

Analysing Authenticity: Explaining What it is to be True to Yourself and
Why this is Good

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Introduction

Ordinary understandings of authenticity associate being authentic with being true to who one is. Attempts to understand what is meant by this are often accompanied by further trope-like clarifications, taking authenticity to entail *being who you really want to be* or *being a genuine and unique version of yourself*. For Bernard Williams (Quoted in Guignon, 2004), “authenticity is... the idea that some things are in some real sense you, and others aren’t”. Apart from thinking of authenticity as being true to who one is, there is also a general sense in which we consider authenticity to be a good thing and something to aspire towards. On closer philosophical inspection, these ordinary understandings of authenticity seem to raise further questions due to their vagueness and vacuousness- signifying the opaque nature of authenticity as a philosophical concept. These understandings raise questions such as: “What is the self that one is being true to?” and “What does being true to this self entail?”. Furthermore, in generally taking authenticity to be a good thing or something to aspire towards, we need to account for what it is about authenticity that makes it good. Finding adequate explanations that can account for these questions mentioned above belies provision of a tenable philosophical account of authenticity.

It is my interest in demystifying our vague ordinary use of the notion of authenticity that makes it an interesting philosophical concept to focus my conceptual analysis on. In this dissertation, I engage in a conceptual analysis of what authenticity is with the hopes of illuminating a satisfactory and substantive philosophical account of what it means for one to be true to who one is. To provide a conceptual account that can

adequately match our considered judgments about authenticity, I also hope that my project will be one that achieves reflective equilibrium regarding the notion of authenticity. By reflective equilibrium, I refer to the methodological approach to philosophical inquiry that has been canonized as a result of John Rawls' (1971) work in developing his theory of justice (see *A Theory of Justice*, 1971). Reflective equilibrium entails finding a state of balance or coherence between our ordinary understandings of what something is (i.e., a moral concept) and the theoretical account used to explain what that concept is (Rawls, 1971:18-22). Achieving reflective equilibrium may require that we change the theory to accommodate ordinary judgments or modify or reject some of the considered judgments about a concept to preserve the tenability of the theory. Taking this into consideration, my conceptual analysis of authenticity is primarily interested in achieving reflective equilibrium in this sense. My main focus will be to find coherence between the abovementioned ordinary understandings of authenticity and provide a theoretical understanding of authenticity. I will be developing my own theoretical conception of authenticity. I hope that by the end of this project, I would have provided a satisfactory answer to the question, "What does it mean for one to be true to who one is and for this to be a good thing?"

Two main considered judgments will be driving my conceptual analysis of authenticity. First, our understanding of being authentic as "being true to who you uniquely are". Secondly, our considered judgment of authenticity as an ethical ideal that all persons are capable of attaining in the middle of living their lives. It is in this sense that my project has two inquiries laden in it: one being concerned with what we mean by being true to yourself and the other being interested in unpacking authenticity as an ethical ideal. The first one relates to providing tenable answers to the following questions: "What does being true to oneself entail?" and "what is it that one is being true to when one is considered to be authentic?". The second line of inquiry is interested in providing an answer to the questions, "why is it that authenticity is thought of as a good thing that we should all aspire to?". Should my philosophical account of authenticity be able to achieve reflective equilibrium concerning these two main lines of inquiry, I would have provided a tenable and competitive account of authenticity that has intuitive appeal and stays true to why we employ the term in our society.

In the first chapter, I will be doing some ground clearing in establishing our ordinary understandings of authenticity. Here, I will be primarily interested in showing the initial tenability of our considered judgments about authenticity. In a project of reflective equilibrium, as Catherine Elgin (1996:102) notes, we must ensure that the theory or

concept developed about a particular considered judgment is robust. The only way to do so, Elgin (1996:102) argues, is to make sure we make use of generally initially credible considered judgments. In this concise chapter, I will show how our considered judgment of authenticity as “being true to who one is” is an initially tenable idea. I will illustrate this by exploring our intuitions using a scenario that can help us explore what being authentic entails. Proceeding from this chapter, I move to develop a conception of authenticity as being true to who one is. To do so in a manner that achieves reflective equilibrium, I will methodically provide an answer to what authenticity is by providing accounts for what it is that one is being true to, what it is to be true to oneself, and what it is that makes being authentic good.

In the second chapter, I will begin to conceptualize the first puzzle of an adequate conception of authenticity. Here, I will start by providing an account of the self that one is being true to when one is authentic. I begin by looking at Alasdair MacIntyre’s (1981) narrative unity of a human life as a viable starting point in understanding the self that we are being true to when we are being authentic. MacIntyre, in *After Virtue*, seeks to provide a conception of a unified human life as a way to build an understanding of virtue that is non-arbitrary and adequate when we come to judge individuals as being virtuous persons. However, as I will show in the third chapter, MacIntyre’s narrative conception of the self is not without its issues. MacIntyre is considerably ambiguous with regards to the nature of the unity of the self in question; issues mainly brought about by the temporality of the self. Attempts to conceive of the self as a unified whole seem to be at odds with the fact that a significant part of who we are is laden in the *future* - a part of our lives that we have not yet lived. The narrative conception of the self runs into the following problem: how can we conceive of the self as a story of an entire life when a part of one’s life is not yet lived?

Bernard Williams (2007) in *Life as Narrative* raises two main charges of scepticism that directly relate to this problem, with the first one noting the potential redundancy of a narrative unity of self and the second noting the impossibility of conceiving of a unified self in the first place. The first charge of scepticism is raised due to Williams’ belief that adding a narrative to the full explanatory tale of a human life may be unnecessary if the explanatory tale gives us adequate information about who the person is. The second charge of scepticism, which I take to mainly come as a result of MacIntyre’s ambiguity on the nature of the unified self, comes about because of the impossibility of conceiving one’s life as an *actual* whole when one is in the midst of living it. MacIntyre’s motivations for positing a unified self are to provide an adequate and non-arbitrary conception of the virtues. Williams, if he’s right in his scepticism, may be able to show that we cannot make use of a narrative unity of self

to shed light on what it is for one to be moral *now*. Noting that I aim to use the narrative unity of self as that which we refer to when we speak about authentic selves, we can see how these doubts could easily be extended to authenticity. This is given by the concern that the narrative unity of self has the potential to fail in explaining what it is for someone to be who they truly are *now*.

However, there is a strong sense in which our ordinary understandings of authenticity take it to be a state which one can attain in the middle of living one's life. The idea that we can be authentic amid and throughout our lives is a notion I want to preserve in my conception of authenticity. It is for these reasons I propose, in the fourth chapter of this dissertation, a modified version of MacIntyre's narrative unity of the self. I term this modified conception of self the Extrapolated Narrative Unity of Self (ENUS) and take it to be the best way to conceive of the self that one is being true to when one is authentic. In short, the Extrapolated Narrative Unity of Self encompasses the story of who one is. This story, I take it, comprises of the factually supported historical narrative of all that one is, and all that one can *possibly* take themselves to be. The Extrapolated Narrative Unity of Self will be taken as the self which I take it one is being true to when one is authentic. My view of the self borrows from Aristotelianism in that it considers the projected future self to be a function of one's chosen *telos*- the ethical goal of a good life that one pursues as one's life purpose or ultimate aim at present.

I am of the view that this Extrapolated Narrative Unity of Self is the missing component to a robust conception of authenticity, due to its peculiar temporal nature. As I will show, the temporal nature of the Extrapolated Narrative Unity of Self contrasts and provides an alternative to the intuitive thought of a unified self as a unity of one's past, present, and *actual* future- something Williams raises as impossible when one is in the middle of living their life. In further ratifying the tenability of conceiving of the self as a narrative unity in this new sense I have suggested, I will also appeal to Ricoeur's (1995) notion of narrative configuration to further show how it is that one's life can come to be understood as a coherent whole. I will also be looking to Charles Taylor's (1989) notion of "taking a stance in inescapable moral frameworks", where a unity of self can be said to be brought in place by the human desire to live a meaningful life. I will also look to Somogy Varga's (2011) notion of alternativelessness. It is in robustly shaping my conception of the Extrapolated Narrative Unity of Self through appealing to these ways of further thinking about the unity of self that I hope to provide a strong understanding of the self that one is being true to.

In the fourth chapter, I will move to address the question of what being true to oneself entails, given that one's self is to be understood as the Extrapolated Narrative Unity

of Self. I will show that being true to who one is involves effort and activity geared at the composition, expression, and maintenance of the story of oneself. Furthermore, the story of one's self that serves as the content of the Extrapolated Narrative Unity of Self must necessarily be an accurate representation of the explanatory tale of one's life as one has lived it. In short, I will discuss efforts of assuring accuracy and asserting oneself as irrevocable to some of the efforts I take to constitute being true to who one is. In the fifth and final chapter of this thesis, I turn my attention towards explaining why we ordinarily think of authenticity as being a good thing. Here, I defend the claim that we *generally associate* authenticity with goodness because of its links with other things we ordinarily take to be good. Firstly, I take it that authenticity is usually taken to be good because we see it to require and reinforce a virtuous life. Secondly, I argue that we take authenticity to be good because of how it is inextricably linked to living a Eudaimonic life. As it will be evident, I limit the ambitiousness of accounting for the goodness in authenticity. Due to the scope of this dissertation, the main aim will only be to account for the goodness of authenticity by showing how it is significantly *related* to goodness. This aims at providing new avenues for conceptualizing a better philosophical understanding of why it is that we ordinarily perceive authenticity to be an ethical good.

Chapter 1

On Our Ordinary Understandings of Authenticity

In order to present a conception of authenticity that can succeed in achieving reflective equilibrium, preliminarily establishing the well-founded nature of our considered judgments about authenticity should not be taken for granted. It is important that the considered judgments which initiate a project of reflective equilibrium are themselves initially adequately defensible and can be used as a reasonable basis for a conceptual analysis of authenticity. Catherine Elgin (1996), in *The Merits of Equilibrium*, outlines the key conditions that a considered judgment needs to meet in order to be used as the initiating point of a philosophical enquiry seeking to achieve reflective equilibrium. Elgin (1996:102-5) tells us that a considered judgment needs to be “initially tenable”. I will start this chapter by expounding on this condition set out by Elgin. Thereafter, I will provide a working scenario example

that I will use to test our considered judgments about authenticity throughout this paper consistently. Making reference to the intuitions emergent from the working scenario, I will then proceed to do some ground clearing on our ordinary understandings of authenticity with the hopes of establishing an initially tenable and coherent set of related considered judgments that will be used in chapter 2 for the proceeding conceptual analysis of authenticity.

According to Elgin (1996:102-5), a considered judgment is considered initially tenable within the context of the project of achieving reflective equilibrium when it (i) is generally accepted as preliminarily credible by those who make use of the concept it refers to, (ii) has preliminary consonance with other considered judgments that are already held and closely related to it, and (iii) is relevant to the other considered judgments we already accept.¹ In terms of authenticity, the considered judgments about authenticity mustn't curtail our extensive efforts to be authentic. Simply put, whatever we ordinarily believe authenticity to be must be generally seen to result in being authentic, should one take the effort to act on what one believes authenticity is. The condition of the general acceptance of a considered judgment as initially credible is not sufficient, by itself, in establishing initial tenability. It is likely that the general acceptance of a considered judgment as initially credible may be predicated in significant bias, prejudice, or common errors held about the concept or idea that

¹ The initial credibility of a considered judgment is said to be established when it is generally accepted that our belief (considered judgment) of what something is does not curtail the actions or outcomes for which that belief is intended. While some of these errors and prejudices can be weeded out in the process of achieving reflective equilibrium between considered judgments and a theory of a concept, I take it that significant errors can also be identified and addressed at the level of the considered judgments themselves. Striving for consistency between closely related considered judgments can be a way of reinforcing the considered judgment as a tenable understanding of what it is that it refers to. It is this that we speak of when concerned about achieving consonance between a considered judgment and other already accepted considered judgments which are closely related to it. The final condition required to establish the initial tenability of a considered judgment is that it be relevant to the other considered judgments that we hold about that concept. In supplementing the consonance of the considered judgment, we want the related consonant considered judgments to be in a symbiotic network where the individual judgments are made more tenable due to their place in this network of considered judgments. For a more detailed explanation of how the initial credibility of a considered judgment is established, see Elgin, C. 1996. *The Merits of Equilibrium*. In *Considered Judgment*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 101-145.

the considered judgments refer to (Elgin, 1996:102). For establishing the initial tenability of our considered judgments about what authenticity is, it must be shown that our considered judgments about authenticity are in initial harmony with themselves and the ideas closely related to authenticity like truthfulness or uniqueness.

Preserving the tenability of what a concept is ordinarily understood to be *as a whole*, requires that we sometimes secede or annex certain considered judgments about what something is or those that relate to what that thing is. (Elgin, 1996: 103). Regarding our considered judgments about authenticity, it is imperative that each of the considered judgments systematically serve our holistic general understanding of what authenticity is. Having explained the three conditions required for a considered judgment to be generally initially tenable, I now proceed to present the working scenario that will be used to interrogate and test our intuitions on authenticity in the rest of this dissertation.

Consider the scenario of a twenty-five-year-old man named Themba. Themba is currently in an internal battle with the acceptance of his sexuality as a gay man. We can understand why: He comes from a Christian conservative and Xhosa traditional background, one still rampant with homophobia and conservatively patriarchal expectations. Throughout his entire life and within his spheres of influence, he frequently had his “manhood” questioned by his counterparts. This continued throughout his years of adulthood- where he was continually being pestered to find a wife in order to be a “proper man”. In many ways, hearing his kinfolk engage in homophobic talk, he considers being gay as something that is not an option for him- both internally and expressively. As a result, he suppresses his sexuality, both to himself and others. To convince himself and others that he is not gay, he often overcompensates his masculinity and performs heterosexuality. He does so to a point where he continually makes an effort to convince himself and believe that he is heterosexual. This is something that he finds himself continuously having to do, particularly due to his homosexual proclivities being ever-present and pervasive in him.

