, and having shown what they have in common, the question was raised of how these differing conceptions are justified. This was addressed in the fifth section where it was argued that although Pring and White do not appeal to the concept of the person as a major source of justification, relying rather on theories drawn from other areas, this is in fact an important area of investigation.

The concept of person is central to PSE, both in articulating the aims and in practice. As Pring (1983:101) notes in the concluding section of an issue of *Educational Analysis* devoted to PSE, at the centre "lies the understanding of what it is to be a person and the ability to behave appropriately towards oneself and towards others as persons." Of clearest relevance, therefore, is the person as a forensic concept. This expresses in general terms the interest in the concept of person in PSE, and provides the focus for discussion of the particular qualities which should be promoted. Notwithstanding this, the underlying concept of the person as a potentially self-determining agent demands that

certain conditions are met. In particular, the demand is for criteria of identity which can ensure the separateness and continuity of persons. This is necessary for the idea of persons as self-determining. In the second chapter, the importance of personal identity to understanding the concept of the person in general was argued, with attention being given to relevance of personal identity to the concerns addressed in PSE, and its importance to the problem outlined above.

The most obvious objection to this approach is that it either implies an objectionable foundationalism, in that it implies that the criteria of personal identity are determining factors in ethical and political theory, or that this investigation of a presupposition of a presupposition is too far removed from the actual concerns addressed in the aims of PSE to be of any relevance. The argument against these objections was first set out in the second chapter, but relies for its force on the development of the argument running throughout the thesis. In the second chapter, the first objection was addressed directly when it was argued that the relation of personal identity to the aims of PSE is one of interdependence. The relevance of the question of personal identity is derivative: it gains its relevance from its association with matters of immediate concern such as the justification for self-concern, future concern, identification with projects, and relations with others.

Having established the relevance of questions of personal identity, the general position taken was strengthened in the third chapter where it was argued that a source of the tension outlined above between the conception of the person as agent and important interpretations of student-centred approaches to PSE, lies in the requirement for criteria of strict identity by the conception of the person as a potentially self-determining agent. In the third chapter, the question of why this should be considered a problem was addressed. It was argued that the aims of PSE should not have the effect of privileging a conception of the self on the basis of its ontological status. In other words, relying on the argument that a person's sense of identity is derived from a theory of personal identity, it has been argued that the acceptance of strict identity as a requirement of the general conceptualisation of the person implicitly privileges some conceptions of the self, namely those that accord this theory of personal identity, on the basis that they are a more accurate reflection of reality. While this does not have the consequence that other conceptions may not be valued, the value accorded these other conceptions will be importantly different.

This led to consideration of the strict identity, or non-reductionist theory. It was argued that the strongest claim, and the source of the plausibility of this view is as a response to the phenomenon of the first-person point of view on experience. However, non-reductionist theories support the thesis that personal

identity is determinate by drawing a disanalogy between persons and other entities. Thus, it is claimed that the trans-temporal identity conditions for persons are unanalysable, or absolute. It was argued that this distinction is difficult to uphold. One avenue of possible support lies in the necessary unity of consciousness. Using Kant, it was argued that appeal to the transcendental unity of apperception, or the necessary unity of consciousness is insufficient to establish a non-reductionist position since Kant's argument is designed to show the necessity of unity of consciousness as a precondition for experience. It does not deny that there are empirical criteria to be discovered or determined.

On this basis it has been concluded that the strongest argument for non-reductionism is not sufficient to warrant its acceptance over the alternative, a continuity theory. Taking Parfit's Reductionist View as representative, on the grounds that the developments Parfit has made have advanced the case for reductionism and that his major claims are consistent with all continuity theorists, chapter three concluded with a short exposition of Parfit's main claims emphasising that the difference between reductionist and non-reductionist accounts of personal identity is that while the latter claims that personal identity has a special nature, the former denies it. The reductionist and non-reductionist views are therefore distinguished according to whether personal identity is thought to consist solely in relations of continuity and connectedness, or whether personal identity involves, in Parfit's phrase, a 'further fact'.

This, however, left a major question unanswered. It has been argued that a non-reductionist theory of personal identity is required by the conception of the person as autonomous. If non-reductionism is unacceptable on the basis of its internal coherence, then does this have the consequence that the conception of the person as autonomous must be rejected? This consequence would only follow if reductionism and non-reductionism were the only alternatives, or if non-reductionism could not rejected on other grounds.

These two issues were addressed in the fourth chapter where the issue of what conditions other than logical adequacy must be met for a theory of personal identity to be acceptable was considered. The argument has essentially two parts, the first addressed to showing that although non-reductionism is the theory we believe, there are no constraints which would prohibit belief in reductionism, and thereby favour non-reductionism. This is not to deny that it may be psychologically difficult to believe reductionism, but to deny that these difficulties are sufficient to constitute a constraint on the possibility of belief. This argument is important for two reasons. The first is that given the argument for the relevance of this approach reductionism must be believable at a level other than that of armchair philosophy. It must, in other words, be possible for

it have an influence, as non-reductionism does, on our attitudes to ourselves and others. The second reason why this argument is important is that it reveals that the strength of the non-reductionist theory, the prominence given to the first-person point of view on experience is closely allied to the realist position on persons taken by advocates of the non-reductionist view.

