Failure and Fault:
Further Defense of the Control-based Account of Moral Responsibility

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DEDICATION

For my husband

Ke Jin

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ABSTRACT

We call something a failure when it falls below a certain standard. Failures are common, and a portion of them are due to human activities. Human failures range from failing to pass a driving test to failing to save a drowning child. We tend not to hold people responsible simply for failures as such, but only for those for which agents are at *fault*—it usually means that we deem that agent as the "origin" or "cause" of the failure. In other words, failures of an agent do not necessarily indicate that the agent is at fault. There is at least one other condition—possessing control—that is required in order to hold an agent responsible for a failure. But is possessing control *really* a necessary condition for moral responsibility? This question is pressing because there seem to be cases—such as various types of omissions, *akrasia*, and moral attitudes—in which we hold agents responsible even though they do not obviously possess control over these things, or, at least, we are not certain about what kind of control agents possess over them.

In brief, the purpose of my dissertation is to defend a control-based account of moral responsibility that applies not merely to voluntary actions, but also to challenging cases of omissions, *akrasia*, and moral attitudes. That is, unlike what non-volitionalists advocate, possessing control is a necessary condition for finding agents at fault for their failures, and thus for holding them responsible. In chapter 1, I introduce the difficulties that the control assumption encounters, as well a few conceptions that are relevant for clarifying what moral responsibility entails. In chapters 2, 3, and 4, I analyze the kinds of control that satisfy the control condition of moral responsibility in various cases of omissions, *akrasia*, and moral attitudes. In chapter 5, I turn to argue for what I call the *sufficient control account* of moral responsibility. I then conclude the project by responding to possible objections and related issues.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Issue of Moral Responsibility.

We call something a failure when it falls below a certain standard. Failures are common, and a portion of them are due to human activities. Human failures range from failing to pass a driving test to failing to save a drowning child. We tend not to hold people responsible simply for failures as such, but only for those for which agents are at *fault*—it usually means that we deem that agent as the "origin" or "cause" of the failure.[1] In other words, failures of an agent do not necessarily indicate that the agent is at fault. There is at least one other condition—possessing control—that is required in order to hold an agent responsible for a failure.[2] Suppose Ada destroys her neighbor's garden under hypnosis. Her action might indicate that she fails to be a good neighbor, but she is not at fault since she has no control over her action under that circumstance. Possessing control is usually deemed to be one of the necessary conditions for attributing a failure to an agent who is at fault and thus holding her responsible for it. But is possessing control *really* a necessary condition for moral responsibility? This question is pressing because there seem to be cases–such as various types of omissions, *akrasia*, and moral attitudes—in which we hold agents responsible even though they do not obviously possess control over these things, or, at least, we are not certain about what kind of control agents possess over them.

[1] When I state that agents are the "cause" or "origin" of their actions here, I do not commit myself to the "mysterious" view of agent-causation. It is too big a debate to walk directly into here.
[2] There are philosophers, e.g., Capes (2012), who would argue that an agent can be blameworthy without objective wrongdoing. That is, an agent might be held responsible even if there is nothing objectively wrong, or no failure occurred. Instead, "a person is blameworthy only for those actions that manifest an objectionable quality of will on the part of the agent" (Capes 2012, p.434). Capes' argument, however, would not undermine my assumption here, since failures in the broad sense involve a problematic manifestation of will.

1.1 The Control Issue of Moral Responsibility.

In order to better understand the issue of control and moral responsibility, let us first visit the traditional Aristotelian frame. In *Nicomachean Ethics (NE)*, he proposes that: "Virtue, then, is about feelings and actions. These receive praise or blame if they are voluntary, but pardon, sometimes even pity, if they are involuntary" (1109b30-33).[3] We commonly accept his observation that moral responsibility is essentially about moral praise and blame.[4] Then, according to Aristotle, we can only hold agents responsible for their voluntary actions. He further explains that voluntary actions are those that are "choiceworthy," where "the principle of the action is in him, it is also up to him to do them or not to do them" (*NE* 1110a13-18). On the other hand, involuntary actions that we should not hold agents responsible for are "things coming about by force or because of ignorance" (*NE* 1110a1). In brief, an agent should only be held morally responsible—that is, be blamed or praised—for things that she does voluntarily.

Aristotle's work on moral responsibility inspired later philosophers and significantly shaped their work. When the notion of determinism posed a threat to whether any of our actions are free or genuinely up to us, philosophers such as Frankfurt (1969), Van Inwagen (1983), Ginet (1990), Kane (1996), and Fischer (1994) threw themselves into a debate between compatibilism and incompatibilism.[5] But whichever side they are on, they generally accept having certain

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[3] In this project, unless otherwise stated, I adopt the English translation of *Nicomachean Ethics* from Irwin, T.(1999). *Nicomachean Ethics/Aristotle: Translated with Introduction, Notes, and Glossary*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.

[4] I focus on the issue that concerns the conditions of blameworthiness in this project. I work under the assumption that praiseworthiness and blameworthiness have the same realm and same condition. There are philosophers, however, would differ. Seemingly, it does not occur to Aristotle that the conditions of moral responsibility for praiseworthiness and blameworthiness might differ. We shall talk more about this later in this chapter.

[5] It is important to note that the notion of "alternate possibilities" is different from Aristotle's notion of "up to," which does not directly affect my project. I would tentatively state that it would be far-fetched to state that they are identical, but it would also be unrealistic to claim that the notion of "alternate possibilities" does not at least inherit some of its concerns from the Aristotelian notion of "up to."

agential control as one of the conditions for bearing moral responsibility. We can call this the *control assumption* for clarity. That is, in order for an agent to be free and morally responsible for her action, she must have a certain type or degree of control over it. Thus, the control assumption adopts the Aristotelian picture that possessing a certain agential control is, at least, one of the necessary conditions for an agent to bear moral responsibility properly. Instead of being directly concerned about whether the agent's action is voluntary (like Aristotle), the contemporary control theorists focus on the condition of control when it comes to determining whether or not to hold the agent morally responsible.

Yet the control-based account of moral responsibility also inherits some of the unsolved issues from Aristotle's own research. When posing his own view in *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle discusses scenarios that would be difficult to categorize, what he calls *mixed* actions:

> But what about actions done because of fear of greater evils, or because of something fine? Suppose, for instance, a tyrant tells you to do something shameful, when he has control over your parents and children, and if you do it, they will live, but if not, they will die. These cases raise dispute about whether they are voluntary or involuntary. (1110a5-9)

In the scenario of a tyrant making you choose whether to do shameful things, it seems that the moving "principle" is still within you, and it is up to you whether to do those things or not.[6] But given the cost of disobedience, the decision is, to a great extent, forced upon you, and this would render it involuntary. Aristotle tries to settle the question by claiming that such decisions are more like voluntary actions. He might be right about this conclusion, but the rationale behind it is

[6] I argue in chapter 5 that it is "up to" rather than "voluntary" is the right principle to determine the threshold of control.

still puzzling. Furthermore, there are a variety of other borderline cases which we cannot simply determine whether they are "more like" voluntary cases, and this raises issues of whether the agents are at fault and responsible for them.

To summarize, despite providing a basis for understanding why people are held responsible for voluntary actions, the traditional Aristotelian account of moral responsibility largely overlooks the explanation of how or why people are at fault in cases of "mixed" actions. Aristotle remains ambiguous on how to distinguish whether a mixed action is "more like" a voluntary case.

This unsolved issue is also inherited by the contemporary control assumption of moral responsibility. Specifically, in some cases of *omissions, akrasia,* and *moral attitudes*, we tend to hold agents responsible for their failures, but we lack a clear explanation of how they have control over their faulty behaviors. That is, similarly to how Aristotle settles the mixed actions, we somehow jump to the conclusion that agents should be held responsible in these difficult cases, even without having a coherent control condition to account for that conclusion. To give examples:

> Omission case: Carl promises to mow his friend's lawn while she is away, but he omits to do so. He fails to do what he promises to the friend.
>
> *Akrasia* case: Belle gives in to her appetite and eats a piece of cake, although she knows that it is harmful to her health due to the doctor's instruction. She betrays her better judgment and fails to follow her diet.
>
> Moral attitude case: Dan is raised in a family that is filled with racists, and he adopts the racist beliefs by force of habit. He fails to treat other people as equals even when he is an adult.

In these difficult cases, we often hold agents responsible for their failures, yet the kind of control they have over the fault at issue is obscure at best or absent at worst; at least, control is not present in the same manner as when agents have control over their voluntary actions. The pressing question, then, is this: Is the control condition required for bearing moral responsibility in these difficult cases of omissions, *akrasia*, and moral attitudes? More generally: In the light of these cases, is control *really* a necessary condition for moral responsibility? Without a clear understanding of the control condition, we can hardly settle the disputes of whether agents are faulty and thus responsible for these failures.

Some philosophers have responded to this issue by denying that control is required *at all* for moral responsibility. For example, philosophers such as Gary Watson (1975), Susan Wolf (1987), and Angela Smith (2008) sometimes appeal to features like an agent's *real self* rather than control to explain why agents should be held responsible for occurrences such as omissions, *akrasia*, and moral attitudes. Though differing in how to spell out the details of the real self, these philosophers, often called non-volitionalists, argue that we can hold agents responsible if their occurrences reflect *who they are* or indicate *a failure or violation of moral standard*. In this way, non-volitionalists avoid having to show that agents have control over what they do in these difficult cases. Despite attracting more and more attention as an alternative to the control assumption especially in those difficult cases, the *non-volitional assumption* faces challenges in providing an account of moral responsibility that is suitably deep.[7]

[7] Various non-volitional approaches have been criticized on the grounds that they only capture a "superficial" kind of moral responsibility rather than the deep moral appraisals that seem to be the issue. The charge of superficiality can be raised even from inside. Specifically, even non-volitionalists themselves would attack each other on whether they provide an account that is merely superficial, e.g., Smith (2008) accuses Watson's (1985) view of providing a superficial account. I shall spell out the details later in chapter 5. Also, although I am certain that there are better expressions to term the distinction between "deep" and "superficial" appraisals, I inherit them for maintaining consistency with the extensive usage by non-volitionalists.

I argue that while non-volitionalists point out the conductor of failures in those cases, they nevertheless conflate the notions of failure and fault, or the notions of morally bad and morally blameworthy.[8] Specifically, by pointing out how these occurrences reflect who the agents really are, non-volitionalists merely indicate that the failures are conducted by the agents. They do not further clarify, however, why we should consider agents at fault for them. I propose instead that in order to hold agents properly responsible for certain failures, a control condition that accounts for why those failures are the agents' fault is necessary.

1.2 Chapter Outline.

The purpose of this project is to defend a control-based account of moral responsibility that applies not merely to voluntary actions, but also to cases of omissions, *akrasia,* and moral attitudes. That is, unlike what non-volitionalists advocate, we rightly hold people responsible for their failures only when they are at fault. People are only at fault for their failures when they possess the requisite control. So, we should only hold people responsible for their failures when they possess the requisite control.

I start my project by examining aspects of control in cases of omissions, *akrasia*, and moral attitudes. Specifically, I conduct a survey of aspects of control that an agent might possess in these difficult circumstances. This is the methodology that Randolph Clarke (2014b) adopts in identifying the aspects that render omissions free:

> I've distinguished several kinds of case in which someone omits to do or refrains from doing a certain thing, and I've identified, in each kind of case, various aspects of freedom one might have in omitting or refraining. (p.110)

[8] Some might wonder what "conductor" means. Mainly, it indicates the person who performs or omits to perform something, but it does not necessarily mean that she is the agent of that thing.

According to Clarke, there can be different aspects of an agent's freedom operative in various scenarios of omissions. That is, we might not be able to pinpoint the exact source of an agent's freedom in various cases of omissions, but what we can do, according to Clarke, is point out the most probable aspects of freedom, or in our case, the aspects of control, in each kind of omission.

I shall conduct the process of data collection about various aspects or kinds of control over cases of omissions, *akrasia*, and moral attitudes in chapters 2, 3, and 4.[9] Specifically, in chapter 2, I shall examine the kind of control that is required for assigning moral responsibility for intentional omissions. Though disagreeing on how to spell out the detail, Clarke and Ginet argue that an agent's mental state, such as possessing an intention, seems to be essential for an agent to exhibit control in intentional omissions. I settle the dispute by arguing that possessing a persistent intention *not* to act is necessary for agents to cause their omissions intentionally. Furthermore, I argue that while omissions are not identical to actions in every respect, there is a *symmetrical* role that intentions play in satisfying the control condition for both cases. That is, just as in cases of intentional actions, agents possess *direct voluntary control* over their intentional omissions.

Following this train of thought, in chapter 3, I shall focus on examining the agent's mental state in order to identify the source of control in cases of *akrasia* and what I call *akratic omissions*. I shall argue that a possible aspect of an agent's control over her akratic actions and omissions is her exercising of *recalcitrant but resistible* desires. In other words, compared to an addict, an akratic agent's desire is such that she executes her own volition over her incontinent

[9] It is important to note that I do not deny the non-volitional assumption in these three chapters of presenting potential aspects of control. Non-volitional approaches could contribute to our understanding of the basis of having control in some scenarios.

actions. In other words, although an opposing desire would threaten our self-control, this does not necessarily indicate that we lose the control required to be held morally responsible. Moreover, though expressing their own volitions, akratic agents are not as rationally committed to their actions as those intentional agents in a rational sense. In this way, agents possess *voluntary but not direct control* over their akratic actions and omissions.

In chapter 4, I turn to discuss cases of non-voluntary failures, e.g., unwitting omissions and implicit moral attitudes, for which we also hold agents responsible or culpable. This kind of non-voluntary culpability poses a particularly tricky problem to the traditional control-based account of moral responsibility. It is even more counterintuitive and trickier to argue that agents have control over non-voluntary failures and bear non-voluntary culpability for them. Despite the challenge, I maintain that having access to control remains one of the necessary conditions that distinguish between those non-voluntary failures that we hold agents responsible for and those we do not. That is, agents are culpable for their unwitting omissions and implicit moral attitudes only if they possess *retrospective control or state tracing control* over them. The retrospective control account differs from the previous tracing accounts in that it does not rely on tracing an agent's current attitudes back to a voluntary decision or moment. Rather, under circumstances in which agents could exercise their control, and from which we can trace their control back to a *state* in which it is reasonable to expect them to avoid committing certain failures unwittingly, they possess retrospective control over those non-voluntary failures. Compared to the kind of voluntary control that agents express in intentional and akratic scenarios, retrospective control is passive in the sense that there is no direct causal link between agents' volitions and their failures. So, retrospective control is distinctive from voluntary control to a significant extent.

Then, in chapter 5, I turn to argue for the sufficient control view of moral responsibility over the non-volitional view. Specifically, I argue that these various kinds of control presented in cases of omissions, *akrasia*, and moral attitudes, though different in kind, are sufficient to satisfy the control condition of moral responsibility. Also, it is worth mentioning that the sufficient control account is a comprehensive but not complete theory to determine the threshold for all cases of culpability. The various kinds of control that I present do not exhaust all possibilities regarding the aspects of control that agents have. Rather, I merely present some plausible aspects of control that are sufficient to explain those difficult scenarios.