As a result, Themba lives more of his life being preoccupied with his fear of being seen as being gay. That is, his motivations for asserting himself to himself and others as heterosexual are often founded in exogenous reasons associated with negative depictions of homosexuality in his community. He constantly obsesses over the social costs associated with being gay and yearns to be “normal”. In his thoughts, Themba can be understood as martyring who he *actually* is in order to maintain acceptability

from others in his community, as well as lives as an individual who aims to continue enjoying the net socially beneficial existence that heterosexual people do. All these considerations, so to speak, leave Themba in a place where he has brainwashed himself to believing that he is heterosexual, when he is *actually* gay.

In assessing the abovementioned scenario, our intuitions should immediately tell us that we are experiencing a tragic case of inauthenticity. This is marked by a few considerations that may relate to our considered judgments about authenticity. At first, we can say that Themba is not being true to who he is. Here, we see that the notion of authenticity is closely related to our conceptions of being truthful and is incompatible with forms of deception or misrepresentation of self. The intuition that he is not being true to himself is given largely by the fact that Themba is choosing to suppress an aspect of who he is in order to maintain social capital in his community. Put differently, in Themba choosing to deceive himself and others into believing that he is heterosexual, and hence suppressing his actual sexuality as a gay man, he is failing to be true to himself. His self-deceptive idea of himself as heterosexual can actually be seen as curtailing his efforts to be who he really is- something we see as important to being authentic as well.

Themba can also be considered to not be who *he* truly is, privy to the motivations behind why he decides to understand himself and present himself as heterosexual. There is a sense here that there is a fraudulent self and an actual self that are present. The fraudulent self is that which is primarily constructed by exogenous considerations like him essentially seeking approval and acceptance from others. Here, because his heterosexuality is not self-originating in the right sense, it would be significantly suspect to consider his heterosexuality as a reflection of who he is. He is actively disregarding who he actually is, which goes against our ordinary conceptions of authenticity. Asserting heterosexuality as a means of rejecting his homosexuality, and not being heterosexual simpliciter, significantly undermines the claims that Themba is being himself. This further ratifies intuitions that he is being inauthentic.

The one intuition I seek to problematize is the association of being authentic with being *whoever* one wants to be. At the level of our considered judgments about authenticity, some might hold the view that Themba is being who he wants to be by choosing to “be” heterosexual. It is genuinely the case that Themba doesn’t “want” to be homosexual either. It is an identity which he believes he has pragmatic reasons to reject. He doesn’t want to live a life where he is persecuted or be ousted by his community and loved ones. We can see how some might say that he is being who he wants to be by choosing to be who he is *not*. Here, we might want to put preliminary

qualifications to the notion of being who you want to be, as it relates to authenticity. Intuitively, when speaking of the nexus between being who you want to be and being who one is, we commonly conceive being who you want to be to be a desire that is intrinsically motivated within the context of authenticity. Intuitively, it is also well-founded to believe that someone is authentic when who they are, so to speak, is *properly* self-originating. Now, formulating who you are on the premise of avoiding how others may perceive you or what they may do to you does not seem to be adequately self-originating in the desired manner. Here, we could simply understand Themba as primarily wanting to be who *others* want him to be- an idea which is at odds with being authentic. This is further ratified, in the first instance, by how the motivations for being who others want him to be are laden in fears of what would happen to him if he were to be who he actually is. To take who one truly is to be compatible with the intuition that one is being who one really wants to be, it seems that we must construe who he really wants to be as something that is properly self-originating.

Finally, we can seemingly take Themba to be living an impoverished existence as a result of the suppression of his homosexuality. He is somewhat robbing himself of living a full and fulfilling life by living a life governed by fear and sacrificing who he really is for the acceptance of others. Side-stepping and suppressing who he is takes away from his flourishing qua who he actually is. Despite the potential contention regarding whether it is bad that he is pretending to be something he is not, we can reasonably agree that Themba pretending to be a heterosexual is bad *for* him. In one sense, the life Themba lives is one of constant anxiety which stops him from living how he would otherwise live if conditions were more favourable to him. So, in this sense, it seems that we can acknowledge that under different circumstances, Themba would be able to conceive of being gay as an overall better way to live. This would mean that we can conceive of the fact that, *ceteris paribus*, he is not living a life that is the most fulfilling for him. This indicates that Themba lives a life that is bad for him or a *worse* life in an important way as a result of him pretending to be heterosexual.

In the above exploration of intuitions about authenticity, we see that there is an initially tenable understanding of authenticity that emerges. Firstly, the key initially tenable understanding of authenticity is that it involves being true to who you are. What this is said to involve is the idea that there is a sense in which there is a self that is an actual reflection of who you are. This is particularly given by our exploration of the intuition that there is a fraudulent self and a real self in the case where Themba asserts himself as a heterosexual man. As such, taking this intuition to be generally accepted

as credible, we take it to be a key intuition that needs to be explained by a theoretical account of authenticity that aims at achieving reflective equilibrium. Expounding this real or true self will be a challenge that my conceptual analysis will have to meet. A theoretical account of authenticity would also need to adequately explain how in being true to who he is, he is being who he really wants to be and who he really is. Finally, we also need to explain the strong intuition of how Themba's being inauthentic is essentially bad for him. Conversely, a theory of authenticity seeking to achieve reflective equilibrium would need to explain why being true to himself is something that is generally good by explaining why being authentic is good *for him*.

For now, we can establish that my exploration of the intuitions has established the general initial tenability of the considered judgments about authenticity. Largely, I strived to make the considerations consonant with each other by refining our understanding of what it means for one to be who one *wants* to be. I have shown how, individually, the considered judgments are also generally credible by exploring them in terms of the intuitions the scenario brings about. Having shown the initial tenability of the considered judgments, I proceed to provide a theoretical conception of authenticity which achieves reflective equilibrium with our considered judgments. In the second, third and fourth chapters, I focus on the strong ordinary understanding of authenticity as being true to who you are. Mainly, I focus on expounding what being true to oneself is by exploring these two questions: "What is the self that one is being true to?" and "What does being true to oneself entail?".

Chapter 2

The Self One Is True To: MacIntyre's Narrative Unity of Self

As I have shown at the end of the first chapter, thinking about authenticity as being true to oneself raises two challenges that a philosophical account of authenticity must account for. First, there is the problem of providing a tenable account of the self that one is being true to. The second problematic requires us to provide a tenable account of what being true to one's self entails. I want to use this chapter as the raw material on which I will build a tenable understanding of the self we consider one to be true to when one is being authentic. In providing this tenable account of the self, I want to begin by looking at Alasdair MacIntyre's narrative unity conception of the self as a promising candidate for the self we are true to when we are authentic. In *After Virtue*, MacIntyre (1981:211) develops a conception of the self and understanding of a human life by drawing an analogy from the narrativity of the lives of literary and dramatic characters. He primarily makes use of an argument from analogy to show how it is the case that we can only intelligibly think of human lives,

and hence the human self, in terms of a narrative unity. In chapter 14 of *After Virtue*, MacIntyre (1981:214) particularly characterises the self as “the unity of a human life which is the unity of a narrative quest”. I will dedicate this chapter to explaining the plausibility of the self being a narrative unity in the way construed by MacIntyre. To do this, I will now proceed to explore the analogy he draws between the human life and the lives of fictional characters to show how a human’s self can also be understood as a narrative unity.

Barbara Hardy (1968:5) once said that “we dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope... through narrative”. MacIntyre’s project is dedicated to establishing the intelligibility of the claim that we interpret everything that we do, our behaviours, as well as our own selves in terms of a narrative unity. MacIntyre proceeds to establish the tenability of a narrative unity of a human life by first looking at two main challenges that may stand in the way of thinking of a self as a unity. The first he terms the Social Obstacle to conceiving of the self as a unified whole. The Social Obstacle encompasses the claim that we often occupy various discretely distinct social roles in our lives, each making different moral demands on the self and requiring different modes of behaviour and action from us (MacIntyre, 1981:203). As one would say, the very fact that we are often pulled in many directions and required to articulate ourselves in a multiplicity of ways puts significant pressure on the tenability of understanding a human life as a unity or a coherent whole. Secondly, there is the Sartrean inspired Existential Obstacle to understanding the self as a unified whole. The Existential Obstacle is slightly different in that it treats the self as separate from the roles one occupies in the world. Here, the claim that the self is a unified whole is undermined by denying that there are aspects of oneself that would need to be made coherent in the first place. Having these obstacles in mind, MacIntyre moves to present an alternative conception of the self that treats every aspect of who one is as part of a larger whole. Here, he simultaneously moves to show why it is justified to think of a human life and self as a unity by showing how this conception of the self-overcomes the potential issues of understanding the self as a unity. I will now proceed to expound on what MacIntyre takes the narrative unity of self to be through exploring the analogies he draws from literary and dramatic fiction.

The first point of analogy that MacIntyre draws is that, just like in literary and dramatic fiction, we find ourselves to be characters within our own life stories and the stories of others. Consider the lives of the fictional characters in the literary work of Chinua Achebe (1958), *Things Fall Apart*. We have the main character, Okonkwo, who purposefully shapes his own life as a negation of his father’s life, Unoka. Unoka, thought Okonkwo, was a lazy effeminate drunk who had nothing to his name.

Okonkwo's effort to become a virile, rich and hypermasculine warrior as a result of the shame he felt from his father also played a significant role in the lives of other characters- notably, his son Nwoye. Due to his own experience of hating the emasculated life his father lived, Okonkwo turns puts undue pressure on Nwoye to be more masculine so that Nwoye does not end up being a failure like Unoka. This, in turn, results in Nwoye's resentment of his father and everything that his father represents, including the Igbo tradition itself. Ultimately Nwoye goes as far as to join the religion of the colonizers as a final way of severing himself from his father, Okonkwo. This short synopsis shows the trajectory that each character's life takes as a result of another character's own behaviours and actions. By analogy, this paints a picture of how we can understand real human lives as interacting in a similar fashion.

Just like a fictional character, MacIntyre argues, who you are and who you become is privy to the influences of your sociality and the context you find yourself in. Looking at Okonkwo and his family, we act and behave in ways that come to shape our own lives as well as the lives of others. In MacIntyre's (1981:211) own terms, we are necessarily not just actors or characters in our own personal dramas, but also play the role of co-authors in our own stories and the stories of others. As a way of preliminarily addressing the existential obstacle to conceiving of the self as a unity, we see that different aspects of who we are can be primary constituents of who we are as a whole. The contexts we find ourselves in, the people we interact with, the roles we occupy in the stories of others, and our own stories can all come to form part of the person we end up being. This is largely because a human person's life, like a fictive character's life, is marked by suffering or acting in relation to the narratives of others and the settings in which one finds oneself (MacIntyre, 1981:211). We seemingly exist within a web of interacting narratives, with some narratives being nested in others.

We can see how this first line of analogy can be reasonably accepted. One important aspect of who we are is that we find ourselves existing in the world as social beings. In being brought into the world, we are already someone's child, someone's sibling, and later on become someone people work with or someone another person is married to. In this sense, we see that our lives are primarily intermingled with the lives of others. As such, it appears intuitively true that whatever we do and however we behave is going to have a bearing, whether direct or indirect, on the lives of other individuals. We also take it to be the case that the circumstances which we find ourselves in as we formulate our identities can have a significant and often deterministic effect on who we take ourselves to be. Our contexts have their own histories, their own stories, which come to influence the personal life stories that

define who we are. If we grow up in the rough part of town and live most of our formative years in poverty, the story of the circumstances we grew up in becomes the story of the beginning of our lives. This exploration indicates that we can accept that human lives are nested narratives in the same way that the lives of fictional characters are- with each story having a determinate impact on the unfolding of another. However, we need not necessarily say that who we are is wholly determined by what others do or how others behave either. We want to reserve the idea that in presiding over your own life, *you* should be the one that is ultimately responsible for how your life turns out. As such, we need to make sense of the idea of being a co-author of one's own life story without undermining the fact that one ultimately takes the first position of authorship and chief editorship of one's own life story. The same insight applies to the role of the settings in which we find ourselves play in determining who we are.

While this indicates how we can understand our lives as unfolding narratives that come to be influenced by our settings and our sociality, we have not yet fully shown how we can understand human life as a narrative unity. To focus more closely on the notion of a narrative unity, MacIntyre moves to draw an analogy between the temporal nature of a human life with the temporal nature of a fictional character's life. Here, he states his main claim about what the self is. MacIntyre (1981:205) proceeds to articulate how, just like we see in the temporal nature of fictional characters, the self "is a unity of a narrative that links birth to life to death as a narrative from beginning to middle to end." At first glance, there may be features of a fictional temporality that may prove contentious if we were to map them onto our understanding of an actual human life as a whole. Firstly, it seems that in the case of fictional characters, their life stories, so to speak, are received by readers from the author as already complete. The idea of a unity of beginning, middle and end of a fictional character's story is easy to comprehend given that all of who they are and all they will ever be is already present in the literary work. However, this is not how we think of a human life. In the middle of our lives, we find that we have not yet lived a significant portion of our lives: our respective futures. For these reasons, it may seem quite counterintuitive to conceive of human life stories as narrative unities of birth, life and death, amid living one's life.

