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***DEATH, FREEDOM AND NARRATIVE THINKING:  
EXISTENTIAL ANALYTICS***

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Submitted for the degree of *Doctor of Philosophy*

*PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT*

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2016

# DEATH, FREEDOM AND NARRATIVE THINKING: EXISTENTIAL ANALYTICS

## Abstract

In this thesis, I focus on the relation between individuals' awareness of their mortality and freedom from a phenomenological perspective, which is based on making sense of our temporality with the tools of narrative thinking. I argue that this perspective will shed light on the neglected question, of how the awareness of the fact that every individual will die would have a bearing upon an individual's freedom. In the first chapter, I argue that a linear understanding of time paves the way for the grand narratives, which eclipse the meaning of death and individual freedom. In the second chapter, I argue that Heidegger's primordial conception of time is the proper way to see death as a phenomenon. This view is based on the distinction, I offer, between conceiving death as an event and an eventuality. I argue that, whereas conceiving death as an event reveals the temporal finitude of one's existence; conceiving death as an eventuality discloses the finitude of possibilities at one's disposal. In the fourth chapter, after introducing Berlin's two conceptions of freedom in the third, I apply the negative conception of freedom in analysing individuals' freedom with respect to the event of death and the positive conception respectively to the eventuality of death. This, firstly, leads me to discussing whether an immortal life-span would be a freer one, in the light of the suggestion of the negative conception that indexes the range of one's freedom to the *absence* of external constraints and, secondly, whether the anxiety caused by the *presence* of death as an (ever-present) eventuality constrains one's freedom, in the light of the suggestion of the positive conception that indexes one's freedom to the *presence* of mechanisms which enable individuals to exercise control over their life. In the last chapter, I conclude that anxiety caused by the eventuality of death might actually constrain one's freedom to a larger extent. I demonstrate that narrative thinking would be helpful to alleviate the influence of anxiety into a lesser degree and it might actually transform this potential constraint on a motivating factor for one's authenticity.

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# *DEATH, FREEDOM AND NARRATIVE THINKING: EXISTENTIAL ANALYTICS*

## *INTRODUCTORY REMARKS*

This doctoral thesis will aim to focus on two interrelated questions: to what extent, if any, an individual's self-making is determined by the notion of death? And how would the awareness of the fact that every individual will die have a bearing upon an individual's freedom? From an existentialist point of view, while "we are condemned to be free" in the Sartrean sense; we are condemned to die in the Heideggerian sense as well. In this regard, mortality and freedom are two condemnations that human beings cannot avoid in their modes of existence. The objective of this research is to determine the extent to which these two condemnations influence, or come to be influenced by, the mode of living an individual adopts – namely an individual's contextual self-making. To put it in another way, I will argue that the way each individual relates to the knowledge that death is certain, is of significance in the *free* future-making of the individual. Furthermore, I will argue that the *proper* way to relate to the awareness of death is conceiving life in narrative terms. To demonstrate this in the thesis, I will argue that a distinction between death as an eventuality and death as an event is necessary. Within the framework of the above mentioned distinction, the main argument of my thesis is that through setting limits to existence, death makes room for an authentic life and enables self-making. Whereas the unique way of being for humans is existence and conceiving death as an eventuality transforms this existence into an *individual* life by means of narrative thinking, death as an actual event can transform life into a *unique* whole which can be compared to a narrative.

From a first person perspective, individuals are not able to experience their own death as an event. However, the way they conceptualize death shapes even their everyday endeavours. One of the central claims of this thesis is the idea that considering human lives as narrative is the proper way to investigate and understand the manners in which everyday existence is shaped and influenced by death. In this regard, the meaning attributed to life, which directs the existence of an individual to be in a certain way, is deeply rooted in the meaning that is given to death. Since human existence is conceived to be constant self-making, which is contextualized by the events in one's life, the rationale to seek for meaning in one's life hinges upon the presence of choices between alternative options. In this regard, we can assume that an individual freedom is indexed to the need to make a choice between several possibilities in

the present. Thereby, there seems to be two essential questions in forming a rationale with the aim of finding life meaningful. Firstly, who/what is the source of the choices (in the sense of being in control, this signifies the realm of freedom) and, the latter is to what end (both in the teleological and completion sense, this signifies the realm of temporality) these choices are directed. Analysing the nature of one's temporal attitude is the particular way this thesis attempts to relate the notions of freedom and death in terms of their significance in the self-making of individuals. For, death as an event signifies a limit to the time that is at the disposal of the individual. This poses a threat to the freedom of individuals, in terms of limiting the number of options they have. However, death as an eventuality transforms the ontic event of death into a significant parameter for the degree of control one has over one's own life. For, in the face of a possibility that is absolutely certain – namely death – rather than individuals being in control of the events, the 'Event' might control them instead.

This thesis is an attempt to clarify the relation among freedom, temporality and mortality within a phenomenological perspective. This clarification will be essential to see how our relation to the notion of death can provide us with a moral basis in adopting a proper temporal attitude freely. The basis of this perspective will be constituted from Heidegger's analysis in *Being and Time*, in which existence is understood as "movement" (this term belongs to Pattison, 2013: 97) since the meaning of existence is temporality in the sense that we travel in time in terms of moving only forwards in it. Moreover, it is important to note that the meaning of temporality is our mortality, since during our journey in time somewhere out "there" in the future, we will come across our death. In this sense, our existence is the movement towards our death from our birth. This is the way Heidegger coins the term "being-towards-death", in *Being and Time*, to express our essential mode of being. Heidegger's term to signify the unique way of human existence expresses "temporal finitude"; in the sense that "death is the finitude of possibilities, the helplessness and limitation on what is achievable within life" (Carel, 2007: 548). In this regard, the fact that we exist is the implication that we move in time; for if we do not move towards the future, then we would not meet our death. However, during our journey in time, we also have un-lived days to look forward to. This implies that there are multiple versions, if not infinite, of the days we have yet to live. Moreover, since one's future functions as an open horizon, one needs to make choices between multiple versions of oneself. I will argue that narrative thinking will enable individuals to make sense of their mortality in the proper way in terms of reinforcing their free self-making rather than constraining this process of self-making.

In the case of choosing among alternative options, the nature of the actions of individuals cannot be comprehended without taking into account the future projections of those individuals. In this regard, the choice between several possibilities is the interplay between the present and the future. Thus, the irreversible direction of causality (in the sense of traveling in time) has a significant influence on the choices of individuals, without which attributing a meaning to life would be thwarted. Thereby, the notion of time is a key feature for an individual in adopting a certain mode of life, since time functions as “the horizon of every understanding of being” and for any way of interpreting it (Heidegger, 2010: 17, Kant, 1998: BXXV). As the irreversibility of causality signifies the direction of the arrow of time, the inevitable nature of temporality of human existence constitutes the extent to which the arrow can reach in the light of death.

The temporality of human existence might be found as a fundamental limitation in our relationship with being, in terms of revealing our mode of being-in-between. This is both in the sense that existence is moving along the trajectory of the period between birth and death only towards the future, and that it requires manoeuvring along the multitude of possibilities and opportunities, since temporality signifies the time-boundedness of human existence, which is, thereby, bounded to be a “unique singularity” (Lewis, 2005: 13). Yet it is also an enabling condition for human experience. Whereas it is relatively clear what it means to suggest that human existence is temporal, it might be useful to focus further on the nature of temporality. One salient interpretation of the term can be put forward by the Kantian understanding that our experience is conditioned by time (and space as two forms of intuitions) and, in this regard, the conception of time is a crucial parameter to understand our relation with being. Another interesting implication of the temporal character of human existence points to the notion of death as a limit (and/or limitation) to human existence, since it essentially means that human existence is finite.

Proposing one’s awareness of death as the basis for an ethical praxis in one’s existence can be defended by the claim that it is the way individuals relate to the mode of being, that is indicative of authenticity, which is the source of freedom. In analytical terms, this claim borrows the notion of intentionality from the existential tradition in the following way; as Nozick states, “to intend that my life be a certain way, I must have an intention, or desire, or goal, or plan that focuses upon my life as a whole, or at least upon a significant portion of it” (2002: 68). The most salient aspect of intentionality in one’s life is having a plan, which is an expression of one’s “own set of coherent, systematic purposes and intention for their life”



(Nozick, 2002: 68). In this regard, the role of death in the focus of individuals on their own life plan is significant for two reasons: its function on the irreversibility of causality towards the future and its factual inevitability as an indicator of finiteness of human existence in time and, thereby, possibility. Thus, “death is an essential structural feature of all projection into a future, and constitutes one kind of structural limitation: finiteness in time” (Carman, 2003: 275). The structural limitation of death partly comes from the meaning attributed to life and partly from the more general conception of human existence.

In terms of revealing the structural function of death in one’s projections, it can be reasonably claimed that death “is the essence of life, not only in the sense that we, as we live life, know that it will end; but in the essential sense that we are always in advance of our momentary life and its contents” (Metzger, 1973: 11). In this sense, language, as a distinctive feature of human existence, reinforces the validity of the claim that human consciousness transcends the present and is oriented towards the future. For, it can be perceived that human beings have a conception of the future since their language provides them with the capacity to bring future into the present, which “enables them to represent future states of affairs in the present” (Hanfling, 1987: 57). In this regard, it is possible to claim that since the meaning of one’s actions is laden with teleological features, an imagined future makes it reasonable to sustain a meaningful life. Thus, an imagined future has a bearing upon the actions taken in the present in the sense that individuals are always ahead of themselves. At this point, death comes into play as a structural limit, since the time of its occurrence is somewhere in that extended future as an inevitable fact.

An extended future gives individuals the opportunity for further improvement and growth, as stated by Nozick, “the *opportunity* to build from what they are not” at that *moment* (2002: 71, italics mine). Hence, the detrimental feature of death does not hinge upon its extirpative influence on the personality of individuals only at a time as an event, but rather its capacity to block the fulfilment of their intentions as a constant threat, in other words, as an eventuality. This is because, the process of self-making is a function of one’s awareness of one’s own existence, setting one’s own goals and directing oneself towards these goals. At this point, the influence of death comes into the picture, as an inevitable but temporally uncertain future event, which might hinder (or rather reinforce) the process of this self-making in the sense that it functions as an essential limit to shaping goals when reflecting upon the future. For, when individuals direct themselves towards the goals that they choose to pursue, death as an eventuality will constantly be present along with the personality construction, which is the

process I consider to be self-making. In this regard, I defend the view that the influence of death on personality construction, and thereby self-making, depends on the meaning attributed to life on the basis of the temporal attitude the individual adopts.

This view is essential, also, in revealing the relation between an awareness of death and freedom in the framework of authenticity. For, as Heidegger states, “if we understand man not as a sensory world-entity, not cosmologically, but rather in his personality, what we have in view is a self-responsible being. Self-responsibility is the fundamental kind of being determining distinctively human action, i.e. ethical praxis” (2002: 180). And since death has a structural feature in the personality construction, it calls individuals to an ethical realm, in which they are delivered the task and responsibility of choosing to be themselves freely.

In terms of attributing a meaning to life the consideration that “the meaning of life is that it ends” – to quote Kafka (Kagan, 2012: 288) – might seem pessimistic, however the dreaded reality of death can be viewed as the source of individuation. And individuation is, in turn, the stimulus (and the distinctive feature) of authenticity. This is a particularly strange way, in which death can be viewed as “the shrine of nothingness” and at the same time function as “the shelter of being” (Heidegger, 1971: 179). As future projecting beings, individuals pursue their projects by considering the future possibilities. While making each single decision among different alternatives, an imagined future is disclosed to individuals in case they choose to go on that particular path. While, on the one hand, the eventuality of death is constantly on each and every path towards the future and implies that the paths are temporally finite, on the other hand, the “temporal finitude” leads to the “finitude of possibilities”, which brings the value of each path into the forefront. The value of the chosen path should be assigned by each individual and in this sense death as eventuality functions as “the shelter of being”, however during the moment of decision, the individual is always reminded that one of the possibilities is the event of death and in this sense it can be viewed as “the shrine of nothingness”.

The optimisation between the imagined future and the need to make a decision in the present requires the notion of a life-plan. However, over-planning can be detrimental to one’s meaningful self-making in the sense that adhering to the strict planning might lead to ignoring the fact that every individual gains new experiences during their life, while these might be helpful to find out what future is best for the individual. In the other extreme, viewing life as a mere experiment can also be too myopic. Thus, thinking in narrative terms provides individuals with the opportunity to reflect upon the future based on a plan, while enabling them to adapt the new experiences gained through the process to that plan. In this regard, interactive planning

is crucial in promoting authenticity since the experimental approach to temporality would hardly lead to self-direction by itself. This is because, self-direction is the temporal compass against which the value of different paths (diverging pool of options) are disclosed. Furthermore, the over-planned approach to temporality would leave less room for taking the actual action and expressing oneself by resolutely actualizing that plan in terms of grasping the aesthetic value of moving along the chosen path. In this regard, adopting an interactive life-plan is a suitable way to a *meaningful* self-making. For, self-expression without self-direction is blind and self-direction without self-expression is empty. This is the particular way of viewing life as a narrative, in which both self-expression and self-direction have a significant value. At the same time, it reinforces authentic self-making in the sense that one is able to lead an authentic life through an awareness of death, which helps individuals in clarifying their goals because of the finitude of possibilities and reminds them of the urgency of realising their goals because of the temporal finitude.

The extent of one's freedom is closely related to the way the individual relates to death. As Dastur states, "the choice of possibilities of existence can take place solely in the light of death, and only a finite freedom can therefore confront the irreversibility of temporality" (1996: 72). Within this framework, from an existentialist point of view, human existence is condemned to be free and mortal. The preoccupying question arises from this dual condemnation: 'How do these two condemnations shape, or come to be shaped by, the mode of living an individual adopts?' It can be claimed that the relation between these two condemnations is bi-conditional. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that "existing bears continuous witness to the retroactive power of death, but though death is a power that determines our existence, it is equally true that existence is a power in itself; therefore, human existence, aware of itself, is a dialogue (not a monologue) with death" (Metzger, 1973: 15). My research will focus on the dialogue of an individual with death, which I take to be the self-direction, with the aim of considering its relation with freedom and self-expression of the individual.

It is evident that some accounts of death can be partly theological. However, it is important to note that my goal in the thesis is not to argue for or against the belief that God will resurrect the human body and consciousness. The reader's belief in an afterlife might be an important factor in his/her notion of death. However, I will not speculate over the bearings of particular metaphysical possibility on the notion of death and related question 'will *you* still *exist* after you *die*?' With this in mind, Dastur claims that:

[...] The phenomenological discourse on mortality argues for ‘no passage beyond’ death, and proposes no transcendence capable of neutralizing it- whether the purely biological one of universal life, the mythological one of a realm inhabited by the dead, the theological one of divine eternity, the metaphysical one of a timelessness of truth (1996: 39).

However, it would be too extreme to claim that the phenomenological discourse on mortality *argues* for no passage beyond death since it can be strongly claimed that the phenomenological discourse has to remain silent over this speculation, as it is outside of the realm of experience. It is significant to clarify that what is final, and outside of the realm of experience, is “being in this world which ends with an individual’s demise” (to which any notion of an afterlife agrees) and this does not necessarily require, nor does it renounce, the denial of another kind of existence (Carel, 2007: 553). However, a phenomenological lens requires us to analyse the notion of death through focusing on the process until the event of death. For, this focus will enable us viewing death as a phenomenon, *towards* which our experience is directed, in terms of revealing its meaning. Thus, the working assumption of this thesis will be the assertion that an individual’s existence is this-worldly and finite. This does not mean that my stance can be considered as sitting on the fence. Rather, this position is deeply rooted in the distinction that needs to be made between death as an event and death as an eventuality. For, the eventuality of death does not signify the period after death, but rather it expresses the process until the event of death. Thereby, this necessary distinction also constitutes the basis for giving priority to this-worldly existence in the phenomenological analysis of the relationship among mortality, temporality and freedom.

The proponents of the theological considerations and analyses of death, through the presumption of the continuity of self in the light of an after-life, might often claim that there can be a phenomenology of death as an event. Yet contrary to this idea, if death is conceptualized as an eventuality, then it would be reasonable to argue that “there is a phenomenology not of death, but our relatedness to death, our mortality” (Dastur, 1996: 42). As a matter of fact, death as an event is experientially blank and “phenomenologically opaque” (Heidegger, 1962: 290). However, this signifies the consideration that analysing death as eventuality, is *de facto* phenomenological since phenomenology is the analysis of the particular ways in which individuals experience their own mortality. In other words, “the discourse on death can be genuinely phenomenological because it is the discourse on how the finite character of one’s existence appears to oneself” (Dastur, 1996: 39). It would be fruitful to add an existential layer to this discourse to relate the notion of death to that of freedom. The influence

of death on the free choice of one's mode of living will be analysed through two related but different conceptions of freedom: the opportunity concept and the exercise concept (death as a structural limitation, as an indicator of finitude). For, "English speaking philosophers have been comparatively silent on existential questions since 'existentialism' is considered to be a school of philosophical thought" (Benatar, 2002: 1) which is related more closely to the continental thinking. However, English speaking philosophers have also been concerned with questions such as whether life has meaning, and relating this question to the notion of freedom, within the context of reflections on death, would be a genuine contribution by the world of English-speaking philosophy, particularly in the area of ethics – where there is an increasing interest in the notion of narratives and mortality, and the ethical issues surrounding these notions.

I will bring analytical tools (Berlin's distinction between negative and positive conceptions of freedom) to bear on problems (death as a constraint on one's freedom) not initially conceived of in those terms, since this will mutually reinforce both traditions. For, on the one hand, bringing analytical tools to bear on *Being and Time* will serve to refine these terms and the related problems, on the other hand, importing the notions of death, temporality and freedom into analytic philosophy will provide this framework with an enriched content.

In this thesis, by means of discussing two conceptions of freedom coined by Isaiah Berlin, the *absence* of death as an event will be presented as prerequisite of widening the extent of one's freedom according to the negative conception of freedom since death as an event is external (outside the realm of existence) to individuals in the sense that it might function as a constraint on enhancing a wider number of possibilities. In this regard, such conception calls for a freedom *from* external obstacles, and viewing death as an external obstacle requires its *absence* for the individual to be free, which is a call for immortality. As for the eventuality of death, the absence of death as an eventuality, as the other potential condition for being free in the negative sense, is ontologically blank without the absence of death as an event. Namely, there would not be an eventuality of death for an immortal, who would have an indefinitely long life. Thereby, this solution is out of the equation in an analysis based on the negative conception.

The *presence* of death as an eventuality calls for an analysis according to the positive conception of freedom since, as an ever-present possibility, death can be viewed as an *internal* constraint (since it is within the realm of existence) and to overcome this constraint (hence to be able to free) one must conceive life as a narrative. For, the positive conception of freedom

defends a freedom *towards* something and this requires a plan, at least in an ordinary sense, by the means of narrative thinking. This conception calls for an exercise concept of freedom. In the positive sense, the proper way to freedom would require conceiving and living our lives narratively, “which is a basic condition of making sense of ourselves by having an understanding of our lives as an unfolding story” (C. Taylor, 1989: 47). Such an understanding would combine the opportunity and exercise concepts of freedom in the light of the essential structural feature of human existence, which is mortality. For, narrative thinking is a kind of mental representation through which one’s capability to consider *facts* in their temporal and teleological context is fulfilled, in the sense that making sense of these facts and events of life is made possible through evaluation of one’s experience with reference to the future, the past, and the present.

One salient aspect of this capability is surveying mortality in the sense of growing an awareness of being in between two facts: birth and death. In narrative thinking, the events of birth and death function as temporal vantage points for having a sense of oneself as a persisting individual. This is essential in exercising one’s freedom and acknowledging the responsibility to take up being one’s own self. For, “without the sense of oneself as a persisting individual whose actions should cohere with one’s beliefs, values, and desires... and whose current actions have implications for the future, one does not have the capacity for moral responsibility” (Schechtman, 1996: 159). In this regard, “the language of foreground and background is useful”, since the present can be perceived as the foreground in the sense that “it stands out from the double background of past and future. The past background has a beginning and the future background has an end. These are facts, but also elements of our awareness” (Carr, 2016: 4). For, in narrative thinking, one’s double background is translated into actions in the present through reanimations of the past and future, and brought into the foreground.

This translation is based on one’s capacity to interpret one’s own experience with an awareness of one’s mortality due to the two significant facts (birth and death) in one’s existence. Thus, “to exist as a self means to exist as a self-interpreter in the sense that to exist as a self-interpreter is to exist as worldly and not as something “world-less” (Heidegger, 1995: 177). Thereby, “Heideggerian authenticity is implicated firmly in the normative commitments of narrative thinking in that, in order to accomplish the authentic life, the self requires some project through which it can project its own-most capacity for being-a-whole” (Fisher, 2010:

247). The implications of the normative commitments of narrative thinking for one's actions will provide an answer to the question 'how can we take up the responsibility to lead our lives'.

The methodology of my thesis will attempt to reveal that an awareness of our mortality leads us from *facts* to *narratives*. In particular, I will argue that when *the* fact that we will die, an epistemological aspect of our awareness of mortality, is linked with the existential structures and conditions pertaining to the realm of ontology, then the need to adopt a particular kind of ethical attitude is revealed. The nature of the ethical attitude depends on which understanding of ontological structure this epistemological aspect is linked with. For example, if this most significant *fact* about our existence is linked with a vulgar/linear understanding of time, a belief that human beings have an essence, and the teleological structure of our actions (a conventional mode of temporality as an ontological dimension of our awareness of mortality), then one would come up with a grand-narrative approach in one's decisions. However, if this fact is linked with a primordial understanding of time, a belief that freedom is the most essential feature of one's existence, and the teleological structure of our actions (a different mode of temporality as an ontological dimension of our awareness of mortality), then one would come up with an individual narrative. In other words, one's striving for freedom functions as a qualitative bridge between one's awareness of mortality and temporality, which reveals the moral dimension of one's mortality as narrativity.

The usage of phenomenology and existentialism, on the notion of death, is not my original idea. Heidegger's *Being and Time* can be introduced as the work of phenomenological existentialism. Its existential characteristic can be found in the attempt of the work in terms of searching the ways in which the individual *ought* to confront death.

Despite interpreters' attempts to find Heidegger's existential recommendation for how to live in the face of our inevitable final end, one finds not a Sartrean denial, nor the traditional Christian belief in an afterlife, nor secular heroic nihilism in the face of the absurd. One finds, instead, the suggestion that none of these responses to terminal death need to undermine finite resoluteness with its joy in the possibility of either preserving vulnerable identities and cultural worlds, or letting them go and disclosing new ones. But beyond that, it seems that each of us, without Heidegger's guidance, has to relate to the inevitability of finally no longer being able to be there in his or her own way (Dreyfus, 2005: xxxvi).

Thus, according to Heidegger, the mode of our being appears to be the highest one, since our existence is open to be an authentic one. For, Heidegger views the human mode of being as essentially being-towards-death, which captures the ontological dimension of the awareness of

our mortality through viewing the meaning of our existence as temporality in the light of our death. However, the ethical issues are implicitly taken up into a complex of finitude of possibilities and temporal finitude that define our worldly engagement as finite transcendence since Heidegger introduces finitude as the essential feature of temporality (Schalow, 1993: 55). In this regard, being-towards-death discloses the need to adopt one's own way in relating to one's own finitude as the key to unlock, or unbound, the bounds of death. Furthermore, as White states:

[...] the need for more thinking, and for new thinking, is not a sign of finitude that is a failing or lack. It is a sign of boundlessness which nourishes the transformation of destiny. This boundlessness, though, continually remains within the bounds of death (2005: 23).

Thus, the notion of being-towards-death as the source of authenticity, seems to be a morally neutral conception (in the sense that it does not belong to the realm of morality, and should not be confused with immorality) in Heidegger's *Being and Time* although by virtue of the interpretation that it views death as a structural phenomenon, an awareness of which reveals the essential structures of human existence, this notion provides us with the basis for an existential ethics. My approach will attempt to insert a moral characteristic into the notion of authenticity via the suggestion to adopt a diachronic temporal attitude towards events in life. This will be helpful to respond to the problems one's relation to one's own death reveals for one's "moral freedom, which is the major focus of existentialism along with the nature of the value of action and choice" (Olafson, 1967: xi). This moral characteristic will also relate the discussion to the exercise concept (positive conception) of freedom mentioned above since I will view freedom as the capacity to act in the patterns of actions of a certain kind, which I consider to be self-expression in the light of self-direction. Moreover, by means of this, I will be able to demonstrate how the purpose of this thesis is related to Heidegger, namely as a development of an ethical attitude, the basis of which is formed by his notion of anticipatory resoluteness, in the light of responding to the related question 'how would the awareness of the fact that every individual will die have a bearing upon an individual's moral/practical freedom', which is a question in general raised by *Being and Time* but left unanswered.

The main objective of this thesis is to demonstrate the view that the moral features of authenticity are revealed when three existential analytics are linked together: death, freedom and narrative thinking. Firstly, death as an eventuality discloses the epistemological and ontological aspects of death. This reveals the need to understand the most significant fact of



human existence (mortality) in the light of the essential features of existence, which leads us to the need to analyse temporality. When temporality is analysed with respect to death, human freedom is disclosed in the need to give priority to some possibilities over others. However, in the light of a temporally indefinite death, the absence of any ground/measure in giving priority leads to anxiety, which requires us to be resolute if we want to exercise our freedom. In this regard, I propose having an integrative will as the measure. This will also forge the basis for the phenomenological link between our practical freedom and narrative thinking. At this point, striving to sustain the anticipatory resoluteness calls for a moral analysis, which I offer through thinking life in narrative terms. For, I argue that a non-narrativist reading of being-towards-death would be inadequate to capture the moral/practical aspects of authenticity and would lead to a paralysis in action in the light of the anxiety of being-in-between multiplicity of events, actions, and experiences. In doing so, I attempt to demonstrate how to make sense of one's situation as a "unique singularity" by being the co-author of one's life and avoiding regret through balancing structural and operational desires.

As a result, in order to reveal the phenomenological aspects of death, I will suggest a distinction between conceiving death as an event and death as an eventuality. In the first chapter, I will examine the meaning attached to death, which varies in different paradigmatic ways of considering time. I will also demonstrate the necessity of scrutinizing death with an appropriate temporal perspective and examine the conventional approaches, which take death as a singular event as the mark of the end of one's time as a result of the linear understanding of time. I will analyse the ways these approaches take death as an inactive element in life, thereby suggesting the transcendence of this event through grand narratives and given values, which is a potential source of problem for one's freedom. This will lead me to the discussing the influence of primordial understanding of time on conceiving death as an eventuality in terms of providing the individual an integral understanding of temporality in the second chapter. Thereby, I will introduce Heidegger's phenomenological conception of death, which suggests that conceiving death as an eventuality provides the individual with the awareness of one's mortality by portraying one's existence as being-in-between in two senses: the finitude in temporal terms and the finitude in possibilities. In the third chapter, in order to see how an awareness of a limited life-span (in both senses) functions as a structural element to value particular possibilities and their pursuit over others, I will approach death as an event in the sense of an external obstacle, and death as an eventuality in the sense of an internal obstacle to one's freedom. In order to make an analysis of the relation between one's freedom and awareness of

his/her mortality, I will introduce Berlin's distinction between negative and positive conceptions of freedom.

The fourth chapter questions how death would constitute constraints to freedom, if any, according to these conceptions: the positive conception of freedom (freedom *towards*/presence of control) that stresses the importance of the exercise of control in one's life and views the eventuality of death as an internal obstacle in acting resolutely towards fulfilling one's projects in the light of the possibility of death, in contrast to the negative conception of freedom (freedom *from* obstacles/ absence of constraints) that focuses on the number of options/opportunities one possesses in life and views death as an external limit to these options.

In the fifth chapter, I will argue that the challenges revealed by conceiving death as an eventuality can be met and overcome by conceiving life in narrative terms. In this regard, I will demonstrate that thinking in narrative terms in the light of mortality enables individuals to exercise their project(s), through constituting the necessary psychological connections between the potential anxiety about the eventuality of death and the meaning assigned to the execution of the project(s), since in the narrative structure there is the need to make a temporal cross-referencing between the projections and the actions. Thereby, I will provide the practical guidance that Heidegger rejects to give in terms of sketching a positive frame of resoluteness in anticipation of death. The positive frame will be constructed through a suggestion that individuals should conceive life as a narrative in order to be free *from* or *towards* death. Hence, it will be demonstrated that both aspects of death can be fitted into one's story: firstly, death as an eventuality in terms of acknowledging its feature to function as closure in the sense that ending is understood as telos, which transforms one's unique way of existence into his life narrative by the means of teleological structure. Secondly death as an event can be fitted into one's story in terms of acknowledging its feature to function as the closure as termination, which transforms this unique life into a whole story that is delimited in temporal terms. Thereby, I will conclude that death, freedom and narrative thinking are three essential analytics of existence that provide the individual with the tools to be the main author of one's free life-story in terms of shaping one's existence authentically by clarifying one's goals, prioritizing some possibilities over others and pursuing and realizing these goals in a resolute manner.

## CHAPTER I

### I. THE MODE OF BEING AND THE MEANING OF DEATH AS AN EVENT

The meaning attributed to death has changed throughout intellectual history as the understandings of the modes of being evolved around transient and temporal characteristics of human existence. This signifies that there had been a metaphysics of death on the basis of our temporality. In this regard, although the transient and temporal nature of human beings remained the same, the meaning attached to death varied according to the differences in the paradigmatic approaches to this nature, and thereby the nature of the striving to transcend this transience. In other words, I argue that if we index our mortality to our temporality in the ‘vulgar’ sense, then the mode of being adopted frames the meaning we attribute to death. According to a Heideggerian standpoint, in the “vulgar” understanding of time the present is always prioritised in an inauthentic way. This is due to the fact that when time is conceived to be a series of “now-points” on a linear and infinite basis, “the concepts of future, past and present initially grew out of the inauthentic understanding of time” (Heidegger, 2010: 312). In this vulgar model of time, the future is conceived as a “not-yet-now”, whereas the past is viewed as a “no-longer-now”, and the present is just a point of reference in this linear conception (Heidegger, 2010: 312). From the standpoint of a Heideggerian conception of time, it can be held that this linear understanding of temporality, which is rooted in Aristotelian conception of time, has overshadowed philosophical analyses of time from the Ancient Greeks till Enlightenment, especially in relation to the meaning of death.

In this regard, as long as time is conceived as *only* a linear continuity, instead of being comprehended as a primordial unity, the time interval between one’s birth and death, namely one’s existence, can only be measured through the now-points of time beginning from birth, to middle age, up to old age, along with corruption and oblivion; and to measure this finitude, an eternal existence that has no beginning and no end – an existence independent from temporality – is necessary in the sense that it would possibly enable measuring one’s existence in time (Mitralexis, 2015: 167). Thus, the linear, vulgar understanding of time grows out of a distinction between time and eternity. In turn, this distinction requires a transcendent existence (at least for a being, if not for all beings) in temporal terms when facing one’s mortality.

On the contrary, I defend the view that if we move from our temporality, in the ‘primordial’ sense, to our mortality, then the meaning we attribute to death frames the mode of being that we adopt. This is the methodology that is used by Heidegger. This also acknowledges

that “the meaning of death does not begin in death”, rather it springs from our temporality (Levinas, 2000: 104). However, both senses signify the necessity to scrutinise death in relation to the notion of time. At this point, the crucial aspect is whether temporality underpins mortality or vice versa? In this chapter, I will examine the approaches that take death as an event, which is due to indexing our mortality to our temporality in the linear sense. For, due to the linear understanding of time, conceived as the trajectory of now-points, death is condemned to be conceived as an event only, namely as an actuality, instead of an ever-present possibility, namely an eventuality, which signifies it as a potentiality. In this regard, the linear understanding of time eclipses the phenomenological aspects of death and leads to an inauthentic understanding of death, as an event only. Thus, the meaning of death is given through the mode of being that one adopts, instead of revealing itself through itself.

The function of death is to annihilate the individuals’ access to time and space. This function leads to an understanding in which “death appears to humans as the limiting constraint, the culmination of temporal losses” (Nussbaum, 1994: 193). In functioning as the limiting constraint, death signifies the end of our access to time and space, and thereby our spatio-temporal existence. However, “whenever, an element of persisting personal identity appears to anchor continuity, defined in either temporal and/or ontological terms, it unavoidably makes death appear as not the definitive end, but as only a metamorphosis” (Remenyi, 2012: 10). In this regard, the Enlightenment was a breaking point in historical ontology, which is the study of various specific ways in which the objects of knowledge come into and go out of being in time (Haddock, 2003). The relation between temporality and mortality is subject to the changes in historical ontology. For, thanks to Kant, “philosophy has been finitude without infinity” since the Enlightenment (Levinas, 2000: 36). Thus, it is reasonable to argue that it had also influenced philosophers in analysing the notion of death within the finite realm.

The Enlightenment also has a bearing upon the role of individuals in formulating their own opinions, which are the basis for the organisation of one’s life-plan, including death. As Kant (1983: 41) states in his own terms, “the Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-imposed immaturity” and this enables individuals to confront their fears, including death. Thus, as different conceptions of the modes of existence evolved, the meaning attributed to death varied as well, since our mortality was no more indexed to our temporality in the linear sense. In this respect, the Enlightenment and Heidegger afterwards have been significant in understanding that our mortality has been underpinned by our temporality in the primordial sense (where time is conceived as an integral unity of the past, the present and the future),

which paved the way to approach death as a phenomenon in itself. Hence, the mode of being itself is conceived as being-towards-death, which I will explain further in the next chapter. In this chapter, therefore, the objective is to evaluate the conceptions that view death as only an event and the role of individuals in terms of being in control of their own death. To demonstrate these, I will discuss the ways in which adopting particular modes of existence influences the conceptions of death by addressing the evolution that took place in the notion of time when considered in relation to that of death. Thus, this will have implications for the role of individuals in the making of their life-plan, which can be compared to a narrative.

### I.A. Grand Narratives and Time

One concrete example of the argument that the mode of living individuals adopt is influential on their response to death is provided by theology, most of which is deeply rooted in the linear conception of time. However, this is not limited to theology but extended to some philosophical accounts. As explained in the introduction, a theological approach can drastically change the meaning of life and death since it merges the linear, vulgar understanding of time with the grand narrative approach. For, “on the linear, ‘vulgar’ understanding of time, classically expressed in Augustine’s *Confessions*, temporality is derived from a higher non-temporal state of eternity, which is co-extensive with the infinite and eternal now of God” (Critchley, 2014: 13). In this regard, Augustine states in his *Confessions* XI.26 that “hence it seemed to me to that time is nothing else than an extendedness” (2006). Moreover, Heidegger argues that “the significance of the standing now is drawn from the vulgar understanding of time in orientation toward the idea of “constant” objective presence” (2010: 406). In its most ordinary sense, the eternal existence renders the paradigm of an after-life possible and, thereby, it has a crucial bearing upon the meaning of death. In this regard, conceiving death as an event only becomes a significant function of death’s depersonalized conception. For, one’s temporality becomes depersonalized in the light of transcendent eternal existence. Furthermore, if one’s death is depersonalized, then it has to be given meaning within a scheme of grand narrative, which attempts to overcome the absurdity of the transience of human existence with an objective meaning.

One possible reason to view death as only an external event (to this-worldly existence) is justified by the conventional, ‘vulgar’ understandings of time, which usually offer individuals access to another kind of existence. It has been noted that a Platonic understanding

of time suggests that the temporality of this-worldly existence is a linear continuity, but only as an image of the eternal temporality:

Now so it was that the nature of the ideal was eternal. But to bestow this attribute altogether upon a created thing was impossible; so he [God] bethought him to make a moving image of eternity [αἰών], and while he was ordering the universe he made of eternity that abides in unity an eternal image moving according to number, even that which we have named time (Archer-Hind, 1973: 120).

Thus, the ensuing existence is not taken to be just a mere reflection of transcendent truth but taken to be the truth itself that is not subject to change. As with the “truer world philosophies” (this term belongs to Young, 2003) i.e. Platonic, Hegelian, the vast majority of religions (monotheistic religions, pantheistic, deistic etc.) place both access to and the *locus* of this transcendence after death, although I believe that the transcendence can be sought within the finitude of one’s existence authentically in the temporal plane when temporality is taken to be a unity in the primordial sense. In this regard, the element of continuity between this-worldly existence and existence in an after-life paves the way to conceive death as an event only.

One salient focus of this study is in answering the question ‘who is the source of the choices?’ Along with this, the constellation of values offered by religions is also problematic in terms of lacking authenticity from the point of the view of an existentialist account. For, in this regard, the meaning in theological accounts has been indexed to a transcendent being as in the following:

There is a tradition, finding its most persistent expression in Christianity [and the other Abrahamic religions], which contends that without life everlasting, without some survival of the death of one’s present body, and without the reality of God to ensure that such a life will have a certain character, life will be pointless and morality without significance (Nielsen, 2000: 154).

The advantage of religion, or ‘truer world philosophies’, can be presented as the presence of God, or a Being, in the grand narrative as the eternal, transcendent being forming the time. This portrayal underpins the depersonalization of death in terms of depersonalizing one’s temporality. The existence of God provides a rationale to assume an element of continuity in terms of time, even between different kinds of existence. That being said, death becomes an event that happens at a specific point to end one existence in order to initiate another. This means that death is no longer a definitive end, and neither is it a structural element that shapes human existence. Rather, it is an event to be actualised at some point in the time-scale that represents a constellation of some now-points that are ever-lasting and continuous (which is insignificant when compared to eternity).

In the ‘vulgar’ conceptions of temporality, access to another kind of existence is placed beyond death, and moreover, the quality of that existence is measured in terms of adhering to the patterns of actions of a certain kind in one’s temporal existence, based on the values that are originated in the transcendent realm. Thus, the quality of one’s this-worldly existence is eclipsed by the quality of an ensuing existence in the transcendent realm. A major problem with the talk of transcendence in general is the variety of ways in which the term is defined. An etymological analysis of the term transcendence would be helpful to get a clear sense of the meaning of the word ‘transcendence’. In this regard, the Latin roots of the word, *trans(e)* meaning to extend across, and *ascend(o)* which means to go back i.e. in time, signify “a double effort of stepping across an interval by elevation or a change of level; the word is, therefore, to be thought in its sense of a change of site” (Levinas, 2000: 163). This does not mean that this world is not significant from a theological standpoint but it suggests that it is a training ground for the after-life, to which the system of values is indexed. For, in the grand narrative of theological accounts, instead of the individual originating the values, the values that are put forward by religion constrain the individual. In other words, the individual’s own life as a narrative is eclipsed by a grand narrative as the absolute source of value formation. In this regard, according to such understanding death is not part of life, independent from the meaning the ‘grand narrative’ attaches to it.

The presence of ensuing transcendent existence directly shapes the way individuals view death and, consequently, the ways in which they would own their time. In this regard, the life-time of the individual, thereby, is conceived as a term of respite. Through the lenses of grand narrative, while one’s life is viewed as a term of respite, it also has a beginning, middle and an end. In this sense, although death is taken as an event, the structural elements of mortality merit the grand narrative of religion. According to this perspective, although the significance of temporality and making the most of the time that is at individuals’ disposal is acknowledged, the pivotal importance of one’s own project in comparison to the ‘grand narratives’ is not stressed. Whereas the view has been acknowledged that “only through the passage of time, experienced as the horizon of one’s project, can possible options become one’s own actualities” (MacDonald, 2000: 34), the range of possible options is restricted by the ‘grand narrative’ in the sense that certain possible options are taken to be necessary to be actualized.

One salient approach to the issues surrounding death, mortality and the meaning of life comprises different conceptions that hypothesize the notion of narrative at the centre of

these issues. In all of these conceptions, life is compared to a journey in the linear sense, which is composed of a beginning, middle, and an end: “a true-world account of the proper course of our life is a kind of story, a narrative”, but only in the ‘vulgar’ sense (Young, 2003: 1). One advantage of this approach is deeply rooted in its disposition to take the structural character of narrative seriously and to apply it to the notion of death in terms of attaching meaning to life. For, one possible way to disclose the relation between the phenomenon of death and the awareness of mortality is defending the view that “accepting mortality provides a boundary for our experience and it makes our decisions meaningful” (Clack, 2002: 130). A boundary is of significance in addressing the nature of meaning since meaning is found in unity and boundaries are the structural features required to compose a unity. This does not mean that an indefinitely long life could have no structure, but rather it suggests the view that immortality lacks the temporal boundary as an element to build meaningful structure. However, the problem with merging the grand narrative approach with the linear understanding of temporality is its inability to form an integral temporality.

Albert Camus signifies the account of boundaries in his discussion in the *Myth of Sisyphus*, where Sisyphus has been punished by the gods with an infinite life-span in which he is condemned to complete the task of pushing a rock to the top of a mountain, where the rock would roll down again (2005: 115). Sisyphus has to start over and over for an indefinitely long period of time. Although, he has a purpose to achieve, and it has a strict structure, it is quite obvious that his life lacks meaning, or at least a significant sense of meaning. For, it lacks the authenticity in which one would be able to “fully realise one’s situated being” (Webber, 2011: 5). One source of authenticity is this ontological element, which is having boundaries. Thus, death as a boundary enables individuals to reflect upon their lives with a provision of their own non-existence. Thereby, individuals are provided with the ontological tool to realise the situation of their existence. The other source of authenticity is an ethical element, which guides individuals in their actions as a freely constructed ‘ought to’. Thus, in addition to being temporally finite, an essential characteristic of a meaningful life is freely chosen actions in the sense of being the function of the finitude of possibilities. For this very reason a grand narrative is an undesirable option since it lacks this notion of authenticity.

In this regard, although the structural characteristics of narratives are at the centre of the ‘grand narrative’ approach, the role of individuality has not been stressed as having pivotal effect in one’s self-making since the conception of temporality is depersonalized. For, it is reasonable to argue that in the ‘grand-narrative’ approach, the narrative relations between the



events are already determined. Hence, as an event death cannot convey meaning to the mode of living, but can only be marked as an end, which borrows its meaning from being a gateway to the transcendent mode of existence. For this reason, adherence to the grand narrative position in seeking meaning is a process of discovery. Furthermore, the way towards the discovery of transcendence is also inflexible. In other words, the optimisation of individual's narrative to the 'grand narrative' is indexed to an absolute transcendent state that is experientially blank.

This traditional account, thus, is global rather than individual, since all lives at all times and places are narrated in them, grand narratives; for traditional thinkers, that is to say, the meaning of life is something we discover, we do not choose or make it to be the case. These two features characterise every grand-narrative philosophy. All true-world philosophers, of whatever shape or hue, presuppose that these two features must characterise any genuine answer to the question of the meaning of life (Young, 2003: 85).

Theology and 'truer world philosophies' can be presented as the representatives of this traditional, 'grand narrative' approach. For, the source of transcendence, in terms of being in a position to comprehend the value of one's choices, is originated in and belongs to another realm of existence. Thus, according to the grand narrative tradition, the narrative relations between the events of our lives are not something we create, but rather something we discover in time.

The grand narrative accounts apply to such an assumption in overcoming the main condition of absurdity. To avoid absurdity, in the sense of "the dragooning of an unconvinced transcendent consciousness into the service of an immanent, limited enterprise like a human life", traditional accounts provide an after-life (Nagel, 2000: 184). In this after-life individuals are to see whether their discovery was indeed true since the truth in the realm of after-life is not subject to change, in terms of being universal and everlasting (Nagel, 2000: 184). Although expectations to avoid absurdity have been met, the locus of the source of transcendence has gone astray. For, transcendent consciousness points to the self-transcendent capacity of individual human beings that enables them to reflect upon their transient character. This kind of transcendence is "the self-awareness as a being-towards-death", as a being that has transient existence, "that is justified from a self-awareness as a being in time" (Remenyi, 2012: 2). In the grand narrative tradition, on the contrary, individuals are only explorers of the transcendence; however, the individualistic narrative accounts would be more successful to locate the source of the transcendence, in terms of viewing the individual as a self-conscious being. In this respect, one's own self becomes an object of reflection for the individual. For,

the individualistic account seems to acknowledge the transience of individuals and attempts to make the best use of this transience within the temporal boundaries of human existence.

## **I.B. Transience and Transcendence**

The question ‘what does it mean to be a transient being?’ is a function of the question ‘what is it to die?’ Whereas dying contains a movement, it also transforms the individual into a passive state. In this regard, there is definitely a movement of the individual from one state to another. This notion of movement further signifies the transience (the state of passing away) and transcendence (the state of extending across time). The accounts concerning the state after death vary as the accounts of death differentiate in its relation to time. The linear movement of time through the now-points requires conceiving death as an event only. For, in this picture, the occurrence of death is only possible when it is a part of history (as according to the linear conception of time, the unity can be constituted only in the now, and death is never a now from the first-person perspective). That is why the assumption of an after-life, or the continuity in the personhood through one’s endeavours is present in the accounts that view death as an external event. However, when death is considered on the basis of primordial understanding of time, it is an eventuality, since death is always the part of future. This distinction will have implications when individuals seek transcendence to fulfil their self-transcendent capacity and to confer meaning on their transient feature of existence.

One reasonable position in attributing meaning to life and death is conceding the point that “acting freely is what makes us the sort of creatures that live the lives that have the characteristic features of narratives, since it is a distinctive feature of narratives that later events can alter the meaning or significance of earlier events” (Fischer, 2009: 146). Therefore, it can be argued that what individuals decide to do in the future can change the meaning of the past events in their life. In a way, it is the narrative characteristic of their life (their ability to change the meaning of it by their own choices oriented to the future) that they can start over, repeatedly, within a finite amount of time. Thus, applying narrative thinking is one source of transcending the transient, limited amount of time that is at the disposal of the individual.

However, death as an uncertain future event might hold the way, which you choose to take. Thus, “acting freely is the feature, which when added to the others (including the capacity to take the appropriate temporal point of view and thus to care about one’s story), transforms us into creatures whose lives can be evaluated by reference to salient sorts of narrative

relationships” (Fischer, 2009: 152). From the point of the view of an account that views human lives as narratives, two important features are acknowledged: the transience of human existence (in the sense that it is bounded by spatio-temporal experience) and the transcendence (whether it is sought in terms of spatio-temporal causality or narrative web of relations) that is required to attach meaning to this transience. The crucial point is fulfilling the capacity to take the appropriate temporal point of view in seeking transcendence. In fact, that is the point where the grand narrative and the individual narrative accounts diverge on seeking meaning in life. I will suggest that transcendence should mean for the individual to move beyond the “now-points” on the temporal plane as long as one exists, namely being aware of the primordial nature of our temporality.

By contrast, transcendence can be misleading in terms of attaching meaning to human existence if it is viewed through the lenses of the grand narrative accounts. For, if the meaning of life is sought in the realm that transcends the this-worldliness of human-consciousness and requires other-worldliness, then there might be sufficient reasons to doubt that this is a proper reply to the question ‘what is the meaning of life?’ For, it is reasonable to claim that this account attempts to come up with a meaning of the finite, by the means of the infinite through a linear thinking of temporality. If a meaning is attributed to life in order to remedy the finite (in temporal terms) character of human lives by postulating another realm, then this would constitute an ad-hoc movement since it would constitute revising the assumption to justify the theory. In addition to this, if such is actually the case, then these explanations can be presented as an “extra-causal, extra-temporal, and extra-spatial meaning of life” (Klemke, 2000: 17). This is an indirect way to admit that there is no meaning of the temporally finite existence, as long as transcendence is sought in an otherworld. For, trying to find transcendence in an extra spatio-temporal causality is an attempt to create an extra meaning to life. The meaning attached to death, thereby, becomes extra-phenomenal as well. However, a Kantian approach to temporality paved the way for Heidegger to take out the infinity from the finitude in terms of avoiding an extra-causal, extra-temporal and extra-spatial sense in the pursuit of meaning.

On the contrary, in the limited – temporally finite – enterprise of human lives, the need for transcendence can be found in narrative thinking in the sense that “human transcendence is simply the ability to see *facts* in a temporal context, to refer to the future and the past, and to have a temporal horizon” (Olafson, 1967: 100). When infinity is sought in narrative terms, which is different from seeking it in spatio-temporal terms; namely, instead of taking death as

an external event which is proposed to be the gateway to another existence that provides infinity in the linear understanding of temporality, death can be seen as an eventuality that transforms the time-dependent and time-extended period into a narrative that is formed by the timeless artistic value. Thus, in the scheme of grand narratives, since another existence is possible only *after* death, so is the ability to achieve infinity due to viewing time as merely a sequence, a linear continuity. On the contrary, that existence is still possible towards death, not afterwards, if human lives are conceived as authorial projects, artistic processes. For, “a narrative is always more than a mere chronicle of events; it is usually more than a bare record of causal sequence. Narratives normally comprise optative and teleological elements: they refer to the desires and purposes that generate and guide our actions” (Scarre, 2009: 157). This would enable individuals to find meaning within their [immanent] lives. Jaspers points out the significance of philosophy to demonstrate this possibility: “philosophizing is learning to die; learning to keep the awareness of the ultimate situation of death open, to whose freely authentic foundering, in order to attain through it the only true being” (1959: 121).