Moreover, I shall argue that, compared to the non-volitional view, the control view provides a better basis to account for an agent's moral responsibility. Various accounts of non-volitional approaches—though they might meet the requirements of certain aspects of moral responsibility, e.g., attributability—fail to illustrate the connection between agents and their moral responsibility. I shall further defend the sufficient control view by responding to possible objections and concerns.

1.3 The Realm of Moral Responsibility.

Before I further pursue the quest, let me answer an important background question: What kind of moral responsibility is at issue here? I need to clarify the relevant sense of moral responsibility before I argue towards the sufficient control account. Also, without a clear statement of what moral responsibility is, I might leave the impression that, instead of providing a coherent account of moral responsibility that applies to different cases (which I aim to achieve), the sufficient control view simply illustrates different control conditions that are sufficient for *various* types of moral responsibility.

In this section, I alleviate these concerns by developing four points: First, my research concerns the aspect or face of moral responsibility that involves *participant reactive attitudes* such as resentment, indignation and guilt. Second, I advocate the theory that moral responsibility is essentially *interpersonal*. This sense of interpersonal, however, involves not only the other-regarding side, but also the self-regarding side of moral responsibility. Third, it is important to be consistent about the *content*—or, the perspective, e.g., intention, action, and consequence—of moral responsibility that is under review. Fourth, I focus on examining cases of *blameworthiness* in which people violate certain moral norms. I do not, however, suppose that there is an asymmetry between blameworthiness and praiseworthiness. The rules that apply to blameworthiness should apply to cases of praiseworthiness—that is, when people exceed the moral norm—in principle.

1.3.1 Faces of Moral Responsibility.

Philosophers have different theories about how many faces or kinds of moral responsibility exist. Some argue that there is only one or one unified face of moral responsibility (e.g., Strawson 1974; Smith 2012). Others, however, advocate there being more faces of moral responsibility (e.g., Watson 1996; Scanlon 1998; Shoemaker 2011). First, I present some of the representative discussions about the different faces/kinds of moral responsibility. I then clarify the face/kind of moral responsibility that I concern here.

P.F. Strawson (1974) advocates a theory of participant reactive attitudes that has been adopted by philosophers in various ways. For instance, according to Shoemaker (2011):

> On the now-classic Strawsonian story, holding responsible is just a matter of having and/or expressing the participant reactive attitudes (e.g., resentment, indignation, guilt, or gratitude), and in the negative cases this is just what blame consists in. (p. 616)

Furthermore, Shoemaker follows Scanlon in pointing out that reactive attitudes are not forms of blame. Rather, they are natural exhibitions of blame. That is, under the Strawsonian picture, holding someone morally responsible, as when we blame a particular moral agent, is almost identical to having participant reactive attitudes towards her. If we take Scanlon and Shoemaker's interpretations of the Strawsonian picture seriously, then it leads to a one-face theory of moral responsibility which identifies bearing moral responsibility with having and/or expressing participant reactive attitudes.

There are hardly any disputes about whether having certain reactive attitudes plays a significant role in moral responsibility. There are, however, other possible faces/kinds of moral responsibility aside from reactive attitudes that philosophers advocate. The question, then, is: Exactly, how many faces does moral responsibility have?

As mentioned, there is a significant debate among various non-volitional approaches over whether they provide accounts for the "deep" kind of moral responsibility, or whether these approaches are best for dealing with the kind of moral responsibility that is mostly "superficial."[10] In order to defend his view of moral responsibility from the charge of "superficiality," Watson (1996) makes a distinction between *attributability* or *aretaic* appraisal and *accountability* appraisal.[11] The aretaic appraisal simply identifies the conductor of moral

[10] It seems that according to these accounts, some faces of moral responsibility are, allegedly, superficial. While the other faces of moral responsibility are deep. I tend not to take the distinction between deep and superficial kind of moral responsibility as another set of two faces of moral responsibility. I find this distinction to be baffling and inappropriate to adopt in discussing moral issues or any other serious issue, though it is adopted by various non-volitionalists and thus an inevitable topic to investigate.

[11] I will give a more detailed comparison between these two kinds of moral responsibility in chapter 5. Also, Fischer and Tognazzini (2011) are inspired by Watson's distinction and further develop these two faces of moral responsibility in great detail. They list roughly 15 analytical "stages" or "steps" of moral responsibility, but they do not seem to directly affect the "count" of two faces of moral responsibility.

practices, while accountability is commonly accepted as a deep kind of moral appraisal that invites condemnation:

> To speak of conduct as deserving of "censure," or "remonstration," as "outrageous," "unconscionable" (and on some views, even as "wrong"), is to suggest that some *further response* to the agent is (in principle) appropriate. It is to invoke the practice of holding people morally accountable, in which (typically) the judge (or if not the judge, other members of the moral community) is entitled (in principle) to react in various ways. (p.230)

Accountability is a "deep" kind of moral appraisal since it tracks the face that assigns reactive attitudes to the agent that is responsible. Watson claims that his account of attributability appraisal, though different in kind, also captures the deep sense of responsibility.[12] Specifically, attributability has a moral significance distinct from accountability. It reflects the face of moral responsibility that evaluates the agent as the conductor or performer of her acts. Anyhow, Watson expands the realm of moral responsibility by arguing that there are two faces of moral responsibility that are worth considering: Attributability and Accountability.

T. M. Scanlon (1998) defends a different version of two-face theory of moral responsibility. Specifically, he argues that moral responsibility has two parts and that a comprehensive account of moral responsibility should include both: the part of being responsible and the part of being held responsible. Shoemaker (2011) calls this view "Scanlonian responsibility", and notes that it accounts for only two faces of responsibility: *Attributability* and

[12] Angela Smith (2005) argues against Watson's defense of the attributability as the deep kind of moral responsibility. We will come back and dig into this debate in Chapter 5.

Answerability. Shoemaker states that there is also a third face of moral responsibility—*accountability*—that is required for a "truly comprehensive" account of moral responsibility.

Going into more detail, Shoemaker (2011) builds his three-face view by arguing against Smith's version of the Scanlonian responsibility, in which Smith argues that "to be responsible for X is just for X to be properly attributable to one, that is, for one to be answerable for X" (p.606). In other words, Smith agrees with Scanlon that attributability and answerability are two faces of moral responsibility, but contends that they collapse into one. Shoemaker rejects this statement by proposing that attributability can stand alone as one face of responsibility without the agent possessing answerability:

> The reason is that being morally responsible is, at least in part, being open to a certain range of moral responses, and our responsibility practices include the relevant sorts of moral responses to mere attributability. (p.612)

Shoemaker takes one face of responsibility to be mere attributability, which is commonly associated with an agent's character and thus attracts aretaic appraisal.[13] For instance, we may make evaluative judgments about someone being a coward. Aretaic appraisals, such as judging someone to be a coward, are not merely stating superficial assessments, e.g., she is tall. Rather, aretaic appraisals "track expressions of evaluative judgments generally." Answerability, on the other hand, is only one specific kind of evaluative judgment that attributability tracks. It consists in holding someone to be answerable for his actions and attitudes, and is about having reason-based evaluative judgments. Answerability comes in when we deal with the deliberative and reason-tracking aspects of the agent. That is to say, attributability consists of at least two

[13] Shoemaker's view of attributability is closely connected to Watson's view, but they are not the same. And neither are their views of accountability. See Shoemaker's footnote (p.613).

faces/kinds of moral appraisal. First, it can stand alone as mere attributability. Second, it can further include answerability in cases that involve reason-based evaluative judgments. In this way, Shoemaker denies that there is an inseparable relationship between mere attributability and answerability.

Furthermore, Shoemaker also argues that there is a third face of moral responsibility—accountability—that is missing in Scanlonian responsibility, though we have heard the term from Watson. Shoemaker contends that when we hold someone responsible, we do not stop at attributing a particular incident to the agent or at holding the agent answerable for her reason-based evaluative commitments. Instead, Shoemaker states that certain other reactive responses are further down the road when we hold someone responsible:

> What it must mean to hold someone to account is precisely to sanction that person, whether it be via the expression of a reactive attitude, public shaming, or something more psychologically or physically damaging. (p.623)

In this, Shoemaker echoes Strawson's notion of reactive attitudes and deems it the third face of moral responsibility. The face of accountability entitles us to express reactive attitudes (positive or negative) towards a moral agent after she crosses certain lines, or more precisely, certain "relationship-defining demands." Furthermore, it is important to note that someone might conflate what we are accountable for with what we are answerable for. Shoemaker makes a clear distinction between answerability and accountability while further defending his three-face view, and he argues that the former face points to the justificatory response while the latter face draws reactive attitudes.[14]

[14] Smith responds to Shoemaker's view by arguing that there is only one unified face of moral responsibility—answerability. According to Smith (2012): "What Shoemaker calls 'responsibility as attributability,' I will argue, is

Now that we have been exposed to a series of theories about the faces of moral responsibility. Let us consider these views and examine whether they offer legitimate accounts of moral responsibility. I admit that each of the three faces—attributability, answerability, and accountability—seems to capture a specific feature of moral responsibility. Each of them merits attention for offering a piece of the puzzle of understanding moral responsibility. In this project, however, I only attend to the full-blooded face of moral responsibility, in which we can properly have and express reactive attitudes such as resentment and indignation towards agents.[15]

Let me clarify what I mean by full-blooded moral responsibility. First, our possession of certain reactive attitudes can be a spontaneous reaction to moral scenarios, or it can be a more analytical process of making judgments according to certain moral beliefs. This is similar to the way a judge makes a verdict: the act of delivering a judgment can itself be a process of making your stand clear. Moreover, I grant that the expression of reactive attitudes can be outward, but this does not necessarily mean that the expression *must* be outward or clearly delivered to the targeted moral agent. A dead serial killer is still hideous and worth condemning, even if there no longer exists an agent toward whom we may directly express our attitudes. In this way, having and expressing reactive attitudes may collapse into one another, at least as I am using the term.

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not a form of responsibility at all, and what he calls 'responsibility as accountability' is just responsibility as answerability in contexts where an agent has violated a specific moral obligation to others" (p.577). Rather, answerability is the core of moral responsibility. In this way, these three faces of moral responsibility are unified into one face again. It is worth noticing that, however, Smith is not rejecting the role that attributability and accountability play in depicting a full picture of moral responsibility. What she rejects is that these two other faces of moral responsibility—attributability and accountability—could play separate roles in assigning moral responsibility without answerability.

[15] The notion of full-blooded kind of moral responsibility may correspond or at least overlap the notion of the deep kind of moral responsibility. I tend not to adopt the distinction between "superficial" and "deep" kinds of moral responsibility. I do not find it to be extremely comprehensible. Also, due to the multiple faces of moral responsibility and the disagreements among philosophers about the use of the terms, I will stick with the term "responsible" in order to avoid confusion. It is safe to say that my sense of responsibility is not merely attributability, but whether it is accountability or answerability in another sense is a mess that I do not intend to step into in the current project.

By insisting that reactive attitudes are an essential ingredient of holding an agent responsible, however, I invite another worry.[16] It concerns two problems with the way in which a moral agent has and/or expresses reactive attitudes: first, whether the agent can be justifiably held responsible (e.g. in the form of being a target of reactive attitude) under certain scenarios; and second, whether any moral agent can be justified in expressing reactive attitudes to another. It seems that these two problems are connected. In examining the control condition of moral responsibility, I focus on responding to the first problem. But I cannot simply disregard the second problem. Specifically, whether anyone is justified in expressing a reactive attitude poses a serious issue, especially when it comes to expressing negative reactive attitudes. Since more and more people fancy themselves to be living in a "respectable" and "polite" society, they do not mind showering people with praise or any other positive reactive attitudes. But in negative circumstances, they mind their own business and tolerate more wrongdoing in others. With the problem of whether we are in principle justified to express reactive attitudes settled, we will then be better positioned to argue whether a certain agent is an appropriate recipient of reactive attitudes.[17]

I respond to the second problem as follows. First, some philosophers may question whether a moral agent needs a certain *authority* to express their reactive attitudes. For instance, people who exhibit a certain moral deficiency may not merit the liberty to shed their harsh

[16] I am not alone in worrying about the legitimacy of having/expressing reactive attitudes towards one another. For instance, Fischer and Tognazzini (2011) express similar worries. They pose a series of questions regarding the issue of reactive attitudes and depict a series of escalating circumstances that involve reactive attitudes, which is illuminating but unnecessarily detailed for my account of the issue.

[17] Also, fewer people feel confident enough to make a solid moral stand due to the prevalence of moral relativism. These factors cloud our judgments about whether we are expressing reactive attitudes righteously. In practice, I agree that it is indeed proper to be cautious about whether we can justifiably or appropriately express reactive attitudes towards a wrongdoer. In theory, however, I adopt the standpoint that if a moral agent meets the condition of being responsible, she is a proper recipient of corresponding reactive attitudes.

judgments towards other agents who share the same deficiency. Otherwise, they are open to the accusation of double standards or being hypocrites themselves. I understand where this worry might come from, but I do not share the same concern. A person does not need to have excellent painting skills in order to appreciate the Mona Lisa. Similarly, as long as the moral assessment is solid and appropriate, it should make no difference whether it comes from a morally decent person or a morally defective person. Even if there is a moral defective agent A, who exhibits a double standard while accusing agent B of the same defect that she has, our moral assessment of A being a hypocrite (and our corresponding reactive attitudes towards A) should be separated from her righteous judgment that B is in the wrong and thus entitle her to express a reactive attitude towards B.

Second, some philosophers even question whether anyone is ever entitled to express reactive attitudes to another. Let us say that you read a report of a father in another country who abuses his son. There is no question whether this father should be held responsible. But you have no direct relationship with the father nor the son whatsoever. People might wonder whether you are entitled to express reactive attitudes to a stranger like that father. The problem, then, is this: Is anyone entitled to express reactive attitudes as a mere bystander? I believe so. Moral responsibility is essentially *interpersonal*. In the realm of morality, it is not the case that what one does only matters to the agent herself. Our expression of reactive attitudes towards that agent is the minimal right that we preserve toward each other as "mere bystanders." That father may slap or kick his own son, but the effects of his actions extend further than him (assuming that we abide by the same moral law of not abusing children).

In brief, I have examined a series of theories about different faces or kinds of moral responsibility, which are important for future understanding. For the purpose of this project, I do not attempt to either side with or refute any of these theories. Rather, whatever distinctions philosophers make, my research mainly focus on the face of moral responsibility that involves reactive attitudes. It is worth mentioning that I do not intend to undermine other faces/kinds of moral responsibility which do not involve reactive attitudes, or to imply that moral responsibility is nothing more than expressing reactive attitudes. It is simply that I am concerned with the face of moral responsibility that entitles us to righteously express our indignation, resentment, and so on.

1.3.2 Moral Responsibility is Essentially Interpersonal.

As I said earlier, I hold the belief that moral responsibility is essentially interpersonal, by which I mean, roughly, that moral responsibility can only occur, and must be thought of, as a relation between people.[18] There are few disagreements about whether it requires more than one person to form a meaningful sense of moral responsibility. What interpersonal means, however, poses a more serious question. Does it entail that moral responsibility cannot be self-regarding? I argue not.