There is perhaps a way in which MacIntyre can attempt to address these contentions. Whatever this way is, it has to address the following very key concern. Given that fictional characters are not authors of their own stories in the same way that we are, we can comprehend a fictional character's life story as already being available to be interpreted as a unity . For the same reason, we cannot conceive of the human life

story as actually given at any point in time. The pressure point for MacIntyre lies in the fact that the wholeness of a narrative requires that it have an “end” that enables us to weave one’s narrative into a whole- seemingly needing to account for the completeness of one’s life amid one’s living of it. Given the inability of a person to experience the actual ending of his life in the midst of living it, the *actual* end of a human life being inaccessible *in medias res* puts pressure on the tenability of conceiving the self as a narrative unity. This is a disanalogy that MacIntyre needs to resolve.

To this, MacIntyre simply claims that “stories are lived before they are told- except in the case of fiction” (MacIntyre, 1981:212). Here, MacIntyre deals with the different aspects of the temporality of a life (the beginning, middle, and end). It also shows how they are analogous to the temporal nature of fictional characters found in narratives, with the exception that we *live* our life stories first before we make sense of them as a coherent whole. In the case of the narrative history of an individual that is also the co-author, character, and executive editor of his own life story, MacIntyre takes the notion of the beginning of one’s life story to take dual shape. Firstly, one’s beginning is marked by the setting they find themselves in. This can be the circumstances in which they are born, the people they find themselves being related to when they enter this world, and the roles they find themselves occupying in the lives of others as they enter this world. What this captures, according to MacIntyre (1981:215), is the fact that “characters... never really start *ab initio*, they are plunged *in medias res*, the beginning of their story is in some sense already made for them by who and what has gone before them. This is a plausible understanding of the beginning of a self. When we are born, we find that our personal narratives are already nested in a pre-existing plot filled with various characters within a certain context, from our family environment to the social climate of the year in which we were born.

The second shape of the beginning of one’s life story takes the form of a *recurring* beginning. This recurring beginning occurs throughout one’s life, given by one’s position as a co-author and chief editor of their personal life story. The idea here is that if someone were to isolate an episode of your life and ask you “how did this come about?”, you should be able to pick out an earlier episode in your history as being causally effective in informing your present. It is this second shape of a beginning that MacIntyre takes to be important in understanding who we are at every given moment of our adult lives. Fictional characters seem to adequately display this second sense of a beginning, in that much of the story of a fictional character usually involves a historical causal history of who the character can be taken to be at whatever point in the story at which we are reading about the character. According

to MacIntyre, this second sense of a beginning seems to be closely related to who we take ourselves to be at the present moment of our lives. Here, these *beginnings* that inform how we got to the point at which we are telling the story about who we are, converge and hence constitute who one is at present.

In terms of the end of a human life story, MacIntyre admits that we do not have access to the actual end of our life stories in the middle of living our lives. What we see here is that MacIntyre chooses to accept the disanalogy between the temporal nature of a fictional character and a human self. However, as I will proceed to show, MacIntyre is interested in showing that this does not undermine the ability to understand a human life as a temporal narrative unity. In short, our lives are projected into the futures that are undefined and unpredictable for us as the characters living these narratives. Even more so, as characters of our own life stories, we are not present to experience the actual end of our personal stories. This is given by the fact that when we die, we are not there to take a survey of our own personal stories in their actual completion. However, just like a fictional character in the middle of its life, we are consistently propelled into our futures and are projected into an unfolding narrative (MacIntyre, 1981:216). An interesting aspect of a human life is that in the middle of living it, we find ourselves having gotten to where we are *now* as a result of our past and our future. A future that is a function of the ends and goals we have projected for our lives. MacIntyre claims, in Aristotelian terms, that it is our *telos* that connects who we are at every present moment with our futures. The conception of the good we pursue, which can be changed and altered throughout the entirety of one's life, is integral to who one sees themselves as being amid living one's life. It is a quintessential characteristic of a human life that it is *active* and not merely aimed at survival. As such, for one's life to be active, one must have a vision (*telos*) of who one wants to be and the kind of life one wants to live overall. This vision can be said to feed back into who they see themselves as being at present. In working in the present so that they may one day live their future, they are critically always connected to their future in the present. What we see emerging when we speak of a unity of the human life in MacIntyrean terms is a life that finds and lives for an ethical goal or end.

The nature of the end as associated with the *telos* of one's life reveals a final claim about the nature of the MacIntyrean narrative unity. This is the fact that a narrative unity is something that we can succeed or fail to achieve. He classifies "the unity of a human life as the unity of a narrative quest" (MacIntyre, 1981:219). He goes on to claim that "quests sometimes fail, are frustrated, abandoned or dissipated into distractions, and human lives can fail in this sense too" (MacIntyre, 1981:219). MacIntyre claims that to evaluate the success of a human life as a whole, we must

look at the success of the narrated quest for one's telos. Here, the idea behind a unified self can fail to be attained if one fails to live a life that is spent seeking a good life for oneself. Conversely, if one fails to live in pursuit of good life, one may fail to achieve a unified self. The only criterion of failure of unifying the self, as such, is laden in one's dedication to the attainment of their *telos*.

This, in essence, is the conception of the self as a narrative unity that MacIntyre provides that I hope is a good candidate for the self we are true to when we are being authentic. To show that I would be justified in using this conception of the self as a starting point in providing an account for what it is for someone to be authentic, I want to show how MacIntyre's intentions for exploring the unity of self can easily be transposed onto my conceptual analysis of authenticity. The main project of MacIntyre's *After Virtue* is to provide a complete account of the virtues that is both non-arbitrary and adequate. To do so, MacIntyre claims that a complete account of the virtues necessarily presupposes an overriding good or moral purpose for which all other goods are subordinate, which is only intelligible under the guise of the unity of a human life (MacIntyre, 1981:202). MacIntyre (1981:205) states that "the unity of a virtue in someone's life is intelligible only as a characteristic of a unitary life, a life that can be conceived as virtuous." This means that if we want to determine if someone is virtuous *right now*, we would need more than just discrete episodes of their lives to make this judgment. If our inquiry stopped on discrete episodes to determine whether one is virtuous, we run the risk of indeterminacy of judging one as virtuous. This will be given by the good we would attach to the virtue being dictated by the situation, leaving the virtues in threat of arbitrariness. We need the totality of who one is, the unity of who one is, to decipher whether one is a good person *in character*. This allows us to conceive of the virtuousness of someone's character as something that is not given by happenstances, but by the display of virtuousness consistently in who they are.

The same can be said for authenticity, in that I am of the view that we need the unified self to uncover what it is for someone to be authentic *right now*. In appealing to the narrative unity of self as a promising candidate of the self which one is being true to, I hope to show that this unified self can also help us adequately understand what it is for one to be authentic right now or in the middle of living their lives. This is key to a tenable understanding of authenticity; in that we need to have a way to evaluate an entire self as being authentic in a way that is compatible with understanding authenticity as a state one can achieve while living their lives. These are other related considered judgments about authenticity that I hope to preserve in my philosophical conception of authenticity. Otherwise, likely, authenticity will also face threats of

arbitrariness that MacIntyre claims virtue could face. It will be difficult to reliably attribute authenticity as a quality of self that one possesses if we look at discrete happenstances in their lives. Authenticity requires that we attribute it to who someone *is* as a whole. It is unlikely that all that someone is can be reasonably taken to be encapsulated in a particular event, action, or behaviour in their action. To make judgments about who one is, we need to look at who one is holistically. It is for this reason that I take the narrative unity of self as a key component of understanding what it is to be authentic, in the same way, MacIntyre takes the unified self as key to understanding what it is to be virtuousness. However, the question arises: does MacIntyre's notion succeed in showing how the virtues require the unified self? And if not, does this show that we cannot take authenticity to require a unified self as that which we are being true to?

Chapter 3

Modifying MacIntyre: The Extrapolated Narrative Unity of Self [ENUS]

In this chapter, I start by evaluating the cogency of MacIntyre's conception of the narrative unity of self. This will be done by engaging Bernard Williams' formidable scepticism against the tenability of MacIntyre's approach, which seeks to use the unified self as a basis for the non-arbitrariness of virtuousness. This scepticism, as I showed at the end of the previous chapter, has a significant bearing on my ability to give an adequate conception of authenticity. If Bernard Williams succeeds in showing that the unified self can in no way tell us how to be virtuous right now, it is likely that we cannot tenably appeal to the unified self to explain what it is for someone to be authentic amid their life either. Here, I will show that due to the limitations and ambiguities in MacIntyre's presentation of his narrative unity of self, his view is

rendered considerably untenable by Williams' scepticism. However, I am inclined to preserve the idea of a narrative unified self as the self which we are being true to when we are being authentic. As such, I seek to modify MacIntyre's notion of a narrative unity of self by providing my account of the Extrapolated Narrative Unity of Self [ENUS]. The ENUS is the story of who one is- which is a story that comprises of all that one is and all that one can *possibly* take themselves to be. As I will show in my development of the ENUS, I will aim to provide a tenable understanding of the unified self that can withstand Williams' scepticism, positioning it as a promising account of the self that one is being true to when being authentic.

3.1 Williams' Scepticism about the Unified Self

Bernard Williams (2007) in *Life as Narrative* provides the most formidable critique of MacIntyre's conception of the self as a narrative unity. Williams starts off by claiming that "the unity of a human life is the unity of a narrative quest" is significantly ambiguous (MacIntyre, 1981:219). Claiming to be charitable to MacIntyre, Williams settles the ambiguity in favour of interpreting the unity of a narrative quest as a quest for narrative as opposed to a narrative of a quest. He takes it to be the case that when attaching the criteria of success or failure to the unified self, MacIntyre seems to be saying that one can succeed or fail to conceive of their lives as a narrative whole. However, I am of the view that MacIntyre does intend to refer both to the quest for narrative and the narrative of a quest in distinctive senses that MacIntyre himself does not make explicit. To some extent, I take MacIntyre to refer to a narrative of a quest in so far as the quest is the pursuit of one's *telos*. This is something he states rather explicitly, saying that a person who fails to live in active pursuit of his *telos* would be unable to conceive of his life as a unified whole. MacIntyre also claims that our life stories are lived before they are told. We can imagine that our ability to conceive our lives as a whole in a way that reflects the life story as we have lived it comes with no guarantees and is something we can succeed and fail to do. In this sense, we can perhaps settle the ambiguity without having to abandon the two senses in which one can construe the unity of the self as a narrative quest.

However, even when focusing on the unified self as the success of a quest for narrative, two lines of scepticism against MacIntyre arise. First, Williams is sceptical about the role narrativity plays in helping us understand a human life as a coherent whole. This line of scepticism pushes us to consider the possible redundancy of narrativity in understanding one's life as a unified whole. Here, Williams focuses particularly on MacIntyre's claim that "stories are first lived before they are told-

except in the case of fiction” (MacIntyre, 1981:212). We can take MacIntyre to mean that a human life being lived takes on a narrative structure that precedes the narration of that life. To this, Williams (2007:306) asks: When Macintyre says that the narrative structure of someone’s life precedes his narration of it, “does Macintyre mean that [this structure] is prior to fictional narration, to any artful narration or any telling at all?”. If MacIntyre means to say that it is prior to any telling at all, then we might take it to mean that there is a good explanatory tale of one’s actions and one’s life which precedes the telling of one’s story (Williams, 2007:306). By explanatory tale, Williams is referring to the temporal sequence of happenstances that are a part of a causal chain that makes up a person’s actual life lived. Differently, we can understand this explanatory tale as a kind of proto narrative. If this is what MacIntyre is referring to, Williams claims that the truth of the explanatory tale remains in-tact even if it was never narrated. Williams does, however, claim that we cannot think of a proto narrative that completely precedes our telling of a human life’s story in this way. This is because part of the explanation of what an agent is doing or how they are behaving is dependent on what they claim to be doing. So, given this, it seems that a narrative structure cannot be completely prior to narration.

Alternatively, we could interpret MacIntyre as claiming that the explanatory tale is separate to some extent but is in an important way vindicated by the artful telling about oneself. However, if we were to accept this, Williams claims that we would need a prior conception of what a human life looks like before we can narrate that human life. Williams (2007:306) claims that “we could not identify those narratives unless we already have a conception of a human life.” This poses a threat of redundancy in conceiving of a human life and, subsequently, one’s self in terms of a narrative. Here, if we can provide a conception of a human life before we narrate it, it would mean that narrativity becomes redundant to our understanding of a unified self. To this, MacIntyre claims that “we understand the idea of a narrative about a person because we understand what a person is, but we also understand what a person is because of a narrative about them” (quoted in Williams, 2007:307). However, as Williams points out, without an adequate explanation of the co-dependency between what a person is and the narrative, MacIntyre may not be able to explain the essential role narrativity plays in the conception of who one is.

In order to respond to Williams, we could attempt to take a closer look at MacIntyre’s exposition on the relationship between personal identity and the narrative self. Here, I want to revisit MacIntyre’s own claims about the interdependence between one’s explanatory tale and the narrative unity of self, in order to see if his exploration sheds further light on the respective roles they play in their interaction. MacIntyre (1981:218)

tells us that there is a relation of “mutual presupposition” between the narrative self and the notion of a person. In evaluating personal identity theories of psychological continuity, such as those of Locke and his contemporaries like Parfit, MacIntyre claims that they all underdetermine the role that a person’s background has in explaining who they are (MacIntyre, 1981:217). What Williams seems to be referring to when speaking of the explanatory tale of a human life seems closer to what MacIntyre identifies as personal identity theories of psychological continuity. This is because psychological continuity theories construe the explanatory tale and person identity as being the same, in that they both posit the causal chain of psychological states and events in an individual’s life as making up the human life. Returning to his claim about the problem with personal identity, MacIntyre claims that personal identity theories, focusing solely on a causal chain of happenings as constituting the person, give us an impoverished view of the individual. As his view of narrativity purports, we need to acknowledge that people’s lives are nested in the stories of their context as well as in the stories of others (MacIntyre, 1981:217). For MacIntyre, an individual’s history is “provided by the concept of a story and of that kind of unity of character which a story requires” (MacIntyre, 1981:217).