One possible reason behind the mistaken usage of infinity by grand narratives is deeply rooted in its attempt to seeking a solution to transience through a transcendent spatio-temporal causality. The vulgar, linear conception of time has a bearing upon this methodology. However, if the transcendence is sought within the narrative causality, then there would not be anything wrong with employing infinitude of possibilities within the temporal limits to avoid absurdity. For, narrative causality is relatively different from the spatio-temporal linear causality, which flows from the past, present and to the future. In the grand narrative account, the present is devalued by employing an extra spatio-temporality after death. However, when the causality of narrative thinking is based on the primordial understanding of time, the future can also change the meaning of the past; this is not possible in the linear conception of time since the future is conceived as not-yet-now and thereby does not exist. Therefore, the narrative meaning puts the present at the end of causality by the means of projections made both to the future and the past in terms of attaching meaning to those episodes. Thus, one’s life regenerates and transforms itself through the narrative thinking, which is the source of creativity in one’s life. In this regard, creativity is the immanent force of our lives, which can be sustained through an individualistic narrative account of life.

Therefore, the question for seeking meaning in life remains as ‘what is the temporal, causal, spatial meaning of life?’ Furthermore, by the means of structural narrative relations, the reply to this question remains within the temporal, spatial realm of finite human existence, and

thereby would constitute an authentic response. In a way, transcendence is created in the immanent capacity and powers of individuals, which I will discuss in the next chapter. In the next section, however, I will provide some examples of the ways in which the vulgar understanding of time influenced the meaning of death. This will reinforce the justification of my adoption of a phenomenological approach to death, which I regard as the consideration of death on the basis of primordial time, in the sense that it is more helpful to reveal the aspects, which the vulgar understanding of time eclipses.

### I.C. A Historical Comparison

In this section, I will not seek to provide a comprehensive historical account of different conceptions of death, but rather my primary aim is to demonstrate the implications of adopting a linear understanding of temporality and the grand narrative approach at the same time for the meaning attributed to death in terms of investing, and moreover, owning one's limited time. The need to seek transcendence in the course of human existence is partly a function of the argument that "a meaningful account of human life can be achieved only if the fact that we will die is *eclipsed* by some other greater goal or purpose" (Clack, 2002: 6). This is essentially a reflection of the grand narrative tradition, since it refuses to confront the fact that we will all die in a direct manner. Indeed, it would be reasonable to claim that a meaningful account of human life can be achieved if the fact that we will die is *linked with* some other goal or purpose. Thus, linking temporal finitude with some goal or purpose is one salient way to seek transcendence in one's life. For, transcendence prerequisites an existing limit in the sense that moving beyond that limit is sought. However, temporal finitude can be transcended within temporal terms only. Whereas it is relatively clear what it means to suggest that the presence of some greater goal is of significance in the case of relating to the notion of death by seeking transcendence, it might be useful to say a few words about the locus of this transcendence.

It is a common characteristic of grand narratives, or 'true-world philosophies', to index transcendence to universal truths since time is not viewed as something that individuals own. For instance, Plato in the *Phaedo* suggests that a meaningful life can be sought only through disregarding this transient world, which is represented by the body and through accepting a transcendent reality (1999: 65c). This means that acceptance of transience requires transcendence and that it also requires optimization of the individuals' life projects to that of a transcendent universal life-project. In such a universalistic picture, death is not viewed as the structural limit to life, but rather an instrument or a gateway to the transcendent existence. This assertion seems to apply only to the conceptions which posit an afterlife since afterlife is taken

to be one transcendent existence, however, I suspect that this methodology is confined to projections of an afterlife. For, I reckon that to view death as an instrument or a gateway to the transcendent existence is deeply rooted in the thoughts that suggest an objective attitude towards one's life in the sense that the transcendence should be sought not only within the temporal plane, but also in the teleological dimension as well.

The problematic nature of following a grand-narrative approach in our actions is not so much rooted in an inadequacy to reveal the teleological aspects of the events of life (including that of death) since it has the feature of narrative thinking. Rather, it springs from its failure to capture a proper temporal point of view, which leads it to eclipse the authentic feature of our actions. This is due to conceiving death as an event only, and linking this knowledge with a linear, vulgar understanding of time. When combined together, these understandings lead to a depersonalized conception of death on the one hand and inauthentic decisions on the other even when the temporal finitude of one's existence is acknowledged in the sense that they eclipse the ideal of autonomy. Thereby, "the problem with traditional moral theories is that they want to "definitize" ethics by grounding the good in some fixed scheme" through which "they bypass the abyssal element of existential decision by modelling ethical deliberation along the lines of demonstrative and calculative techniques that in a sense decide things "for" us" (Hatab, 1995: 417). One salient example of such an attitude is viewing oneself as part of a larger/universal project.

According to Kierkegaard, to have an objective attitude toward one's life is encouraged by a Hegelian view of the world. On such a view, one is part of a larger world-historical process of the self-realization of Reason or Spirit, and one's life takes significance if one plays a role, however minor, in that world-historical process (Slote, 1975: 17).

The world-historical process is a teleological, but also a linear process in seeking transcendence. It is teleological in the sense that on the one hand it reveals "the desire for unity aroused by my death – the desire to counter the stamp of authorship on my life as a whole rather than to be buffeted about by the pressures" of everydayness and transient desires, while on the other hand, it "stands in an uneasy relationship with the desire to exist as part of a larger whole to which I belong and in light of which I gain importance as a participant in, and contributor to, a larger narrative" (Vogel, 1994: 40). In this regard, it is a common claim of the people who live in the light of the world-historical, in which immortality will be achieved through their works (Slote, 1975: 18). Thus, in the discourse of grand narratives, the transcendence – that is sought for the sake of accepting and overcoming transience – has to be objective and universal. Moreover, it

can be reasonably defended that the people who live in the light of the world-historical are in a transcendent *Schein*, in the sense that they conceive death as an event only. For, an objective and universal stance towards death is a function of the depersonalisation of one's own death. However, death as an eventuality is one's most personal and active concept in one's existence. For that reason, according to Kierkegaard, "to live for the world-historical is to forget that one exists" (1960: 274).

Another detrimental implication of viewing death as an event, rather than an eventuality, for an authentic choice can be seen in Platonic thought. According to Plato the attainment of wisdom is possible only when the soul is liberated from the hindrances of body, which is what death is to him (1999: 64c, 65b). Thereby, Platonic thought asserts the idea that the major problem of human beings is to live a meaningful life in the face of death. Moreover, since the transcendence is sought in a truer, fuller existence which does not belong to this world, meaning is found in rejecting this-worldliness of existence and craving for the liberation through death. Thus, according to Plato, philosophy is practising death since its role can be compared to that of death: the soul can become independent and free from interference by concentration on that which is pure and everlasting and immortal and changeless (1999: 79a). The everlasting, immortal and changeless existence is the fuller universal mode of being that Plato seeks for.

Another school of thought that is much to the point on the discussion of death is Stoicism. Although it can be claimed that Stoic thinking is very close to being a representative of the grand narrative tradition (which depicts a universal life-project as a package to be accepted as a whole), it is also reasonable to argue that a realm is left to the individual in terms of relating to the notion of death. One substantial justification of this argument is the view that Stoic thinkers looked on philosophy as a way of life, and an art of life. To that effect, the claim can be held that this is a reference to the creativity of the individual. Moreover, the reflections of this view can be traced back to Epictetus, who claims that "just as wood is the material of a carpenter, bronze that of the statuary, so each individual's own life is the material of the art of living" (1998: 32). The same view can also be reflected by the insights of Marcus Aurelius, whose approach to death represents the major principles of Stoic thinking.

The way Aurelius conceives life is also indicative of the similarity found between human lives and narratives, since "Aurelius compared [the image of] life to a play" (Rutherford, 1989: 167). Thus, it can be claimed that in the Stoic philosophy the mode of living one adopts (the process of self-making) is something that is an expression of one's endeavours. The idea

that the subject matter of the art of living is each individual's own life is evident. However, a significant implication of this idea is that the art of life is conceived as something that is not external to individuals, in other words, individuals' way of life is what Stoics will characterize as something within the power of individuals, although not many people would be capable of this except those that find philosophy as the subject matter of their lives (Sellars, 2003: 56). To that effect, a major diversion from the grand narrative tradition is obvious. Nevertheless, the way of life is not wholly within the power of individuals, according to Stoicism, what is within it is the possibility of acquiring virtues that shape the way of an individual's life.

Although the locus of control seems to be placed within the individual, this implication is not sufficient to come up with the claim that Stoicism is not adjacent to the tradition of the grand narrative. For, the discussion of freedom is, partly, indexed to the dispositions of soul, and the concept of soul assumes an already given nature for individuals. In other words, the kind of freedom – one that an artist might have – is attenuated by a transcendent notion of soul, which is disposed to acquire virtues in accordance with the given nature of that individual. Chrysippus' famous analogy of the cylinder is much to the point in terms of analysing the Stoic understanding of freedom. In this regard, according to the Stoic thinking, "freedom is something that happens to us because of us, that which depends on us" (Bobzien, 1998: 300). However, this does not necessarily mean that there is not a given nature to individuals in Stoic thinking.

In Chrysippus' famous cylinder analogy, the attention is drawn to the fact that when one pushes a cylinder, although the movement is initiated by the push, the way in which the cylinder moves is due to its own internal nature or form, namely its circular cross-section. He uses this analogy to illustrate a distinction between what might be called internal and external causes. The initial push that starts the cylinder rolling is an external cause but the nature or the shape of the cylinder that determines the way in which it moves is an internal cause. In the case of humans, it is the internal disposition of one's soul that determines the way in which one responds to the external events. As in the case of the cylinder, this internal nature directly impacts upon the way in which a thing behaves. (Sellars, 2003: 83)

One interpretation of this passage would be that the internal disposition of one's soul shows some similar characteristics with the mode of living one adopts. For, it is the mechanism that determines the way in which one responds to the external events. As the mode of living one adopts has a direct and necessary impact on an individual's behaviour, the disposition of the soul functions as an internal cause that influences the way of life an individual would follow. Thus, presence of the internal disposition of one's soul constitutes one reason to count Stoicism as a thought school that has close ties with grand narrative tradition, which presumes a given



nature of individuals. However, the interesting thing with the notion of death is the claim that it also shapes the mode of living one adopts.

It can be claimed that what had been left half finished by Stoic thought, in terms of providing individuals an immanent realm to deal with the notion of death, has been completed by the means of the Enlightenment. Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* introduced the form of time, in a way transferring a transcendental element to human experience by defining it as a form of thought, namely as the source of intuition.

[...] For it really says no more than that in the whole time in which I am conscious of myself, I am conscious of this time as belonging to the unity of my Self, and it is all the same whether I say that this whole time is in Me, as an individual unity, or that I am to be found with numerical identity, in all of this time (Kant, 1998: 423).

Instead of pointing to a transcendent and eternal God, the immanent notion of time has been introduced as the source of possibilities within human experience and existence. Death, as the final limit to the temporal losses, has been a measure of our self-making after Kant's influence on the Enlightenment. "To measure ourselves as historical and finite relies on measuring time in relation to a limit: ... in this respect, death itself is a transcendental value, a point in relation to which the value of values derives since all life is measured in relation to its proximity to death" (Goodchild, 2002: 46). In this sense, the notion of death shapes the mode of living one adopts. This is partly due to an attempt to adopt an integral attitude towards temporality, though it is not primordial. To that effect, echoes of the Enlightenment's approach are also present in Stoic thinking.

Seneca argues that "once we become aware of the limited time available to each human life, we will use our time wisely, and we will ensure that we do not waste our energies pointlessly or in pointless activities" (1997: 50). In this regard, Seneca suggests combining the temporal periods of the linear understanding into an integral temporality by arguing in favour of the view that "those who forget the past, neglect the present, and fear for the future have a life that is very brief and troubled" (1997: 59). Also, in Aurelius' *Meditations*, the moral effect of death is a point to focus on. I argue that an effect is moral if it can be used as a guide to an individual to formulate an 'ought to' phrase. For him, "the supreme law of history is the transient characteristic of individuals, ... and death is not only, as it was with other Stoics, the centre of philosophical reflections as an event against which moral greatness of life is measured; it becomes the test of every single act and event" (Choron, 1963: 73). Thus, the moral effect of death becomes the ethical response of an individual to the notion of death.

For, one salient way for individuals to overcome the problems attached to the fragile status of human existence is to attach a value to the limited time they have. This very notion of attributing value to one's actions can be presented as the moral effect of death, since the inevitable but indefinite (in the sense of the old saying *mors certa, hora incerta*) character of death is the source of that fragility. Moreover, on the very existence of the moral effect, death becomes 'the test of every single action', since the constellation of each individual action should lead to a valuable life. In other words, the presence of death is a reason for individuals to reflect on morality. Another point, which is of significance in the discussion of the role of death in one's ethical world making, can be traced back to Seneca. According to him, "the human condition is defined by death and trouble, far from being aberrations, [these] are fundamental features of human existence" [in this sense] Seneca "focuses on that which is in our control: our responses to such occurrences; thereby, he is concerned with the ethical response to death" (Clack, 2002: 117). Thus, one's response to the inevitable event of death is partly a process of an ethical construction of the mode of being, namely the self-making.

This process contains adherence to values, which are always "relative to goals, and goals only exist if they are chosen" (Young, 2003: 133). An appropriate temporal point of view can give meaning to life in virtue of the anticipation of death. This signifies the importance of chosen goals linked with the fact that human existence is finite. This brings the discussion to one of the key developments of existentialism, which is its challenge to the traditional philosophies' depiction of the nature of the mode of being as containing given values rather than chosen ones. According to such a conception, it would not be possible that our response to death leads to changes in the mode of living we adopt. For, the correct response to death would be fixed in such a scenario, according to the values already chosen for the individual. However, it is reasonable to argue that the meaning attributed to death will change the importance given to relevant values, which in turn shape the mode of living one has. Moreover, taking into account the inevitable possibility of death in our decisions will reveal the authentic aspects of our actions, which do not necessarily lead to correct actions but call us to take up responsibility in owning our finite time.

## *CHAPTER II*

### *II. THE MEANING OF DEATH AS EVENTUALITY AND THE MODE OF BEING*

In the previous chapter, it has been claimed that our conception of time has a pivotal effect on our response to death. If time is viewed as a source of possibilities when conceived in its uniformity, then death can be found as a limit to our existence. By contrast, if our time-boundedness is conceived as a limit then death can be viewed as a rescissory event that liberates our existence. However, it is indubitable that death is the loss of access to space and time. Whether this access will be revived at a later stage (by the means of an after-life) is another question and requires another discussion. Nevertheless, the significance of time in relating to the notion of death is obvious. While the metaphysician may seek to decisively prove or refute that there is a life after death or that human-beings are immortal, the attempt of phenomenology is simpler. It attempts to portray the phenomenon of death as it is meaningful to human understanding. In this chapter, I will attempt to provide a manifestation of death through a phenomenological lens that views it as an eventuality.

Phenomenology attempts to analyse death from the standpoint, where it views death as a mirror for one's existential search for significance and meaning in one's experiences.

A phenomenology of death will not seek to uncover what it is like to be dead, what the singular event of death is like, but as a description involving a reduction to meaning; it will be intimately related to a phenomenology of life, exploring the ways in which death penetrates human understanding as a necessary condition of being-in-the-world (Leman-Stefanovic, 1987: 5).

From a phenomenological stand-point, death can be properly defined as a *phenomenon* that signifies the fragile status of existence, since it is the devourer of one's access to time; in this sense death transforms one's existence not on the temporal plane but within its limits. In this regard, death is a permanent possibility – a certain eventuality – that threatens the existence of individuals by closing down their access to time, which is the horizon of all possibilities.

Viewing death as a phenomenon reveals two dimensions of death: the fact that it is being an event and being an eventuality. The former dimension is the conventional way through which many philosophical systems – except phenomenology and existentialism – approach death. The latter dimension, as it is the subject of an unconventional approach, might need further elaboration in terms of what is meant by the term eventuality. Eventuality is a certainty that will eventually happen in the future, but at an indefinite time. To avoid leaving the term at

an abstract level, it would be helpful to make it concrete through an example. For instance, when one gets into water, wetness is not an eventuality, for ‘when’ it will happen is known. Nor is it like the result of an application; after one submits their application the result will eventually appear before the announcement deadline (in the sense that its ‘when’ is known again although there is a period of waiting). Rather, it is like an earthquake, of course if one lives in an earthquake zone. It will happen eventually, but it is not definite in terms of ‘when’ it will occur. Some environmental (e.g. seismic) changes may cause the earthquake to strike earlier than it is expected, and other factors may postpone it; but nothing can eliminate the possibility, because where one lives is, and will remain as an earthquake zone.

In the case of life, it is quite similar; since humans are mortal, one cannot eliminate the possibility of death, although it is possible to take preventive measures to postpone it, or to make it happen immediately by choosing to commit suicide. However, these are only modifications in the temporal plane whereas it is not possible to modify the ontological condition of mortality. In the case of an earthquake, the habitants of an earthquake zone should learn to live with the earthquake, this is to mean that they have to organise their lives around this fact (considering this crucial condition of living in an earthquake zone, and earthquake as an eventuality, when it comes to constructing buildings, living areas, transportation networks, so on and so forth). Similarly, individuals should learn to live with the condition of mortality, and death as an eventuality. Moreover, they have to organise their lives and personality constructions around this fact. Otherwise, quite contrary to the case of an earthquake, the buildings, which are not built with the consideration that they are in an earthquake zone, would collapse; the individuals would find that there is nothing to collapse at the moment when the eventuality of death becomes an actuality through the event of death.

A conventional conception of death, on the other hand, would view it as an external event that puts an end to human life in the sense that it is not realised when one is alive. This has crucial implications for the decision to be made as to whether envisaging death is still possible while one lives. Such an understanding leads to a pseudo-dichotomy between life and death – as if death is nothing to a living human-being. For, if death is an external event, and not an eventuality, then it is not an active element in life. This was held by Epicurus, who claims that a right recognition that death is nothing to us makes the mortality of life enjoyable, or to use a better term bearable, not by adding on an infinite time, but by removing the longing for immortality (Epicurus, 1940: 60). Echoes of the dichotomous conception of life and death

are present in this claim that argues when there is life, there is not death; and when there is death, there is not life.

Ignoring death as long as one is alive, thereby, is proposed by Epicureans to be the best option to confront the mortality of life. Although the significance of time with relation to the meaning of life is admitted by making reference to the longing for immortality, in this conception there is a flawed relation between time and death – temporality and mortality. For, not thinking about death, on account of the fact that longing for immortality is in vain, is not the proper reply to coming to terms with mortality. Moreover, this could encourage individuals to waste their time. In this regard, viewing death as a mere event is a fatal error, since it prevents individuals from recognizing the conditions of their existence. Kierkegaard finds this “an absentminded haze without ever truly becoming aware of what it is to be a human being” (Muench, 2011: 111). This can be interpreted from an existential point of view that individuals live in vain if they do not comprehend the existential condition, to which they are subjected. And that condition is proposed to be the conception of death as a permanent possibility, which is the essential structure of our lives: the individual’s life being temporally bounded by death and death being temporally uncertain.

Rather than viewing it as a distinct event (the individual’s decease), death – when conceived as a permanent possibility – is no longer a mere negation of life. By contrast, as has been suggested by Heidegger, it is in its fullest sense “a phenomenon of life” (1962: 291). In this regard, life ought to be a constant dialogue with death by relating to the knowledge that we will die. Thus, “our relation with our death is not something that is realised *when* we die, but something either we realise or fail to realise *in* our life” (Mulhall, 2005: 303). This wider coverage of the phenomenological conception of death would be fruitful to deal with the problems of conventional approaches, in which death is taken as an event, since it suggests relating to life in such a way that it takes the finitude of individuals’ existence and the realm of (in)finite possibilities of self-making into account. I will attempt to narrow down this sense, to demonstrate the way in which death penetrates our understanding as a necessary condition of having meaningful structure in our lives, which is a reflection of the positive conception of freedom that stresses the exercise of control in our life.

This definition of death – a permanent possibility that threatens the existence of individuals by closing down their access to time – is, therefore, a function of phenomeno-existential analysis. For, from a phenomenological standpoint, “death is the condition for the

meaningfulness of all possibilities and the limit concept that defines the boundaries of meaningful experience” (Carel, 2007: 547). Moreover, Cooper states that “phenomenology – the central feature of existence – is a focus upon the meanings and acts of meaning in virtue of what we refer, and otherwise relate to the world” (1999: 3). Thus, a phenomeno-existential analysis of death proclaims two significant features of death: it is a structural condition of life and as a structural condition, it illuminates the meaning attached to life. In a particularly eccentric way, death is, in the Kantian sense of the term, the ‘critique’ of life. This is to say that “death stresses the boundaries of life and the finitude of human existence in this world; and this phenomenon uncovers the successive layers or dimensions in the constitution of human beings” (MacDonald, 2000: 34). To comprehend the significance of the structural feature of death in attaching meaning to life, it is imperative to analyse human existence in temporal terms. Moreover, such an analysis will reveal considerable problems to the freedom of individuals since the temporality of human existence means to suggest the temporal inevitability of death on the one hand, and the temporal uncertainty of death on the other.

## **II.A. Human Existence and the Moment**

### *II.A.1. Humans and Existence*

One salient claim of the previous chapter is the view that the basic misconception of conventional approaches to death is rooted in their attempt to analyse human beings, as if the object of the analysis were things or living substances. It might be reasonable to choose ontological conceptions as the departure points in the case of establishing an ethical theory for the explanation of human actions. Nevertheless, the ontology of things in general differs from the ontology of human beings. Although it might be possible to come up with an account of the nature of substances in general, and to use this account to explain relations between substances through causality; it would be an irremediable oversight to apply this substance-oriented analysis to the explanation of human actions. For, the relation between the future and the present plays an inevitable and unique role in the case of explaining human actions. Otherwise, the awareness of death would only remain at an epistemological level in the sense that it will only affirm the proposition that all men are mortal. Such a description would view death as a remote event and overlook the structural feature of death that is rooted in the perception of death as an eventuality. For that matter, relating to death at an ontological level would become impossible. It would be the same with the claim that death penetrates each of

our choices with existential urgency in the sense that it does not conceal itself in the future but interpenetrates our present concerns and actions (Lepp, 1969: x).

Admitting the significant function of the future-projection in the actions of individuals allows Existentialist thinkers to view the condition of human-beings as a unique manner of existence, as opposed to the conventional recognitions of a human-being “as an instance of a timeless essence” (MacDonald, 2000:3). This reflection is an exercise of phenomenological analysis that “aims at describing man’s being or existing, not his nature” (Levinas, 1985: 39). That is to say that, according to existentialist reflections, “what a person is at any given time is always a function of what he/she is on the way to becoming in pursuit of the projects issuing from a reflective concern for his/her life” (Cooper, 2000: 3). This constant projection towards an open future, which is based on the past as the source of new possibilities, is the unique manner of existence.

The unique manner of existence for humans means that human existence is constantly self-making. Moreover, since each individual bears, as an existential conception, “the sole responsibility for determining what sort of person to be, and what acts to perform, it is crucially important that in making his/her choices s/he is careful to avoid all forms of comforting self-delusion” (Scarre, 2007: 26). This, on the other hand, requires a proper comprehension of the notion of temporal moment in order to prevent the future-projections in vain. For, only through a proper temporal point of view, can individuals possibly recognize the condition in which they constantly strive to be. This will be a pivotal step for individuals to hold an understanding that illuminates the way of seeing death as a phenomenon, which is to take death as something that shows itself as itself. In other words, it is something that manifests itself. Thus, a proper temporal point of view dispels any cover that might prevent individuals seeing the condition in which they have to proceed in their self-making.

### *II.A.2. The Moment*

From a Heideggerian point of view, “fully comprehending a moment would involve placing it in a context wider than the immediate past and future and it would mean seeing it as the point to which one’s life has led, and from which the remainder of one’s life will acquire a specific orientation and momentum” (Mulhall, 1996: 140). Such comprehension is conducive to understanding the fundamental structure of human existence in the sense that it is never “to be seen as a static phenomenon of present: unlike simple material objects, human beings always have plans and projects, which on a fundamental existential level, orient themselves towards a

futural horizon of possibilities” (Leman-Stefanovic, 1987: 9). Likewise, Kierkegaard argues that “thinking about death characterizes a mode of living and acting that consists in attending to oneself every moment, where the very act of attending will give one’s life a certain character and shape” (Muench, 2011: 119). Divergent as the world-views of Heidegger and Kierkegaard may be, images seem to converge here on the focus on the future-oriented feature of human existence and the significance of an integral unity of time. Thereby, the claim is that an awareness of one’s mortality, which provides the basis for a comprehension of integral unity of past, present and future, can also provide a basis for an answer to the question ‘how one ought to live knowing that one will die?’

One possible criticism of this position would be the claim that putting an emphasis on futurity in human existence might debase the value of the present. It can also be contended that some people do fall into this trap due to existential concerns. From an empirical point of view, it can be contended that “it is the present which has a being in nature, things past have a being in the memory only, but things to come have no being at all, the future being but a fiction of the mind” (Hobbes, 2003: 30). In this conception, the image of time is formed by “a series of now-points” that provide the basis for seeing the present as the primary meaning of human existence (Leman-Stefanovic, 1987: 63).

Whereas it is relatively clear what it means to suggest that time is a series of now-points, it might be useful to say a few words about the influence of such a suggestion on conceptions of death. Viewed through the time prism that is ‘a series of now-points’, death would seem to be the present without a future. This was actually the misconception of Epicurus that led him to conclude that death is nothing to us, since one can never break through into a present with any future in time as the sum of now-points. His apprehension about the meaning of death comes partly from the fact that without having an appropriate temporal point of view it is not possible to come up with a proper understanding of death. For, as an eventuality, death is the future without a present. The example of a terminally-ill patient’s attitudes towards death would be useful to see why this is the case:

As long as I have understood anything in the world, I have existed. My being is defined by temporality. You are telling me that I will have no future, you are asking me to understand this fact, but that is impossible for as long as I understood anything in the world, there has always been a future. If there is no future, then there is no time, there is no self, my essence is destroyed, there is no meaning – how can something meaningless be understood? (Leman-Stefanovic, 1987: 175).



His misconception is partly due to his conception of death as only a singular event in the ‘series of now-points’, instead of an ever-present eventuality. Although the conception of death as an ever-present eventuality contains the conception of death as a singular event, it transcends this conception and considers death as being both an event and an eventuality. Seneca’s thoughts might ease the conundrum of Epicurus, as he contends that “after death everything comes to an end, even death itself” (Roberts, 1924: 73). Understanding death as an ever-present possibility – a certain eventuality – provides one with the tool of comprehending the possibility of not being able to be – in other words, one’s own-most impossibility. Thereby, an epistemological approach to the notion of death would not be sufficient to understanding its meaning.

The combination of viewing death as a singular event and taking time as a series of now-points is the passage to an account that considers human life as part of a grand-narrative. Since, by means of these two conceptions individuals are urged to devalue death, if not to ignore it. Dispatched in the present, the time close at hand that can cover only immediate past or future, an individual is lost in the everydayness. Without projecting towards the future or towards the past (nor to one’s own death) to combine an integral character; and in the absence of being on alert as a reflection of one’s own mortality, the individual is not able to seek transcendence by means of having an integral conception of time through projections. However, the individual is left with transience, since, the time at the disposal of the individual is limited to the time close at hand, when considered on the basis of the vulgar understanding of temporality. By contrast, if death is considered on the basis of the primordial understanding of temporality, then mortality reveals itself as that which transforms the future and the past into an issue for individuals. Hence, by admitting mortality, the time at the disposal of the individual increases in terms of its urgency and significance. In this regard, we come to the understanding that “nothing is ours except time” (Seneca, 2008: Epist. I, 3). However, to come to this understanding, individuals need to transcend the vulgar, linear understanding of temporality, and come across to the primordial understanding.

In this regard, Heidegger stresses that “time is the primary horizon of the transcendental science, or briefly put, the transcendental horizon” (1975: 460). Thus, it can be safely contended that according to Heidegger “the phenomenon of time does not appear in merely ontic terms of presence, but in terms of the integral unity of past, present, and future”; although there is an emphasis on the future-oriented character of time, “time’s continuity is not

denied but in fact is stressed” (Leman-Stefanovic, 1987: 34). Echoes of existential tunes can be heard in the claims of this conception of temporality. In the existentialist tradition it is the future which firstly awakes the present. This is in the sense that although the primary meaning of existentiality is the future, my situation is not constituted by only the facts of my past endeavours, but by those which “take on significance from me precisely in the light of what I am on the way towards” (Cooper, 2000: 73). In this regard, the existentialist tradition urges the individual to have an integral unity of time.

The combination of viewing death as an ever-present possibility and having an integrally unified conception of time is the passage to an account that provides the basis to have an appropriate temporal point of view. In this regard, Heidegger defines temporality as the following:

Coming back to itself, from the future, resoluteness brings itself to the situation in making it present. Having-been arises from the future in such a way that the future that has-been (or better, is in the process of having-been) releases the present from itself. This unified phenomenon of the future that makes present in the process of having-been is what we call temporality (Heidegger, 2010: 311).

In this regard, Heidegger does not deny the aspect of linear succession in temporal causality, rather he suggests that on the one hand, “the integral unity of this succession forms in advance the pure aspect of succession, which serves as the open horizon” (Leman-Stefanovic, 1987: xvi). On the other hand, he takes the eventuality of death as the structural limit to the formation of temporality. For, “anticipation of the most extreme and own-most possibility – [which is conceiving death as an eventuality] – comes back understandingly to one’s own-most having-been; [the individual existence] can be authentically having-been only because it is futural, in a certain sense that, having-been arises from the future” (Heidegger, 2010: 311). In this sense, individuals are enabled to understand the primordial time, which is finite (Heidegger, 2010: 316). Thus, viewing death as eventuality enables individuals to become aware of the temporal finitude of their existence.

Although the awareness of this existential status stays in the background, “the residual background awareness of our life as extended in finite time means that all our plans and projects operate in a timeline” (Bortolotti, 2009: 23). Thus, we depend on the history that shaped us, and we move towards goals and destinations that are yet to be achieved, in the sense that “there is an interplay between our present selves, the future towards which we move and the past from which we come” (Bortolotti, 2009: 23). However, it can be contended that the interplay

between our present actions and future plans does not itself guarantee that this interplay is not absurd. In his article, 'The Absurd', Thomas Nagel argues that:

It is often remarked that nothing we do now will matter in a million years. But if that is true, by the same token, nothing that will be the case in a million years matters now. In particular, it does not matter now that in a million years nothing we do now will matter. Moreover, even if what we do now were going to matter in a million years, how could that keep our present concerns from being absurd? If their mattering now is not enough to accomplish that, how would it help if they mattered a million years from now? (2000: 176)

This quotation is a critique of the two candidates for seeking meaning in one's actions: the interplay of the effects of one's actions between present and future and the role of these actions in the larger picture of world history. Although one salient feature of the human condition – transcending the moment through projection – is acknowledged in this critique, the rationale to seek this transcendence is found to be unconvincing. One reason to rule out the latter candidate is the fact that it has been encouraged by a Hegelian world-view, which is at odds with an existentialist understanding of the world. For, in a Hegelian image of the world, the individual process of self-making is eclipsed by the making of the world-historical process. This view is also at odds with a phenomenological analysis since such an analysis attempts to reveal that "the meaning of an act does not depend on the attainment of the external goal", which is objectified in a Hegelian conception by the self-realization of Reason (Edwards, 2000: 149). Hence, according to this analysis, it is at the disposal of each individual to shape the meaning by conscious activity that provides the basic tool to transcend the moment by virtue of projecting the primordial time.

According to the conception of Nagel, the presence of death is the particular reason that transforms human life into an absurd condition since it is a limit on the transcendent consciousness and enables individuals to see that their life is finite. This is the reason, for him, to rule out the first candidate for providing a basis to our lives. On the one hand, human beings have the ability to project towards the future, and on the other, know that this future is also limited. Popper contends that those who think that life is meaningless, because it comes to an end fail to see that the opposite argument might also be proposed: that if there were no end to life, life would have no meaning, that it is, in part, "the ever-present danger of losing it which helps to bring home to us the meaning of life" (1977: 148). At this point it is important to ask these questions: Which one of these arguments is the one with the right guideline for our actions?

Would what one does now matter or not? Or would it matter if one does some other action instead of the one s/he chose?

To find a satisfactory answer to these questions, our job is to discern how individuals interpret what they are now experiencing and how this relates to their understanding of who they are, how they get through the present point and where they are moving (Bortolotti, 2009: 24). Thus, “meaning arises in the ordinary earthly human quest when individuals are able to fit the events of their life into a framework that displays them as stages in a journey towards greater self-awareness and moral development” (Bortolotti, 2009: 28). Thereby, an appropriate temporal point of view towards human existence, which is a function of a full account of the human condition, has three dimensions: the first is the awareness of our temporality, the second is awareness of our mortality and the third is the awareness of the narrative structure of our lives (which properly combines the past, present and future).

Heidegger’s description of the human mode of being as being-towards-death captures this second dimension of our condition but it remains at the ontological level since it does not give us any practical advice on how to interpret this ontological status at an ethical level. In the last chapter, I will attempt to demonstrate this narrative structure of human life and defend that a diachronic approach to it would be the proper way to understand mortality and the freedom of individuals. This will be helpful to acknowledge a finite realm of freedom in the face of death and come to terms with the human condition. Before that, however, I will now analyse Heidegger’s conception of being-towards-death.

## II. B. Being-Towards-Death

According to Heidegger the notion of being-towards-death, as the essential mode of being, is the means of breaking through into the ontological dimension of death. This notion itself designates some fundamental features of death: being certain, indefinite (in the temporal sense) and own-most possibility. These three features constitute the basis for viewing death as an eventuality, instead of an event. Moreover, it is the eventuality that each individual has to relate by him/her own-self. The attempt in *Being and Time*, to find an answer to what it means “to be” and “not to be”, had been evolved into an analysis of the conditions of existence. Although this means that the goal was to find the meaning of being in general in the beginning, it also suggests that death – as a fundamental structural feature of existence and as the source of the

awareness of finitude – compels an individual to choose to be a self, moreover to be himself/herself.

Along these lines, death provides individuals the means “to realise that they do not have time to explore all the multiplicity of options which life places before them” (Young, 2003: 118). This is the reason why at the beginning of his work Heidegger envisages that “the meaning of being – of that being we call Dasein (this is the term, Heidegger uses for the unique way of individual existence) – will prove to be temporality” (Heidegger, 2010: 17). The suggestions to view temporality as the meaning of being seems to bear multiple meanings: is it a call to understand the notion of time, or is it a flicker of potentiality of being with open horizons on the temporal plane, or rather is it a suggestion of becoming aware of mortality and organizing one’s life around this fact? The notion of being-towards-death seems to cover the multiple meanings of the term ‘temporality’. Echoes of the themes that signify the relation between the meaning of existence and the phenomenon of death can be heard in Heidegger’s initial contemplation on temporality.

One salient implication of this contemplation is the view that the meaning of existence is that it ends in the sense that death provides a limit in the temporal plane. Another reasonable ramification of Heidegger’s initial reflection is the claim that existence is an individual endeavour. In this respect, the temporality of being marks an individual set of choices within the context of existence since “not the arbitrary and accidental structures but essential ones are to be demonstrated in the everydayness, structures that remain determinative in every mode of being of an individual” in the sense that these structures provide an individual the tools to come to terms with “the question of existence only through existence itself” (Heidegger, 2010: 16). That is also the reason, for Heidegger, that death is one’s own-most possibility since it is an essential structure of existence. As a certain, indefinite and own-most possibility, and thereby as an eventuality, death is a way *to be*. Moreover, death as an event initiates the realm of *not to be* in the sense of *not being able to be*. This suggests that because of the possibility of no longer being able to be, being able to be is meaningful.

Being-towards-death, as a notion, amounts to an understanding that combines death as an event and death as an eventuality. This combination is crucial in the self-making of individuals since, in the mode of being-towards-death (which includes the sense of being-towards-the-end) self-making requires “the art of viewing one’s life as if from its end – grasping one’s own self as a completed totality, as something whole” (Young, 2003: 87). If

death were simply taken to be as an event, then it would have to be taken as a realization of something in the world. However, death is not an end in the sense of being a fulfilment. When combined with the feature of being an eventuality, death – as an integral phenomenon – becomes an outstanding possibility. In this sense, it becomes an awareness of one’s mortality and of the finitude of one’s options. Thereby, this realisation is a dimensional movement within the meaning of existence: from the awareness of one’s temporality to the awareness of one’s mortality. In this section, I will provide Heidegger’s analysis of being-towards-death as a mode of being through examination of three significant features of death: being one’s own-most possibility, its certainty, and its indefiniteness in terms of temporal occurrence.

The following three sub-sections will comprise the discussion of death as one’s own-most possibility, in which it will be shown that the life of each individual is death-laden and the way one relates to death is an individual one. In the second sub-section, certain feature of death will be demonstrated as a tool for comprehending the epistemic dimension of death, which is a public interpretation of death and the level that most individuals cannot exceed. In the last sub-section, the indefinite feature of death will be analysed as a way to compass the ontological dimension of death.

### *II.B.1. Death: One’s own-most possibility*

The term ‘own-most’ (*eigenste*) had been coined by Heidegger to bring the notion of death back to its individuality from its depersonalized usage among philosophers and in the idle talk of everydayness. For, it is the departure point of the ontological dimension of the conception of death from the epistemic conception, which remains at the public interpretation of death. From a Heideggerian point of view, the larger question of “what it means ‘to be’ and ‘not to be’ defines and distinguishes each individual and determines the way each individual lives his/her life” (Schmidt, 2010: xviii). In this sense, our way of being is “shaped fundamentally by the fact that each individual is preoccupied with this question, even if it is not thematised as such and even when it is forgotten” (Schmidt, 2010: xviii).

Along these lines, since death as an eventuality is an essential structure of “to be” – while death as an event is the possibility of “not to be” – the way each individual relates to the phenomenon of death determines the distinct way in which each individual lives his/her life. Thereby, death becomes a possibility of being that each individual has to take up himself/herself; because with the reflection on death an individual is enabled to see death as it manifests itself as “its-own-potentiality-of-being”, in which an individual is only “concerned

about its being-in-the-world absolutely” while an individual’s death is “the possibility of no-longer-being-able-to-be-there” in the world (Heidegger, 2010: 241). This is the particular phenomenological approach, by which Heidegger analyses the larger question of the meaning of being.

One major issue this phenomenological approach raises is the problem of existence. In Heidegger’s approach, what it means ‘to be’ at the general level is narrowed down ‘to exist’ at an individual level. One possible source of this transition for individuals is the presence of death and the awareness of mortality this presence suggests (when understood authentically). For, “to project oneself upon one’s own-most potentiality of being means to be able to understand oneself in the being of the being thus revealed: to exist” (Heidegger, 2010: 251). To view the meaning of ‘being’ as ‘to exist’ is a call for individuals to understand the ontological dimension of death and to move towards the awareness of one’s mortality, and moreover towards the awareness of one’s finitude. Otherwise one would remain lost in the epistemic conception of death and miss the opportunity to be an individual towards death.

According to Heidegger individuality and death, both, are at the centre of the analysis in the meaning of being, and thereby existence. However, the way one relates to the phenomenon of death has implications for the individuality of that person. For, there can be authentic and inauthentic understandings of death. When one gets closer to the inauthentic understanding of death, this move gets them closer to the public interpretation of the meaning of being, thereby takes a person away from their individuality. In the public interpretation of the meaning of being, it is admitted that “one dies, because in this way everyone can convince him/herself in no case is it I myself, for this one is no one” (Heidegger, 2010: 251). This “one” does not belong to the realm of existence, but only to the epistemic dimension, where this knowledge has an implication only for the sentence “all men are mortal”.

As long as “one” does not move to the existential/ontological dimension, they have to remain to be “no-one”. Thus, in suggesting that death belongs to one, inauthentic understanding of death actually suggests that it belongs to no one, in other words, one dies means that – at an ontological level – no one dies. What this indicates is the idea that the inauthentic talk about death does not have any implication for individuals since it always points to the ‘Other’. For, the ‘other’ is never me and it is as if I have immunity from death. Moreover, the suggestion made by the inauthentic understanding of death is either a longing for immortality or a negligence of death. Therefore, the question remains to be answered by the advocates of the

inauthentic understanding of death: ‘if the assertion that one dies means that no one dies, then by the same token of reason, would it be possible to suggest that one lives means no one lives?’ For, Mulhall suggests that “to confront death as its own-most-possibility is to acknowledge that there is an omnipresent possibility of its being in which its being as such is at issue” (1996: 119). If one’s being is an issue for one-self due to the acknowledgement of death as one’s own-most possibility, then without the awareness of one’s mortality, one’s being would not be an issue for oneself – just as the being of others is not an essential issue for the one. In this regard, it can be seen that one’s individuality is indexed to the acknowledgment of one’s finitude.

One salient position existentialist thinkers often adopt suggests a similar view that “a person’s finitude is at least a necessary condition for his freedom and individuality” (Cooper, 1999: 134). In defence of this view, it is argued that “if we lived forever, each of us would eventually take up the same possibilities so that no one could be individuated by the choices peculiar to him” (Cooper, 1999: 134). Convergent as the general approach of Cooper and my stance on the significance of one’s mortality may be, ideas seem to diverge here on the reasons given to that account. For, I consider that it is not the sum of actualized possibilities what constitutes the individuality, but rather it is the need to *give priority* to some possibilities over others in temporal plane. I suggest that even though two series of actions are comprised of the same actions, the meaning of these two series of actions might differ, due to the arrangement of actions. This is actually the reason why temporality is taken to be the meaning of existence: it is because the arrangement matters. As for the significance of the arrangement, it requires *giving priority* to some options over others. For, what happens after can drastically change the meaning of what happened before. This means that by the same token Cooper uses, an immortal life-span is not a danger to individuality since different arrangements of the same possibilities are always a possible case in an immortal life.

However, if the justification given – for the claim that one’s awareness of mortality is a necessary condition for individuality – were valid, then such a counter argument would not be possible. Instead of Cooper’s justification, I find it more convincing to offer another reason. It is *the need to give priority* to some possibilities over others in the temporal plane that is a necessary condition for freedom and individuality. This need, by no means, has any presence in an immortal life since time does not function as a temporal limit to our choices in an infinitely



long life. In other words, the meaning of an immortal life would not be temporality<sup>1</sup> since the arrangement in temporal plane is not required in an immortal life. The definition of temporality here may be a bit obscure, however, in existential ethics temporality means to suggest exactly “an organised structure” of futurity that provides the individual with the tools to unify the elements of time; past, present and future in a way which is more than just to sum up “a collection of givens” (Sartre, 2003: 130). Nonetheless, one’s awareness of their mortality is the source of the need to give priority. Moreover, even in a mortal life-span, one still might not have such an awareness, if they were stuck within the epistemic conception of death. *Videlicet*, by the means of an ontological understanding of death, the second dimension of the human condition can be revealed: which is an awareness of mortality.

This is one danger that inauthentic understanding of death poses to individuals, even though in such a mode of being the choices are still possible. However, “individuality is not a matter of making decision after decision, each of which is genuinely expressive of herself rather than of the public, it means leading a life that is genuinely her own” (Mulhall, 1996: 139). This proper conception of individuality suggests two kinds of freedom: self-expression and self-direction (which I will discuss in detail in the next chapter). At this stage, it would be sufficient to suggest that mortality is the source of this genuineness in the sense that individuality requires self-direction and self-expression and it is enabled by an awareness of mortality. In other words, individuality is being in control of possibilities when it comes to actualising them. For if the individual reveals his/her mortality and finitude, the fact which is usually concealed by everydayness, if s/he makes use of this by virtue of getting a positive assistance from this fact, then s/he can become – according to Heidegger (2010: 175) – liberated from being lost in those possibilities which may occasionally heap up in an inauthentic life, freed in such a way that “one can authentically understand and choose among the factual possibilities lying ahead of death” (Young, 2003: 118). In this way, death reveals itself as one’s own-most possibility and it is this particular way, being one’s own-most possibility finds its meaning in the mode of being-towards-death.

Offering the mode of being-towards-death as the authentic mode of living might be seen as a phenomenological revival of the tradition of “dying as personal control, which has dominated the history of dying in Western Europe from the Middle Ages in the form of the art

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<sup>1</sup> I do not imply that in an immortal life there is no temporal sequence. It is therefore significant to note that the notion of clock time is quite different from the time mentioned in the temporality of being.

of dying, a series of actions by the dying to prepare for their demise” (Strange, 2009: 123). In the mode of being-towards-death, as a revived art of dying, or expressed better in Heideggerian terms as “the” art of living, the individual is “free for his/her own-most possibilities, which are determined by the end, and so understood as finite” (Heidegger, 2010: 253). In this regard,

[the individual] averts the danger that s/he may, by his/her own finite understanding of existence, fail to recognize that s/he is getting overtaken by the existence-possibilities of others, or that s/he may misinterpret these possibilities by forcing them upon his/her own, thus, divesting himself/herself of his/her own-most factual existence (Heidegger, 2010: 253).

In other words, revealing the meaning of one’s own-most possibility is the proper way to freely give meaning to the possibilities that one comes across towards death. Thereby, one’s own-most possibility shapes the meaning of all other possibilities and this means giving priority to some possibilities over others at the temporal plane.

### *II.B.2. Death: Certain*

The standpoint one chooses does not make a difference, when it comes to admitting the knowledge that death is certain. Whether one is an adherent of the metaphysical possibility of an after-life, or a secular nihilist who finds the courage to live under the shadow of the absurdity, which leads to a complete and dark nothingness, or an Epicurean to whom death is nothing; one would not deny the fact that death is certain (White, 2005). This is the epistemic dimension of death, which means that its presence at the end of one’s life is inevitable. However, the divergence starts at this point in terms of relating to this end to find a satisfactory answer to the question: how ought one to live knowing that one will die? Two epistemologically certain conditions demand guidance in one’s choices: being-in-the-world and death being-at-the-end of that world. Being an individual is being in between these two conditions as soon as one comes into existence.

From a Heideggerian standpoint, the strategy to confront these conditions actually constitutes the ontological understanding of death. For, Heidegger argues that “the fact that demise, as an event that occurs, is only empirically certain, in no way decides about the certainty of death” (2010: 247). At the same time, it is suggested that “knowing is a mode of being of individual existence as being-in-the-world, and has its ontic foundation in this constitution of being” (Heidegger, 2010: 61). Since death is the most fundamental knowing of existence, then being-towards-death is the essential mode of being for an individual. On the other side, Heidegger argues that being-towards-death can be concealed by a public

interpretation of death. As it is in the case that “one says that death certainly comes, but not right away; with this “but...” the *They* (or a better term: *Public*) denies death is certain” (Heidegger, 2010: 247). This denial is deeply rooted in the inauthentic understanding of death which takes it as an event instead of taking it as a certain eventuality. In this way, the individual is provided with the tools to avoid reflecting upon the knowledge of death. However, when taken as an eventuality, it is always present for the individual to reflect upon its ontological implications.

In this regard, this understanding necessarily calls for a reflection upon death, which is why this consideration is avoided by the *They* since the *Public* chooses to remain at the epistemic dimension of death. For, bypassing the conception of death as an eventuality provides the tools “to postpone death to sometime later, by relying on the so-called general opinion [in which] the *Public* covers over what is peculiar to the certainty of death, that it is possible in every moment” (Heidegger, 2010: 247). This is the particular way “a constant tranquilization of death” is justified and “thinking about death is regarded publicly as cowardly fear” (Heidegger, 2010: 244). In this sense, the epistemic dimension of death is not sufficient to illuminate the phenomenon of death, not even its certainty in the sense that it is inadequate as to urge individuals to comprehend what this certainty tells them. This is because, the only advice suggested by the public interpretation – which only captures the epistemic dimension of death – is to flee from this fact and to live as if one would never die.

On the contrary, Seneca contends that “the man... you should admire is the one who finds it a joy to live and in spite of that is not reluctant to die” (1969: 105). This is definitely more compatible with the demands of the epistemologically certain conditions: the individual as being-in-the-world and death being at the end of it. In other words, the man one should admire is the one who adopts the mode of being-towards-death. It is the particular way epistemologically certain conditions of existence become relevant in the self-making of individuals. Forasmuch as, “for the subject it is an act to think about his/her death, not only knowing but also a doing that is related to knowing” (Muench, 2011: 118). In this regard, “thinking about death characterizes a mode of living and acting that consists in attending to oneself every moment, where the very act of attending will give one’s life a certain character and shape” (Muench, 2011: 119). This is only possible through an understanding that takes death as the eventuality alongside death as an event. In turn, this will enable the individual to

have an ontological understanding of death and to admit the second dimension of human existence, which is the awareness of one's mortality and finitude.