P.F. Strawson (1974) makes a distinction between what he calls “self-reactive” attitudes and “other-reactive” attitudes. Most of the reactive attitudes that I mentioned before, such as indignation and resentment, are other-reactive attitudes. That is to say, our participant reactive attitudes, such as feeling resentment or indignation, always target others. In other cases, however, our attitudes are self-reactive, such as when we feel guilt or remorse:

[18] According to Michael Zimmerman (2016), this view is widely adopted by R.J. Wallace (1994); Gary Watson (2004); T.M. Scanlon (2008); P.F. Strawson(2008); Angela Smith (2005, 2008, 2012, 2015), Stephen Darwall (2006), David Shoemaker (2007, 2011, 2015), Michael McKenna (2012), and Derk Pereboom (2013). Zimmerman himself undermines several popular interpretations of the issue and concludes that it reveals no significant truth. In this project, I side with the account that moral responsibility is interpersonal. I shall, however, explain what it means to me.

> The personal reactive attitudes rest on, and reflect, an expectation of, and demand for, the manifestation of a certain degree of goodwill or regard on the part of other human beings towards ourselves; or at least on the expectation of, and demand for, an absence of the manifestation of active ill will or indifferent disregard. (p.15)

For instance, unlike other-regarding reactive attitudes, the attitude of remorse is self-regarding. Self-reactive attitudes, such as feeling remorse about our own wrongdoings, do not seem to require us to actually interact with other people. For instance, suppose I am the only one that witnesses a child drowning in a lake, but I do not even attempt to save him. Afterward, I feel extremely remorseful for my selfishness even if no one else blames me for the occurrence. The feeling of remorse in this case is purely self-regarding. The problem, then, is: If we admit that reactive attitudes can sometimes be purely self-regarding, would this threaten the belief that moral responsibility is essentially interpersonal?

Jonathan Bennett (1980) responds to the threat in the following way:

> A self-reactive attitude does involve an important 'interpersonal' relation: remorse, for instance, can be represented as a confrontation—with an accusing glare on one side and downcast eyes on the other—between one's present self and some past self. (p.44)

According to Bennett, an interpersonal relation is a factor even in cases of self-remorse. When a moral agent feels remorse, she is actually conducting a moral assessment between her present self and her past self. Bennett's explanation, however, fails to ease all worries about the threat. Zimmerman (2016) raises the objection: "A 'community' of one, composed of temporal slices of oneself! In any case, if all it takes is one person to make a moral community, then of course the

Slogan is true, but only trivially so" (p.258).[19] In other words, if one person can have an interpersonal relationship with herself in different time slices, then all it takes to have a moral community is one person. This is clearly not the kind of interpersonal relation and moral responsibility that we have in mind.

Zimmerman himself offers a development to ease the threat:

> If ever some self-reactive attitude is appropriate, then so too, in principle, is some other-reactive attitude. True, only P can feel genuine remorse for what P has done, but it may be perfectly appropriate for someone else, Q, to adopt some related attitude toward P in light of what P has done. (pp.258-9)

This new response seems to suggest that where there are self-reactive attitudes, there are certain other-reactive attitudes on the way. By connecting the self-regarding attitudes to other-regarding attitudes, Zimmerman links the interpersonal relation back to the self-reactive attitudes indirectly. But his solution also undermines the possibility that self-reactive attitudes *per se* are essentially interpersonal, which is not totally satisfying.[20]

I disagree with Bennett's statement that a person can conduct an interpersonal relation with herself in a different time-slice. Rather, I propose that she is conducting self-examination under the interpersonal norms. For instance, Robinson (from *Robinson Crusoe*) could continue living as a moral agent even if there were no one else on the island, but I doubt if a person who somehow ends up being raised by a pack of wolves could conduct a normal moral life in our community, at least not at the beginning. That is, Robinson could follow interpersonal moral

[19] The "Slogan" at issue is "There can be no moral responsibility without a moral community."

[20] It is a common practice to treat the self-regarding part of moral responsibility as "personal." Fischer and Tognazzini (2011) state that attributability talks about "the connection the agent has with her action," while accountability concerns "the potential interaction the agent might have with her moral community." Only in later cases of holding an agent responsible is she open to moral blame from her community.

norms alone on an island, while a wolf-person could not live a moral life even when living among other people.

What is more, I admit that a self-reactive attitude can be connected to other-reactive attitudes. But a self-reactive attitude can represent or imply an interpersonal relationship without involving with other-reactive attitudes. For a self-reactive attitude is also essentially the product of following a certain interpersonal moral norm. That is, even if there is no one else to "react" to the occurrence, a self-reactive attitude is an indication that the moral agent herself is deeply bonded by morality. She internalizes her role as one part of a moral community and thus the moral responsibility that comes with it. In other words, the self-regarding part of reactive attitudes is not only self-standing, but also essential to the notion of interpersonal moral relationship. Expressing reactive attitudes towards the others or being the recipient of the others' reactive attitudes is only one part of moral responsibility. Aside from that, generating corresponding self-reactive attitudes is also independently an inseparable part of moral responsibility.

In summary, the statement that moral responsibility is essentially interpersonal is compatible with both self-reactive attitudes and other-reactive attitudes. Moreover, self-reactive attitudes expand the realm of moral responsibility in a way that they include those assessments that are mostly self-regarding—e.g. character defect of *akrasia* or intemperance—into our moral considerations.

1.3.3 Content of Moral Responsibility.

What specifically an agent is morally responsible for—or, as Fischer (2017) refers to, the *content* of moral responsibility—is *also* a notion that requires further clarification.[21] There are, it seems, a variety of things that an agent can be morally responsible for, which leads to disagreements.

In his previous work, Fischer (1982) lists a few popular options for the content of moral responsibility:

> There is considerable disagreement about what sorts of things we hold persons responsible for. Some philosophers believe that we hold agents responsible only for their choices, and not for their acts (if these are different from their choices); some believe that we hold agents responsible for their acts, but not for the consequences of these acts, whereas others insist that we hold agents responsible for the consequences of their acts (as well as the choices and acts themselves). (p.28)

In other words, the content of responsibility could be choices (or intentions), actions, or consequences, or some sort of combinations of those factors. In cases of omission, an agent can also be held responsible for her failure to act, or her failure to attempt to act. Since the content of moral responsibility is varied, it is reasonable to think that the control condition for them might vary accordingly. That is, while examining the control condition, we have to be careful about which aspect of moral responsibility is at issue.

There is another way of distinguishing among different kinds of moral responsibility that might affect the control condition. Zimmerman (1988, 2016) distinguishes two senses of being

[21] Fischer also compares the content of moral responsibility with the "degree" of moral responsibility, which is not the current concern. I suggest in chapter 5 that agents should be condemned differently if their control is different, but that is more of a practical issue to deal with.

morally responsible *for* something: *prospective* and *retrospective*.[22] In cases where "the thing lies in the future," the moral responsibility is prospective. Prospective moral responsibility can be free from reactive attitudes, since what is held responsible is in the future. It is similar to the notion of duty or obligation, according to Zimmerman. In cases where "the thing for which one is responsible lies in the past," we can say that the agent *bears* responsibility in a retrospective sense. Blameworthiness or praiseworthiness then kicks in when an agent is held responsible retrospectively. It is important to note that retrospective control, which I argue for in chapter 4, is not in direct relation to the kind of retrospective responsibility described here. The distinction between prospective and retrospective responsibility can be further clarified by Zimmerman's lifeguard case. A lifeguard, by virtue of her occupation, has a duty to ensure the swimmers' continued safety. In this scenario, Zimmerman would say that the lifeguard possesses perspective responsibility. Suppose, however, that the lifeguard fails her duty and it leads to the death of a swimmer. Then the lifeguard bears retrospective responsibility for the swimmer's death.

The distinction between prospective and retrospective responsibly is not awfully clear. For one thing, if the notion of prospective responsibility is close to "duty" or "obligation," like Zimmerman suggests, then it is more of a constant state rather than something that resides in the future. Specifically, prospective responsibility does not magically emerge in the future when something occurs, the way Zimmerman believes. A lifeguard's perspective responsibility exists throughout the entire time he is on duty, whether in the past, present or future. Also, if someone witnesses the lifeguard's negligence and the tragedy of the swimmer's death, then the witness

[22] I take Zimmerman's (2016) recent explanation of prospective and retrospective here. In his book (1988), Zimmerman explains that these two senses of moral responsibility belong to personal responsibility. In comparison, there is causal responsibility, which "just is event-causation; that which is responsible is an event (in this sense, the short-circuit), and that for which this event is responsible is another event (in this sense, the fire)" (p.1).

can blame the lifeguard for the thing that occurs right at the same moment it happens. It seems that the thing which an agent can be held retrospectively responsible for does not necessarily occur in the past as Zimmerman states. For another, even if we grant that the distinction is clear, I fail to appreciate the significance of distinguishing between prospective and retrospective moral responsibility. For when we hold the lifeguard responsible for her failure to save a swimmer, we do not hold her any more or less responsible based on past events.

Though I would not take Zimmerman's distinction as essential for understanding the content of moral responsibility, it does reveal some truth. Specifically, one of the preconditions of holding someone responsible is that she has to possess the duty or obligation regarding something. It does not matter whether we regard moral duty as an internal moral law or whether we treat it as merely an external force, we have to work under the assumption that a certain moral duty is behind the thing for which we hold someone responsible. Moral duty is obviously present when we hold someone responsible in a negative way. Some philosophers, however, raise doubts about whether being praised also requires the presence of moral duty. In the next section, I investigate whether there is a significant asymmetry between blameworthiness and praiseworthiness.

1.3.4 Blameworthiness and Praiseworthiness.

As I have mentioned above, I am focusing on examining the kind of moral responsibility that involves having and/or expressing reactive attitudes. Most reactive attitudes are negative, like indignation and resentment, in that we express them towards those agents who are blameworthy. In scenarios in which a person is praiseworthy, we express positive reactive attitudes. Blameworthiness and praiseworthiness are the two pillars of moral responsibility. Some philosophers, however, see an asymmetry between blameworthiness and praiseworthiness.

Specifically, blaming a moral agent seems to require that the moral agent satisfy sophisticated requirements, e.g., the agent has to possess control, while praising a moral agent has much looser requirements, if there are any.

Most philosophers pay more attention to the negative side of moral responsibility—whether they are termed as blameworthiness, answerability, or accountability. When we investigate whether to hold an agent responsible (or specifically, answerable or accountable), the common connotation is that we are investigating whether that person is blameworthy. Answerability or accountability, however, seems to only have an intimate relationship with blameworthiness, and not with praiseworthiness. Applying terms of responsibility to cases of praiseworthiness feels less natural than using them in cases of blameworthiness. For instance, Zimmerman (2016) states that when we blame a moral agent, this kind of negative appraisal contains a certain *demand* for a response from the agent. It would most likely make us resent the agent more if she shrugs off the moral blame that she is supposed to take. In cases of praiseworthiness, however, this tendency to demand is less obvious or even absent. If someone acts heroically and saves a baby from fire, we express our respect and awe, but we do not usually demand the hero to respond to her own action. Smith (2008), however, argues that there is an analogue to a demand in the praiseworthiness case:

> This feature of negative moral appraisal [viz., calling upon an agent to answer for something] is more difficult to extend to its positive analogue, but I think we can say something like the following: positive moral appraisal, though it does not itself address a demand to its target, by its nature involves an acknowledgment that the agent has exceeded in some way the legitimate moral demands that apply to her. (p.381)

Smith's response is inadequate according to Zimmerman. That is, she conflates two senses of demand: the demands of morality itself and the demands that one agent makes of another. Regrading cases of moral responsibility in which we hold agents answerable, we are referring to the second kind of demand rather than the first, contrary to what Smith implies in her response.

I agree with Zimmerman that Smith's response is not satisfying, but her approach of trying to fill in the gap between praiseworthiness and blameworthiness is admirable. I would also argue that there should be no significant gap nor asymmetry between them. For one thing, even if we admit that praiseworthiness does not seem to fit in the picture of answerability or accountability, this does not mean that it fails to meet the core condition of moral responsibility. As I mentioned in the previous section, some moral duty must govern the issue if one is to hold someone responsible. Now I shall illustrate how blameworthiness and praiseworthiness are symmetrical in requiring the precondition of moral duty. Specifically, moral duty grounds moral demands in both cases of blame and cases of praise. In cases of blaming a moral agent, we say, or at least imply, that she fails to satisfy a certain moral duty. For instance, when we accuse someone of being a hypocrite, we demand that the person answer for her moral defect, since she fails the moral duty of being a decent person. In cases of praiseworthiness, however, an agent answers a demand of morality and fulfills her moral duty. For instance, say that a person gives five dollars to a homeless person who is in need. We would praise her for her kindness since she follows her moral duty to be kind. If, however, she decides to give five dollars to her colleague, who lives comfortably even without her donation, it would create an awkward situation rather than a praiseworthy one, since there is no relevant moral duty or demand for her to give five dollars to the colleague. In this way, even when the content of the demand varies, praiseworthiness and blameworthiness do not exhibit significant asymmetry, at least not on the grounds that praiseworthiness lacks the feature of demand while blameworthiness requires it.

There are also philosophers who argue that an asymmetry between praiseworthiness and blameworthiness lies in the difference between their control conditions. Specifically, they say that an agent is blameworthy only if she has control over her action, but such control is not required in order for her to be praiseworthy for her action.[23] Intuitively, I reject this supposition. One of the preconditions for properly blaming or praising people is that they are adequate moral agents. We use the terms of blame and praise in different senses: Strict and Loose. We may use the terms loosely to agents that are not fitted. That is, when we blame or praise someone in a loose way, we do not examine whether the agents are under the right conditions to be blamed or praised. For instance, the process of teaching children to follow moral rules will inevitably involve us blaming or praising them for their actions. But we should know, even as we use the terms, that they are not yet proper recipients of serious moral condemnation or praise. When we apply the term "blame" or "praise" strictly, we mean that the recipient must meet the same condition regardless of whether she is being blamed or praised. In this way, I propose that the condition that renders people responsible for both their negative actions and positive actions should not detach from each other in principle.

In brief, I do not detect a significant asymmetry between praiseworthiness and blameworthiness. My examination of the control condition will focus on analyzing cases of blameworthiness, but the strict, or proper, condition for holding agents negatively responsible should not, in principle, differ from the positive side of moral responsibility—praiseworthiness.

[23] The asymmetry between praiseworthiness and blameworthiness is too much of a debate to dig deeply into in my current project. See Dana Kay Nelkin (2011, chapter 5) for more detail about the debate.

Chapter 2 Control over Intentional Omissions.

According to the *control assumption*, agents have to possess control over their actions in order to properly bear moral responsibility for them. If the control assumption holds true in cases of omissions, it seems that we would expect agents to also possess control over those omissions that they are held responsible for.[24] Suppose a lifeguard watches a swimmer drowning in the pool, and viciously intends not to save the swimmer. Eventually, that swimmer drowns. Although the lifeguard does not do anything to drown the swimmer, it seems that she should be held morally responsible for intentionally omitting to save the swimmer. As indicated, there hardly exists any dispute about whether agents should be held responsible for their intentional omissions. Exactly how agents possess control over omissions, however, requires further clarification. In this chapter, I argue that just as in cases of intentionally doing something, having a persistent intention to *not* do the thing *causes* the agent's omission, and thus she possesses a kind of *direct voluntary control* over her intentional omission.