Admittedly, while MacIntyre still proves elusive in his exposition here, we can begin to gather what he may mean. I take it that he says we already think about the background which someone finds themselves in (a key constitutive factor of who one is) in terms of a story. Taking the background to be constitutive of who one is, we cannot merely conceive of a person in a substantive sense without looking at the stories of where they find themselves in the first place. Here, MacIntyre seems to be saying that the explanatory tale of one’s life has to be abstracted from the story of the context and the roles one occupies in the stories of others already. So, in terms of the role narrativity plays in helping us understand what a person is, the story of the context and of others related to that person give us the key raw material that will be pieced together to bring about that causal chain of events that will be taken to make up the person in the first place. Furthermore, MacIntyre also claims that narrating *about oneself* plays a key role in establishing the train of events that make up the explanatory tale of a human life in the first place. Here, MacIntyre refers to the notion of accountability of the self. MacIntyre claims that as we live our lives, we have to consistently position ourselves as being ready to explain why it is that we do what we do and the reasons why we do those things- “often pondering between [someone’s] account of what I did and my account of what I did” (MacIntyre, 1981:218). To be able to provide answers to this, we are said to need to establish a bare narrative of the things we did and our reasons for doing them, too. Here, we see that artful telling

about oneself, according to MacIntyre, plays a role of tying together the explanatory tale as well.

In explaining the dependence of the narrative on personal identity, MacIntyre also appeals to the notion of accountability. Here, he focuses on the claim that each individual is “the *subject* of a history that is [his] own and no one else’s” (MacIntyre, 1981:217). What this means is that if you want to give an intelligible tale of you are, you would have to appeal and make use of your life history which presents itself as a complexity of events from your birth to death. Here, I take it that MacIntyre believes that an individual must recognize and take ownership of the fact that their life history is in an important sense theirs and only theirs. When an individual does so, they are taking accountability of the raw material, the bare actions and behaviours that make up the causal chain of one’s life, to compose an intelligible narrative about oneself in the first place. Furthermore, we instil the intelligibility of our personal narrative by establishing a continuity in the series of events that make up the explanatory tale of our lives. Here, I take it that MacIntyre offers a decent enough explanation of the dynamic of the inter-dependency between the explanatory tale and the narrative of self. Whereas the narrative needs the explanatory tale for its intelligibility, the explanatory tale requires narrativity (mainly in the form of the story of our background) in order to bring coherency to a life lived. However, MacIntyre faces a challenge he cannot meet in Williams’ second line of scepticism.

In his second line of scepticism, Williams argues against thinking of a human life as a unity. Williams claims that is implausible, or even incorrect, to speak of a unified human life in the first place. Williams claims that there is an irreconcilable disanalogy between a fictional character’s life and a real human life, regarding the nature of their respective temporalities. MacIntyre claims that in virtue of how fictional characters are presented as one goes through their stories, they, like us, do not know their futures (Williams, 2007:310). However, Williams claims that the reason they don’t know their future is very different from the reason why human beings do not know theirs. The reason that fictional characters do not know their future is simply because they do not have one. This is because all they are and ever could be has already been captured, cover to cover, in the literary works in which they are found (Williams, 2007:310). In reading fictional characters, we read them as all they could have been, as characters whose story line is always conceivable (at least by the author) from the very beginning (Williams, 2007:311). This is not the case for human lives. Our futures are in a significant way unpredictable and full of existential possibilities that have not yet been actualized.

The future of a fictional character's life is always *already there*; but is not yet realized in the middle of reading a book. Williams takes the lives of fictional characters as given temporal wholes in a way that our lives cannot be. As Williams (2007:312) states, "it's essential to fictional characters that their wholeness always already be there and it is essential to ours that it is not". Given that our lives are not given wholes, the only way to understand our lives as we live them and who we are is by appealing to what has emerged *so far* as who one takes oneself to be (Williams, 2007:312). In this view, for me to continue being who I take myself to be so far, it is enough that I take my behaviour and actions exhibited *at present* as sufficient to who I am right now. This shows that the coherence of a human life can never be complete or whole in the way MacIntyre imagines. This is because a human life's future is always a future un-lived. Subsequently, this future is always unavailable to the individual, even if it still belongs to that individual. Here, Williams presents a strong challenge against the tenability of the unified self.

I believe that MacIntyre is susceptible to the criticisms levelled against him with regards to conceiving of the self as a unity. The criticism is a pervasive issue primarily due to MacIntyre's ambiguity on the nature of narrative unity. Firstly, the claim that the narrative unity is a unity from birth to middle to death makes it appear that he thinks the self is an *actual* unity that combines one's actual past and present with their actual unrealized future until their death. It is entirely plausible that after an individual's death, we may be able to consider them to be a unity in this sense. However, this idea does not seem to tell us much about an individual who is in the middle of living their lives, because they cannot integrate a future to which they have no access. This is, of course, something that MacIntyre admits, but his solution to this does not help with clearing up this issue. MacIntyre suggests thinking of the future being integrated into one's life as being given by their projection into their *telos* that feeds back into who we are now.

However, given that the pursuit and attainment of one's *telos* is something that *actually* takes place in the course of one's life until one dies, MacIntyre does not seem to clarify between whether we are still integrating the actual course of our pursuit of the *telos* or if we are merely interested in how the *telos* helps us shape who we are at present. What MacIntyre may have been doing is, in effect, referring to a multitude of narrative unities of the self, each with their respective nature. On one level, he seems to be asserting that there is an actual unity that encompasses an entire human life — a unity that Williams' rightfully argues we cannot make sense of as being present in the middle of a person's life. Alternatively, there is a unity that is brought by the *telos*. However, he would need to be clear about which of these is actually doing the work

of grounding the unity of the virtues. In the context of MacIntyre's work, this confusion about the nature of the unity brings warrant to Williams' claim that we cannot make use of MacIntyre's notion of the unity to tell us how to be virtuous right now.

However, we can take it that when MacIntyre (1981:215) claims that "there is no present that is not shaped by some image of the future... which always presents itself in the form of the telos", he means to claim that the unity in question is not the literal (as opposed to figurative) unity of one's life from birth to middle to death. Here, we can see that this unity can tell us how to be virtuous right now by an appeal to one's *telos* as playing a constitutive role in the unity of self. This may mean that we can, after all, make use of the narrative unity of self to understand what it is for one to be authentic in the middle of living one's life, as well. However, this invites further issues. What happens when one's telos changes? What happens when one actually fails to attain the good life for themselves? We need to have an understanding of the implications on the unity of self. Given that the human life is so vulnerable and rendered unstable by its actual but not yet actualized future, the threat to the tenability of thinking of oneself as a unity remains. If someone changes their telos, do we still consider them to be a unified self after the fact? What qualifies their new self as a unity? What happens to who they were before?

MacIntyre himself, unfortunately, fails to account for these issues that his account brings about. As such, while there may be ways for MacIntyre to meet the challenges set by Williams, he would still need to do much more work in providing a tenable and adequate understanding of the self as a narrative unity. Given that MacIntyre does not do so in his account, I seek to provide my own account of the unified self. This unified self that I term the Extrapolated Unity of the Self (ENUS) incorporate the robust elements of MacIntyre's account of the self and will also make modifications to MacIntyre's view. At the end of section 3.2., I hope to have provided a more robust view of the unity of self that can withstand the issues raised by Williams and can also be tenable for us to take it as that to which we are true when we are being authentic.

3.2 The Extrapolated Narrative Unity of Self (ENUS) as a Modification of MacIntyre's Narrative Unity

In this section, I start by giving a full account of what the ENUS is. I will then move to give detailed explanations of its components, particularly discussing them in comparison to MacIntyre's conception of narrative unity. This will be done by clarifying which components of MacIntyre's narrative unity of self I plan to integrate

into this ENUS, and which components constitute the modifications I have made to MacIntyre's account of the narrative unity. Throughout, I will illustrate how my account puts to rest concerns from Williams and additional concerns about the tenability of a narrative unity. In doing so, I will take it that ENUS can serve as the self which one is being true to when attempting to understand what it is for someone to be authentic at present.

Before proceeding, the best way to explain the Extrapolated Narrative Unity of Self is to explain it in terms of an individual in the middle of living his life. The Extrapolated Narrative Unity of Self, in contrast to an actual metaphysical unity of self from one's birth to death, is a narrative configuration that combines a) an individual's actual history and b) the vision of who they want to be, as constituting who that person is at the present moment. The story of who you are *now*, which is the self, *is* an extrapolated combination of the story of what brought you to seeing yourself as who you are now with the vision that you have for your own life. The vision of who you want to be is just as present in who you are now as the past that has brought you to where you are now. At this point, we can think of it in the following way: Who I am now is in part the story I tell of how I got to be who I am now. Another part of who I am is given by the life that I aim to live, and how I am living *now* to realize my telos to its fullest is what essentially brings unity to my life. The extrapolation component of this self is particularly important. By extrapolated, I mean to say that this combination of the story of your past and the *lived* vision of who you want to be presents itself as a coherent story of self that persists beyond our present observations of who we are now. Concerning our actual futures, the self is a story that has integrated one's story about one's past and the story about one's vision for oneself. This story made up of these two integrated stories is a unity which the agent takes to be something that will persist throughout that agent's life as an answer to the question "Who am I?", at the current moment of giving that answer.

Two things are important for the accuracy and intelligibility of the story of who you are *now* as being adequately reflective of who one really is. Firstly, it is imperative that the story of who one is be adequately reflective of the explanatory tale of one's life as they have lived it. What I take to be the explanatory tale is similar to Williams' and MacIntyre's construal of it. However, I take it to be significantly more complex than they let it appear. I am of the view that the explanatory tale of an individual's life does not necessarily take the linear form that seems to be implied in both MacIntyre and Williams' construal of it. I am of the view that an individual's life in actuality is an overwhelming complexity of events and happenstances. Throughout our lives, there are a lot of things that we do, a lot of things that happen to us and a lot of ways we

behave that can serve as an explanation of how we got to where we are now. As such, the explanatory tale of the self is something that leans to the side of obscurity, even though the tale is a causal chain of events that make up a person's life till the present moment. What do I mean by this? Even though we can make sense of a life lived as a continuous causal chain of events, this causal chain may be too difficult to pin down in linear terms. This is because of all the overwhelming number of events that may warrantably and equally demand to have a place as crucial components of one's explanatory tale. This is revealed by the idea that all the things that happen to us or the things that we do bring shape to who we are at different levels of significance, but still serve as a part of the explanation for who we actually are. In the process of configuring the story of who you are at the current moment, coherency in your understanding of who you are requires that you take aspects of your explanatory tale that significantly demand articulation as being constitutive of your personal story. In addition, the story of who you are must reflect the basic chronological thread of your explanatory tale. Here, we see that the story of who one is *now* must adequately reflect and bring coherence to the explanatory tale of one's life until the present moment.

The second aspect that is important for the accuracy and intelligibility of the ENUS as the story of who one is *now* has much more to do with one's relation to, and the well-foundedness of, one's vision for how one wants one's life to pan out. In terms of a person's relation to their vision, how they have lived and are living so far needs to be a reflection of someone who is living to realize their *telos*. This is vindicated significantly by appeal to the explanatory tale of one's life. An individual who is adequately living in a way that actualizes his *telos* should be able to answer questions like: "*What is it that you are doing and have done to realize your telos?*" and "*In what ways are you presently living, such that you are living consistently and adequately lined up with your telos?*". Answers to these questions are found by appealing to your explanatory tale as *evidence* of you living in accordance with the vision you set for your life. Now, visions of a good life are susceptible to issues of their own: most notably, wishful thinking. For example, many people wish to become billionaires one day, but do not act or behave in such a way that this wish can be taken to be in the realm of possibility for them. To combat wishful thinking, one's vision of the life they want to live must be well-founded. The well-founded nature of one's vision is laden again in whether the individual is adequately living in such a way that they are actively actualizing their vision in the present. Again, this simply requires a person to be able to account for how it is that they are actualizing the vision by pointing to how it is that they are living their lives at the present moment. The vision that we are taking to be what brings the unity of self together is in this important sense; a *lived* vision.

This narrative unity, as a combination of how one's life story has panned out so far and one's lived vision for how it will pan out, is what is of interest in speaking of the ENUS. Our construal of the ENUS so far should reveal some peculiarities about the nature of its unity which need further exposition as well. I postulate that we need not think of this unity as a given unity. That is, the ENUS is not a representation of all that one will and ever can be in the strict metaphysical sense. We need not assert that this ENUS is all you ever will be to understand it as a unity. To do so would be to undermine the pervasiveness of how unpredictable our futures are and how our futures can still shape a significant portion of the self. Moving to a somewhat controversial aspect of my conception of the self, I am of the view that the ENUS is instead a story of all that one is, and all that one can *possibly* take themselves to be at a given moment.