One salient implication of the discussion above in this section is the idea that the conception of death as an eventuality is closely related to what is peculiar to the certainty of death in terms of its possibility in each and every moment. This is to suggest that although death is certain, it is temporally indefinite. This peculiarity signifies that knowledge of death is a unique one in the self-making of individuals. Therefore, Heidegger's question "How does understanding, anticipating, project itself upon a definite potentiality-of-being which is constantly possible in such a way that the when in which the absolute impossibility of existence becomes possible remains constantly indefinite?" still remains to be answered (2010: 254). The reply to that question requires an analysis of the indefinite feature of death, which is the last link of the chain to gain an awareness of one's mortality and finitude: namely, adopting the mode of being-towards-death.

### *II.B.3. Death: Temporally Indefinite*

The meaning of existence is temporality – this is the view Heidegger adopts not only in the sense that time is the horizon of all understanding and possibilities, but also in the sense that behind each and every cross-section in this horizon there is the possibility of death, as a temporally indefinite phenomenon. So, the meaning of existence is to configure the potentiality of our being and the possibility of nothingness due to the temporal indefiniteness of death. This is basically what we can call the awareness of one's mortality.

To be mortal is not to have a finite lifespan with death at the end of it, but death impends at every moment of Dasein's life, since no choice of circumstances, life-style or behaviour can ever eliminate the possibility that we will die – no degree of caution or timidity can entirely remove death, understood as a possibility, from our lives (Mulhall, 1996: 117).

This awareness of mortality cannot be derived from the loss of others. A derivation made from the death of others cannot constitute a genuine awareness of mortality, since it does not reveal itself to us as an eventuality. Rather, the death of others marks an event at the end of one's life in the sense that each of us can be the one that dies. However, this does not imply any practical effect on our own personal timeline, apart from striving to fill the emptiness left behind by the loss of the ones who have significance in our lives. However, if it were possible to derive the loss of opportunity of being able 'to be' from it, then it could have a more crucial effect. In this regard, it is only possible as a first-person experience, which is the act of attending oneself at

every moment, to get a clear sense of what it means to not being able 'to be'. As Heidegger points out "we do not experience the dying of others in a genuine sense, we are at best always just nearby" (2010: 230). A proper awareness of one's mortality, thereby, should take death as an eventuality in order to provide us with the mental tools to optimize the potentiality of our being. Death is our "own-most", "certain possibility" which is indefinite in the temporal sense.

In the case of analysing the indefinite feature of death, the concept of the 'outstanding' (*Ausstand*) is much to the point. For, in the Heideggerian interpretation of existence, there is something in an individual's life "that is always outstanding: what s/he can be and will be" (2010: 224). Moreover, there is also an ever-present possibility that belongs to what is outstanding and constitutes the end of his/her being (Heidegger, 2010: 224). For that reason, Heidegger contends that "this end, belonging to the potentiality-of-being, that is, to existence, limits and defines the possible totality of the individual's existence" (2010: 224). What is outstanding in the existence of individuals are the possibilities and the potentials of being an individual based on those possibilities. However, in one of these possibilities at some point in the future, there is no more potentiality-of-being; but nothingness in the sense of no-longer-being-able-to-be-in-this-world. That is the reason why death is a fundamental structure and an active element in life. And that is also the reason why it is a certain eventuality.

The distinction between, and also the togetherness of, death as an event and death as an eventuality becomes even sharper through a discussion of what it means to be outstanding in Heideggerian terms.

Outstanding means indeed what belongs to a being, but still lacking. Outstanding, as lacking, is based on a belongingness. For example, the remainder of a debt still to be paid is outstanding. What is outstanding is not yet available. Liquidating the debt as paying off what is outstanding means that the money comes in and the remainder is paid off, so that the not-yet, as it were, filled out until the sum owed is all together. Thus, to be outstanding means that what belongs together is not yet together (2010: 233).

Death as a unique event has its peculiarity on that account in the sense that it is also an eventuality because it belongs to one's life and it is still lacking. On the contrary, if it were taken as any other event, then it would still belong to one's being but it would not be lacking (e.g. graduation from university and having a bachelor degree at the end of it, if one lacks it, then it does not belong to his/her life). That is actually the token of reason those who take death as an event often adopt: if one lacks it, then it does not belong to their life; and since as an event

it is always lacking, then it does not belong to life. The conclusion of this defective reasoning would be the regrettable suggestion to ignore death by fleeing from it.

One salient aspect of temporality in avoiding this defective reasoning is the integrity and unity of time. The false dichotomy between life and death is not a necessary conclusion of the relation between what is outstanding and what belongs to it. For, there is a constant striving to be in the life of individuals in the sense that an incomplete element of existence is the source and limit of the potentiality of their existence. As long as the individual exists under the shadow of death, “s/he has never attained its wholeness; but if s/he does, this attainment becomes the absolute loss of being-in-the-world which is to mean that it is then never again to be experienced as a being” (Heidegger, 2010: 228). Being a whole individual and being dead is correlated by Heidegger in a peculiar sense that “in death the individual is neither fulfilled nor does it simply disappear; s/he has not become finished or completely available as something at hand” (2010: 236). If death is not a fulfilment, and it is the end of existence, then in what sense does it provide individuals with the mental tools to comprehend themselves as a whole?

Heidegger talks about a different sort of end when it comes to comprehending death. “The ending that we have in view when we speak of death, does not signify a being-at-an-end of an individual’s existence, but rather a being towards the end of this being. [In this regard] death is a way to be that an individual takes over as soon as it is” (2010: 236). This might seem to be a Heideggerian way to express the meaning of an end in the context of mortality in a strangely peculiar way, but what he seems to suggest here is the imminent feature of death. For, Heidegger cites from Boehme that: “as soon as a human being comes into life, he is old enough to die” (2010: 236). According to Heidegger, death as an end is not “the last outstanding element reduced to a minimum, but rather an imminence” (2010: 240). Thereby, the indefinite feature of death, when examined through what it means to be outstanding, marks the imminence of death.

One salient implication of the imminence of death can be viewed as a calling to individuals for attending to themselves in every moment since death is conceived to be “*a way to be*” in Heideggerian terms. This call for attending to oneself is the particular way to view death as an active element in life when the temporality is unified through attending to oneself by future and past projections (one’s possibilities and thrown-ness) in the light of death. When one thinks about the possibility of their death, they are actually considering the possible potentialities of being in their existence as a whole. This is a mode of reflection upon oneself

towards its end in this worldly existence. Therefore, in this regard, death provides individuals the mental tools to comprehend themselves as whole in the sense that they are equipped with the tools to reflect themselves integrally on a temporal plane. According to Heidegger, it is the mode of being-towards-death, which is “essentially anxiety” (2010: 254). In this regard, it might be viewed as the mode of existence, in which life is viewed as a death-laden phenomenon. At a first glance, this might seem to be a morbid interest in death, however in this conception, it is not death what one is advised to be concerned with. Rather, it is the existence itself, and death – as a fundamental structure of it – plays a crucial role in this concern.

It is also significant here to distinguish the role of death in an individual’s concern about existence. For, this concern is only *caused* by death, it is not *about* death. One criticism is possible towards adopting the mode of being-towards-death, if this distinction is ignored. It has been contended that “one cannot live in a permanent state of alert, and in trying to liberate oneself in this manner from the obsession of the thought of death, one becomes, on the contrary, enslaved to it” (Choron, 1963: 99). Heidegger replies to this foreseen criticism, in a way that might cause some confusions. He admits that anxiety is about the existence, when he argues that “what anxiety is about is being-in-the-world-itself”; however, when he continues to support this argument he asserts that “anxiety about death must not be confused with a fear of one’s demise” (2010: 240). Instead of the second usage of the term “anxiety about death”, if he had used ‘anxiety *caused* by death’ I assume a criticism of such would not be possible. This becomes even clearer when he argues that “just like fear, anxiety is formally determined by something *in the face of* which one is anxious and something *about* which one is anxious” (Heidegger, 2010: 327). However, what Heidegger means by anxiety is the awareness of one’s mortality, temporality and finitude. Moreover, anxiety does not suggest that the individual should live waiting for death to come at the very next moment, “death would then overwhelm, rather than provide the background to our existential choices and so would mean renouncing the responsibilities of projection in favour of the passivity of thrown-ness” (Mulhall, 1996: 117). Thereby, anxiety is a concern about one’s own existence that is limited by one’s mortality.

It is perfectly non-gratuitous to say that anxiety about existence reveals another salient implication of the imminence of death – of which the indefinite feature of death is the source – that is the fragility of existence. The combination of the indefinite feature of death and the imminence of death constitutes it as a certain probability. This is tantamount to saying that anxiety can also be about the fragility of existence in the light of Sartre’s conception of fragility:

What is fragility if not a certain probability of non-being for a given being under determined circumstances? A being is fragile if it carries in its being a definite possibility of non-being. But once again it is through man that fragility comes into being, for the individualizing limitation which we mentioned earlier is the condition of fragility; one being is fragile and not all being, for the latter is beyond all possible destruction (2003: 32).

The correlation between finitude and fragility would not be valid without the immanence of death, which is deeply rooted in the temporally indefinite feature. By stressing the significance of the temporally indefinite feature of death, Heidegger explains that the authentic mode of being is revealed to individuals only through their discovery of their mortality. That is to say that anxiety *about* the fragility of existence is *caused* by the temporally indefinite feature of death. However, is this tantamount to advising individuals to live their life in constant anxiety under the shadow of fragility? While the criticisms on the impracticality of the constant anxiety *about* death were dodged away by the distinction made between the fear of demise and the fear of death, the anxiety *caused* by the correlation between finitude and fragility does not seem to be avoided that easily. For, with the comprehension of death as an eventuality by the means of reflecting upon the temporally indefinite feature of death, the actuality of being-in-the-world and the possibility of being-at-the-end transforms existence to being-towards-death. Anxiety is thus *about* being-in-between: being-in-the-world and being-at-the-end.

#### *II.B.4. Authentic Mode of Being-towards-Death*

Adherents of the view that awareness of mortality has a structural effect on one's existence and freedom often adopt the position that there are three essential mental tools provided to individuals for dealing with the fragility of existence within the context of their existential choices by the anxious awareness of mortality: realisation of one's contingent existence (its life as a uniquely arranged sum of past choices), comprehending the fact that each of his/her choices might be the last, being aware of the fact that he/she is a being with a life to lead "(his/her existential choices contributing to and contextualized by the life of which they are a part), and one whose life is its own to lead (so that its choices should be its own rather than that of determinate or indeterminate others)" (Mulhall, 1996: 120). Thereby, anxiety is not only a simple concern about existence but it is an individual concern about existence. Therefore, according to Heidegger, anxiety is one's confrontation with the nothingness as a possible outcome (2010: 253). It is a mark of individuality in the sense that one's existence is at stake, and therefore is an issue for them which, in turn, demands the responsibility towards one's existence and anticipation of one's death.



The mark of individuality on one's existence through an awareness of mortality reveals the mode of being-towards-death as essentially being anxious, in the sense that one's existence is being anxious about being between an authentic and an inauthentic mode of being (Heidegger, 2010: 254). According to Heidegger, "to be authentic is to open up to the absence of any universal, non-historical directive governing who one ought to be" (Vogel, 1994: 2). In this regard, it can also be argued that:

Heidegger does not clearly distinguish between two very different kinds of inauthenticity: 1) the anonymity of the unreflective person who loses himself in the crowd and 2) the impersonality of the morally reflective individual who acts in the light of purportedly higher and universal standard, the supposed presence of objective values or the operation of a rational-decision procedure (Vogel, 1994: 19).

That is to say that there can be different modes of being inauthentic although the basis for this inauthenticity is the lack of one's awareness of one's own mortality in the sense that one's time is one's own to be shaped. Thus, "in response to the anonymous event of death, which cannot be owned, one can choose one's own self, a singularity that amounts to a self of existential possibilities, a possible response to impossible actuality" (Lewis, 2005: 45). Since this anxiety is in virtue of the authentic understanding of death, this makes us question: what is it that calls us to the authentic understanding?

The answer Heidegger provides us with is the call of conscience, the existential and ontological foundation of which is the event and the eventuality of death (2010: 260). Thus, it can be argued that "conscience is the very process of the discursivization of the actual facts of birth and death in the sense that it is the call of those actualities and at the same time an existential response to them" (Lewis, 2005: 41). This ontological basis of mortality, which is derived from the epistemological aspect of our awareness calls us to the ethical realm. "The authentic essence of humanity of man, thus also the essence of pure reason as practical, must be understood from self-responsibility" (Heidegger, 2002: 187). Although, we are *summoned* into the ethical realm, "implicit all along in Heidegger's project is the need to identify the temporality of an original ethics, which determines how ethical issues are taken up into a complex of possibilities that define our worldly engagement" (Schalow, 1993: 55). Heidegger states this need implicitly by arguing that "the call does not say anything, does not give any information about events of the world but it strives to open a conversation with itself in the self which has been summoned" (2010: 263). In this regard, "the primordial call of conscience is uncanny because it utters no practical injunctions, it simply demands that a person face his life

as a whole and suspend his tendency to secure himself by his immersion in particular projects, including moral ones” (Vogel, 1994: 20). However, this reveals the need to own up to one’s responsibility in terms becoming aware of “one’s capacity to author one’s own self from the materials one is given by a critical repetition of where one already is in light of one’s life as a whole” (Vogel, 1994: 22). What the indefinite feature of death reveals is the transience of our finite existence and what we are called upon is transcending this transience within temporal terms.

Although the call of conscience does not provide the individual with the practical tools in terms of equipping the individual with directives in particular circumstances, it reveals a potential for phenomenological and existential ethics in terms of expressing the locus of one’s freedom (one’s own) and the focus of this freedom (one’s mortality). For, the call of conscience, “rather than exercising the critical functions of warning, reproving and commending by reference to claims valid for everyone”, summons “the person to the task of leading his own life without recourse to a fixed or common yardstick” (Vogel, 1994: 20). This is one reason why Heidegger states that “the problems absolutistic, transcendental moral systems” face with are due to “their detachment from a more worldly, finite, lived morality” in his early lecture course *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle: Initiation into Phenomenological Research*, where the potential of his ethics is revealed implicitly by his ontology (Hatab, 1995: 407). In this regard, “conscience does not call us to authenticity but rather, by way of the most-own’s being brought to bear on the indifferent, to anticipatory resoluteness: it calls us to a double nullity and thus to between authenticity and inauthenticity” (Lewis, 2004: 52). This absence of a tangible measure in one’s decisions reveals our freedom with the price of responsibility. Moreover, once this is doubled with the urgency and contingency of our decisions in the light of the opportunity cost revealed by our mortality, our response to the call of conscience can be eclipsed by the anxiety of being-in-between.

In this regard, it is reasonable to defend the view that anxiety is about one’s individual existence – not the event of death itself – there is still a problem for Heidegger to allay this concern. The responsibility of being an individual is not an easy one, and requires the anxiety *caused by* the eventuality of death and *towards* the event of death. This is to mean that as long as one exists there is a tension caused by the awareness of mortality and this will be present towards the event of death. Nonetheless, this tension is a valuable one as it is also the source of individuality. However, if the comprehension of the eventuality of death overwhelms the

existence of the individual, then this anxiety would *control* the individual, instead of the ideal condition in which the individual *controls* this anxiety and turns it into a motivation for the self-making process. The solution suggested by Heidegger to dispel this concern and to guard one's individuality is to have an anticipatory resolute comprehension of one's mortality.

One salient reason behind referring to anticipatory resoluteness is one's continuous, dynamic need to exercise one's own freedom resolutely in the shadow of anxiety. The dynamic nature of this resoluteness is based on one's relation with temporality, a relation which brings one into the realm of morality through becoming aware of one's radical freedom and exercising it. For, "anxiety brings one back to thrown-ness as something to be possibly repeated, and reveals the possibility of an authentic potentiality of being that must, as something futural in repetition, come back to the thrown There" (Heidegger, 2010: 328). Thus, "when responding to the call of conscience, or to the responsibility and concomitant anxiety that ensues, we enter that mode of being which Heidegger called resoluteness" (Sherover, 1981: 226). In this regard, resoluteness has to be interactive in the sense that one has to refer to it in the existential *Moment* of decision, where "the *Moment* brings existence to the situation and discloses the authentic there" (Heidegger, 2010: 331). Thus, "resoluteness is no abstraction and it defines the particular situations in which we find ourselves called to act" (Sherover, 1981: 226). Once one comprehends one's temporality in the light of the eventuality of death, this enables one to face with one's responsibility and moreover to exercise one's freedom on the basis of this responsibility.

In this manner, Heidegger reveals the necessary but also sufficient conditions of having an authentic understanding of death and thereby shaping one's choices authentically in one's situational existence. Thus, while he acknowledges "anticipation in the face of being-towards-death as a necessary aspect of the standard for authentic choice, he refers to resoluteness in the face of historical thrown-ness to supplement anticipation and to provide it with content" in terms of satisfying the sufficient conditions of shaping one's story (Vogel, 1994: 60). In this regard, Heidegger argues that "when resoluteness and anticipating, has caught up with the possibility of death in its potentiality-of-being, the authentic existence of Dasein can no longer be overtaken by anything" (Heidegger, 2010: 294). This is the particular way in which, "the transformation of death into a distinctive modality of human being becomes a final crowning of the voluntaristic effort to introduce an element of volition and of freedom into our relationship to what has always been regarded as the most unassimilable fact of human life"

(Olafson, 1967: 174). This account of resoluteness unquestionably marks the significance of *exercise of control* by individuals in their existence. It is the striving to grasp the individual existence on a temporally integral plane by exercising control over one's choices in the self-making process.

Any human-being whose resolute grasp of her choice-situation involve projecting herself upon a given possibility against a background awareness of her own mortality will view the relevant moment not simply as if it were her last; but also as a particular, non-repeatable moment in the wider context of her life. Seen in terms of her own possible impossibility, any given *Moment* in a person's existence is revealed not just as utterly contingent in itself, but as part of an utterly contingent life, one with a very specific origin and history, one which will end at a specific point in a specific way, a sequence which might have been different but whose particularity is now the horizon within which she must either attain or fail to attain true individuality. (Mulhall: 1996: 139, italics mine)

Moreover, it is suggested that “anticipatory resoluteness is not a way out fabricated for the purpose of overcoming death, but it is rather the understanding of gaining power over the existence of individual and of fundamentally dispersing every fugitive self-covering over” (Heidegger, 2010: 296). As can be seen, Heidegger devoted his major work *Being and Time* to reveal the fundamental structures of mortality and temporality through which existence manifests itself in the mode of being potentially authentic, “yet ironically, despite using key terms that are usually taken to have a moral or religious import, his work studiously avoided the development of any moral philosophy” (Sherover, 1981: 223). Although this description of existence is coherent and the suggestion to have an anticipatory resoluteness is potentially very fruitful and powerful; it is not very helpful in the sense of its insufficiency to give any positive practical guidance or at least a frame to have such resoluteness.

Just why this is so is a philosophical or historical problem to which Heidegger scholarship might well address itself. But, if one remains impressed by his analysis of the nature of human existence and of the presuppositions it reveals, and is also concerned with the continuing problematic nature of contemporary existential situations, one is bound to consider the implications, suggested or mandated, for a coherent existential ethic (Sherover, 1981: 223).

In the next chapter, I will try to examine what it means to be free towards death, through the examination of two conceptions of freedom: negative (opportunity) and positive (exercise) conceptions. After this analysis, I will provide an account of how death would be an obstacle, if any, to these conceptions of freedom. This will help me to develop the moral aspect of anticipatory resoluteness, which is implicit in Heidegger's texts, as being open up to the

*absence* of any external directive governing what one ought to do through the *presence* of narrative thinking, which enables one to meaningfully relate to one's temporality via internally generated experiences, and thereby to exercise one's finite freedom. That is to say that, I will attempt to provide the practical guidance that Heidegger rejects to give in terms of sketching a positive frame to seek resoluteness. The last chapter will contain this attempt, through a suggestion to individuals to conceive life as a narrative in order to be free *from* or *towards* death.

## *CHAPTER III*

### *III. FREEDOM AND DEATH*

In the previous chapter, it has been demonstrated that when viewed through the phenomenological lenses, death manifests itself as an eventuality, as an implication of one's mortality that reveals the authentic mode of being. The eventuality of death is instrumental in disclosing a significant aspect of self-making, namely anticipatory resoluteness – a term coined by Heidegger to comprehend the meaning of death. As phenomenological as this term might be, I argue that bringing analytical tools to bear on problems not initially conceived of in those terms will serve to refine these terms. Thus, I will attempt to argue and articulate the view that the frame to seek “anticipatory resoluteness” can be sketched through revealing its relation to the positive and negative conceptions of freedom – though these were initially conceived as analytical tools.

This chapter will attempt to describe to what extent the individual's freedom can be restricted by death in two senses: the presence of death as an event, in the sense that the extent to which it can be widened by the absence of death as an event; and the extent to which, if any, it can be constrained by the presence of death as an eventuality, through its internalisation. For, I argue that the distinction introduced by Isiah Berlin between two conceptions of freedom (negative and positive) is another case in pointing the distinction introduced by the previous chapters of this thesis, between death as an ontologically certain phenomenon bounding the time of an individual and death as a temporally indefinite phenomenon unfolding the limited timeline. In this way, our first-person phenomenological perspective (an approach that takes into account feelings, desires, and anxieties of individuals) will be preserved while following a framework in an analytical style will enable us to reveal how the “anticipatory resoluteness” actually transforms this first-person experience. Hence, I will try to demonstrate the relation between what it means to be aware of one's mortality, what it means to be free; and how the combination of these two meanings is related to one's self-making.

#### **III.A. Freedom, Anticipatory Resoluteness and Integrative Will**

The significance of the role future projections play in human existence has already been mentioned in the previous chapters. It is a respectable, but often a neglected view from Aristotle to Heidegger that the individual is a teleologically oriented being (Cebik, 1980: 70). The teleological structure of actions and choices requires the disclosure of the relation between freedom and ends of the individual on socio-temporal terms. For, the concept of an act

subsumes numerous subordinate notions which one needs to organise and arrange in a hierarchy:

[...] To act is to modify the shape of the world; it is to arrange means in view of an end; it is to produce an organised instrumental complex such that by a series of concentrations and connections the modification effected on one of the links causes modifications throughout the whole series and finally produces an anticipated result (Sartre, 2003: 455).

Accordingly, an important phenomenological link needs to be forged here between freedom and anticipatory resoluteness. In this section, the notion of integrative will is going to be proposed for forging the basis of this phenomenological link, in virtue of providing the discourse on how one's mortal and finite existence *appears* to oneself *through* one's self-making. In this way, the ambiguity of the term "anticipatory resoluteness" can be superseded when it is understood as an organising force for exercising control over one's ends and their realization, which is also an essential element in the positive conception of freedom.

### *III.A.1. Integrative Will*

In this regard, having an 'integrative will' presupposes having an individual timeline in the sense that self-making process is carried out on a linear, but also in a unique sequence and unified timeline. This means that integrative will consists in one's capacity to order one's experience into a coherent temporal structure. In contrast to conceiving life in anticipation of death, conceiving life with an emphasis on having the most extended timeline as it could be would amount to conceiving one's life only in terms of duration on the linear understanding of temporality. Such understanding would prefer an immortal life-span over a mortal one, when they are compared in terms of being freer. This is due to relying on an essential element of the negative conception of freedom, according to which freedom is only a matter of having more opportunities, where the role of opportunities is indexed to their numbers. However, having a linear timeline is only a default setting of existence. Beyond that, free self-making means to shape this default setting, through self-direction and self-control, into an individual timeline in the sense that it is constituted by one's choices between different opportunities. This understanding is underpinned by the positive conception, where the role of opportunities is indexed to their significance in terms of viewing one's timeline as a preferred narrative.

In the case of choosing between different options, the future projections of an individual are much to the point, since the nature of the individual's behaviour cannot be comprehended without taking into account the future projections of that individual (Edwards,

1979: 18). Projections made by the individual to the future construct the rationale in order to choose one of the many options, which in turn determine the present behaviour of the individual. Integrating goals and desires in the light of expectations is underpinned by the integrative will. This is the particular way the notion of freedom bears on having an integrative will via the ideal of personal autonomy, which requires that individuals should make their own life, “with a vision of individuals controlling their own destiny, shaping it through successive decisions throughout their life” (Flikschuh, 2007: 152). In this regard, one’s awareness of one’s being-towards-death reveals the significance/worth of actions on the temporal plane, whereas integrative will distinguishes one’s desires in temporal terms. Thus, integrative will is interpretative/reflective employment of one’s will on one’s desires in temporal terms. Once, this awareness and integrative will are employed together, authentic aspects of one’s actions are revealed.

The integrative will also marks the relation of one’s ends and one’s freedom, since “the object of wish is the end, and the object of choices is what conduces to the end, actions concerning what conduces to the end will be in accordance with the choice of individual” (Aristotle, 2000: 45). Two salient features of human existence are deeply rooted in the mental link that forges this relation: being teleological, which underpins the basis of this relation, and being social, which underpins a potential source of problems for this relation. In this regard, Bratman reasonably argues that any unbiased theory of human action has to focus on the three core features of human existence: “reflectiveness”, “plan-fullness” and “conception of individual agency as temporally extended” (2000: 35). Although these features can be nominated as successfully explaining the teleological nature of human actions, they may not be sufficient to respond to the problems for the freedom of actions that are revealed by the social feature of human existence. This signifies a further core feature of human existence as being socially extended.

Being socially extended signifies one crucial aspect of the ideal of personal autonomy, namely the co-authorship of one’s life in the sense that although the autonomous person is not subject to the will of another and their life is authored by them; one still has to interact with other individuals (Flikschuh, 2007: 156). Here, the notion of co-authorship reveals the inevitable need to interact in the social context in the sense that these interactions are influential on the narrative of the individual. The nature of these interactions and the extent they occupy in the individual’s life are two crucial elements in the co-authorship and the autonomy of the



individual. In addition to being a crucial aspect of personal autonomy, this is also a mark of the relational aspect of the notion of freedom in the sense that individuals have their own will and these have the potential to get into conflict and interfere with each other when the individuals' ends diverge.

The diversity of the ends, however, is caused by and signifies the other feature of human existence: being capable of possessing many values against a teleological background. The values that individuals are capable to have, can and do vary. Moreover, "the values humans pursue are not only multiple but sometimes irreconcilable, and this applies at the level of whole cultures – systems of value – as well as between the values of a particular culture or individual" (Hardy, 2002: ix). Thus, on the one hand, actions that are underpinned by the values individuals hold, in order to fulfil their ends, might cause conflict in the context of social interactions. On the other hand, the values of one's own actions might come into conflict in the context of one's own temporal interactions since the ends one holds, might vary and diverge at some point in one's lives. In this regard, it will be fruitful to see why the notion of freedom is crucial in the context of an existence that demands the exercise of an integrative will alongside the need to interact with beings who have the same capability but with potentially different values. For, integrative will is significant in revealing the narrative value of one's actions, which is the essential condition of being authentic.

In this regard, without exercising an integrative will, "we could not shape the narratives of our lives – or at least could not have a [central] role in giving them the narrative value they have" – since that would mean that "we lack the capacity to engage in reasoned decision-making, or we are entirely subject to manipulation by external agents (in which case our lives might still have narrative value, but that value would be attributable to our manipulators rather than ourselves as their narrators" (Altshuler, 2015: 870). For, "authenticity conditions specify that, to be autonomous, an agent's desires, beliefs, commitments, and values must be her own, which requires that she has critically evaluated them in some way" (MacKenzie and Poltera, 2010: 48). Moreover, integrative will provides one with the interpretative tools to evaluate one's desires in temporal terms. Thus, the way one critically evaluates one's desires must be in temporal terms in order to being able to judge the worth of them in the *moment* of decision.

In this sense, one's involvements will be reviewed in the phenomenological sense in terms of portraying one's existence as self-interpretation. For, in Heideggerian terms,

“involvements are akin to situational episodes, and situations comprise a nexus of interconnected activities whose meanings cut across one another” (Fisher, 2010: 257). Moreover, “the self is that phenomenon which is able to make sense of any period of involvement in which it features; and it can do this because through its involvements it is disclosive of its broader situation in terms of which things matter to it” (Fisher, 2010: 258). Thus, the task of being one-self reveals the diachronic feature of self-experience, which does not exclude episodic actions, but admits them. Integrative will is essential to take up this task properly since through it one is able to distinguish desires and their worth in temporal terms. For, “the will is a power to act accordingly to concept” (Heidegger, 2002: 187). In this regard, distinguishing desires in temporal terms provides one with the conceptual interpretive principles, which leads one to the resolved-upon actions.

These evaluative principles, to which one's existing gives expressions, are the canons of his individual being. They delineate, define and ground the individual self he is. These principles may be prudential, ethical, economic, hedonic or aesthetic; but the priorities they command are moral priorities concerning the responsible use of time (Sherover, 1981: 231).

Once the worth of actions is judged through integrative will, one is enabled to take up the full-responsibility for one's involvements, for one's ownership of one's time. In this regard, integrative will plays a significant role in revealing the way in which Heidegger views “practical freedom as autonomy and self-responsibility”, which he considers to be “the essence of the personality of the human person, the authentic essence, the humanity of man” (Heidegger, 2002: 187). Integrative will, on the one hand, guards one against being subjected to manipulation by external agents and, on the other, motivates one's commitments in the multiplicity of internal impulses. This dual function enables one to be autonomous, which reveals the authentic essence of human existence.

The two fundamental features of human existence, namely being temporally and socially extended, call for one fundamental sense of freedom which is “freedom from chains, from imprisonment, from enslavement by others” (Hardy, 2002: 48). This fundamental sense of freedom discloses the *subject* of freedom in the sense that the subject of freedom is the *individual* and the extent of freedom should be indexed to the range of non-interfered individual choices. Hardy argues that “the rest is extension of this sense... To strive to be free is to seek to remove obstacles, to struggle for personal freedom is to seek to curb interference, exploitation, enslavement by men whose ends are theirs, not one's own” (2002: 48). This

extension discloses the *object* of freedom in the sense that the object of choices conduces to the *ends* individuals pursue and the extent of freedom should be indexed to realisation of one's fundamental ends/goals. Thereby, the conceptual relation between the subject and the object of freedom reveals two aspects of freedom. In other words, the sense of the usage of the term 'freedom *from*' requires a sense of 'freedom *towards*'.

### III.A.2. *Conceptions and Conditions of Freedom*

The extensions that can be termed *conceptions* of freedom, spring from the fundamental *concept* of 'freedom'. Any addition to the fundamental *concept* of freedom via the usage of the terms 'towards' or 'from' amounts to having different *conceptions* of freedom. In other words, what is signified by the *concept* of freedom can be stated as being free while *conceptions* of freedom can be stated as extensions that focus on different senses of being free. For, there are divergences in the attempts to describe the conditions that would constitute constraints on one's freedom, and to prescribe the ways conducive to realize one's fundamental goals. In this regard, the meaning of the *concept* 'freedom' "varies because freedom is related to the individual's will, and consequently to the individual's understanding of what is good" (Dimova-Cookson, 2003: 512). In this regard, individuals' understanding of what is good is a function of values and ends that individuals hold. One salient source of the relation between the differences in the conceptions of freedom and the goals/ends of the individual can be exemplified by Mill's account that considers freedom as the ability to pursue one's own good in his own way (Silier, 2005: 57). This is a disclosure of the subjective/normative dimensions of freedom due to the need to prescribe the divergent ways to secure the realisation of one's fundamental goals in addition to describe what would constitute as constraints on these goals.

In this regard, while constructing one's ends is a personal endeavour, guarding one's actions based on these projections during the interactions within the social context – where others' ends also exist – is the interpersonal one. This is the macro-level context of freedom. Thus, two fundamental features of existence, namely being temporally and socially extended, disclose freedom both as a personal conception and an interpersonal conception. This reveals many further implications for freedom at individual and political levels. In this respect, divergent *conceptions* of freedom stimulate many discussions around these two levels.

Any conception of freedom that claims to cover both personal and interpersonal (also the individual and political) aspects of the notion cannot ignore its relationship with the will of the individual. Whether one's will is free is another question that needs further analysis (which

I do not intend to discuss at any length here), this being a controversial topic in philosophical discussions since the time of the Stoics. Although discussions about free-will is not a concern of my thesis, the integrative will (its strength or weakness, not free-will) is pivotal among the conditions that enable or thwart one's freedom, therefore these will be covered in this thesis. For, it is the conflict of the will within an individual or the conflict of the wills between two or more people that cause interference, coercion, compulsion, indulgence or any other condition that may affect one's freedom.

As for the interpersonal aspect, it must be secured that no one else's will coerces one's will to act in a particular way. One necessary element in securing this non-domination is the strength of one's own will to challenge any coercion or obstacle offered by others. The analytical order that signifies the priority of freedom's interpersonal aspect has been put forward by Hannah Arendt quite succinctly. She argues that "man would know nothing of inner freedom if he had not first experienced a condition of being free as a worldly, tangible reality; we first became aware of freedom or its opposite in our inter-course with others, not in the intercourse with ourselves" (1993: 148). When this non-domination is secured, then one must turn towards themselves, to the personal aspect, to see whether their will fulfils the capacity to sustain a balance between *structural desires*, which express the organisational attitudes towards one's own wishes, intentions and goals in the long run, along with *operational desires*, which serves to imply one's episodic needs, fulfilment of which seems to be related to the short-term sensations. These terms should not be mixed with the first order and low order desires, since the distinction between operational and structural desires does not depend on a hierarchy, but it underlies the diachronic feature of desires. Basically, it is a distinction between desires in temporal terms. This balance enables one's self-direction and its failure is the frustration of one's own efforts to be master of one's own life.

For example, let us consider the situation of Desmond Hume, who is a young person facing a crucial decision-making situation that would affect his remaining life. Such choice is significant for Desmond, and so is being free in making such choices. In this regard, choosing which subject to study at university can constitute such a choice for a young person since this will influence his remaining life in terms of putting some career tracks forward over others. The young person wants to study Archaeology in the college, however if his doctor father coerces him to go for medicine, and he, as a young person who has respect for his father or out of having expectations from him, obeys his father; this would mean that his choice was not

free. His respect or expectations constitutes a constraint on his choice which would influence his remaining life. On the other hand, Desmond has a more autonomous character and his respect for his father does not stop him from choosing Archaeology, which is what he considers to be the pursuit for his own good. This young autonomous person does not have any expectations from his father as well. At this point, Desmond seems completely free in terms of making this significant decision. However, *structural* and *operational* desires come into the picture at the decision-making situation here. Although external agents are not able to impose their wills on this young person to coerce him to choose the particular option they want, *operational* desires can prevent Desmond doing what he actually wants.

Let us assume that Desmond secured non-domination in contrast to the obstacles presented by his father, but an opportunity to have the holiday at his favourite island becomes surprisingly available, except there is one problem if he chooses to have this dream holiday, which appeared after the hectic study period, he will miss the submission deadlines for the Archaeology department applications. However, as a twist of fate, the deadlines for Medicine course are compatible with him going on the holiday. Moreover, his father who knows the situation, offers an advance payment for the holiday, which otherwise would have to be paid from his own savings he made during his last summer part-time job. Now, Desmond is in a conundrum, either he will choose to go on this holiday, which is quite pleasurable for the short term and would make him very happy for a certain period of time (also save him a lot of money in the short term); or he will choose to prepare his documents for Archaeology applications, which – if it proves to be successful – would make him happy in the long run. Before this *operational* desire to have the dream holiday appeared, his *structural* desire to read Archaeology was seeming perfectly right and preferable. However, now studying medicine does not seem that horrible, plus he will be able to make his father happy, which in turn would make him possibly happy as well. Moreover, when he becomes a doctor, he would help people to be healthy, which is also a good thing. Except, at the source of this need to convince himself to see positive aspects of studying medicine, there is his desire to have that dream holiday now. Although he may have this holiday next year after a pleasant academic year at an Archaeology department, if he chooses to fulfil his operational desire at the very moment the opportunity appears, then it can be strongly argued that his freedom was compromised by the imbalance between his operational and structural desires. For, his goal to study Archaeology is clearly restricted by his inclination towards the fulfilment of his operational desire to have the holiday,

which would be relatively easy for him to frustrate with the presence of a balance between his operational and structural desires.

Opponents of the view that there are conditions of freedom pertaining to the personal aspect might argue that Desmond has not let his structural desire go, but he just replaced one with another. Although this seems to be quite a reasonable response, it seems to miss a significant point in the sense that the reason to change one's structural desire is an operational one. If Desmond had done this due to a comprehensive consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of choosing medicine over archaeology, then it would be quite reasonable to defend the view that operational and structural desires do not make a difference in the conditions pertaining to the personal aspect of freedom. However, the case of Desmond shows that due to his failure to have an integrative will, he is prevented by his operational desires. The balance between the operational and structural desires has also implications for the claim that interactive planning is a necessary element in one's freedom but it is not sufficient by itself. For, what Desmond did seem to have similarities with exercising interactive planning in terms of reflecting upon the contribution of fulfilling a new opportunity in one's self-expression.

The notion of interactive planning is much to the point in terms of securing the conditions of freedom pertaining to the personal aspects since it is claimed that it provides the individual with the opportunity to consider a planned future, and also to adapt this plan to the new experiences gained through the process. While doing justice to the structural desires, one is enabled to be in position to include operational desires into the process by reflecting the contribution of operational desires to one's self-expression. The particular significance of interactive planning hinges on its difference from ordinary planning in terms of reflecting on one's endeavours on a temporally extended plane. Bratman helps us to explain this core feature of interactive planning, arguing that one's structural desires, unlike operational desires, are "subject to distinctive rational norms of consistency, coherence, and stability" in terms of being deeply rooted in one's capacity "to see his/her action at the same time as the action of the same agent as he/she who has acted in the past and (it is to be hoped) will act in the future" (2000: 42). The crucial difference of interactive planning is that individuals will be in a position to evaluate the advantage and disadvantages of fulfilling operational desires by leaving some place for new experiences along with structural desires. Adopting interactive planning as a self-governing policy will enable one to reflect on their temporal extension in terms of integrating one's desires and goals in a rectilinear manner.

Recalling our example on Desmond might help us to understand this difference. The opportunity to go on the holiday at his favourite place seems to disturb his desire to study archaeology and leads him to reflect upon the positive aspects of an option he did not consider in the first place preferable, namely studying medicine. The crucial point here is the contribution of this reflection to one's self-expression. If the reason that changes Desmond's mind was his conviction that studying medicine would contribute to his self-expression, then it would be reasonable to defend the view that he practised a proper way of interactive planning in the sense that the opportunity to go on this holiday offered a new experience which made him adapt his plan accordingly. However, if it is the urge to fulfil his desire to go on this holiday that made him change his mind, then it is reasonable to defend the view that it was not actually an interactive planning since having this holiday does not itself contribute anything to his self-expression. This would not constitute an example of adopting interactive planning as a self-governing policy, which would support one in reflecting upon their temporally and socially extended existence in a rectilinear manner, rather it would constitute an ad-hoc movement (to borrow a term from philosophy of science) of Desmond convincing himself that he is not restrained by his operational desires. Appealing to ad-hoc movement is not a tool of interactive planning, nor is it convenient for self-direction. These two, however, bear on the necessary and sufficient conditions to secure personal and interpersonal aspects of freedom.

Berlin's distinction between the negative and positive aspects of freedom is instrumental to comprehending the meaning of freedom both at the individual and the political level since his distinction is fruitful to reveal the necessary and sufficient conditions of freedom. However, in this thesis, I will focus only on the aspects of freedom that have implications for the conditions of freedom at the individual level (which is underpinned by the personal and interpersonal aspects).

In order to reveal the complete meaning of freedom, it would be essential to defend the view that the disputes between the advocates of different conceptions of freedom are underpinned by the disagreements on the conditions that are taken to be necessary and sufficient for freedom. I have argued above that the integrative will is one necessary condition of being free. In this regard, what having an integrative will means is being conscious of any option available to act upon, being capable of putting these options into practice according to one's intentions, and thereby transforming the acts into one's actions. This means that if an agent has an integrative will, that agent is conscious of the scope of the acts and their position

in the agent's conduct. As Heidegger contends that "praxis means actions, the particular kind of action made possible by a will" (2002: 187). Thereby, choosing to act in a particular way becomes a free action with the presence of the integrative will.

A similar model for human conduct explains the actions, which an agent sets out to perform, "by reference to his beliefs (including his perceptual beliefs about his situation and his beliefs about his powers) and his desires" (Neely, 1974: 32). In this regard, a human agent is unique in being able to reflect on the desirability or otherwise of his/her preferences – "in other words, to prefer to have one set of preferences over another" (Hamilton, 2011: 39). As desirable as it can be, to be free as a bird in terms of feeling unique like a bird that no one can ever control, individual human freedom is unique in its own terms that disclose self-direction through the strength of the will. Those who do not exercise the strength of their will have been labelled by Nietzsche as "decadents", who suffer from a disaggregated will in the sense that "instead of having a will that integrates one's disparate instincts into a larger whole the decadent is merely a composite an aggregate of instincts and drives, whose expression is not organised by any larger purpose" (Dudley, 2002: 128). This is due to the weakness of the will to be a self, which is tantamount to the lack of self-control termed by the ancients as "akrasia".

This is to mean that presence of a choice, by itself, is not sufficient to allow the talk about freedom without the notions of self-control, will and the intellectual capacities to choose the particular preferences (Hamilton, 2011: 40). The constant striving to converge operational and structural desires can be viewed as the striving to liberate oneself through self-mastery in the sense that the more one's actions conform to the balance between the operational and structural desires via the strength of the will, the more unified would be their selves, thereby the more extended the range of their freedom would be. In other words, "freedom is characterized by a constantly renewed obligation to remake the Self which designates the free being" (Sartre, 2003: 58).

This is also one salient reason to defend the view that "freedom cannot be separated from the conditions necessary to use freedom that is intimately related both with the scope of alternatives and one's consciousness of these options" (Silier, 2005: 18). In other words, indexing the extent of freedom to the range of options without signifying the relevance of these options in one's life is an incomplete attempt, in the sense that it is an attempt which only satisfies the descriptive conditions that are relevant to the *subject* of freedom and fails to give an account of the *object* of freedom. The *subject* of freedom concerns only the interpersonal



aspects of the subjects of freedom in analysing where the limits of freedom begin and end (the extent to which one is free). However, the *object* of freedom concerns the personal aspects of freedom in the sense that why it is important to be free (the quality of the extent to which one is free). The failure to give an account of the latter can be avoided by indexing freedom to “the extent to which a person is guided in his actions by his own considered will, by his reason rather than by momentary impulse or circumstance” (Hayek, 2006: 84). To stress the object of freedom, it is essential to defend that “the man is a free agent in the act, because through his identification of himself with a certain desired object... he makes the motive which determines the act, and is accordingly conscious of himself as its author” (Green, 1991: 2). Disclosing consciousness of oneself as the author of one’s life is one salient way to stress the idea that the individual is free if and only if he plans his life in conformity with his own integrative will.

The life of such individuals would consist of pursuits freely chosen from various alternatives which were open in their horizon, indeed, the ideal free life is deeply rooted in the creation of new values, goals and reasons (Flikschuh, 2007: 46). However, being temporally and socially extended, having plans and goals, and reflecting upon these usually face constraints either on the range of open alternatives or in the creation of new goals and reasons when one does not have an integrative will. On the one hand, the descriptive concepts are instrumental to give an account of what might constitute constraints on the range of options. On the other hand, the normative concepts are of significance to analyse the constraints on the creation of new goals and reasons. It is perfectly reasonable to argue that “normative concepts are intrinsically less determinate than empirical concepts, in that they refer to non-empirical properties, qualities or capacities” (Flikschuh, 2007: 40). However, this complexity should not constitute a reason to ignore the normative aspect of freedom. On the contrary, it should be a task to reveal the nature of the normative constraints in order to introduce a proper and complete account of freedom. Attempts to fashion value-neutral accounts of freedom merely aim to allow the widest possible range of pursuits, since identifying any normative constraint would constitute to narrow down the range of pursuits for an individual (Christman, 2005: 84). Berlin’s distinction between the negative and positive freedom is of significance to reveal these two aspects of freedom as descriptive and normative.

In the next section, I will describe a micro-case for providing an answer to the question ‘what it means to be in a decision-situation?’ through which I will attempt to provide an account for the conditions that would constitute a constraint/interference on an individual’s freedom,

namely before describing what freedom means, the conditions of unfreedom will be provided. The preventing conditions of freedom will be analysed through descriptive and normative concepts, in order to arrive at facilitating conditions of freedom. After that, we will be in a position to introduce Berlin's distinction between two conceptions of freedom and analyse the descriptive and normative implications of these two conceptions. Then, we will be able to consider whether, and if so how, death can constitute a constraint on an individual's freedom.

### *III.A.3. Constraints and Unfreedom*

One conventional way to approach the notion of freedom is describing it as being free from any constraint. Although there is a wide agreement on this description, the major disagreement is on providing a comprehensive account to respond to the following question: what does or should (e.g. moral) constitute a constraint on one's actions? The claims differ depending on what free individuals do, and this requires an explanation in the form of different conceptions of freedom (Nelson, 2005). The basic model of unfreedom is indexed to being in chains in the sense that one's movement is prevented by an external factor. Hobbes, as a vigorous advocate of the simple and fundamental *conception* of freedom, makes an analogy between free movement of water and free actions of an individual when he argues that:

[...] so of all living creatures, whilst they are imprisoned, or restrained with walls, or chains; and of the water whilst it is kept in by banks, or vessels, that otherwise would spread itself into a larger space, we use to say that they are not at liberty, to move in such a manner, as without those external impediments they would (1968: 261).

Whereas this analogy is significant and successful in revealing the external aspects of a decision-making situation by pointing to being able to do otherwise in the absence of the external impediments, it is still incomplete. For, it ignores the relevance of possible internal impediments, the absence of which would enable the individual to do otherwise. One complete explanation can be made by a micro-analysis, in which a decision-situation is revealed through illumination of its external and internal aspects. It is reasonable to argue that "the standard instances of unfreedom to act in moral discourse are those in which an agent is under physical constraint or in which he is subject to exploitation or duress" (Benn, 1976: 110). This means that if one is made to act in one particular way by physical or non-physical force, or is prevented choosing any other option he may wish to choose, then this is a standard instance of unfreedom.

There are four main conditions in a decision-making situation and the analysis of these conditions are indicative of being instances of free/unfree actions. These are: (1) having a

determinate set of actions at one's disposal, (2) being confronted with a set of opportunity costs, in the sense that pursuit of x means forgoing pursuit of y, z and etc. (3) having goals forming an ordered preference set, in the light of which one makes the choice, and (4) having a set of beliefs about (1), (2), (3) e.g. about the relation of actions to one's goals (Benn, 1976: 111). There would not many who would have second thoughts on the first two conditions in terms of their relevance to one's free actions. These two conditions are usually conceived to be external to the individual. This means that these conditions are open to becoming obstacles by the manipulation of only external factors. For this reason, it is argued that the absence of these conditions would develop into a state of unfreedom.

However, the last two conditions are often neglected by those who take obstacles to be only as being external to the individual. I argue that the last two conditions (3), (4) are essential for having an integrative will since one's beliefs about one's actions and goals provides the conceptual content to form evaluative principles in defining and shaping one's resoluteness, the absence of which would develop into a state of unfreedom since if one lacks an integrative will (which is tantamount to saying that the conditions (3) and (4) are lacking), then any decision based on these conditions will be open to manipulation by the external factors as well. Moreover, having an integrative will, which represents the personal and internal aspect of a decision-making process, supports the individual in terms of being guarded against the external factors that might endanger one's freedom. Thus, the internal factors *should* also be taken into account by stressing the third and fourth conditions.

The scenario of Desmond, which has been given as an example above, can help us to understand the micro case for a decision-making situation and the relevance of all four conditions. The conditions (1) and (2) are fulfilled in his case, since he has three options (to study archaeology, to study medicine, to take the holiday) and if he chooses to take the holiday, he must forgo studying archaeology, or if he chooses to study archaeology, he must forgo studying medicine and taking the holiday. If he did not have more than one option, such as, if studying archaeology was his only option, then obviously the talk about his freedom would be in vain. As it would be the case, if he had not the opportunity cost, for example if taking the holiday were compatible with the deadlines of the archaeology application. However, the fulfilment of these conditions is not sufficient to allow having a complete conception of freedom. For, although they represent a different aspect of freedom in terms of signifying intra-

personal aspects, fulfilling the third and fourth condition are as relevant as fulfilling the first and second condition. In this regard, they rely on having an integrative will.

Desmond has the goal to study archaeology and this forms the order of a preference set for him, in the light of which he makes the choice. This means that his scenario also fulfils the third condition, which bring us to the most crucial part: the fulfilment of the fourth condition. Having a set of beliefs about (1), (2), (3) for example about the relation of Desmond's actions to his goals, is the crucial term of furnishing oneself with authority on giving *priority* to some options over others. The more one relies on his integrative will, the more authority he has over his life in the sense that instead of letting the external factors control his life, the individual is striving to control his life in the face of external factors. That means that the more authority one has over his life, the freer he is.