Let me start this chapter by briefly introducing a distinction between the broad and narrow senses of omissions. Omissions, in their broad sense, include all non-occurrences. I, however, adopt a narrow sense of omissions, in which agents omit to perform the actions that certain norms require them to perform. Then, I introduce a notion of intentional omissions that is primarily advocated by Ginet (2004) and Clarke (2014a). They both argue that there are three major conditions—what I call the reality condition, the ability condition, and the mental condition—required for an omission to be intentional. After analyzing these conditions, especially the mental condition, I argue that in order to hold an agent responsible for her

[24] As mentioned in chapter 1, though the subject is fascinating, in the current project, I won't dig into whether determinism would threaten agents' ultimate control.

intentional omission, her intention to not do the thing must persist throughout. What is more, I argue that intentions play a symmetrical causal role in both the cases of intentional actions and those of intentional omissions, and also that agents exhibit a kind of *direct voluntary control* over their intentional omissions. Thus, agents may properly be held responsible for their intentional omissions.

2.1 Omissions.

What we do has clear effects on the world around us. But the things that we omit to do make a difference as well. Unlike actions, which we can observe being conducted at a certain time (even in cases where there is no audience, the observation is at least available to the agent who performs them), it is inconvenient, if not impossible, to pinpoint how and when an omission occurs. More importantly, without a proper understanding of omissions, we cannot settle the conditions under which certain omissions are attributable to an agent. In order to avoid this obscurity, it is necessary to clarify the relevant sense of omissions in question before we examine the possible grounds of agential control over them.

Ann never walks the Queen's dog. Some philosophers, e.g., Lewis (1986), Hall (2004), and McGrath (2005), might instantly say that this entails the nonoccurrence of her not walking the Queen's dog, and label non-occurrences like this as omissions of hers. They do so because they adopt a broad sense of what omissions are, and so conclude that omissions consist of the non-occurrences of any event of a certain sort.

Following Clarke (2014a), I adopt a narrower sense of omissions, in which *normativity* plays a significant role in further defining the concept. Specifically, if there is no norm of any kind that requires Ann to walk the Queen's dog, her not walking the dog is not an omission of hers in the relevant sense.[25] On the other hand, if Ann is the Queen's designated dog walker, then she has an obligation to walk the Queen's dog because that is part of her job description. In this latter scenario, the nonoccurrence of Ann's never walking the dog would count as an omission of hers. Norms for omissions can be manifested in different forms—such as a moral obligation to not commit murder, a formal contract, or an informal promise—and they pose certain requirements for the agent.[26]

In brief, there exists a broad sense of omissions, which includes all non-occurrences, but I, in line with philosophers like Clarke, am concerned with a narrow understanding of omissions. So, as I am using the term, if there is no *norm* that calls for the agent to do what she omits to do, then there is no omission.

Moreover, there are various other ways to distinguish which omissions pertain to norms. It is important to note that these ways of distinguishing are not mutually exclusive.[27] Some omissions are, allegedly, identical to certain actions, while others are not. For instance, if a soldier follows an order to stand at attention, her omission of not moving is identical to her action of standing still. Omissions that involve more than bodily movement, however, tend not to be held (e.g., by philosophers such as Fischer 2017) as identical to actions.[28] There are also cases

[25] I am not denying the broad sense of omissions, but my focus of interest about omissions is related to issues of moral responsibility, and the presence of norms is essential when it comes to attributing responsibility to an agent. Including omissions that do not contain the relevant norms pertaining to agents makes the range of omissions enormous and renders the issue trivial.

[26] I adopt Clarke's line of defining the realm of omissions by whether there are norms required. There are other ways to distinguish between broad/wide and narrow senses of omissions that are more directly involved with principles such as the agent's capacity to omit. For instance, Fischer (1995) embraces a relatively wide conception of omissions, "whenever a person does not do something, X, he fails in the relevant sense to do it, and he omits to do it" (p.46). According to Fischer, omissions of this sense do not require explicit deliberation about X, or the ability to do X.

[27] From this point forward, I mean omissions in its narrow sense (the kind that pertains to norms) when I use the term without specific clarifications.

[28] There are philosophers, e.g. Davidson (1985), who defend the omission-action identity view, in which all

of omissions that occur for a short while as well as omissions that are sustained for a considerable period of time. If I promise my friend to meet her at 2 p.m., then my omitting to show up at 2 p.m. counts as an omission that occurs for a short while. In a case where I omitted to bring back a souvenir for my friend after my six months' stay in Greece, my omission of not buying a gift is more likely to be deemed as an omission that lasts a long time.

More essentially, we could also distinguish between intentional omissions and non-intentional omissions based upon whether the agent possesses an intentional mental state of a certain kind. Examining the distinction is important, for it is closely related to our considerations of moral responsibility. This is not to say that agents are only morally responsible for intentional omissions. In some cases of non-intentional omissions, agents should also be held responsible, which is an issue I will deal with in the following chapters. In the present chapter, in order to defend the way the control account of moral responsibility explains cases of intentional omissions, I focus on examining the conditions that render an omission intentional, and whether an agent possesses control over her intentional omissions. And if she does, then what kind of control it is.[29]

2.2 Conditions of Intentional Omissions.

In order to better analyze the sources of control and thus an agent's moral responsibility for intentional omissions, it is suitable to start by examining the conditions that render an

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omissions are identical to actions. Philosophers such as Clarke (2014) and Fischer (2017) advocate the hybrid view that only some omissions are identical to actions. They both illustrate the representative omission-action identity case as standing still and omitting to move are identical to each other. Here, I merely present this popular view but do not hold the identity view of any form, but this view would not threaten my main point that agents exhibit similar control in both cases of intentional actions and intentional omissions.

[29] I leave the discussion of non-intentional omissions for which we tend to hold agents responsible—e.g., omissions that are motivated by desires and omissions that are nonvoluntary—in chapter 3 and 4.

omission intentional. The prominent philosophers that work on omissions, e.g. Carl Ginet (2004) and Randolph Clarke (2014a), argue that there are three major conditions required for an omission to be intentional. First, what I call the "reality" condition—that the agent did not do the thing. Second, what I call the "ability" condition—that she could have done the thing. Third, what I call the "mental" condition, which concerns the kind of intention needed, a question that is much disputed. Specifically, Ginet argues that the agent has to possess a persistent intention to not do the thing, while Clarke defends a less strict mental condition, in which the agent only has to possess an intention with relevant content at some pertinent time. Further, Clarke argues that intentions play a causal role in cases of intentional omissions, while Ginet defends a non-causal account.

To state Ginet's (2004) position in more detail, he presents the conditions for an agent's intentionally not doing a certain thing, "V-ing," as follows:

> S intentionally did not V during T if and only if[30]
>
> (i) S did not V during T—what I call the "reality" condition,
>
> (ii) the interval T is composed of a sequence of intervals such that throughout each of those intervals S intended that it contain no V-ing by her—what I call the "mental" condition, and
>
> (iii) S could have V-ed during T (or at least could have done something by which she might have V-ed during T)—what I call the "ability" condition.

In addition to the "reality" condition (i) that the action was not performed by the agent during that time period, and the "ability" condition (iii) that the agent could have so acted or could have done something which she would have done the committed thing, there is also the "mental"

[30] Where S is an agent (the subject of the omission) and T is a duration of time.

condition (ii) that during the time period in which the agent intentionally did not do a certain thing, she possessed the intention to not do that thing. Ginet further argues that the agent must possess this intention throughout the time, meaning that even if the agent is not constantly aware of the intention, once it is acquired, the intention cannot be forgotten or abandoned by the agent changing her mind.

Also, it is important to note that Ginet (2002, 2010) defends a non-causal account, which claims that moral responsibility requires *uncaused* actions. That is, unlike what is commonly believed, Ginet argues that although the agent's possession of an intention explains the corresponding action, it does not necessarily imply that there exists a causal link between an intention and the explained action. By extending the non-causal account to cases of intentional omissions, we conclude that an intention not to act explains the non-occurrence but not in a causal way.

So according to Ginet, the mental condition for agents to have control over their intentional omissions is the possession of a persistent intention to not do that thing throughout the time, but the connection between an intention and the corresponding omission is not causal.

Clarke agrees with Ginet that there are three conditions that define intentional omissions. He, however, argues against Ginet's mental condition in the following three main ways.

First, Clarke argues that an omission can be intentional if the agent has an intention *at some pertinent time*, rather than having a persistent intention throughout the time, as Ginet claims. Clarke (2014a) presents the following case to explain his reasoning:

> Suppose that having decided not to attend a meeting in a distant city on Monday morning, I don't carry out any of the needed preparations: booking a flight, getting to the airport, flying to that city, and so forth. Having forgone the preparations, I have no further need

> of the intention not to attend, and with other things on my mind, I may dispense with it. (The claim isn't that the intention *couldn't* be retained, only that it need not be.) It can nevertheless be the case that my omission to attend the meeting is intentional. (p.65)

He further states that there is no need for me to keep the intention till Monday morning, since "the intentionality of the omission doesn't require that there's something occurring on Monday morning that I'm doing intentionally"(p.66). That is, the omission would still count as intentional even if the intention could not have been carried out 'til Monday morning, since there was no way for the agent to actually attend the meeting without adequate preparations.

Second, contrary to Ginet's statement that the agent has to possess an intention to not do the thing, Clarke argues that an intention *with some relevant content* is enough to render our omissions intentional. Clarke offers a list of scenarios about how "relevant" the intention could be; here is one, representative scenario:[31]

> Suppose that while walking in the countryside you come to a fork in the path. You're aware that the path on the left is more pleasant, and you realize that should you take the path on the right your walk will be less enjoyable. Suppose that you nevertheless decide to take the path on the right (perhaps because that one is shorter), and you then do so, you needn't, in addition to intending to take the right path, also intend not to take the left path in order for it to be the case that you intentionally don't take (refrain from taking) the latter. (p.67)

In the fork case presented above, Clarke claims that the agent's intention to take the right path is relevant enough to make your omission to take the left path intentional. He further presents the

[31] Clarke has to confirm that the content of relevant intentions is "somewhat vague," which makes his intentional condition more suspicious. I will talk about this later in section 3.

following action case to support how relevant intentions could render an omission intentional. Suppose you intentionally start your car in the morning, knowing that it will be really noisy. Your action of disturbing your neighbor would then also be intentional even without your possessing an active intention to do so. Similarly, according to Clarke, “one can carry out an intention to A and be aware that, in intentionally A-ing, one will not do something B, without then intending not to B, and yet intentionally refrain from B-ing” (p.68). Similarly, in the omission version of the scenario, your omission of not taking the left path is also intentional without you intentionally omitting not to take the left path. For the omission to be intentional, it only requires that your action to take the right path be intentional. The omission of not taking the left path, however, is neither an end of nor a means to the action of taking the right path. Rather, just as disturbing your neighbor while starting your car intentionally is a side effect that counts as an intentional omission, so omitting to take the left path is merely a side-effect of the intended action of taking the right path but still counts as an intentional omission.

As indicated above, Clarke seems to adopt the view that we should consider a certain side-effect to be intentional as long as the performed action which led to it was intentional. That is, as some philosophers (Ginet 1990: 76; see also Bratman 1987:123 and Harman 1997:151-52) would argue, the side-effect resulting from an action is also intentional if the agent performs that action intentionally. When you start your car intentionally, you do not perform another action by disturbing your neighbor. Rather, disturbing your neighbor is merely a known side-effect of your intentional action of starting your car in the early morning. Since the performed action is intentional, the resultant side-effect is also held to be intentional. Similarly, the agent’s omission to take the left path is not itself brought about by an intention to omit, but is merely a known side-effect of her intentional action to take the right path. In other words, Clarke takes the above side-effect scenarios to support his “intention with relevant content” view, in which he claims that even without the intention to not take the left path, one can intentionally omit to take the left path so long as one adopts an intention of taking the right path.

Third, Clarke defends a causal theory of action, which he expands to cases of intentional omissions. By contrast, Ginet argues that intentional omissions require the presence of intentions to not act, but he does not believe that there exists a causal link between intentions and omissions. Specifically, Clarke affirms that intentions play a causal role, both in cases of intentional actions and in those of intentional omissions.

> Indeed, it appears that they must play a causal role that parallels in important respects the role that such mental states or events are required by causal theories of action to play in cases of intentional action. In a case of intentional omission or refraining, relevant mental states (or events) must cause some of the agent’s subsequent thought or conduct, even if they needn’t cause the absence of some action. (p.74)

Clarke responds to possible questions about whether such mental states, e.g. intentions, play a similar causal role in cases of omissions as they do in actions, especially when one holds the view that omissions are essentially absences. He argues that intentions do play a causal role in cases of omissions/refraining, but he avoids the problem of absence causation by stating that what intentions cause here are the agent’s “subsequent thought or conduct” rather than absences *per se*. Without the presence of an intentional mental state, it seems that there would be no cases of intentional omissions but only pure happenstance.

Furthermore, Clarke (2014b) states that:

> [I]n cases of intentionally not doing a certain thing, an intention with relevant content *causes* some of the individual’s subsequent thought and behavior. It needn’t be the case

> that the intention directly causes any action at all; still, it plays a crucial causal role. (p. 109)

As indicated above, Clarke argues that intentions with relevant content cause some of the subsequent events which concern those omissions. To this end, he offers several scenarios that show how intentions with "relevant content" play a causal role in cases of intentional omissions.. For instance, in the fork case mentioned above, the agent's intention to take the right path is relevant enough to "cause" her intentionally omitting to not take the left path.

In brief, both Ginet and Clarke propose that there are three conditions of intentional omissions. They differ, however, in how they specify the requirements of the mental condition. Specifically, in contrast to Ginet's strict mental condition of having an intention to not do the thing throughout the time, Clarke offers a relatively loose but causal requirement on both the timing and content of the intention. In this way, if we take Clarke's mental condition of intentional omissions, there are many more cases of omissions that would be included as intentional omissions than if we take Ginet's requirement. In order to better illustrate what intentional omissions are and further explain agents' control over them, I will settle the dispute between Ginet and Clarke in the following section.

2.3 How do Intentions Provide Control over Intentional Omissions?

As stated above, despite disagreement about how to spell out the details, prominent philosophers, e.g. Ginet and Clarke, who work on intentional omissions propose that there are three conditions required to render an omission intentional. In this section, I argue that intentions play a symmetrical role in cases of intentional actions and omissions. Specifically, it is the mental condition—that the intentions *not to act,* which are *persistent* throughout the relevant times, *cause* the corresponding omissions—that provides the source of *direct voluntary control* over intentional omissions. [32]

In order to examine on what exact ground agents possess control over their intentional omissions, I start by explaining why it is the mental condition that grounds our control. Then, I settle several of the disputes that surround the mental condition of intentional omissions. The next step I take is to propose that a comparison with intentional actions would better clarify what kind of control an agent has over her intentional omissions. Specifically, I argue that, similar to intentional actions, possessing a persistent intention to not do a thing grants a kind of direct voluntary control over omissions, and thus provides the basis for holding agents morally responsible for intentional omissions.