Here, the language of existential possibilities that are available to an individual at a given moment in their lives is important. In explaining what is meant here, I will refer to Charles Taylor's (1989) notion of "taking a stance in inescapable moral frameworks" and Somogy Varga's (2011) notion of existential possibilities as alternativeless to best articulate the nature of ENUS's unity that I have in mind. Charles Taylor, in *Sources of the Self*, claims that a significant part of our human agency is laden with encounters with questions about how, why, and with whom you should live your life. Questions of how a person should live their life are a particular type of problematic: a problematic that takes issue with what constitutes a fully lived life for the subject living that life. These questions should not be taken lightly, based on the fact that they have a bearing on how a life unfolds right now. Answering that one should live *this* way as opposed to *that* way, precedes a space of questions that involves strong evaluations, according to Taylor (1989:14). Issues of how, why, where and with whom to live one's life "are issues of strong evaluation because the people who ask these questions have no doubt that one can take a wrong turn and hence fail to live a full [fulfilling] life" (Taylor, 1989:14). Notably, Taylor (1989:19) goes on to say that this space where we make strong qualitative distinctions about issues of strong evaluation allows an agent to perceive their own mode of living as "incomparably higher than the others which are more readily available." Amongst the alternative possible modes that compete for significance in determining how one should live their life, that which the individual takes to be incomparably higher than the others is what we take to be the answer to who one is (Taylor, 1989:27).

Before further engaging these insights from Taylor, I also want to look at Varga's insights regarding existential choices. In *Authenticity as an Ethical Ideal*, Varga

(2011:115) speaks of existential choices as those “alternativeless choices with which we constitute ourselves”. In referring to an existential choice as alternativeless, he means to say that all the other possibilities of being cannot adequately be described by the person living that life as viable options of being (Varga, 2011:115). Here, the alternative ways of being are “eliminated with unusual force” in favour of an alternativeless alternative that one cannot help but Be (Varga, 2011:115). Returning to the Extrapolated Narrative Unity of Self, I stated that the ENUS is the story of all that one is, and all that one can *possibly* take themselves to be at a given moment. What I take this to mean is that given the existential possibilities of being that one has available to him or sees possible for him, the ENUS encompasses a way of being for the agent, which is incomparably higher than others and is alternativeless in the senses discussed above. Therefore, what is taken to be the unity of self *at present* is the extrapolated way of being that one cannot help *but* be, in the face of alternative ways of being that are available to one. The basic idea behind this is that a person cannot conceive of themselves as being what they deem impossible or inviable to Be.

This invites an opportunity to provide an answer to what happens in the case where one changes one’s telos. To answer this, we need to be aware of what is happening within the realm of existential possibilities. Before proceeding, I do want to assert that the aim here is to make the ENUS as compatible as possible with the fact that our lives, and the lives we take as irrevocably those that we want to live, can change in the future. In the situation where a person changes their telos, this can only come about because of a new existential possibility being open which was not previously available to them. This telos competes with the previous one as an existential possibility that is to be taken as incomparably higher or alternativeless to any one vision that one could have for one’s life. In the case where they adopt a new telos, they would need to also live in such a way that reflects the active actualization of their new telos in order to have who they are be considered a unified self. Upon adopting and living in a way that signifies the active realization of the new telos, we take an individual who now lives in this way as *still* possessing an ENUS. However, there have now been key changes to his ENUS. The story of who all one is and can possibly take themselves to be changes as a result of the new *telos* but remains intact *as a unity* because it is still all that the individual can possibly take themselves to be, *now*. The ENUS that they took themselves to irrevocably be before the telos changed also plays a constitutive role in making them who they are now. In adopting a new telos, an individual must be able to adequately explain why it is that they changed who they envisioned themselves being and must see their first ENUS as *now* being an aspect

of the story of who they once were. I have illustrated what I take to occur when someone changes their vision for who they are in the figure below.

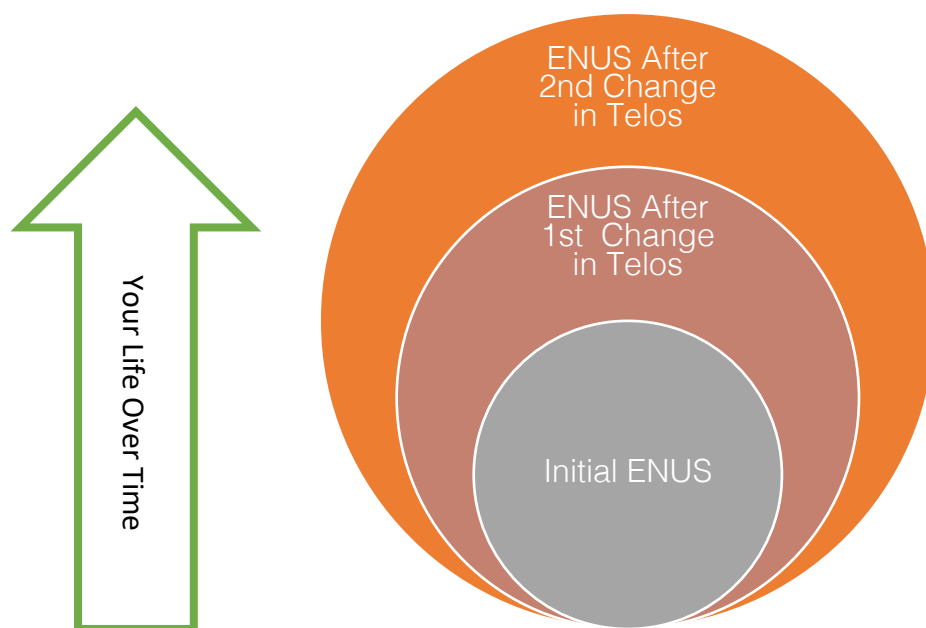


Figure 1: Modelling the ENUS over Changes in Telos.

In the above illustration, the inner-most circle represents one's initial ENUS. Here, given all the existential possibilities that an individual has available to him or takes to be readily in reach, the self is the story of who he is and all he can possibly take himself to be at present. In the case that one finds a new telos, they now discover that unlike they had thought before, the innermost ENUS no longer represents all that they possibly take themselves to be. As such, their initial ENUS now becomes a part of the story of all that they have been up to the point of discovering their new telos. After that, one forms a new ENUS which envelopes the previous one (the previous one now becomes *part* of the story of who you are). One then establishes the unity of the new ENUS by living in a way that signifies the active realization of the new telos. This process can be said to continue in so far as one discovers a new telos, which one takes to be an irrevocable expression of who one sees oneself becoming. It is crucial to note that this is not to mean that there are multiple selves, per se. It is to say that at any given moment of one's life, there is only one unity of self that can be taken to be who one can possibly conceive of themselves as being. In thinking of the ENUS in the sense of the concentric circles in the above figure, I make the idea that one is always a unified self compatible with the intuition that who one extrapolates

oneself as being can change. I do so without risking the tenability of understanding the self as an extrapolated unity at all points of an individual's life.

In going back to Williams' scepticism about the narrative unity, I am of the view that my account of the ENUS can adequately address Williams' concerns. I want to start by addressing the potential redundancy of narrativity that can be brought about by already having an explanatory tale of a human life. Concerning this, I pushed back against Williams' presupposition that the causal chain of events that makes up one's explanatory tale is structured in a way that is easily perceivable or intelligible prior to the artful telling about the self. As I stated, the complexity of events and the sheer overwhelming number of events that make up a human life makes it surprisingly difficult to determine what it is *exactly* that caused another event in your life. At best, we can think of this chain of events as a bare chronological continuity that has clusters of events that serve as candidates in explaining the story of someone's life. It is in telling a story about oneself that one takes pieces from their explanatory tale and coherently organizes them chronologically, building an intelligible conception of who one is. In constructing the stories about ourselves, we are essentially taking pieces from the very complex and obscure explanatory tale which demand articulation as constitutive of who we are, and we organize them in a way that stays true to the chronological nature of the explanatory tale. The story of who one is and possibly can be necessitates the intelligibility and coherency of a life lived. It is through the self as an ENUS, as the story of who one is, that one can intelligibly answer the question "Who am I?"

Regarding Williams' issues about the unity of the self, I believe that I have put many of the issues to rest by conceiving of the unity of a human life as an extrapolated unity as opposed to an actual metaphysical unity. The ENUS being an extrapolation helps us integrate understanding of who one is as involving the future in the only way that is available to us at present. In speaking about the ENUS being the story of who one is now, constituted of all that one is and all that one possibly conceives themselves as being at that point, we can understand the unified self as including the future in the unity as an indefinite conclusion. In speaking of the ENUS, we get the sense that one's life is a unity, up until one's telos changes. At the point at which one's telos changes, a person is still a unity *now*, where the unity is all that they are and have been till that point combined with all that they possibly see themselves as being at that same point. Also, speaking about a lived vision seemingly solidifies the notion of a unity with one's future being present at all times. Where a person lives and continues to live in such a way that they can be interpreted as actualizing their future, my view is that their self can be taken to be a unity that is adequately connected to

their future. The upside of thinking of the self as an extrapolation is that the unity of self is stabilized by the individual seeing themselves as being all that they are and could possibly be, *even beyond their current observations of who they are now*. This can be said to adequately stabilize the unity of the self even in the face of the unpredictability of one's future.

In postulating the ENUS, I hope to have provided a complete account of the self as a unity at all given times in one's life. What I have shown here is that there is a tenable way of interpreting the self as a unity in the middle of one living their lives. This was particularly shown by the kind of relationship one has with one's futures when one thinks of who one is as an extrapolated narrative unity. As such, having shown that it is intelligible to think of the self as a unity in the middle of one's life, I have subsequently shown that we can see the ENUS as key to understanding whether an individual is being authentic *at the present moment*. This is because the ENUS is the self that one has to be true to at any given moment of one's life in order to be considered as authentic. I now proceed to show what being true to one's ENUS entails in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4

What Being True to Oneself Entails

In this chapter, I discuss the next key problematic in providing a conception of authenticity that aims to achieve reflective equilibrium. Here, I pose the following question: What does being true to oneself entail? Having taken the self in question to be the Extrapolated Narrative Unity of Self, the question now becomes: What does being true to one's ENUS entail? To best answer this question, I will mostly focus on the process of *becoming* authentic, in order to articulate what is involved in an individual getting to a point where they *are* authentic. Now, in terms of our considered judgments about what it is to be true to one's self, we generally cite three primary considerations as important. The first considered judgment is that being true to one's self requires some kind of effort or actionability on the part of the individual who wants to be authentic. More particularly, this effort or actionability is directed towards one's relationship with how one expresses one's self. This is a two-fold considered judgment. On the one hand, being true to oneself requires the same efforts of truthfulness towards oneself *about oneself*. Authenticity also requires that you unreservedly take on the various social and normative demands that flow from the various aspects of self that make up your ENUS. Alternatively, we can also determine whether someone is being authentic by looking at how their behaviour and actions adequately originate from their ENUS.

The second considered judgment we generally hold about being true to oneself is that one adequately embodies the type of individual that one describes oneself as being. Here, we are interested in whether someone is *really* who they claim, describe, and present themselves as being. The third considered judgment is that one is being true to oneself when what one does, how one behaves, and one's understanding of who one is, are *primarily* self-originating. Only you are in the best position to know who you are, even if we accept that sometimes, other people's insights into who you are can illuminate aspects of yourself that you did not realize are there. The trueness in being true to oneself is seen to be predicated on living for oneself. This need not be construed in a selfish sense. Instead, it should be construed as not living for pleasing people's expectations of who you should be, or not living primarily for the approval of others. This is largely because the expectations and approval of others may come at the cost of asserting who we genuinely believe we are and may call for the displacement of who we unequivocally take ourselves to be to make others happy. These three considered judgments are interrelated, mostly because judgments of whether a person is *really* who they claim to be come to be vindicated by observing the effort they put into affirming, asserting, and expressing their ENUS in a reliable and primarily self-originating manner.

In providing a conceptual analysis of what it means to be true to one's ENUS, I will primarily focus on three key aspects of the ENUS, and the kind of effort and action each of these aspects requires from the individual to be considered authentic. In the first section, I will look at the effort required in presiding over the narrative configuration of one's ENUS. In the second section, I will focus on the effort required in presiding over the assertion and expression of one's ENUS to oneself and others. In the last section, I will focus on how one should relate their ENUS to their patiency in the world. These three aspects are important for establishing, reinforcing, and maintaining the ENUS as being who one truly is. Each of these, as I will proceed to discuss in-depth, require one to behave and act in a way towards one's ENUS that constitute the effort of being true to oneself.

4.1 *How One Presides over the Narrative Configuration of Their ENUS*

Before we can understand an individual as being true to their ENUS, I believe it is important that one makes an effort to establish the truthfulness of their ENUS. What I mean here is that it would be *non sequitur* to describe someone as being true to themselves if the self they are being true to — if the story they are telling about

themselves — in no way accurately reflects who they are or the life that they have lived. As such, significant attention should be given to how this story of oneself comes about, in order to make sense of the idea of being true to oneself in the first place. Thus, it is a requirement of being true to oneself that one have a truthful story to tell *about* oneself. The effort of ensuring truthfulness and accuracy in the composition of one's Extrapolated Narrative Unity of Self will be the first requirement of being true to oneself that I discuss in this section.

Given that I am interested in the truthful composition of one's narrative, the effort to ensure the truthfulness and accuracy in one's Extrapolated Narrative Unity of Self will be a function of the way one fulfills one's role as the co-author and chief editor of one's narrative. Truthfulness and accuracy are significantly dependent on how one composes or configures one's personal narrative. Here, I think it is important that I state what I mean when I speak of narrative configuration. Narrative configuration, as termed by Paul Ricoeur (1995:141), is the process whereby one arranges the facts, fortunes, and events from one's explanatory tale in a way that articulates a coherent story about who one is. This process requires a well-reasoned arrangement of the facts that come to make up one's personal narratives by striving for accuracy, coherence and concord in providing an accurate answer to the question "Who am I?". I take it that one must carry a certain level of intentionality in assuring accuracy in the composition of one's personal narrative. Related to this, one must make an effort to practice as much self-restraint as possible, and resist temptations and pressures that threaten to veer one off the facts in the explanatory tale of one's life. Finally, we need to put in the effort of being impartial in how we configure ourselves through being open to evaluating the justifiability of other people's perceptions of our own selves when forming our self-understanding.