The argument has not been all in favour of reductionism, however. The argument of the fourth chapter established that while there are no pragmatic or metaphysical constraints which would prohibit the acceptance of reductionism, there is an epistemological constraint which leads to a modification of Parfit's view. The operant constraint is the knowledge we have of persons. The knowledge that is relevant is that persons do not undergo fission. This rarely if ever articulated belief has a profound effect on how we conceive of ourselves. In particular it influences our interpretation of our past, and the formation of our intentions as well as other forward looking mental states. Crucially, those mental events which are influenced by this knowledge are first-person events: I form intentions to perform personal actions with the knowledge that I will not branch. The effect of this argument is twofold. It effectively denies Parfit's impersonality thesis, and thereby allows retention of the conceptualisation of the person as potentially autonomous, and the way in which this is achieved allows for a strength of the non-reductionist position to be more fully explained consistent with a psychological continuity or reductionist view.

It will be recalled that the strength of the non-reductionist position was that it articulated the first-person point of view. This is the subjective point of view from which identity seems undeniably determinate. The continuity or reductionist view denies that identity is what matters, and thus that what matters is determinate. An effect of the indeterminacy thesis is that there may legitimately be no answer to the question asked of some future set of experiences 'Will it be me?' The strength of the reductionist view is that it affords a third-person perspective which denies that a person is in a significant sense utterly separate from others and the world.

The chief advantage of the reductionist view is that it allows us to decide between theories of personal identity. On the non-reductionist view, the unity of the person is ensured. Whether we choose to value the unity of a person or not, persons are unified and separate from others. There is an unbridgeable gap between being me and being you. Reductionism, while rejecting this view of the unity of persons, allows unity to be a value and something to be strived for. Thus the argument of the thesis has been that a continuity view is to be preferred, in the context of PSE, to a non-reductionist view, not because it is possible to definitively say which is correct, but because, consistent with other values, the conceptualisation of the self which is preferred should not be

implicitly privileged on the basis of its ontological status. Given that there are alternative theories of personal identity, each of which adopts a differing perspective on the person, the grounds for determining which should operate as a presupposition in the aims of PSE is a decision which rests on several factors. There is the option of privileging either a subjective view of the self or an objective view. On the conceptualisation of the person argued for here, although the two perspectives remain incompatible, the subjective view is accounted for. On the non-reductionist view, or on Parfit's view, one perspective can only be taken account of in a way that does not correspond to our experience as persons. The interpretation of the subjective view, on this modified continuity view, is importantly different from the non-reductionist view in particular. It remains, however, consistent with Parfit's main claim, that identity does not involve a 'further fact' and has the effect that the subjective view on experience can be interpreted in a way which permits the separateness of persons to be interpreted as a value while denying a strong thesis of autonomous access to first-person trans-temporal states. What is important is whether or not reductionism is preferred over non-reductionism, the grounds for choosing between the two is influenced by the effects of the adoption on ethical and other educational concerns. This is consistent with the argument made in the second chapter that a relation of interdependence exists between theories of personal identity and the aims of PSE.

How these conclusions affect practice was illustrated in the final two chapters where the use of autobiographical writing by students in PSE was discussed. It was first of all argued that the value of autobiographical writing as an educational task is based on a conception of the self, and then through a discussion of the genre of autobiography it was shown that the reductionist or continuity view of the person or self is not inconsistent with recent interpretations of autobiography. It was argued that the conceptualisation of the person advocated here has clear advantages over some post-structuralist interpretations, which deny the subject, and also is to be preferred to the narrative conception of self for similar reasons. The narrative conception of the self is, nevertheless, seen to add to the continuity view advocated in that it deepens and enriches the conception of continuity and connectedness on which the continuity theory relies. The final chapter considered some of the problems traditionally faced in using autobiography in education. These were addressed through the conceptualisation of the person suggested in this thesis, showing that this conception has advantages over the traditional conception in certain crucial areas.

It has been argued that even if the major claims suggested here are rejected, the concept of the person is fundamental to discussions of the aims of PSE and

its practice. The aim has been to draw attention to some of the complexities of this central concept. The fact that it is a concept which admits of several perspectives, means that a certain amount of care should be taken with its use in the aims of PSE. As was argued in the first chapter, this does not preclude the privileging of one perspective over another, but suggests that care should be taken to avoid obscuring the fact that there is more than one perspective, and that the basis for preferring one conception of the person should be consistent both with the theoretical adequacy of the conception and its implications for students' experience of self.

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