2.3.1 The Source of Control over Intentional Omissions.

Let us start the examination of control by presenting a standard case of intentional omissions.

> Callous Eda: Suppose that Eda walks by a pond and notices that a child is drowning and calling for help. No one but she witnesses the incident. Also, she knows that she could save that child without threatening her own life, but she still intends not to do anything about it and continues her walk.

In this scenario, Eda does not act upon her moral obligation (assuming that there is such a norm which calls her to act) to save the drowning child, and she omits to do so callously.[33] We tend to blame agents like Eda for intentionally omitting to do what they have an obligation to do, but on

[32] In later chapters, I propose that in some cases of non-intentional omissions, control is also present without the agent possessing intentions, just not the kind that is direct and voluntary.

[33] I present the intention here in a way that fulfills Ginet's strict requirement of intention and surely qualifies as Clarke's requirement of relevant intention.

what ground? According to the *control* assumption of moral responsibility, having control is at least one of the necessary conditions for bearing moral responsibility. That is, agents like Eda have to possess a certain kind of control in order to be held responsible for moral failures, such as not saving a drowning child. In this way, if we want to defend a coherent control account of moral responsibility, then we need to clarify the sources of control which agents exhibit over their intentional omissions.

It seems obvious that callous Eda meets the reality condition and the ability condition of intentional omissions. She omits to save the drowning child and she could have done so if she did not persistently hold her intention to not act. These two conditions could help to *guarantee* that Eda is in a position to be fully aware of her omitting to save the drowning child, but they do not seem to explain why agents have control over omissions and thus bear moral responsibility for them. In other words, these two conditions do not give us sufficient reason to conclude that an agent has control over such omissions. We thus have insufficient reason to grant her moral responsibility, at least not the kind that elicits reactive attitudes such as indignation. More generally, I am aware that there are many things that I should and could do instead of sitting on the sofa. This does not, however, render my omitting to do all those things as under my control. In other words, it is not reasonable to hold agents responsible for all those things that they know that they could do instead of sitting on the sofa, at least not in a serious way.[34]

We are left now with considering the mental condition of intentional omissions. Specifically, it seems that our best candidate is that possessing a relevant intention, such as Eda's intention not to save the child, provides a source of agential control and helps to explain why

[34] Peter Singer presents arguments that we do bear moral responsibility for people in need if we have the ability to help them, which is noble but attracts various philosophical and practical disputes.

agents bear moral responsibility for their intentional omissions. The question, then, is: How, exactly, does possessing an intention provide the control required to hold an agent responsible for the corresponding omission?

2.3.2 Settling the Dispute of Mental Condition over Intentional Omissions.

In order to clarify the kind of intention that grounds our control, I now settle the aforementioned disputes between Ginet and Clarke by arguing for what I consider to be the proper mental condition, to wit, that the intentions *to not* do the act have to be *persistent* throughout and *cause* the corresponding omissions. In other words, along the line of philosophers such as Clarke, I argue that intentions cause the corresponding omissions, and this is significant in explaining how agents have control over them. But I disagree with Clarke that intentions play a “weak” causal role, in comparison with cases of intentional actions. Furthermore, I argue against his relatively loose requirements for the mental condition, and propose that intentions which are not persistent and/or merely have relevant content do not suffice to render omissions intentional and exhibit agents’ control over them.

First, recall what we considered previously, Clarke argues that an omission can be intentional by the agent’s having an intention *at some pertinent time*, instead of a persistent intention throughout the time, as Ginet claims. For instance, according to Clarke, in order for your omission of not attending a meeting to be intentional, it does not require you to maintain that intention until that meeting actually occurs. Rather, your omission is still intentional even if your intention only lasts until it is too late to prepare for attending the meeting.

What Clarke states is not wrong, but the intentionality of an omission, however, requires that the agent could have acted on that thing. To elaborate, Clarke adopts three conditions of intentional omissions, including the ability condition that the agent could have actually acted on it. A person could not intentionally omit to fly since she has no capacity to fly. Similarly, suppose that I abandon my intention to not attend the meeting, as Clarke suggests, and turn to adopt a strong intention to attend that meeting. Since I have already waited until it is too late for me to make the requisite preparations, it is also already too late for me to intentionally omit to attend the meeting. In other words, it seems that the omission of not attending the meeting would not be intentional since I could not do it even when I wanted to. In this way, if the agent's intention is not persistent throughout, even though her not attending the meeting would still count as an omission, it would not necessarily be an intentional omission of hers.

Second, unlike what Ginet claims, Clarke argues that an intention *with some relevant content* is enough to render our omissions intentional. For example, in order for your omission of not walking the left path to be intentional, you need not make up your mind to not take the left path (as Ginet requires), but only possess an intention to walk the right path.

Responding to the previous statement, I would briefly observe that it is a controversial question whether a side-effect is intentional even if the performed action is intentional. For instance, philosophers such as Mele (2001) argue against the previous statement, while Harman (1976) and Bratman (1984,1987) argue that there are some cases in which side-effects are intentional. Knobe (2003, 2006) presents experimental evidence to support the idea that, depending on people's moral considerations, a side-effect could be considered to be intentional or not. Specifically, Knobe (2003) concludes that:

> In other words, there seems to be an asymmetry whereby people are considerably more willing to blame the agent for bad side-effects than to praise the agent for good side-effects. And this asymmetry in people's assignment of praise and blame may be at the root of the corresponding asymmetry in people's application of the concept intentional:

> namely, that they seem considerably more willing to say that a side-effect was brought about intentionally when they regard that side-effect as bad than when they regard it as good. (p.193)

That is, according to the conclusions Knobe draws from his experiments, people do not take all side-effects to be intentional even if the associated action is intentional. People tend to put more moral weight on those condemnable side-effects than on the praiseworthy side-effects that are brought about by actions. This experimental evidence is compatible with Harman's statement, which is that our judgments on the intentionality of side-effects are highly influenced by our intuitive attitudes towards them. In this way, it seems that even those who support the view that side-effects could be intentional if the performed action is intentional often add various restrictions such as moral consideration or intuitive attitudes.

Moreover, since agents do not choose side-effects, neither as mean nor as ends, it is unreasonable to hold them responsible for all of them. Some people might state that those side-effects which are foreseen by the agent should be considered intentional. Having foreknowledge is commonly taken to be one of the necessary conditions for rendering an action/omission intentional, but it is not a sufficient condition. Even when the agent is aware that his action will lead to particular side-effects, he never intends any of them to happen. If there were a way for the agent to avoid his action leading to the side-effect, such as starting the car without disturbing the neighbor, he would gladly go without it.[35]

[35] People might wonder if we ignore those side-effects that knowingly accompany the intended actions, we might lose the moral ground to condemn those agents who knowingly take actions that lead to harmful consequences. In legal terms, there exists a distinction between acting intentionally and acting recklessly. In both cases, agents act knowingly and should be held responsible, but only in the former is the action performed as an end or a means to an end.

Let us recall the cases that Clarke presents to support his intention with relevant content. Even if we grant that an intention to take the right path is intentional, the side-effect of omitting to take the left path does not strike us as intentional. For there is no moral significance or harm that could be attributed to the agent's omitting to take the left path. Moreover, we have opened a door that is rather difficult to close if we state that the corresponding side-effects are intentional every time the actions are intentional. For instance, in the fork scenario that Clarke presents, what if it is not a forked path that I encounter, but an infinite spider-web of paths that are ahead of me. I would only take one path intentionally, being fully aware that I am omitting to take the rest of paths, in which case, it seems too farfetched to claim that all these non-occurrences are intentional to me.

In brief, intention with relevant content appears to be a criterion that is too vague to guarantee that the omissions it describes are intentional, for it would inevitably involve cases of intentional side-effects and thus obscure the line between omitting knowingly and omitting intentionally. Instead, restricting the realm of intentional omission to those cases in which agents intend to omit either as an end or as a means to an end would solve the problem. It is important to note that even if side-effects are not intentional in my sense of the term, this will not affect whether agents possess control over them and are responsible for them. Rather, what my clarification does is distinguish whether agents exercise the same kind of control over their intentional omissions as they do over the corresponding side-effects.

Third, Ginet (2002, 2010) defends a non-causal account which states that the agent's possession of an intention not to act explains the non-occurrence, but not in a causal way. This non-causal account, however, is not widely accepted.[36] For instance, Clarke (2003, 2010) objects to Ginet's standpoint and argues that relevant intentions play a causal role and thus lead to the subsequent non-occurrences, just as in cases of intentional actions. This proposal could help to clarify how agents have control over their omissions by possessing certain mental states—intentions, which I will examine in detail later in this chapter.

As stated above, Clarke affirms that intentions play a causal role in cases of intentional omissions, just as in cases of intentional actions. He argues, however, that "there's much less that an intention not to act must do in order to secure its satisfaction than is required of an intention to act " (2014a: 79). This is because positive action requires that one's behaviors *fall within* a narrow range. Comparatively, the requirement in cases of omissions is to remain outside that narrow range. In other words, according to Clarke, in comparison with the kind of causal role that intentions play in cases of actions, the role is similar but *weaker* in omissions.[37]

I accept Clarke's assertion that intentions play a causal role in cases of intentional omissions, but disagree that it is weaker than in cases of intentional actions. Instead, I propose that there is no solid ground for concluding that the intentions' causal roles in both cases are *not* symmetrical. I will spell out the role of control in more detail in the next section. For now, I simply appeal to the intuition that intentional actions do not necessarily require more effort than intentional omissions. It is true that intentionally watering the garden takes more effort than intentionally omitting to do so. But compare my intentional action of picking up the coffee cup that is in front of me with my intentionally omitting to move for one hour in the sun: more effort

[36] I briefly mention the existence of the rare non-causal account but omit to discuss it in detail in this piece. Rather, I focus on spelling out the details of the causal role that intentions play in cases of intentional omissions.

[37] Clarke's statement that intentions play a "weak" causal role ("not to lose control") seems to befit his comparatively weak view of intentions (intentions with relevant content), which I have raised doubts about before.

is needed to satisfy the latter than the former. Thus, the range of behaviour required for omitting to move and remaining outside could be narrower than the range for moving in this scenario. In this way, Clarke's statement—that what is required for intentions to be satisfied is less in cases of omissions than in cases of actions—is not necessarily true. More importantly, based on the reasons Clarke presents, we cannot conclude that intentions play a different causal role in omissions than they do in actions *per se*. Rather, in some cases, the intention to act seems to require more effort to fulfil, and in other cases, the intention to omit seems to take more effort. Neither consistently takes more effort than the other.

To sum up, I argue that the intentions *to not* do an act have to be *persistent* throughout the relevant time and *cause* the corresponding omissions. Specifically, I defend the strict version of the mental condition and argue against Clarke's assertion that an omission can be intentional if the agent has an intention with some relevant content at some pertinent time. But it is controversial, at least, whether the omissions in the cases Clarke presents to support his "loose" mental condition even qualify as intentional. In the meeting case, for instance, the agent lacks the ability to actually attend the meeting, so it fails to fulfill one of the three conditions that render an omission intentional. In the fork case, I propose that it is controversial to state that the agent's possessing an intention to take the left path is enough to render the agent's omitting to take the right path intentional, since the agent is far from committed to that omission. That is, it seems that Clarke's condition—that intention with relevant content—tends to obscure the line between omitting knowingly and omitting intentionally. Moreover, I agree with Clarke that intentions play a causal role in cases of intentional omissions, but reject that the role it plays is weaker than in cases of intentional actions. Rather, as I argue next, the causal role that intentions play in the two cases is symmetrical.

2.3.3 The Symmetry between Intentional Actions and Omissions.

In order to further examine what kind of control agents possess over intentional omissions, it is best to start by analyzing standard cases of intentional actions. I argue that intentions play a symmetrical role in the two cases, and examining intentional actions could help to shed some light on our quest for intentional omissions.

Here is a representative case of intentional action.

> Greedy Finn: Suppose that Finn's cousin stands between him and a considerable amount of inherence. Out of greed, he makes up his mind to murder his cousin. After his careful plan, he lures his cousin to a remote pond and pushes her into it. Then he makes sure that his cousin can not get out of the pond and leaves the scene.

In this case, Finn acts on his evil intention and murders his cousin. It seems intuitive that Finn has control over his hideous action and should be held responsible for it. These intuitions also seem right concerning other intentional actions. It is widely accepted that an agent possesses control over her intentional actions and bears moral responsibility for them.[38] By contrast, suppose Finn did not intend to push his cousin into the pond but he still performed the bodily movement of pushing while under other influences—for instance, his arm was held by a person who was stronger than he, or his mind was hypnotized by another person who wanted to murder his cousin. Then most people would not blame him for his cousin's drowning, since he exhibited no control over the unfortunate incident, even if his bodily movements in these non-intentional scenarios were the same as those of the greedy Finn. In other words, it appears that in intentional

[38] Of course, to some philosophers, the general issue between determinism and freedom is of great importance in examining whether an agent has control over something. Specifically, the debate surrounds the question of whether we could still possess ultimate control over our actions if the universe is determined. This debate, though fascinating, is not my focus of research here.

actions—that is, acting or at least trying to act as intended—the executing of an intention provides a source of agential control and thus serves as the basis of moral responsibility.

Furthermore, according to some philosophers, the kind of control that intentions provide over actions is direct and voluntary. For instance, according to Buckareff (2008):

> Intentions are irreducible executive mental states that serve as the instruments of control in the etiology of action. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, *intentions mediate an agent's reasons for acting* (e.g., a desire or a desire-belief complex). Merely being caused to *A* when one wants to *A* or wants some end *E* and believes that by *A*-ing one can achieve *E* absent having the proper intention to *A* that guides and monitors the agents *A*-ing are not by themselves sufficient for controlling behavior in the way necessary for action. Direct voluntary control over action is exercised *via* our intentions. (p.10)

As Buckareff states, unlike mere desires, intentions provide agents with a kind of "direct voluntary control" over their actions.[39] That is, in cases of intentional actions, the execution of intentions functions as the cause of the corresponding actions, and thus exhibits the agents' control over their intentional actions. It is also important to notice that Buckareff distinguishes cases in which intentions provide control from cases of beliefs or desires. Just as he states later:

> In the case of coming to believe, no intentions mediate our epistemic reasons or must play the executive role necessary in the case of action to safeguard against causal deviance...

[39] I agree with Buckareff that intentions indeed provide a kind of "direct voluntary control" over actions, which serves as a basis for the standard control situations we have in mind. I shall argue, later in this chapter and in this project, that there are other sources of control, e.g., wanting, though not "direct voluntary," are also sufficient to provide a basis for moral responsibility for not only actions, but also for omissions.

> But if intentions are the means whereby behavior that is actional is subject to direct voluntary control, then coming to believe is not under our direct voluntary control. So it is not the case that belief and action are the same with respect to the controlling function of reason in their etiology. (pp.10-1)

That is, unlike in cases of coming to belief, intentions provide a kind of direct control over actions by settling the agent's reasons to act. Specifically, what makes it direct is that the agent's own determined mind is the source of an action's execution, by way of the agent's intentions, just as he states later: "so if anything is under one's direct voluntary control, it is the activity aimed at making up one's mind regarding p" (p.11). Beliefs and desires, though also causes of agents' actions, often come from sources outside an agent's own determination. In other words, there seems to be a strong correlation between the directness of control and an agent's determination.[40] While agents possess control over their voluntary actions, they possess a specific kind of control over intentional actions, which is direct as it comes from more determined minds.