Concerning the effort of ensuring accuracy, there are two essential things that I believe an individual needs to do to achieve the truthfulness of the ENUS. To put it in the simplest terms, we need to ensure that we do not consider a merely concocted narrative that appears unified as a candidate for an authentic self. We have an interest to ensure that who one takes oneself to be adequately reflects one's life as one has *lived* it, is living it and hopes to live it. Here, what I mean is that one's ENUS must adequately reflect the explanatory tale of one's life, such that the constitutive elements of one's life story are founded in the factual trajectory that one's life is taking. When one's ENUS is a factual representation of one's life as one has lived it, it prevents the possibility of mistaking a false or merely wishful self for the true unified self. Secondly, a person needs to actually be able to distinguish between merely periphery happenstances and those key events that come to have a constitutive force

in their lives. They need to know what precisely, in the midst of the complexity of the explanatory tale of one's life, demands articulation as a significant contributor to who one take oneself to be today. A certain reflectivity is required in this instance to ensure that the parts of the story that make up who you *are actually* play the role that they are purported to play in making up who you are.

Bernard Williams (2002) in *Truth and Truthfulness* discusses truthfulness in the procedural sense that is salient to my discussion of the effort one has to put in one's narrative configuration. Williams (2002:127) speaks of truthfulness as the search for *accuracy* in "discovering and coming to believe the truth". When applying Williams' claim about accuracy to the process of narrative configuration, an individual must preside over the configuration process in such a way that he gets his story "correct". An individual seeking to be true to himself must be interested in having the narrative of himself reflect the truth of how he has lived his life. The creation of fantasy narratives and sheer wishful thinking in who one takes oneself to be must be avoided. Staying true to the facts of how one has lived one's life, as well as aiming for predictive accuracy in one's extrapolation of self, are key to having an accurate picture of who one is. One has to take care to avoid obstacles to the process of accurately telling a story about oneself.

Let's look back to the scenario of Themba. In order to configure a story of himself that is a true reflection of who he is, it seems important that he stops intentionally deceiving himself into believing that he is not gay when he *actually* is. If we are to take his homosexuality as a key explanatory fact of his life, that fact demands to have much more significant articulation in the story of who he is than he lets on. To avoid seeing his homosexuality as a key constituent of the story of his life is to fail to accurately depict his life as he has lived it in his ENUS. As such, he fails to put in the effort of truthfulness that is requisite to him being considered true to himself. There is a sense in which we know that Themba is not truthful and that *he* knows that the story he is presenting as a depiction of himself cannot be taken as the true story. This is seen in how his motivations to be heterosexual are as to *conceal* the key explanatory fact in his life that he is, in fact, gay.

So, we could say that he is not merely failing to get his story correct; he is actively avoiding making his story accurate. As such, we can take him to be an individual who is actively avoiding being true to who he is because he is purposefully veering away from the explanatory tale of his life to avoid the social costs that come with being homosexual. Regarding his ENUS, Themba has chosen to *narrate out* (remove from the narrative) an aspect of his actual life which demands articulation. In this instance,

even if he can construct a narrative self that can appear unified, it is in fact incomplete because it omits a constitutive aspect of who he is. He also seems to have convinced himself that by sacrificing who he actually wants to be, he is in effect living a better life than he otherwise would if he asserted who he is. While this aspect is more in the domain of whether being authentic is generally good (I will address this in the next chapter), I think that we can take him to be engaged in wishful thinking by thinking he would be living a better-quality life by suppressing his homosexuality. While this seems to be going into the direction of ad hoc considerations about whether it is always good for someone to assert themselves as homosexual to others, I think we can reasonably accept that there is significant damage being done to his quality of life in his failure of *self-acceptance*. It would be suspect to consider him to be living a good life due to the level of self-suppression and wilful ignorance of a life that he would actually want to live if he did not fear rejection or persecution from others.

In looking at Themba's story, what I wanted to illustrate is that one needs to be mindful and put in the effort not to deceive oneself into telling oneself that one is something that one is not. There is a significant demand of honesty towards oneself that is often difficult to meet because of the implications it has for how others perceive us. It is for these reasons that the narrative composition of one's ENUS must display one's agency over oneself as the person living the life that the ENUS represents. What is positive here is that this effort was primarily implied in my construal of the ENUS in the first place, where the ENUS is characterized as that which brings coherence, intelligibility and reflects the explanatory tale of one's life.

The effort of self-restraint is also involved in assuring accuracy in the composition of one's ENUS. Looking again at Themba, we can see that he perceives asserting himself as heterosexual to have significant social benefits that homosexuality does not bring about. In this sense, he has taken an ethical egoistic perspective towards the configuration of himself, choosing to configure a story about himself that will best position him to continue enjoying the social benefits of being perceived as heterosexual. However, in the case of Themba, we would see his assertion of himself as heterosexual to be a function of the beguilement of the desirable aspects of heterosexuality. What this is ratified by is the likely realization that in choosing to pretend to be heterosexual, it is, in fact, *his pretence* that receives acceptance and not who he really is. What can, therefore, *seem* as being a better way for him to live is in *actuality* not providing him with benefits that we can attribute as being a result of who he *is*. Themba would have an interest in resisting the temptation of being something that he is not, mostly because it would result in a life where one's *pretence* gets the benefits of deception while who one knows oneself to be in actuality is left

significantly impoverished. One must be able to resist lying or fabricating inaccurate stories of who one is, in order to be true to oneself. This again can be done by staying true to and accurately representing the explanatory tale of one's life in the configuration of one's ENUS.

Themba's story reveals one final aspect of the narrative configuration process that is required for establishing the truthfulness of one's ENUS. This has to do largely with ensuring that one actively assumes one's powers of primary authorship and editing over one's personal narratives, without overdetermining one's capacity to "always be right" about who one takes oneself to be. There is an interest in ensuring that the narrative configuration process is adequately in the hands of the person who the story is about, without that person unwarrantedly discounting how the role they play in the narratives of others can help constitute and refine their understanding of the story about who they are. Given that we are social beings who find ourselves to be part of the narratives of others and also find ourselves interacting with others, it is important to avoid giving others undue power to dictate who you are to you. But it is also important that you consciously have a critical attitude over who you take yourself to be, as a means to striving for accuracy in the story of who you are. This is, in part, a way of ensuring that one avoids being the *they-self*, as Heidegger (cited from Mulhall, 1996) puts it. It also helps us take into consideration how others can help us understand and conscientize us to aspects of ourselves that we may have overlooked or have been unaware of. This is what is meant by the claim that one has to also be impartial in assuring the truthfulness of ones' own story.

My claims here require us, in this project of reflective equilibrium, to refine some of the initially considered judgments that are associated with being true to who one is. Here, I take it that being true to oneself does not mean that one should be whoever one wants to be, *simpliciter*. We must put qualifications to that statement, due to the very fact that it seems to invite considerations that we might intuitively take to conflict with what we think authenticity involves. If we are to associate authenticity with truthfulness and genuineness, it would be contradictory to say that Themba choosing to live a lie is authentic because it is who he *wants* to be. What we see from this section is that being who you want to be mainly involves who your life as you have lived it purports you to be. An extrapolated self requires the vision for who you want to be in the future to be "on trend" with the trajectory of how you are living your life now. This is reinforced by the efforts required in being authentic that have been discussed in this section.

4.2. *How One Presides over the Assertion and Expression of Their ENUS*

In the previous section, the discussion was mainly set on the establishment of an ENUS that is truthful. In this section, I want to focus more on articulating what it is to be *true to* this ENUS that has been constructed truthfully. Here, I want to focus more on the effort one has to put into how one asserts oneself and how one expresses who one is towards others as a means to ensuring that one is considered as being true to oneself. While the previous section was more interested in answering the question “How do I construct my personal narrative such that it is a truthful depiction of who I am?”; the question here is “What is required for me to affirm my personal narrative in a way that it is truly who I am?”. In our ordinary considerations of authenticity, we tend to think of the latter question significantly more when we are asking ourselves how to be authentic.

What is of interest here is whether one’s ENUS is adequately, reliably and generally reflected in what one does and how one behaves. When we ask whether someone is *being* who they truly are, we are asking an evaluative question of consistency. First, in terms of how well their actions and behaviour reflect who they say they are. Second, in terms of how well they adequately express who they are in a way that reinforces the stability of their ENUS. Additionally, we seem to be interested in the confidence one has in who one is. What is revealed by the individual’s acceptance and internalization of his ENUS is that he comes to understand his ENUS as irrevocable and the only way for him to be. The effort that I take to be required in being true to oneself is one of truthful and accurate assertion and expression of the ENUS. Inherent in this effort, I take it, is that one needs to express one’s ENUS unreservedly, as well as wholeheartedly take on social costs, social benefits and demands that the assertion of one’s ENUS requires.

A quintessential characteristic of human life that will help me best articulate the effort required in assertion and expression of who one is, is the fact that individuals form an understanding of who they are in an already existing social tapestry. This social tapestry is made up of *human categories* (or identities) that make up all the possible ways for one to be that one can occupy in order to assert themselves as a person with the said identity. When we think of the constitutive facts that make up who we are, we often have these kinds of categories in mind. We think of ourselves as fathers, brothers, queer people and men, amongst other human categories. We also often take these aspects of our identities to be irrevocable aspects of who we are, such that we are not who we are without them. To articulate the implications of there being

human categories that we come to assume as reflective of who we are, I want to make reference to Ron Mallon's (2016) account of human social categories in his book, *The Construction of Human Kinds*. Taking it for granted that his account of social roles is the correct one amongst its alternatives, I want to make use of it in a rudimentary way that does not require us to be committed to much of Mallon's own claims. While his work focuses more on providing a generalizable account of the construction of human categories, I am more interested in the conditions Mallon sets as being required for the constitution of social categories. He states that social categories are constituted under the following two conditions:

- a. "Where the representations (i.e. the labelling of people, the necessary characteristics that certain people are said to have, evaluations associated with the certain type of person, the social costs and benefits associated with being a said person picked out and the expectations of behaviour when interacting with the people being picked out) is linked to a set of beliefs and evaluations – or ideas about the persons being picked out" (Mallon, 2016:58).
- b. "That for all persons in the community, everyone knows that everyone knows that everyone knows that (a) occurs and believe it to hold. That is, it is common knowledge that the representations pick out people of a certain category obtain in the community of those people in that said category" (Mallon, 2016:58).

Without committing myself to further aspects of Mallon's constructionist theory of social roles, there is a key take away that relates to our understanding of the social roles or sub-identities that we come to assert as parts of who we are in our ENUS. We can see that who we take ourselves to be can be seen to largely draw from already existing and relatively adequate socially defined possibilities which are granted by the various existing social roles and by what we generally know about them. All in all, these social roles each have their respective descriptions, social costs and benefits, behaviours and demands which are adequately recognized as being associated with having that identity in question. For you to be a person who assumes a said identity as your own, a significant aspect of being able to consider yourself as a person of that identity will depend on your adequate acquisition and affirmation of the characteristics that make one a quintessential person with that said identity. To avoid the possible perception that I am advocating for conformity when authenticity is ordinarily understood to be about the uniqueness of persons, I want to qualify my claims here. I take it that one's *individualized* articulation of a particular social category, which will in large part be shaped by the complexity of one's explanatory tale that is wholly unique to that individual, should be able to capture what it is to be

a person with that identity. So, in one's differentiable articulation of self as a person with a said identity, one must nonetheless show adequate articulation of the aspects generally taken to be markers of that identity, such that one can satisfy the criterion of belonging to that identity.

Given this, I think that I am now better positioned to explain the effort required in acting and behaving in a way that can undoubtedly reflect the story of who one is. An individual's ENUS has as its components constitutive elements that are connected coherently into a story of who they are. Taking one aspect of an individual's life, if the truthful ENUS involves Themba being a gay man, then Themba has to do the following to be true to being a gay man. Themba will firstly have to evaluate for himself what being gay entails, making adequate reference to the representations of being a gay man that have been established and are common knowledge in picking out an individual as belonging to the "gay community." In looking into what being gay entails, Themba will be able to see the modes of behaviour and actions that being gay necessitates. Also, he would have to evaluate the judgments of people who are gay, the social costs and benefits that are associated with being gay. After this process of reflection, Themba would then have to adequately assume these representations of being a gay man in his own individuated way. To do so is not always easy of course, especially with persecuted identities like homosexuality. I take it as adequate for an individual to get to the point of adequate self-acceptance regarding what it entails to be a person with a said identity. In the expression of this identity, one can still articulate a said social identity in a way that feels most reflective of their individuality-without discounting the fact that to be a person of x identity is to behave, act and take on demands which we can generally take to be associated with the identity.

I think queer identity is interesting in cases where we are considering the nexus between being true to oneself and the expression of one's identity. Much of the immediate concern might relate to whether Themba has to *tell* others that he is gay to be true to himself and be seen as expressing himself truthfully. The position to take would be to say that he has to express himself to himself *and others* as a gay person to be considered authentic. However, I want to state my reservations that treat authenticity as a form of moral supererogation that goes against common sense considerations such as one's safety and survival. It is a very significant reality that individuals like Themba live in very homophobic communities where their public expression of their homosexuality can put their lives in direct danger. However, I take this to be illuminating of the nature of the moral judgments we make about authenticity. I contend that Themba's failing to express himself as a gay person without reservation is a failure to be completely true to himself.

