A Tale Untold

Implicit Narratives in the Narrative Self Constitution View

Student: Afra Koks (s4648889)

Begeleider: prof. dr. M.V.P. Slors

Woordenaantal: 19913

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Abstract:

In narrative theories of personal identity there is a lack of clarity on how explicit an identity constituting narrative must be. In the Narrative Self Constitution View, implicit self-narratives are taken to be unarticulated parts of one's life which nevertheless determine one's feelings and behaviors (Schechtman 1996). Strawson (2004) takes an anti-narrativist stance because of the revision thesis, according to which explicit narratives are non-veridical reconstructions. Implicit narratives seem resistant to revision, and would hence undercut Strawson's argument. I seek to clarify whether the concept of implicit narratives is intelligible and to what extent a narrative should be articulated. I argue that implicit narratives are intelligible indeed and that it is affection, rather than articulation that is relevant.

Introduction

It seems perfectly natural for a person to experience one´s life as a story with oneself in the lead. This pre-philosophical intuition provides the point of departure for narrative theorists of identity. Central to this line of thought is the idea that our actions and decisions are intelligible only in the context of a larger history. The experiences we have been through so far, as well as our character traits, dispositions and skills that have developed over time, all exert their influence on our current state of being and as such on the way we will anticipate our future. The majority of narrative theorists claims personal identity is tightly bound up with the content of our narratives: "each of us constructs and lives a 'narrative'.. this narrative *is* us, our identities" (Oliver Sacks); "self is a perpetually rewritten story.. in the end, we *become* the autobiographical narratives by which we 'tell about' our lives" (Jerry Bruner); A person "creates his identity by forming an autobiographical narrative - a story of his life" (Marya Schechtman).

Varying narrative theories share a great deal of common ground when it comes to themes like meaningfulness, temporal ordering and causal explanation. However, they seem to be unclear and divided on how explicit an identity constituting-narrative should be told. As a consequence, it remains unclear whether implicit narratives should be allowed, or even, whether the concept of implicit narratives is an intelligible concept in the first place. Schechtman signals this as a common frustration with the narrative view, for it leaves us at loss on the question of what exactly counts as a narrative in the context of self-constitution (Schechtman 2011, 407).

This is not merely a theoretical question, for autobiographical narrativizing seems to be a human tendency that deeply permeates our everyday lives. It relates to the question of self-knowledge and determines the way we perceive ourselves as persons. One's autobiography is one of the main tools of any form of 'talking therapy'. This applies to professional therapeutic contexts but also to the seemingly more trivial ways in which we discuss our day to day affairs with others. We use our narrative to

reflect on past experiences, think about what we could have done otherwise, and make plans for the future. Further, our autobiographies are strongly bound up with the way we relate to others and thereby they exert a profound influence on our social dynamics. Therefore, the question of what exactly counts as an identity constituting narrative should matter to us deeply.

Although narrative theories of identity are widely accepted throughout the domains of philosophy and psychology there has been firm criticism as well. Galen Strawson argues, that even though it might be true that some people indeed have a narrative outlook on life, it is by no means necessary to lead a meaningful life, on the contrary, he is convinced it is potentially pernicious. According to Strawson, human beings have a tendency to engage unconsciously in invention, falsification and confabulation when they are asked to articulate their own life stories, a phenomenon which he calls 'the revision thesis' (Strawson 2004, 447). Schechtman on the contrary, is inclined to demand articulation of one's narrative, although she also admits for the concept of implicit narratives. Implicit self-narratives are to be understood as unarticulated parts of one's life which nevertheless determine one's feelings and behaviors (Schechtman 1996, 116). In this context it is particularly interesting to explore the issue of implicit narratives for when one tends to revise when articulating a narrative, this implies that simultaneously there is an unarticulated (pre-revised) story that actually explains one's doings. In other words: when a person revises one's narrative, a divergence between narratives occurs. Since implicit narratives are resistant to this sort of revision, these might be especially interesting for Strawson: when implicit narratives will be given due weight in narrative theories of identity the need to discard narrativity in its entirety may become unnecessary. My research question then, will be whether the concept of implicit narratives is intelligible and if so, to what extent a narrative should be articulated to be considered constitutive of identity. I will argue that implicit narratives are intelligible indeed and that their implementation will point us to a more body oriented account of narrativity.

In section 1, first I will briefly sketch the field of narrative theories of identity in general and more specifically the narrative self-constitution view as developed by Schechtman, for this is one of the most well-developed accounts which draws a tight link between narrative and identity. Also, I will outline Strawson's critique with a particular focus on the revision thesis. In section 2, I will explore a variety of problems related to the question of articulation, respectively: the problem of the audience, the problem of self-deception, the issue of self-constitution, the issue of agency and the role or repudiated characteristics. In section 3, I will take a more empirical turn and explore the phenomenon of implicit knowledge and the domain of trauma treatment in psychiatry. I will end my argument by returning to Strawson's veiled narrative tendencies. Finally, I will draft a conclusion from these inquiries and formulate an answer to my research questions.

1. The Narrative Self

1.1 Narrative theories of personal identity and Strawson's revision thesis

In the debate on personal identity there are two distinct questions that are being targeted. Traditional psychological continuity theory has its focus on the re-identification question - what determines a person being the same person at separate times, - which is a question of logical relation. Instead, narrative theories of identity engage with the characterization question, asking which actions, experiences, beliefs, values, desires, character traits, and so on, are to be attributed to a given person (Schechtman 1996, 73). When people reflect on themselves – for example in an identity crisis, it seems that it is this sort of 'identity' they are interested in and not the question of logical relation. The characterization question seeks a means of determining which characteristics constitute a person's identity (Schechtman 1996, 74). When we are truly consistent in trying to answer the characterization question, we should readily be aware of the fact that our identity entails more than just our articulated self-narrative at a certain point in time. What characterizes us is inevitably also a social affair, since persons do not exist in a vacuum.

A general commitment of narrative theories of identity is the idea that the life of a person cannot be adequately explained in reductionistic, biological terms since this sort of approach falls short in capturing the meaning and significance our experiences and actions have for us as persons. Furthermore, it tries to give due weight to the irreducible, first-personal character of experience that is essential to the life of a person, something a reductionistic approach cannot. This subjective point of view is a central tenet of the narrative approach. The narrative approach is not a monolith, rather, it is made up of a wide array of different kinds of views concerned with different sorts of problems. Catriona Mackenzie provides a definition of what a narrative should minimally consist in:

> A narrative is an organizing structure that explains actions and events by integrating them into meaningful and coherent temporal patterns or sequences. A minimal set of requirements for a meaningful and coherent narrative is that it must explain the causal connections between the events/experiences and actions it recounts; it must structure event/experience sequences into temporal orderings that need not be chronological but must be intelligible; it must provide a context within which individual events/experiences and their significance can be understood; and it must enable the reader or audience to make sense of the inner lives and perspectives of the characters - their motives, and emotional responses to other characters and to the events and actions described in the narrative (Mackenzie 2014, 158).

This definition applies to the vast majority of narrative views whilst a great deal of variation still remains possible within this framework. Due to the limited space available I will restrict myself to the views and themes relevant for my argument.[1]

Narrative views of the self all draw some kind of link between narrative and selfhood, but the links drawn vary widely. Perhaps the most basic kind of narrative view, and the one that draws the strongest connection between narrative and self, holds that selves are inherently narrative entities (Schechtman 2011, 395). Others who conceptualize this connection in a similar way are Alisdair MacIntyre (1984), Charles Taylor (1989), Paul Ricoeur (1994) and Daniel Dennett (1992). A somewhat 'looser' kind of narrative view links selfhood to the capacity to think in narrative terms and to offer narrative explanations. It does not focus on the story of a life, identifying the self with a character in that story, but rather on the fact that selves employ the kind of logic found in stories when they describe, explain, and choose their own behavior (Katherine Nelson 2003, David Velleman 2006, Peter Goldie 2014). Primarily the target of my paper will be the first sort of view which more or less equals narrative with identity. Nevertheless, lines of thought derived from the looser conceptions of narrativity will proof themselves useful in my attempt to determine what sort of narrative should be considered constitutive of identity and is best befitted to answer the characterization question.

The narrative view has become widely accepted throughout the domains of psychology and philosophy, however, there are fierce opponents of this line of thought as well. One of the most influential critiques comes from Galen Strawson. In his article "Against Narrativity" (2004) he claims he is a person with no narrative outlook on personhood and life whatsoever. Even though he fully acknowledges he has a past and future as a *human being*, he denies this applies to his deeper, 'inner self'. He does not experience his 'inner self' to be there in the remote past or future. To his opinion, this 'happy go lucky' sort of being does by no means impede him in having a rich life full of meaning and worthy relationships. He opposes his own episodic kind of lifestyle to the narrative, diachronic way of living. He is convinced that living a life as an episodic is perfectly compatible with personhood in a value laden way. In addition, he states that a narrative outlook on life is potentially pernicious for it hinders human self-understanding, closes down important avenues of thought, impoverishes our grasps of ethical possibilities, and is potentially destructive in psychotherapeutic contexts. (Strawson 2004, 429).[2]

Strawson signals several problems that arise in striving for a narrative self-experience of which the problem of revision is especially relevant for my thesis. According to Strawson, being narrative goes essentially beyond being diachronic for

[1] See Schechtman 2011 for discussion and overview of narrative theories of personal identity.

[2] In "Stories, Lives, and Basic Survival A Refinement and Defense of the Narrative View", Schechtman replies to Strawson's concerns and tries to dissolve the disagreement by conceding that the narrative of a human being and that of the 'self' are conceptually distinct, in the sense that only the 'self' refers to a unity which involves connections of strong identification (Schechtman 2007). However, I agree with Walker (2019) that this move is unsatisfactory since it omits repudiated, alienated, or simply distant characteristics as relevant for characterization identity and thereby hinders narrative unity of a life rather than enhances it (Walker 2019, 84).

one must also have some sort of story-telling tendency, which as such, in its non-falsifying mode may be harmless. To his opinion, the basic model for story telling is the way in which gifted and impartial journalists or historians report a sequence of events. This process implies more than just listing them in the correct temporal order for they would also select amongst events and place them in a connected account. Thus, developmental coherencies and personal constancies would be detected (Strawson 2004, 442). However, according to Strawson, problems concerning truthfulness arise, when one will have a tendency to "engage unconsciously in invention, fiction of some sort – falsification, confabulation, revisionism – when it comes to one's apprehension of one's own life." He explains that revision is by definition a non-conscious process which "may sometimes begin consciously, with deliberate lies told to others, for example, and it may have semi-conscious instars, but it is not genuine revision in the present sense unless or until its products are felt to be true in a way that excludes awareness of falsification" (Strawson 2004, 443). Strawson has no doubt that almost all human narrativity is compromised by revision. He is convinced that "telling and retelling one's past leads to changes, smoothing's, enhancement's, shift's away from the facts … the more you recall, retell, narrate yourself, the further you risk moving away from accurate self-understanding, from the truth of your being" (Strawson 2004, 447).

I will argue that even though the revisionary threat is to be taken seriously when aiming for an identity constituting narrative, it will not be necessary to discard the narrativity thesis as a whole because of it. A narrative theory of identity wherein the concept of implicit narratives is given due weight will enable us to mitigate the hazard of our revisionary human nature and to use this knowledge to our advantage. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile reflecting on narrative theories of identity with Strawson's problem of revision in mind, for if we conceive our narrative to be constitutive or our identity, the hazards of the revisionary thesis seem quite relevant. In what follows I will first elaborate specifically on Schechtman's Narrative Self Constituting View (NSCV) (1996), since it is one of the most well-developed accounts of narrativity which draws a tight link between personal identity and the content of one's autobiographical narrative.