In this way, it seems that in cases of intentional actions, possessing intentions provides a source of direct voluntary control over those actions. If intentional omissions and intentional actions are symmetrical in their relationship with intentions, then the previous analysis will at least provide a *prima facie* explanation of the source and kind of control agents have over intentional omissions. For the purposes of this project, establishing the symmetry relation between intentional actions and intentional omissions is of prime importance.

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[40] I argue in chapter 4 that agents can exercise direct voluntary control over coming to belief. For instance, an agent could actively participate in turning into an environmentalist if she is settling on that thought.

First, an analysis of intentional omissions supports the symmetry between cases of actions and omissions. Clarke (2014a) states that the execution of intentions in cases of omissions is *not* that different from intentional actions.

> On a widely held view, the representational content of an intention to act is an action plan, and the attitudinal mode is that being settled or committed: intending to perform an action of A-ing is being settled on or committed to A-ing (See, e.g., Mele 1992: chs.8&9). When one intends not to A, the content of one's plan is not-to-A. There is no need to see the attitudinal mode as any different from that of intending to act. (p.71)

Here, Clarke's explanation of intending confirms what Buckareff contends about intention. It is a mental state that settles on or commits to the corresponding occurrences or non-occurrences.[41] In both cases, though described in different ways, the content of intentions motivate agents towards their actions. In other words, an intention serves as the executive mental state that settles agents' various reasons beforehand, and leads to a certain action/omission.

On a related note, I have argued that intentions play a causal role in intentional omissions. This causal role grounds our control over omissions just as it does in cases of intentional actions. According to Clarke, in both cases of intentional actions and omissions, "if one's intention causes what it causes in some peculiar way, so that one loses control over what follows it, then we don't have a case in which something is done intentionally" (p. 79). That is, in those cases where agents do not lose control over omissions, intentions properly cause them

[41] I have argued against Clarke's loose intentional conditions. He also proposes that one can intentionally omit to do something without deciding not to do it. He offers the Wet Paint case, in which "Once I see the sign seeing, 'Wet Paint/ Do not Touch,' there might be no question in my mind whether to touch the object—no practical uncertainty that needs to be settled by making a decision—and I might come to intend not to touch it without actively forming such an intention—without making a decision" (2014a: 63). This, again, does not make a proper case of intentional omission, if we perceive intention as "committed" as Clarke suggests here. Moreover, seeing the wet paint sign simply gives you a reason not to touch it. We can only deduce that your not doing so is partially supported by the reason, but not necessarily coming from your intention.

and thus render them intentional. This causal role that intentions play in cases of omission is similar to its role in cases of intentional action. When agents exercise their direct voluntary control over intentional actions, the execution of intentions not only causes the action, but does so in a way that differs from beliefs and desires. Here, again, we do not see any disparity between cases of intentional actions and those of intentional omissions. In cases of intentional omissions, intentions not to act cause the corresponding omissions in a self-determined way, which renders those omissions direct and voluntary for those agents who are omitting intentionally.

In this way, intentions seem to play the role of a direct voluntary control in both intentional actions and intentional omissions. Its control is "direct" in that the source it causes—the execution of the intention—comes from the agent's own determined mind.[42] Other sources of control, such as belief and desires, could enter into the process of bringing about an intentional state of mind, but unless these sources override the agent's own determination, she exhibits her voluntary control over the occurrence/non-occurrence directly. In contrast, if the execution of my intention is caused by a neuroscientist, and not by me, then whatever action followed would not be intentional from my perspective, since I am no more than a puppet in this scenario (the exercise of control passes through me, rather than originating in me). Also, an agent might exercise her voluntary control over her action/omission by executing the motivating content of some belief or desire, but these sources of control are not as direct as those which come from the agent's own determined mind (and thus are not intentional).

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[42] I would argue in chapter 5 that volitions such as intentions and desires are, or at least, function as mental acts. Agents are the origins of those scenarios in which it is their mental acts that cause them.

To sum up, from what we have gathered, it seems that in cases both of intentional actions and of intentional omissions, intentions play the executive and causal roles that provide sources of direct voluntary control over them. In other words, through the execution of intentions, agents exhibit the voluntary nature of their control directly and exercise that control over omissions, just as they do in cases of intentional actions.

2.3.4 Two Objections to the Symmetry.

There are, however, several objections that might be raised to the idea that intentions play symmetrical roles in actions and omissions. Even if omissions appear to have a close relationship with actions, one might consider them to be a separate sort of phenomenon, which therefore exercises a different kind of control.[43] For instance, Clarke (2014b) himself claims that the kind of control we have over omissions needs to be distinguished from the kind we have over actions:

> There is nevertheless a difference between the kind of control exercised in such a case [an intentional omission] and the kind exercised in performing an intentional action. The difference is simply that, in the former case, there need be no action that is performed. In intentionally not doing a certain thing, one need not have executed any intention to act. (p.110)

In his statement, Clarke distinguishes the kind of control evident in intentional actions from that which we see in omissions. Specifically, he argues that the execution of an intention to act does not seem to be necessary in cases of non-occurrences such as intentional omissions. I would

[43] See note footnote 5—the omission-action view would not threaten our argument. The same is true for those philosophers (Clarke 2014a; Fisher 2017) who would argue that some omissions are identical to actions (e.g., cases of simple bodily omissions), while others are not. Most philosophers do not simply reduce omissions to the category of actions. We have to admit, though, that omissions and actions are sometimes treated as the same, while at other times they are treated as opposites. I am reluctant to adopt either idea without more clarification. The relationship between actions and omissions is complicated and difficult to analyze, but it is worth the trouble to consider the ways in which they are similar and those in which they are not.

reply that it is true that one need not have executed any intention to act in cases of intentional omissions, but this difference would not necessarily undermine the symmetrical role that intentions play in providing sources of control over intentional omissions and actions. For one thing, as I have previously argued, Clarke's relatively weak requirement for intentions—that without the presence of an intention to not act, the omission would not be intentional—is flawed. It therefore cannot be used in an objection to the symmetry. For another thing, in cases of *not doing* a certain thing, the fitting intention executed should be to *not act*. For instance, when callous Eda intentionally omits to save the drowning child, she does not need to execute any intention to act, but she does need to execute an intention to *not* act. Otherwise, Eda's not saving the child would not be intentional. In this way, it seems that intentions are also executed in cases of intentional omissions, and this exhibits the agent's control over them, though not in the way of *acting*, but in the way of *omitting*.

Furthermore, according to Buckareff's conception of direct voluntary control, possessing an intention is not just the executive mental state that causes actions, but is so in a way that mediates the agent's reasons to act. We affirm that intentions also play a causal role in cases of intentional omissions while clarifying the mental condition governing them. Similarly, in cases of intentional omissions, agents such as Eda also make the determination to omit. Just as in cases of action, the intention to *not* act also settles the agent's mind—e.g., Eda might hesitate about whether to save the drowning child before intentionally omitting to save him. So it seems that the standard—that one needs to execute an intention to *act*—that Clarke presents for intentional actions and also tries to apply to intentional omissions, does not in fact threaten the idea that intentions also provide a source of direct voluntary control over omissions.

It seems that the differences in control requirements that Clarke points out above cannot undermine the claim that intentions play a symmetrical role in providing control for actions and omissions. But people might still question whether intentions provide a source of direct voluntary control over intentional omissions in precisely the same way they do in cases of intentional actions, since people tend to perceive omissions as less *intended* than actions. For instance, there are researchers who study the psychological phenomenon of "omission bias," which captures people's tendency to evaluate an agent more negatively when she makes a decision to commit an action than omit an action, even if these two decisions lead into the same consequence. As to the factors that could explain the perceived difference between actions and omissions, one of the researchers states that:

> In sum, the results of the three experiments suggest that the basis of the omission bias is a difference in perceived causality—probably caused by the fact that commissions are more salient than omissions—making the outcome of an omission appear less intended than the outcome of a commission. In other words, people seem to think that if you want something to happen, you make it happen: If something is not, or in a lesser degree, caused by your behavior, you did not intend it to happen as much as when something came about because of what you did or did not do. Because of your reduced strength of the perceived causal link between an omission and its consequence, an omission may usually be perceived as a nondecision, or at least as a less intended decision than a commission. (Kordes-de Vaal 1996: 169)

According to the data collected by Kordes-de Vaal, people tend to perceive less causality and less intention in cases of omissions than in cases of actions. And he also concludes later that there is a significant correlation between perceived causality and responsibility rating. That is, due to the subjects' lower perception of causality and intention in omissions, they tend to blame agents less than they do for actions that cause the same negative consequences.

The above research on omission bias, however, seems suspicious to me, especially if we dig deeper into how its conclusion has been reached. Let us consider an example that is used by the researcher, which he borrows from Spranca et al. (1991): "A tennis player has to play a game against Lendl the next day. He knows that Lendl is allergic to Cayenne pepper, and he also recalls that the house dressing served in the dining room contains Cayenne pepper. His intention is to have Lendl consume the house dressing. In the omission version, Lendl orders the house dressing himself and his opponent does not warn him of the Cayenne pepper. In the commission version, Lendl's opponent recommends that he try the house dressing, which he does accordingly" (Kordes-de Vaal 1996:162). According to Kordes-de Vaal, subjects exhibit a positive bias towards the omission case, even if the intention and consequence are the same in two scenarios. But there is another factor—the evilness of violating the moral principle—that might cause an overall more negative evaluation in cases of commissions/actions than omissions. Specifically, in the omission case, what the opponent does is not warn Lendl about the Cayenne pepper in his order. While in the commission/action case, he actively offered the Cayenne pepper to someone he knows is allergic to it. The moral code that the opponent violates during the process of executing his intention in the latter scenario is commonly taken as more serious than in the former. In other words, even if given the same intention and consequence, the subject's perceived viciousness could vary depending on the *way* that the opponent conducts himself or the *means* he uses in these two scenarios. More importantly, even if the way that the opponent behaves in the omission scenario does exhibit less control than in the commission/action scenario, it does not necessarily indicate that agents in general exhibit less control over omissions than actions.

Now taking the examples of the callous Eda and the greedy Finn, it is probably true that we would attribute different levels of moral responsibility to them, but we could not thereby conclude that Eda exercises *less* control over her omission than Finn does over her action. The difference very likely lies in the fact that agents who intentionally murder someone are subject to a more severe moral responsibility than those who intentionally do not save him. But Eda, in executing her intention of not saving that drowning child, exhibits no less voluntariness than Finn's intentionally pushing his cousin into the pond. In brief, the omission bias captures our seemingly different intuitive reactions to omissions and actions, but we could not safely conclude from this that agents possess less direct voluntary control over intentional omissions than over intentional actions.

If these arguments stand, then it seems that these two objections do not threaten the symmetrical role that intentions play in intentional actions and intentional omissions. That is, agents exercise a sort of *direct voluntary control* over both their actions and omissions by possessing intentions that cause them in a self-determined way.

2.4 Concluding Remarks.

In summary, according to Ginet and Clarke, there are three conditions required for an omission to be intentional. I adopt this basic framework and settle their disagreements regarding the mental condition. Specifically, I propose that the three conditions for an omission to be intentional are as follows:

(i) it meets the *reality* condition (i.e., the thing did not happen),

(ii) it meets the *ability* condition (i.e., the agent could have done the thing), and

(iii) it meets the *mental* condition (i.e., the agent possesses intentions *not to act* that are *persistent* throughout and *cause* corresponding omissions).

Furthermore, I tentatively argue that, as they do with intentional actions, agents possess direct voluntary control over their intentional omissions. In both cases, I propose that intentions play an executive role in causing the corresponding occurrences/non-occurrences. The control that agents exhibit in cases of intentional omissions is not weaker than intentional actions. Specifically, it is the mental condition—i.e., possessing a persistent intention to *not* do the thing—that causes intentional omissions in a self-determined way. In this way, according to the control account of moral responsibility, agents can properly be held morally responsible for their intentional omissions because they exhibit direct voluntary control over them.

Chapter 3 Control over Akrasia and Akratic Omissions.

I argued in the previous chapter that having intentions at least partially provides a kind of direct voluntary control over intentional omissions as well as intentional actions. That is, despite the apparent disparity between actions and omissions, it seems that mental states, e.g. intentions, play a symmetrical role in satisfying the control condition for both cases. In this chapter, I turn to examine the symmetrical role that desires play in cases of *akrasia* or akratic actions and what I present as cases of *akratic omissions*—when an agent betrays her better judgment and yields to the desire that motivates her to *omit*. According to the control assumption, an agent must possess control over an occurrence if we are to properly hold her responsible. In addition to intentional cases, we also tend to hold agents responsible in non-intentional cases, such as akratic actions and omissions. The question, then, is: Does possessing the relevant desires suffice to provide voluntary control over akratic actions and omissions?

In reply, I argue that while an agent must be in some kind of mental state to have voluntary control, that mental state need not to be an intention. Possessing a desire that opposes an action also satisfies the control condition for an agent to be properly held responsible for her corresponding akratic actions and omissions. What is more, an agent exercises an indirect sort of voluntary control, though not directly, over her akratic actions and omissions by executing her desires. Under the circumstances of *akrasia,* an agent knows what the right thing to do is, but she yields to a desire that motivates her to act otherwise. The above proposition, however, raises the following dilemma: *Akrasia* is commonly known as a state in which an agent lacks self-control due to exhibiting a certain overwhelming desire. In what sense, then, does an agent both have a loss of self-control and also at the same time possess voluntary control over the same action? In order to resolve this tension, I bring in a comparison between two kinds of losing self-control:

akrasia and addiction. Specifically, we tend to hold people responsible for their akratic actions but not their addictive behaviors. I argue that compared to the kind of *irresistible desire* that addicts possess, akratic agents' desires are *recalcitrant* but *resistible* in the way that they execute their own volition over the event. In other words, although an opposing desire would threaten our self-control, and thus our control over our actions, this does not necessarily entail that we lose the control required for us to be held responsible for those actions. I argue that in cases of akratic actions the source of an agent's voluntary control over her akratic omission is her possession of a corresponding recalcitrant but resistible desire.

3.1 Akrasia.

As mentioned above, the issue at hand is whether possessing desires suffice to provide voluntary control over actions. In order to answer this question, I do not attempt to examine all sources of desire-motivated occurrences, but instead use a representative case—*akrasia*. As the first step of this investigation, I introduce the phenomenon of *akrasia*.