Going back to our example, if Desmond believes that studying archaeology is more important than having the holiday, and chooses to study archaeology, then it is reasonable to say that he relied on his integrative will and fulfilled the fourth condition in a decision-making situation, and thus his choice was not an instance of unfreedom. For, his decision relied on his reflection on his plan, and the new opportunity that came up during the formation of this plan. His choice might have been otherwise, since it is not that particular choice which made him free, but it was the way he made the choice. Thus, it is the *presence* of an interactive planning that reveals the exercise of background mechanisms of an integrative will. In this regard, the relation between interactive planning and narrative thinking is also much to the point in seeking evidence for the *presence* of an integrative will, since "our self-narratives function as organizing principles that integrate experience, enabling us to make sense of ourselves, our actions, and the world with which we engage" (MacKenzie and Poltera, 2010: 32). I will analyse the relation of the exercise concept freedom and narrative thinking later in the fifth chapter in order to see how anxiety of being-towards-death stands together with these two. In this context, having more than one way at one's disposal is crucial, but the reasons for moving along these ways also counts for one's freedom. This brings us to the negative and positive conceptions of freedom, which is a distinction introduced by Isaiah Berlin.

### III.B. Negative and Positive Freedom

In this section, I will attempt to provide an account of the negative and positive conceptions of freedom and I will also demonstrate the implications of using the *absence* and *presence*

vocabulary in terms of their contribution to understanding the extent of an individual's freedom in various ways. Even though introducing the distinction between the negative and positive senses of 'freedom' to moral philosophy have been usually attributed to Isaiah Berlin since he analyses these two senses in his famous essay – first published in 1958 – in depth, “the idea of distinguishing between a negative and a positive sense of the term ‘liberty’ goes back at least to Kant” (Carter, 2012). It is absolutely clear that “Berlin discusses Kant at several places in his celebrated essay, but he does not mention that Kant himself also made a distinction between a negative and a positive conception of freedom” (Van Hees, 2003: 337). However, the usage of terms ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ is traceable in Kant’s own provisional definition of freedom, which is “the property of a kind of causality so that human will can be *efficient independently* of alien causes determining it” (1998: 52, italics mine). This definition has been termed negative by Kant himself, and led him to derive another sense of freedom as the following: freedom is “the combination of a negative determination with a positive capacity” (1998: 62). As divergent as the authors’ rationale in using these terms could be, it is not groundless to defend the view that the usage of the terms – ‘negative and positive’ – is not a reflection of the authors’ feelings about these conceptions in terms of approving one and disapproving the other.

Berlin – according to whom “conceptions of freedom are derived from the views of what constitutes a person, a man” – clearly stated that he approves the negative sense of freedom and disapproves positive sense. This is concluded out of his conviction that the positive sense of freedom is open to be abused in historical and political terms as he argues that “enough manipulation of the definition of man, and freedom can be made to mean whatever the manipulator wishes” (2002: 181). Therefore, we can argue that using these labels relies, rather, on the way each author chooses to describe freedom and the similarity between the labels is deeply rooted in the vocabulary used by each author.

More importantly, although Berlin’s distinction is quite different from that of Kant, there is a significant similarity, which serves to illuminate the reason behind their usage of these terms i.e. having a methodological purpose to reveal the categorical difference between the two conceptions of freedom. For, “both authors define negative freedom in terms of the *absence* of certain influences or constraints on a person’s behaviour, and positive freedom refers in the work of both authors to the *presence* of certain mechanisms of control on the part of the person” (Van Hees, 2003: 338). In the Kantian context the positive sense of the notion of freedom is indexed to the *presence* of a particular determining ground of the will, whereas

the negative sense denotes the *absence* of certain other determining grounds (Van Hees, 2003: 339, Kant: 1998: 52). Although Berlin used this vocabulary in a quite different context, the usage of these labels is crucial in terms of revealing the necessary and sufficient conditions of being free. For, even though the term absence signifies the *necessity* of not being coerced or constrained, this *absence* is not, by itself, *sufficient* to reveal another sense of being free, which requires the *presence* of some goals, direction and control. Thus, if we want to analyse an individual's freedom, we need to consider both senses of freedom in the light of this particular vocabulary used by Berlin and Kant.

Hereby, after giving Berlin's account of the negative and positive senses of freedom, I will analyse Berlin's usage of the terms absence and presence in relation to their implications for an individual's free self-making process in three layers. I argue that these three layers correspond to the extensions of these two senses of freedom. First, I will analyse *externality/internality* of freedom, which denotes one of the essential features of human existence as being socially extended in terms of its approach to freedom as an interpersonal/intrapersonal notion. Secondly, I will discuss freedom as freedom *from* (obstacles, coercion, interception) and freedom *towards* (doing or becoming something), which denotes the teleological and temporally extended nature of human existence in terms of their approach to freedom as an end state, *towards* which the individual strives to attain by being free *from* constraints. And last but not least, I will combine these two to come up with Taylor's account of freedom as an *opportunity* and *exercise* concept, which denotes the narrative feature of human existence in terms of their approach to freedom as being related to reflecting upon *opportunities*, making plans based on these reflections and *exercising* these plans. Then, I will be in a position to analyse to what extent an individual's freedom can be restricted by the presence of death when it is viewed as an event; and the extent to which, if any, it can flourish or be constrained by the internalisation of death when it is viewed as an eventuality. I will argue that when life is viewed as a narrative, death cannot constrain one's freedom, rather it can reinforce one's liberty when it is conceived as an eventuality in the process of self-direction.

### *III.B.1. Berlin's Two Conceptions of Liberty*

The necessary and sufficient conditions of freedom denote two different senses of freedom which are essential to provide answers to two different questions. Berlin introduced two questions, each corresponding either to the negative sense or to the positive sense of freedom. According to him the negative sense of freedom reveals the aspects related to the question of

“What is the area within which the subject – a person or group of persons – is or should be left to do or be what he is able to do or be, without the interference of others?”, whereas the positive sense of freedom pertains to the aspects related to the question of “What, or, who is the source of control or interference that can determine someone to do, or be, this rather than that?” (2002: 169). While an answer to the first question seeks for a freedom that results from the *absence* of any constraint, which is crucial for self-expression, the second question leads to an investigation of a freedom that results from the *presence* of control, which is crucial for self-direction.

Berlin argues that defending liberty in a negative sense is tantamount to ruling out any interference since interfering with an individual’s choice means to threaten that individual with persecution unless he submits to the persecutor’s choice, it also means “to block before him every door but one, no matter how benevolent the motives of those who arrange this, [and it] is to sin against the truth that he is a man, a being with a life of his own to live” (2002: 174). His approach to the positive sense reflects the individual’s attempt to be his/her own master in the sense that the individual defends his/her freedom by depending on himself/herself in his/her decisions. In Berlin’s account of positive freedom, the free individual is “a doer, deciding, not being decided for, self-directed and not acted upon by external nature or by other men as if he were a thing, or an animal, or a slave incapable of playing a human role, that is, of conceiving goals and policies of his own and realising them” (Berlin, 2002: 178). This seems to be similar to Heidegger’s account of existence in the sense that one’s being is an issue for one. However, it seems that Berlin prefers to put the same idea into words in his discussion of the positive sense of freedom through analytical terms, when he argues that “I wish above all, to be conscious of myself as a thinking, willing, active being, bearing responsibility for my choices and able to explain them by reference to my own ideas and purposes” (2002: 178). One’s own ideas, one’s courage to take responsibility in defending his goals is a reflection of the positive sense of freedom.

Also, echoes of Heideggerian themes of existence can be heard in this positive sense of freedom. For, according to him an individual’s way of being is shaped fundamentally by the fact that each individual is preoccupied with defending his existence in relation to the answers he himself found in response to the question of ‘what it means ‘to be’ (Heidegger, 2010: xviii). Although Heidegger is sketching a general theme for existence here, it is reasonable to argue that its relation with the positive sense of freedom would be instrumental to understand how it

affects one's decisions at some particular instants. Moreover, it is instrumental to reveal the implications of one's awareness of one's mortality – conceiving death as an eventuality – for one's decisions at some particular instants. For, having an authentic way of life is the mode of being according to Heidegger in the sense that “becoming free liberates one from one's lostness in chance possibilities urging themselves upon us, so that the factual possibilities can first be authentically understood and chosen” (2010: 253). Carter's scenario, which serves to help revealing the difference between the negative and positive sense of freedom, is also helpful to see how an individual's life is shaped by his control over his decisions.

Imagine you are driving a car through town, and you come to a fork in the road. You turn left, but no one was forcing you to go one way or the other. Next you come to a crossroads. You turn right, but no one was preventing you from going left or straight on. There is no traffic to speak of and there are no diversions or police roadblocks. So you seem, as a driver, to be completely free. But this picture of your situation might change quite dramatically if we consider that the reason you went left and then right is that you're addicted to cigarettes and you're desperate to get to the tobacconists before it closes. Rather than *driving*, you feel you are *being driven*, as your urge to smoke leads you uncontrollably to turn the wheel first to the left and then to the right. Moreover, you're perfectly aware that your turning right at the crossroads means you'll probably miss a train that was to take you to an appointment you care about very much. You long to be free of this irrational desire that is not only threatening your longevity but is also stopping you right now from doing what you think you ought to be doing. (Carter, 2012)

One salient implication this persuasive portrayal of the free driver is the relevance of the way Berlin uses the terms ‘absence’ and ‘presence’ during his analysis of the negative and positive senses of freedom. In the negative sense, on the one hand, we can clearly see that what makes the driver free is the *absence* of any obstacle, barrier, or coercion to his movement. In the positive sense, on the other hand, the driver is free if and only if the *presence* of his control over his goals/desires is secured in terms of directing himself towards fulfilling his goals rather than being directed away from fulfilling his goals. In the positive sense, the individual is free, when he is autonomous in the sense that he follows his own authentic way of living, as the struggle for freedom is no longer directly carried out in the external environment as the negative sense would argue but it is also achieved through the elements within the person himself that thwart his desire to realise his own way of living (Miller, 2006: 3). An etymological analysis of the term autonomy can serve to understand why it has been used by the defenders of positive sense in relation to freedom. The word ‘autonomy’ is rooted in the Greek words *αὐτο* (meaning self) and *νόμος* (meaning law). Setting one's own laws on one's own self, therefore, constitutes



the basic meaning of the term autonomy. In the context of the positive sense of freedom, it has been used to denote the capacity of setting one's own direction on one's own actions.

Autonomy and the *presence* of a sense of direction are, therefore, required for an authentic way of living, which has been proposed to be a condition of freedom in this positive sense. In this positive sense, one's freedom is indexed to the translation of one's own plan into one's actions with the *presence* of self-direction and self-control. Here, a careful reader can follow the traces of the negative sense of freedom if he/she adds the following phrase, which is implicitly assumed by the positive conception. One's freedom is indexed to the translation of one's own plan, in the *absence* of any coercion to his/her plan-formation, into one's actions with the *presence* of self-direction and self-control. This implicit existence of the term absence demonstrates two significant points. Firstly, it reveals the need to discuss freedom in terms of the *absence* of certain influences or constraints on a person's behaviour. Secondly, it reveals the fact that even though freedom is discussed in relation to the *presence* of certain mechanisms of control on the part of the person in the positive sense, this conception contains and transcends the negative sense of freedom. Carter's example of a driver and having more than one direction at the driver's disposal is, thereby, a succinct way of giving a depiction of the senses of freedom in the light of Berlin's vocabulary. For, although in this example the driver is free in the negative sense, but not free in the positive sense, it reveals the ways in which the driver can be rendered free in the positive sense as well. Furthermore, it reveals the need to address what the combination of the awareness of one's mortality and the temporally indefinite feature of death might mean in one's control over one's life and its further implications for one's feeling of anxiety.

What Berlin has in mind when he expresses the term *presence* is reflected by his description of a free individual in a positive sense, in which it is argued that the individual is free, if, and only if, he plans his own life in accordance with his own will, and plans entail rules, and a rule does not oppress him if he imposes it on himself (2002: 190). He continues to defend the view that the sense of freedom in this conception is not one of "a field without obstacles, a vacuum in which there is no obstruction" on one's possible actions, rather it is one of "self-direction and self-control" (2002: 190). Although his analysis of the relevance of self-direction and self-control in relation to an individual's freedom in a positive sense seems to be correct, his attempt to view the area covered by the positive sense of freedom not as "a field without obstacles" seems to make it incomplete. For, it is quite hard to imagine an individual giving

direction to his course of actions, shaping his own life along with the obstacles. It is presumed that it is a field without obstacles, but there should be a direction in the open field in order to call the way one chooses to take one's own way.

When we recall the driver in Carter's example, we cannot consider the driver free, if his road is blocked by barriers and he is being driven to another particular point due to these barriers even though he does have certain mechanisms of self-direction and self-control that would take him to another point. If we reverse the situation, and if we assume that there are no barriers on the road, however the driver is being driven to some particular point due to the *absence* of certain mechanisms of self-direction and self-control, then we cannot consider him completely free in this scenario as well. Indeed, the driver is free from barriers but the range of this preliminary freedom can be widened with the presence of certain mechanisms of self-control. Thus, freedom might come in degrees, each degree corresponding to the fulfilment of different aspects of freedom. In this regard, Berlin quite reasonably argues that there are two different senses of freedom. However, his analysis of the positive sense is incomplete in terms of missing its implicit assumptions about the absence of obstacles. For, we can consider the driver free if, and only if, there are no obstacles to his movement *and* there are certain mechanisms of self-direction and self-control in the positive sense. Thus, we can defend the view that the positive sense of freedom does not exclusively express the presence of certain mechanisms but also includes the absence of obstacles as well. Therefore, we can argue that Berlin's claim that the sense of freedom in the positive conception is not one of "a field without obstacles, a vacuum in which there is no obstruction", is incongruent, and it needs to be revised as follows: the sense of freedom in the positive conception is one of a field that covers an area, without obstacles, in which the individual can freely direct himself with certain mechanisms of self-control.

Another salient implication disclosed by the free driver's persuasive portrayal is the extent of the negative and positive senses of freedom. Although I have argued above that the positive sense contains and transcends the negative sense of freedom, advocates of the negative conception might oppose this view on the grounds that the scope of the negative conception is larger than the positive one. Furthermore, they might ask 'how come the positive sense of freedom contains and transcends the negative sense while the scope of the negative sense proves to be wider'?

Along these lines, they might refer to Berlin's argument that "emphasis on negative liberty, as a rule, leaves more paths for individuals or groups to pursue; positive liberty, as a rule, open fewer paths, but with better reasons or greater resources for moving along them" (2002: 49). This is tantamount to the claim that whereas the negative sense of freedom is a matter of "opportunities", the positive sense is a matter of "accomplishments" (Kramer, 2003: 2). For, the basis of the negative sense of freedom is not ultimately a matter of "whether I wish to walk at all", but it is a matter of "how many doors are open, how open are they, and upon their relative importance in my life" (Berlin, 2002: 32). The reasoning behind this argument is a reflection of Berlin's claim that "the more avenues men can enter, the broader those avenues, the more avenues that each opens into, the freer they are" (2002: 272). Although it is congruent to defend the view that the number of options is more crucial in relation to the negative sense, and that the extent of one's freedom is indexed to the number of options at one's disposal, it does not necessarily mean that one would be freer in the negative sense than one would ever be in the positive one.

The analogy drawn between the negative sense and opportunities, on the one hand, and the positive sense and accomplishments, on the other, signifies another parameter in the comparison between the extents of freedom each sense covers. This parameter is the diachronic nature of becoming free in terms of two senses. Along these lines, it is reasonable to argue that "negative freedom is the first stage in the process of self-development of the individual, whereas positive freedom (in the sense of self-control) is a higher stage in the same process" (Simhony, 1993: 37). For, opportunities occur before accomplishments and since the negative sense is a matter of opportunities, it comes before the positive sense. *Videlicet*, it is necessary to secure a range of opportunities before one is enabled to accomplish them. Thus, the negative sense refers to a particular area in the process of becoming free, and the positive sense refers to another area. The incompleteness of Berlin's account is deeply rooted at this particular point. He takes this area (the area covered by the negative sense) completely independent and distinct from the extent covered by the positive sense while the area covered by the positive sense of freedom contains the area covered by the negative sense, plus an area that is not covered by the negative sense.

The crucial point here is covering a broader area of the conditions that constitute a constraint on one's freedom. On that note, Carter defends the view that "the extent of a person's freedom is a function of two variables: first, the importance of her available actions in the sense

that the particular significance assigned to each available action by the person, and second, the sheer number of those actions” (2005: 136). Since the positive sense of freedom covers an area without obstacles, in which the individual can freely direct himself with certain mechanisms of self-control, it is congruent to argue that it takes into account both variables. For, on the one hand, the implicit emphasis on the *absence* of obstacles refers to the number of options/available actions, and on the other hand, the *presence* of certain mechanisms denotes the importance of the options/available actions. On the other side, the negative sense of freedom confines itself to taking into account only one variable, namely, the sheer number of options/available actions. According to Carter the difference between the two senses of freedom is deeply rooted in “the difference between factors that are external and factors that are internal to the agent” (2012). Carter defends the view that this is the reason why the defenders of negative freedom are “primarily interested in the degree to which individuals or groups suffer interference from external bodies”, whereas proponents of positive freedom are “more attentive to the internal factors affecting the degree to which individuals or groups act autonomously” (2012). Thus, the distinction between internal and external factors is much to the point in the case of analysing the extent of freedom. Furthermore, this distinction is deeply rooted in the usage of *absence* and *presence* vocabulary, which brings us to the three layers of freedom as extensions of the negative and positive senses of freedom.

One salient conclusion of the above discussion is the claim, which I defend, that the positive sense of freedom is broader than the negative sense in terms of covering both variables. The three extensions of the two senses will also serve to analyse the positive sense’s extent in depth. The first basis of this claim springs from the interpersonal/intrapersonal feature of freedom. The negative sense, as a conception focused on the factors external to the agent, is “a purely interpersonal concept which refers to the relations between people at a particular, limited moment” (Blokland, 1997: 83). Along these lines, mentioning ideological factors might serve to help the way in which individuals assign value to particular opportunities, which in turn limits what a person takes to be relevant opportunities. Choosing a marriage partner is not taken to be a personal choice in some cultures due to the internalisation of the arranged marriage code. Even if choosing a marriage partner should be possible for the individuals in these cultures, they do not value this opportunity. For such individuals arranged marriage is taken to be one’s fate. This is what Heidegger terms as facticity in the sense that “fate is seen to be tied to the facticity of the historical situatedness which the individual inherits” (Leman-Stefanovic, 1987: 89).

One salient phenomenological reading of existentialism would be the position that the life of an individual is inauthentic when his/her life is ordered around his/her own facticity, which is a reflection of being unaware of one's mortality, one's being-towards-death as one's authentic mode of being. The term facticity refers to "one's personal circumstance and one's historical situation" (Young, 2003: 119). As phenomenological as this term might sound, the distinction made between the interpersonal and intrapersonal elements in the negative and positive sense of freedom serves to help to reveal how one's facticity might be limiting one's freedom. Again, the echoes of Heideggerian themes can be heard in this positive sense of freedom. Moreover, it is reasonable to argue that the positive sense is a much broader concept than the negative sense, "because it is not only an interpersonal but also an intrapersonal concept: someone's attempts to be master of his own life can be frustrated by inner inhibitions as well as external ones" (Blokland, 1997: 83). This claim constitutes the rationale behind the first layer of the distinction between the positive and negative sense, as an extension to these conceptions of freedom: namely, externality and internality of freedom. This also constitutes the rationale for the second extensional layer, namely freedom as freedom from X and freedom to do Y, in terms of securing the lack of external obstacles (X) and choosing to do particular acts (Y). For, the range of X is peculiar to the interpersonal affairs and this range depends on others' attitudes as well, whereas the range of Y is or should be construed intra-personally.

Another salient extensional layer of the distinction between negative and positive senses is the conception that views freedom as an opportunity and exercise concept. The rationale behind making a further extension in the distinction between two senses is deeply based on the difference between the ranges each sense covers in temporal terms. Along these lines, it is reasonable to claim that whereas the negative sense covers the aspects related to the question of the degree to which someone is free at one particular moment, the positive sense answers this question across a certain time-span since its answer is based on one's autonomy (Blokland, 1997: 83). This sense of freedom requires an orientation on the temporal plane, at times to the past and at other times to the future. Such an orientation is tantamount to viewing life as a narrative, in the sense that an individual's freedom is indexed to the number of opportunities and the exercise of control over these options. This sense of freedom is the third extensional layer of the distinction between the negative and positive sense of freedom as a result of the usage of the absence/presence vocabulary. It is related to viewing life as a narrative in the sense that whereas the negative conception of freedom refers to an episodic freedom, positive conception denotes a diachronic freedom. This distinction will serve to illuminate the

relation between one's freedom and one's operational and structural desires as well. The relevance of desires in one's freedom is opposed by many authors, who position themselves in the negative camp, on the grounds of their insistence on the externality of freedom. The discussions about the externality and internality of freedom will demonstrate, on the one hand, how an individual's freedom is enriched through three extensional layers of freedom. On the other hand, it will reveal significant implications for the relevance of being aware of one's mortality in the task of seeking the proper (proper in the Heideggerian sense when he mentions authenticity) balance between intrapersonal and interpersonal factors.

### *III.B.2. Externality and Internality of Freedom*

Analysing the internality and externality of freedom is instrumental to understanding how the negative and positive sense of freedom differs in terms of determining the factors that constitute constraint on one's freedom. Berlin enriches the content of the rationale behind his distinction between the two senses of freedom by inserting the nature of conditions that he regards as constraints on one's freedom. In his famous essay on 'Two Conceptions of Liberty', he indexes the freedom of individuals to the degree of their ability to avoid any constraint on their freedom. Berlin reasonably defends the view that "freedom consists in playing a part in determining one's own conduct; [and] the greater this part, the greater the freedom" (2002: 259). Furthermore, it is also a reasonable claim that what is crucial in playing a part in determining one's own conduct depends on what constitutes a constraint on one's own conduct.

One rudimentary feature of Berlin's negative sense of freedom focuses on the externality of freedom. According to Berlin, only external factors can qualify to constitute constraint on one's freedom since he argues that "the lack of freedom is being determined by external forces; and the greater part played by these forces, the smaller freedom of the individual" (2002: 259). For those who view constraints on freedom in this negative sense, an individual is unfree only to the extent that *other people* prevent that individual from doing certain things (Carter, 2012). This means that natural or social factors cannot constitute constraint on one's freedom. Along these lines, it is essential to mention the view that "the causal or the statistical regularities that constitute the order, hold under certain conditions, and we can sometimes change the conditions", and although "we cannot alter the effect of sub-zero temperature on human bodies, but we can dress in protective layers, or stay inside a heated house" (Kekes, 2013: 284). One salient implication of this view is the sense of control an individual has upon the environmental conditions. It is reasonable to argue that it is not only

people that cause obstacles, but environmental characteristics such as the availability of sources and means etc. can create obstacles as well.

If we call these “applicable regularities limiting each possibility in certain ways”, then we can still opt for possibilities we want to pursue while accepting the limits set by these regularities; since “the regularities establish the possibilities and limits our various endeavours, but they leave us with some control, in the sense that necessities do not exhaust our possibilities”. (Kekes, 2013: 284). In the fifth chapter, I will analyse death as an applicable regularity that we cannot completely free ourselves from, as beings subjected to the conditions of mortality. In that chapter, I will demonstrate the ways in which one’s response to death - the universally applicable regularity – reinforce one’s freedom since it is reasonable to claim that “we can respond to the unalterable conditions we face with despair, hope, indignation, irony, rage, resignation, self-deception, surprise, and so forth, and the attitudes we cultivate and those we wear ourselves from have much to do with the quality of our lives” (Kekes, 2013: 285). This is the particular way, the externality and internality of freedom will be related to death as an external event, and death as an internalised obstacle.

Berlin’s attempt to bring the externality of freedom into the forefront stimulated a rejoinder from the defenders of the positive sense in terms of featuring the internality of freedom. The attempt to feature internality of freedom is deeply rooted in the broadness of positive freedom in terms of covering a wider area of constraint. For, the major idea behind the need to feature internality of freedom is a reflection of the claim that “as we broaden the compass of possible constraints, we progressively obtain ‘more positive’ concepts of liberty” in the sense that whereas “external factors pertain to the individual’s environment, internal factors are related to the individual’s psychological or bodily constitution” (Spector, 2010: 793). This is the particular way, the positive sense of freedom describes a conception of freedom by combining two interrelated aspects of it, namely by highlighting both the interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of freedom. Here, external factors express the relevance of interpersonal elements in one’s freedom by signifying the effect of the individual’s environment, while internal factors underline the relevance of intrapersonal elements in one’s freedom by pointing to the influence of the individual’s psychology.

Another salient implication is that the distinction between internality and externality of freedom is a product of the absence/presence vocabulary. In this regard, it is congruent to argue that the *presence* of “external interference is a sufficient condition only for the unfreedom

of objects that were previously in a state of freedom” (Flikschuh, 2007: 19). However, the *absence* of external interference is not sufficient for the freedom of the individual since “obstacles to act freely may be *internal* rather than *external*, that you will need to free yourself from these psychological constraints if you are to behave autonomously” (Skinner, 2006: 244). Skinner’s reference to behave autonomously is actually deeply rooted in Berlin’s description of freedom, which “consists in playing a part in determining one’s own conduct”. For, the autonomous person is described as a part author of his own life, while “the ideal of personal autonomy is the vision of people controlling, to some degree, their own destiny, fashioning it through successive decisions throughout their lives” (Flikschuh, 2007: 152). Therefore, when the autonomy of individuals is secured, then one can ensure that their own conduct is determined by their self-making through self-direction *freely*.

Determining one’s own conduct is significant to one because “a fundamental and inescapable feature of being human is that we have to choose between incompatible alternatives, in a sense creating ourselves through our choices” (Warburton, 2001: 19). Whereas, the lack of any external constraint is much to the point in signifying how freedom can be attained, the comparison Mill makes between a tree and an individual’s self-development is another factor that denotes the relevance of internal factors in the attainment of freedom. He argues that “human nature is not a machine to be built after a model, and set to do exactly the work prescribed for it, but a tree, which requires to grow and develop itself on all sides, according to the tendency of the inward forces which make it a living thing” (1985: 123). This means that “personal growth is something that cannot be imposed from without, but must come from within the individual in the sense of developing their own faculties to the full and according to their own inner logic” (Carter, 2012). Thus, if both external and internal factors are taken into consideration while we analyse the conditions that constitute constraint on one’s freedom, we would be in a better position to see how one is enabled to determine his own conduct in relation to the two senses of freedom. For, “the internality/externality distinction properly describes one single concept of freedom that consists of the interrelation of the two aspects” in terms of combining the opportunities one has and the control one exercises on these opportunities (Simhony, 1993: 38). Thereby, I will adopt a hybrid view (a different version of Berlin’s positive sense) that investigates the goal of freedom underlying the negative conception and that reveals the internal constraints on freedom, while incorporating the notions of self-direction and self-expression. Such a view will incorporate both externality and internality of



freedom by featuring the significance of having as many options as possible and having control over these options in shaping one's life.

Advocates of the negative sense of freedom oppose the internality of freedom on the grounds that it presupposes an idea of the divided self, due to the reference made to the control mechanisms within the individual. The rationale behind their opposition is the claim that “the idea of self-control implies the bifurcation of a person into controller and controlled in the sense that talk of being one's own master has precisely this connotation of one part or aspect of oneself as being in control of some other part or aspect of oneself” (Flikschuh, 2007: 23). If we recall Carter's portrayal of the free driver, who happens to be a smoker as well, this would illustrate the inefficient insistence of the advocates of the negative sense to refute the internality of freedom.

According to Berlin [...] the smoker in our story provides a clear example of a divided self, for she is both a self that desires to get to an appointment and a self that desires to get to the tobacconists, and these two desires are in conflict. We can now enrich this story in a plausible way by adding that one of these selves — the keeper of appointments — is superior to the other: the self that is a keeper of appointments is thus a ‘higher’ self, and the self that is a smoker is a ‘lower’ self. The higher self is the rational, reflecting self, the self that is capable of moral action and of taking responsibility for what she does. This is the true self, for rational reflection and moral responsibility are the features of humans that mark them off from other animals. The lower self, on the other hand, is the self of the passions, of unreflecting desires and irrational impulses (Carter, 2012).

One salient mistake in this reasoning seems to be using the terms desire and self interchangeably. The division is not between the driver and the smoker, as if there were two distinct selves, rather the division, and more importantly, the conflict is between two desires of the same individual. Thus, the assumption has not been made by the defenders of the positive sense of freedom, rather it has been made by the advocates of the negative sense. However, this assumption is false. For, the distinction is between the operational and structural desires and it is the same individual who directs herself by controlling the opportunities according to her own plans. Therefore, the presence of a control mechanism does not assume a divided self, rather it assumes a distinction between different kinds of desires.

Furthermore, the distinction between operational and structural desires do not constitute a hierarchy between each other. Rather, they refer to episodic and diachronic features of the desires. They do not necessarily conflict with each other, however in some cases, like in the case of the smoking driver, fulfilling one episodic desire might lead to frustrate one

structural desire. Actually, in Carter's original example Carter discloses this by stating that the driver longs to be free of the desire to direct herself towards the tobacconist that is not only threatening her *longevity* but is also stopping her right now from doing what she thinks she ought to be doing (2012). However, in order to refute the arguments held by the positive theoreticians in their attempts to feature the internality of one's freedom, Carter discloses above Berlin's attempts to attribute several assumptions – which will prove to be false – to the positive theorists. Along these lines, Parekh demonstrates these attributions as follows: basing the positive sense on the theory of divided self, accusing the positive sense of equating 'what X would choose if he were something he is not... with what X actually seeks and chooses, presenting positive sense as a conception that views the true ends of an individual as independent from one's choices, leaving positive sense one and only one true way of living a good life (1982: 36). These four attempts are not successful and efficient to demonstrate that a positive sense of freedom needs to be necessarily a rational and an absolute one.

The first attribution rests on the conventional idea about positive sense of freedom, a reflection of Berlin's portrayal of a single positive sense with an absolutist, narrow way of life. It is reasonable to defend the view that "at the heart of Berlin's objection to positive liberty lies in his opposition to the idealist view of freedom as rational self-direction" (Miller, 2003: 12). In this conventional attribution to the positive sense of freedom, "the self is partitioned into a lower (empirical) self and higher (rational) self", in the sense that to attain freedom, the rational self serves to have control over the empirical self, which is potentially a constraint on rational self-direction (Simhony, 1993: 35). In the example given above, whereas the self that desires to get to the tobacconists is proposed to be the empirical self, the self that desires to get to an appointment is taken to be the rational self. However, as has been argued above, this portrayal is neither an effective nor an appropriate account of positive sense.

In the account I have given for the positive sense of freedom – a view that investigates the goal of freedom underlying the negative conception and that reveals the internal constraints on freedom, while incorporating the notions of self-direction and self-expression – there is no place for a divided self. On the contrary, the capacity of self-direction, which also underlies self-expression, features an integrated self. Furthermore, while the idea of integrative will does oppose to divide the self into two, as rational and empirical, it also relies on the intertwining of operational and structural desires. The proponents of the negative sense might argue that self-direction is not any different in the sense that it underlies the bifurcation of the individual into

a director and a directed person. However, this would be a slightly misconstrued portrayal of self-direction, since the notion of self-direction implies a *director* and a *life* that is directed by the director. For, without a sense of direction that life would not be a reflection of the individual's self-expression. Whereas, it is congruent to suggest that there is a distinction between desires in temporal terms, it is also necessary to assert the idea that the freedom of an individual is indexed to a balance between these two kinds of desires in this positive sense. Therefore, Berlin's attempt to base the positive sense on the theory of divided self is an incomplete and inefficient one.

The second attribution, which rests on the accusation that the positive sense equates 'what X would choose if he were something he is not...' with 'what X actually seeks and chooses', also depends on the conventional attribution of a divided self. However, this time, this division is made on a temporal plane. For, in the positive sense, the reason behind choosing to act in a particular way is also a significant element in one's freedom and some aspects of the reason may be teleologically construed by the individual. In this particular sense, the future projections made by an individual can influence the present choices of the individual. At that point, the accusation of a temporally divided self is put forward by the defenders of the negative conception to demonstrate that when the advocates of the positive sense defend acting in a non-heteronomous way, they fall into the problem of a temporally divided self. This is actually a reflection of the claim defended by the theoreticians like Parfit, who deny that someone's identity is defined in terms of his entire life: at forty, you are someone other than when you were twenty (Blokland, 1997: 57). On the other hand, the theoreticians like Taylor, who position themselves in the positive camp, argue that "people can change, naturally, but this change will then always have a place and meaning in an entire story" (Blokland, 1997: 57). Thus, it is reasonable to argue that the positive sense suggests non-heteronomous acts in one's conduct, whereas acting in a non-heteronomous way depends on a unified story, rather than assuming a temporally divided self.

This accusation does not hold for the account I have given for the positive sense of freedom since, in my account, to be free in a positive sense requires self-direction that incorporates the notion of interactive planning in terms of providing an individual the opportunity to consider a planned future, and also to adapt this plan to the new experiences gained through the process. Along these lines, Taylor argues that "we want our lives to have meaning, or weight, or to grow towards some fullness... if necessary, we want the future to

redeem the past, to make it part of a life story which has sense, or purpose, to take it up in a meaningful unity” (1989: 51). Actually, it is reasonable to defend the view that “this makes the narrative character of human existence inescapable: we understand our lives in a narrative; in order to get an idea of who we are, we must have a notion of where we are coming from and where we are going” (Blokland, 1997: 57). I will discuss this feature of human existence in depth, when I analyse freedom as an opportunity and exercise concept, namely the third extensional layer of the distinction between the negative/positive senses.

The third and fourth attributions reflect the way Berlin uses the positive sense of freedom and rationalism interchangeably while he combines them with an absolutist account. However, a positive sense of freedom does not have to be rational and absolutist at the same time even though it can incorporate a notion of self-direction. Berlin’s inclination towards the interchangeable usage of rationalism and positive sense of freedom is not purely based on intellectual reasons but on the political and historical conditions he faced during his lifetime. He defends the view that the positive sense of freedom is prone to allow tyranny on political institutions since if the ruler is a tyrant he/she can argue that “if he/she is rational he/she cannot deny that what is right for him/her must, for the same reasons, be right for others who are rational like him/her” (2002: 191). By the logic of this reasoning he concludes that adopting a positive sense of freedom will eventually lead to consideration of coercing others to live in an absolute rational way.

It is one thing to argue that the positive sense of freedom can be, and had been, abused by the politicians, but it is another to claim that it is bound to lead to tyranny. Furthermore, it is a methodological mistake to attempt to refute an individual concept through arguments based on political ones. Berlin’s misconception is that he supposes that his criticisms on rationalism – whether these are congruent or not is another discussion – constitute necessarily problems for any version of the positive sense of freedom. It is needless to say that his third and fourth attributions on the positive sense of freedom do not hold for the account of freedom I proposed, which is a hybrid view that contains both negative and positive sense while it requires viewing life as an open story authored by each individual himself/herself.

Another attempt to deny the internality of freedom is based on rejecting the relevance of desires in assessing the extent of one’s freedom at all. Rejecting the intrapersonal elements in one’s freedom progresses into denying the relevance of desires, which are basically related to one’s internal mechanisms. It is not actually hard to conceive why intrapersonal elements

should be taken into account while assessing one's freedom, since there is a simple similarity between interpersonal and intrapersonal elements in terms of constraining one's freedom due to a conflict within those elements. In the interpersonal elements, it is the presence of at least two people and conflicting ends of these two that constitute the basis of constraining one's freedom. At this point, the defenders of negative sense, as has been mentioned above, follow the same logic and come up with an attribution to positive sense of an idea of divided self, as if it were a necessary element to demonstrate how the intrapersonal elements would go into conflict (as an inference from the presence of two conflicting people to show externality of freedom). Then, on the grounds that a divided self is an oxymoron, they deny the internality of freedom. However, I have demonstrated above that a divided self is not a necessary element of the positive sense, rather some versions of positive freedom require a unified self. After this unsuccessful attempt, the defenders of the negative sense try to demonstrate the irrelevance of desires since it is pretty clear that the presence of conflicting desires is what makes internal elements significant in assessing one's freedom according to the positive sense.

One salient view the proponents of the negative sense often adopt in their attempt to demonstrate the indifference of one's desire to the extent of one's freedom is that there is difference between being free and feeling free. Along these lines Steiner argues that we should carefully distinguish between being free and feeling free in the sense that somebody is free if there are no external constraints on his actions, whereas one feels free if he is free to do what he desires to do (1991: 125). The argument advances on the idea that if one does not distinguish between feeling free and being free, then another oxymoron is inevitable: a contented slave who is free, since a slave might be just doing what he always desired to do while being a slave. "It seems that those who deny that the contented slave can be free cannot also continue to affirm that to be free is to do what one wants to do, because either the contented slave is free, or freedom is not merely doing what one wants to do" (Flikschuh, 2007: 30). Does this mean that desires have nothing to do with freedom on the grounds that feeling free is not necessary for being free?

According to Berlin, the answer is positive! On the grounds that the contented slave example provides, Berlin rejects the relevance of one's desires in assessing one's freedom: freedom is not about doing what one desires to do; it is, rather, about having options. In fact, the conclusion derived by the defenders of the negative sense is one of the few things that they come to terms with the advocates of the positive sense. For, according to the positive

theoreticians “freedom cannot be simply doing what one has a desire to do, for there is clearly such a thing as being the victim of a desire, of being a slave to a passion, of a desire's being irresistible and, hence, restricting one's freedom – a fact which lends the first view such plausibility as it has” (Neely, 1976: 37). According to Amartya Sen, the reason behind this is the conception that “we find it absurd to dissociate the extent of our freedom from our preferences over alternatives” (1990: 470). This is the reason, actually, the positive theoreticians express the significance of internal elements in constituting constraint on one's freedom. Thus, this does not lead them to deny the relevance of desires in assessing one's freedom since they believe that under some special conditions desires can constrain one's freedom. For this reason, “we must ask under what conditions a desire can enslave its owner and modify the view to take these into account” (Neely, 1976: 37). As the external constraints limit the options one has in terms of making some unrealisable, conflicting desires function as the internal constraints on one's options in terms of leading the individual to make priorities between options and making some unrealisable.

Conflicting desires, as one salient source for the constraint on the extent of one's freedom, demonstrate the internality of freedom. For, it is reasonable to claim that since desires may conflict with each other and as mortal, finite beings we cannot satisfy some, or even many, of our desires due to limitations in time, talents and opportunities, the statement is yet to be clarified: “the satisfaction of which desires are more important for the achievement of freedom” (Silier, 2005: 65). The presence of this question signifies the relevance of conflicting desires, and the need to balance these desires on a temporal plane, in assessing one's freedom. Furthermore, denying any link between freedom and desires makes freedom irrelevant to the agent since such a conception only takes objective constraints, which are not related to one's aspirations and goals, into account (Silier, 2005: 59). This amounts to denying, on the one hand, the normative aspects of freedom and confining it to a merely descriptive account of freedom.

In this section it has been argued that the positive sense is a broader notion than the negative sense in terms of signifying the internality of freedom in addition to the external factors influencing one's freedom. The next section will serve to demonstrate that the positive sense is broader than the negative sense in another sense, namely covering both normative and descriptive aspects of freedom. For, confining oneself to a descriptive account is tantamount to ignoring the teleological feature of one's freedom, which brings us to the second extensional layer of the distinction between the negative and positive senses of freedom: MacCallum's

analysis of freedom as a triadic conception, namely freedom *of* the individual analysed through the terms freedom *from* and freedom *towards*.

### *III.B.3. Freedom From/ Freedom Towards*

Analysing freedom as a triadic conception has been introduced to moral philosophy by Gerald MacCallum, who discusses the negative and positive sense of freedom in order to demonstrate the usefulness of the distinction in terms of revealing different categories of freedom in his essay 'Negative and Positive Freedom'. The significance of the triadic conception is deeply rooted in its efficacy of revealing the ranges that are relevant in assessing the extent of one's freedom. The triadic analysis does not argue for two (or more) fundamentally different concepts of freedom, rather it is instrumental to demonstrate that freedom should be viewed as "one overarching conceptual schema allowing for several different conceptions" (Christman, 2005, 81). In this regard, it is reasonable to claim that the triadic analysis is based on the absence/presence vocabulary used by Berlin to signify different conceptions of freedom. For, the term absence leads to analyse freedom as freedom *from* something, whereas the term presence signifies freedom as freedom *towards* something and this freedom is the freedom *of* someone. In this section, I will attempt to argue and articulate the claim that the positive sense is more successful at covering the categories relevant to one's freedom. This claim will be substantiated through the elaboration of MacCallum's triadic analysis, which is especially significant to show the teleological feature of human existence and thereby, the normative aspects of freedom.

Whenever the freedom of some agent or agents is in question, it is always freedom from some constraint or restriction on, interference with, or barrier to doing, not doing, becoming, or not becoming something.' Such freedom is thus always of something (an agent or agents), from something, to do, not do, become, or not become something; it is a triadic relation. Taking the format "x is (is not) free from y to do (not do, become, not become) z," x ranges over agents, y ranges over such "preventing conditions" as constraints, restrictions, interferences, and barriers, and z ranges over actions or conditions of character or circumstance. (MacCallum, 1967: 314)

MacCallum's usage of the terms 'freedom of an individual', and 'freedom from constraints' is not novel. However, the prominence given to the term 'freedom towards' is crucial to reveal the conditions that remain implicit, as a matter of fact ignored, in the negative sense. The triadic analysis is also crucial to disclose the implicit usage of the term freedom from external constraints in the positive sense. For, if we accept the format offered by MacCallum, we could see that whereas in the negative conception the variables in the range Z are completely ignored,

the variables in the range Y are only implicitly admitted in the positive conception. So, to make an assessment of X's freedom we need to take into account both ranges, namely Y, denoted by the term freedom *from*, and Z, denoted by the term freedom *towards*. MacCallum quite succinctly shows that the relation between these three constitutes the extent of one's freedom.

An agent, constraints and actions are the three elements that need attention since the nature of each element intertwiningly constitute the freedom or unfreedom of the individual. For, in this portrayal, it is claimed that freedom is a triadic relation in the sense that a relation between *three things*: an agent, as an active element, constraints as particular preventing conditions, and actions as particular doings (Carter, 2012). In this triadic analysis, the absence or the presence of freedom is indexed to assumptions made to describe these three variables and the relations between them. These assumptions are about the active elements that constitute an agent, the factors that constitute constraint on the active agent, and the ends that constitute reasons behind the agent's actions (Carter, 2012). Furthermore, these assumptions demonstrate how the triadic analysis is based on the absence/presence vocabulary. For, the conditions to be free, which are based on these assumptions, in the triadic analysis of freedom seem to range from the claims about the *absence* of some constraints; to the *presence* of the ends of the individual, in the context of human existence, in order to demonstrate the elements that can constrain us (Nelson, 2005: 73). It is one thing to have a different stance on the nature of these assumptions, but it is another to ignore some of these assumptions on the grounds that they are not relevant to one's freedom. As we shall see, the positive sense is more successful than the negative sense in terms of taking all of these assumptions into account, instead of ignoring some of them.

If we recall the portrayal of the free driver, we would be able to see in solid terms how the negative sense ignores the ends of individual. The driver, as an active agent, is free, according to the negative sense, *from* any constraint since he is able to go from point A to point B. The freedom of the driver is indexed to the *absence* of any external constraint on his movement to go to point B. The negative sense is not interested, by any means, in the driver's ends that constitute the reasons behind going to point B. He might be just going to the tobacconist, or he might be just going to an appointment, which, let us assume that, is more important for his future. If one ignores the driver's ends, then how could one analyse the driver's freedom in the case of a conflict between going to points A and B? Is it not the case that the constraint on going from A to B is caused by a conflict in the negative sense? For, a



road-block or any other obstacle that might constitute constraint on the driver also happens to be there for serving an end, probably to avoid people getting damaged by the construction work, or to warn them against the danger.

The proponents of the negative sense admit that an obstacle needs to be deliberately formed by other agents. When it comes to the interpersonal aspects, the proponents of negative sense do not abstain from admitting the conflicting ends between two or more people, even though this is quite implicitly admitted. However, when it comes to the intrapersonal aspects, they seem to ignore the conflicting ends within an individual. In the previous chapter, I have demonstrated that the internality of freedom is ignored by the negative sense. This leads to ignoring the conflicting ends *within* the individual, along with the category of freedom *towards*. However, it is reasonable to argue that what makes an obstacle a constraint shall admit the intentional aspect of freedom. For, constraints of one's freedom "deprive a person of the possibility of acting according to his present intentions by forcing him to modify his intention" (Silier, 2005: 12). The source of these constraints may refer to interpersonal or intrapersonal aspects of one's ends. In other words, whereas a case of unfreedom would be caused by the conflicting ends of two or more people, it may also possibly be caused by the conflicting ends of the same individual. If we recall MacCallum's formula as well, we could see that the negative sense ignores the range Z, which deals with the aspects of the driver's freedom *towards* fulfilling either of his two ends: going to tobacconist or going to the appointment. This is a reflection of the negative sense's denial of the normative aspect of freedom that is covered by the elements in range Z. These elements are closely related to the goal of freedom, which the negative view avoids specifying.

One salient perspective that the proponents of negative sense often adopt is the view that "whether a person has or lacks freedom is something that is empirically verifiable, and purely descriptive; it is not related to the various subjective uses of that freedom." (Silier, 2005: 134). This perspective is incomplete in the sense that it does not take into account the agent's goals, which signify the normative realm of freedom. For, to find out what counts as a constraint on the individual's freedom, it is necessary to take into account the particular goals of the agent. Furthermore, as the different individuals' goals show difference, the constraints on these goals diverge as well. The same element can constitute a constraint on one person's freedom, but it might not be a constraint on another's. The intentionality of freedom is much to the point in this case. Silier analyses this through the example of a climber and a

photographer. This is actually a reflection of the claim that whereas the extent of one's freedom is influenced by the actions of other individuals, one's realm of freedom is, and should be, shaped by one's own. It is one's own realm, which one can shape according to his goals, plans, and motivations. Thereby, the conceptual schema of the normative aspect of freedom requires us to focus on both interpersonal and intrapersonal elements.

Let us imagine a scenario in which, a rock blocks a path, and it is put there by a competitor to constrain the freedom of the climber, who wants to go to the top of the mountain and it is only this path that leads to the top. It is obvious that this rock does count as a constraint on the climber's freedom. However, when we take into account the photographer, the same rock does not constrain her freedom but actually reinforces it since she was looking for a background element in her image. According to Silier, this shows that "only after we decide what we want to do with our freedom, can we classify things as constraints or as useful means to achieve our purposes" (2005: 134). It is crucial that we could only be in a position to decide what we want *to* do, before we secure that we are free *from* any constraints. In other words, we are teleologically oriented *towards* some ends, but to attain these ends, we must be free *from* any constraint.

One salient implication of the teleological aspect of freedom is the claim that "we should refer to the significance of actions in order to have any notion of a free person and to find out the ways in which one can become freer" (C. Taylor, 2006). This is to mean that, if we ignore this teleological aspect of human existence, then we would not be able to analyse which things constitute a constraint on one's actions. Thus, we can argue that MacCallum's analysis is not merely descriptive, but it also contains a "subliminal normative message" (Flikschuh, 2007: 55). This subliminal message translates one's ends into the elements *towards* which an individual's freedom is directed. The liberation towards one's ends is perfectly described by MacCallum's formula in the sense that "in cases where X is not free *from* Y *to* do/become Z, he should be rendered free *from* Y, thereby enabling him *to* do/become Z" (Flikschuh, 2007: 55). Therefore, the climber should be rendered free *from* the rock *towards* becoming the titleholder who arrives at the top of the mountain first. In this case, it is an external constraint that causes the climber's unfreedom.

If we recall the smoking driver in Carter's example, we could consider the driver unfree anyway if there were a road-block to the avenues that lead to the appointment place. In this case, it is also an external constraint that causes the driver's unfreedom. However, even

though there were no road-blocks or any other external constraint, the driver should still be rendered free from the heteronomy between his desires. This heteronomy is between his desire to go to the tobacconist in order to fulfil his operational desire to get nicotine, which belongs to the realm of episodic needs, and his structural desire to go the appointment in order to fulfil his future plans, which belongs to realm of diachronic needs. Thus, in this case, it is an internal constraint that restrains the driver's freedom. This shows that the task of self-control, required by the positive sense, involves seeking "the appropriate balance between constraint and liberty" – between self-expression and self-direction (Schechtman, 2004: 426). Therefore, it is reasonable to defend the view that MacCallum's triadic analysis of freedom is effective at covering both externality and internality of freedom, while doing justice to the normative aspect of one's freedom. It also shows that the positive sense of freedom is broader than the negative sense in terms of successfully assessing the extent of one's freedom.