1.2 The Narrative Self Constitution View

In 'The constitution of selves' Schechtman responds to the characterization question with the narrative self-constitution view according to which a person creates his identity by forming an autobiographical narrative – a story of his life.

> "According to the NSCV the difference between persons and other individuals lies in how they organize their experience, and hence their lives. … Some, but not all, individuals weave stories of their lives, and it is their doing so which makes them persons. On this view a person's *identity* (in the sense at issue in the characterization question) is constituted by the content of her self-

> narrative, and the traits, actions, and experiences included in it are by virtue of that inclusion, hers" (Schechtman, 1996, 94).

To avoid the false claim that just *any* narrative a person comes up with, counts as identity constituting, Schechtman sets out certain constraints which are meant to guard both intelligibility and authenticity of the narrative involved. First, in demanding that an identity constituting narrative has *narrative form*, Schechtman insists, that in order to be a person at all, one must construct a narrative which at least approximates traditional linear narrative form. Second, when asked for, a person should be able to at least locally articulate her life narrative to others, in a way that makes her actions intelligible, this is being referred to as the *articulation constraint*. Third, the narrative should comply to a *reality constraint*, meaning that one's self concept is basically in alignment with the view of one held by others.

The ultimate goal of the narrative self-constitution view is to capture the intuitive relation between personal identity and four basic features of personal existence: survival, moral responsibility, self-interested concern, and compensation. These 'four features' are meant to capture the pre-philosophical intuition that we care for ourselves in a highly specific way. First and most central, even though we can care *as much* for others as we care for ourselves, when it comes to continuation of our own existence, a different *type* of caring needs to be added. Second, we believe that personal identity is tightly bound up to questions concerning moral responsibility – a person can only be held responsible for her own actions. Third, there is a very specific way in which we care for our own future and related to this, fourth, facts about compensatory fairness are also linked to facts about personal identity (Schechtman 1996, 14). The NSCV tries to give an account of the way personal identity is related to these four practical features that living the life of a person implies.

It´s important to keep in mind that having a narrative outlook on life goes beyond reflecting on one's life in a historical way. Foremost, it means that the experience of the *current* moment is being colored and valued by the larger context of our story as a whole. According to Schechtman, narrative is 'the lens through which we filter our experience and plan for actions'. As an example she describes the experience of winning the lottery, which will be a profoundly different experience for someone immensely wealthy, someone who has lived a life of crushing poverty, or someone who has struggled unsuccessfully with a gambling addiction. The sum of money will be just the same in these three cases, but what it *means* to the persons involved will be determined by the narrative background against which winning is interpreted (Schechtman 2011, 398). What seems crucial for Schechtman then, are those experiences in the past or those anticipations on the future which actually *affect the present*.

I would like to emphasize this affective point of departure, for this will turn out to be a helpful touchstone in determining to what extent a narrative should be counted as identity constituting. In 'The constitution of Selves' (1996), Schechtman insists on an *affective* reading of Locke's theory of extended consciousness as opposed to the more common *cognitive* reading, interpreting Locke's view as a memory theory

of personal identity. In trying to answer the re-identification question this cognitive reading has become standard, since memory is the only faculty by which we have an immediate knowledge of our past actions. However, according to Schechtman, Locke tells us that 'past actions and experiences become those of a present person if they affect *present* consciousness, causing the person pleasure and pain in the *present*. On this reading we extend consciousness back in time to some past action or experience by caring about it in the appropriate way - by *feeling* its effects' (Schechtman 1996, 110). This alternative interpretation seems to make sense in the context of narrative theories of identity, for it is an utmost personal matter what experiences will influence a person the most and in what way. When a past experience has no effect whatsoever on a person's actions and emotional life in the present, it is highly questionable to what extent, if at all, we should count that experience as self-constituting. Although the experience at issue is the experience of one and the same human being, it doesn't automatically entail that this experience shapes one's personality. It is the 'shaping' sort of experiences we are looking for, because these experiences contain the subjective quality that will help us find an answer to the characterization question.

If we agree on the affective emphasis, then as a consequence memory alone will not suffice, for if a memory is just being told, without it actually affecting me as a person *now*, it should not be considered to be constitutive of my identity. To clarify: winning the lottery for a billionaire might be no more than a minor detail in one's history and will hardly alter the lens through which she experiences her life, whilst for the welfare mother that same lottery ticket will mean a radical change in future prospect in a practical manner but also in her complete sense of self. In the narrative self-constitution view then, only in the latter case the experience of winning the lottery will be self-constitutive.

When we take Schechtman's affective reading one step further we can see how it is possible that the past can affect present well-being without being explicitly remembered. It is in this context that she allows for the concept of implicit narratives. As an extreme example Schechtman describes the psychological phenomenon of repression. Victims of severe trauma can lose conscious memory of the details of the trauma and yet suffer depression and other affective disorders later in life. More common, less dramatic incidents such as being humiliated by one's parents or schoolmates maybe forgotten and yet leave undeniable affective traces (Schechtman 1996, 110). These examples show that even though we will not be able to articulate these experiences, they nevertheless profoundly shape our character and the lens through which we experience the world. Thus we may conclude that these experiences, despite their lack of articulation, are constitutive of identity.

When we allow the concept of implicit narratives as described above, we might wonder if a narrative theory of identity can be acceptable for Strawson after all. In trying to refute the claim that 'episodics' are dysfunctional in the way they relate to their own past, he replies that "the past can be present or alive in the present without being present or alive *as* the past. The past can be alive – arguably more genuinely alive – in the present simply in so far as it has helped to shape the way one is in the present, just

as musicians' playing can incorporate and body forth their past practice without being mediated by any explicit memory of it" (Strawson 2004, 432). According to Strawson, what goes for musical development goes equally for ethical development. He refers to Rilke's remarks on poetry and memory which to his opinion have a natural application to the ethical case: "For the sake of a single poem, you must have … many … memories. … And yet it is not enough to have memories. .. For the memories themselves are not important. They give rise to a good poem 'only when they have changed into our very blood, into glance and gesture, and are nameless, no longer to be distinguished from ourselves"' (Strawson 2004, 432). The aspects of our past that Strawson believes are relevant for us as persons *now,* bear a strong resemblance with Schechtman's affective emphasis. Strawson is convinced that "it is only the present shaping consequences of the past that matter," so when we shift the emphasis from 'memory' to 'shaping consequences', by allowing implicit narratives into our autobiography, abandoning narrativity as a whole might no longer be needed.

However, the concept of implicit narratives is not undisputed. The majority of philosophers is unclear on the issue and those who are outspoken on the matter believe that accepting implicit narratives is indefensible. Richard Menary, for example, is convinced that narratives should at all times be explicit, meaning that a narrative fundamentally requires an audience and should be expressed in an intersubjective context. According to Menary, Schechtman's proposition of implicit narratives "begins to push narratives into a deeper and darker location" (Menary 2008). In addition, Lamarque reminds us "there can be no narrative without narration..", and also: "a story must be told, it is not found" (Lamarque 2004, 394). And even though Schechtman allows for such a concept, she acknowledges that the possibility of implicit narratives is at odds with the articulation constraint. According to Schechtman, even though having an autobiographical narrative does not involve *actually* articulating the story of one's life at all times, the NSCV does not allow a person's self-narrative to remain entirely subterranean. The narrator should be able to explain his motives, actions and feelings when asked for (Schechtman 1996, 114). Before I will explore this matter in more detail, I would first like to consider in what ways a narrative can be called 'implicit', for there seems to be a lack of clarity on what exactly the concept of implicit narratives can consist in.

In the existing literature different conceptions of the term are conflated and whilst it is true that these oftentimes intermingle and overlap nevertheless a gross distinction can be made. Broadly there are two different ways the term 'implicit' is being used. First, 'implicit' can be used as a synonym for 'private', in which case the narrative is not being expressed to another person in written text or spoken words but kept to oneself, for example in narrative thinking. Second, 'implicit' can be used as a synonym for 'unconscious', meaning that a narrative does indeed direct a person's actions, thoughts and emotions yet at the same time one is not consciously aware of it. These different conceptions oftentimes conflate and intermingle, in a variety of ways, as will become clear in the following section.

2. The Concept of Implicit Narratives

In what follows I will examine different ways of how narratives can be told, with varying types and degrees of explicitness, to see to what extent a narrative should be explicated to count as identity constituting and to identify which complications may arise. For the very reason that an implicit narrative is, for many philosophers at least, a controversial or even unacceptable concept, I will start with what seems to be the safest way to go: a narrative that is being told to another person, out loud, and of which the narrator is fully aware of its content, in other words, the narrative is 'explicit' in both ways described above, meaning articulated publicly and consciously. Although this last remark might seem redundant, there are ways of narration conceivable, wherein a person is not aware of the message he is communicating, I will get to this later.

2.1 Implicit narratives and the problem of the audience

First I will consider this 'double' explicit way of narrating a portion of our life: a conscious narrative expressed in spoken or written language, to another person. In the articulation constraint, Schechtman will not go as far to say that a person needs to fully narrate his history at all times, but a person should at least be able 'to explain why he does what he does, believes what he believes, and feels what he feels,' when occasionally asked for (Schechtman 1996, 114). In more general terms, being a person means that one feels at all times, that it is legitimate being asked for an explanation of one's doings. Richard Menary agrees with the articulation constraint but seems to demand more, since he insists a narrative should at all times be directed towards another person. To his opinion this discursive nature is an essential requirement of autobiographical narrativizing, "...narratives are told to an audience, and unless we are reading aloud to a hushed group, the audience is an interlocutor or discursive partner" (Menary 2008, 64). Even though this may sound as a reasonable request, we should be aware of what involving *another*, often times - if not at all times, implies for the content of our narrative.

In what follows I will show how such stringent requirements of explicitness will undermine our self-understanding rather than enhance it, and therefore should be refuted. Classical communication theory assumes that stories that are being told to another person, are not just being told to transfer a certain content. Social relationships and associated social dynamics play an important role in the goals a person means to achieve by telling a story. It is not at all evident that the transfer of knowledge is being given priority, on the contrary, it is quite conceivable that social dynamics are more important than historical accuracy is. The idea that an intersubjective context entails a dominantly socially structured framework, is broadly supported by empirical sciences. To illustrate this point it is worthwhile considering the work of historian Sönke Neitzel and social psychologist Harald Welzer on communication amongst German and Italian soldiers shortly after the second world war (Neitzel and Welzer 2011). In their extensive study of the ways in which soldiers tell their personal stories to one another

and to their superiors, it becomes clear that the transferred content is only of secondary importance. First and foremost, depending on one's interlocutor, the actual message of what is being told is not the factual content, but confirmation of the pre-existing social relations. For example, when speaking to a companion, the main goals are creating consensus and agreement, affirming the relationship, and ascertaining one's world of experience is the same. In addition, when speaking to a superior, one is especially keen on acknowledging and re-establishing the hierarchical structures and to make sure these hierarchical structures are not being compromised (Neitzel and Welzer 2011, 11, 150, 287). In this process of adjusting the story to fit the other person, the factual content can easily be revised, not necessarily in a way that distorts reality, but even with only slight alterations in emphases, personal meanings may change significantly.

The context of war is an extreme one, but it is not such a far stretch to see how these dynamics are just as much at work in more daily sorts of intersubjective storytelling. When a certain experience is communicated to a colleague, for example, it will be told in quite a different way, and with different social goals to be attained, compared to the story told to one's boss. Philosopher Charles Taylor shares a common view in his book *The language animal* (2016). According to Taylor, intersubjective, spoken language, never merely serves a descriptive goal. He states that our language is permeated with the pre-existing social dynamics and when people talk to one another something is actually *happening* between these people, social relations are being affirmed or altered (Taylor 2016, 36).