Akrasia (also known as incontinence, weakness of will, or lack of self-control) is a phenomenon that is very familiar, yet its existence remains puzzling to us.[44] According to the influential view that Aristotle proposes in *Nichomachean Ethics VII*, *akrasia* is the opposite of *enkrasia* or continence. Also, *akrasia* is a state of soul that we should avoid. Specifically, according to Aristotle, there are six states of soul that we need to pursue or avoid: divine virtue,

[44] It is important to note that to some philosophers, these different terms point to different kinds of phenomena. For instance, Richard Holton (1999,2009,2016) makes a distinction between *akrasia*—acting despite better judgment (the more traditional view that I depict here)—and weakness of will—relates more with the agent's irrational reconsideration. Precisely, according to Holton (2016), "weakness of will refers to the violation of a 'resolution', where the resolution is a kind of decision, intention, plan, or policy that is formed precisely in order to remain firm in the face of contrary desires one expects to arise when the time to act comes." I will not dig deep into this dispute, but instead take these different characterizations as describing one unified phenomenon of *akrasia* and focus on considering the status of our control over it. For those philosophers who hold the distinction firmly, the realm of my discussion of *akrasia* extends only to the former.

bestiality, virtue, vice, continence, and incontinence (*akrasia*). Among them, the first two are too far away from us, or rare among human beings, so they require less attention. Agents who are truly virtuous or vicious always act in a predictable way, for their souls are unified by a single motivation. For instance, entirely temperate agents and entirely intemperate ones both act according to their characters and are reliable in their own way. The continent and incontinent/akratic agents, however, are not stable in their actions. They know the right thing to do, but they have appetites (i.e. bodily desires) that motivate them to take the wrong path.[45] So they are always at war within their own minds. It is like when people drink alcohol. Continent agents can tolerate alcohol and follow their rational judgment, while the incontinent agents get drunk and eventually follow their appetites. Strictly speaking, an incontinent agent cannot act incontinently in all cases or he will be likely to be deemed intemperate according to Aristotle. Also, akratic agents have to feel remorse for what they have done, since they know what is right and recognize that their actions were wrong. Furthermore, some agents act akratically because of passion, and yet other cases of *akrasia* involve different levels of deliberation. In sum, *akrasia* (incontinence) is a baffling state of soul which is about desires, which occurs only occasionally in an agent, and which is followed with regret.

[45] Mele (2002) takes Aristotle's line of considering *akrasia* but expands the realm of the opposing motivational force to more than bodily appetites. Rather, he argues that beliefs, emotions, and moral assessments could also motivate an agent to betray her better judgment. Furthermore, unlike Aristotle's intellectualist view that reasons alone are what we should identify as a person's better judgment, Mele holds a holistic view, which suggests that appetites or emotions could also support a person's better judgment. In other words, according to Mele's account, an akratic agent's better judgment could be supported by the same source as the opposing motivational force that she were led away from it. In this way, there is no categorical difference between the better/rational judgment and the bodily appetites like Aristotle suggests, but the difference is simply that an agent is caught up between what she judges to be better and the opposing motivational force. I agree that there might be no categorical difference between the oppositional forces, but the opposition is still between what the agent considers to be rational and irrational forces.

In other words, in cases of *akrasia* or akratic actions, agents are torn between following what they know to be right according to their reason and an opposing desire to act otherwise. The akratic agents end up betraying their better judgment and are led by their desires. In the opposite state—*enkrateia*, self-control or continence—the agents successfully resist their desires and do what their reason tells them to do. Here is a representative case of *akrasia*:

> Suppose Belle should not eat any sweet things according to her doctor, but she has a desire that drives her to eat the delicious cake that is in front of her. She is torn between whether to indulge her desire to eat the cake or to follow the doctor's instructions to stay healthy. Eventually, Belle gives in to her desire and eats that cake, although she knows that it is harmful to her health.[46]

Belle knows that eating the cake is not the right thing for her to do, but she does it anyway. Just like Belle, other akratic agents are tempted by things that are against what they know to be the right or better thing to do. In akratic scenarios like this, desires such as eating a cake appear to contain a certain motivational force—a force that is strong enough to defeat what reason or judgment provides by itself. Furthermore, we tend to hold akratic agents like Belle responsible for eating the cake because we think that they possess voluntary control over their akratic actions. It seems, then, that desires serve as both the mental basis for and the cause of corresponding akratic actions. This poses a problem for those philosophers who are suspicious about whether desire-motivated actions—especially those that agents lack self-control over, e.g. *akrasia*—could be voluntary for the agent.

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[46] Starting from Aristotle (*NE* VII.3), this kind of sweet cake case is representative for illuminating the inner contradicting state of *akrasia*. Despite the fact that what the agent violates here is not strictly a moral principle, I would still like to borrow this case to illustrate the kind of state that an akratic agent is in.

3.2 Control over Akratic Actions.

Next, let me answer the question: In what sense do akratic agents possess voluntary control over their actions? In this section, I argue that the source of an agent's control over her akratic action is her possession of a certain *recalcitrant* but *resistible* desire. In order to make this argument, I compare two cases of losing self-control: *akrasia* and addiction—which is commonly defined as the agent being abducted by an *irresistible* desire which results in her acting compulsively. Agents that lack self-control could, however, possess the kind of control that is necessary to bear moral responsibility. Specifically, compare an addict whose desire is too overwhelming for her to act otherwise with an akratic agent whose desire is such that she could do otherwise with respect to that action. Addicts have no control over their addiction-related behaviors at the moment of acting, for they are compelled to do them and have no other choice, while akratic agents act according to their own volitions. That is, it is important to note that despite the fact that being motivated by an opposing desire could threaten our ability to control ourselves, depending on the circumstances, it does not necessarily rob an agent of voluntary control over her action.

3.2.1 The Puzzle of Possessing Control over Akrasia.

It is widely accepted that *akrasia* is the opposite state of *enkrateia* or self-control (see Davidson 1970; Mele 2002; Levy 2011). Moreover, akratic agents often excuse themselves by stating that they do not often feel in control or admit that they have control while acting akratically. Rather, they are abducted by their own desires. For instance, Mele(2002) treats *akrasia* (want/lack of self-control) as the state opposing self-control.[47] Specifically, these two character traits are opposites of each other. The difference between them is that agents who act under self-control follow their better judgment, while akratic agents fail to do so:

> I will follow Aristotle in understanding *self-control* and *akrasia* as two sides of the same coin. As Mele states,
>
> […]Self-controlled individuals are agents who have significant motivation to conduct themselves as they judge best and a robust capacity to do what it takes so to conduct themselves in the face of (actual or anticipated) motivation […]. Akratic individuals, conversely, suffer from a deficiency in one or both of these connections. (Mele 2002: 531; see also 1992; 1995)

That is, the capacity to follow their reason which self-controlled agents possess is what akratic agents lack. In this way, they are opposite states. Their opposition, however, leads some to question whether akratic agents—those who by definition are in the state of lacking self-control—possess the necessary control over their actions to bear moral responsibility.

In other words, it seems that any account that attributes to an agent control over her akratic action has to face the challenge that rises from the opposition between *akrasia* and self-control.[48]

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[47] It is important to note that despite expanding the realm of *akrasia*, Mele, along with Aristotle, claims that *akrasia* and self-control govern the same realm, whether that realm only involves desires or also includes other things like beliefs. Moreover, autonomy, as Mele understands it, is self-rule or self-government. It is closely connected to the notion of self-control (enkrateia), which is the contrary of *akrasia* (want of self-control) according to Mele. But mere possession of perfect self-control is insufficient for autonomous agency, since it could also imply a deterministic world or it could indicate that the agent is brainwashed. Control, as Mele points out, is a causal phenomenon that can be distinguished into compatibilist, or non-ultimate control and ultimate control. And "causal" need not be a deterministic term, so the notion of control can be independent of the determinism-indeterminism debate regarding the issue of autonomy. Moreover, he defends a version of agnostic autonomism that does not side with either compatibilism or incompatibilism (or libertarianism). This agnostic view, according to Mele, is more credible than nonautonomism.

[48] Also, the opposition poses a special problem for those contemporary philosophers who consider self-control to be an indispensable factor for free will and thus moral responsibility. That is, it seems to many that an agent is only free when she possesses control over her action. In other words, if an agent lacks control over herself, then it seems that

I argue that one sense in which akratic agents possess control over their actions is that they execute their own volitions. In other words, akratic agents are known as those who are lacking self-control, yet this is not to say that their performances are out of their control. For instance, despite Belle's lacking the kind of control to respond to her rational judgment while acting akratically, she still seems to possess control over whether to eat the cake. In the next section, I further clarify the kind of control that akratic agents possess by comparing two ways of losing self-control: *akrasia* and addiction .[49]

3.2.2 Resistible Desire vs Irresistible Desire.

In the same way I elaborated upon the sense of *akrasia* above, here I first illustrate the phenomena of addiction before making comparisons. Addiction is commonly taken as a process in which people develop a dependency on certain things, e.g. drugs and alcohol, such that they are compelled to fulfill their desires for the objects of their addiction. An interruption of their addictive behaviors will generally cause great anxiety. This is why addicts often go to excessive lengths in order to keep engaging in their addictive behaviors, even when this causes tremendous harm to themselves and the others, such as endangering their health, drifting apart from their family, and committing crimes.

What is more, various cases of addiction or compulsion are also taken to be states of lacking self-control, which resemble *akrasia* in that people come to be in those states by

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she is not as free as we expect. So if having self-control is one of the conditions that render an agent free, then an akratic agent that lacks the ability to control herself is not free when she acts akratically. While I will not pursue the issue from the perspective of free will here, it remains a hidden factor relevant to my current study of control.

[49] I am going to elaborate on the sense of addiction that I compare with *akrasia* later, for this term is applied to different kinds of addictive behaviors. Most, if not all, of us are familiar with addictive behaviors, such as alcoholism, drug addiction, sugar addiction, etc. There are also, of course, compulsive symptoms that are pathologically typical.

abandoning their better judgment. Just as Watson (1977) states, self-control is the ability to overcome recalcitrant desires. These desires do not align with people's better judgment about what is the right thing to do. Both akratic agents and addicts fail to exhibit self-control while betraying their better judgment. In other words, unlike self-controlled agents, akratic agents and compulsive agents lack or fail to exercise their ability to follow their better judgment.

Before I pursue the issue further, a distinction is needed between the lack of the control necessary for moral responsibility and the lack of self-control.[50] These are overlapping but individually distinct. "Lacking self-control," as we have seen, describes people who fail to act according to their own rational minds. The opposition between reasons and desires has been widely discussed by philosophers like Socrates and Aristotle. According to them, reasons are what people should identify with. It is in this sense that we consider intentions to be truly determined and owned by agents, for intentions come directly from agents' rational capacity. When desires argue with reasons and motivate people to act against those reasons, the resulting actions could be considered somehow external to the people acting. That is, people lose self-control over what they do when they are motivated by recalcitrant desires, either resistible or irresistible.

It is not the case, however, that by losing self-control people lose the kind of control needed to bear responsibility for their actions. In contrast, moral responsibility is not properly applicable when people genuinely lack control, and an agent genuinely lacks control when alternate possibilities are not accessible to her. For instance, when her brakes are suddenly broken while driving, it is impossible for the driver to prevent her car from running into the fire hydrant. In cases like this, we cannot properly hold agents responsible for slamming into a fire

[50] I will discuss the distinction between voluntary control and self-control in the following section.

hydrant. Of course, if the agent knows that the brakes are about to go out and still takes that car out on the road, we can properly hold her morally responsible, since it is within her control whether to drive a car that may endanger her and other people's lives. I will deal with the kind of control we have over non-voluntary failures in chapter 4. For now, I conclude that, despite the fact that possessing self-control is manifestly good, it is still not the kind of control that is necessary to hold people morally responsible.

With this clarification made, now we can come back to examine these two phenomena—*akrasia* and addiction—that seem to fall into the same category, as for they both exhibit a lack of self-control. There is, however, a moral difference between them, for the desires that motivate them are different. According to Watson:

> In summary, then, there are capacities and skills of resistance which are generally acquired in the normal course of socialization and practice, and which we hold one another responsible for acquiring and maintaining. Weak agents fall short of standards of "reasonable and normal" self-control (for which we hold them responsible), whereas compulsive agents are motivated by desires which they could not resist even if they met those standards. That is why we focus on the weakness of the agent in the one case (it is the agent's fault), but on the power of the contrary motivation in the compulsive case. And this view allows explanations in terms of weakness of will to be significantly different from explanations in terms of compulsion. In the case of weakness, one acts contrary to one's better judgment because one has failed to meet standards of reasonable or normal self-control; whereas, this explanation does not hold of compulsive behavior. (pp.331-2)

That is, although both addicts (compulsive agents) and akratic agents fail to meet the accepted standards of self-control and instead exhibit a lack thereof, only akratic agents are responsible for their failures. Akratic agents *exercise* their own desires while failing to do the right thing. Addicts, however, lack self-control in a way that makes it impossible to resist their desires. In other words, the contrary desire that motivates an akratic agent is recalcitrant but *resistible*, while the addict's motivating desire is *irresistible*.

In order to better illustrate what irresistible desires are, it is important to explain the kind of addiction I am referring to. Specifically, though I take the notions of addiction and compulsion to be interchangeable here, this is still a debatable issue. That is, some people tend to consider addiction a compulsive phenomenon, while others think of it as a choice, as Henden (2016) explains:

> The "medical model" sees addictive behavior as compulsive and symptomatic of neurobiological illness. The "choice model" sees it as the manifestation of harmful social or psychological circumstances that have led addicts to freely and, in a certain sense, rationally choose to engage in this behavior. (p.116)[51]

I do not want to throw myself into this controversy, but merely argue that even if some parts of addictive behaviors seem to be involved with a certain level of choice-making, there exist, at least, addictive behaviors that are compulsive to the agent.

Generally, I side with the medical model and hold that addicts act compulsively, and they are not responsive to their reasons. Wallace (1999) explains this model in the following way,

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[51] Henden, etc. (2013) makes a similar distinction in an earlier work, which states "compulsion involves irresistible desires, some philosophers argue that various kinds or at least some of the additions are compulsible, while others argue that addictions are under voluntary control and are intentional."

“addicts, we tend to suppose, are subject to impulses or cravings that are peculiarly unresponsive to their evaluative reflection about what there is reason for them to do” (p.621), while supporters of the choice model believe that there exist no compulsive addicts but only the people who make bad decisions. A common reason to support this latter model is that, according to some researchers, it is possible for addicts to quit successfully, even unaided (see Heyman 2009; Pickard 2013). Also, there is other, empirical evidence that seems to indicate that addicts could respond to their reasons, and that they exhibit a lack of prudence (rather than a lack of control) when they choose to engage in addictive behaviors. For instance, it is doubtful whether a tobacco addict would suffer much mentally or physically if they refrained from smoking in the elevator. What they have are bad manners and vicious habits. They do not seem to be under the influence any stronger than what akratic agents suffer. In reply, I point out again that there also exist addicts, such as a substance-dependent drug user, who would disregard all kinds of harms, including damage to their own health, finance, or even disregard their family in pursuit of their addiction. It seems that at least heavy drug addicts exhibit symptoms of compulsion when they destroy the things that they would otherwise greatly cherish.