One salient objection the defenders of negative sense might have to this portrayal is the claim that if there were no road-blocks or any other external constraint, then why would going to the appointment make the driver free rather than going to the tobacconist? This is a valid question that needs attention. One possible answer to this may be one's need to *give priority* to some actions over others. This answer is closely related to the elements in the range Z. For, the concept of freedom is "deployed against a background understanding that certain goals and activities are more significant than others" (Silier, 2005: 34). Thereby, the issue of freedom *towards* doing what becomes a central element in making discriminations between some of our goals. For this reason, it is reasonable to claim that freedom is a value-laden concept that has both interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects.

The normative feature of freedom reminds us of another central question Berlin asks in the case of attaining freedom: 'who is the source of control or interference that can determine someone to do, or be, this rather than that'? The normative feature of freedom and the need to respond to this question require thinking in terms of a positive sense of freedom. Thereby, Berlin reasonably argues that this question falls into the realm of the positive sense. However, defenders of negative sense would still ask 'what makes the driver free if he chooses to go to the appointment'? Is it simply a desire satisfaction? For, "if we take the goal of freedom as the satisfaction of arbitrary desires then we face the paradox of the contented slave" (Silier, 2005: 134). This is tantamount to conceiving freedom as doing what one desires. However, neither the defenders of the negative sense nor the advocates of positive sense would accept that. For,

the freedom to do something is quite a different notion than being able to do something. The conventional interchangeable usage of *being free* and *being able to* seems to mistake possessing the power to do a particular thing with rendering oneself free from impediments in the way of doing it (Cranston, 1953: 26). However, being free does not merely denote “the sense of being able to do” what one chooses to do in the *absence* of external obstacles, but also it expresses “the sense of not being determined to choose what one chooses by causes outside one’s control” with the *presence* of certain control mechanisms (Flikschuh, 2007: 35). Therefore, what renders the driver free when he chooses to go to the appointment is his exercise of control over conflicting desires in order to make discriminations among his ends in a proper sense.

Apart from the usage of absence/presence vocabulary, another lexical evidence has been used to support the need to refer some sort of control mechanism. For, the proponents of positive sense argue that “it is instructive to note a usage of freedom, cited by the Oxford English Dictionary, as ‘the condition of being able to....’, where freedom is conceptually tied up with ability in the sense that absence of impediments is enabling” (Simhony, 1993: 42). This is not to equate being free to being able to, rather it serves to demonstrate that being free is more than being able to do whatever one wants. Moreover, it has been argued that “the capacities relevant to freedom must involve some self-awareness, moral discrimination and self-control, otherwise their exercise could not amount to freedom in the sense of self-direction” (C. Taylor, 2001: 206). On the contrary, a pure opportunity concept takes ‘causes outside one’s control’ as only external. Once one is rendered free from the external obstacles that determine what one chooses, there remains an elbow room, in which one is free to do what one wants. One possible reason behind this perspective might be the ambiguity about the word outside. However, ‘causes outside one’s control’ can also be internal if one takes into account the conflict of one’s own desires and the need to make proper discriminations among them.

The sense of the word ‘proper’ constitutes one possible source of problem for the proponents of the positive sense. How one should make proper discriminations between conflicting desires? For, if we take the goal of freedom as rational self-direction, then we could fall into the trap of absolutism. Such a perspective would argue that going to the appointment is the only right choice, and only choosing to go for this right option can make the driver free. This is actually what Berlin argues against, and it is what one gets when self-direction is combined with rationalism and absolutism. For when self-direction is combined with rationalism and absolutism, individuals feel they are provided with a final solution to shape

their life. However, “since no final solution is in principle ever going to harmonize the different aims that human beings have, and since there are numerous incompatible, worthwhile ways of living, a combination of negative and positive freedom is a precondition of a satisfactory life” (Warburton, 2001: 19). Thus, to avoid reducing freedom to arbitrary desire-satisfaction, simply falling into a trap of absolutism is not the proper answer.

On the contrary, the ideal of autonomy could be proposed as the proper answer that covers both categories of freedom, namely the absence and the presence vocabulary. For, conceptually, if exercising control over conflicting desires is based on autonomy, and “if autonomy is, at bottom, being the author of one's own world without being subject to the will of others (being one's own master)”, then one could reasonably argue that this positive sense entails the negative sense of freedom as well since one's not being subjected to the will of others denotes the absence of coercive interference, which would undermine one's autonomy (Simhony, 1993: 48). Furthermore, one does not need to be free *from* all desires to be free *towards* fulfilling one's ends. Rather, it is the heteronomy of the desires and the imbalance between one's desires and ends, *from* which one should be rendered free.

Another salient implication of value-ladenness of one's freedom is the relation between the actions and values of the individual. Such a relation requires the harmony of the self, in the Platonic sense that “the free agent is someone who translates his values into action” (Silier, 2005: 72). The ideal of autonomy is required in this translation in the sense that one becomes the director of his life. On the contrary, the defenders of negative sense argue that “it is possible to distinguish the fact of freedom from its value in the sense that one can distinguish analytically between feeling free and being free” (Flikschuh, 2007: 100). From this perspective an individual, who exercises self-direction, is not freer than an individual, who follows the rule of arbitrary desire. For, one can analytically distinguish the former as just feeling freer than the latter since he satisfies the desires that he values more. The distinction between feeling free and being free relies on the equation of desire satisfaction and freedom to do things, which is a mistake.

The defenders of negative freedom can be accused of making the mistake of viewing positive freedom as if its defenders were equating desire satisfaction to the extent of freedom. Harmonizing one's ends, and balancing one's desires and one's ends is not equal to merely satisfying particular desires. Nor would following “a final solution” dictated to the individual by any of the absolutist conceptions – described in the first chapter as grand narratives that

hold a Hegelian historical world-view – harmonize one’s divergent ends. Needless to say that in such a case a person will be driven in his life, which is a condition of unfreedom, instead of being the driver in terms of directing his life. However, in the positive sense of freedom “the life of the autonomous person consists of pursuits freely chosen from various alternatives which were open to him, indeed, the ideal is connected with the creation of new values and reasons” (Flikschuh, 2007: 152). In other words, an individual is free *towards* acting in some way only if he is also free not to act in the same way in the sense that he is free from any constraint to act in a particular way; this signifies the existence of another reasonable choice as the first condition of free action (Silier, 2005: 60). This is the point where a rational positive conception, which Berlin criticises, and an authentic self-directional positive conception diverge, which Berlin’s criticisms are not able to discredit. For, it is the dominance of narrow and parochial horizons of value that leads Berlin to scepticism about positive liberty (Christman, 2005: 81). An authentic self-direction, on the contrary, denies any link between the liberty of an individual and having a narrow range of avenues.

Furthermore, it is the integrative will that sustains a balance between one’s desires and ends. An authentic self-direction depends on this balance. It is different from the rational self-direction, which Berlin criticises, in terms of leaving individuals more than one particular way of acting, each depending on the individual’s narrative, of which they are the authors. It is the *presence* of a sense of direction, a sense of control over one’s options, one’s desires that makes the individual free. In the case of the driver, it is his control over his desire to smoke, his direction *of* himself *towards* going to the appointment that makes him free. This brings us to Charles Taylor’s doctrine of positive freedom which “is concerned with a view of freedom which involves essentially the exercising of control over one’s life” (C. Taylor, 2006: 144). This is the third extensional layer of the distinction between two senses of freedom: freedom as an opportunity and freedom as an exercise concept.

#### *III.B.4. Freedom as Opportunity vs. Freedom as Exercise*

Analysing freedom as an opportunity and exercise concept serves to illuminate the relation between being free and conceiving life as a narrative in terms of attributing meaning to being free and being mortal. In other words, Charles Taylor’s analysis is significant in revealing the reason why we value freedom while being aware of our mortality. This relation is hinged on the teleological, normative feature of freedom, thereby the role played by the internal and external features of freedom in having an authentic life. Whereas viewing freedom as an

opportunity concept is usually defended by the negative theoreticians, conceiving freedom as an exercise concept is a position the proponents of the positive sense often adopt. In that sense, it is also an extension of the absence/presence vocabulary. For, according to Charles Taylor the positive sense of freedom is an exercise concept, in terms of signifying the effectiveness of the individual in determining the proper shape of one's life, through the *presence* of exercising control over one's ends; whereas freedom as an opportunity concept consists in just the *absence* of obstacles, in the sense that it relies on a pure negative conception where being free is "a matter of what the individual can do, of what it is *open* to the individual to do", whether or not the individual does anything to *exercise* these options (C. Taylor, 2001: 205). Therefore, taking freedom as an opportunity concept is tantamount to passivising the individual.

Charles Taylor's further emphasis on the active involvement of the individual in viewing freedom as an exercise concept is significant in terms of revealing the relation between having an authentic life and being free. For, making a distinction between the opportunity and the exercise aspect is a function of the claim that the meaning of freedom "supervenes on a life properly ordered around the right stuff" (Seachris, 2013: 4). In Taylor's analysis, a full account of being free is indexed to having an authentic life, which requires seeking the right momentum between the intrapersonal and interpersonal elements of freedom.

One potential source of tension between different conceptions of freedom is the question of 'when does an obstacle turn into a constraint on one's freedom?' Particularly for Charles Taylor's analysis, the question seeks an answer to 'what does constitute a constraint on ordering properly one's life around the right stuff?' For, Taylor's analysis focuses on the interpersonal and intrapersonal elements in one's striving to *properly* order her life around the things one finds worth pursuing. It is again the case that what is truly at issue in the quarrel between Taylor's "opportunity" concept and "exercise" concept is not a disagreement about liberty but one about constraint (Nelson, 2005: 64). For, the opportunity concept does not take into account any internal factor as possible constraints on one's freedom in their fundamental life project. According to Taylor, ignoring the internality of freedom allows one to say that "freedom is being able to do what you want, where what you want is unproblematically understood as what the agent can identify as his desires" (2001: 206). The sense of using the word 'unproblematically' is quite crucial in acknowledging that there are some intrapersonal and interpersonal elements influencing one's desires, around which one strives to order one's life.

The opportunity concept does not take into account the authenticity of one's desires, ignoring which leads to deny the relevance of exercising control over one's ends. On the contrary, conceiving freedom as an exercise concept requires making discriminations among motivations in the sense that if being free is indexed to the exercise of certain capacities, then blocking or unfulfilling these capacities means not being free, or being less free (C. Taylor, 2001: 2006). Internality of the obstacles have been discussed above, however, there is one more salient implication of signifying the authenticity of desires that need further analysis: namely conceiving the individual as an active element in one's own conduct.

One salient position the proponents of negative sense might often adopt against viewing the individual as an active element is the assumption that such a perspective is necessarily related to a certain metaphysical stance that makes a distinction between your real goals and your real intentions. This is due to the usage of such a vocabulary by the defenders of positive sense when they say that for self-direction, one has to be able to do what one really wants, or to follow one's real will, or to fulfil the desires of one's own true self (C. Taylor, 2001: 207). Although the usage of the word 'real' is problematic, and although it is to Berlin's and other advocates of the negative conception of freedom credit, conceiving freedom as an exercise concept, which is an extension of the positive sense of freedom, does not necessarily assume a divided self as has been argued above unless it has been combined with a particular metaphysical dedication i.e. rationalism, absolutism. However, one certain element that is necessarily assumed in the exercise concept is the presence of authentic desires, which lead to view life as an authorial project.

Viewing life as an authorial project, in particular assuming this view as a necessary element for being free, demonstrates how the positive sense is broader than the negative sense. For, having control over the opportunities "transforms formal freedom into effective freedom" (Machlup, 1969: 125). This control presupposes the individual's active self-direction in one's authorial project. For, "this effective self-direction requires that the individual be able to foresee some of the conditions of his/her environment and adhere to a plan of action" (Hayek, 2006: 89). Unlike the opportunity conception, which deals with only the opportunities in one's environment as if freedom were something that is given, the exercise conception, in this particular way, conceives the individual as an active element in the formation of his/her own freedom. The proponents of the negative sense oppose this on the grounds that "freedom is not a property, but a relation: not something that one happens to possess or stumble across like a



chest of gold, it is a relation between agents” (Kristjánsson, 1996: 11). As a matter of fact, the defenders of the positive sense who view freedom as an exercise concept do not deny that it is a relation between agents, but according to them some intrapersonal features of the individual, whose freedom is in question, are also significant to being free.

One salient reason behind the emphasis on the intrapersonal features in the exercise conception is the intentionality of freedom. For, the exercise conception indexes being free to not merely the range of options as it is the case with the opportunity conception, but also relates being free to “whether one can expect to shape his course of action in accordance with his present intentions, or whether somebody else has the power so to manipulate the conditions as to make him act according to that person’s will rather than his own” (Hayek, 1960: 13). Thereby, the capacity to form and pursue one’s own intentions is a necessary condition for being free in an authorial project. Furthermore, other individuals are also co-authors in one’s authorial project in terms of contributing to/inhibiting the project.

We become full, self-conscious human beings through appropriating to ourselves a full range of languages of expression. Language must be here understood in the broadest sense of the word: it refers to all means of expression with which we define our identity, including the languages of love, the gesture and art. These languages are a social product and are acquired through interaction with others. The acquisition of a language and the definition of identity continue throughout life and always take place in dialogue with what George Herbert Mead called significant others (Blokland, 1997: 63).

The co-authorship is inhibitory if the co-authors try to play the part of the main author. However, the authorship can also be damaged by the author’s own conduct. For, the individual, who should be the author of her own life, is unfree when in her actions she is motivated “by anxieties, by non-authentic, internalised conventions, by a false-consciousness, by all those motivations which ultimately work against the basic goals which she strives after in her life and which frustrate the realisation of her identity”; moreover “they are motives which do not fit within the narrative of our life and can even threaten the continuity of this story” (Blokland, 1997: 61). If individuals do not play an active role in this narrative, then their stories are written mostly by the co-authors according to the conventional demands of society. This does not mean to assume a solipsistic account of freedom based on authenticity. For, the individual can define her identity “only against the background of things that matter for her”, and to bracket out “history, nature, society, the demands of solidarity, everything but what she finds in herself, would be to eliminate all candidates for what matters... Thereby, authenticity is not the enemy

of demands that emanate from beyond the self, it supposes such demands” (C. Taylor, 1991: 40). One crucial element while the individual is sustaining authenticity and others co-authoring one’s project is the teleological feature of freedom. For, the line where the co-authorship becomes the main authorship is a bit vague. Moreover, the realm of freedom is about having one’s own purposes and fulfilling these ends in an authentic way.

Our attributions of freedom make sense against a background sense of more and less significant purposes, for the question of freedom/unfreedom is bound up with the frustration/fulfilment of our purposes. Further, our significant purposes can be frustrated by our own desires, and where these are sufficiently based on misappreciation we consider them as inauthentic. A man’s freedom therefore can be hemmed in by internal, motivational obstacles, as well as external ones. A man who is driven by spite to jeopardize his most important relationships, in spite of himself, as it were, or who is prevented by unreasoning fear from taking up the career he truly wants, is not really made more free if one lifts the external obstacles to his venting his spite or acting on his fear. (C. Taylor, 2001: 216)

If we recall the scenario in which Desmond’s goal to study archaeology conflicts with his desire to go on holiday, then we would be able to see how the authenticity is related to the freedom. Although the desire to go on to the dream holiday is Desmond’s own desire, choosing that option would not constitute an authentic choice, since this would frustrate Desmond’s basic goal to study archaeology, which has a more fundamental place in his narrative than enjoying the holiday in diachronic terms. His father, who can be seen as belonging to the significant others in his narrative, claims to be the main author by attempting to impose studying medicine on Desmond. Moreover, by offering to pay for the holiday, he seems to manipulate the conditions as to make him act according to his own will rather than Desmond’s. If Desmond decides to misappreciate his goal to study archaeology and chooses to go on holiday, then this choice becomes inauthentic as well in terms of letting someone else to manipulate your own conduct. Thereby, making discriminations among one’s own purposes makes the individual an active element in his freedom *towards* fulfilling his authentic desires by exercising control over his opportunities while being free *from* any constraints, whether they be internal or external.

However, in the light of Desmond’s knowledge that he is going to die at some point, and that death is his own-most possibility, there remains some relevant questions such as: would choosing to study archaeology be an authentic choice that makes him free? What is the role that this infallible knowledge about his mortality plays in his choice to study, which he takes to be a fundamental goal in his life-project? This is the micro-level reflection of the question of how would the awareness of the fact that every individual will die have a bearing

upon an individual's freedom? On the one hand, would death be an external limit to one's freedom in the senses that having an indefinitely long life-span means a free life? On the other hand, since death manifests itself as an eventuality – as an implication of one's mortality – which reveals the authentic mode of being, would the internalization of death lead the individual to freedom towards death or should that individual need to be rendered from an inauthentic fear of death? In the next section, I will attempt to analyse the role that one's awareness of mortality plays in one's narrative.

## CHAPTER IV

### IV. DEATH AS A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF CONSTRAINT ON ONE'S PROJECT(S)

A project is a constellation of files ordered around a fundamental goal, with each file serving a particular end to fulfil the fundamental goal of the project, which is to be exercised over a period of time according to a plan. Marked by mortality, every individual strives to leave a trace through shaping their life as a project. For many this might be centred on a career, for some the centrality might be found in art, science or sports, and for others it might be just having a happy family. For each track, there is an option-pool from which the individual has to choose one or some, but not each and every option. In this regard, the individual is in-between many options. The mark of mortality, however, discloses two significant events: at the beginning birth, and at the end death. One salient implication of these events is the feeling of in-between-ness during the course of one's existence. In this section, I will demonstrate how this status of being in-between marks one's freedom in their actions. In other words, I will attempt to provide an answer to the question: 'how do the two senses of in-between-ness shape one's freedom?'

Two points in the description above are relevant to consider death as a potential source of constraint on one's life-project: the multiplicity of files and goals, namely the range of options that serve to realise the goals and the time-span over which these options are realised. If we conceive life as a fundamental project of the individual, death might be viewed as a potential source of constraint on one's project in the sense that the period of time is limited by the event of death, which is not a part of the project, thereby an external limit on exercising or accomplishing the project. However, if we view death as a part of the project, which is to mean coming to terms with death and internalising it, then death might be considered as an internal obstacle to one's project in the sense that the anxiety caused by it may lead to a lack of control over one's possibilities when the internalisation is inauthentic. Thereby, there might be two strategies to deal with death as a limit: removing the limit, which means that there will be no limitation to one's options in time whatsoever (the *absence* of death as a solution to the temporal finitude) or exercising control over the finitude of possibilities through organizing the very personal set of priorities along with the eventuality of death (thinking in narrative terms as a solution to the finitude of possibilities due to the *presence* of death, internalizing death authentically).

Although the *absence* of death might be viewed as a guarantor of exploring each and every file to fulfil one particular project or all the multiplicity of projects, the *presence* of death can also be viewed as a structural element enabling the individual to distinguish temporary files from essential ones since one will realise that he/she does not have all the time to explore each and every file. In other words, “death structures the cares, concerns and projects of human life and without it there would be no impetus for these cares, concerns and projects” (James, 2009: 58). For, as has been argued above, it is the need to give *priority* to some possibilities over others in the temporal plane that is a necessary condition for freedom and individuality. Moreover, only along with the presence of death as a structural limit, “what one is compelled to do is to determine which life-options are the important, essential ones, and which are the trivial distractions, the accidental time wasters, as Heidegger calls them, which life thrusts one’s way” (Young, 2003: 118). The options that are considered to be time wasters, belong to the temporary files of one’s project in a mortal life.

Furthermore, if one cannot distinguish between the temporary files as trivial distractions, and the essential files as important ones, then one’s fundamental project – in other words one’s life – will be wasted. Asking for the absence of death in order to be free to explore each and every option, in the sense that one is enabled to have an infinite pool of realisable opportunities, is a craving for immortality. Wasting one’s life with the accidental options is not compatible with this yearning, since a wasted life would be itself a temporary file and it would lose the opportunity to be immortal, at least in a very loose sense, in terms of being worth being remembered. On the contrary, an authentic life would not be a wasted one since the term presumes “the ability to make a distinction between the essential and irrelevant life-options” (Young, 200: 118). However, one can argue that in an indefinitely long life-span, immortality in the strictest sense, each and every option is relevant and essential since it is the presence of death that brings the necessity to make a distinction. Thus, no option can be seen as time-wasters in an indefinitely long life-span.

Along these lines, imagine a person “who spends day after day, or night after night, in front of a television set, drinking beer and watching situation comedies” and on that grounds “whose life is lived in hazy passivity, a life lived at a not unpleasant level of consciousness, but unconnected to anyone or anything, going nowhere, achieving nothing” (Wolf, 2013: 306). Or imagine “someone counting blades of grass, or reading and rereading the phone book, or, worse, torturing people for fun” (Seachris, 2013: 12). On the one hand, these images do not

seem to represent worth realizing or meaningful projects. On the other hand, it is a reflection of the argument that in general, pursuing any single-minded, vacuous, and unbalanced activity will prove to be a not-worth-realizing project (Fischer, 2013: 408). The scarcity of time and opportunity is one structuring and limiting element in pursuing projects, and yet single-mindedness and vacuousness are still limiting elements as well. Thereby, singularity of the chosen and pursued projects is another constraint on one's freedom on the face of having the opportunity to have all the multiplicity of the options even though they are present. Therefore, in addition to the capacity to explore all the multiplicity of the options, exercising this capacity in a balanced, purpose-filled way is also significant to have an authentic, and thereby free, life.

Death as a mere event poses a threat to the multiplicity of the options at one's disposal in terms of limiting one's temporal horizon. It is not the sole threat to one's freedom in shaping their fundamental life-project since its *absence* does not guarantee a multiplicity of pursuits. However, the presence of death as an external limit is argued to be one source to reflect upon the multiplicity within the finite realm of temporality. This requires further discussions concerning the following questions: Could an immortal life be authentic? Would an immortal life be necessarily freer than a mortal life? The replies to these questions will illuminate the extent to which death as an external event constrains one's freedom in shaping one's life-project since it will compare the degrees of freedom one could have in a mortal and immortal life-span.

## **IV.A. Death as an External Limit: An Analysis in the Negative Sense**

### *IV.A.1. Being-In-Between: Birth and Death as External Limits*

Our existence is marked by a knowledge of mortality and finitude. This knowledge depends on two external events, in the sense that the externality of these events suggests a lack of control on the individual's part. In this regard, it suggests a mode of being-in-between for the individual's existence, both in terms of temporality and possibility. For, since an individual's life is framed by "a knowledge of always being situated somewhere along a trajectory running from birth to death", the individual invests "the ways in which he/she travels along this trajectory with meaning" (Brannmark, 2003: 333). This holds true even for the day-to-day interactions of the individual, as Heidegger argues that "everydayness is, after all, precisely the being between birth and death" (2010: 223). The uniqueness of human existence is deeply rooted in this in-between-ness; being aware of its mortality, finitude of its possibilities and its

temporal finitude yet still having the desire of having an infinite range of opportunities based on an unlimited temporality.

The feeling of opportunity cost is the major implication of being-in-between different options, since the individual invests the time at her disposal to have a sense of meaningfulness during her journey. Economists usually refer to the term “opportunity cost” to highlight “the value of next-highest-valued alternative use of that resource” (Henderson, 2008). In the case of an economic interaction, the resource is monetary. However, in the case of an individual’s day-to-day interactions it is temporal. Nozick defends the view that “economists speak of the opportunity cost of something as the value of the best alternative forgone for it; for adults, strongly, the opportunity cost of our lives appears us to be the value of all the forgone alternatives summed together, not merely of the best other one” (2002: 82). The craving for an indefinitely long life-span is a function of having that feeling of opportunity cost, and it is seen as a solution to be rendered free from the mode of being-in-between. From a Heideggerian point of view, this is the particular problematic understanding, which claims that human existence “traverses the time-span allotted to it between the two boundaries in such a way that it is real only in the now and hops, so to speak, through the succession of nows of its time” (Heidegger, 2010: 356). This is tantamount to saying that when all the possibilities were yet still before the individual, to that individual it felt as if she would do them all (Nozick, 2002: 82). In the terms of an indefinitely long temporality, instead of dealing with the terms of an indefinite and inevitable future event of death, the notion of opportunity cost is transformed into an opportunity-pool in the sense that the feeling of being-in-between leaves its place to the sense of being-onwards. However, in the realm of mortality “we achieve meaning by affirming our limits and living with purpose within them or by defining ourselves in terms of what we exclude and reject, the possibilities we choose not to encompass” (Nozick, 2002: 82). Thereby, the sense of being in-between, both in terms of temporality and also possibility, is the source of our freedom. For, it is the parameter that makes the multiplicity of choices, and the need to choose the authentic options possible.

Along these lines, Kierkegaard puts the same idea forward with an existential tune by arguing that “the self is composed of infinitude and finitude”, which requires a synthesis in the sense that “the self is a relation that, even though it is derived, relates itself to itself, which is freedom” (Kierkegaard, 1983: 29). One salient implication of this argument is that “the self is freedom, but freedom is the dialectical aspect of the categories of necessity and possibility”

(Kierkegaard, 1983: 29). Although, in this sense being-in-between is the source of individual freedom, two elements that build up the mode of in-between-ness also provide a limit to the individual's freedom. For, although they remain external to human existence as events, the former constitutes the basis for many parameters that remain belonging to the individual during the course of existence (the things an individual cannot choose or change), and the latter puts "an end to the temporal existence as the individual experiences it here and now, with all of its possibilities, failures, limits and expectations" (Calcagno, 2007: 61). Individuals come to this life with a lot of certain determinants (birthday, gender, family, origin etc.) but they pass away by an ambiguous determinant, which is death. In this sense the freedom an individual has is "the freedom to add to the given past" (Ginet, 1990; Fischer, 2009: 152), and moreover it is a freedom until one's past is fixed by the event of death.

A past event, birth, together with an event of future, death, defines the limits of one's freedom in its own terms. In other words, we start to die by an exact date but the inevitable end of this process (the event of death) is not exactly known temporally. For this reason, just from the start, the life of individual is actually being-in-between: between birth and death. Moreover, "the very act of freedom is the assumption and creation of finitude, [where] ... to be finite is in fact to choose oneself – that is to make known to oneself, what one is by projecting oneself toward one possible to the exclusion of others" (Sartre, 2003: 567). Regarding this, a proper phenomenological interpretation of death relies on "the interplay of fullness/plenitude of being and nothingness" (Calcagno, 2007: 60). The plenitude of opportunities leads to a feeling of being-in-between, which is deeply rooted in the two external events, birth and death, that structure a mode of being-in-between in temporal senses. From a determined start towards an empirically certain and yet still temporally uncertain end, the time in-between is called life, which is essentially structured finite but also comprises infinite possible versions of life to be actualised through the determination of the individual via free choices.

These two external events have been termed '*facticity*' by Sartre, since birth is laden with certain parameters such as gender, family, language, origin and death is laden with the certainty and fixity it brings with it. The term '*facticity*' is essential to see how these two external events function both as a source of the individual's freedom and at the same time as a limit to this freedom. For, Sartre argues that "without facticity freedom would not exist – as a power of annihilation and of choice – and without freedom facticity would not be discovered and would have no meaning" (2003: 517). In this sense, the *substance* of human being is viewed



as *existence*, thereby, via the presence of freedom and power to negate facticity during the course of one's life in-between the two external events, human life becomes an essenced existence (Heidegger, 2011: 300). For, in each and every moment during the course of this in-between-ness the individual has "the inalienable power to choose to become a different kind of person, to choose for herself a new essence" (Young, 2003: 132). Moreover, one's essence is defined and shaped by their facticity, heritage, in which their values (according to which one is guided through in-between plenitude of options) are not freely chosen but represent something to which one finds herself already committed as she is born into her native culture, however till to the infinitesimal event of death one is free to shape this heritage to become her own heritage, which is fixed after one's death (Young, 158). Thereby, these two events enable and limit two aspects of an individual's life, those when combined together represent an essenced existence: birth, on the one hand, constituting the parameters of facticity that represent the essence and, death, on the other, constituting a limit to the existence.

One salient justification for taking birth and death as external life events is the extent, if any, to which the individual can exercise control over these. An individual's birth, which remarks the beginning of one's history, "the act through which that individual was conceived belongs more to the history of others" – in this case to that individual's parents – than to that individual (Ricoeur, 1992: 160). This supports the view that "the existence of every individual is not just one in which she is condemned to die without choice, but it is also one into which she is born, also without choice" (MacAvoy, 1996: 74). Birth happens to a person independent of their will, which is a significant tool for one's freedom in terms of denying dependency on others. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that since the choice to begin to exist is out of an individual's own control, birth is an external event.

For the same reasons death is also viewed as an external event since it is a source of impotency and dependency, which can be inferred from the convention that although the individual leaves a last will and testament as a symbol of one last autonomous act, in "disposing of one's assets and imposing one's intent on the living, one depends radically on others to see that those wishes are carried out" (Connell, 2011: 24). Along these lines, Sartre points to another implication of impotency by arguing that "death is a pure fact as is birth, it comes to us from outside, and it transforms us into the outside" (2003: 566). Death as a limit is external since "at that infinitesimal instant of my death, I shall be more than my past", this means that after that infinitesimal instant my life will be fixed; in this sense "death changes life into destiny"

(Sartre, 2003: 138). With the presence of the event of death, the individual loses control over his project, his narrative. For, after the inevitable and irreversible event of death one's past is fixed without a future event, thus any possibility to change its meaning. This is also one possible reason why philosophers paid more attention to death rather than birth, although it is the sense of being-in-between that provides a basis for the possibility of freedom.

Virginia Held approaches this reasoning from a different framework by stating that "death has received more philosophical attention because it is perceived to be a distinctly human phenomenon, whereas birth is perceived to be a merely natural occurrence" (1989: 363). For, she holds – in the defence of her feminist evaluation of birth and death – the view that birth also "should be understood to be central to whatever is thought to be distinctively human and that the tradition of describing birth as a natural event has served the normative purpose of discounting the value of women's experiences and activities" (1989: 363). Although I find her statement plausible in the sense that the tradition served particular normative purposes, I do not agree that the focus on death is deeply rooted in these normative purposes. Rather, I argue that it is the irreversibility of the meaning of one's life after the event of death that attracted the attention of the philosophers from ancient to post-modern discourse. What is outstanding in an individual's life is the possibilities and potentiality of the individual based on these possibilities. However, in one of these future possibilities, there is no more potentiality-of-being but nothingness and a fixity, in the sense that no-longer-being-able-to-be-in-this-world and no-longer-being-able-to-change-this-world. That is the reason why death is taken to be a fundamental structure of human existence.

Another salient reason for the attention death received from the philosophers with regards to expressing the significance of external limits in the mode of being-in-between is the deeply rooted in the individual's freedom and conceiving one's life as a project in that respect. For, Sartre argues that "every project of freedom is an open project, not a closed project, and moreover every action is comprehensible as [a file of this] project of oneself toward a possible" (2003: 482, 528). This is tantamount to saying that after each decision-making situation, the individual's actions modify the nature of the project, in the sense that either the project moves forwards by the achievement of that particular file or becomes a different project open to modification. Yet, there has to be a surrounding fundamental project to speak of any modification to the project.

Human reality can only modify its relation with being. For man to put a particular existent out of circuit is to put himself out of circuit in relation to that existent. In this case he is not subject to it; he is out of reach; it cannot act on him, for he has retired beyond a nothingness. Descartes following the Stoics has given a name to this possibility which human reality has to secrete a nothingness which isolates it - it is freedom. What is human freedom if through it nothingness comes into the world? (Sartre, 2003: 48)

Being-in-between comes into the picture in depicting one's freedom in modifying one's project by particular choices. For, "the external limits of the situation become a situation-limit, death becomes a situation limit on condition that it be taken as an event of life even though it points toward a world where my presence and my life are no longer realised" (Sartre, 2003: 551). We can reasonably argue that death is an external limit to one's freedom in their project as a situation limit, when the condition above is incorporated into Sartre's claim that "death is the final phenomenon of life and is still life, [moreover the phenomenon] of one's personal life which makes of that life a unique life – that is a life that does not begin again, a life in which one never recovers his stroke" (2003: 523). Thereby, the event of death can be taken to be a fundamental *limiting* structure of human existence since nothing can be modified by individuals after their death. What is a limiting structure on one's freedom if not death?

#### *IV.A.2. Elasticity of Death's Timing*

Due to the temporally indefinite feature of death, which has been discussed in detail in the second chapter, the limits drawn by the event of death are elastic. When viewed through the lenses of 'nows of the time', death becomes phenomenologically opaque, and generates a sense of living forever. Through these lenses, "time, which seems to move, but only in one direction and at no assignable rate, and is paradoxical, to be sure, but no declaration of its unreality can alter the fact that we feel it" (R. Taylor, 2013: 296). A first-person phenomenological perspective needs to take into account feelings, desires and anxieties of individuals, and in the same way, no declaration that views death as phenomenologically opaque can alter the fact that the elasticity of its timing generates some feelings and anxieties on the individual. For, "with each setting sun we see our lives shortened, see the vents that we felt so lively just moments ago begin receding into a fading past, gone forever" (R. Taylor, 2013: 296). This is a simple, valid and sound knowledge that springs from the awareness of one's finitude in temporal terms.

On the contrary, Sartre defends the view that an individual cannot say that the minute which is passing is bringing death closer to that individual although to his opponents' credit he concedes the view that it is true that death is coming to the individual if he considers very

broadly that his life is limited (2003: 557). This is to argue that the limits death sets on life are elastic. An individual may die at the age of ninety-nine, or she may die five minutes later at the age of twenty-eight. Sartre defends the view that this elasticity indicates that an individual cannot know whether the end is coming closer to her or being removed further from her (2003: 557). If we consider the human beings' penchant for choosing to live another day, when they are given the simple choice between living for another day and dying in five minutes, and when this penchant is reinforced with the elasticity of the timing of death and a version of mathematical induction, we come up with the idea of having an indefinitely long life (Nagel, 1986: 224). If the moment we will die were temporally as certain as the moment we were born, the idea of having an indefinitely long life might sound stranger than it does when we think it in terms of the elasticity of death.

One salient reason of craving for immortality is deeply rooted in the elasticity of death's timing and the sense of outstanding files in one's life as a fundamental project. As beings in the pursuit of freedom, in pursuit of modifying one's heritage, human-beings have all the fears of mortals, but all the desires of immortals (Seneca, 1997: 61, La Rochefoucauld, 1959: 100). This is actually something "the majority of the mortals complain bitterly of the spitefulness of nature, because they are born for a very brief span of life and that all save very few find life at an end just when they are getting ready to live" (Seneca, 1997: 59). If the sense of outstanding files were lacking in one's life as a project, then it would lead to a morbid understanding of life, in which there is no reason to make life worth living while it is known that life is but a short-term loan from death (Baumann, 1992: 4). Sartre reckons that this is due to "a considerable difference in quality between death at the limit of old age and sudden death which annihilates us at the prime of life in youth" (2013: 557). The difference between the two is while it is affirming the awareness of the mortality that the individual does when she anticipates the ending event, and in that sense "it is one way among others of choosing finitude and electing our ends on the foundation of finitude", anticipating a sudden death at a young age is affirming the fact that one's life as a project is "an enterprise that is lacking" (Sartre, 2013: 557). The former is the epistemological dimension of death, when it is viewed as a mere external event with the recognition of the elasticity of death's timing. The latter is the ontological dimension of death, which requires an active response from the individual.

Sartre's conception of death highlights the elasticity of the timing of death as a strategy to reply to the ontological dimension of death. By excluding death from one's possibilities in

one's project, the external limit of death is removed further away, since one's project is never complete without death. For, he argues that the external limits of freedom – birth and death as they represent contingent facticity – precisely because they are “external and are interiorized only as unrealisables, [...] will never be either a real obstacle for freedom or a limit suffered; thereby, freedom is total and infinite, which does not mean that it has no limits but that it never encounters them” (2003: 552). However, Sartre seems to contradict his own claim in the notion that ‘the very act of freedom is the assumption and creation of finitude’. For, in his strategy to (re)place the elastic limit of death further away it is not clear how an individual will respond to the feeling of being-in-between the plenitude of options when it is coupled with viewing one's life as a project, an enterprise that is lacking.

It seems to me that his dialectic of viewing death as an external limit chooses to remain silent on the craving to have an indefinitely long life. The dialectic of viewing death as an external limit leads him to defend the unconvincing view that “even if one is temporally indefinite – i.e. without limits – one's life will be nevertheless finite in its very being because it makes itself unique” (Sartre, 2003: 567). One salient reason for stating this claim is to recover the implicit bridge between his conception of death and the craving to have an indefinitely long life, which is required since “what makes a limit a limit always includes knowledge of what is on both sides of it. It is a dialectic of the limit to exist only by being removed” (Gadamer, 1975: 307). For, uniqueness does not necessarily assume finitude. However, the arrangement of a sequence is also a parameter that matters in conferring uniqueness to a constellation of events in life and which is also possible in an indefinitely long life that contains the plenitude of an indefinite number of options. Thereby, the interchangeable usage of uniqueness and finitude is not a valid use. It is reasonable to defend the view that death is an elastic external limit on life, but it is not compatible with the claim that an indefinitely long life would remain finite. For, once the external limit of death is removed one has an indefinitely long life span, which requires a discussion that would provide answers to the following questions: ‘Would an immortal life be necessarily freer than a mortal life’? ‘Could an immortal life be authentic’?

#### *IV.A.3. Indefinitely Long Lives and the Negative Conception of Freedom*

Advocates of the negative conception of freedom might claim that in the case of the absence of death, the mode of in-between-ness, and thereby, the tension between the fears of mortality and desires of immortality would be lost. Thus, each and every possibility could be enabled for the individual and this would increase the number of the options the individual has at her

disposal and, thereby, maximise the range of freedom for her. For, the shortness of life implies also a limited amount of time. However, with the *absence* of death the range of an individual's possibility to act otherwise is also increased. Since the range of any possible modification to one's projects is widened in an indefinitely long life, one's freedom is enriched as a power of annihilation and choice, as a power to negate one's facticity and to shape one's existence through the process of self-making. Therefore, it may seem *prima facie* that freedom of the individual requires the *absence* of death.

On the contrary, those who hold the view that an awareness of mortality is in fact necessary in being free or freer, when freedom is related to achievements in a positive sense, might argue that it is not that individuals have a short life-span, but that they waste a lot of it. For, "life is long enough, and a sufficiently generous amount has been given for the highest achievements if it were all well invested... Life is long if you know how to use it" (Seneca, 2005: 59-60). Thereby, even though there is still an opportunity cost in a limited resource, the nature of investment might leave a realm of enough multitude in a mortal and temporally finite life. Along these lines, as the view can be defended that to recall some certain events from the past that would not be viewed with regret but with joy and success, it can also be strongly stressed that death as a future certainty should be taken into account as a trademark of fulfilment. Therefore, the claim can be strongly defended that free individuals make their life longer by combining all time periods into one. For, "those who forget the past, neglect the present, and fear for the future have a life that is very brief and troubled" (Seneca, 2005: 70). Thus, the planning and management of time is of significance in increasing the possibilities and options regardless of the particular position of death on the personal timeline as an external limit. From this perspective, death seems like a "limit in deriving what significance it has from the role it plays as an ordering function with respect to experiencing being which it limits" (Evra, 1971: 175). Therefore, how an individual relates to the knowledge that death is certain and that it limits life in terms of time, determines the way individuals make use of the time at their disposal.

Although it is reasonable to argue that within the elastic limits of her life, individuals can enjoy a considerable degree of freedom by effectively managing their time, modifying their project and ordering the pool of opportunities according to their priorities; it seems to be gratuitous to defend the view that a longer life, or a life without limits, would not constitute a wider area of opportunities in terms of their realisability in relation to having an unlimited resource in temporal terms. Thereby, this would constitute a wider range of freedom according

to the negative sense of freedom, which focuses on the externality of freedom and takes the number of options at one's disposal as the crucial parameter in measuring the degree of freedom. This second view seems to be what Sartre defends when he states that death is an external event and it can be interiorised only as an unrealizable, [it] will never be "either a real obstacle to freedom or a limit suffered" since encountering death is phenomenologically unrealisable (2003: 552).

The sense in which Sartre views death as an external event leads to a comparison between the limitation of life by death externally and the limited area between any two numbers in mathematics. In such a perspective, any two numbers bound the area between those numbers. However, between these two numbers there is an infinite amount of real numbers. These real numbers never encounter the two natural numbers that bound the area, in which an infinite amount of real numbers exist. It might be a strange coincidence that two numbers are called natural, since two events that limit one's life, and structure the mode of being-in-between, are also natural events, viewed as regularities limiting each possibility in certain ways. Thus, the life of an individual, on the one hand, can be compared to that bounded area, but this time by birth and death. On the other hand, the numbers of the options of the individual can be compared to the infinite amount of opportunities in that bounded area. Along these lines, Sartre concludes that life is not limited by death, but "life is limited by life; and it becomes like the world of Einstein finite but unlimited" (2003: 532).

Advocates of the negative sense of freedom, who defend the view that indefinitely long lives necessarily bring about a wider range of freedom, might reply to this by arguing that, although in each scenario there is an infinite amount of real numbers between the numbers, the area between the number 2 and the number 6 is wider than the area between the number 2 and the number 4. Thereby, they might argue that "similarly, the arithmetical rules that define certain operations, such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division are different for infinite and finite numbers" (Fischer, 2013: 456). Furthermore, "it is clearly a mistake to think of immortal human life along these lines of an anatomical horizontal explosion of ordinary finite human life, keeping the temporal proportions fixed, as it were" (Fischer, 2013: 457). One salient implication of this argument is that, since there is a difference between the arithmetical rules these magnitudes are subjected to, there must also be a qualitative difference between finite and infinite magnitudes, and more significant to our purposes, thus between finite and immortal lives (Fischer, 2013: 456). Thereby, it is the qualitative difference that ensures the

wider range of freedom an indefinitely long life might offer. This is equivalent to saying that an infinite realm will prove to offer a wider range of opportunities than a finite realm. This is due to the qualitative difference that requires different arithmetical rules in terms of measuring the two.

One possible response, the defenders of Sartre might provide, rests on the same assumption that it is not even possible to conceive an indefinitely long human life due to the qualitative difference between mortal and immortal lives. Moreover, having an infinite amount of options might bring a heavy burden of timidity that might in turn be an obstacle to one's freedom. In such a case, there would be a lack of active involvement of the individual in her fundamental projects. That kind of passivity is an obstacle to one's free self-making. In the movie 'The Legend of 1900', (originally, 'La Leggenda del pianista sull'oceano') the echoes of such a response can be heard. The protagonist 1900 (which is actually his date of birth), who was born and had lived all his life in a ship, becomes a known pianist and refuses to leave the ship when he reaches middle-age, at which point the ship no-longer functions to sail and thereby the officials decide to demolish it. In credit to his refusal, he makes a comparison between the ship and the city in terms of finitude and infinitude. The following monologue is his response, in the final scene of the film, to his friend, who tries to convince him to get off the ship before it is demolished:

Believe me. All that city... You just couldn't see an end to it. The end! Please, could you show me where it ends? It was all very fine on that gangway and I was grand, too, in my overcoat. I cut quite a figure and I had no doubts about getting off. No problem. It wasn't what I saw that stopped me. It was what I didn't see. Can you understand that? What I didn't see. In all that sprawling city, there was everything except an end. There was everything. But there wasn't an end. What I couldn't see was where all that came to an end. The end of the world. Take a piano. The keys begin, the keys end. You know there are 88 of them and no-one can tell you differently. They are not infinite, you are infinite. And on those 88 keys the music that you can make is infinite. I like that. That I can live by. But you get me up on that gangway and roll out a keyboard with millions of keys, and that's the truth, there's no end to them, that keyboard is infinite. But if that keyboard is infinite there's no music you can play. You're sitting on the wrong bench. That's God's piano. Christ, did you see the streets? There were thousands of them! How do you choose just one? One woman, one house, one piece of land to call your own, one landscape to look at, one way to die. All that world weighing down on you without you knowing where it ends. Aren't you scared of just breaking apart just thinking about it, the enormity of living in it? I was born on this ship. The world passed me by, but two thousand people at a time. And there were wishes here, but never more than could fit on a ship, between prow and stern. You played out your happiness on a piano that was not infinite. I learned to live that way. Land is a ship too big for



me. It's a woman too beautiful. It's a voyage too long. Perfume too strong. It's music I don't know how to make. I can't get off this ship. At best, I can step off my life. After all, it's as though I never existed. (Tornatore, 1999)

What he argues is that the lack of an end is intimidating since it generates a sense of impotency in the individual. Although defenders of this perspective admit in credit to immortality that having an indefinitely long life actually leads to more opportunities, they oppose the idea that it would mean a freer state. For, the comparison made between the ship and the land represents the comparison that can be made between mortal and immortal lives. The presumed validity of the rationale behind this comparison is deeply rooted in the argument that although there is a difference between the arithmetical rules these magnitudes are subjected to, “they are not totally dissimilar [in the sense that] there are, indeed, sufficient similarities to suggest that the relationship between these sets of rules is one of analogy” (Fischer, 2013: 456). Thus, following the argument presented by the protagonist 1900, it is possible to conceive an indefinitely long life and, yet still, even comprehending it – let alone living in such terms – might generate a feeling of bearing a heavy burden, which would in turn lead to inauthentic choices. It might sound quite interesting that although death as an external event has been proposed to be a source of impotency in the previous section, it follows from the argument above that an absence of death also leads to a feeling of impotency in dealing with the enormity of the range of the options one can realize. For, the sense of the enormity of options an individual faces in an indefinitely long life might cause a feeling of confusion.

However, in the case of the absence of death, the feeling of dependency is also lacking, which is in credit to the claim made in the previous section since a lack of dependency is one necessary element in terms of having a wider range of freedom. For, according to a negative analysis of freedom, as has been argued in the third chapter, the less one is dependent on external elements, the more one is free. Therefore, it is still reasonable to defend the view that death as an external event can constitute some degree of constraint on one’s freedom. Furthermore, one does not need to rely on the terms of finitude in a realm of infinitude, but only depend on them in choosing the authentic options. This requires an analysis of the relationship between having an indefinitely long life and being authentic.

Although the quoted monologue suggests the fact that having an indefinitely long life might be intimidating from a perspective that is structured by finitude in terms of both temporality and possibility, it does not mean that one is not able to be authentic. Indeed, it reinforces the fact that being authentic is not easy in the face of a multiplicity of options. Death

as external event generates an in-between-ness in terms of both temporality and possibility. On the contrary, although the absence of death removes temporal in-between-ness, it reinforces the multiplicity of options into a completely different level, infinity. However, in response to the genius pianist 1900, it is essential to state that in an indefinitely long life, a person's life seems to be more like "a musical theme with variation: the theme is the basic melodic line which reoccurs again and again, [...] but each time new friends, new loves, emergent events and so on confer another variation on the basic theme" (Kundera, 1991: 303-11). To a considerable degree, a person who has an integrative will can exercise the power of modification on those variations: "he/she can conduct the musical unfolding in a manner which is concordant or discordant, harmonious or not harmonious" (MacDonald, 2000: 23). Thus, the music one can conduct in an indefinitely long life is harder to play but it does not need to be discordant. Therefore, it depends on the level of the exercise of control, which is a concern of the positive conception of freedom that I have discussed in the third chapter and will turn back to it in the next section where I will analyse death as an internal constraint on one's freedom. However, the endeavour to be authentic becomes more difficult in an indefinitely long life-span due to the increased magnitude of opportunities.

#### *IV.A.4. The Awareness of Immortality and Freedom*

A major problem with the talk of immortality in general is the variety of ways in which the term gets defined. Overcoming this problem is essential in examining the relationship between having an indefinitely long life and being authentic. Usually, the term 'immortality' is confused with the notion of the will to survive. For, "to seek to remain alive when one's life is threatened, is not the same thing as having an on-going awareness of one's death", which is deeply rooted in the claim that "the fact that we die is the most important fact about us" (May, 2009: 7). Thus, craving for immortality is not the will to survive but it is an inclination towards infinitude. What is implied by the term 'immortality' in this thesis is having an indefinitely long life, in which the most significant fact about one's life is reversed: the fact that one does not die. On the contrary, the opponents of the claim that an indefinitely long life might lead to authentic choices would argue that "the trouble with immortality is its indefiniteness in our lives, the fact that we can never be certain of our own immortality, or of its character as long as one is still engaged in living" (Possen, 2011: 125). Although this is to confirm that death as an event is external, it also claims that any knowledge related to this event remains external to one's epistemological compass.