If it is indeed social dynamics that are being prioritized, there is no guarantee whatsoever that this is not to the detriment of a truthful narrative, which should be warranted first, to serve the purpose of securing the four features. It seems highly questionable then, that these public, intersubjective narratives should be used to define one's personal identity. Even in a therapeutic context, which would seem the most optimal environment to speak freely and without hesitance, the tendency of having an additional agenda aimed at the social dynamics is never completely ruled out. Psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk aptly describes this phenomenon drawing on his own experiences with psychoanalysis. "While I talk easily and can tell interesting tales, I quickly realized how difficult it was to feel my feelings deeply and simultaneously report them to someone else. When I got in touch with the most intimate, painful, or confusing moments of my life, I often found myself faced with a choice: I could either focus on what I had felt back then, or I could tell my analyst logically and coherently what had transpired. When I chose the latter, I would quickly lose touch with myself and start to focus on *his* opinion of what I was telling him. The slightest hint of doubt or judgment would shut me down, and I would shift my attention to regaining his approval" (van der Kolk 2014, 282).

Interestingly, the sort of narratives that are being uttered in this double explicit way, do seem to answer the minimal requirements as stated by Mackenzie. Afterall, the narrative makes the experience and actions that are being told intelligible to the other, and seemingly the narrative also enables the other person to make sense of one's inner life. Nevertheless, if we recall Schechtman's affective emphasis, the discussion above

demonstrates that narratives told to others are not always suited to serve an identity constituting purpose. Because not only our stories might vary depending on the interlocutor one is talking to, but also they might differ significantly from the private story you tell yourself in times of reflection. This means that even if the story you tell makes your inner life seem intelligible to the other, if what you have just told, does not reflect what you are *really* thinking and feeling, it should not be considered to be identity constituting. The intelligibility of just *any* story is not the relevant sort of intelligibility, to count as identity constituting we want intelligibility of *our* story, in other words, intelligibility does by no means automatically entail subjectivity. On the contrary, it might even obscure the narrative that is actually driving us, because once the demand for intelligibility is being met, we will no longer be inclined to search any further. It seems then, that contra Menary's opinion, inviting an actual discursive partner to hear what we have to say about ourselves, involves a high risk of the sort of revision Strawson is concerned about.

In *The Mess Inside - Narrative, Emotion and the Mind* (2012), Peter Goldie gives us several options to conceptualize narrativity without a physical public being involved. He argues that in autobiographical narrative thinking, one often times has an external audience in mind, without actually articulating the narrative out loud. For example, thinking through what the possible explanations for being late at a meeting could be (Goldie 2012, 41). Unfortunately, this way of autobiographical narrative thinking does not exclude the possibility of deceptive tales either. Even though the public in this case might be internalized, we are nevertheless still dealing with a public whose expectations we are trying to meet. This is easy to see in the example given by Goldie: oftentimes the story we tell to explain why we are late, - 'heavy traffic', is just meant to obscure the fact that we couldn't get out of bed this very morning.

Another option suggested by Goldie might be better suited, he invites us to take this 'public in mind' one step further, and instead of involving 'another' as an internal public, the narrator can address himself, in which case the audience and the narrator are one and the same person, one serves so to speak as one's own public. Goldie explains how this move can be made intelligible by highlighting the notion of perspective, which is at the heart of his narrative view. Afforded by temporal distance, one gains different perspectives on one's history. This enables us to be narrator and audience at the same time for the plain reason that my perspective *then*, differs from my perspective *now*. We can see this can be the case in different sorts of ways. For example, your perspective now may differ in the sense that you now have more knowledge about a specific situation then you had at the time you were actually experiencing that situation. Goldie refers to this as an epistemic gap. In addition, it might be that you experience different emotions about the episode being told at the time of telling, than you did during the experience, causing an emotional gap. Or it might be that you value the situation now differently then you did back then, resulting in an evaluative gap. According to Goldie, as long as there is this sort of ´external perspective´ - me as a thinker now, and an 'internal perspective' - my perspective as a protagonist of the story then, we are dealing with a narrative (Goldie 2012, 40). In this way the narrative will meet the conditions as stated by Mackenzie and at the same time

avoid the revisionary consequences of social dynamics that are at play in both a physical or imaginative sort of intersubjective setting.

However, in the process of talking to oneself, a slightly different but related hazard can be expected as a result of the 'dynamic' between oneself as a narrator and oneself as an audience. We might not have an agenda aimed at altering or reinforcing the relationship with ourself as a conversational partner in a literal way but nevertheless, it does seem quite natural to feel some sort of judgement or evaluation, in this case coming from oneself. It seems inevitable then, that when we are 'talking to ourselves', there still is a normative dimension of the public, potentially directing our narrative towards deception, even if it is our very 'self' that is we are talking to. Goldie acknowledges this, but regards this mechanism as an essential feature of human narrativizing, rather than it primarily being a deceptive force. According to Goldie, the evaluative import in autobiographical narrative thinking, is one of the necessary conditions a narrative must meet, to differ from just a bare annal or chronicle (Goldie 2014, 7). Adding this evaluative element enables a person to express the *meaning* events and actions have for her life. It is in this way that the subjective quality we are looking for in an identity constituting narrative, is warranted. However, the downside of this evaluative import is that this inner evaluation towards ourselves, can be considered analogous to the external evaluation we expect from another person. In the case of an external conversational partner it is the anticipated evaluation of the other subject which will precede setting out the course of our narrative. Just the same, we might adjust our inner narrative in such a way that it will live up to the expectations we have consciously or unconsciously set out for ourselves.

When the mechanism of self-evaluation is a conscious undertaking it can be a useful tool in times of self-reflection. However, it's conceivable that some of our less appealing motives and behaviors which are hard to face up to make us alter the course of our inner narrative into a more desirable direction, in an unconscious way. The reason this mechanism remains subterranean might be just *because* of the fact that facing the reality of not behaving according to our own moral standards, gives us pain rather than pleasure. It is in this way that our inner judgement or evaluation could hinder a truthful narrative just as an actual intersubjective narrative can. In explaining how one can have an autobiographical narrative with oneself as an audience, Goldie stresses that it is important to see that autobiographical narrative thinking does not simply remove the possibility of deceiving or disappointing yourself in the story that you tell yourself. One is constantly faced with the dilemma of telling an honest, sincere narrative or a dishonest or insincere story (Goldie 2012, 42). This observation resembles Strawson's concern about revision[3]. In addition, Strawson points out that contrary to the mitigating tendencies we may have to spare ourselves, for some people a recurring pitfall is to actually revise one's story to their own detriment, which may be

[3] In *Against Narrativity* Strawson accepts that "one can change one's view of the facts of one's life without any falsification, simply by coming to see things more clearly" (Strawson, 2004, 443). In Strawson's conception revision essentially involves more than merely changing one's view of the facts of one's life. However, he does not further explain how to distinguish a change of perspective for 'the better' from falsifying revision.

no more attractive than revising to one's advantage (Strawson 2004, 445) Either way, similar to the revisions one may apply to one's narrative in actual intersubjective contexts, it also seems questionable then, whether these sort of private narrative aberrations should be accepted as identity constituting.

2.2 The Narrative Self Constitution View and the problem of self-deception

In *The constitution of Selves*, Schechtman acknowledges that this theme of self-deception in autobiographical narrativizing raises difficulties for the NSCV. The articulation constraint demands for explicability, but simultaneously Schechtman recognizes that sometimes we simply are not capable of telling some parts of our life stories, in a way that makes them intelligible. Moreover, she agrees with Goldie and Strawson, that, "even when we do have ready accounts of our actions, it is sometimes all too obvious that our stories are inaccurate - a commonsense observation given formal expression, … by both Freudian and cognitive psychology" (Schechtman 1996, 115). It is in this context Schechtman presents the example of 'the hostile brother', wherein a man swears he feels nothing but affection for his brother and explains the many instances in which he has hurt or undermined his brother as unfortunate accidents following on the best intentions. It is important to note that in this case the man himself is truly convinced of his motives and does not recognize the hostility he feels towards his brother. However, his wife or other relatives may readily observe this hostility indeed. When going back in history, it may be that he and his brother were in permanent competition for parental affection, in which he always came out second best, causing him to grow mounting feelings of envy and hostility towards his brother. This explanation would not only make the man's current behavior more intelligible but is also more in alignment with the view of one held by others. In terms of identity constitution, we might rightfully question then, whether the man's own story about his relationship towards his brother is a narrative we should accept. Schechtman's case of the hostile brother readily exemplifies Strawson's concern about truthfulness.

The remark that autobiographical narratives should comply with the stories others tell about you is not just a sidenote in the NSCV, on the contrary, it directly follows from a central tenet of Schechtman's view, namely, the basic assumption that personhood is an *intrinsically social* concept. What is characteristic of being a person is leading the life of a person (Schechtman 2014) and persons do not exist in a vacuum. "The very concept of personhood is inherently connected to the capacity to take one's place in a certain complex web of social institutions and interactions – to act as a moral agent, enter into contracts, plan for one's future, express oneself and in general live the life of a person" (Schechtman 1996, 95). In order to be a person one's self-conception must cohere with what might be called the 'objective'[4] account of her life, therefore

[4] On the concept of objectivity Schechtman remarks there "obviously is no single narrative which is the objective story of a person's life." All she means to imply is that "there are certain basic constraints on a narrative which come from the publicly accessible facts about the history of an individual" (Schechtman 1996, 95).

we cannot simply put aside the understanding the people surrounding the person, like family, friends and colleagues, have of her life.

The main difficulty that is brought to light in the example of 'the hostile brother', is that there are cases in which a person's *explicit self-narrative* seems to diverge from the psychological organization from which his experience and actions are actually flowing. This unconscious and unarticulated narrative which nevertheless shapes one's current experience and behavior, is what Schechtman calls the *implicit self-narrative*. According to Schechtman, implicit self-narratives are to be understood as unarticulated (and sometimes inarticulable) parts of one's life which nevertheless determine one's feelings and behaviors. Since these narratives do (at least partly) define who we are, the NSCV includes them in an identity constituting narrative even though the person herself explicitly denies the features we attribute to her. In Strawson's terminology the explicit narrative accompanied by an implicit one as described by Schechtman, equals the sort of 'revision' he is wary of. The narrator is not aware of the level of deceit carried by his explicit narrative and therefore cannot know he is being self-deceptive.

To demonstrate just how intelligible and consistent with our natural intuition the concept of implicit narratives is, I will consider some examples that differ from Schechtman's hostile brother, but are alike in the sense that these narratives too, are unavailable for articulation at the time and yet are central to one's identity, in fact, oftentimes the explicit and implicit narratives will diverge substantially. These cases will exemplify some possible guises of implicit narratives at work and once one has become acquainted with them, it will be hard not to see them throughout everyday life. Furthermore, different cases of implicit narrativizing will bring to light different aspects worthwhile highlighting, for they will convey the richness and potential of autobiographical narrativizing.

Quite an extreme example in diverging autobiographical narrativizing comes from Bessel van der Kolk, leading traumatized veteran groups he describes the following: "The soldiers told horrible tales of death and destruction, but I noticed that their bodies often simultaneously radiated a sense of pride and belonging" (van der Kolk 2014, 282). He observes a similar phenomenon in his regular psychiatry practice: "many patients tell me about the happy families they grew up in while their bodies are slumped over and their voices sound anxious and uptight." What is important in these examples, is that without these observations, a very different story would have been told. The relevance of the things that are being told non-propositionally, 'in between the lines', can hardly be overstated, for they express an essential part of what the meaning and value is for the person telling the story and without it, the implicit narrative would go missing entirely. Again, this is the sort of first personal, subjective quality relevant to the four features and that will help us answer the characterization question.