However, this reveals two things about the nature of being authentic. Firstly, authenticity can be a surprisingly accommodating notion as an ethical *ideal*. If Themba was to accept that he is gay and live his private life as a gay man, we can consider him to have gotten as close as possible to being his true self, *given the circumstances that obstruct him from being fully true to himself*. Here, we can take Themba to be closer to being authentic than he would otherwise be by choosing to suppress and ignore his sexuality. We would also understand that he would need to express himself without reservation in order to be fully authentic. Secondly, this reveals that we may be wrong in our moral judgments about authenticity. Here, we also need not necessarily take a failure to be authentic as a moral failure on the part of that individual. We can see that there can be obstructions to being authentic that are genuinely beyond an individual's control without having to compromise on authenticity as an ethical ideal, as well. An individual who is choosing not to assert a persecuted identity like homosexuality, having weighed it against considerations like a genuine threat to their life, for example, need not be seen as a bad person because they are not authentic. Within the set of possibilities available to Themba as to how to assert himself in a way that reflects his gay identity, we can consider him to be *true* to himself without taking him to be *as true* to himself as he *could* irrevocably be. As such, being true to your ENUS requires you to assert and express your identity(ies) and its demands to yourself and others as well.

Moving on to the related effort required, one needs to also put the effort of consistency in adequately expressing their ENUS, such that the expression of one's ENUS can be seen to reinforce the stability of one's ENUS over time. Someone who is true to who they are in this case also *reliably* acts and behaves in a way that reflects their ENUS. Being authentic is a state of self that requires the establishment of stability in the self. An individual who undergoes erratic changes in behaviour or acts in a way that cannot be comprehended as a function of who he is cannot be understood as a person who is being true to who he is. This makes reference to one's continued action and behaviour adequately and consistently reflecting the intention of expressing one's ENUS. Put simply, in order to be taken as being true to oneself, the motivation for why you do what you do or why you behave the way you do should be the fact that it reflects who you take yourself to be.

One therefore needs to adequately display a wholehearted and unreserved commitment to who they are, which is best reflected in the projects that they decide to take on. For example, we take it that one who is being true to who one is as a

mother has taken on the commitment of raising her children wholeheartedly, such that she is seen as a *good* mother. For her to consistently forget her children at school or fail to care for her children when they need affection is to not be true to who she is as a mother. We see that in this case, the reliability of one's ENUS over time is also based on how excellently one comes to assert and express aspects of one's identity. Here, behaving in a way that reinforces the indubitability of one's story of who one is, *is* to be true to who one is as well.

4.3 A Predisposition to Maintaining the Alternativelessness of Your ENUS, in the Face of Change

In this final section, I articulate the fact that one's ENUS should be resistant to threats of destabilization. Part of whether one is being true to oneself will also be evident in how one adequately continues to maintain one's ENUS as a representation of who one is- despite changes that threaten to destabilize the conception of who one currently sees oneself as being and possibly ever being. This point about being true to oneself is particularly related to the extrapolated nature of the self. A representation of an ENUS as a true personal story needs to be relatively stable, and this includes being stable in relation to one's vision for oneself. If MacIntyre and I are right to construe the self as a unity that is brought about by living in a way that actualizes their vision for a good life, then it is imperative that this also be a component of the self that remains relatively stable in the face of changes that may come about in future. However, I also stated that the notion ENUS also accommodates the idea that one can change their telos and still be considered to have an ENUS that is a true representation of who they are. So, the question arises: How can one be true to who one is *now* when one can come to change and have a new ENUS that is formed by a change in one's vision for a good life. This question arises particularly because the credibility of one being true to who they are is predicated in how they are able to maintain their ENUS in a relatively stable way in the midst of threats to their current conception of the self.

What I take to be needed in this instance are two things. Firstly, it is important to establish the type of relationship one has with their ENUS as a story of who they are now and ever possibly could be, within the space of existing existential possibilities that are conceivably available to them. Secondly, we need to look at the nature of the changes that warrant a change into a *new* ENUS. In the first instance, I want to make clarifications between the notion of existential possibilities and the notion of a self. I think there is significant ambiguity in our talk of existential possibilities that come to

complicate our conception of the self unnecessarily. At any given point in a person's life, there are possible ways of being that are available to him. We should note particular things about the self in relation to this. The self is all that one can possibly be or conceive of themselves as being. It would be unintelligible to think of the self as already existing outside of the realm of a life that is conceivable for one to live. Simply put, you cannot *be* what is *inconceivable* as an option for you to be. In relation to the nature of the self as such, I think it reveals the nature of the self in relation to existential possibilities, namely that the self is something that can only exist within the space of conceivable possibilities for the agent living that life. Given that our future is unpredictable, it is *likely* that it will open us up to new existential possibilities that we may want to take on as constitutive elements of who we are. However, we need not take this to mean that the self is in a sense incomplete because of this fact. What we take it to show, rather, is that the self is all that it can be at all times, until such a point that one is opened up to a new existential possibility that demands articulation in one's life story. At that point where one assumes that existential possibility as a constitutive element of who they now are, they *are* all that they can possibly be at that point in time too.

Upon considering the abovementioned insights, an individual can be considered to be true to who they are when they assert who they are as alternativeless, in the face of the conceivable existential possibilities available to them. The alternativelessness is established as a function of the efforts already discussed in the first and second section, mainly coming from an unwavering commitment to the irrevocability of the story of one's self, given all that one knows they could otherwise possibly be. This means that in the face of change, one has to have the willpower to resist discord in one's conception of the self. I think this is something we can think of in terms of the extrapolated self, in that as humans, we do not merely live in the moment, but we also *anticipate*. We anticipate what will happen, how we would act in situations where our lives change significantly, and so forth. Our ability to anticipate what would happen to us, and how we would react, both play a crucial role in how we come to establish the ENUS. We, so to speak, work stability into our ENUS by considering how we would come to behave in the case of certain occurrences in the future that we might face. How does one work stability into one's ENUS? In aiming to tell a coherent story of all that you are and possibly could conceive of yourself as being, you work-in the tenacity of who you are as a way of reaffirming the accuracy of the claim that you are who you take yourself to be.

Now, a change in one's telos is a very different kind of change that can occur in one's future. It is the expansion of existential possibilities- an expansion which reveals to

one a new way to be that is incomparably higher than the way in which one was being before, with particular reference to the vision for one's life that one had been living before the expansion of existential possibilities. In this case, for one to be true to oneself, one would then need to take the same efforts discussed up until this point and apply them to this newly established self. In this situation, the irrevocability of the self before the change in telos, primarily predicated by the conceivable existential possibilities before the change, is defeated by the irrevocability of the new telos that informs the newly established unified self. What we see is that one can be true to who one is before and after the change in telos, mostly because in both cases, one *is* all that one is and could possibly be, given the existential possibilities available to one that make the notion of a self intelligible in the first place.

Having completed my conceptual analysis of what it is to be true to who one is, I want to cast our minds back to the considered judgments about what being true to oneself entails. In establishing our considered judgments about what being true to oneself entails, I stated that it requires efforts of truthfulness towards oneself. Notably, one should strive to accurately embody how they describe themselves, ensuring that who they take themselves to be is primarily self-originating without discounting the contributions others can make in illuminating who they are to themselves. I discussed the composition of one's story truthfully, the expression of oneself in a way that adequately reflects who one takes oneself to be, and the maintenance of self through working stability into the self. This discussion aimed at showing how one can adequately account for what it is to be true to who one is. Having provided the conception of what it is to be true to oneself, I now move to explain why it is we consider being true to oneself to be good for the person who is being authentic.

Chapter 5

The Good in Authenticity

In this final chapter, I provide an account of why we ordinarily take authenticity to be a good thing. It is important to state that I am only committing myself to explaining why we *generally associate* authenticity with goodness. I consider my discussion of the ENUS and the effort required for one to be true to oneself to have implicitly revealed that we generally associate authenticity with goodness. In making this more explicit, I believe Aristotelian Eudaimonic virtue ethics is a good candidate for explicating the goodness we associate with being true to oneself. In the first section, I claim that we take authenticity to be good because it requires and reinforces a characteristically virtuous life for the authentic individual. In the second section, I state that we can understand authenticity to be good because it is inextricably linked to the possibility and actualization of a Eudaimonic life. It is important to note that I am not committed to arguing for the stronger claim that authenticity is good because it *is* a virtuous life and a Eudaimonic life. This is because I take defending the stronger claim to be mainly outside of the scope of this

dissertation. Instead, I take it to be sufficient to explain why whenever we think of being true to oneself, we ordinarily also think of being authentic as a good state for one to be in.

5.1 *Authenticity as Involving and Reinforcing a Virtuous Life*

In this first section, I defend the claim that authenticity is generally associated with goodness because it involves and reinforces something else that we take to be good. It involves and reinforces a virtuous life for the authentic individual. Before proceeding to make my argument, let us start by looking at what it is for one to have an Aristotelian ethical virtue. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* (*NE*, II.6), Aristotle states the following about virtue:

“We must, however, not only describe virtue as a state of character but also say what sort of state it is. We may remark, then, that every virtue or excellence both brings into good condition the thing of which it is the excellence and makes the work of that thing be done well... if this is true of every case, the virtue of man will be the state of character of man which makes a man good and which makes him do his own work well” (*NE*, II.6).

In particularly picking out what is good about being virtuous, what we see about virtue is that it is the excellent state of an individual's character. Aristotle further explains virtue in terms of the doctrine of the mean, as a by-product of an agent's good use of practical reason. What this means is that virtue involves using our practical reasoning to make choices on how to act and behave in a way that is “just right” between two otherwise vicious ways of acting and behaving in any given situation (*NE*, II.2). The doctrine of the mean dictates that virtue is the intermediate state between otherwise deficient or excessive states of character, where either extremity of character is considered to be bad for one *qua* one's human flourishing and *qua* one's individual flourishing. Aristotle mentions several character traits as virtuous, including truthfulness, courageousness, temperance, and impartiality. For the sake of my argument going forward, I will assume that the abovementioned virtues are the most important cluster of virtues required for one to live a virtuous life. Having shown what virtue is, I want to show how authenticity requires and reinforces a virtuous life. This will be done by showing how one cannot be authentic and lack in any of the abovementioned key virtues. This will lend credence to my view that authenticity is ordinarily taken to be good because it requires and reinforces a virtuous life.

First, my discussion in the previous chapter availed already that one cannot lack truthfulness and be true to who they are. We can see how this is the case by showing how the motivations of an individual that has a deceitful disposition are starkly incompatible with being true to oneself. Someone who is by nature deceitful cannot be taken to be swayed by or committed to truthfulness in any substantive sense. I stated that being true to oneself requires the effort of making sure that the configuration and expression of one's ENUS adequately and accurately reflects one's explanatory tale and the lived vision for the attainment of one's telos. Now, if one is predisposed to being deceitful, then one would have no reason to ensure that their ENUS strives for accuracy, given that striving towards accuracy necessarily involves a commitment to truth through adequately accounting for the facts.

At this point, it is essential to refer back to MacIntyre's (1981:205) idea of the unity of a virtue as being established through appeal to who someone is as a whole. Considerations about what it is to speak of who someone is as a *whole* reveal something more substantial about the individual's character and how they live their life. Being truthful to who you are as a whole not only means accurately reflecting your explanatory tale, but also involves ensuring that all your actions and behaviours reflect the explanatory tale and the lived vision you have set for yourself. This requires a significant and constant amount of honesty in the individual in how they generally carry out their expression of self as well. When looking at how one's ENUS is also affirmed or validated as a truthful tale about a person, we need to also look at a host of events, actions and behaviours that we can, on the whole, take to reflect the truthfulness of the self that they would need to be true to in order to be authentic. Being true to yourself can be affirmed through ensuring that what you do, what you say you are going to do and how you behave are reflections of who you are. If we see behaviour and action as constitutive elements of one's ENUS, we would see that being true to one's ENUS already entails that one is truthful in a relatively consistent and widespread way in various areas of one's life. Therefore, we see that it is implausible for one to simultaneously be true to who they are and lack truthfulness in character.

Secondly, I also argue that it is implausible for one to be cowardly and be true to who they are. Being a coward in the Aristotelian sense refers to a very particular state of character. On the spectrum of fear, a coward is an excessively fearful individual. He is excessively scared to a point where he is easily scared. He significantly undermines his ability to rise to challenges or overcome adversities that he may face throughout his life (*NE*, II.4). There are a few ways in which a coward may not be able to meet the demands required for him to be true to himself. In discussing the efforts

required for a person to be true to himself, we saw that he should make an effort to express and maintain his ENUS unreservedly and irrevocably. In the context of Aristotle's understanding of courageousness, this requires an expression of self that is *reasonably* uninhibited. Such an expression of self is significantly undermined when one is predisposed to constantly and excessively succumbing to fear. In the case where one actually has a particular persecuted identity, an excessive fixation with avoiding the social costs of the identity is likely to have an inverse relationship with the assertion of the identity in question. It is likelier that one would withhold self-expression as a means of always "protecting" himself against potential adversity.

Let us remind ourselves of the nature of cowardice versus courage. As Aristotle notes, "the courageous man withstands and fears those things which are necessary and on account of the right reason, and how and when it is necessary to fear and withstand them and likewise in the case of being bold" (*NE*, 1116b17-19). Given that Aristotelian virtuousness is governed by acting in the right way, given the circumstances one is in, we can see that being true to oneself requires that one express oneself unreservedly in the right way. It would involve one acting in a way that they express themselves unreservedly as they can in a manner most appropriate to the circumstances they find themselves in. In the case of Themba, we see that he is not necessarily cowardly because he reasonably weighs his circumstances in the expression of himself. He is cowardly in the Aristotelian sense because he overdetermines the role of avoiding the social costs in fear of being labelled as gay, so much so that he overly inhibits self-assertion. This is what leads him to the denial of his own sexuality, even to himself. In this way, Themba robs himself of the opportunity to be true to himself because his fears excessively end up making him narrate out a constitutive element of himself in his ENUS. This leads him to assume a fraudulent identity to mask who he really is. Taking this to be contrary to the demands of being true to oneself, we can see that one cannot be cowardly in character and be true to oneself either.