The claims of externality of the knowledge about the absence of death to living individuals is in contrast to the claim I made above that how individuals relate to the knowledge that death is certain and that it limits the life in terms of time, determines the way individuals make use of the time at their disposal. In fact, the claim of externality is deeply rooted in the statement that “knowing death is only possible in the sense that the individual raises a certain sort of self-reflective question about death” (Walker, 1985: 28). In this sense, the epistemological dimension of death is intended to point out the ontological dimension of death in term of expressing the need to be self-reflective based on this knowledge. The epistemological dimension is derived from the statements that all men are mortal and all mortals die. Along these lines, it is not gratuitous to claim that the knowledge of death is external in the sense that it depends on the syllogism, which bases its propositions on the data coming from others. However, to illuminate the ontological and ethical dimensions of death one needs to go beyond this. One needs to reflect upon oneself to relate this knowledge, certainty of which comes from others’ death. To do this, death should be conceived as an eventuality, which is a fuller account of death, which is the account I will analyse in the next section with a positive analysis of freedom. Thereby, the self-reflection, which is reinforced by the eventuality of death, determines the way individuals make use of the time at their disposal.

Following the claim above, the defenders of the externality of knowledge about the absence of death would continue to argue that in order for our immortality to be a definite fact for us and in order to be subjected to a certain sort of self-reflective question, we need to be definite about it at every moment, but “this is impossible for existing human beings, for whom every moment is a fresh opportunity to wonder whether we are really immortal, whether in our lives so far we have earned an immortal happiness, or whether we are gaining or losing our immortality right now” (Possen, 2011: 125). Perhaps, this is the reason behind Unamuno’s claim that the eternal yearning for immortality is not philosophy but rhetoric, which is what Plato himself said when he took his analysis of immortality of the soul “to be better clothed in legend, or mythology” as he coins his account of immortality as the Myth of Er (Plato, 1921: 38). However, if our certainty concerning the presence of death depends on others, in the format of a syllogism which makes it a definite fact, the knowledge about immortality would also depend on a similar syllogism. If we imagine the scenario in which, for a century no human being dies, in a sense death stops out of nowhere, then the syllogistic conclusion would change in favour of immortality. From the propositions that no immortals die and no human beings die, the conclusion can be derived that all human beings are immortals. Thus, the status of certainty

would remain the same as the certainty of mortality. Furthermore, another legend by Jonathan Swift, in *Gulliver's Travels*, is much to the point in terms of providing an account of immortality, which features definiteness of having an indefinitely long life.

Having an indefinitely long life-span is central to a negative analysis of death as an external event, since immortality will provide the mode of being which is free *from* the *external* limit of death, providing a multitude of *opportunities*. For, these are the three layers of freedom that is deeply rooted in the *absence* vocabulary provided by the negative conception of freedom. The account of Struldbrugs covers these three layers, and moreover, it responds to the accusation of inconceivability of death as an external event.

Although very rarely, a Child happened to be born in a family with a red circular spot in the forehead, directly over the left eyebrow, which was an infallible mark that it should never dye. The spot, as he described, was about the compass of a silver three-pence, but in the course of time grew larger, and changed its colour, for at twelve years old it became green, so continued till five and twenty, then turned to a deep blue, at five and forty it grew coal black, and as large as an English shilling, but never admitted any alteration. He said these births were so rare, that he did not believe there could be above eleven hundred Struldbrugs of both sexes in the whole kingdom, of which he computed about fifty in the metropolis, and among the rest a young girl born about three years ago. That, these productions were not peculiar to any family, but a mere effect of chance, and the children of the Struldbrugs themselves, were equally mortal with the rest of the people (Swift, 2005: 193).

The claim that a person would not be certain of their immortality is fended off with the presence of the red circular spot, which reverses the most significant fact in favour of immortality. This is tantamount to saying that for the Struldbrugs, the condition that they will not die is the infallible knowledge that in turn would shape their response in investing the unlimited time in the activities they prefer.

Unlike the protagonist 1900, Captain Lemuel Gulliver seems to be very sympathetic to the idea of having an indefinitely long life, since he believes that when one is rendered free *from* the perpetual awareness of mortality, a mode of being laden with the sense of fragility, one would accomplish and achieve so many *opportunities* that are beyond comprehension, and thereby become free in a complete sense. The following statement is the response he gives when he learns about the account of Struldbrugs, a group of people gifted – for some in the very loose sense of being gifted though – with immortality.

Happy nation, where every child has at least a chance for being immortal! Happy people who enjoy so many living examples of ancient virtue, and have masters

ready to instruct them in the wisdom of all former ages! But happiest, beyond all comparison are those excellent Struldbrugs, who being born exempt from that universal calamity of human nature, have their minds free and disengaged, without the weight and depression of spirits caused by the continual apprehension of death (Swift, 2005: 194).

After being encouraged by this acknowledgement of the freer life in an indefinitely long life, Captain Gulliver gives an account of how he would make use of the unlimited temporal resource in the service of his fundamental project of being “a living treasury of wisdom and knowledge”, without any opportunity cost. He argues that such a life would be desirable and never be boring since during this personal timeline although events seems to occur again and again, each time they happen they would lead to new friends, new loves, and new knowledge. In these terms, one would be able to modify his fundamental project, as a power of annihilation of the past and choice, which enriches one’s freedom in the sense of choosing to become a different person. This seems to be in line with an authentic life-plan. Along these lines, Gulliver tries to convince the audience, who seem to hold themselves a bit distant to the idea of immortality, by showing how new experiences would partake in an indefinitely long life.

Add to all this, the pleasure of seeing the various revolutions of states and empires, the changes in the lower and upper world, ancient cities in ruins, and obscure villages become the seats of kings. Famous rivers lessening into shallow brooks, the ocean leaving one coast dry, and overwhelming another, the discovery of many countries yet unknown. Barbarity over-running the politest nations, and the most barbarous becoming civilized. I should then see the discovery of the longitude, the perpetual motion, the universal medicine, and many other great inventions brought to the utmost perfection. What wonderful discoveries should we make in astronomy, by outliving and confirming our own predictions, by observing the progress and returns of comets, with the changes of motion in the sun, moon and stars! (Swift, 2005: 196)

While the transience of all other natural things remain fixed, immortality would bring a sense of novelty in terms of witnessing the one thing that remains the same, the phenomenon of change itself. However, those who actually live with the Struldbrugs do not agree with Captain Gulliver since they believe that his version of immortality assumes “perpetuity of health, youth and vigour”. In this particular way, the image drawn by Captain Gulliver seems to be immune to time’s abrasive effects. They argue that although immortality may seem to be desirable to mortals (just the opposite position of the pianist 1900) “the appetite for living was not so eager, from the continual example of the Struldbrugs before their eyes” (Swift, 2005: 197). According to them, the right formulation of the question therefore was “not whether a man would choose to be always in the prime of youth, attended with prosperity and health, but how he would pass

a perpetual life under all the usual disadvantages which old age brings along with it” (Swift, 2005: 197). This is a significant remark that takes into account the distinction between the will to survive and the craving for immortality.

One salient implication of the counter-argument brought to Captain Gulliver is the impotency that comes with old age. Although death seems to be a source of impotency, in terms of fixing a person’s past and having no more control over one’s life, it follows from the above argument that a huge percentage of an indefinitely long life the Struldbrugs happens to have is lived with a minimum rate of control, with a sense of impotency. Their lives depend extremely on others; in this sense their lives do not constitute a model for a free life according to a negative sense of freedom. Although the absence of death means being free *from* death, the *opportunities* do not seem to increase because of the impotency demanded by the lack of youth, prosperity and health. Thus, the Struldbrugs usually acted like mortals, until they reach thirty years, after which by degrees they demonstrated signs of growing melancholy and then became dejected, with an increase in both till they came to four-score (Swift, 2005: 197). Moreover, when they reach forty years, which is taken to be the extremity of living in their country, “they had not only all the follies and infirmities of other old men, but many more which arose from the dreadful prospect of never dying” (Swift, 2005: 197). In addition to these psychological conditions, the Struldbrugs were subject to some physical deterioration in terms of losing their memories, and even hair and teeth.

They have at that age no distinction of taste, but eat and drink whatever they can get, without relish or appetite. In talking they forget the common appellation of things, and the names of persons, even of those who are their nearest friends and relations. For the same reason, they can never amuse themselves with reading, because their memory will not serve to carry them from the beginning of a sentence to the end, and by this defect they are deprived of the only entertainment whereof they might otherwise be capable (Swift, 2005: 197).

This means that new friends, new loves, new emergent events do not count as opportunities, since the Struldbrugs lose their capacity to exercise any of these with an awareness of their value. This image is quite different from the image Captain Gulliver had in mind, when he called the Struldbrugs the happiest beings. However, these do not necessarily pose a danger to the claim that the range of freedom is wider in an indefinitely long life. For, the reason behind the situation that new friends, new loves, new emergent events do not constitute an opportunity for the individual is not rooted in having an indefinitely long life but in getting older. This is why a major problem with immortality is the various ways in which the term gets defined.

To illuminate the extent to which having an indefinitely long life influences the range of freedom an individual has, one needs to adopt a *ceteris paribus* approach, in which all other variables are held constant when the effect of one variable on another is measured. In our case, these two variables are having an indefinitely long life and the range of freedom. In order to hold other variables constant, there seems to be only one way, which is indefinitely multiplying a sample life (in order to ensure that all of the variables except having an end remain constant). One particular way to ensure this requires a fine-tuning of the account of the Struldbrugs. Instead of aging constantly, imagine if they continue aging till the point a mortal being can reach (averagely), then they start rejuvenating till the point a mortal being might be counted as an individual (this might be the age of 7, when the moral agency begins to be shaped). This means that the red spot over their left eye-brow – which turns to green at twelve, then to a deep blue at twenty-five, and gradually to coal black after which never admits any alteration – will change from coal black back to deep blue and then green, and then vice-versa, repeating this process over and over again for an indefinitely long time. This is tantamount to saying that their lives would be cyclical. In such a mode of being, all of the regularities (to point out a few in Gulliver's contrast: aging, having depression, having an epiphany, having a weak memory, having a strong memory etc.) of a mortal life will be conserved except death. This is essential to signifying the major difference between the mortal and immortal lives: namely, time-boundedness.

Since being bounded by time is not an element in an indefinitely long life, the mode of authenticity ought to be different. It has been argued in the previous chapters that the question of freedom/unfreedom is deeply rooted in the frustration/fulfilment of one's purposes, which can be authentic only if they are based on the proper interpretation of their desires. In this sense making discriminations among one's own purposes is a necessary element for the individual to be an active element in his free self-making *towards* fulfilling his authentic desires by exercising control over his *opportunities* while being free *from* any constraints. In a mortal life, the need to make discriminations among one's purposes is crucial in the light of being bounded by the temporally *external* limit of death. However, in an indefinitely long life, there is no need to make discriminations among one's purposes. This might change the way the term authenticity gets defined in an indefinitely long life.

Let us imagine Desmond Hume (the young man who is mentioned above in the chapter III and who is forced to choose between two options: to go on holiday, which is quite

pleasurable for a short term and would make him very happy for a certain period of time [also save him a lot of money in the short term]; or to prepare his documents for Archaeology applications, which – if it proves to be successful – would make him happy in the long run) were living in an alternative possible world, in which everything else remains the same except that he is a Struldbrug. In that case, the difference between the short term and long term purposes would be lost. For, when the time comes for Desmond to decide, the spot over his left eye-brow will be green and he knows that it will be green again some time later, so this time he would choose to go on holiday and then in the second turn he would choose to study Archeology. For, in his indefinitely long life-span, the chance/opportunity to study Archeology would never be missed in case he chooses to go on holiday.

On the one hand, since the sense of impotency would be at the same level if Desmond were mortal, the range of opportunities is definitely wider in this parallel universe where he is a Struldbrug. This means that having an indefinitely long life leads to a freer status according to the negative analysis of freedom since in such an analysis it is the range of opportunities, number of options, which assumes an absence of external obstacles that make an individual free. One salient implication of this result is the validity of the claim that death as an external event constitutes a constraint on one's freedom in the negative sense. On the other hand, although the number of Desmond's options increase to an indefinitely higher level, it follows that the need to choose one over another seems to lose its meaning. The need to giving priority to some options over others, which is crucial for authenticity, seems to be irrelevant since he is no longer bounded by the external event of death. Furthermore, although we would expect to be freer in case of the absence of an external obstacle to our freedom, it follows that our freedom does not increase; in fact, it decreases dramatically since in that case the point of choosing between different options at a particular instant does not exist.

This is different from what pianist 1900 argued, when he points to the confusion, and timidity, an infinite range of options might lead to, nor is it the same with the argument – the antagonists of Captain Gulliver hold – that there would be the impotency to exercise these options. For, the lack of any value assigned to each and every option is merely due to the *absence of death – ceteris paribus* – and, thereby, not being bounded by the *external* event of death. This might not count as a constraint on one's freedom from the perspective of the *negative* sense of freedom. However, according to the positive sense of freedom, having more than one way at one's disposal is crucial, but the reasons for moving along these ways also



counts for one's freedom. This is the reason behind, actually, why we need to go beyond the conception that views death as an external event, and to conceive it as an ever-present eventuality, which covers a fuller account of death. For, otherwise, we might come to paradoxes, in which removing a constraint on one's freedom does not end up with an increase in one's freedom. In this way, we will be able to analyse death from the standpoint of a fuller account of freedom as well, namely by a positive analysis of freedom.

#### **IV.B. Death as an Internal Obstacle: An Analysis in the Positive Sense**

The crucial role of death in revealing the “temporal finitude” and the “finitude of possibilities” (these terms belong to Carel, 2007) in the interplay between the multiplicity and nothingness is deeply rooted in conceiving it as an eventuality. As the positive sense of freedom contains and transcends the negative sense of freedom, conceiving death as an eventuality also contains and transcends conceiving death as an event. In this sense, it will be fruitful to analyse death as an eventuality from the standpoint of the positive sense. Some existentialist and continental philosophers, including Camus, Kierkegaard, Sartre and Heidegger, would argue that conceiving death as an eventuality is the ‘proper’ source of freedom in the sense that the awareness of mortality raised by death reveals the ‘authentic’ choices that lead individuals along different and multiple paths open to them according to the reasons that constitute the expressions of one's mortality. In other words, individuals' response to the fact that they are mortal and that the inevitable consequence of this mortality can happen at any time is the particular way of their self-expression; and with the guidance of the most significant fact of death as an eventuality, this self-expression should be underpinned by self-direction. This type of freedom is equivalent to what the positive sense of freedom suggests.

On the contrary, in the above, it has also been demonstrated that the task (*presence*) of self-control is required to sustain the appropriate balance between the operational and structural desires, and death as an eventuality might function as an internal obstacle to sustaining this balance since the awareness of mortality generates a mode of anxiety as well. Thus, although, on the one hand, conceiving death as an eventuality might be proposed as an element that promotes one's freedom; on the other hand, it can also be seen as a potential to close down the future projections of the individual. Hence, in that sense it promotes a feeling of powerlessness, which in turn promotes a sense of losing control over one's conduct. In this section I will first present the ways in which the mode of being-towards-death can be conceived as a mode of freedom-towards-death. Then, I will analyse the extent to which, (and the ways

in which) anxiety caused by the *presence* of death as an (ever-present) eventuality might constrain the freedom of an individual *towards* death via the *exercise* of self-direction. Finally, I will propose that as long as life (and death) is conceived in narrative terms, death as an eventuality would not constitute an obstacle to one's project(s) in life from the standpoint of the positive conception.

#### *IV.B.1. Freedom-towards-death*

One salient feature of death as an event is deeply rooted in the aspect that suggests 'phenomenological opaqueness' of death in the sense that it is not possible to translate its experiential status from a first-person standpoint into one's life as an existing human-being. This opaqueness discloses a reasonable and significant claim that death needs to be something we experience if it is suggested to be "a matter of existential concern for us" (Scarre, 2007: 31). However, this point is essential to reveal death as an eventuality – as an ever-present possibility, which provides a fuller account of death. For, in the third chapter it has been demonstrated that when the eventuality of death is taken into account, it is revealed that death hangs like the sword of Damocles over individuals' endeavours throughout their life. Thereby, it can be seen that it is, in fact, a matter of existential concern for them.

Moreover, through the phenomenological lenses, death as an eventuality will be viewed as "a matter of existential concern to us [as long as we continue to exist] because we live in its shadow and need to think how best to dispose of the finite amount of time that we have available" (Scarre, 2007: 31). This means that an individual's response to death's eventuality is a process of internalisation of the notion of *death*, and this internalisation promotes the interplay between desires and exercising control over them due to the need to prioritise some options over others. Moreover, this *ever-presence* of the possibility of death is different from the *presence* of death as an event.

The fuzzy line between being dead and living is marked by the event of death, which has been argued above as being external to life. Although the view might be objectionable or defensible that since "the last hour, the last breath belongs to the process of life, having died is also a part of this process" and – thereby the event of death – it is a matter of fact that death transcends this fuzzy transformative process in the sense that "it breaks through life" (Metzger, 1973: 134). Conceiving death as an eventuality promotes this fact into a phenomenological knowledge, an awareness of mortality for the individual. For, this does not only mean that "death cannot be outstripped", but it also signifies "the daily necessity to reflect on the practical

implications of the fact that existential being is being-towards-death” (Scarre, 2007: 31). This is tantamount to saying that reflecting upon death as an eventuality is actually an active tool to exercise control over one’s life.

However, this does not suggest that internalisation of death should be taken as “a dispassionate, disengaged theoretical attitude toward matters of importance for life”; for, such an attitude would not take feelings, desires, and anxieties of individuals into account and in that sense it would “tend to distort our sense of what we are and what is at stake in being alive” (Guignon, 2011: 188). For, reflecting upon death requires the perspective of the individual affected by death; and this affection – as an implication of the phenomenological status of death as an eventuality – does not spring from a “timeless constitution of existence”, instead it arises from “an extremely concrete date in time that lies ahead of me as a living being” – in the sense that a particular date in the calendar is my death-day – and “as a function of my proximity to this point” (Remenyi, 2012: 2). Thus, the meaning of life is something that is illuminated only from the intensely committed first-person perspective “in relation to ultimate, worthy ends” and the proximity of death, “not from the cool moment of reflection” (Guignon, 2011: 188). Internalisation of death, however, represents a phenomenological perspective that acknowledges feelings, desires and anxieties of individuals and this is why, from this perspective, death might also be seen as a source of anxiety that promotes a sense of losing control.

On the contrary, the opponents of viewing death as an eventuality would still argue that instead of seeking a balance between the desires (both operational – episodic short-term ones – and structural, diachronic long-term ones), the individual might focus on feelings and be driven by anxieties that are revealed by the awareness of “temporal finitude” and “finitude of possibilities”. For, although viewing death as an eventuality leads one to taking it as an internal element, it might also lead one to viewing death as “sheer, meaningless contingency, an accident” (De Beauvoir, 1969: 92). Along these lines, they might argue that “our death is inside us, but not like the stone in the fruit, like the meaning of our life, inside us, but a stranger to us, an enemy, a thing of fear” (De Beauvoir, 1992: 463). De-Beauvoir narrates her own experience with her internalisation of death in the account where she expresses that once death had become “an intimate *presence* to her, then nothing else had counted... her books, the criticisms, the letters she got, the people who talk to her about it, everything that would otherwise have given her pleasure had utterly rendered void” (De Beauvoir, 1992: 465). Even

her projects, to which she committed herself whole-heartedly and would give her pleasure unless death's eventuality became present, became meaningless.

De Beauvoir's account represents the situation where the *presence* of death as an eventuality functions as an obstacle to the projects of the individual due to the *absence* of control it causes. The fact that death could come at any moment makes "the radical contingency of life apparent [and] to acknowledge this fact is tantamount to acknowledging finitude in the sense that an individual's existence is neither self-originating, nor self-grounding, nor self-sufficient" (Carel, 2007: 548). However, death as an eventuality linked together with the phenomenological opaqueness of the event, can constitute a reason for reflecting upon the things that are worth thinking, the actions that are worth doing, and the options that are worth realising. For, if the event of death itself were not phenomenologically opaque, but instead if there were a chance to come back from death, as it is the case for the characters in the video-games, then there would not be the need to reflect upon the worth of the actions, but instead individuals would be enabled to experiment with different courses of actions to achieve their goals without the need to reflect upon risking dying.

In this particular way death as an eventuality can be also conceived as a structural element of freedom, according to the positive sense, since death illuminates the reasons behind finding some options worth realising over others. For, "that death is inexplicable is not a request to solve riddles [about the phenomena after death], but is death's serious warning to the living: I do not need to be explained, but do not ever forget that after the decisive moment of death, all is over and that "this can happen at any moment; and this is worth thinking about" (Pattison, 2013: 54). Becoming aware of our own death promotes the awareness that "we are not predestined to be anything and that we do not have an abiding essence which dictates what we should be and do in the world" (Dollimore, 2001: 162). Thus, death as an event represents the nothingness that comes after it, and death as an eventuality represents the need to choose among the multiplicity of possibilities, to prioritise some possibilities over others for an individual. For, when the absence of an abiding essence is taken into account, the *presence* of the blank space for writing one's own story is disclosed. Thereby, "the blank wall of *death*, beyond which consciousness simply cannot penetrate, throws the individual back into life and designates *life* as his proper field of concern" (Pattison, 2013: 54). Although this concern is deeply rooted in conceiving death as an eventuality, it is a concern about one's freedom, one's free self-making in the sense that it is one's condemnation to choose to be this or that particular self. Therefore,

this is the implication of conceiving death as an eventuality, in which sense it suggests taking an existentialist stance towards one's mortality by means of the phenomenological knowledge of death.

Being-towards-death can be conceived as the mode of being-free-towards-death since conceiving death as an eventuality reveals the phenomenological dimension of the knowledge that one is going to die. For, phenomenology studies consciousness as the constellation of structural elements experienced from the first-person perspective; among these elements, "the central structure of an experience is its intentionality, its being directed *towards* something, as it is an experience of or about some object" (Smith, 2013). Thus, "an experience is directed toward an object by virtue of its content or meaning (which represents the object) together with appropriate enabling conditions" (Smith, 2013). Thereby, existence means to be facing a multitude of opportunities and making decisions for the individual. In this regard, "freedom describes the ambiguous process by which we make ourselves out of what we have been made to be" (Eshleman, 2001: 43). Such a process also represents the internalisation of our mortality as temporal finitude, *towards* which we make ourselves, and as finitude of possibility, *from* which we make ourselves. This is the particular reason why being-towards death is viewed as "a way of conceptualising life and death, possibility and limitation as intimately linked" (Carel, 2006: 65). For, conceiving death as an eventuality reveals the two kinds of finitude stated above.

By means of becoming aware of the two kinds of finitude, individuals are alerted that they have a life to lead, in the sense that the meaning of existing is revealed to them that they are condemned to be free in terms of deciding "which existentiell possibilities will be actualized and which will not" (Mulhall, 1996: 116). Whether this existential awareness – which is based on one's mortality – is a motivating or a depressing element in one's projection over the future is decisive in analysing the extent to which the internalisation of death as an eventuality functions as a constraint on individuals in terms of exercising control over their life.

One salient implication of the internalisation of death, hence, according to those who defend the view that being-towards-death promotes freedom-towards-death, is its structural power of enabling the individual to sustain a proper balance between the multiple goals and desires open to him. For, the advocates of this view hold three essential claims, namely that; 1) "the right sort of confrontation with death can bring a genuine sort of earnestness into life that lies in the inner being of humans"; 2) that the reflection upon death provides the individual a proper balance in life and a sense of projection through which the goals are directed towards

this balance by the individual; and 3) that the individual realizes this confrontation “in the present this very day” (Guignon, 2011: 190). Thus, the proper balance is proposed to be a reinforcing parameter in the need to give priority to some goals or desires over others. This sort of confrontation with death can be viewed as a shocking experience, as a mode of “being in-between the ever-more and the never-more; one hangs suspended alone in a state of being in between one’s previous perception of life as stretching into a never-ending future, and a realisation of the full meaning of one’s finitude” (Leman-Stefanovic, 1987: 171). In the regard, as an indicator of being-in-between, confrontation with death enables the individual to confront the limited freedom at one’s disposal.

Furthermore, confronting death, as shocking an experience as it might get to be, might also be a motivating tool to alert individuals as no other phenomenon does in the sense that confronting death as certain and ever-present “enables them to clarify their goals, to be decisive about what is really worth pursuing, and to pursue those goals at the right momentum” (Guignon, 2011: 190). In this sense, it paves the way for individuals to be authentic in terms of understanding that they are responsible for their endeavours and this responsibility requires their control over their desires, goals and actions. Thus, becoming free towards death is only possible by having an authentic understanding of death.

Along these lines, the view that “the significance of death lies in its retroactive power to motivate life, not in morbid thoughts about one’s demise” can be defended (Guignon, 2011: 194). For, it is retroactive in the sense that when one reflects upon death as a future eventuality, there happens a resilience as a capacity provided for the individual to turn back to the present and deal with the implications of this phenomenon for one’s goals in the present. Furthermore, conceiving death as an eventuality is the phenomenological lens, through which what death implies is not “the detachment from one’s preoccupation with the world or with others, but a fundamental questioning of what is to come or what is next” (Calcagno, 2007: 63). Thus, “what is of existential interest about death is not the existentiell phenomenon of passing away or demise, but rather the distinctive way of being human as being mortal” (Guignon, 2011: 195). By means of seeing life through the phenomenological lenses, individuals’ choices eventually become the ways in which they express their individuality, which is shaped in the light of the awareness of mortality (eventuality of death), and is completed as a whole via the final event of death.

Moreover, when the anticipation of what is to come next is coupled with the conception of death as an eventuality, individuals are brought face to face with the possibility to be themselves in “passionate and anxious freedom towards death, which is free of the illusions of the tradition – factual and certain of itself” (Heidegger, 2010: 254). The bilateral feature of death as an eventuality in terms of functioning as an obstacle or a liberating element is deeply rooted in the conditions of being free towards death. For, although the individual is liberated *from* the conventional, inauthentic public understanding, which has been characterised as true-world narratives in the first chapter, and through which the individual is always sure of itself; and although this liberation provides the individual an internal *locus* of control up to a degree in terms of being the author of her narrative; the individual might feel a sense of insecurity in terms of not being certain of herself. This means that although the individual is freed *from* the *external* constraints (related to interpersonal conditions), there could still be *internal* obstacles (related to the intrapersonal conditions). Thus, this feeling would function as an internal obstacle to the individual in exercising control over the multitude of possibilities.

However, authenticity (*Eigentlichkeit*) is the term coined by Heidegger to express the *intrapersonal* condition of being able to understand the proper kind of being revealed to oneself. An etymological analysis will be helpful to see this connection. For, the word ‘*Eigen*’, which is the stem of the word authenticity, in German represents the word ‘proper’ in English. Authentic understanding of being-towards-death is finding out that individuals are *free* in choosing the proper self they strive to be. Just like the owner is the person who is in control of the *property* at their disposal, individuals also own their life and *should be* in control of their life to shape it in a ‘proper’ way, if they want their life to be authentic, and thus become free in the positive sense.

The idea here is that in facing up to the inevitability of death, one can choose among the possibilities open to one with a heightened degree of clarity about the importance and gravity of one’s choices because one sees that one is not dependent on the public understanding of possibilities. As authentic, one remains certain of what is revealed by being-towards-death and also remains ready for the indefinite threat to one’s being-there, a constant threat that becomes most evident in anxiety (Guignon, 2011: 200).

If we recall the example of Desmond and the possibilities Desmond faced, we would be able to see how conceiving death as an eventuality can provide Desmond ‘a heightened degree of clarity about the importance and gravity of his choices’. Desmond’s choice to study

Archaeology is his way of expressing ‘I am a free mortal’ and ‘I am aware of my mortality’; in the sense that affirming the multitude of possibilities open to him, he is also affirming the finitude to which he is subjected; the finitude of possibilities which is marked by his temporal finitude. Moreover, among these possibilities, he will choose the one he would commit himself whole-heartedly, the one which is prioritised over others. In his context, studying Archaeology is the action he would choose, because otherwise he would always regret not realising this possibility, due to the particular finitude of possibilities. This means that conceiving death as an eventuality, Desmond has a sense of freedom-towards-death in terms of being able to distinguish between the trivial and authentic possibilities at his disposal. However, according to Heidegger, this is not always the case for the individuals, since inauthentic relation to death as an eventuality is more widespread and it is what the tradition dictates to the individual. I hold the idea that to acquire this freedom-towards-death is not an easy endeavour due to the elasticity of death’s timing. In the next chapter, I will analyse whether authenticity would be more accessible and attainable in a mode of being where death’s timing is not elastic but certain and fixed. I will also ask whether, if this is the case, to what extent the anxiety caused by this fact constrains one’s attainment of authenticity and thereby freedom?

#### *IV.B.2. Authenticity and Regret*

Committing oneself to a particular track of options may be a reasonable and an integrative approach to avoid regret in terms of *exercising* control over the direction of one’s life *towards* the goals one has. In this sense, it satisfies the conditions that spring from the intentionality of freedom. For, as Metzger suggests “freedom is always intentionally oriented freedom for, and the substance towards which it is oriented is the being to which nothing in the world corresponds” (1973: 183). Heidegger’s term ‘anticipatory resoluteness’ (*Vorlaufende Entschlossenheit*) discloses this intentionality of freedom, where an open horizon of possibilities exists vis-à-vis the individual striving to achieve his goals. Although new options are always opening up, “by making a defining commitment such as marriage, an individual can close down all the other possible marriages he might have had; but if his commitment is whole-hearted, the individual senses it as closing down trivial possibilities to gain one worth living for” (White, 2005: 11). Actualising the possibility of marriage by choosing the particular partner one chose, one makes an important choice that shapes one’s life, “setting the individual on paths which s/he might not have ended up on had s/he chosen differently” (Flikschuh, 2007: 153). Although, a feeling of regret would not be felt for the options/possibilities actualised



along this path, the choice to take that particular path might be a source of regret in a mortal life.

One can choose to abandon the pursuit of any goal, so long as one is aware of pursuing it, and one can adopt new goals. 'There is no doubt that I could have done otherwise', Sartre claims, but the interesting question is: 'at what price?' The answer to this question, he eventually concludes, is that the cost of doing otherwise is 'a fundamental modification of my original choice of myself', 'another choice of myself and my ends' (Sartre, 2003: 486).

The question 'at what price?' is a crucial question in the context of mortality, especially when the unpredictability of death's timing is taken into account. For, one aspect of mortality is that although the possibilities are always opening up, the individual can only actualise a finite amount of them, and indeed, has the need to prioritize. This aspect is quite transparent and can be handled when one is aware of one's mortality. The other aspect, which is disclosed by the elasticity of death, is not that transparent. A change in the fundamental project in one's life might be desirable for the individual, but the unpredictability of death's timing might lead the individual to stay on course due to the higher possibility of failure to complete the project in terms of time. For this reason, the price one needs to pay in the case of a modification in the course is quite high. The eventual cost of this uncertainty is the feeling of regret, which would lead to single-mindedness in one's projects, instead of authenticity.

One salient condition that helps in attaining the ideal of authenticity is the lack of regret, which can be ensured by putting a distance between the *presence* of death (which is an ever-presence in the case of conceiving death as an eventuality) and the projects one holds. This is quite different from ignoring the need to conceive death as an eventuality, since ignoring this need leads directly to the inauthentic ways of existing. However, putting a distance between the ever-presence of death and one's projects is proposed to eliminate the barriers to having an authentic life. In other words, it is proposed to be a tool for individuals *being* in control of their life to shape it in a 'proper' way. This means that if individuals want their life to be authentic, and thus becoming free in the positive sense, and for this to be the case *should* he/she *be* in control of their life to shape it in a 'proper' way; then this *could* be possible by indexing our existence as being-towards-death, rather than being-near-death. Thus, the sense of being-towards-death can easily shade into being-near-death, when the eventuality of death is eclipsed by the unpredictability of death's timing. Whereas being-towards death enables the individual to reflect upon the things that are worth thinking, the actions that are worth doing, and the options that are worth realising; the sense of being-near-death promotes a feeling of

regret, timidity and anxiety, in terms of assessing the worth of the choices one made, is making and will make.

Furthermore, in assessing whether one's life (as a constellation of one's goals, actions, and options that are actualised or non-actualised) is worth living, "one can imagine whether one would have chosen to live the life that one is living, taking into account everything that one has experienced; if one would have chosen to live one's life, then this suggests that one finds life worth living" (Triesel, 2007: 67). Moreover, the individual's assessment on the worth of choices, and thereby the extent to which one becomes free in the positive sense by acting according to this assessment, becomes clearer when the reasons behind these choices are properly related to the choices. Thus, the authenticity of one's life is inversely proportional to the regrets one reasonably has. For, "one can infer whether one finds life worth living based on whether or not one would want to repeat one's same life an infinite number of times" (Triesel, 2007: 70). This would be a lot easier, if death's timing were known to the individual in terms of making a life-plan in a closed-end time interval. On the contrary, not knowing the time of one's death leads to anxiety. For, since one's freedom is oriented towards "the being to which nothing in the world corresponds", in the sense that it is oriented towards a possibility, and since death's eventuality generates a fundamental question of 'what is to come next', one's freedom *towards* the possible can be conceived as a freedom-towards-death. However, if one is obsessed with the possibility that death is the thing that is to come next, then this would lead the individual to conceive this possibility as being-near-death, which is a situation caused by not knowing death's timing and which generates a constant feeling of anxiety.

Along these lines, in his novel *Invitation to a Beheading*, Vladimir Nabokov reflects the voice of the character Cincinnatus C, a prisoner sentenced to death but not told when his execution will take place. Cincinnatus complains that "the compensation for a death sentence is knowledge of the exact hour when one is to die; a great luxury, but one that is well-earned. However, I am being left in that ignorance which is tolerable only to those living at liberty" (Nabokov, 2001: 14). Knowing the exact hour when one is going to die enables the individual to plan his life as a project accordingly, and thereby, a freedom *towards* one's death. Moreover, this would also enable a freedom *from* the fear of death, in the sense that one would not abstain from doing some particular actions out of the fear of death. The story of Edward Bloom – which is told in the novel *Big Fish: A Novel of Mythic Proportions* by Daniel Wallace – is

much to the point in terms of seeing how would knowing how and when one is going to die affects one's choices in life.

In the film *Big Fish* based on this novel, when Edward Bloom and his friends are walking around the town as children, they find themselves in front of an old, creepy house in which a much feared witch lives who, according to legends, had one glass eye, which was said to have mystical powers to show how one is going to die when someone looks directly into it (August, 2003). Edward's friends bet that he could not go and look into the glass eye, and Edward, wanting to prove his bravery as a trademark of his character, accepts the challenge. So he goes into the house, and after having a conversation with the witch, he comes with her, and she makes his friends look into her glass eye. They, inevitably, find themselves seeing how they are going to die. Then, the witch rewards him, for his bravery of confronting her, to choose whether or not to look into the glass eye. At that point Edward considers the advantages and disadvantages this might bring about and tells the witch that "on the one hand if dying was all you thought about, it could kind of screw you up, but it could kind of help you, couldn't it? Because you would know everything else you can survive" (August, 2003). He decides that he would like to know and looks right at the glass eye and sees how he is going to die. Then, he says, while he tells his life-story to his adult-son when he is at his deathbed, that "from that moment on he no longer feared death, and for that he was as good as immortal" (August, 2003). For, this provides Edward a life with the lack of the feeling of regret, which would only be offered by an immortal life-span otherwise. Although Edward's life is mortal and limited by death, he has now a freedom from the fear of death and has a life to lead. Moreover, the interval between the moment he knew he was going to die and the moment he actually dies is full of the blank pages he could write his own story without wasting any energy on the unpredictable nature of his death's timing.

The Broadway Musical, which has the same name *Big Fish* and is also based on the same novel, depicts this dialogue between the witch and Edward even better in terms of showing the reasons behind Edward's choice to look into the glass eye.

Witch: Everyone dies, Edward Bloom.  
But your death is glorious. Let me show you.

Edward: Why would I want to see how I die?

Witch: What's your concern? Are you scared of hearing one thing new, when you could learn something secret that could help you through?

In one good turn I can show you. Counterfeit from true life begins, when you  
know how it ends! And yours is no ordinary life.

You become important, you're the bravest man around, you're the kind with  
virtue, always finding common ground, you climb each hill in front of you  
without a suffering sound, compassionate and warm, the calm in any storm.

Other Witches: So, take a chance

Witch: Let me show you how your days unfold!

Other Witches: And in advance

Witch: You and me can play the hand you hold  
When you gamble, then you get the gold

Other Witches: Life begins when you know how it ends

Witch: Don't believe the fairy tales that say life is a breeze,  
Every man must face a trial that brings him to his knees,  
But let me share a magic truth, a proof of all that thrives  
The ones who face their fears lead, the most interesting lives, lives!

Witch: So tell me what you want

Edward: I want a big life

Witch: And tell me what you see

Edward: I see a road

Witch: And tell me where it goes

Edward: In one direction

Witch: So, don't you want to see what's next, what's waiting in the void  
You may be disappointed, but you may be overjoyed...

All Witches: Don't be sad, don't be scared!  
Be alert! Be prepared! Take a breath! Take it slow!  
Let uncertainty go, when you know how it ends you begin... (Lippa, 2013)

This dialogue is essential to see why the timing of death has such a defining role in one's freedom since it argues that "life begins when you know how it ends", that an authentic counterfeit begins when you know how it ends, and that "the ones who face their fears lead the most interesting lives" (Lippa, 2013). Indeed, Edward leads a life, in which he pursues his goals and his desires passionately without the fear of death and with the alertness of mortality, which

means that he is indeed aware of the need to prioritise some of the goals over others (in his case, this fundamental goal is pursuing the love of his life) without being depressed about the uncertainty of death, standing out – at the middle of the possibilities opening up – towards realising these goals. In this regard, Edward has been liberated by the knowledge of how he is going to die in the positive sense, since he achieves at the end his goal to marry the girl, the love of his life. For, as has been mentioned in the third chapter, whereas according to the negative sense, freedom is about the number of the opportunities, according to the positive sense, it is a matter of achievements. Furthermore, Edward finds this life “as a life he would want to repeat an infinite number of times” in the Nietzschean sense. In this regard, his life is a constellation of the options he finds worth realising, of the goals he finds worth pursuing. Thereby, the knowledge of the timing of his death makes him freer in the positive sense.

Although, this eccentric story is helpful in seeing how the indefinite nature of death’s timing would constrain one’s life and how one would be liberated by being provided with the definite knowledge of death’s timing, it is not so effective in real life. For, although it reveals the aspects of conditions of freedom under a mortal life-span, it does not function as a solution to the problems caused by the unpredictability of death since this knowledge remains a secret to the individual in the conditions of the world we live in (whether it would be a better world to have the witch with a glass-eye in each and every town is another discussion). Thus, the unpredictability and inevitability of death might still function as a source of anxiety and this might lead to a sense of powerlessness and lack of control, which would mean the individual is not free according to the positive sense of freedom. Thereby, I will analyse in the next section the extent to which the anxiety *caused* by death might constrain one’s freedom and ask what would be a realistic way to find a way around this obstacle.

#### *IV.B.3. Anxiety towards Death and the Positive Conception of Freedom*

Although, according to Heidegger, the anxiety *about* one’s mortality is different from the fear of one’s demise, it still resembles the awareness of a terminal patient about the fundamental change the demise might disclose. According to Heidegger, “what anxiety is about is being-in-the-world itself, [in this sense] it is not an arbitrary and chance weak mood of an individual, but, as a fundamental attunement of Dasein, it is the disclosedness of the fact that Dasein exists as thrown being-towards-its-end” (Heidegger, 2010: 241). Thus, “Dasein’s existence is not simply a project it has freely created for itself, instead, its existence is something it can only acquire through decisions and actions it finds itself called upon to make or perform” (Pattison,

2013: 32). This is one of the sources of anxiety one's awareness of death generates, in the sense that one is thrown into (without a choice) a mode of being, in which one is condemned to make choices.

One's being towards annihilation constitutes another source of anxiety over carrying out the free project, in terms of exercising the proper control over its implementation. For, "Dasein is thrown towards its annihilation, and its freedom is possible only on the null ground of this thrownness" (Pattison, 2013: 34). Furthermore, carrying out a project is essentially, making a plan in one's head and going out for achieving the goal of that project in the sense that "being out for something as a rule is aiming to actualise some possibility, but being toward death is one case of being toward a possibility in which there is no such thing as actualising what one is toward" (Guignon, 2011: 197). The thing for which the individual stands out might always lead to annihilation, and this would lead the individual to abstain from going out to actualise that possibility, and instead to change the plan, or even the goal. Moreover, in the worst case, the individual might abstain from carrying out any project at all. One possible solution to this would be the position that looks "at human existence from the perspective of our birth rather than from the perspective of death" by shifting "the focus on existence from the unavoidability of our ultimate demise, which might cause us to wonder why we ought to do anything at all, towards the possibility which life represents" (MacAvoy, 1996: 75). However, this would shift the focus in the temporality of one's existence from the future to the past. The irreversible causation of spatio-temporal time is one salient reason behind this solution being ineffective (although in the narrative time-space it might be a good solution, which I will refine in the next chapter).

A Heideggerian depiction of being-towards-death and the role of the present moment executing one's projects resembles the following account.

Here, we are secure in our past, presumably healthy at present, always projecting ourselves towards a futural horizon of possibilities which appear to be endless [and] that future is what we make it to be, it is ours to shape at will, if only we have enough faith and courage to work hard to realize our plans and dreams. Forging a future from out of the past, through the present, in an essential existential participation in-the-world. (Leman-Stefanovic, 1987: 164)

However, with the unpredictability of death, each moment would transform into the moment when the terminal patient experiences the grave impact of her proximity to death. The crucial word in the above account is the word 'courage', since "having enough faith and courage to

work hard to realise our plans and dreams” is essential in being free in the positive sense in terms of having control over carrying out the projects one has. Moreover, if we recall the account of Edward, in the film *Big Fish*, we would be able to state that this courage depends on knowing when one is going to die. Otherwise, without this knowledge, in each moment one has to exercise their freedom to realise their plan, one might hold the perspective of a terminal patient and step back from exercising this freedom due to the timidity generated by the anxiety about one’s mortality.

The moment the terminal patient comes to an awareness of the determinate nature of his death, his life alters: the peculiar demands of the ontic event which now changes the colour of his life forces a total, re-orientation within a temporal life-span which is now delimited. One’s perception of time now changes fundamentally. Again, one vacillates between authentic and inauthentic perceptions and awareness, but the new ontic moment changes everything. (Leman-Stefanovic, 1987: 171).

This is because of the unpredictability of death and one’s future-directedness. The terminal patient’s perspective is very similar to the perspective of someone who is depressed. For, “depression is marked above all by a mood of powerlessness, an inability to take control of one’s life, and is expressed in the failure to mobilise one’s rational capacities to find a way out of the morass” and in this way it is a mode-of-being in which one “escapes from freedom” (Hamilton, 2011: 305). Thus, “we are freed from the need to exercise our freedom, [since] if we apprehend that in writing our own biographies the pen is indeed being moved by an invisible hand, it makes sense to stop writing” (Hamilton, 2011: 306). In this regard, death as an eventuality turns into the event that controls one’s life, instead of one controlling the events in his/her life. Without the presence of an internal locus of control, the sense of being responsible for the course of one’s life also disappears. Absence of this means that the individual is not free in the positive sense, since lack of responsibility means lack of authenticity as well. Thereby, although the context of the ordinary human life is different from the context of the terminal patient, the extent to which the role death might play in terms of escaping freedom is nearly the same.

The term ‘anticipatory resoluteness’ is what Heidegger offers as a solution to this kind of inclination towards being passive due to the anxiety caused by death. Heidegger takes Tolstoy as “providing us with the opportunity to think more closely about what it might mean to run resolutely towards death in the context of an ordinary human life” (Pattison, 2013: 62). This is particularly due to the marvellous account he made of Ivan Ilyich, who is the main character of the novella *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, which is also referred by Heidegger in his

work *Being and Time*. For, his account represents how an ordinary man confronts the knowledge that he is going to die, which is of course a fact that one would always know. However, this time the proximity of death is the element that brings this knowledge to the forefront, which is actually something an authentic individual should do in the authentic mode of being-towards-death. Ivan Ilyich is a 45-year-old judge at the Russian High Court, however being a ‘highly respected’ judge is not the authentic relation to his life, rather it is simply a career to occupy his time in this life. In this regard, it implies that Ivan Ilyich fails “to recognise that his existence is getting overtaken by the existentiell possibilities of Others” (Heidegger, 2010: 253). In other words, his existence is not authentic, as it happens to depend on the expectations of others.

On an ordinary day, when Ivan is hanging the curtains at his house, he falls and injures himself. Although this injury does not seem to be major, he starts to feel a bad taste in his mouth, which leads him to seek several ‘highly respected’ doctors, who cannot explain nor treat his condition apart from telling him that his kidneys are failing, in other words that he is dying. At this point, Ivan begins to understand explicitly the implicit meaning of being a mortal: his condition of having a limited time-span. In this sense, anticipating his own death discloses that he was lost in the “They-self” (to use a Heideggerian term) and now he is brought to confront the possibility of being himself, to be free from the ‘They’. For, this freedom comes with a price: the feeling of anxiety. Tolstoy depicts the three-staged implications of the anxiety caused by the confrontation with one’s death, one’s mortality. The first stage is the isolation of Ivan Ilyich, which is why death is his own-most possibility in the sense that it is experienced from a first-person perspective (in line with Heidegger’s claim that “no one else can die for me”). “During the last days of that terrible isolation, Ivan Ilyich lived only with memories of the past. One after another, images of his past came to mind. His recollections always began with what was the closest time and shifted back to what was most remote, to his childhood and lingered there” (Tolstoy, 1981: 122). Thus, the first stage is reflecting upon one’s life through a journey to one’s past.

The next stage is conceiving death as closing the future, which functions as an obstacle to one’s freedom in terms of alleviating the courage and resoluteness to exercise it. Thus, while Ivan is freed *from* the illusion of the They (freed from the *external* interpersonal constraints), he is now chained by the *internal* constraint of anxiety (as an intrapersonal obstacle) to *exercise* his freedom *towards* death. For, Ivan Ilyich is an individual who is “constantly projecting ahead



of himself, living vicariously in an anticipated (and idealised) future; just as death slams the door on the future, the dying Ivan experiences this closure already in his illness as the anticipation of death displaces all other hopes and plans for the future” (Connell, 2011: 25). Furthermore, this is tantamount to stating that the worth of one’s structural desires dramatically decreases, so that the individual can no longer find a reason to project towards the future. Such a situation is detrimental to one’s freedom, since it is a condition of being authentic to make a proper balance between the structural and operational desires. The third stage is even worse in terms of pursuing this balance. For, it is the point where the individual conceives death as a phenomenon that annihilates the value of the present.

Death does not just close the future, it obliterates the present. Before Ivan’s illness, he delighted in losing himself in the present moment of inconsequential amusements such as card games, but ill Ivan loses this ability. The proximity of his death, the nearing moment when he will have no present moment, prevents him from fully living in the present moments he still has left (Connell, 2011: 25).

Thus, when the knowledge that one is going to die is made explicit and one realises that it is nearer than one imagines it to be, the value the individual assigns to the operational desires dramatically diminishes as well.

One salient reason behind devaluing one’s desires and goals is the unpredictability of death eclipsing the proximity of it. This is the point where being authentic and at the same time exercising control over one’s life becomes problematic. For, on the one hand, being authentic requires confronting death and distinguishing between the trivial and essential possibilities one can actualise. On the other hand, confronting death paves the way for anxiety taking control over the individual in terms of trivialising both the operational and structural desires the individual has. In this regard, the terminal patient experiences a permanent paralysis, in which savouring the present is out of the equation. Furthermore, when the healthy person confronts their mortality, which is a pre-condition of being authentic, the same paralysis would endanger their freedom towards death, due to the inability to execute their plan to achieve the goals of his/her life as a project. As the terminal patient is in a permanent paralysis, the existence of the authentic individual then risks becoming a permanent terminal morbidity.

If we recall the young Desmond’s case, his decision between going on holiday and studying Archaeology would become trivial, if he started thinking about the possibility of death, and if he imagines its possible proximity. His awareness of his mortality was functioning as an element that reinforces self-expression of his desire to study the secrets of man-kind’s cultural

heritage. However, now anticipating death as a possibility, the value Desmond assigns to enlightening the cultural heritage would begin to seem trivial. For, he knows that studying Archaeology takes a long time, and during this period death might block the way, and he would not achieve this goal. Rather, going on holiday is also an option he would like to actualise, and even though in that case he would have missed the opportunity to study Archaeology, studying medicine would be still available. Moreover, although he would not value studying medicine as much as studying Archaeology, he would not be let down if death would get in between him and becoming a doctor. Furthermore, his father would be happier and he would be respected by the public as a doctor. Thus, he would choose to go on holiday and study medicine when he anticipates that death would get in between him and his desire of becoming an archaeologist. This scenario covers the first two stages that Ivan Ilyich faced. It becomes even worse, when Desmond goes into the third stage.