Goldie mentions the more trivial example of how a person's way of dressing or driving may reveal a characteristic one did not intend to reveal, for example one's carelessness. Of course these revelations can also be in convergence with one's explicit narrative when one is telling a funny story about how things went wrong again in one's

chaotic life, but sometimes a narrative can reveal what the narrator firmly intends *not* to reveal, aiming rather to hide something from view. This can be a conscious undertaking, to make one's narrative fit in with social convents and one being aware of that. However, Goldie points out that oftentimes a person is revealing elements she does not intend to express and even is *not aware of herself*, such as her vanity, or suppressed feelings of envy or guilt. To Goldies opinion this applies particularly to autobiographical narrative simply because the subject concerned is what Kant called the 'dear old self' (Goldie 2014, 33). These sort of diverging implicit narratives are presumably the ones Strawson is concerned about in drawing up the revision thesis.

The inclusion of implicit narratives in narrative theories of identity complicates matters because hereby we enter the domain of first person authority. There is a widely accepted assumption that people are considered to be in a privileged position to make claims about their own mental states. That is, self-attributions of mental states are considered to have a more authoritative status compared to the attribution of mental states to others (Strijbos 2015, 298). Unfortunately this assumption does not sit well with the acceptance of implicit narratives in narrative theories of identity. In case of the hostile brother we can see how it is his implicit narrative that makes intelligible both his emotional life and behavior for other people whereas the brother himself explicitly denies the implicit narrative and instead, endorses an alternative explanation. It is in this way that accepting implicit narratives as definitive of one's identity, can be perceived as an assault on this first person authority, for in this case the wife's story is regarded to be more authorative than his own. Arguments that question this authority are worthwhile considering,[5] however, Schechtman chooses to bypass this conflict by proposing an approach in which both explicit and implicit narratives may co-exist. In assigning a different status to implicit narratives Schechtman holds on to the authoritative value of one's explicit narrative and simultaneously allows that in some cases it actually is the implicit narrative that is guiding us. However, with the preceding discussion in mind, this strategy is in need of some further explanation and analysis, for it might seem as if our intuitions run quite the contrary – we might feel that emotions and desires that are hidden deep in our unconscious actually are more definitive of who we really are than those we can easily explicate.

2.3 Implicit narratives and self-constitution

The discussion above shows that the concept of implicit narrative is intelligible indeed and seems to be an essential feature of autobiographical narrativizing, just as the phenomenon of diverging narratives is. It seems to make sense then, to grant implicit narratives a place in narrative theories of identity that is in keeping with the extent to which they constitute our identity as targeted by the characterization question.[6]

[5] For interesting discussions in favor of third person authority see Goldie 2012, 121.

[6] It may be a matter of dispute whether an implicit narrative that is explicitly denied by the person himself should be regarded to be a *self*-narrative at all. Schechtman replies to this concern by explaining that a person's underlying psychological organization "is not just a static set of facts about him, but rather a dynamic set of organizing principles, a basic orientation through which, with or

Consequently, when implicit narratives are given due weight we come up against the matter how explicit and implicit narratives relate to one another. More specifically, the question arises which one of these is more constitutive of our identity, an issue on which Schechtman herself is quite outspoken.

In the NSCV, the articulation constraint, "acknowledges that the elements of a person's narrative he cannot articulate are his, but says that they are only partially his – attributable to him to a lesser degree than those aspects of the narrative he can articulate" (Schechtman, 1996, 117). Even though Schechtman recognizes that it is tempting to believe that the real story is the one not told, she insists these stories are less ours, because they are not subject to the same kind of scrutiny as the narratives we are aware of. According to Schechtman, implicit narratives are hidden from view and therefore their influence is rigid and automatic. To demonstrate she presents Freud's analysis of the bedtime rituals of an obsessive patient in which the patient's compulsive rituals are compared to a case of posthypnotic behavior, in both cases the patient cannot produce a motive for his actions. Schechtman remarks that "the analogy to posthypnotic suggestion is important. It underscores just how strongly alienated a person is from her unconscious impulses and the actions that carry them out." According to Freud these impulses "give the patient himself the impression of being all powerful guests from an alien world, immortal beings intruding into the turmoil of mortal life" (Schechtman 1996, 118). Obviously, the term 'alien', which is quite strong, is chosen deliberately in this argument, for the term incorporates all that is opposite to what is one's 'own'. In the context of personal identity the term 'alien' is meant to express the opposite of 'inner'. Something *outside the person* seems to be driving his behavior and therefore Schechtman concludes that implicit narratives should be regarded less attributable to the person.

The analogy to posthypnotic suggestion is being put forward to illustrate a vital difference between the explicit narrative that is regarded as 'mine' and the implicit narrative that, even though it affects my behavior, is regarded as 'alien'. However, there are several problems that arise in making such comparison. We should ask ourselves whether it is justified to equate the unconscious motives of the compulsory patient with the unconscious motives that drive the brother's behavior for two reasons. First, in this analogy a comparison is made between a deeply pathologic case and a case that is to the contrary, a very common, everyday sort of experience. Second, and more important in the context of my argument, even though these particular cases both concern an unconscious motive for action, they nevertheless differ significantly with regard to the extent of automaticity and rigidity. In the case of the compulsory patient her motive is probably inaccessible to a much greater extent than in the case of the hostile brother. The brother might, more or less easily, come to different insights, maybe brought about by a serious conversation with his spouse, or by watching a

without conscious awareness, an individual understands himself … These implicit organizing principles are not simply a collection of features, but a continually developing interpretation of the course of one's trajectory through the world. In this way it is legitimate to think of what I am calling the implicit self-narrative as a *self*-conception" (Schechtman 1996, 116). Also see Ricoeur (1992). I will return to this topic later.

movie portraying a case similar to his. There are endless, oftentimes small things we can encounter in everyday life, which can make us change perspective. Luckily, the experience of changing perspective is just as commonplace and essentially human, as the tendency of unconsciously obscuring our flaws is. So, whereas it might be true that in the compulsory patient her implicit motive is isolated and unavailable for scrutiny, this certainly is not the case when we consider the brother's motive, which seems to be lying just below the surface of consciousness.

The comparison as made by Schechtman reveals an interesting feature of the way we think about the unconscious. Apparently, we tend to think about the consciousness and unconsciousness as being distinct in a binary way, we talk about narratives as being *either* explicit *or* implicit. However, reflecting on the differences in the cases described above, it becomes clear that consciousness is not an all-or-nothing attribute. Instead, as Schechtman acknowledges, "a somewhat continuous line of demarcation between the consciousness and unconsciousness more closely mirrors the phenomenology of consciousness. At any given time some elements are at the forefront of consciousness … and are having the most powerful influence on the overall character of experience. Other aspects are at the periphery – there and accessible, but pushed to the corner; others are not conscious but can easily be brought to consciousness; others cannot be made conscious without immense effort; and some may never come to consciousness at all" (Schechtman 1996, 141). Likewise, Strawson remarks that the border between consciousness and unconsciousness "is both murky and porous" (Strawson 2004, 443). It seems then, that consciousness is a matter of degree rather than a binary attribute. Consequently, the content of our self-narrative will ongoingly vary. Which elements are being brought to the forefront of consciousness obviously is not a result of introspection alone, rather, it seems to be strongly related to environmental stimuli, both physically and socially. We might say then, that because of our turn of phrase, a false dichotomy is being created which at least partly results in the problem of which sort of narrative is more or less constitutive of identity. A dichotomous approach of consciousness might fit a more synchronic, time slice based account of personhood, quite the opposite Schechtman intends to achieve with the NSCV.

Of course Schechtman is right to argue that the brother's explicit narrative is more available to introspection and thus for scrutiny, then his implicit narrative is. However, if therefore we prefer the explicit narrative above the implicit, we need to ask ourselves what exactly it is we are scrutinizing. We may be reflecting on an intelligible explanation of our behavior, but when the matter of the fact is that there is a diverging, implicit story that *actually* preceded our behavior, then we must conclude that the explicit one is just *a* narrative that we reflect upon instead of *our* narrative. Schechtman's argument of scrutiny would obviously hold in case of an explicit narrative that would not be gainsaid by a diverging implicit narrative. It seems then, that in the case of the hostile brother she seems to confound these two distinct manifestations of explicit narratives.

It seems then, that in the explicit narrative of the hostile brother the subjectivity the NSCV aims for, is not being met. This is important, for it is the subjectivity of our narrative that ties it to the four features. The more we let our narrative drift away from what actually moves and affects us, the less relevant it will be in terms of the characterization question.

This is not merely a theoretical point, for in any form of talking therapy searching for implicit motives is a central tenet. Settling for an explanatory yet false narrative is not an option, for the obvious reason that this won't help the patient any further, no matter the amount of labor and scrutiny being put into the analysis. Mackenzie, drawing on Philips, makes a similar point, stating that "it is the first personal import that is the surplus of narrativity, that is crucial in bringing about any therapeutical benefits" (Mackenzie 2010, 43). Psychiatrist van der Kolk will surely agree on this opinion, for in alternative therapeutic treatments such as EMDR or freewriting he is convinced that its successes largely depend on the patients ability to fully focus on one's inner experience instead of getting sidetracked by trying to make one's narrative intelligible to the other (van der Kolk 2014, 303). In the case of diverging narratives, assigning more weight to the explicit narrative for the sake of availability actually jeopardizes subjectivity, since once an articulated, intelligible explanation seems to have been found, we are no longer prone to search any further. It seems right to conclude then, that in trying to answer the characterization question, the affective touchstone should be prioritized over the articulation constraint. Articulation of one's narrative can be very useful and therefore it is favorable but not at all costs. Pressing too hard on getting one's narrative to be articulated may lead to (self) deception and that in turn will lead us astray in trying to answer the characterization question.

2.4 Narratives and agency

One of Schechtman's motivations that presumably gave rise to the arguments in favor of the explicit narrative, could be that the apparent need for accessibility of our autobiographical narrative is related to the agential properties required to live the life of a person. In fact, Schechtman's point of departure in creating the NSCV, next to the idea that selves are narrative in structure, is the line of thought that persons are essentially *self-creating* (Daniel Dennett, Jean Paul Sartre and Harry Frankfurt amongst others)[7] (Schechtman 1996, 93). The general idea in these hierarchical views of autonomy is that an essential part of being a person is reflected in the capacity to choose what sort of person you want to be, which is not being expressed when an autobiographical narrative is solely being regarded as a story being told passively, 'after the facts'. We relate to our stories *as* selves, and in doing so, we have the potential to live our lives as autonomous agents.[8]

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[7] Daniel Dennett, *Elbow Room: The Varieties of Free Will Worth Wanting* (1990, 74-100), Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness* (1956); Harry Frankfurt, "Identification and Externality" (1976, 239-52).

[8] Catriona Mackenzie shares the view that the NSCV could be characterized as an agency based account of temporal subjectivity since there are clear resonances between Schechtman's account of

Thus, when departing from the relation between agency and personhood, Schechtman has a point in considering the brother's explicit narrative of being a loving sibling 'more his' than the implicit hostile narrative for two reasons, first, the explicit narrative describes the characteristic which he wholeheartedly endorses whereas the man repudiates being hostile, and second, the hostile narrative is obscure to him and therefore he cannot reflect on it and be autonomous with respect to it. It seems clear then, that the man is not autonomous with regard to the hostile feelings towards his brother. However, we may ask ourselves if answering the characterization question necessarily involves this extent, or sort, of agency. This leads me to a point highlighted by Catriona Mackenzie and Jackie Poltera, who agree to a large extent with the NSCV, however, they argue that in regarding the explicit narrative more identity-constituting than the implicit, identity is conflated with autonomy. In relation to the hostile brother example, Mackenzie argues that even though the man is not autonomous with respect to his emotions of hostility since these emotions are not accessible to reflection, these emotions are nevertheless central to his identity, since it explains many of his actions (Mackenzie 2010, 46).