Concerning impartiality and temperance, we can see why one must be virtuous in this way to be true to who one is. This is easily seen in situations where one may be tempted to misrepresent who one is or is prone to wishful thinking about who one is and possibly can be. The virtuous character traits of impartiality and temperance, in this instance, relate largely to maintaining the veracity of one's ENUS as a reflection of one's life as one has *actually* lived it. Consider a self-indulgent individual, who may perhaps have an excessive desire to appear favourable in the eyes of his peers. Likely, how such an individual is motivated in the presentation of himself will easily result in him being preoccupied with telling a story about himself that people want to

hear, as opposed to a story that accurately reflects the life that he has lived. Alternatively, take someone who is significantly biased towards *his* views about who he is, and disregards warranted perceptions of others about who he is. I had established in the previous chapter that in this case, such an individual would not display a proper interest in the veracity of his ENUS. This is given by the fact that a person plays significant roles in the stories of others, and hence those people's warranted input in who they think we are should also play a role in forming how we conceive of ourselves. What we see is that lacking impartiality and temperance is incompatible with being true to who one is. These insights are supported by my claim in the previous chapter that being true to oneself presupposes that there is a truthful ENUS to speak about in the first place. What my discussion of impartiality and temperance show is that these virtues are needed in the establishment of a truthful tale that one should be true to in the first place.

Given that we can see that being true to oneself requires the various virtues discussed so far, we can see that there is something more significant being revealed about the relationship between virtue and authenticity. Being true to who you are can be said to require you to live virtuously, in so far as a virtuous life involves one displaying the cluster of virtues that I have discussed in this section. What this section has displayed is that one cannot be true to themselves and fail to adequately display any of the key virtues that I assumed are important for one to live a virtuous life. Not only does this show that it is untenable to be authentic and lack in some virtue, it also shows that being authentic is not a virtue amongst other virtues but is akin to and requires the virtuous life itself. The kind of project that is establishing, expressing and maintaining your ENUS shows that it is not enough for one to be erratic and discretely episodic in how they behave and act virtuously. The project requires one to display virtuousness in a distinctively consistent and global sense in all that one does, say and how one behaves throughout all aspects of one's life. One way to see this is in how virtuousness impacts the establishment and reinforcement of the veracity of one's ENUS that is required for one to be true to oneself in the first place.

There is a potential issue that may stand in the way of conceiving of authenticity as requiring one to live virtuously. This issue mainly arises from my development of an account of a unified self that stems from MacIntyre's notion of narrative unity. There may be a concern that I have gotten things the wrong way around concerning the relationship between virtue and the self. As we saw in MacIntyre's project in *After Virtue*, the reason for postulating a unified human life was to provide a non-arbitrary and complete account of the virtues. This implies that a tenable account of the virtues presupposes the unity of a human life. MacIntyre states that "the unity of a virtue in

someone's life is intelligible only as a characteristic of a unitary life, a life that can be conceived as a unified whole" (Macintyre, 1981:202). As such, my reasoning may appear circular, considering that my conception of authenticity requires a unified self that seemingly needs the virtues to be established in the first instance.

In response to this potential charge of circularity, I believe that we can embrace that there is a virtuously circular relationship between virtuousness and the unified self. This will be given by the fact that there is a positive feedback loop between virtue and the ENUS. It is sufficiently plausible that when one consistently acts and behaves virtuously in configuration and expression of the ENUS, one becomes better positioned to assert one's true self. Being true to oneself, in turn, can stabilize attributions of virtue to an individual in a non-arbitrary and complete way. To expand on this, what the discussion in this first section was set to illustrate is the fact that displaying virtue towards oneself is important in ensuring that one is true to oneself. Attributing virtuousness, at least, needs to come after an adequate display of virtuousness throughout one's life. Alternatively, virtue needs to be displayed consistently and globally in all that one does, says and how they behave in order for it to be non-arbitrary. The ENUS as that which one is being true to will be constituted mainly by how one acts and behaves on the whole as well. We see that being true to the constitutive facts of your life story reinforces the stability of attributing certain traits to your character. This is because the consistency brought about by the coherence in your actions, and behaviours that are taken to be constitutive of who you are, in turn reinforce the consistency of the virtues that need the holistic host of actions and behaviours to ensure that the virtues are not attributed arbitrarily.

In this section, I hope to have shown that it is tenable to think of being true to oneself as requiring one to live virtuously. Hence, this allows us to articulate the goodness in being true to oneself in that it involves a distinctively virtuous way for an individual to live. This is primarily given by the fact that being true to oneself requires the display of a key cluster of virtues. It is also given by how authenticity comes to reinforce the stability of these virtues in a person.

5.2. Being True to Who You Are As Generally Inextricably Linked to Living a Eudaimonic Life

In this section, I argue that authenticity is generally taken to be good because it is inextricably linked to another good, which is living a Eudaimonic life. To support the tenability of this claim, I want to challenge an intuition that claims that authenticity

may be separate from a Eudaimonic life. This intuition is the thought that one can be authentic yet fail to be eudaimonic. On immediate observation, we see it as a possibility that one can be true to who one is and yet fail to live a good life. This may suggest that I am making too strong of a claim about the relationship between authenticity and Eudaimonia. What this suggests is that authenticity by itself is insufficient for a Eudaimonic life.

To this, it is important to note that I am not necessarily arguing that authenticity is sufficient for one to have a good/Eudaimonic life. I am instead defending the claim that authenticity is seen as good because it is inextricably linked to a Eudaimonic life. What the claim that I defend requires is that I only show how we cannot decouple authenticity and a Eudaimonic life. I want to show that being authentic cannot be seen to be compatible with not living a good life. This can be seen in how something that inhibits a good life will also inhabit one's ability to be authentic. In addition, being authentic in an important sense requires the potential for and actualization of a Eudaimonic life in the first instance. What this will show is that we cannot decouple the notions of authenticity and a characteristically Eudaimonic life, which will lend credence to my view that we associate authenticity with goodness because it is inextricably linked to a Eudaimonic way of life.

One thing ordinarily taken to contribute to the failure of one's ability to live a good life is the fact that one might be extremely unlucky. Aristotle, in reference to virtues, claims that "one can be as virtuous as they want but cannot live a Eudaimonic life if they are terribly unlucky" (Russell, 2012:107). Take an individual who has spent much of his formative years living in war-torn Syria and has lost all that he finds valuable about life, including his family. This individual lives in fear most of his life and lives more to survive than to flourish. In these circumstances, we see that he lives a significantly impoverished life and cannot be said to live a good life. Now, it is important to note how this discord and misfortune in his life also makes it highly improbable that he would be in a position where he can be authentic either.

On the level of configuring one's personal narrative, we saw in the first chapter that a person's narrative is nested in already existing narratives of the context in which they find themselves and interlocks with the narratives of others. Being able to compose a personal narrative that is adequately coherent and intelligible would necessarily have to occur in a background that is adequately intelligible and coherent as well. We see that in the state of significant discord in the background story of one's life, it becomes significantly difficult to narrate about one's self coherently. If someone lives in a constantly chaotic and discordant background, it is difficult for them to form an

ordered narrative of themselves. Also, it is significantly unlikely that someone primarily concerned with their day to day survival would be able to carry out a *lived* vision in any significant way. It would be tough for such a person to actively live in pursuit of their telos, which would mean that they would struggle in bringing about the unity that is required for one to have an ENUS that they are going to be true to. What we see is that misfortune and discord do not only stand in the way of a good life but also stand in the way of one's ability to conceive of a coherent, unified self. Given that we need the ENUS as the self that we are true to, it seems that without being able to establish it adequately, it would be challenging (if not impossible) for one to be true to who they are in the first place. What this should lend credence to is the idea that the failure to live a good life will significantly correspond with a failure to be authentic- where both failures are brought about by the same cause. Conversely, this can be taken as one way to illustrate that being true to yourself is inextricably linked to living a Eudaimonic life.

Another way of consolidating authenticity's inextricable link to a Eudaimonic life is to focus again on the nature of the ENUS that one needs to be true to. Casting our minds back to Chapter 3, I stated that the ENUS is the narrative of self that comprises all that one is, and all that one can possibly conceive of themselves as being. All that one can possibly conceive of themselves as being is captured by the notion of a lived vision. I stated how the unity is brought about by how they actively pursue their telos in the middle of living their life. A component of being true to yourself will involve the efforts required in how one actualizes their telos and has moved to actualize their telos up until the current moment. Two things are involved in actualizing one's telos that are required for one to have an ENUS. First, one must be able to conceive of their telos as attainable in the first instance. Second, we see that one must be able to live in a way that is conducive to attaining one's telos.

As such, one must be able to and must be working towards realizing their telos to establish the unity of self that is the ENUS. Notably, MacIntyre tells us something quite important: "The good life for man is the life spent in seeking for the good life for man" (MacIntyre, 1981:219). This reveals something quite important about the establishment of the unified self that has a bearing on whether we take an authentic life to bring about an Eudaimonic life. We see that a significant part of establishing one's ENUS is to live a Eudaimonic way of life. A Eudaimonic way of life, as we see, is a life that is spent in the pursuit of one's telos. A Eudaimonic way of life, taking from MacIntyre's insights about the good life, is in an important sense internal to the establishment of one's ENUS in the first place. What is revealed are two important insights. Firstly, there is a sense in which one must be capable of and actively pursue

Eudaimonia to have a self to be true to. Secondly, the amount of effort one puts into being true to who one is can be said to dictate how successful one can be in their pursuit of a good life. The effort to be true to oneself involves your commitment to realize your telos. Additionally, the effort marks the extent to which your life as you live it now is a life that adequately reflects the vision that you have set for yourself. If you are true to yourself, we can therefore say that you would have adequately lived a particular kind of life that is Eudaimonic. This will be because you have lived a good life in virtue of your efforts of realizing a good life.

What is revealed is that we can take authenticity to be good because it is inextricably linked to a Eudaimonic way of life. This is the case, such that not to be true to oneself is to not live a Eudaimonic life. Put differently, it is implausible for one to have the ability to be authentic and fail to live a Eudaimonic way of life. We see this in how reasons that may inhibit one from living a Eudaimonic life also inhibit one's ability to be true to one's self. I also showed how being authentic can be vital in ensuring the successful realization of a Eudaimonic life. These two insights, coupled with the insight that authenticity requires and reinforces the virtues, can be used in providing a promising account of why we ordinarily take authenticity to be a good thing.

Concluding Remarks

The project of this dissertation was mainly aimed at bringing about a conception of authenticity that can achieve reflective equilibrium with our considered judgments about what authenticity is. I established that “being true to oneself” is primarily widely accepted as the ordinary conception of what it means for one to be authentic. I also stated that we ordinarily think of authenticity as a good thing. In the first chapter, I worked to show how this ordinary conception of authenticity may be initially tenable. This was to ensure that the ordinary understandings of authenticity that I use in my conceptualization of authenticity were well-founded, as a means of ensuring that the conception of authenticity that results from the procedure of reflective equilibrium is robust from the beginning. I stated that to be able to provide an adequate conception of authenticity, we need to be able to account for what “being true to oneself is” and why this is a good thing. To account for this, I stated that an adequate account of authenticity must be able to answer the following three aspects of what it is to be authentic. First, the account must be able to explain what it is that one is being true to. Second, it must be able to explain what being true to oneself entails. Lastly, it must be able to explain why we ordinarily think of authenticity as a good thing.

I dedicated the second and third chapters to providing an adequate account of what it is to be true to oneself. To do so, I started by looking at MacIntyre's notion of a narrative unity of self as a potential candidate for the self that one is being true to when one is authentic. However, in assessing Bernard Williams' scepticism about the narrative unity of self, it became apparent that there were issues with regard to the temporality of the self and the understanding the self as a unity that MacIntyre could not adequately account for. Seeing that my project is primarily interested in being able to tell us how one can be authentic in the middle of their lives, Williams' scepticism threatened the cogency of using a unified self in telling us how one can be authentic *now*. This was brought about by Williams' view that it is impossible to conceive of a self as a unity in the first place.

In my development of the Extrapolated Unity of Self (ENUS) through making modifications to MacIntyre's notion of narrative unity, I moved to reinforce the tenability of thinking of a self as a unity at every given moment in one's life. The ENUS is meant to be an adequate account of how we can take a person as being connected to their past, present, and future in the middle of their life. More particularly, I worked to show why it is intelligible to think of a self as a unity in the middle of one's life. Having done so, I have also shown that the Extrapolated Unity of Self is the self we take one to be true to when we think of one as being authentic in the middle of their lives. Having provided an account of the self that one is being true to, I moved to account for what being true to oneself entails. In the fourth chapter, I discussed that being true to oneself involves the effort that one puts into configuring, expressing, and maintaining the self.

Putting in the effort to ensure that your ENUS accurately reflects your explanatory tale, ensuring that you unreservedly express yourself and being committed to maintaining the alternativelessness of your ENUS were identified as the key ways one can ensure that one is true to oneself. In the last chapter, I discussed the two main reasons why we might take authenticity to be good. In the first instance, I provided an account of how authenticity is good because it involves and reinforces a virtuous life. Secondly, I showed that we can think of being authentic as good because of how it is inextricably linked to living a Eudaimonic way of life. Having provided adequate accounts of what it is to be true to oneself and why authenticity is good, I hope to have provided a tenable and promising account of authenticity that achieves reflective equilibrium with our considered judgments about what authenticity is.

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