Now that following his operational desire, Desmond decides to go on holiday, the anxiety about death will not leave him in peace. Now, he is concerned about death getting between him and fulfilling his operational desire. This is the point when Desmond begins to be paralysed by the possibility of death. This is also the point where Desmond's freedom is impaired by his own reflection upon his death. For, one's freedom is "impaired in proportion to the probability of someone/something interfering with one's actions and choices" (Goodin & Jackson, 2007: 250). This probabilistic approach to one's freedom explains the situation of Desmond quite succinctly in terms of revealing Desmond's self-censorship. This begins as his self-censorship in regards to studying Archaeology, which is (would be) actually his self-expression of his own mortality. Then, it reaches the level of not-being-able to express himself at all. Opponents of the probabilistic approach might hold the claim that "people self-censor not because they see and greatly fear the mere possibility of interference; rather, they self-censor because they misperceive the probabilities of interference" (Goodin & Jackson, 2007: 256). However, in the case of conceiving death as a possibility interfering with one's projects, it is not easy to convince someone that death would not be interfering with your project by saying that "what you fear in your head is an imperfect reflection of what there is to fear in the world" (Goodin & Jackson, 2007: 264). For, death as an eventuality poses a danger to one's free self-making project because of the unpredictable nature of its timing, along with its inevitability. In other words, since our lives can only be lived under the shadow of death, the fear caused by the unpredictability of death is not just an imperfect reflection of what there is to fear in the world.

One possible way to free the individual who suffers from the anxiety caused by death is demonstrating to him the distinction between being alarmed and being alerted. “The phrasing of the terms of the Australian antiterrorist campaign, ‘Be Alert but not Alarmed’, carries the clear conversational implicature that there is something to be alert to and (implicitly, contrary to the explicit injunction) to be alarmed about” (Goodin & Jackson, 2007: 264). For, the individual knows that there is something to be alarmed about in regards to death interfering with one’s project(s), however, one can choose to be alerted, since being alarmed is not the only option and possibly not the best option. The best option among being alerted, being alarmed and being indifferent *towards* death seems to be being alerted in terms of being able to express oneself freely. However, self-expression without self-direction will be blind. Without directing oneself towards death, one would either be lost in the tradition, in the They (by being indifferent to death – an inauthentic mode of being) or lost in the anxiety instead of controlling the anxiety caused by death (by being alarmed towards death, anxiety-towards-death – a paralysed authenticity). Edward Bloom was gifted with the knowledge of how he was going to die, so that the witches enabled him to be alerted; Ivan Ilyich, who was indifferent to his mortality and gifted with inauthenticity, did not have that luxury, so that he was alarmed after his late confrontation with death; one possible way for Desmond to be alerted without being capable of knowing the exact time of his death is conceiving life in narrative terms, which will enable him to direct and express himself freely *towards* death and to *control* the anxiety caused by death.

## CHAPTER V

### V. THINKING IN NARRATIVE TERMS: EXERCISING CONTROL OVER LIFE AND DEATH

#### V.A. Existential Analytics

In order to exercise robust control over one's projects, clarifying one's goals, projecting towards the implementation of these goals, and implementing these projections over a period of time according to a plan is required. The previous chapter has focused on the ways in which death can function as a constraint on one's freedom to realise one's projects. It has been demonstrated that one salient aspect revealed by conceiving death as an eventuality reinforces individuals in terms of clarifying their goals and priorities. However, it has also been argued that anxiety, which is another aspect revealed by the eventuality of death, challenges individuals in terms of implementing these prioritised goals over a period due to the emotional bearings it has on individuals, namely the passivity due to the anticipation of nothingness. This challenge has been proposed to be a constraint on one's free self-making, on one's striving '*to be*', which amounts to realising the possible ways the individual may live. Along these lines, Levinas rightly questions "whether it is through its own nothingness that this end marks our time and whether this anxiety is the true emotion of death; whether time borrows its meaning as duration from this end" (2000: 37). These remarks signify the view that the meaning assigned to one's particular set(s) of actions is essential to control the emotional bearing death reveals.

In this chapter, I will argue that the challenges revealed by conceiving death as an eventuality can be met and overcome by conceiving life in narrative terms. In this regard, I will demonstrate that thinking in narrative terms in the light of one's mortality enables the individual to exercise their project(s), through constituting the necessary psychological connections between the potential anxiety about the eventuality of death and the meaning assigned to the execution of the project(s). Thereby, referring to the individual self-making (in Heideggerian terms, '*the striving to be*'), since in the narrative structure there is the need to make a temporal cross reference between the projections and the actions. According to the positive sense, which takes freedom as an exercise concept, the anxiety caused by conceiving death as an eventuality is a constraint on one's freedom, since due to the anxiety the present is devalued; which is tantamount to saying in the Heideggerian vocabulary that when one is anxious, one is unable to act in the present. However, if one thinks in narrative terms, which is

to mean that if one views one's life as an unfolding story, then one would be able to combine the past, present and future from an integrative temporal perspective, which would generate the proper emotional bearing towards one's death. For, such an integrative temporal perspective would enable the individual not only to assign priority to some options over others, but also to assign the authentic value – the purposive meaning and the value of self-expression – to one's life, which is required to act in a resolute manner. By having demonstrated this, I will be in a position to expose clearly what I propose Heidegger means by the term 'anticipatory resoluteness', which remains ambiguous as it sounds, without the practical guidance as a solution to the anxiety caused by the eventuality of death.

This chapter will propose thinking in narrative terms as a tool for generating the meaning for one's life, and, thereby, for being alerted to the negative emotional bearing death generates. Thus, I will attempt to demonstrate the ways in which thinking in narrative terms, by providing the individual the integrative temporal viewpoint, might be helpful in enabling the individual to be free-towards-death. The discussion in the previous chapter revealed three salient potential modes of emotions that conceiving death as an eventuality generates. The presence or absence of thinking in narrative terms will be shown to be essential to reveal the reasons behind the individuals' choices to follow the ways in which the individual is led to being indifferent, by having a pure episodic outlook, which amounts to being lost in the They; or the ways in which the individual is led to being alarmed, by having a pure diachronic outlook, which amounts to being lost in the anxiety; and finally the ways in which the individual is led to being alerted, by thinking in narrative terms, which is having a balanced outlook between the episodic and diachronic self-experience, which amounts to being-free-towards-death.

The first group adopts an inauthentic mode of being as they choose to be indifferent to death by adopting the episodic motto: "Eat, drink and be merry! For tomorrow you shall die!" This seems to be the exact opposite of thinking in narrative terms, since what it suggests is an unreflective mode of being. It resembles the situation of Ivan Ilyich, which has been mentioned in the previous chapter. Ivan's situation displays some aspects of the inauthentic response to mortality, "focusing as it does on an unreflective man who kept his attention diverted from his mortal nature by absorption in his daily routines and duties" (Baillie, 2013: 187). One salient reason for being alarmed might be the lack of narrative, or, reflective thinking. However, there is another kind of response to mortality, which is not inauthentic, as it contains reflecting about death. The novelist Julian Barnes' own account of his self-experience (in his memoir on his

life and its inevitable end) over thinking the eventuality of death is one salient example of this kind of response.

For me, death is the one appalling fact which defines life; unless you are constantly aware of it, you cannot begin to understand what life is about; unless you know and feel that the days of wine and roses are limited, that the wine will madeirize and the roses turn brown in their stinking water before all are thrown out for ever including the jug – there is no context to such pleasures and interests as come your way on the road to the rave.

Only a couple of nights ago there came again that alarmed and alarming moment, of being pitchforked back into consciousness, awake, alone, utterly alone, beating pillow with fist and shouting “Oh no Oh No OH NO” in an endless wail, the horror of the moment – the minutes – overwhelming what might, to an objective witness, appear a shocking display of exhibitionist self-pity. An inarticulate one too: for what sometimes shames me is the extraordinary lack of descriptive, or responsive words that come out of my mouth. ... We know that extreme physical pain drives out language; it is dispiriting to learn that mental pain does the same. (Barnes, 2008: 124-125).

The mode of being adopted by the second group can be termed anxiety-towards-death, which is an authentic but paralysed mode of being due to having a pure diachronic attitude towards death, and such a mode of being constrains one’s freedom. Baillie reasonably questions the reason behind the authentic individual’s situation as being alarmed by the thought of death by asking “although he lives in the light of his finitude and regards this attitude as a precondition of a meaningful life, what was responsible for his incapacitating panic?” In other words, “what reduced him to the same inarticulate scream as filled Ivan’s last days?” (Baillie, 2013: 187). I argue that it is the lack of conceiving life in narrative terms in that particular moment that led him to anxiety. For, although conceiving death as an eventuality is an authentic understanding of one’s mortality and a precondition of a meaningful life, I argue that thinking life in narrative terms is also a precondition of a meaningful life. Satisfying only one condition will lead the individual to anxiety towards death in the sense that anxiety is deeply rooted in the feeling that there is something outstanding, something not resolved.

Indeed, although Barnes has been equipped with the tools in terms of having an authentic understanding of death, the lack of necessary tools to deal with the emotional bearings of this understanding leads him to being alarmed. This point is actually raised by Heidegger in suggesting that “when it is anxious, Dasein is equipped with authentic understanding but unable to act” (Carel, 2006: 81). Furthermore, it has been suggested that “the individual is indifferent to all possible ways of being Dasein, it is frozen by the total insignificance of the world; Dasein

experiences existential death when it suffers from anxiety” (Blattner, 2012: 168). One solution, in overcoming the paralysis, put forward by Heidegger is having ‘anticipatory resoluteness’, which has no practical implication for an individual as it stands. I will demonstrate that thinking in narrative terms will be the practical solution to have immunity to the anxiety caused by death. Thereby, there will be the third group, who would be enabled to adopt the mode of being which can be termed freedom-towards-death, since thinking in narrative terms enables these individuals to constitute a balance between episodic (operational desires) and diachronic (structural desires) perspective.

Whether Desmond would find himself in the first, the second or the third group can be demonstrated by, firstly, the absence or presence of the narrative thinking in his life; and, secondly, it is also deeply rooted in the claim made in the first and the second chapters that the way one relates to death (the meaning of death) shapes, or comes to be shaped, by the mode of being one adopts. For, if Desmond were living before the Enlightenment, which – according to Kant – refers to the time of human-beings’ immaturity, and if he were living in adherence to a grand narrative, the meaning of death would not lead to a mode of being as an anxiety-towards-death. For, the meaning of life as seeing one’s life related to a transcendent cause given by a particular grand narrative, would be quite salient in that case. Thus, the meaning of life would not be taken to be something constituted by the values chosen by the individual, but rather given to the individual. That is to say that “living within the confines of a grand religious or quasi-religious narrative, humans possessed what they thought were the necessary and sufficient reasons to live lives that made sense, that were rationally and existentially satisfying” (Seachris, 2013: 7). However, this picture began to change with the emergence of the Enlightenment, which is the beginning of the era that discloses “conditions for the anxiety-laden search for the meaning of life” (Seachris, 2013: 7). Furthermore, individuals have been, now and then, faced with the striving to choose themselves, in other words, to choose whether to be themselves (Young, 2003: 158). This is a pertinent source of anxiety, as it signifies one’s condemnation to be free. For, now, it has been revealed that the individuals are mature enough to create their own sense of meaning, and this involves and brings forwards a sense of anxiety. This, as has been argued in the second chapter, has implications for the mode of being one adopts; namely one’s free self-making.

If Desmond were living, and let us assume that this is the case, in post-modern times, he would find “a life in which human possibilities for autonomy and development are largely

unrealised and untested will seem deficient in meaning” (Nagel, 1986: 215). For, post-modern times would be proposed as the most salient candidate for analysing the influence of Existentialism, which demonstrates that “no set of scientific laws explains how we live”, which means that “man is an infinitely plastic entity of which one may make what one will, precisely because of itself it is nothing save only the mere potentiality to be ‘as you like” (Ortega y Gasset, 1961: 203). Although this account advocates a radically extreme account of freedom, and although such an account is more of a speculation, it is also instrumental to demonstrate that the anxiety faced by the post-modern individual is deeply rooted in this perceived *complete* freedom within the “finitude of possibilities” and “temporal finitude”. In other words, one’s condemnation to be free and to die eventually.

In the Heideggerian account of existence, the individual is called upon to perform the task to be himself/herself in the post-modern period. What generates anxiety for the individual in performing this task is the multitude of the ways of performing it, especially when the eventuality of death is imagined to be closer than it is. That is tantamount to saying that “the phrase ‘*to-be*’ is more gerundive than gerund; it expresses the idea that we have our being ‘to be’, as we may have tasks to do or miles to walk” (Blattner, 2012: 158). Furthermore, our own perspective upon death, the way we relate to death, can even function as a limit to the call to be who-we-are. For, “in anxiety Dasein is not at home in the world, because the world offers it no possibility for understanding itself” [since] “in anxiety Dasein is unable to be anyone determinate or concrete; it is only possible.” (Blattner, 2012: 167). Thus, if Desmond finds himself in the mode of anxiety-towards-death, he will be lost in the possibilities, without being able to perform the task he delivered to himself.

Then, what the fulfilment of the task delivered to the individual requires is, adhering to an account, which views individuals as temporally extended beings, in the sense that: “as beings who make plans for the future and adopt policies to carry out those plans, often in light of one’s memories of past failures or short-sighted values, or in light of new facts about oneself and the world” (Bratman, 2000: 44). One salient promise of thinking in narrative terms is backwards and forwards projection, which not only provides the individual with a reflective evaluation of the options at one’s disposal, but also the reasons behind any potential choice from the option pool at a particular time. Thus, such an account will be essential to explain the ways in which “human beings engage in intentional action, where one’s beliefs and desires, say, at a particular moment, play a role in leading or causing one to act, or not act, in a given



way” (Feagin, 2007: 20). In addition to contemplating one’s actions at a larger scale, this account would be able to integrate “the vulnerability of Dasein’s world, commitments, entanglements, passions, and attunements into the manner in which it is resolutely open to what the current situation requires” (Blattner, 2012: 173). Thereby, death, freedom and thinking in narrative terms are proposed to be the existential analytics for the individual. Moreover, in practical terms, it means that, the individual will be able to overcome the anxiety caused by death. Thus, Desmond will be enabled to transform his mode of being from anxiety-towards-death into freedom-towards-death by conceiving his life in narrative terms.

In this chapter, I will argue that if Desmond comes to terms with the existential analytics – namely death, freedom and thinking in narrative terms – then he would be alerted towards the anxiety caused by death. For, “integrating the vulnerability of what matters into one’s style of projection involves *both* being prepared to struggle for one’s projects in the face of their fragility *and* being prepared to move on when they have died” (Blattner, 2012: 172, italics mine). By coming to terms with the existential analytics of freedom, the individual is enabled to comprehend what matters to him and to project towards that what matters; this means that by coming to terms with the eventuality of death, the individual acknowledges the fragility of one’s projects; and by thinking in narrative terms one is alerted to prepare to act for the sake of what matters while being prepared to admit its fragility. That is the reason why “for Bernard Williams’ Dostoevsky, denying the narrative form of human existence amounts to denying the historicity and temporality of the self, and so its freedom – its freedom to shape its identity over time” (Mulhall, 2011: 36). Without conceiving death as an eventuality, the average everydayness will not let individuals fully comprehend the task they are delivered, which is the task of free self-making. Furthermore, without thinking in narrative terms, the anxiety will not let individuals exercise their freedom.

The price of confronting one’s mortality, both in terms of “finitude of possibilities” and “temporal finitude”, is the sense of alarm, panic and eventually paralysis – Heidegger uses the word anxiety as an umbrella term to express these senses. Social psychologists have also made some experiments based on this idea to test the hypothesis “that conditions reminding people of mortality have the potential to increase the anxiety”, which has been evolved into the terror management theory (Solomon et. al, 1991: 22). In this regard, the theory also suggests that individuals can bypass the anxiety caused by reflection on mortality by importing the feeling that their life is laden with meaning and purpose in the sense that “the inevitability of

death is not as threatening if people believe that their existence, though transient, is meaningful and serves a greater purpose” (Routledge and Juhl, 2010: 849). The research conducted by Routledge and Juhl “tested the assertions that subtle mortality primes increase death anxiety and perceptions of meaning in life moderate this effect” (2010: 848). During the test the participants’ perceptions of the meaning in life were measured, in which death cognition primed, and death anxiety assessed.

According to the results “a mortality prime increased death anxiety, but only for individuals who lack perceptions of meaning in life” (Routledge and Juhl, 2010: 849). Furthermore, the results indicate that “when death was salient, meaning was inversely related to death anxiety”, and this means that, “people who indicated that their lives were full of meaning did not respond to mortality salience with increased death anxiety” (Routledge and Juhl, 2010: 851). This is in line with the findings of Dechesne et al, who report that “when feelings of broader purpose and meaning are bolstered prior to a mortality salience induction, people do not respond to thoughts of death with further psychological defences” (2003: 723). Thus, finding one’s life meaningful is a pertinent source of immunity against the paralysing effects of anxiety caused by conceiving death as an eventuality. That is one reason why in pre-modern times, the notion of death was not laden with the sense of anxiety since the individuals were imbued with a sense of transcendence by the means of adhering to a grand narrative. For, “being part of something larger, more enduring, and of greater significance than one’s physical existence provides feelings of death transcendence” (Solomon et al, 1991: 23). However, by valuing the freedom to be oneself, individuals admit to be mature enough to configure the existential analytics by themselves.

In the next sections I will argue that by conceiving life in narrative terms, one would be able to overcome the paralysis of the anxious mode of being, and one would be able to exercise freedom-towards-death as the authentic mode of being, since conceiving life in narrative terms would give meaning to one’s life, in terms of enabling the individual to conceive it as a transcendent object/project, to which one’s actions can be related in a coherent way with an integrative view point of temporality. Thus, on the one hand, narrativity will be instrumental to make sense of the awareness of mortality. On the other hand, the eventual outcome of mortality, the event of death, will function as a closure to this narrative. In this regard, I will attempt to demonstrate that individuals can be the co-author of their life and as the executive producer of their unfolding story, by actively engaging with their life as a

transcendent project in terms of meaning and as an immanent project in terms of relating to the meaning, they would enjoy the limited freedom with a vengeance.

#### *V.A1. Human Lives as Narratives*

The way the term narrative gets defined is essential in analysing its relationship with other existential analytics of freedom and death since the term can be, and actually is, defined in a variety of ways, which might function as a source of tension in the discussion. By the term narrative, it is meant “a kind of representation of a sequence of events” (Goldie, 2009: 98). What makes narrative thinking relevant in confronting the existential analytics of freedom and death is deeply rooted in the factors that make narrative thinking a unique kind of representation of a sequence of events, namely as “a *mental* representation—a sequence of thoughts that can have the features of coherence, meaningfulness, and emotional import” (Goldie, 2009: 98). Conceiving life in narrative terms, thereby, means conceiving the events of life in terms of their coherence, meaningfulness and emotional import within one’s life story. This definition of narrative thinking is significant in two aspects. Firstly, it reveals the aspects of narrative thinking that provide us with the tools to have an authentic understanding of our primordial temporality since seeking coherence, meaningfulness and emotional import constitutes the basis of having a diachronic self-experience. Secondly, it discloses the ways in which the thoughts of death can have a bearing upon the authenticity of one’s actions since it puts emphasis on mental representation in the sense that it can interpret the eventuality of death as a background awareness, as a reanimation of a certain, future event.

Moreover, taking into account the teleological aspects of one’s actions is a distinctive feature of narrative thinking. In this regard, “a narrative is always more than a mere chronicle of events, and more than a bare record of causal sequence” in the sense that it “comprises optative and teleological elements in terms of referring to the desires and purposes that generate and guide an individual’s actions” (Scarre, 2009: 157). Thus, it differs from “a scientific account of causal connections between events in that it is essentially teleological – it provides reasons, not just causes” (Rudd, 2007: 542). Although modern scientific accounts might be able to come up with an explanation of nature in general by providing causal explanations of substances, such an explanation would not be able to explain the existential analytics of freedom and death.

Narrative structures provide the individual with the tools for coming to terms with the existential analytics of freedom and death in terms of enabling the individual to assign meaning

to, or comprehending the meaning of, human actions. Naturalistic accounts in psychology, when it comes to explain human behaviour, tends to reduce one's personality into causal, mechanistic relations. Echoes of the inability of the naturalistic accounts (in terms of taking human actions as if they were substances) can be heard in one of the salient claims of teleological science, which is a term that can be used to refer to the pre-Cartesian understanding of science (Aristotelian science) animating nature, that the scientific account would be able to provide reasons in addition to causes for natural phenomena (Hornborg, 2011: 22). In this regard, natural teleology takes natural phenomena as if they were human actions, in the sense that they have teleological features in their happening. Thus, whereas natural teleology attributes teleology to mechanistic relations, naturalistic accounts detach the teleological feature of human actions and confined to mechanistic explanations. This claim is incommensurable with modern scientific explanation, which is taken to be satisfactory under the current paradigm. One needs to transcend the causal explanation, and take into account the teleological nature of human existence while explaining human actions.

Although Aristotelian scientific understanding was a reversal of the methodology used by naturalistic accounts' search for meaning in human existence (and in that it is not satisfactory), his understanding of ethics was successfully displaying some features of narratives: "a plurality and incommensurability of values, an acknowledgement of the cognitive role of emotions, and an insistence on human vulnerability and the fragility of goodness" (Nussbaum, 1990: 36). Thus, narrative thinking can be revealed in Aristotelian ethics as an ethical tool in terms of guiding one's actions, one's freedom to choose from the multitude of options in fulfilling purposes that depend on different and incommensurable desires, within the light of one's mortality, and thereby by taking into account the role of emotions caused by it. Indeed, MacIntyre promoted these features of Aristotelian ethics in his account of narratives, in which he proposes narrative to be teaching the individual the ways in which "he/she can respond to certain motives, and what motives it is appropriate to have in response to environmental cues, and to be shaping the individual's behaviour by shaping one's self-understanding" (1984: 206). This has led many thinkers to view narrative thinking as a tool for self-reflection, which is required to have meaning in one's life.

Meaning in one's life originates when individuals conceive their life as an unfolding story, which will enable the individual to fit the events of their life into a framework that "displays them as stages in a journey towards greater self-awareness and moral self-

development” (Bortolotti, 2009: 28). In this regard, the relation between the narratives and meaning in one’s life can be put forward by stating that “we achieve our personal identities and self-concept through the use of the narrative configuration, and make our existence into a whole by understanding it as an expression of a single unfolding and developing story” (Polkinghorne, 1988: 50). Thus, narrative thinking enables the individual to give meaning to the particular actions and decisions through the filter of a special kind of self-conception. For, one’s narrative self-conceptions “function as implicit organising structures through which one interprets and makes sense of his/her past histories; project himself/herself into the future via plans and intentions; and makes sense of his/her actions, emotions, desires, beliefs, character traits, and relations to others” (MacKenzie and Poltera, 2010: 34). The role of these self-conceptions is the particular way in which thinking in narrative terms has implications for one’s freedom and being towards death on two levels: interpersonal and intrapersonal.

The interpersonal aspect generates a major tension for one’s freedom since as social beings, making sense of ourselves and our relation to others in narrative terms implies a sense of co-authorship. For, “our personal narratives are intricately interlocking structures, forcing us to adjust our ends and means in order to reach the best accommodation with other people; the author-ship of our own lives is something we share with others (though in compensation we also share in the authorship of their lives)” (Scarre, 2009: 156). Moreover, it is not that freedom is “sacred in virtue of whatever intrinsic or instrumental value it may have, but rather that is integral to a biographical life” (Ruddick, 2005: 505). Thus, conceiving one’s life in narrative terms seems to pose a threat on one’s freedom, which is not something to be bargained away, at the interpersonal level. However, “these reflections do not undermine the claim of narrative history to be the proper genre for understanding human lives, but they bring home that life narratives are necessarily complex constructions, requiring continual updating and revision in the light of circumstances” (Scarre, 2009: 156). This claim resonates with the claim that conceiving life in its integrity should go hand in hand with conceiving death as an eventuality to sustain a balance between interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of freedom and also between the individual’s operational and structural desires.

One salient advantage of linking narrativity and mortality in our lives is while acknowledging that “we are continually faced with decisions about how best to use the limited time that we have available as finite creatures”, we also abstain from performing “activities impulsively, starting and stopping them without reflecting on whether the activities are

worthwhile”, in the sense that by the means of self-reflection “we evaluate the worth of activities — before, during, and after we do them” (Trisel, 2007: 66). Without comprehending the worth of actions, decisions, the reasons for performing particular options would be missing. In this regard, individuals would be vulnerable to the manipulation of others in the co-authorship of their narrative as a biographical life. That is tantamount to saying that individuals would not be qualified as even the co-author of their narrative, in that their narrative is substantially written by others. Thus, the interpersonal aspect of freedom is imperilled since “when I act freely, I make a statement, and the value of my free action is the value of writing a sentence in the book of my life (my narrative)” (Fischer, 2013: 445). In this sense, while self-conception is one basis of evaluating the worth of actions, the awareness of death is another major buttress of imbuing value and meaning to our options.

In the Heideggerian sense, the lack of comprehending the worth of actions in one’s narrative amounts to the situation in which the individual is lost in the ‘They’. However, “whoever attempts to bring life in its entirety into view, in the light of the certainty of one’s end, makes himself less vulnerable to social systems that try to expropriate the entire person” (Remenyi, 2012: 4). Thus, the interpersonal aspect of freedom is secured for individuals who live their life in narrative terms with an awareness of mortality. This means that when the narrativity is linked with mortality, the ways in which “the memory of finiteness can indeed play a critical role in the service of freedom” are revealed (Remenyi, 2012: 4). However, the aspect of intrapersonal freedom still requires to be secured due to the anxiety that might be caused by an awareness of mortality.

Another salient advantage of linking mortality and narrativity is alleviating the negative effects of anxiety, as an internal obstacle, in the service of the intrapersonal aspects of one’s freedom. For, when the elements of life are isolated, self-experience towards death is the mode of anxiety. Thus, when conceived in isolation, death as an eventuality might carve up the meaning of actions, cancel the worth of options out, and thereby reduce freedom to absurdity. However, “narrativity is meant to help explain what it means to be a unique, individualised subject of experiences, as opposed to a dissociated, disconnected series of selves” (Christman, 2004: 696). The unique features of narrative thinking – coherence, meaningfulness, and emotional import – are instrumental in having an integrative self-understanding, which make the singular actions, motives, reasons intelligible to the individual. In this regard,

narrativity is crucial to make sense of one's mortality and temporality in terms of equipping the individual with the proper temporal perspective.

What binds the elements of a life together, for the narrator, is some species of intelligibility relations, which are also sometimes called "narrative relations," in recognition of the fact that we have moved beyond the naturalistic, causal connections so familiar from neo-Lockean psychological reductionist views of personal identity. These "narrative episodes" or individual sets of intelligible events do not occur in isolation but are fundamentally embedded in larger webs of such episodes (Behrendt, 2014: 333).

Utilising one's capacity to view one's life from the filter of temporality promotes one's existence to an unfolding, meaningful story, which becomes an issue for the individual in the existential sense. The various episodes of life would make sense when self-reflection enables the individual to assign value to the particular actions, before, during or after performing them. Moreover, this is also the case for conceiving death. For, "narrative thinking helps to bring out the nature and significance of dying and to consider it as a stage in life, where the stages of life are conceived as connected in the manner of parts or chapters of a narrative" (Scarre, 2009: 156). Thereby, intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects of one's freedom are secured by the means of reflecting towards one's life as a narrative and one's death as an eventuality. Conceiving death as an eventuality is a tool provided to the individual by an awareness of death. In this respect, narrative thinking is helpful in alleviating any negative emotional implication of the awareness of mortality. Furthermore, one's mortality would also, in return, be instrumental in having a successful narrative structure. For, another potential collaboration between narrativity and mortality can be disclosed by the eventual consequence of one's mortality, the event of death since the event of death might function as a closure to one's narrative.

However, the question 'whether one's life is actually lived in narrative terms or should be lived in narrative terms?' still remains to be answered. To discuss the potential replies to this question, I will analyse the features of a successful narrative, through a discussion of the episodic and diachronic temporal points of view. This discussion will be fruitful in its implications for conceiving life as a whole and the role of death in terms of functioning as a closure to this whole.

### *V.A2. Episodic versus Diachronic Meaning*

The discussion centred on the differences in the temporal perspectives at the disposal of the individual is essential to analyse the status of narrative thinking as an ‘is’ or an ‘ought’. This is especially crucial in terms of revealing the connection between Heidegger’s notion of anticipatory resoluteness and narrative thinking. Indeed, “the basis of Dasein’s transcendence is temporality: thrown projection is the mode of existence of a being open to past, present and future” (Mulhall, 2005: 158). Thereby, Heidegger gives some clues on how to acquire anticipatory resoluteness if it is valid to interpret it as a tool to understand and transcend anxiety caused by death’s eventuality. For, the means of attaining transcendence is narrative thinking in the sense that the appropriate temporal perspective is an integral one, being open to past, present and future. However, the issues surrounding the questions whether ‘having a proper temporal perspective (if we remember the stem – ‘*Eigen*’ – of the German term for ‘authenticity’, ‘*Eigentlichkeit*’, can be translated as ‘proper’) has normative implications’ or ‘is it simply a descriptive term?’ can be analysed by the distinction made between episodic and diachronic self-experience.

Advocates of narrative thinking usually defends the view that the narrative structure of one’s life is robustly based on the diachronic self-experience, which is the kind of experience based on a proper first-person perspective of temporality. On the one hand, diachronic self-experience is defined as the experience that “one naturally figures oneself, considered as a self, as something that was there in the further past and will be there in the further future” (Strawson, 2004: 430). On the other hand, it is argued that “narrative time (which is to be contrasted with subjective, phenomenal time, or what is sometimes called time-consciousness) is the time *internal* to the narrative” (Goldie, 2009: 101). One salient implication of acknowledging the feature of the first-person standpoint is confirming the status of narrative thinking as ‘ought’. In other words, it can be granted that “we are not all naturally narrative in our thinking but insist that we should be, and need to be, in order to live a good life” (Strawson, 2004: 429). For, another type of self-experience is possible for the individuals who “do not naturally figure themselves, considered as a self, as something that was there in the further past and will be there in the further future” (Strawson, 2004: 430). This type of self-experience is termed episodic self-experience.

The existence of episodic self-experience poses a threat to the status of narrative thinking as an ‘is’. In other words, advocates of narrative thinking would not comfortably



defend a descriptive narrative thesis, which is to say that the self-experience of persons is necessarily and naturally structured in a diachronic manner, if episodic self-experience is possible (MacKenzie and Poltera, 2010: 34). However, the existence of episodic self-experience needs to be based on solid grounds in terms of granting the conditions of a continuous self-hood, in order to mention an episodic '*self*'-experience in the first place. In this regard, Strawson, as a leading advocate of episodic self-experience, argues that "episodics are aware that, qua human beings, they are continuous entities, but as far as selfhood is concerned, they do not consider themselves as something that was there in the (further) past and will be there in the (further) future" (2007: 86). This is tantamount to saying that being open to further past and further future is not the proper way to conceive the temporality from an episodic point of view. For, from the standpoint of the view of episodic self-experience, one's life is conceived as episodes of the perpetual present.

The short-termism suggested by episodic self-experience directs one's concern primarily to the immediate past and immediate future. Thus, individuals are actively engaging in their life only in the light of the present, which contains immediate past and immediate future in their relation to the present. In this sense, Strawson reasonably states that one's episodic self-experience is more relevant to one's endeavour in the present in the sense that "one's remoter future does not engage one's self-concern in quite the same way as tomorrow does" (MacKenzie and Poltera, 2010: 38). This claim seems to be quite commonsensical since the individual's attention might be focused on an important occasion tomorrow, such as a wedding, an employment interview, a viva, a medical operation etc. In this regard, the immediate future has relatively been given more weight than the distant future, and in that sense the experience is more of an episodic one. However, the advocates of the episodic self-experience still need to reply to the question of 'whether the value is given to the immediate future for the sake of the present time's temporal priority or is it due to the importance of these individual events in terms of their structural function in the whole?

Advocates of the episodic self-experience might often adopt the view that there are some events that do not have any structural function in your life, such as playing cards with friends, seeing a sitcom, making sand-castles with your children and etc. These are closely related to operational desires, which serve to imply one's episodic needs, fulfilment of which are related to the short-term sensations and serve the important function of relaxation. Indeed, one's self-experience might be located in the present in this sense, if one devotes their attention

to the operational desires. In this regard, the existence of operational desires suggests the existence of episodic self-experience. However, the problem with this account seems that it is vulnerable to devoting one's attention to the operational desires in an unbalanced way. For, an episodic does not have any great or special interest in her past, nor does she have a great deal of concern for her future (Strawson, 2004: 433). If individuals do not have any concern for their future or past, then the concern for any structure in their life would only be trivial, which in turn would lead them to divert their full attention to the operational desires. Thus, one salient feature of the episodic self-experience is the lack of organisation in terms of temporal experience.

The defenders of the descriptive narrative thesis might often adopt the claim that a lack of organisation in terms of temporal experience would only signify an anomaly in one's experience. Elyn Saks' account, where she describes her own traumatic experience in terms of sustaining a meaningful life while she was living with schizophrenia, is much to the point in defending the view that the natural way of temporal self-experience is diachronic. For, in her autobiography, *The Centre Cannot Hold: A Memoir of My Schizophrenia*, Elyn Saks, who is a Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry herself, demonstrates how the disorganisation of temporal experience undermines the continuous self. Unlike Strawson, who counts himself among episodic self-experiencers but claims to have a conception of continuous self for himself, Saks experiences disconnected temporal experience due to her condition with schizophrenia, which caused her to have psychotic episodes. She describes one of these episodes in her autobiography with the following words:

Consciousness gradually loses its coherence. One's centre gives way... The "me" becomes a haze, and the solid centre from which one experiences reality breaks up like a bad radio signal. There is no longer a sturdy vantage point from which to look out, take things in, [and] assess what's happening. No core holds things together, providing the lens through which to see the world, to make judgements and comprehend risk. Random moments of time follow one another. Sights, sounds, thoughts and feelings don't go together. No organising principle takes successive moments of time and puts them together in a coherent way from which sense can be made. And it's all taking place in slow motion. (Saks, 2007: 12)

On this basis, the defenders of descriptive narrative thesis would argue that our lives are actually structured in narrative terms, which provide a vantage point to individuals to comprehend themselves as temporally extended subjects, and their life as a temporally extended object. Furthermore, if one is not able to conceive themselves as temporally extended

subjects, this is because they are not able to conceive their life as a temporally extended object, which can only be due to an anomaly in their cognitive capabilities.

It is one thing to argue that conceiving oneself as a temporally extended subject would be instrumental to conceive one's life as a temporally extended object, as an unfolding story in the narrative genre. For, being a temporally extended subject is a precondition of a continuous self. In other words, the status of being a temporally extended subject is '*is*' for a continuous self. However, it is another thing to claim that lack of conceiving one's life as a temporally extended object is a dysfunction. This is similar to the misconception which accuses the positive sense of freedom of presuming a divided self for defending a control mechanism over one's desires. However, what is divided in that conception is the desires that refer to different temporal terms. Thus, a single self can be conceived as having distinct desires. In a similar vein, individuals can conceive themselves as continuous selves (since the individual '*is*' a temporally extended subject) without conceiving their life as temporally extended objects. For, when individuals are experiencing or apprehending themselves as selves, the remoter past or future in question is not their past or future, although it is certainly the past or future of that particular individual as a human being (Strawson, 2004: 433). Thereby, as conceiving one's life as a temporally extended object/project is a way in which one's self-experience can happen 'to be', conceiving one's present (including the immediate future/past) as one's temporal concern is another way in which one's self-experience can happen 'to be'. Thus, the episodic or diachronic self-experience is a matter of choice.

The episodic self-experience, which Strawson advocates, can be termed metaphysical episodism. For, this kind of episodism is deeply rooted in the "reductionist theories of personal identity, in which the subjective states that compose the individual's identity are often loosely bound by impersonal metaphysical relations" (Behrendt, 2014: 332). In this regard, according to reductionists, "one's concern for non-present states should be roughly in proportion to the degree of psychological connectedness between them and the present state" (Behrendt, 2014: 332). Although the episodic self-experience is based on a metaphysical stance on personal identity, the ethical implication of such an episodic self-experience is the view that accepts a long-enduring self but not the idea that a life has to be planned in narrative fashion, with a single main plot-line. For, "once practical concerns such as goals, desires, agency, moral responsibility, and values are brought into the picture, we shift from impersonal metaphysical relations to distinctly humanistic relations of meaning" (Behrendt, 2014: 333). Thus, the ethical

implication for advocating the episodic self-experience is giving credit to the idea that the striving for attributing meaning to one's life-events, thereby, can be either episodic or diachronic – or ideally, a combination of both.

One salient implication of acknowledging the episodic or diachronic self-experience as a matter of choice is the claim that although thinking in narrative terms is underpinned in the diachronic self-experience, the episodic self-experience is not excluded in the extent to which it does not undermine the structural elements in one's life. In other words, “the episodic and diachronic styles of temporal being are radically opposed, but they are not absolute or exceptionless” (Strawson, 2004: 431). The diachronic individual can switch to episodic style in times, which would alienate the experiences he/she can remember in his/her past. For example, if a predominantly diachronic individual envisions spending the next three months of his life by only watching sitcoms, and during the second month he regrets it, and focuses on preparing for the examination he is going to take in three months, she might conceive that first month as an episode which is disconnected from her experience, and that self-experience as an alienated one. This does not mean that the episode spent with watching sitcom was a result of anomaly, or dysfunctional cognitive skill, but as a matter of the choice to have an episodic self-experience, which is actually based on the operational desire to have an enjoyable time, even though it is for a short-time.

On the other hand, “predominantly Episodic individuals may sometimes connect to charged events in their pasts in such a way that they feel that those events happened to them – embarrassing memories are a good example” (Strawson, 2004: 431). Thus, the descriptive narrative thesis seems to be unsatisfactory in terms of demonstrating why an episodic self-experience has to be a result of dysfunction, which would thereby make the status of diachronic self-experience as ‘is’. However, this does not mean that episodic self-experience would function as an appropriate temporal view point in providing sufficient avenues to the individual for a satisfactory, fulfilling, and meaningful life. For, according to the ethical narrative thesis, “it is precisely because of such experiences of discontinuity that the integration of selfhood across time is both practically necessary and fragile, an achievement of agency rather than a given of experience” (MacKenzie and Poltera, 2010: 38). Thus, the ethical narrative thesis, which is the view I will defend, argues that diachronic self-experience will prove to be more meaningful than episodic self-experience. This view also gives credit to the episodic self-experience for the role it can play in the experimental import in narrative thinking.

The three main features of narrative thinking, which are coherence, meaningfulness, and emotional import (as has been mentioned by Goldie), function as the basis of ethical narrative thesis, which favours diachronic self-experience over episodic self-experience. I will introduce the experimental import as a fourth dimension, which refines these three features in terms of collaborating narrative thinking. For, diachronic self-experience provides the individual with the tools to conceive himself/herself as a temporally extended subject, and these three major features of narrative thinking provide individuals with the tools to conceive their life as a temporally extended object in longer terms. Moreover, the experimental import cooperates with these features in terms of edifying one's narrative as an unfolding story. In this regard, Ricoeur directs our attention to the narrative thesis by posing the question "how indeed could a subject of action give an ethical character to his or her own life taken as a whole, if this life were not gathered together in some way?" (1992: 158). Furthermore, this implies that this could be possible only through the means of narrative thinking. For, according to the narrative ethical thesis, since narrative thinking is the means through which the subject acquires self-understanding, and since diachronic self-experience is the means through which the actions of the subject is extended temporally, the ethical character of one's actions can be shaped by this temporal experience.

The ethical aspect of deciding to act in one way rather than another and the role of narrative thinking in this ethical aspect can be revealed when we see that, "in acting, we seek (not usually explicitly) to understand our actions, and we can succeed in doing so only if our actions make sense in context, that is, if they are explained by our motives" (Altshuler, 2015: 872). This means that, the decision to act in a particular manner is generated by an examination of the external conditions (which contain the interpersonal elements) and an understanding of one's internal motivations (which signify the intrapersonal elements). The self-understanding enables individuals to evaluate the value of the options at their disposal, and provides "a potential rationale for their next action—that is, an account that would make the action intelligible, a coherent development in their story" (Velleman, 2006: 218). That is to say that "the aim of self-understanding works in the background of our practical reasoning to steer it in the direction of acting on motives that it makes the most sense to us to act on" (Altshuler, 2015: 872). Thus, the observation that "we are temporal beings and thus have to make choices not only between momentous options, but between gardening and sports-watching as well, is anything but a trivial fact about us" (Rudd, 2007: 545). Therefore, the significance of the implication of the fact that we are temporal beings reveals the ethical aspects of having episodic

or diachronic self-experience. In the next section, I will demonstrate the ways in which the diachronic self-experience may lead individuals to conceive their life as an unfolding, whole story.

### *V.A3. Coherence, Meaningfulness and Emotional/Experimental Import: A Diachronic Self-Experience*

The first advantage the diachronic self-experience might bring about in narrative thinking is the sense of coherence the individual needs to seek in his actions (Goldie, 2003: 305). The sense of coherence is not already given to one's actions, rather it has to be adopted by individuals as long as they conceive their life in narrative terms. According to the principles of having diachronic self-experience, "momentary trivialities are not what can bind our lives together narratively" (Brannmark, 2003: 338). In this regard, relying on episodic self-experience is not desirable. However, there has to be a degree of thinking – which is termed narrative thinking – involved in reflecting "upon our past, upon how our lives might have gone differently, and upon our plans for the future and how things might turn out" in order to find coherence in one's life (Goldie, 2003: 305). This narrative thinking is, therefore, underpinned in diachronic self-experience in the sense that narrative thinking presupposes a temporally extended understanding of the self.

In this regard, it is acknowledged that "experience is an ever-changing perspective or vantage point from which we survey past and future; and of course, this means that past and future look different depending on where we view them from" (Carr, 2016: 25). It is reasonable to argue that Heidegger also agrees with the claim that "the self should be viewed as a diachronically extended entity, capable of being unified as an autobiographic whole" (Fisher, 2010: 246). For, Heidegger states that "existentially, the constancy of the self [*Selbstständigkeit*] means nothing other than anticipatory resoluteness" (2010: 308). Moreover, this point is essential to reveal the validity of the claim I made at the beginning of this thesis that narrative thinking discloses the moral aspects of anticipatory resoluteness and provides one with the practical advice, which is not explicit in Heidegger's texts, in terms of dealing with the anxiety about being-towards-death. For, through narrative thinking, we could make sense of the diachronic self-experience and, thereby, give coherence, meaningfulness and emotional/experimental import to our actions. Accordingly, being aware of our story-shaping character can enable us to face the anxiety (generated by anticipation of death) with resoluteness (generated by narrative thinking). For, directing our awareness of our finitude and

mortality in a temporal perspective through narrative thinking is “not something fixed once and for all but something constantly changing from within” (Carr, 2016: 26). And, once this degree of autonomy at the disposal of oneself over one’s life is revealed, so is the responsibility and resoluteness to take up the task to shape one’s story, and thereby one’s authentic being towards death.

One reason behind proposing the narrative thinking in guiding and shaping one’s life through the striving to have a coherence between the events in one’s life is the similarity between the characters in a story and our sense of selfhood. For, “written works of literature belong to genres, and genre constrains and determines not only choice of events, but also the shape of individual characters” in the sense that, “for instance, it is not open for a tragic hero to be a coward, and cowardly deeds are excluded not merely from the recounted action, but also from the hero’s presumed past” (Goldie, 2009: 103). This does not suggest that there cannot be twists in one’s character. Rather, this is tantamount to saying that in narrative thinking “we identify actions in terms of intentions and designs”, and [realise] that we must stop and think through the events described, reversing the order of events in one’s mind, to figure out what it is that the protagonist is doing” (Feagin, 2007: 23). Therefore, when we conceive our lives as narratives we try to make sense of our next action by relating to our past, since we seek coherence in our story in terms of edifying our self-conception. In a similar vein, “a successful literary narrative orders the different events recounted in the narrative into a meaningful temporal structure and enables the reader to make sense of the actions and emotions of the characters, their inner lives, and their relationships to one another” (MacKenzie and Poltera: 2012: 34). Thus, in order to make sense of our actions, we need to recount the past events of our lives, and project towards our future plans and evaluate the value of the options at our disposal. When we can make sense of our actions, both in terms of retrospection and projection, we can make sure that one condition of making our lives successful in narrative terms is satisfied.

One salient objection to seeking coherence in one’s life has been raised due to the concerns over its effect on one’s self-understanding. Strawson opposes the ethical narrative thesis by claiming that “the narrative tendency to look for story or narrative coherence in one’s life is, in general, a gross hindrance to self-understanding: to a just, general, practically real sense, implicit or explicit, of one’s nature” (2004: 447). Although this claim might seem, at first glance, odd since the more coherent the individual’s character is, you would expect the

individual to feel more of the selfhood. However, according to Strawson, “the implication is plain: the more you recall, retell, narrate yourself, the further you risk moving away from accurate self-understanding, from the truth of your being” (2004: 447). This point seems to ignore the process in which the individual develops a character. For, although Strawson is correct in saying that “possessing a character means possessing a personality with its own continuous history” (2004: 438), he seems to ignore that the development of a character may involve changes. Indeed, what makes the diachronic self-experience superior to the episodic self-experience in terms of providing individuals a better self-understanding is its acknowledgment of experimentation since it is the distinctive feature of narrative thinking that later events can change the meaning of the past events. In this regard, narrative thinking is the horizon, in which individuals would make sense of the changes in their character, instead of ignoring the significance of the changes.

The condition of coherence does not mean having an absolute, single-minded character, rather what it means is that individuals would be able to understand the twists in their character over time. In this regard, one’s life is not only a lived narrative in the sense that “it is being constantly added to; but also it is one that is being constantly revised” (Rudd, 2007: 544). Thus, the process requires symmetry between seeking coherence in one’s life (up to that point, and with the chosen action among the possible ahead) and being able to make sense with one’s past and imagined future. Thereby, since the later events can change the meaning of the past, the meaning of this symmetry is that one’s narrative is an open horizon of revision. Furthermore, this symmetry reveals the conception that individuals have a life to lead, a life through which they express themselves via the choices they made.

The notions of self-direction and self-expression implies the sense of unity among the events in one’s life. An analogy between the leaders and the group of people they are leading would be helpful in disclosing what is implied by the term unity. For, we are inclined to imagine the leaders as the agents guiding a united group of people, who express themselves in that united group around a shared purposive meaning. In this regard, the presence of coherence, shared meaning and emotions bring different people together in the union. For, it would not make sense to constitute a union if there is no shared purposive meaning among the members. Furthermore, if there is no sense of shared purposive meaning, then there would not be something towards which the leader would guide the group even though there would be a list of names accessible to the leader.



Similarly, “lives that can be led are not a mere constellation of causally interconnected events, but they are meaningful wholes” (Brannmark, 2003: 333). Although the events can signify individually different expressions in the sense that they serve to fulfil different desires, rather than serving a single overriding structure, the relation between them should be intelligible to the person leading the life, in the sense that the individual’s life is composed by those events into a meaningful whole. Thus, lives as meaningful wholes “enable the audience to understand how the actions of those persons who are internal to the narrative could have made sense to them at the time; in other words, it enables the audience to grasp and make sense of internal perspectives” (Goldie, 2003: 305). As for the intrapersonal aspect, the audience are individuals themselves. This signifies the idea that the reasons behind choosing particular set(s) of options have to be pertinent for the individual. In that, individuals should be in position to fit that particular action in relation to the plot of their story. At the interpersonal level, unless the reasons behind choosing to go through the particular paths taken are salient to individuals, it would not be possible to make them accessible to others through self-expression as well. Moreover, unless self-direction is implemented throughout the process, the reasons behind the particular choices will remain fuzzy.

Meaningfulness, as the second condition of narrative thinking, is a significant element for individuals in expressing themselves since it is deeply rooted in directing oneself. Stokes stresses these remarks in the Whole Life Thesis, according to which, “the object unified by narrativity is a whole life, not merely part of a life” (2012: e92). This is the particular way in which the positive conception of freedom offers an explanation for the kind of freedom that human beings are capable of, by focusing on the particular ways we live and lead lives that amount to representing narrative wholes structured with coherence, meaning and emotional import. For, narrative thinking functions at the service of freedom in providing the features of coherence, meaning and emotional import to one’s life, even in times of existential crisis, which are imagined to promote challenging conditions in terms of seeking meaning in one’s life.

One salient objection to the usefulness of narrative thinking in terms of shaping one’s action at the ethical level is based on the rareness of such epiphanies. Lippitt argues that the feeling of being lost in possibilities cannot be overruled by resorting to narrative thinking, since only in quite rare moments of existential crisis, would a person ask himself whether his life as a whole has meaning (2007: 47). This observation is crucial in two aspects: firstly, in terms of its implications for thinking about death, and secondly, in terms of the existential gravity of

our actions and decisions made in the light of the awareness of mortality. For, although he finds narrative thinking problematic, Lippitt gives credit to the idea that in times of existential crisis one would find himself asking such questions. On the other hand, he argues that such occasions are so rare that many people go through life without facing such a crisis (Lippitt, 2007: 47). The reason many do not face such a crisis in life is not that meaningfulness does not play any role in many choices one makes throughout life. Rather, the reason behind the lack of the existential crisis is one's choice to ignore death, and the awareness of mortality. However, one would find himself lost in the 'They', in the public understanding, if they do not seek meaning in their choices in respect to their mortality and their lives as a whole. Thus, the lack of existential crisis is due to the lack of the awareness of one's mortality, which should be secured in the first place for an authentic life, as a condition of free self-making. Once they bear this awareness in mind, then the pertinence of meaning-seeking questions would be visible to them.