Mackenzie and Poltera provide a further argument for this point drawing on Elyn Saks' autobiography *The Centre Cannot Hold: A Memoir of My Schizophrenia* (2007). Their argument primarily focuses on refuting Strawson's contention that an episodic outlook on life is sufficient to lead the life of a person. Mackenzie and Poltera convincingly argue how Saks' reported psychotic experiences in which she seems to lose her diachronic sense of self, show that the capacity for narrative integration is pivotal to lead a flourishing life. However, they also argue that Saks' illness narrative makes clear that these experiences are central to her identity, despite the fact that they do not meet the constraints as set out by the NSCV. During psychotic episodes Saks believes she is a mass murderer, being able to kill people with her thoughts. Mackenzie and Poltera stress that even though the NSCV is right to state that Saks cannot constitute herself as a mass murderer, these delusions, being part of her illness, nevertheless play an important role in characterizing her, since her illness pervades many aspects of her life. Therefore they argue that Saks' characterization identity should include the 'fact' of suffering these delusions but not their 'content'. Evidently Saks is not autonomous with respect to her delusions, but just as in the hostile brother case, reduced autonomy does not mean the narrative is not relevant to her identity (Mackenzie 2010, 45). Interestingly, in a BBC interview with neuroscientist David Eagleman, Saks herself tells that, contrary to Mackenzie's opinion, she is convinced that the *content* of her delusion (being a mass murderer) does indeed reveal something highly specific about her identity, namely that deep down she thinks of herself as being a very bad person[9]. This example reiterates the significance subjectivity has for our self-conception. Therefore we might also want to consider the content of the psychosis constitutive of Saks' identity, albeit in a metaphorical way, irrespective of its

agency involved in the NSCV and the work of Harry Frankfurt (1972, 1987) amongst others (Mackenzie 2009, 101).

[9] BBC series: *The brain with David Eagleman* (2016). Episode 1: "What is reality"?

articulability or its distorted sense of reality.[10] It seems then, that there are cases wherein both the articulation and reality constraint should not be pressed to meet.

Although Mackenzie and Poltera agree with Schechtman that one's self-narrative must be articulable to some degree, they argue that the articulation constraint as proposed by the NSCV is far too strong. However it may be true that the explicit narrative expresses the characteristics endorsed by the man himself, it overlooks the fact that the man's actions and emotions are made intelligible only by the unacknowledged hostility. I would like to take this take this argument one step further, for holding on too stringently to the articulation constraint seems to enable and even promote false rationalizations. Indeed, in the case of the hostile brother we see that in demanding articulation the man is pressed to make up all sorts of excuses for forgetting his brother's birthday and so on, and at first glance the confabulatory story the man has made up about himself seems both coherent and intelligible, meeting the requirements of Mackenzie's definition. However, even though it might be the narrative he himself endorses, it is not *his* narrative in the affective sort of way, since neiher does it shape his emotional life, nor his actions. One might say then, that the subjective quality relevant for characterization identity perishes in order to meet up to the articulation constraint. Strawson has a point then, in worrying about the revision applied the articulation of our story. Contrary to the man's explicit narrative, the diverging but unarticulated implicit narrative is resistant to this sort of falsifying revision.

Schechtman might object that in the case of Saks' illness, it is not so much the articulation constraint that is at issue, rather it is the reality constraint that is being violated, since during her psychosis Sacks is severely cut off from reality. However this may be true, in both cases one can see how just the same, autonomy and identity get conflated. Moreover, despite the difference in violated constraint, the comparison between these cases shows how the concepts of reality and articulation can be akin in the sense that in the brothers case it is his self-delusion that causes the inarticulability of the hostile narrative. The man might not be delusional in a gross, pathological way as is the case in schizophrenia and thus violating the reality constraint in an obvious way, but rather it is a more subtle sort of everyday self-delusion. However, in a way we could say that his narrative does not cohere with reality either, for his relatives will disagree with the 'reality' as described by the man himself. The similarity in these cases reveals an underlying problem in the NSCV, namely, that it has difficulties how to relate to contingent, and specifically, adverse events, or in Schechtman's terms, experiences or characteristics one feels alienated towards. Of course Saks did not *choose* her illness, in her autobiography she comprehensively describes her struggles to accept the fact that she suffers from schizophrenia and the consequences the illness has for her life. The hostile brother, for his part, did not choose his childhood of neglect and its consequent sibling rivalry either, nor did he choose certain character traits that may

[10] This is a view also endorsed by contemporary lines of thought in psychiatry, for interesting discussions and examples see van Spronssen and van Os (2021), *We zijn God niet, pleidooi voor een nieuwe psychiatrie van samenwerking*.

have given rise to his hostility. In both cases there are contingent adverse elements, that are being repudiated by the person concerned, but that nevertheless play an important role in the characterization of the person's identity.[11]

2.5 Narratives and the role of repudiated characteristics

I would like to examine a second analysis of the hostile brother case, in which the problem of repudiated characteristics is the main focus and wherein an attempt is being made to explain how an unacknowledged narrative can be regarded to be identity constituting despite its lack of articulation. In 'Two senses of narrative Unification' Mary Jean Walker seeks to clarify the role of narrative in the unity of a person's life. In trying to answer questions of characterization Walker departs from Schechtman's NSCV, however, she agrees with Mackenzie that in this view autonomy and identity are conflated. In proposing two different ways in which narrative can be conceptualized she aims to demonstrate how and why repudiated and possibly unacknowledged characteristics or adverse life events should be considered part of a person's narrative. In what follows I will elaborate on these two distinct senses of narrative unification, for this might help to understand how implicit narratives can be regarded constitutive of identity, despite the absence of consciously exerted agency as required by Schechtman.

Drawing on Ricoeur, Walker suggests to distinct two different ways in which narrative can unify: through 'bottom-up' processes related to the connection between agency and self-conception; and 'top-down' processes related to self-interpretative activity. 'Bottom-up' unification is the phenomenon that more or less coherent patterns of action over time emerge, because as persons we tend to act in ways that are consistent with our existing self-conception. The more consistent our self-conception is, the more similarities these patterns will exhibit (Walker 2019, 86). According to Ricoeur this sort of unity involves hierarchical relations, meaning that lower-order actions nest within higher-order actions, such as pursuing a particular profession or long-term goal. As a result the lower order actions make sense in light of each other and in the light of the higher order action. As an example Ricoeur discusses the work of a farmer as a higher order 'practice', which includes subordinate actions, such as plowing, planting, harvesting, and so on in descending order, until one reaches basic actions such as pulling or pushing (Ricoeur 1992, 154). This way of understanding human action is narrative in nature, for very basic actions like pulling or pushing can only be interpretated meaningfully, nested within the higher order practice of being a farmer.

[11] Schechtman herself appears to be somewhat ambiguous on this matter, in the majority of publications she insists that the degree of identification with a certain aspect and it's accessibility for consciousness determine whether it should be considered to be part of one and the same self-narrative, putting the degree of agency in a lead position (Schechtman 1996, 2001, 2004). However, in a more recent article in which she responds to Mark Schroeder's account of personal identity (2022) she argues that he unduly emphasizes the role of agency and stresses the importance of embodiment instead.

This 'bottom-up' notion of narrative unity is reminiscent of Schechtman's self-creative emphasis based on hierarchical theories of autonomy. One chooses a higher order pursuit, in the example above this is a profession but it might as well be a character trait or a way of life which one endorses, which subsequently structures and directs one's lower order actions. At first sight this sort of unity seems to require the sort of agency Schechtman demands to accept a narrative as truly one's own. However, on further examination we might wonder whether exerting agency should necessarily be a conscious undertaking. With regard to the hostile brother case, Walker says that even though the man's denial of being hostile can be understood as a failure of self-knowledge, it "is still 'part of his narrative' because it impacts on bottom-up processes in a range of ways, affecting his actions and decision, and his affective responses to certain kinds of situations. As such, the characteristic plays a role in the 'lens' through which he filters his experiences and plans for actions" (Walker 2019, 89). What Walker seems to say then, is that through bottom up unification we can see that it is by no means evident that agency can only be exerted consciously. Walker has a point here, for just as with consciously chosen higher order goals, in time a consistent pattern of behavior will emerge, since all the actions and feelings concerning his brother will contain an element of hostility. Furthermore, just as in the case of the farmer, hierarchical relations are at work here, however unconsciously, since the lower order actions of demeaning his brother in several ways can only be interpretated within the higher order practice of his hostility. In Saks' case, 'bottom-up' wise, her narrative makes intelligible how her illness influences her whole life, and her future experiences and decisions, again, despite the fact that she is not autonomous with regard to them.

Alongside bottom-up processes we need another way of narrative unification since people's lives typically do not revolve around any one or any several higher-order practices and these may change over time. Furthermore, our lives (and 'lenses') are importantly shaped by contingent, external events (Walker 2019, 86). It is in these cases that Walker's notion of top-down unification can step in, which is based on Ricoeur's discussion of 'emplotment':

> "Emplotment refers to the arrangement of different events into a narrative whole, or the imposition of narrative form onto events. Ricoeur describes emplotment as configuring diverse elements into a unity, as a 'synthesis of the heterogenous'(Ricoeur 1992, 141). But this does not necessarily mean that the elements must be consistent with each other; the elements may be unified while remaining heterogenous. Narrative can unify diverse elements because of its capacity to represent time and different perspectives" (Walker 2019, 86).

Walker explains that it is in this way that one can be attributed contradictory beliefs, if the attribution relations include the information that these believes were at different times in different contexts. This is preeminently the domain of narrative expression,

for in a narrative *the role* of a characteristic in a person's history can be conveyed[12]. Likewise, one can be attributed conflicting character traits at the same time, like being organized in one context and being disorganized in another. Again, even though these traits seem mutually exclusive, one's narrative can make intelligible that they may co-exist in one and the same person, in fact, this way of thinking about one's personal tendencies is rather natural. Walker argues that in this way "a person's identity may be informed by a characteristic one is resistant to reflectively acknowledge, repudiates, or sometimes delusionally believes, because the attribution relation includes the information about how the characteristic relates to the person. .. interpretations of change play a role in the person's ongoing self-understanding, and so in actions and decisions. That is, top-down unification does not depend on a person retaining the same self-conception over time, but rather, on the person's self-interpretative practices" (Walker 1992, 87). What Walker means to emphasize, is that narratives top-down wise, are suited to do justice to the complexity of attribution relations, something reductionistic views cannot. By this move the need to quantify which narrative is more or less constitutive of identity is being made less urgent because the qualitative distinction of the attribution relation itself is taken up in the narrative. Herewith, space is being created for question marks, gaps, ambiguity and ambivalence, shifted perspectives and so on, all phenomena typical for the narrative of a person.

For example, in Saks' case, her delusional beliefs are later being acknowledged as such, 'top-down' wise, when she looks back at her psychotic episodes. In her autobiography Saks explains how exactly these episodes can be attributed to her, including the information that the content of her delusions were temporary and false, being part of her mental illness. She might also mention that in a literal way the content is obviously false, however, in a metaphorical way, the content does add to her self-understanding since it expresses something highly specific about her self-conception, namely that she herself feels she fundamentally is a bad person. It is narrative capacity that enables her to apply such nuances. However, in the case of the hostile brother the characteristic of being hostile is not being acknowledged by the man himself. We have seen that this characteristic should be considered part of his narrative 'bottom up wise', but 'top down' - which relies on one's self-interpretative practices, it poses a challenge for us, since it is obscure to the man himself. Walker's claim that we can include the hostility in his *self*-narrative by noting the nature of the attribution relations, namely self-blindness (Walker 2019, 88), seems in need of some clarification then. For this purpose it might help to consider Goldie's account of narrativity with at its heart the notion of perspective.

Like Walker, Goldie departs from Ricoeur's notion of emplotment, which he describes as: "a *tâtonnement*, a tentative, groping procedure: one might begin with an idea of how the narrative should be shaped, and, once one has developed it somewhat, one might be able to see saliences that one could not see before, and then find it appropriate to go back and reshape the narrative in this new light" (Goldie 2012, 11).

[12] See for an informative and nuanced elaboration on how language can express these attribution relations Peter Goldie on the topic of 'free direct style' (Goldie 2012, 32, 48).

Central to Goldie's account of narrativity is the feature that multiple perspectives can be taken up into one and the same narrative and that one's interpretations will evolve over time, meaning that essentially one's narrative evolves over time as well. When this is right we should accept that one's narrative is not a given that is fixed, but rather it would be more appropriate to regard narrativity as a dynamic process which is essentially full of gaps and question marks. We are 'groping' for the right narrative keeping our narrative permanently open for revision. Contrary to Strawson, Goldie regards this feature as a strength of narrative capacity not a weakness (Goldie 2012, 13).

Furthermore, one could say that in these emplotment-based accounts of narrativity, Goldie and Walker both presuppose implicit narratives, for it is these that we are groping and searching for. We might also conclude then that, contra Lamarque, in a way, narratives are to be *found* after all. Indeed, the narratives that relevant for our identity are *re*-constructed, not merely constructed. The process of tâtonnement, alongside with the gradual character of explicitness as discussed previously, enables a person to continuously develop one's narrative. Also, the fundamentally social aspect of narrativity should not be overlooked. Just as self-attribution relations can be taken up into a narrative, likewise, the mental states *others* attribute to us, may be included. In case of 'the hostile brother', he himself might tell a story of love towards his brother but simultaneously mention that his wife has her doubts about that, he might also add that he explicitly denies her opinion for he repudiates being hateful against one's family. Including these varying and diverging relations of attribution into one's narrative will not undermine its authority. On the contrary, it will result in a richer, more complete notion of one's identity and it will enable the narrator to express the complexity and oftentimes ambiguity of what it means to live the life of a person.

The broader problem of repudiated characteristics and adverse life events as identified by Walker does not precisely map the tension related to the concept of implicit narratives. Nevertheless, I think it's worthwhile to examine this theme more closely, for it will provide a further argument for the idea that nor the explicitness nor the degree of positive attribution is what determines a narrative being constitutive of identity. I will further explore this theme in the next section, drawing from the empirical domain of trauma treatment in psychiatry which demonstrates that adverse, unarticulatable experiences are in fact quite dominant in affecting one's life and personhood. Alongside the philosophical argument, Schechtman develops a neuroscientific oriented defense of the claim that implicit knowledge should be considered less constitutive of identity. I will briefly discuss this first, for it yields several statements which are particularly interesting when exploring the field of traumatic experiences.

3. Implicit Narratives in the Empirical Domain

In what follows I will first consider the phenomenon of implicit knowledge (also being referred to as 'the new unconscious') more extensively, since research in this domain provides further evidence for the idea that many of our beliefs, desires and actions are being driven by implicit motives even though we ourselves think otherwise. Thereafter I will discuss some interesting insights from the domain of trauma treatment for it has some features that are especially relevant in the context of implicit narratives.

3.1 Narrative self-constitution and the 'New Unconscious'

Over the past few decades a new picture of unconscious processes has emerged from the empirical domains of cognitive sciences. Unconscious processes appear to be capable of doing many things that formerly were thought of as requiring conscious awareness. These processes range from complex information processing through behavior to goal pursuit and self-regulation (Hassin 2005, 9). Originally this domain was referred to by the term "cognitive unconscious" since it was conceived of largely in terms of cognitive processes (Kihlstrom 1987, 215). Since then, abundant research has been published on this topic, adding affect, motives, and goal-directed behavior to our conception of what unconscious processes are capable of. Even though there still is much debate on a variety of details, researchers agree on the general idea of unconscious and automatic processes that drive our judgement and behavior and the possibility that these co-exist with conscious but contradictory beliefs (Dijksterhuis 2005, 77). This phenomenon is being referred to as 'the new unconscious'.

The theme of implicit knowledge is discussed by Schechtman and she recognizes that this shows that a person's current psychological life can be influenced by unconscious elements (Schechtman 1996, 139-142). However, she insists that the articulation constraint is entitled to consider unconscious elements as less attributable to the person then conscious elements, since their influence on conscious experience is more limited. More specific, she maintains that the impact on conscious experiences and action is more rigid and stereotyped. This is important since the NSCV departs from a notion of co-consciousness wherein experiences can be attributed to a single consciousness only when they 'mutually influence and inform one another'. Take for example a sentence in which each word is interpreted in light of the others, or when hearing a chord, it is the relation between the notes which is heard, as well as the notes themselves. Schechtman emphasizes this point because it shows the depth of mutual influence between the different elements. When in a chord one single note is replaced by another, the entire experience of the chord will change, not just the single note. "The phenomenological changes occur because the mutual influence of the different elements that are part of a single consciousness act as a lens through which the others are experienced" (Schechtman 1996, 138). Translated to a narrative context this means that elements can only be considered to be part of the same narrative when they can mutually influence each other.

To provide further support for this point of reciprocity, Schechtman draws on research in cognitive psychology and neuroscience. She refers to the work of Ran

Lahav who argues for the profound differences between conscious and unconscious information after discussing several kinds of implicit knowledge, i.e. blindsight, agnosia, neglect and the implicit knowledge that occurs in normal subjects. Lahav concludes that "conscious experience expresses information available for an entire spectrum of global, integrated, and flexible (non-automatic) behaviors." He hypothesizes "that it constitutes a central junction of information, one in which information from different sources and modalities are integrated to produce a unified and coherent body of behaviors. In contrast, nonconscious information is largely segregated from other information processing events in the organism, and is therefore limited to exerting specific, isolated, or rigid effects on the cognitive system and on behavior" (Lahav 1993, 70) (Schechtman 1996, 139).

Against this background of cognitive science Schechtman recalls Freud's case of repression wherein nonconscious perceptions exert a routinized and automatic influence just as in the case of patients with blindsight. She concludes that these unconscious elements can alter affect and behavior profoundly but they are less contributable to the person for "they assert themselves, as it were, blindly. Their impact is not sensitive to context and cannot be modified to meet new circumstances or take account of new information. Although nonconscious psychical elements influence conscious life, they are not themselves directly influenced in return. They cannot be scrutinized in the light of what is known, and so cannot be revised, reconsidered, or reshaped in the light of the rest of the person's psychological life" (Schechtman 1996, 141). From both Freud's and Lahav's findings Schechtman infers that consciousness elements exert an influence on one's subjectivity and behavior that is flexible, global, and responsive, whereas elements that are unconscious exert an influence that is rigid, automatic and stereotyped.

Schechtman's distinction between explicit and implicit narratives may seem plausible and its orderliness is tempting, however, it can be challenged in a number of ways. First, it should be noted that when referring to Freud's case of repressed memory Schechtman means the case of the woman with the compulsory bedtime ritual. Whether it may be true that an implicit narrative may be the cause of her compulsion, it is certainly not true that implicit narratives or repressed memories always express themselves in an obsessive compulsory way. However it may be true that such compulsory symptoms are hard to affect, it seems too big a leap to infer from this that implicit narratives as a whole cannot be influenced by new contexts or circumstances. I will return to this point later.

Second, we have seen that the brother's explicit 'loving' narrative, the mutual influence is not warranted either. On the contrary, the 'loving' narrative is not able to direct his behavior, and conversely, the explicit narrative is not adjusted in the light of new experiences or new information. Because the man explicitly repudiates the characteristic of hostility, experiences that will point in that direction will not be considered salient or will be revised to fit his 'loving' narrative instead. So beheld, the explicit narrative seems insensitive to context and resistant to be modified to meet new circumstances, therefore, scrutiny of the explicit narrative will prove itself illusory. What we might conclude then, contra to Schechtman's contention, is that despite its

conscious nature, the explicit narrative appears to be rather segregated from other processing events, albeit in a slightly different way then implicit narratives. Lahav's distinction might be sustained in the case of an explicit narrative which passes the affective criterion, or differently put, when implicit and explicit narratives converge, however, in the case of diverging narratives, it seems untenable.

In conclusion, we might say that the flexibility and responsiveness as required by the NSCV to count as identity constituting are not being met by the explicit narrative when simultaneously a diverging implicit narrative is at work. Of course Schechtman is right to remark that the effects of implicit narratives in some cases are isolated in an important way, making them less susceptible to conscious control. In the next section I will draw on the empirical domain of trauma treatment in psychiatry to further examine in what ways unarticulated narratives, especially those of adverse events, shape our identities and how these implicit narratives nevertheless can be reached and influenced. This will further counter Schechtman's argument of isolation.

3.2 Traumatic experience and the embodied nature of narrative

There are several aspects of trauma processing and trauma counselling that are especially relevant in the context of implicit narratives. First, when a person goes through adverse life events like falling ill, being victim of a crime or experiencing a natural disaster, these have far-stretching effects on a person's life and color one's 'lens' profoundly, while simultaneously one is not autonomous towards them. Second, traumatic memory is oftentimes difficult or even impossible to articulate. Third, experiences in trauma treatment points towards a less cognitive and more body based model raising the hypothesis that identity constituting narratives are embodied to a far greater extent than the NSCV allows for (also see Mackenzie 2009 and Brandon 2016). In what follows I will elaborate on these points drawing from the work on trauma by psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk.

In his book *The body keeps the score* (2014) Bessel van der Kolk explains how the experience of trauma, even when the memory of it is being repressed in full, affects our psychology and outlook on life pervasively. We can see how this is true on a very straightforward 'lens-affecting' level, for example in the case of a victim of sexual assault who in a near-reflexive manner will recognize an approaching male on a deserted street as a potential rapist. However, according to van der Kolk the effect of trauma is far more global then that, it doesn't confine itself to situations similar to the context of the experienced event. After the experience of trauma, patients may be constantly 'on guard' even without a current anxiety trigger. Research from neuroscience, developmental psychopathology and interpersonal neurobiology has revealed that trauma produces actual physiological changes, including a recalibration of the brain's alarm system, an increase in stress hormone activity, and alterations in the system that filters relevant information from irrelevant. Further, studies involving fMRI show that in patients suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the default state of the brain, - what happens in the brain when trauma survivors are *not* thinking about the past, changes radically. What happens in your brain when it is

'idling'? Normally, it turns out that you pay attention to yourself: the default state activates the brain areas that work together to create your sense of 'self'. Studies on this 'idling brain' in PTSD patients demonstrate that there is a lack of activation of any of these areas[13]. These self-sensing areas are responsible for registering the internal states of the body and assessing the relevance of incoming information. When this system is hindered it becomes difficult to 'know what you feel' (van der Kolk 2014, 106). This is being interpreted as a tragic adaptation: in an effort to shut off sensations of fear and pain, the capacity to feel fully alive is deadened as well. Drawing on Damasio van der Kolk argues that the core of our self-awareness rests on the physical sensations that convey the inner states of the body. The areas of the brain responsible for this process create the 'wordless knowledge' that underlies our conscious sense of 'self' (van der Kolk 2014, 109). What van der Kolk means to emphasize is that the pervasiveness of the effects of trauma on the brain can hardly be overstated, and the effects are far more global than Schechtman is convinced of. In a narrative context then, we could say that the experience of trauma colors the lens through which we experience both ourself and the world profoundly and that these effects stretch much further than the context related to the trauma.