Opponents of the ethical narrative thesis would argue that the existential gravity of our actions is not salient since they advocate adopting an episodic self-experience, which is also a reason for not having the awareness of death from an Epicurean point of view. They reject the idea that seeking meaning is relevant in more wide-spread, casual activities when the individual is "faced with a decision as to whether or not to accept a new job, or to continue with (or bail out from) a romantic relationship" since they believe that "there is an important difference between asking whether particular aspects of a life hang together, and of whether a 'whole life' does, and [that] the former experience is far more common than the latter" (Lippitt, 2007: 48). In this regard, they actually give credit to the distinction between seeking coherence and seeking meaning, which are two distinct aspects of narrative thinking (and conditions of the ethical narrative thesis), in the sense that various aspects of life would hang together and one would seek to have this coherence in their more casual decisions but this would not require seeking meaning in one's life as a whole in respect to that particular decision.

The relation between seeking coherence and meaning in one's actions is revealed by the interactive planning in terms of both retrospection and projection and experimenting *in* (not with) life, which requires a balance between episodic and diachronic self-experience. For, "without the sense of one's life as a whole, the individual might indeed think of his/her past as a series of short-term narratives, which are now over and settled" (Rudd, 2007: 544). Moreover, since it is the unique feature of narratives that later events can change the meaning of the past, the individual needs to consider how would deciding in any particular way, when faced with a

choice between “whether or not to take a new job, move to a new town, or even a new country, would affect his/her life as a whole and the meaning it has for him/her” (Rudd, 2007: 544). For, if one thinks of their past as settled episodes, then the avenues to learn from those events are also closed.

For example, one may reflect upon how deciding to reject the job in a new town would affect their future life, or how deciding to take the job would change the meaning of the past events. Furthermore, individuals need to consider the past experiences, in terms of how similar experiences had changed their life. Thus, the narrative structure is “the background against which our options, and the features which characterize them, get their meaning and thus in the end get their value, or perhaps better, their importance for the goodness of our lives as wholes” (Brannmark, 2003: 342). However, “we do not always know what will constitute meaningful and purposeful activity for us, and introspection alone will not always be enough to make this clear” (Schechtman, 2004: 425). In order to constitute the background against which our options get their meaning and value, we need to implement experimenting in addition to planning. This would amount to implementing interactive planning, which is a term I coin for suggesting a meaningful self-making through taking into account both operational and structural desires.

The need to have experimental import might seem, at first glance, odd with respect to narrative thinking. However, it is essential to see that experimenting needs to be implemented for the sake of better understanding, better self-reflection and thereby better structure and better self-direction; this includes the means of finding out the meaningful experimental import in one’s unfolding story to sustain coherence with the proper emotional bearings such experiences would imply. Thus, “living a human life involves a certain amount of experimentation – trying out different possibilities, following out inchoate inclinations, and trusting ourselves sometimes to overthrow a standing commitment to see if something else might work better” (Schechtman, 2004: 425). One crucial aspect is seeking a balance between experimenting and narrative thinking. For, seeking meaning “allows us to choose goals we can expect to find satisfying”, seeking coherence allows us “to package these goals into a rough conception of a good life for us”, seeking experimental import improves our self-conception in terms of “knowing about ourselves and our circumstances”, and lastly, seeking emotional import enables us “to live up to this conception in a way that we should have no cause for regret” (Tiberius, 2009: 215). In order to assign proper value to the options at our disposal, and in order

to assign meaning to our choices, we need to have this additional layer of experimenting to the narrative thinking. Thereby, once seeking coherence and meaning is collaborated, the conception of a whole life is made sense, and once seeking emotional import and experimenting is collaborated the resoluteness to engage in that whole is enabled.

Emotional import is the third component of narrative thinking in the sense that it discloses the individual's "external evaluation of, and emotional response to, what happened, from the ironic distance that this external perspective allows" (Goldie, 2003: 305). This element is crucial in terms of revealing the relation between authenticity, misfortune and regret; and in terms of disclosing that narrative thinking does not lead to moral blindness in the individuals as has been argued by the opponents (Lippitt for example, see 2007, p.52). For, experimenting provides a significant degree of emotional import to the option pool. In addition to this, emotional import equips the individual with the tools to learn from the experimentation, in terms of evaluating the way it felt with similar experiences. In this regard, Velleman succinctly signifies the importance of the emotional and experimental import in the following terms:

A life in which one suffers a misfortune and then learn from it may find one equally well-off, at each moment, as a life in which one suffers a misfortune and then reads the encyclopaedia. But the costs of the misfortune are merely offset when the value of the latter life is computed; whereas they are somehow cancelled entirely from the accounts of the former. Or rather, neither misfortune affects the value of one's life just by adding costs and benefits to a cumulative account. The effect of either misfortune on one's life is proportionate, not to its impact on one's continuing welfare, but to its import for the story. An edifying misfortune is not just offset but redeemed, by being given a meaningful place in one's progress through life (Velleman, 1991: 51).

Thereby, the experimental import distinguishes narrative thinking from imagining in terms of revealing its emotional bearings upon the individual. For, on the one hand, narrative thinking is the representation of events in a unique sequence, which views the life as an unfolding story, and, on the other hand, "a story enables its audience to assimilate events, not to familiar patterns of how things happen, but rather to familiar patterns of how things feel" (Velleman, 2003: 19). Thereby, individuals are equipped with more than self-reflection but also with the power to actively engage in their story. For, "these patterns are not themselves stored in discursive form, as scenarios or stories, they are stored rather in experiential, proprioceptive, and kinaesthetic memory" (Velleman, 2003: 19). Referring to past experiences in terms of the feelings they generated e.g. disappointment, satisfaction, regret, gratitude etc. strengthens one's engagement in their life story with a passionate attitude. Similarly, referring to future experiences, in terms

of the feelings they may generate, might be another element in constituting the narrative background against which one's actions gain value.

The previous chapters written by individuals might underpin the potential rationale to shape their next chapters, and once the forthcoming chapters are indeed shaped by this rationale, the meaning of the previous chapters can be edifying even though they would have seemed to be regretful in that time. Thus, "the ways in which things contrast and throw light on each other, especially over time, create both significant breaks as well as thematic threads that make up important parts of the narrative wholes that our lives form" (Brannmark, 2003: 336). Combination of seeking coherence, meaning, emotional and experimental import, however, enables individuals to make sense of their life as an unfolding story. In this regard, viewing one's life as an unfolding story would prove to be essential in finding one's life meaningful. Furthermore, collaborating this meaningfulness with the awareness of mortality will, as a second layer, constitute the basis for a robust self-making, a freedom-towards-death. This requires a discussion centred on the question 'what kind of stage can individuals conceive death occurring in their life?' This question signifies the closure of the unfolding story in two senses: closure as telos, in terms of reaching towards the aims, and closure as termination, in terms of being over. In the next part, I will analyse the collaboration between death and life as narratives, in terms of providing individuals the sense of control in their life. This analysis will disclose the eventuality of death functioning as closure in the sense of telos, and the event of death functioning as closure in the sense of termination. Such an analysis will reveal the relation between death, freedom and narrative thinking as interlocking features of life.

## **V.B. Death: Closure in One's Life**

In the previous sections, I have demonstrated that thinking in narrative terms imbues the present with retrospective and projective attitudes in disclosing the value of a particular option at a particular time for the individual. In this regard, choosing freely to act in a particular manner, on the basis of seeing how it is going to fit together with one's other moves, is the way in which the artistic value of self-expression is realised. In other words, the individual responds to the contextual present in the light of the past and in anticipation of the future. In this regard, narrative thinking functions as structuring one's temporality in the proper way, both in terms of projection and retrospection. Heidegger's term 'historicity' (*Geschichtlichkeit*), which he employs to describe the essential structure of human existence, comes from the German word '*Geschichte*' for the word 'history' in English, which implies that according to Heidegger the

self is a “story-shaped” concept (Guignon, 2011: 195). Thus, the ways in which the individual’s story is shaped depend on the individual’s choice to adopt retrospection or/and projection as a tool for narrative thinking.

Furthermore, this will be decisive in fitting death as an eventuality into one’s story in an authentic but more importantly resolute manner. For, “the ending relevantly frames the entire story and this framing falls broadly within the normative sphere, and includes a salient emotional component” (Seachris, 2011: 144). However, since “the ending does not necessarily mean fulfilling oneself, it thus becomes more urgent to ask in what sense, if any, death must be grasped as the ending of Dasein” (Heidegger, 2010: 235). In this regard, it has been argued that death “serves to give additional urgency or focus towards the demands of ethics, [although] these do not originate in the relation to death” (Pattison, 2013: 93). Thus, the present is imbued with the ethical demands; in Heideggerian terms, the individual is called upon to perform the task to be himself/herself in the present by the eventuality of death (call of conscience). This means that through the compass of narrative thinking, an individual person responds to the call of conscience “by evaluating the situations in which he finds himself in terms of the possibilities he sees them as offering” in the sense that “he defines and delimits any situation by what he sees it as offering or lacking” (Sherover, 1981: 231). The temporal compass of narrative thinking enables an individual person “to read his situation as opportunities or demands and his reading, then, expresses the judgmental criteria or principles his own perspective forces upon him” (Sherover, 1981: 231). This is the ideal condition of narrativity of death in the moment of decision when death thoughts are put out of the forefront of consciousness and function as a background awareness.

On the contrary, if the present is imbued with death thoughts, then the individual might be paralysed by the anxiety it generates. For, being-towards-death can be seen “as a state-of-being suspended in between in a void, to the extent that all my traditional orientational signposts disappear for the moment, as I see to take in the full meaning of the eventful possibility of my-no-longer-being” (Leman-Stefanovic, 1987: 173). In this regard, diachronic self-experience and anticipation of death generate a tension between two mental representations during the *moment* of decision since “the most concrete manifestation of man’s anxious encounter with the nothingness of his existence” [...] functions “much more than a mental state: time and the self are entirely modified in between the world which was, prior to this moment, and the world which is now delimited, finite, and concretely defined” (Leman-Stefanovic, 1987:

173). However, as I have demonstrated in the first part of this chapter, narrative thinking helps to alleviate the paralysing effects of anxiety caused by death through imbuing meaning in life. In this regard, the individual still needs to adopt a retrospective or/and projective reflection in narrative thinking to constitute this meaning, which would not be at odds with what the projection of death implies.

In this part, I will, first argue that death as an eventuality can be fitted into one's narrative through viewing closure as telos. This requires conceiving the eventuality of death in relation to viewing closure as a process of reaching towards one's goals, which requires both retrospection and projection in shaping one's present action and transforms one's unique way of existence into one's life narrative throughout the process of self-making. In the second section, I will analyse death as an event in terms of revealing its feature to be the closure as termination, which transforms this unique life into a whole story that delimits the temporal limits.

The term 'historicity' is essential to reveal the aspects that relate, on the one hand, authenticity and freedom and, on the other hand, being-towards-death and authenticity. For, the authentic mode of being, according to Heidegger, is being-towards-death and the structure of this mode of being is historicity. In other words, according to a Heideggerian account of narrativity, the individual needs to shape his/her self through narrative thinking towards the ever-present possibility of death. On the one hand, historicity reveals one's striving to be free in terms of realizing oneself in an authentic manner contrary to the conventional and given ways (grand narratives) of responding to contextual present, and, on the other hand, it reveals the limits and fragility of this striving in terms of exercising control over one's story versus the need to have a closure. Thus, in our free self-making, what we do in the present is shaping our life on the basis of our past experiences – the events that already belongs to our story, that makes us who we are at that time – in the light of the eventuality of death, which requires a projective thinking to shape our intentions before the event of death forecloses the present. For, once the eventuality of death transforms into an actuality through the event of death, it would fix the meaning of our story, thereby leaving us with a fixed history, the meaning of which we can change no more (in the sense that our positive power to modify the shape of our world does not exist anymore but our stories do). Namely, what we became is something determined, which is not what our existence means in terms of temporality.

*Historicity* is the condition of being historical. And as *Sein und Zeit* teaches, the aim of locating and understanding conditions cannot necessarily be achieved by simply studying the phenomena (i.e., historical events) that they make possible. In other words, Heidegger is interested in the connection that Aristotle had suggested between what is necessary and what is possible (but not always necessary). In a strange reversal the necessary turns out to be possibility, i.e., the possibility of repetition, which overflows all the ways in which possibilities can be actualized. The consequence for Heidegger is that the best way forward, in any of the dimensions that humans operate in, implies types of *response* to the traditions, legacies and histories that make us what we are. That *response* (our responsibility—the ability to respond with a modicum of freedom to a tradition) always implies some minimal *unthought*—the undetermined futural aspect of time. (Phillips, 2004)

In this sense the term ‘historicity’ reveals the accumulative feature of meaning, which functions as a limit to one’s free self-making in term of shaping one’s unfolding story. For, “due to a combination of the passage of time and the attendant increasing complexity and decreasing malleability of meaning relations within life, the retroactive meaning alteration among life events become less viable over time” (Behrendt, 2014: 344). This is one possible source of lack of control the individual might face at an older age, in the sense that his/her history is laden with so many events that the comparably lesser amount of possible future events would hardly change the meaning relations between the past events and any particular present event. Although, the retrospection is at hand for being implemented in the case of an elderly, if he lacked the future projection in his younger age, then with the awareness of relatively less possibility of change in one’s story in his old ages would lead him to a sense of lack of control and regret.

On the other side of the coin, individuals have the resources of more possibilities at a young age in terms of changing the comparably lesser amount of past events’ meaning by projective thinking and resolute acting. In other words, the chapters written in their story are comparably lesser, and thereby the chapters ahead function as an open horizon with regards to developing a meaningful story with a coherent main character, namely themselves. In this regard, “the ever-present possibility of death has been thought by critics to suffuse human life with an element of contingency that forecloses the possibility of understanding our lives in terms of a projective narrative” (Stokes, 2011: 11). However, narrative thinking and historicity requires the closure in terms of providing the story with the retrospective meaning-overhaul to compose a whole. Thus, closure signifies the end as “providing what meaning or value there is to be had for the narrative as a whole” (Behrendt, 2014: 337). For, “a story without an ending is not a [complete] story, and human life needs deathly finitude in order to be thinkable as a



unified whole in the way essential to narrative self-intelligibility” (Stokes, 2011: 10). Individuals, thereby, need to adopt a projective attitude towards death as an eventuality in the sense that it imbues the unfolding story with the closure as telos in terms of reaching *towards* their aims in the present, since conceiving closure as a telos signifies that “unity as a pathway, not a destination” (Behrendt, 2014: 340). By adopting the projective attitude in narrative thinking, death as an eventuality can be fitted along the pathway as a tool for sustaining unity.

One salient problem with conceiving life as a story is the fact that “a premature death can spoil one’s life story” (Fischer, 2009: 150). In this regard, “critics have charged that the radical contingency of death poses a particularly difficult problem for narrative theory”, in the sense that if the way a story ends frames the meaning of the entire story, and “the end of my life narrative (and everything that comes after it) is inaccessible to me, then I might be living out a radically different life-narrative to the one I take myself to be leading” (Stokes, 2011: 10). However, when closure is conceived as telos, and thereby the unity is taken to be a pathway, the condition of self-intelligibility of narrative structure is secured. Moreover, the end of one’s story, the event of death that terminates the story, transforms this pathway to a narrative whole, which is still intelligible to others. Thus, there are two different senses of closure and they differ in what meaning an ending confers on the story. “The first asserts that our entire life is reasonably regarded as a single unit of meaning, and the second, apparently related, view is that the meaning that a life as a whole has is especially dependent on what happens near the end of it” (Behrendt, 2014: 331). In the next sections, I will demonstrate that the ending, in other words the closure, to a story can be conceived in these two senses: the first, closure as telos, which implies unity throughout one’s life quest, and the second, closure as termination, which implies unity as a whole.

#### *V.B1. Death as an Eventuality and Closure as Telos*

The various roles the past, present and future events play in our life and the ways we conceive their role is essential to have a sense of control in our present endeavours. The narrative relations between the events of a life are salient ways to make sense of these events. In this regard, death as an eventuality can be fitted into one’s story in terms of promoting the teleological aspect of one’s life. If individuals lack the tools (the web of narrative relations) to comprehend the proper role of the events in their life, this might amount to a lack of control over one’s life and thereby individuals would be prevented in their free-self making in the positive sense. Thinking in narrative terms, and adopting the proper temporal attitude

accordingly, helps to comprehend the ways in which the closure functions for structuring one's life. The diachronic self-experience accepts a long-enduring self and suggests a planned life in narrative fashion, which implies a teleological process. In this regard, "teleology has been depicted by the narrativists as an ongoing agential impulse to minimise internal conflict when choosing to act on goals" (Behrendt, 2014: 339, Schechtman, 2008). Narrative theory, particularly the Whole Life Thesis, signifies the teleological aspect of our lives in the sense that "our actions are directed on ends and are not mere random bodily movements; and, as self-conscious, rational agents, we seek to organise our projects and commitments into a coherent whole" (MacIntyre, 1984: 209). In this regard, conceiving death as an eventuality implies adopting a projective temporal attitude based on the retrospective evaluation of the events in the present.

The teleological component of our lives requires us to organise our actions around our projects and "integrating those projects as part of a larger project that may be understood as the life itself" (Malpas, 1998: 127, Stokes, 2012: e91). Beyond that, the process of integrating our projects together in the present, through demonstrating our resoluteness – namely acting in particular ways we value – requires both retrospective and projective thinking. From the retrospective aspect, "the past is not simply over and done with, precisely because I recognise it as a part of the continuing story of my whole life" (Rudd, 2007: 545). At this point, opponents of narrative thinking, and particularly the Whole Life Thesis, might argue that death, as an event is never a past event for the individual. Moreover, they might continue to argue that for this reason death as an event cannot be made sense of in an ongoing story. For, they defend the view that "the life in which coherence is found [without the sense of closure] can only be understood as a narrative in a necessarily incomplete sense" (Lippitt, 2007: 45). However, this view undermines the conception of closure as the process of reaching the telos due to the fact that it neglects the notion of death as an eventuality. Although, the view that the ending of a story frames the meaning of the entire story can be defended, the accumulative component of meaning in one's life does not let the ending implement a dramatic change in the narrative meaning (however, the events near the ending can improve or diminish the meaning even if this is not dramatic).

Moreover, the eventuality of death imbues the present with the need to adopt a projective attitude towards the events in one's life, and in this sense, it can be fitted into one's story as a closure in the sense of signifying the process towards reaching the telos. For, the past

is open to reevaluation in the present within the framework of future events in the sense that “the open-ended nature of a lived narrative, far from undermining the idea of living my life as a whole, is an essential part of what gives that idea sense” (Rudd, 2007: 545). Moreover, individuals are free if they can choose their fate, change the meaning of their historicity. Thus, both retrospective and projective attitudes should be implemented if we are to be free in the sense that “to understand one’s situation in a different way is, in fact to change one’s situation, in this way one is free to choose one’s fate” (Leman-Stefanovic, 1987: 90). Death as an event has the feature of functioning as the closure for one’s life story, as the ultimate fate of the story. Similar to the idea that the closure is a possible source for reinforcing the meaning of one’s story, the timing of this closure frames (eventuality of death) the plot-line, which is the open horizon of possibilities. In this regard, “the uncertainty of death – the fact that we never know when it will come – makes us aware that the defining relation is not futile, but is possible” (Guignon, 2011: 192). Thereby, the projective attitude towards the events in one’s life is marked by the eventuality of death in addition to the retrospective attitude.

Death needs to be understood through the filter of narrative thinking since it enables the individual to adopt a proper temporal view. For, La Rochefoucauld suggests the view that “one cannot look directly at the sun or at death” (1957: 410). Although if one looks directly at the sun, there is a chance that it can damage one’s eyes and one’s sight, if one uses relevant filtering tools, then the sun would not prevent individuals from seeing the surroundings clearly. Thus, it is not the absence of the sun that enables individuals to see the outside world clearly in terms of eliminating the detrimental effects of sun on the eyes. In a similar line, if one does not have the relevant tools to approach death, then the thoughts of death would lead individuals to anxiety, in which they would be paralysed and unable to act. This does not require the absence of death in order to act in a resolute manner. Rather, it requires the narrative filter through which the presence of the eventuality of death does not constitute an internal obstacle to one’s freedom (in the positive sense, in terms of exercising control) but functions as closure in one’s story as a source of telos in the plot-line. Just as the sun enables us to see the outside world and makes the perception possible as long as one does not look at it directly, death as an eventuality enables us to comprehend the meaning of our existence and makes the authentic way of being possible as long as it is viewed through the lenses of narrative thinking.

The filter of narrative thinking, however, needs to be based on a balanced temporal attitude towards events in life. Kierkegaard portrays such an attitude on the basis of the

eventuality of death as follows: “the thought of death gives the earnest person the right momentum” (1993: 83). This suggests that individuals need to take into account both the eventuality of death and the significance/value of the alternative options. For, “earnestness becomes the living of each day as if it were the last; but it is also living life as if it were open to possibilities, though each day is lived as if it were the last, it is also lived as the first in a long life” (Kierkegaard, 1993: 96). In this sense, Heidegger’s descriptions of the unique mode of human being as being-towards-death, historicity as the structure of this mode, and freedom-towards-death as the authentic way of moving along this structure signify that our lives are stories with closure as a process of achieving divergent telos.

The idea of existence as being toward the culmination or completion of the story enables us to think of death as the fulfilment of a total life story. Seeing death in this way helps to clarify the conception of human existence as a future-directed projection toward realising certain possibilities. It tells us that a life story must always involve an experience of life’s going somewhere or adding up to something, even if we do not always achieve our aims (Guignon, 2011: 195).

This type of narrative thinking might be vulnerable to criticisms in the sense that it promotes a grand-scheme in one’s life. For, in contrast, upon reflection on which temporal attitude to adopt, individuals would come up with a deliberate, conscious choice to view their life as a series of short stories, in which each day is seen as a new chapter in their life.

“Carpe Diem”, which is first coined by the poet Horace in *Odes* (Book 1, Number 11), is one relevant attitude that suggests a short term organisation in one’s life (as if life is taken to be a post-modern novella), rather than the long term organisation of telos along the plot-line of a classic novel. When coupled with the eventuality of death, it might seem to be a reasonable strategy to enjoy the moment, and not to trust the next day. For, the uncertainty of death’s timing makes the future only contingent. Due to this contingency, individuals are advised to make use of the present through short-time projects, and to see their life as a collection of short stories, in which each day is a new chapter, even though they might not fit together at the end. Thus, the temporal dimension that the individual seems to have control over, according to this attitude, belongs to the present endeavours (considering the immediate past and future). However, basing one’s choice on the worst possibility in adopting the short-time organisation due to the eventuality of death is not the only reasonable approach. For, such reasoning springs from an Epicurean interpretation of the ‘Maximin Principle’, which suggests the decision rule that under uncertain conditions “you must evaluate every policy available to you in terms of the worst possibility that can occur to you if you follow that particular policy” (Harsanyi, 1976:

39). Thus, in the light of the eventuality of death – which is the most salient and also uncertain (in terms of its timing) condition of our existence – adopting the “carpe diem” attitude is suggested by the ‘Maximin Principle’ since when the individual lives the present, death is not present (so the worst possibility is avoided).

If we recall the example of Desmond in the previous chapter, who has to decide whether he should go on holiday or study Archaeology; the outcome of choosing to go on holiday can be valued according to the corresponding value in fulfilling the operation desire (a short-term value), and the outcome of choosing to study Archaeology can be valued according to the corresponding value in fulfilling the structural desire (a long-term value). The overall probability of dying in a short-term project is comparably lesser than dying in a long-term project. Thus, the probability of worst possible outcome in the latter case is much higher than of the worst possible outcome in the first case. Thereby, according to the Maximin Principle, Desmond should choose to go on holiday, which conflicts with his desire to study Archaeology. A carpe diem attitude would advise Desmond to go on holiday as well. For, fulfilling the desire of studying Archaeology is a distant possibility. When this is coupled with the eventuality and interference of death, over which he has no control, and with the availability of the other option of applying to medicine (which is the option his father wishes him to take, if we recall the scenario, it is also the option compatible with going on holiday due to its suitable application deadline), choosing to go on holiday is advised by a Carpe Diem attitude since it is Desmond’s operational desire, which can be fulfilled in the short-term period, without trusting the future.

A carpe diem attitude focuses on the worst case scenario, and thereby suggests an attitude that focuses on the present since it is the only period over which the individual can exert control. One salient implication of the idea to view life’s plotline as a constellation of the event features episodic self-experience. In this sense, such a narrative conception would be arguably less depressing in so far as it is less aware of the fact that one’s story will have an end (in an uncertain future). For, applying the ‘Maximin Principle’ to narrative thinking, in terms of adopting a proper temporal attitude, implies adopting the present and, thereby, in the case of reflecting upon one’s life favouring the retrospection rather than projection. Thus, the accumulative feature of meaning is given credit since the individual is provided with the certainty of the past (facticity as one aspect of the historicity) in controlling the present endeavours. In this regard, this attitude avoids the accusation of adopting an unreflective conception.

Moreover, being less depressing means being able to exercise more control since “depression is an inability to take control over one’s life” (Hamilton, 2011: 305). However, if Desmond takes into account the best case scenario as well, namely being able to fulfil his ambition of studying Archaeology without death interfering along the way in the plotline, then he would not miss the opportunity to apply for Archaeology. Thus, adopting the decision rule of Bayesian theory, which suggests to “take one’s chances if one has a strong enough preference” (see Harsanyi, 1976: 39), is a more reasonable strategy in narrative thinking. For, another aspect of “seeing my life comprehensively and as mine to lead without recourse to an absolute measure is the recognition that I can waste my time by staying stuck for the fear of risking change” (Vogel, 1994: 46). In this regard, avoiding taking one’s chances for pursuing one’s strongest preference (which is to study archaeology in Desmond’s case) would mean choosing to follow one’s operational desires (which is to take the holiday in Desmond’s case). However, “the irony here is that anxiety over choosing for oneself and risking change traces anxiety in the face of death, and yet a life stuck in time is a kind of living death” (Vogel, 1994: 46). Moreover, the eventuality of death, the awareness of one’s mortality, reinforces the priorities and thereby strengthens the preferences. Thereby, it should provide the individual with a reasonable degree of control over the options towards securing one’s aims and goals.

Opponents of adopting a projective attitude still raise the question whether, “even if we accept the view that events in stories are unified by a telos toward which they aim, do lives have such a telos that explains all of their fitful meanderings?” (Christman, 2004: 704). For example, how does Desmond’s making a coffee relate to his desire to study Archaeology? It might be the “regular activity of coffee-making” that gives his days its familiar structure, or it might be a coffee he is making for an expected visitor, or it might be “a bit of displacement activity” to get some time getting on the decision he is going to make between going on holiday or applying for Archaeology, or it might be an activity of remembering nostalgic memories since its aroma takes Desmond back to a love affair in a distant city (Rudd, 2009: 64). Thus, even the activity of coffee-making, which might seem trivial at a first glance, would make sense in different ways by projective or retrospective reflection. Thereby, when the teleological aspect of our existence is given credit, “even the simplest of present actions carries with it levels of meaning which point into indefinite expanses of the past and future” (Rudd, 2009: 64).

Although the teleological aspect of one's life is given credit, opponents of the 'Whole Life Thesis' argue that adopting a projective temporal attitude and organising the events in one's life according to the planned plotline belongs to the genre of "fanciful biographers rather than plausible structural accounts of everyday lives [since] most people undertake entirely separable projects and goals, which, though each has an internal organising aim, fail to interconnect in a grand scheme" (Christman, 2004: 704). For example, it is true that Desmond's goal to study Archaeology is separable from his goal to marry the love of his life (with whom he had coffee with that unique aroma in a distant city) and have children. It is also true that the ways in which these goals can be achieved do not *necessarily* have overall coherence in relation to a *single* goal of life. Thus, this interpretation of narrative thinking claims that projective thinking views closure as telos, as the ending of the teleological process towards "a single culminating purpose" (see Christman, 2004). While "some people do set out quite consciously to realise some grand, overarching ambition" and they act in a way to make sure that all of their endeavours are "fitted to the realisation of that end", we need to give credit to the fact that "this is comparatively rare, and it is a mistake to suppose that Narrative theory claims otherwise" (Rudd, 2009: 64). Rather, the point of viewing the eventuality of death in line with the closure as telos is ensuring the various aims, desires, and goals fit together in a *single* story, not towards a *single* telos. Thus, in this way, one significant function of reanimating the eventuality of death is revealed: understanding its function to act like the closure as the telos in one's story/narrative. This function implies that "the configurational and the teleological character of stories suggests that the end-point will determine how events are selected and also how they are interpreted" (Carr, 2016: 15). Thus, this function enables one to envision life from the standpoint of its factual end, as a something 'that will have been' when we narrate a sequence in hindsight.

The implication of adopting both projection and retrospection as a temporal attitude in narrative thinking is the need to have an interactive planning rather than having a single plan in the first place, or implementing this plan throughout one's life towards a single goal. Thus, the idea is that there might be twists and turns in the story, which might lead the individual to change the plan on the basis of the lessons learned from the retrospection and the adapted goals in line with the projection – in contrast to acting for the sake of the present, with various disconnected stories in a single chronological plot as the individual's timeline without future projection. For, "without a trajectory – without the thought that events have *an implicit temporally-located conclusion or telos* towards which they are leading – events cannot be narratively emplotted, merely temporally sequenced" (Behrendt, 2014: 339). In this regard, in

order to make sense of what we are doing in the present, thereby, in order to exercise control over *our* present we need to have an idea of where we are coming from and where we are going.

The point is rather, that in aiming, as I do, at various distinct goals, I have to take into account that these are all things that I am trying to achieve, and that how I set about one project will inevitably be affected by how I set about others. A typical life narrative will not be a story of the pursuit of one single goal, but the story of how the protagonist attempts (successfully or not) to coordinate his/her different projects and goals with one another. So an agent who is committed to making space in his or her life for Work, Family, Leisure, Creativity etc. will do so on the basis of considering them all as valuable aspects of the one life that he or she has to lead, and will therefore have to be concerned with how they all fit together. (Rudd, 2009: 65)

In Desmond's case his goal to be an Archaeologist, and marrying the girl whom he had coffee with, and going on holiday can fit together; if he gave priority to one of these options over others in the temporal order in terms of realising them, which amounts to adopting the mode of being-free-towards-death. Otherwise, "without the thought of an eventual denouement, *an ending that confers a form of meaning on the whole sequence of events*", his life would be "just one damn thing after another" (Behrendt, 2014: 339, Kermode, 2000: 55ff). Thus, conceiving death as an eventuality provides Desmond with 'a heightened degree of clarity about the importance and gravity of his choices'. His choice to study Archaeology, when it is not possible to go on holiday at the same time, is his way of expressing 'I am a free story-shaping mortal'; in the sense that while avowing the multitude of possibilities open to him, he is also acknowledging the finitude to which he is subjected; the finitude of possibilities which is marked by his temporal finitude. Desmond exercises a reasonable degree of control over *his* present, which provides him with the multitude of opportunities (sometimes conflicting), in the light of a policy that is close but different to Carpe Diem: 'memento mori, carpe vita!', namely 'remember that you are mortal, so seize life'.

The above view of narrative thinking can be termed a hermeneutical narrative view, which portrays the closure as telos "as an ongoing process in which the agent strives for unity and coherence throughout a life, rather than as a final and overwhelmingly important end point to be reached" (Behrendt, 2014: 343). This hermeneutical narrative view demonstrates the fact that most people do not, and actually cannot, live their lives according to the latter principle, and thereby it is not vulnerable to criticisms in this regard. Thus, once individuals reject the "grand narrative" view of life events culminating in a particular object or state of affairs" (Behrendt, 2014: 343), the range of freedom they enjoy also widens in the positive sense (in



the sense that individuals are aware of the fact that following “a final solution” dictated to individuals by a grand narrative would narrow their life, instead of harmonising the divergent ends).

What is meant by seeking a whole life is not singularity, rather this striving implies whole-heartedness. For, “whole-heartedness involves some readjustment of our different priorities, and sometimes the rejection of projects and ends incompatible with other commitments we find more important, until we have reinterpreted or refashioned our ground projects” (Davenport, 2001: 293). Heidegger holds that one’s existence is authentic when it is open to past, present and future in the sense that viewing one’s future as an open horizon when reinforced by the whole-heartedness provides the individual with the structure of historicity (the individual’s self as being story-shaped). In this regard, being-free-towards-death implies an essenced existence in the sense that the individual has ground projects rather than a single grand project. Thus, if individuals “replace the grand-scheme narrative instead with the preferable picture of many, ongoing, and sometimes competing, goals and desires that they struggle to unify”, they are open to “a picture of a life in which the opportunities for large-scale retroactive meaning-overhaul are less viable nearer the end of a life” (Behrendt, 2014: 343). In this regard, it would ensure that the ground projects are “mutually reinforcing in spirit (rather than pulling in opposite directions), and so that they can all be pursued together (each in its proper respect) in one harmonious life” (Davenport, 2001: 293). In the next section, I will analyse the extent to which death as an event transforms the meaning of one’s life into an actual story.

#### *V.B2. Death as an Event: Closure as Termination*

Echoes of the Latin proverb “Respice finem”, which means “First, check out the ending”, can be heard in the Maxim of Solon “Call no man happy, until he is dead” (Bortolotti, 2009: 22), this is in the sense that the ending transforms the process into a complete whole (in terms of being determined) and this changes the meaning of the whole in the way that no other event in the process might do. For, on the one hand, without the closure a narrative will always be incomplete in terms of providing the harmonious piece with the cadence, in the sense that the narrative is resolved and no other event is going to change it. On the other hand, “the way a narrative ends has significant proleptic power to elicit a wide range of broadly normative human responses on, possibly, emotional, aesthetic, and moral levels towards the narrative as a whole in virtue of it being the ending” (Seachris, 2011: 144). In this regard, individuals are

enabled to evaluate their life as a whole with the existence of death at the end, while they are alive. For, “the value of acting freely, or acting in such a way as to be morally responsible, is the value of self-expression, which is a kind of aesthetic value, or akin to an aesthetic value” (Fischer, 2013: 445). Furthermore, once individuals view their life as a narrative, they become aware of their freedom-towards-death, and are enabled to act resolutely in terms of enjoying the freedom to instil aesthetic value into their life. The product of this freedom is the life, a narrative expressed freely through aesthetic concerns and led by the integrative will.

The life of individuals is valued because it is a free life, and moreover it is worth living if it is composed of the free actions, which is similar to the value of composing melody (coherence) in a musical (one’s narrative). However, without the cadence (closure) the music composed in the musical is still incomplete (in terms of emotional import). In this regard, the closure provides the composers with the capacity to lead their musical theme towards it, with the narrative dimension of value, in terms of assigning meaning to the basic theme in the melody. Thus, if conceiving life as a narrative is the “familiar framework for thinking about one’s life in its entirety, [then] the end of life is one occasion when both the freedom and the urgency to conceive of matters in these terms can present themselves” (Behrendt, 2014: 334). Whereas it is clear what is meant by the idea that the end of life might be the basis of both the freedom and the urgency to conceive one’s life as a narrative, the idea that it is the right time for thinking in narrative terms needs to be refined. For, although in terms of being the last event, death has the capacity to instil the last drop of meaningfulness into one’s life, the end of life is neither the only nor the best time to think in narrative terms. However, “the emotion that resolves a narrative cadence tends to subsume the emotions that preceded it: the triumph felt at a happy ending is the triumph of ambitions realised and anxieties allayed”, or [a tragic ending with] one’s “hopes dashed and loves denied” (Seachris, 2011: 145). In this regard, the meaning that a life as a whole has can be eclipsed by the nature of its closure.

This is not to mean that the meaning of one’s life as a whole totally depends on the closure, but rather that the closure can transform this narrative into a happy narrative or a tragic one not through shaping the plotline but through reinforcing or diluting the values of the events in it once and for all. In this regard, “the conclusory emotion in a narrative cadence embodies not only how the audience feels about the ending; it embodies how the audience feels, at the ending, about the whole story” (Seachris, 2011: 145). Moreover, this emotion about one’s life story is definite in the sense that “having passed through the emotional ups and downs of the

story, as one event succeeded another, the audience comes to rest in a stable attitude about the series of events in its entirety” (Seachris, 2011: 145). Thus, the key point here is that whereas death as the termination, and the closure, transforms one’s life into a complete narrative, the role of individuals is reduced to being the audience while death as eventuality – closure as telos – provides individuals with the tools (coherence, emotional and experiential import) to exert control on their actions, and to lead their life in terms of being the author of it.

As a structural element in one’s life narrative, death as an event is required since it is the prerequisite of conceiving death as an eventuality (which reinforces one’s striving to be free), though its function to be the closure as termination is argued to create tension for one’s freedom. For, in this sense, “death is a termination of something that was under way, projecting towards a future” (Nussbaum, 1989: 315). In this regard, on the one hand, death as an event “robs the individual of the capacity to continue to lead a life with a narrative dimension of value, and thus with a specific sort of meaning in terms of depriving us of the possibility of changing the narrative meaning of the past” (Fischer, 2013: 450). Thus, individuals “need mortality for meaning, completeness, unity, yet their death deprives them of the completion of their self-narrative” (Behrendt, 2007: 148). On the other hand, death as an event “cuts off the accumulation of momentary well-being, and [in this sense] it can prevent us from writing a better ending to our story (and thus vindicating our past)” (Fischer, 2013: 451). In this regard, it is argued that death as an event can only function as closure to one’s narrative without restricting one’s freedom only if one could decide when to die. The crucial question is that ‘would we ever decide to let the capacity to continue to lead a life with a narrative dimension of value go away?’

The term ‘*Ausstand*’, which Heidegger uses for signifying the outstanding nature of one’s existence, is crucial in terms of revealing the relation between viewing life as a narrative and the need to see death as an event as the closure in the sense of termination. Without the closure that terminates one’s story, the individual is always in-between: birth and death, this option or that option since “the lack of wholeness means that there is still something outstanding in one’s potentiality-for-being” (Heidegger, 2010: 227). Thus, the multitude of possibilities makes self-expression valuable, and one’s existence as a type of artistic expression. Moreover, the event of death (not the eventuality of it) is the termination of this self-expression, the product of which is one’s story regulated by self-direction. In this sense, it transforms the narrative into a whole, eliminating any outstanding possibilities in the sense that just as a

musket would not be a whole without any of the lock, stock or barrel, a story without the termination is not a whole.

Deciding to conclude one's story, through the event of death, is similar to triggering a musket, once triggered it cannot be reversed. Thus, the event of death belongs to the moment that does not have any future. The eventuality of death, on the other hand, belongs to every moment that leads to the future. In this regard, the event of death, the closure to one's story as termination, is about the meaning of the whole and not about the process. Since it belongs to the moment that does not lead to any future, it cannot restrict the individual in the present when making choices, including the one in which the individual is to decide when to die.

Deciding when to die is like deciding when and how to end a story, a decision that cannot be dictated by considerations of momentary well-being. Hence a person may be rationally willing to die though he can look forward to a few more good weeks or months; and a person may rationally be unwilling to die even though he can look forward only to continued adversity. The rationality of the patient's attitude depends on whether earlier or later death would make a better ending to his life story. (Fischer, 2009: 149).

Thus, in order that the decision to end a story would be reasonable, the story should be a whole in the sense that its meaning is fixed instead of being open to indefinitely extensive possibilities of meaning overhauls, which might function as providing a better closure. In this regard, the artistic value of self-expression, in terms of writing one's narrative, is time-dependent and time-extended. The event of death transforms this time-dependent and extended value of life into a timeless (in the sense that it is not limited by time anymore) artistic value in the form of a narrative. This is one salient reason why the fairy stories end with the conventional remark: "... and they lived happily ever after". This is not because they were immortal, but since the story came up to an epiphany and emotional cadence, now its meaning is fixed, and this feature of ending transforms the story into a timeless entity, a whole.

However, in order for the story to be a whole and its meaning to be fixed, it has to be ended already. Thereby, the decision to let the capacity to continue to lead a life with a narrative dimension of value go away is never practically possible if one likes to do that for the sake of writing a better ending to one's story. In this regard, the feature of death (as an event) to function like the closure as termination to one's story does that on behalf of the individual and transforms one's narrative into an actual story. Thus, as long as one is alive one's existence is indispensable due to the artistic value of self-expression, and once individuals are dead, their

life story is immune to any change, which is why life can be seen as an art of living. Individuals can excel in this art of living, if they see it as a preparation for death (as Socrates sees it), in other words, if individuals anticipate death, they would use time as a resource in order to be in a position to welcome the ending always as the best closure no matter when it comes. To quote Seneca once again, “the man... you should admire is the one who finds it a joy to live and in spite of that is not reluctant to die” (1969: 105). For, such person was aware of his mortality by acknowledging death as an eventuality, which enabled her to see the unity as a pathway, and in this way was always prepared for the closure.

## *CONCLUDING REMARKS*

In this thesis, I aimed to demonstrate the relationship among temporality, mortality and freedom from a phenomenological standing point, as I believe that such perspective clarifies the link among the three analytics of human existence: death, freedom and narrative thinking. The first chapter of this research focused on the relationship between temporality and mortality initially from a merely linear understanding of time, which paves the way for the grand narratives to eclipse the meaning of death in terms of functioning to be the basis of individuality and authenticity. Thereby, such perspective has been criticised for eclipsing the individual freedom in the sense that it is not able to constitute an awareness of mortality as an active element in life.

Following this, in the second chapter I attempted to forge the phenomenological link between temporality and mortality through analysing Heidegger's conceptions of primordial time and being-towards-death. This led me to suggest that in conceiving death, one needs to make a distinction between death as an event and death as an eventuality. As for the phenomenological implications of this distinction on the relationship among temporality, mortality and freedom, I argued that, whereas conceiving death as an event reveals the temporal finitude of one's existence (in terms of being limited externally in temporal terms), conceiving death as an eventuality discloses the finitude of possibilities (in terms of not being able to realise each and every option one might have due to the internalisation of the external limit) at one's disposal. In this regard, I aimed to demonstrate the extent to which these conceptions would constrain one's freedom. One reason for aiming at this is the idea that the distinction between two conceptions of death and conceiving death as an eventuality requires viewing death as an active element in life through the awareness of mortality it generates. However, I demonstrated that whereas conceiving death as an event underpins the feature of its eventuality to function as a structural limit, it also acts as an external limit to one's life-time as an open horizon. Moreover, I aimed to show that the internalisation of the eventuality of death generates the sense of anxiety.

In the first part of the third chapter, thereby, in order to be able to reply to the question of 'to what extent do the two conceptions of death constrain one's freedom', as the next step, I aimed to introduce the conditions of freedom. This led me to the idea that both the event of death and conceiving it as an eventuality might be a potential tension for one's freedom. In the

second part of the third chapter, in the analysis of one's freedom with respect to death, I used Berlin's distinction between the negative and positive freedom.

In the fourth chapter, I applied the negative conception of freedom in analysing individuals' freedom with respect to the event of death. This, firstly, led me to discussing whether an immortal life-span would be a freer one, in the light of the suggestion of the negative conception that indexes the range of one's freedom to the *absence* of external constraints. After concluding this discussion with the view that one's freedom does not increase, but in fact dramatically decreases since in the case of an indefinitely long life the point of choosing between different options at a particular instant does not exist; I applied the positive conception of freedom in analysing individuals' freedom with respect to the eventuality of death. This led me to discussing whether the anxiety caused by the *presence* of death as an (ever-present) eventuality constrains one's freedom, in the light of the suggestion of the positive conception that indexes one's freedom to the *presence* of mechanisms which enable individuals to exercise control over their life. After concluding this discussion with the view that the anxiety caused by the eventuality of death might actually constrain one's freedom to a larger extent, I aimed to show that narrative thinking would be helpful to alleviate the influence of anxiety to a lesser degree. As a matter of fact, it might transform this potential constraint into a motivating factor for one's authenticity.

In the fifth chapter, I attempted to demonstrate the validity of the view that thinking in narrative terms, on the one hand, enables individuals to come to terms with the awareness of their mortality and, on the other hand, it reinforces one's freedom not only with respect to the eventuality of death but also in terms of reinforcing individuals' capacity to set direction to their actions. The first result is underpinned by the results of the psychological experiments on the relation between finding meaning in life and anxiety caused by death. I argued that seeking narrative structure in one's life provides meaning for one's life, which in turn, according to the results of experiments made by various psychologists reduces the onsets of anxiety. The second result is based on the feature of narrative thinking to acknowledge the teleological aspects of one's freedom.

All in all, when viewed through phenomenological lenses, death reveals itself as an eventuality and the mode of existence as being-towards-death. This generates a sense of anxiety for individuals which might prevent their authentic self-making. However, when the eventuality of death is viewed through the lenses of narrative thinking, one's existence is seen

as being-free-towards-death, which can reinforce one's authentic self-making, thereby one's freedom. In this regard, thinking in narrative terms is the virtue that enables us to conceive our mortality as a "shrine" of our individual freedom, our existence. As Durant states in a Kantian view:

Sensation is unorganised stimulus, perception is organised sensation, conception is organised perception, science is organised knowledge, and wisdom is organised life: each is a greater degree of order, and sequence, and unity. Whence this order, this sequence, this unity? Not from the things themselves; for they are known to us only by sensations that come through a thousand channels at once in disorderly multitude; it is our purpose that put order and sequence and unity upon this importunate lawlessness. (Durant, 2006: 352)

Thereby, it is death as the line between being and not being both temporally and ontologically, that motivates us to act freely when we think of life in narrative terms through organising it around our individuality, namely "our values, interests, aspirations, commitments and tastes" (Scarre, 2007: 150). Thus, if our lives are stories after all, and if we value our aesthetic freedom, then this means we have sufficient reasons to make our stories good ones even in the light of our mortality. For, one may not have left her mark on the grand narrative of the world through inventing technological wonders, or discovering the secrets of the laws of nature, or setting new records in sports, or ruling the greatest empire, or painting far-reaching works, or composing recognizable music and poetry yet "may nonetheless have succeeded in living the life that one intended to live, or some approximation to it" (Scarre, 2007: 150). Thereby, if Desmond views his mortality and freedom through the lenses of narrative thinking, then he may be able to say in the end 'My name is Desmond Hume and this is *my* story'.

Speaking of stories and narratives, I would like to conclude with the wise words of Shakespeare's Prince Hamlet in Act Three, Scene I:

To be, or not to be: that is the question:  
[...] The insolence of office and the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after death,



The undiscover'd country from whose bourn  
No traveller returns, puzzles the will  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others that we know not of?  
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all [...] (1992)

Finally, Can Yucel, a Turkish poet, translates the phrase “to be or not to be” as literally meaning: “there is one more possibility, and do you think it is death?” (1992: 66<sup>th</sup> sonnet). And through narrative thinking can we conceive our lives as the product of our freedom, which reveals its value of artistic expression; otherwise, our existence would neither be authentic nor free. For, without the awareness of our capability to write our stories, it would only constitute a chronicle. This amounts to exchanging one’s life-time with a life-span. However, such life-time would lack the meaning for individuals to move forward, namely to exist. For, the urgency and significance of being able to live through the path an individual can call ‘my way’ is revealed by the awareness of mortality. Individuals can find the resoluteness to walk through ‘their way’ freely by thinking in narrative terms. Thus, the most essential question ‘to be or not to be’ is underpinned by the eventuality of death, and narrative thinking transforms the anxiety about death into the striving to be free towards death. The other implication of the awareness of our mortality is not about moving forward, but also about looking back, in terms of avoiding regrets through sustaining authenticity. Even if Desmond has not been able to fulfil all of his desires or “to travel each and every highway”<sup>2</sup>, the reflection that his life was “a masterpiece of nature”<sup>3</sup> would be helpful to allay any concerns over the feeling of disappointment in the sense that he was aware that his life was an empty frame, and he crafted the painting in his way. Once he was the master of his life, Desmond was no longer slave to his mortality, as should each individual be.

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<sup>2</sup> “Regrets, I had a few,/ but then again too few to mention/ I planned each charter course, each careful step along the byway/ And, more much more than thin, I did it my way I’ve lived a life that’s full/ I travelled each and every highway;/ But more, much more, than this,/ I did it my way”. My Way, lyrics Paul Anka, singer Frank Sinatra, released by Warner Brothers, 1969.

<sup>3</sup> This is Dworkin’s phrase when he discusses the sanctity of each human life in his book “Life’s Dominion”, p.82.

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