Simultaneous to this global effect of trauma on the brain, van der Kolk describes how, especially in the case of adverse experiences that have a significant impact on life, difficulties arise when patients try to articulate these experiences. Problems concerning articulation occur on a spectrum with on the one end cases wherein memories can be consciously recalled yet articulation is impaired due to reasons which I will discuss below, and on the other end cases wherein articulation is impossible because the memory of the event is not accessible for consciousness. This may be the cause when for example the event happened on a very young age, or because memory of the event is being repressed. An example of adverse life events that can consciously be recalled in detail but nevertheless seem difficult to articulate, are those belonging to patients suffering from PTSD. As it occurs, PTSD patients oftentimes have very lively memories that can be recalled consciously indeed, and oftentimes may come unbidden, overflooding the patient unexpectedly.[14] It is particularly interesting that these sort of memories are typically being relived in images, not in words. FMRI studies show, that when patients are asked to recall traumatic memories, there is a diminished activity of Broca - one of the speech areas, comparable to dysfunction in stroke. Without a functioning Broca's area, thoughts and feelings cannot be put into words. This is in alignment with observations in therapeutical contexts wherein feelings associated with trauma oftentimes seem impossible to articulate. Van der Kolk observes how patients eventually come up with a 'cover-story'

[13] The medial prefrontal cortex, the anterior cingulate, the parietal cortex, and the insula, the so called Mohawk of self-awareness, all areas that contribute to consciousness and are responsible for registering the entire range of emotions and sensations that form the foundation of our self-awareness, our sense of who we are. (van der Kolk, 2014, 106).

[14] The occurrence of flashbacks at oftentimes innocuous moments is an aspect of traumatic memory that jeopardizes autonomy as understood by Schechtman in a very specific way. We are not autonomous over the effects caused by the trauma and adding to that, the trauma keeps flooding back to the patient in an unescapable and unforeseeable way, making him even less autonomous.

for public consumption that offers some explanation for one's symptoms and behavior, however, these stories "rarely capture the inner truth of the experience" (van de Kolk 2014, 51). In these cases, despite the high level of availability, articulation is hindered grossly. Instead, the emotional part of the brain (the limbic area and the brain stem) expresses its altered activation through changes in emotional arousal, body physiology and muscular action. The imprints of trauma are organized in fragmented sensory and emotional traces: images, sounds, and physical sensations[15] (van der Kolk, 2014, 210). These findings point towards an embodied sort memory, with far-reaching consequences for the person involved, despite the lack of language that accompanies living through trauma.

On the most extreme end of the spectrum we find the phenomenon of repressed memory, which is noted and discussed by Schechtman (Schechtman 1996, 110). Repression may occur when trauma is too severe to be kept in conscious memory, and therefore is removed by repression or dissociation or both. At some later time it may reappear in conscious memory, often under innocuous circumstances. Although this phenomenon may be controversial in legal contexts, in the field of psychology and psychiatry there is abundant scientific support for the occurrence of memory loss after trauma (van der Kolk, 2014, 229). However, repressing the experience from consciousness does not imply it has no effect on one's current psychological life, on the contrary. Repressed traumatic experiences may cause psychiatric symptoms later on in life, like depression or anxiety, or physical complaints that are poorly understood on a purely somatic basis. Patients may even re-enact their trauma in their current relationships without knowing what causes them to do so (van der Kolk 2014, 214). The inaccessibility of the experience for consciousness makes articulation impossible, yet we cannot but accept that they play an unwanted but eminent role in the making of our identity and the shaping of our 'lens'. Again, despite a lack of language, the body keeps score.

Schechtman acknowledges that implicit narratives influence a person's life and current experience importantly, however, she insists that these narratives are less attributable to a person for they cannot be influenced in return. If we set aside Mackenzie's critique of the identity/autonomy conflation for a moment, we can see that Schechtman is right to make a distinction between articulated experiences which we can scrutinize and those which are not. Indeed, there is an important way in which these narratives are isolated, particularly those that are being repressed. Also in the 'less severe' cases wherein narratives are accessible for consciousness, it seems hard to regain control over the effects these experiences exert a person's life. Van der Kolk explains that remembering the trauma and talking about it, which forms the core of traditional talking therapy, does not necessarily resolve it. Even when an attempt is

[15] Goldie argues that also in non-pathological, everyday narrative thinking, one oftentimes thinks through a past event or possible future scenario *in images*, not words. Also, he mentions the very mundane example of a 'flash-bulb' memory that typically occurs as an image in one's mind, not as a propositional narrative. According to Goldie, any mental content with narrative structure counts as a narrative. In addition, he explains how imagining a narrative may result in experiencing actual emotions (Goldie 2012, 3, 43, 79, 80).

being made to involve affective elements related to the trauma in this process, PTSD symptoms oftentimes persist (van der Kolk 2014, 233). Also, cognitive behavioral therapy, which has proven to be one of the most effective treatments in anxiety disorder and depression, has similarly disappointing results. Only one in three participants with PTSD who finish research studies show some improvement and those who complete CBT treatment usually have fewer PTSD symptoms, but they rarely recover completely: most patients continue to have substantial problems with their health, work, or mental well-being (van der Kolk 2014, 233, 265). It seems reasonable to conclude then, that notwithstanding their global effects, implicit narratives appear to be inflexible indeed, for they seem resistant to be mutually influenced.

However, on closer examination we can see that this 'therapeutic resistance' might not necessarily entail that the effects brought about by implicit narratives cannot be influenced in return *per se*. What it does imply is that the consequences of inarticulable trauma are difficult to restore when approached predominantly in a linguistic and cognitive manner. In fact, the basic premises of the 'talking cure' and cognitive behavioral therapy are 1. that telling the trauma story in great detail will help people to leave it behind (van der Kolk 2014, 218) and 2. that irrational believes about ones current situation can be challenged and adjusted using cognitive strategies (van der Kolk 2014, 264). Departing from there, van der Kolk argues extensively for a body based approach since the narratives most determinative of who we are, seem to be stored in the body. Whether we can recall these stories propositionally or not is seems to be only of secondary relevance.

To clarify, consider van der Kolk's following example derived from ordinary life wherein a therapeutic intervention is not needed, for in some cases the effects of inarticulable experience can be restored by the course of life itself. Attachment research has shown that interactions with our care givers at a very early age shape the way our rapidly growing brain perceives reality. When, as a child, we repeatedly are not properly being taken care of and when we are not being comforted when we are upset, this information will be embodied in the fundamental structure of our brain circuitry and will form the template of how we think of ourselves and the world around us. The inner maps thus formed, prove themselves to be remarkably stable across time, a finding that is supported by neuroscientific research as well (Eagleman 2020). Naturally, since the experiences happened to us on such an early age, we are unable to propositionally recollect them, making articulation impossible. This might add on to the idea that the traces left behind by these sort of experiences are isolated and impossible to convert. However, according to van der Kolk, despite the stability and inarticulability of these inner maps, these circuits can be modified *by experience itself*. Van der Kolk explains: "A deep loving relationship, particularly during adolescence, when the brain once again goes through a period of exponential change, truly can transform us. So can the birth of a child, as our babies often teach us how to love. Adults who were abused .. as children can still learn the beauty of intimacy and mutual trust. .. In contrast, previously uncontaminated childhood maps can become so distorted by an adult rape or assault that all roads are rerouted into terror or despair. These responses

are not reasonable and therefore cannot be changed simply by reframing irrational beliefs" (van der Kolk 2014, 154).

What van der Kolk is aiming at, is that in a person's life some experiences are being engrained so deeply in the body, that it is to be expected that therapy on a cognitive basis will turn out to be insufficient. Our great challenge then, is to apply the lessons of neuroplasticity, the flexibility of brain circuits, to rewire the brains and reorganize the minds of people who have been programmed by life itself. It seems quite intuitive to conclude then, that what we need is an approach aimed at the experiences of the living body, instead of a primarily cognitive approach which seeks to scrutinize past events and correct irrational beliefs. In what follows, he pleads for a new paradigm for treatment, moving away from traditional talking and drug therapies and towards an alternative approach taking the living body as its primary focus. He discusses a wide range of therapeutic strategies, such as EMDR[16], sensi-motor psychotherapy, somatic experience, and mindfulness, but also less well established forms of treatment like neurofeedback, creative and communal therapies, and the usage of family constellations. These varying treatments of course have many differences but they also have some notable elements in common that traditional talking therapy has a lack of: 1. they primarily aim at getting the body calmed down on a visceral level and 2. they enable patients to express their inner world in a bodily manner and restore the harmful effects of their experiences likewise. The positive results accomplished by these body oriented therapies indicate that the impact of these experiences may be sensitive to context after all and can be modified to meet new circumstances, contrary to Schechtman's assumption. Also, these observations suggest that the narratives that are truly constitutive of who we are, primarily are being stored bodily and may only secondary be expressed propositionally. Therefore, the degree of articulation does not seem to be the right measure to determine whether a narrative should be considered to be identity constituting or not.

One might object that the domain of trauma, just as Schechtman's case of the obsessive compulsory patient, is pathological and therefore we should be cautious to draw any conclusions from it. However, the basic principle of embodied experiences can easily be translated to a non-pathological, more mundane context. Indeed, most day to day experience passes immediately into oblivion, therefore many of those events are impossible to articulate when asked for. However, this does not automatically entail that these are of no importance to one's identity. Take for example the numerous times a mother helped a child brushing her teeth or getting dressed. These memories may not be articulated for they do not seem to be very distinctive, however, the feeling of being taken cared for as a child, which is what these practical little tasks express

[16] During EMDR the patient recalls the traumatic event and in particular the associated images, thoughts and feelings whilst simultaneously following a distracting stimulus. Particularly interesting in the context of implicit narratives is that this treatment can be conducted effectively without the patient actually telling the therapist what has happened. According to van der Kolk it is precisely because the EMDR doesn't require patients to speak about the intolerable, or explain to a therapist why they feel so upset, it allows them to stay fully focused on their internal experience (van der Kolk 2014, 303).

ultimately, will most certainly be determinative of the person one is today (Goldie 2012, 44). Also, small injuries or insults may be reminded in a similar way. The content of the insult or remark oftentimes fades, but our dislike for the person who made it usually persists. It will instantaneously be expressed in a bodily manner through changes in emotional arousal, body physiology, and muscular action (van der Kolk 2014, 211). We can see how this is true when we bump into someone unexpectedly and our bodies will instantly tell us how we relate to the person. Likewise, psychologist Harriet Lerner describes the moment in which a letter drops on one's doormat: the receiver's first bodily reaction will reveal the narrative determinative of the interpersonal relationship, irrespective of one's capacity to articulate it. To Lerner's opinion this initial bodily reaction overrules a potentially diverging, after the fact, explicitly uttered story (Lerner 2017). It is in these ways sensory triggers like scents, sounds, or images may cause implicit narratives to resurface and be expressed bodily. The same goes for unexpected encounters or being situated physically in settings reminiscent of childhood for example, or other defining periods in one's life. Sometimes we may find the words to express what makes us feel and react in a certain way, but oftentimes language will fall short. Nevertheless, this lack of articulation will by no means call into question the personal importance of the experience. Therefore, dismissing these oftentimes subtle signs or overriding them by articulating an explicit narrative which may seem more appropriate or intelligible, should be considered to be a missed opportunity to self-knowledge. It is in this way that Strawson has a point in quoting Rilke, that only those memories that "have changed into our very blood, into glance and gesture, and are nameless, no longer to be distinguished from ourselves", are the ones that are relevant to identity (Strawson 2004, 432).

As for Strawson's concerns about our revisionary nature, studying the domain of trauma reveals an interesting feature of memory in PTSD patients. To recall, Strawson is worried that by telling our story we will drift away from the truth by each telling. To his opinion an optimal narrative would be the one told by a talented and impartial journalist (Strawson 2004, 442). It seems then, that what Strawson considers to be an ideal, non-distorted telling would be a narrative that would depict the experiences of the history exactly the way they were at the very moment. Goldie's notion of narrative already made clear that applying new perspectives to our narrative is essential for it to be called a narrative. But adding to that, the exact depiction of the scenes the way they were at the moment of happening is precisely what is pathologic about memory in PTSD patients. In the Grant Study of Adult Development, which has systematically followed the psychological and physical health of more than two hundred Harvard men, the majority would go off to fight in World War II. These men were interviewed in detail about their war experiences in '45/'46 and again in '89/'90. In the latter interviews non-traumatized men would give very different accounts from the narratives recorded in their immediate postwar interviews. With the passage of time, intense events had been bleached and the current telling was one of a passed history. In contrast, the men who had been traumatized and subsequently developed PTSD did not modify their accounts at all; their memories were preserved essentially intact forty-five years after the war ended. These men were trapped in the past and

suffered ongoingly (van der Kolk 2014, 2010). Again, we can see how some sorts of revision turn out to be an essential part of human autobiographical narrativizing, not a hazard.

With the exploration of the domain of trauma I hope to have demonstrated that departing from the embodied nature of human experience will add to the argument of intelligibility and relevance of implicit narratives. We have seen that contrary to Schechtman's opinion, the effect of adverse events is global, yet simultaneously articulation is oftentimes impaired. Also, however it is true that the effects of trauma may be isolated when approached cognitively or propositionally, most certainly this does not seem to be the case when treatment is based on experience and embodiment. We may conclude that assigning a superior status to explicit narratives reflects an overly cognitive notion of narrative, since it fails to appreciate the embodiment of our history.

Now that I have shown that implicit narratives should indeed be given due weight in narrative theories of identity, it might be interesting to return to Strawson's episodic approach and examine in what ways the concept of implicit narratives can be of use in mitigating his stance towards narrativity.

4. Strawson and Narrativity

My primary aim is not to defend narrative theories of identity against Strawson's argument nor do I wish to deny that in some ways an episodic outlook on life may be fruitful. However, in the context of my thesis it might be useful to say a few things about his defense of episodicism[17]. In his description of what true friendship entails Strawson may be right to note that remembering the factual events of a mutual history is by no means necessary to appreciate the relationship in full (Strawson 2004, 450). However, we can easily see how our mutual history in itself is very relevant indeed in this matter and more specifically, those embodied elements that affect our 'self' and our relationship in this very moment. This is an observation Strawson presumably will endorse as well, since he states that the value attributed to past shared experiences with one's friend is shown in how one is in the present. Even so, it seems clear that accepting the importance past events have for us *now*, whether they are being remembered or not, presumes a diachronic ordering. As a matter of fact, we might even suspect that not only Strawson is just as diachronic as many others, but also just as narrative. Since it seems obvious it is not just a diachronic ordering he presupposes but also, in the example of friendship, these events are laden with value and meaning. Assigning personal meaning to diachronically ordered events makes narrative (Goldie 2012, 17). As a result, past events color the current relationship with his friend, just as

[17] Also see Mackenzie's case of Saks' schizophrenia which makes a convincing argument against Strawson's anti-narrative stance (Mackenzie 2014).

a single note in a chord colors the overall experience of the chord (Schechtman 1996, 137).

The relevance of the emphasis on embodiment of life experiences may be exemplified even more in Strawson's description of what musical performance consists in, for the musician might have no detailed memory whatsoever of the numerous study hours she has invested up to the moment of performance. Nevertheless it's obvious that the actual performance can only be as good as it is when these past, diachronically ordered events have been incorporated by the musician herself and are of significant importance for the musician her*self* at the time of performance. Also we might add, that alongside the technical studies, other life experiences the musician has been through are implemented implicitly into the way she will perform. It seems hard to maintain then, that the musician at the time of performance will not care for her former *self* in the specific way as captured by the four features. It is in these ways that the embodiment of our history fits our everyday intuition but simultaneously, contra the episodic outlook on life, it is our history indeed that matters to our 'self' today. When the concept of implicit narratives is given due weight in narrative theories of identity, it might turn out that the gap between 'diachronics' and 'episodics' is not as wide as it at first appeared.

Finally, one last remark about Rilke's prose: Strawson's 'glance and gesture'-quotation, which is meant to illustrate "how the past can be present or alive in the present without being present or alive *as* the past" (Strawson 2004, 432), is a fragment from *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* (1910), a semi-autobiographical novel and coming of age story. First, the literary form as chosen by Rilke, a semi-autobiographical work of prose, reveals he himself was quite narrative in nature. Being a coming of age story, it can hardly be interpreted episodically. Second, the quoted lines are extracted from a larger section. The theme of this passage is the eternal debate between being out in the world and writing about the world. Indeed, the lines that are cited by Strawson, express the idea that only the past experiences that affect the present, that 'have changed into our very blood', matter to our current self. However, that is not the *whole* story. Preceding these lines, Rilke draws up a sequence of personally meaningful events, involving a life span, involving childhood and death, which actually reveals a strikingly narrative disposition. With this passage, Rilke tells us that all of these experiences are of significance for the 'selves' we are today. Indeed the points of subjectivity and affectivity are being expressed, just as the element of embodiment, as Strawson means to illustrate. But just the same, we can see this work of prose is fundamentally narrative in nature.[18]

I will cite the full text below, since Strawson's move to extract only a few lines from the whole, aptly represents his episodic error. Again, just as with the metaphor of the chord: the sound of a single note will be determined by the harmony of the

[18] Similar observations on Rilke's quest for truthfulness of his poetry, can be found in the autobiography of Stefan Zweig, a contemporary of Rilke (Zweig, 1944). This quest aptly exemplifies the process of 'tatônnement', the search for which narrative is truly his own, and underlines the significance of subjectivity.

whole and vice versa. Likewise, the words as cited by Strawson, reveal an altered meaning when being interpreted in the whole:

> "Poems amount to so little when you write them too early in your life. You ought to wait and gather sense and sweetness for a whole lifetime, and a long one if possible, and then, at the very end, you might perhaps be able to write ten good lines. For poems are not, as people think, simply emotions (one has emotions early enough)—they are experiences.
>
> For the sake of a single poem, you must see many cities, many people and things, you must understand animals, must feel how birds fly, and know the gesture which small flowers make when they open in the morning.
>
> You must be able to think back to streets in unknown neighborhoods, to unexpected encounters, and to partings you had long seen coming; to days of childhood whose mystery is still unexplained, to parents whom you had to hurt when they brought in a joy and you didn't pick it up (it was a joy for somebody else); to childhood illnesses that began so strangely with so many and profound and difficult transformations, to days in quiet restrained rooms and to mornings by the sea, to sea itself, to seas, but it is still not enough to be able to think of all that.
>
> You must have memories of many nights of love, each one different from all the others, memories of women screaming in labor, and of light, pale, sleeping girls who have just given birth and are closing again. But you must also have been beside the dying, must have sat beside the dead in the room with the open windows and the scattered noises.
>
> And it is not yet enough to have memories. You must be able to forget them when they are many, and you must have the immense patience to wait until they return. For the memories themselves are not important. Only when they have changed into our very blood, into glance and gesture, and are nameless, no longer to be distinguished from ourselves only then can it happen that in some very rare hour the first word of a poem arises in their midst and goes forth from them" (Rilke 1910, 6).

It seems then, it is in the full text of Rilke, that Schechtman and Strawson may finally meet.

5. Summary and Conclusion

In Schechtman's Narrative Self Constitution View (1996) implicit self-narratives are taken to be unarticulated parts of one's life which nevertheless determine one's

feelings and behaviors. Galen Strawson (2004) takes an anti-narrativist stance, mainly because of the revision thesis according to which explicit narratives are almost invariably non-veridical reconstructions, which makes them unfit for self-constitution. Implicit narratives seem resistant to this sort of revision, and would hence undercut Strawson's anti-narrative argument. In my thesis I seek to clarify whether the concept of implicit narratives is intelligible and to what extent a narrative should be articulated to be considered constitutive of identity.

The NSCV aims to answer the characterization question, asking which actions, experiences, beliefs, values, desires, character traits, and so on, are to be attributed to a person. Schechtman insists on an affective reading of Locke, which entails that an experience should be considered to be of one and the same consciousness if one can *feel* it's affect in the current moment. Consequently repressed memories that nevertheless affect us in the present should be counted to be constitutive of identity. Alongside this affective outlook Schechtman emphasizes that a narrative should be considered to be ours when it affects the 'lens' through which we experience ourselves and the world. This implies that our subjectivity should be put forefront. To guard intelligibility and authenticity of a narrative the NSCV minimally requires a narrative to be linear in form and it should comply with the reality and articulation constraint.

Schechtman argues that in case of diverging narratives, implicit narratives should be considered to be less attributable to a person, since they are not available for scrutiny. I argue that it is the contrary, for it is the implicit narrative that complies with Locke's criterion of affection and makes our actions and emotional life intelligible. Further, contra to the explicit narrative, the implicit narrative is befitted to warrant our subjectivity and therefore provides for the better answer to the characterization question. I hypothesize that Schechtman's preference for the explicit narrative originates from the role of agency in personhood. However, in case of diverging narratives, agency seems illusory since it actually is the implicit narrative that determines one's actions. Solitary actions can be made intelligible only, when being regarded as lower ordered actions nested within a higher order pursuit. Also, looking back on one's history one may include varying interpretations of an experience in one's narrative, by specifying the attribution relations (Walker 2019, Ricoeur 1992, Goldie 2012). Furthermore, it seems that the NSCV conflates autonomy with identity, for however it may be true that we are not autonomous regarding our implicit narratives, they nevertheless constitute our identity (Mackenzie 2010). In addition, Goldie (2012) emphasizes that the process of narration is a groping, tentative procedure and therefore the degree of articulation may vary. Contemporary developments in the field of the cognitive sciences and trauma treatment in psychiatry provide for additional scaffolding for the argument in favor of implicit narratives and the role and significance of the embodied nature of narrative (Hassin 2007, van der Kolk 2014). Finally, in the last section I hope to have shown that Strawson is far more narrative then he cares to admit.

Pressing the articulation constraint too hard, might lead to the impression that despite it's affective point of departure, the NSCV is an overly cognitive notion of narrativity.

Also, we may conclude that Mackenzie's current definition of what a narrative minimally consists in (Mackenzie 2014, 158), fails to specify the affective criterion and thereby the importance of subjectivity. Also, it might be recommended to emphasize that an autobiographical narrativizing is a dynamic process, making it permanently open to revision. Hereby gaps, question marks and ambiguities can be understood as elements that enhance, rather than undermine, the notions of intelligibility, causality and coherence, as required in the definition of narrative.

Considering all of the above, I conclude that implicit narratives are intelligible indeed and that their implementation will point us to a more body oriented account of narrativity, in which the criterion of affect is prioritized over the articulation constraint. When given due weight, the concept of implicit narratives will refute Strawson's revision-based argument against narrative theories of personal identity. Hence, the concept of implicit narratives may reconcile Schechtman and Strawson on this matter.

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