On a related note, there are also philosophers who are skeptical about the notion of irresistible desires. For instance, Feinberg (1970) expresses this point of view:

> [S]trictly speaking, no impulse is irresistible; for every case of giving in to a desire, I would argue, it will be true that, if the person had tried harder he would have resisted it successfully... Nevertheless, it does make sense to say that some desires are stronger than others and that some have an intensity and power that are felt as overwhelming. (pp.282-3)

While Feinberg is clearly correct about the varied strength desires, he is too quick in concluding that the ones “felt as overwhelming” are not actually so, that is, that they are not genuinely irresistible to the people experiencing them. It is like saying that if your immune system is strong enough, your body would not catch the flu even if a sick person coughed to your face, and since our immune systems are all strong enough, there are no such things as highly contagious diseases.[52] If that were the case, we would rightly blame ourselves for being sick. But this is an absurd conclusion—just because you might be immune to the flu in your better condition, it does not follow that there are no viruses to which your body might succumb at another moment. In the same way, as long as a certain desire appears to us to be irresistible to the agent at the moment—e.g., the desires are too strong to resist for those heavy addicts—I will class them as irresistible desires.

In short, it might not be true that all desires that addicts possess are irresistible, and that is probably why people tend to be suspicious about whether addicts are compelled by their dependency or are simply bad decision-makers. I argue that there exist compulsive addicts, at least some of whose desires are too overwhelming to resist. And it is precisely this kind of addict that I have in mind when comparing them to akratic agents.

Having elaborated what I mean by irresistible desires in the context of addiction, I will now examine how having a resistible desire serves as a mental basis for akratic agents to exhibit voluntary control over their akratic actions. More specifically, I argue that akratic actions which are caused by mental states such as resistible desires are still voluntary to the agents.

[52] The outbreak of the COVID-19 virus would be an excellent example for highly-contagious disease. People have a less tendency to catch the virus if they have a better immune system, but the virus is still generally too overwhelming to resist.

3.2.3 Voluntary Control over Akrasia.

It is baffling how akratic agents who apparently lack self-control can also possess, at the same time, voluntary control over their failures. Because akratic agents act under the influence of their recalcitrant desires rather than according to what they hold to be right, some philosophers conclude that the resulting actions are out of the agent's control. This poses an obvious problem: How can we blame akratic agents for failures that are out of their control? To answer this, let us consider the case of addictive Belle. (I previously presented the case of akratic Belle, in order to better illustrate the different states of losing self-control, but I am now introducing the case of addictive Belle):

> Suppose Belle should not eat this sweet, according to her doctor, but she is addicted to sweet things. Her desire drives her to eat the delicious cake that is in front of her. She knows that it is harmful to her health and strives to fight against her indulgence of sweet things. But no matter how hard she tries, she still yields to her irresistible urge of eating the cake.

In contrast with the case of akratic Belle, who only experienced recalcitrant but resistible desires, if Belle is *addicted* to sweet things, then the desire that motivates her to eat the cake is irresistible. The addict Belle might struggle to resist the urge for the cake just as akratic Belle does, but addict Belle's struggle is futile where akratic Belle's is not, since compulsive addiction does not leave any space for the agent to choose.

By contrast, desires often appear to be overpowering to akratic agents, yet those agents still have genuine access to doing the right thing. Just as Aristotle states, *akrasia* is not a regular state for an agent. Rather, akratic agents only betray their better judgment occasionally. Suppose Belle *always* eats the cake that is in front of her. She is, then, more like an intemperate agent rather than an akratic agent. One might be reluctant to admit that she chooses to eat the cake against her better judgment. Belle expresses genuine volitional power over her *akratic* action of eating the cake when she weighs the two options and turns to the irrational one. Instead, suppose that while Belle is deliberating about whether to eat the cake, she reads a medical report about the harm that eating sweet things would cause to her health. This new source of reasons could add weight to her better judgment and so that it wins against her desire to eat the cake. Even if she is misled by her desire eventually, it is still clear that she is making a choice when she eats the cake. In the case of addictive Belle, however, even if her struggle to resist the urge to eat the cake is genuine, she remains powerless over its eventual occurrence. That is, addictive Belle's behavior of eating the cake simply occurs *to* her, rather than being conducted *by* her. So, more generally speaking, addicts cannot choose whether or not to follow their compulsive desires, because those desires are too overwhelming to resist. Akratic agents, however, do choose—through being irrational and betraying their better judgment—to follow their desires after weighing the options.

Furthermore, while akratic agents disobey what they believe to be right and thereby undermine their ability to control themselves, this does not undermine their voluntary control over their akratic actions. Self-control and voluntary control do not come from the same source, and it is not self-contradictory to state that an agent could lack one of them, and yet at the same time possess the other. Specifically, self-control is an ability to regulate ourselves according to reason. Voluntary control, however, need not be expressed by a rational choice. Rather, irrational decisions can be voluntary to the agents, so long as those agents express volitional power over the actions. In other words, when an agent exhibits her voluntary control over an occurrence, it is because she possesses a certain mental state—an intention or a desire—that causes the occurrence to happen. So both kinds of action are voluntarily conducted by the agents, even though desire-motivated actions are not as directly voluntary as intentional actions, since the former are less rationally regulated by agents.[53] What is more, not all desire-motivated actions are voluntary. When a compulsive or an irresistible desire strikes an addict, it is not just an irrational motivation in her, but it actually steals her agency. Just as we tend not to hold children fully responsible for their behaviors, since they haven't yet fully developed their agency, in a similar way, we also say that since an addict loses her agency, she cannot properly be held responsible for her behaviors.

I have argued above that despite the fact that both akratic agents and addicts act according to their desires, akratic agents possess control over their actions, while addicts are robbed of their agency and thus do not possess control. This might lead one to wonder what being a proper agent *does* require. To answer this, let us visit a classic view of *agency* from Foot (1974):

> The idea of agency, in the sense that we want, seems to be composed of two subsidiary ideas. First, we think of particular effects as the result of particular sequences, as when a certain fatal sequence leads to someone's death… Suppose such complications [are] absent. Then we can pick out the fatal sequence and go on to ask who initiated it. If the subject died by poisoning and it was I who put the poison into his drink, then I am the agent of his death… But we can easily understand the idea that a death comes about through our agency if we send someone poisoned food or cut him up for spare parts, but not (ordinarily) if we fail to save him when he is threatened by accident or disease. (p.80)

[53] See chapter 2 for a more detailed explanation of how a certain control is direct to the agent.

According to Foot's account, agency consists of two elements. One is that a particular sequence of events explains why a particular thing happened. In both akratic and addictive cases, this element consists in desire that motivates the agent and thus explains why her failures occur. Next, there are some agents who originate sequences of events which ensure that those events cannot happen other than they do. With this principle in hand, we can discern whether those persons involved in such sequences are agents. Though motivated by irrational sources, i.e. desires, akratic agents initiate their wrongdoings and choose not to take the right path. In cases of addiction, however, addicts are powerless over whatever happens next, never mind ensuring anything. In other words, when addicts are compelled or abducted by their urges, they are part of the sequence but not the initiators of it. It is similar to the fictional case in which a neuroscientist manipulates your mind and orders you to raise your arm—it is the neuroscientist, and not you, who is the agent of your arm raising. That is, an agent's akratic actions come out of her opposing desires, and not other sources, while an addict is powerless over her addiction and thus is not the agent of her compulsive behaviors.

In brief, by using a comparison between two kinds of losing self-control: *akrasia* and addiction, I argue that, unlike the addictive agent's powerlessness before her irresistible desires, an akratic agent exhibits voluntary control over her action—though irrational and betraying her better judgment—through the process of *yielding* to her opposing but resistible desire. That is, an akratic agent is at fault for failing to choose what is right, while addicts are destined to fail in facing up to their dependency. Specifically, though an akratic agent loses a certain level of *self-control*, in the sense that she makes an irrational choice, she still expresses *voluntary* control over her action. In comparison, addicts not only lack self-control but also lack agency, due to their powerlessness over compulsive urges. In this way, it seems that at least some desire-motivated actions, e.g. cases of *akrasia*, are voluntary to agents.

3.3 Akratic Omissions and Control over Them.

In the previous chapter, I established the symmetrical roles that an agent's intentional mental state plays in cases of intentional actions and intentional omissions.[54] Having just illustrated our voluntary control over *akrasia,* or cases of akratic actions, in this section, I argue that we also have voluntary control over our akratic omissions. Akratic omissions are cases in which what motivates an agent to *omit* is her possession of a certain desire, and for which agents are properly held morally responsible. I first present several cases of akratic omissions. Then I propose that just as in cases of akratic actions, agents possess voluntary control over their akratic omissions because their desires, though recalcitrant, are irresistible. Finally, I argue against two possible objections to the idea that desire-motivated omissions, such as akratic omissions, can be reduced to intentional omissions.

3.3.1 Akratic Omissions.

From what I argued previously, we can see how having a resistible desire satisfies the mental condition for voluntary control in cases of *akrasia*. In this section, I argue that having a resistible desire also suffices to ground our voluntary control over omissions. In order to argue for this, I bring to light a special, but neglected, kind of omission—what I call an akratic omission—in which what motivates an agent is her possession of a certain desire rather than an intention.

[54] I have argued there that the role which mental states—intentions, desires, etc.—play in both cases are symmetrical.

Agents often find themselves caught in cases of what I call *akratic omissions*. In these cases of akratic omission, as in cases of akratic action, agents struggle between their desires and what their better judgment tells them to be right. Akartic omissions differ from akratic actions, however, in that desires motivate agents to *omit* rather than to *act*. Let us represent the drowning child case as an example of akratic omission:

> Suppose that Eda notices another child drowning in the lake. She does not form an intention to not save the child like she did last time. Rather, she is torn between a desire to not save the child and her rational judgment that saving the child is the right thing to do. She eventually gives in to her desire and omits to save the child.

As this example indicates, it seems that akratic agents who omit are just like those who act. They both end up being led by their desires rather than following what they know to be right. In this scenario, Eda does not execute any intention but is led by a desire to not save the child. So in cases of akratic omissions, an agent's desire is the mental basis that motivates her to omit to do what is right. If what motivates Eda as she omits to save the drowning child is a desire rather than an intention, does she still possess voluntary control over her omission? Obviously, agents do not have intentional mental states in these cases, but do agents have control over these non-intentional omissions via other mental states, e.g. *desires*? In practice, we would tend to hold Eda responsible for her omission, even if she merely *desires* or *wants to not* save the child. I argue that despite the fact that she might not possess *direct* voluntary control over her akratic omissions, she still possesses voluntary control over them.

3.3.2 Control over Akratic Omissions.

As mentioned above, the question at issue is: Do akratic agents possess voluntary control over their akratic omissions, since they are motivated by desires rather than intentions? In order to answer this question, I argue—despite Clarke's claim that possessing desires is *not* sufficient to satisfy the mental condition for intentional omissions—that possessing desires is sufficient for agents to possess voluntary control over their akratic omissions. That is, while having a certain intention is one way of satisfying the mental condition for expressing control over omissions, it is not the *only* way. Rather, an agent can have voluntary control over her akratic omission without possessing any intention, but instead by having a recalcitrant but resistible desire.

To better compare our views, let us consider Clarke's (2014a) argument that possessing desires is not enough to satisfy the mental condition of intentional omissions, since having desires does not make an agent committed enough to an action:

> Just as one can desire to A without being settled on or committed to A-ing, so one can desire not to A without being settled on or committed to not A-ing. And just as desiring to A, together with an awareness that one is A-ing, doesn't suffice, as far as having the required attitudes goes, for intentionally A-ing, so, it seems, having the corresponding desire and awareness is not enough to render one's not A-ing intentional. (p.68)

For Clarke, omissions that are motivated by desires are not intentional, since desiring agents lack the kind of commitment that intending agents have. He explains further that an agent might possess a desire to do something, but "it takes more than bringing it to my attention that I'm not doing so to make it the case that I'm intentionally not doing so"(p.68). That is, Clarke rejects this presupposition (possessing desires is enough to satisfy the mental condition of intentional omissions) since while desire and awareness get a person to notice her omission, this does not necessarily entail that an agent is committed to that omission.

Indeed, I accept that unlike intentions, desires do not necessarily indicate an agent's commitment to an event. An agent, however, might possess voluntary control over her omission via mental states other than intentions, e.g. desires. In other words, we do not need to demonstrate that an akratic omission is intentional as Clarke suggests. Rather, we simply need to demonstrate that an agent possesses a voluntary control over her omission which is motivated by a certain desire.

What is more, I propose that an agent's possession of a recalcitrant but resistible desire meets the mental condition required for possessing voluntary control over her akratic omissions, just as it does in cases of *akrasia* or akratic actions. For instance, in the akratic omission case of Eda, her relevant desire does more than bring her attention to a potential action. It also guides and motivates her omission to not save the child. Although intentions and desires are different mental states, they are both volitions that direct us to either act or omit.[55] If it makes sense to believe that an agent's mental state—an intention to do or not to do—plays symmetrical roles in cases of intentional actions and intentional omissions, it is not difficult to hold the view that desires also play symmetrical roles in cases of akratic actions and akratic omissions. That is, in contrast to addicts who are motivated by compulsive/irresistible desires, akratic agents express their agency, and thus voluntary control, when being motivated to act/omit by their resistible desires.

In this way, akratic Eda, eventually follows her desire to omit after struggling between her two options, but though she does not *intentionally* omit to save the child, we still blame her for not doing so. Holding an agent morally responsible for her omission requires her to have control over the omission but not necessarily to perform that omission intentionally. The fact that Eda's akratic omission of not saving the child is not intentional does not free her from being properly held morally responsible, for she is responsible as long as she possesses control over the

[55] I will explain more about the voluntary control that we possess through executing volitions in chapter 5.

akratic omission. That is, our moral intuitions to condemn an agent's akratic omission provide, at least, a *prima facie* reason to believe that she has control over what she omits to do.

In summary, as we can see from the case of akratic Eda, agents can have voluntary control over their akratic omissions without possessing any relevant intention. Specifically, in akratic omissions, agents have voluntary control over the occurrence of their omissions at the time, while at the same time not possessing intentions of any kind regarding those omissions. Though not as committed or direct, agents have voluntary control over akratic omissions, just as they do over intentional ones. That is, though possessing intentions is one way of satisfying the mental condition for us to have voluntary control over omissions, it is not the only way. Therefore, there are two kinds of omission over which we have voluntary control: intentional omissions, over which we have direct voluntary control by possessing a certain intention, and akratic omissions, over which we have voluntary but not direct control through executing a recalcitrant but resistible desire.

3.3.3 Defending Akratic Omissions from Two Possible Objections.

In this section, I address two possible objections that, if correct, could undermine my account of akratic omissions. Specifically, critics might question my claims about akratic omissions in two ways. First, there might be hidden intentions in cases of akratic omissions, making them reducible to intentional omissions. Second, some philosophers might question whether non-rational or non-intentional sources such as desires are capable of grounding an agent's control over her behaviors. In this section, I defend my view of akratic omissions against these two objections. Before I start, it is worth mentioning that if there is indeed a symmetry between cases of akratic actions and akratic omissions, these two objections and answers to them apply in both cases of akratic action as well.

First, some philosophers, e.g. Clarke, might argue that there are hidden intentions that, at least in part, ground our control over akratic omissions, such that they are reducible to intentional omissions. Specifically, according to Clarke (2014a), there is indeed an intention with relevant content which is part of the akratic agent's mental state—namely, Eda's deliberation about whether to save the child. Clarke claims that the process of deliberating is *typically* an intentional activity. People can intentionally consider things that are relevant to an issue, or intentionally try to decide upon things. In Clarke's argument, Eda's process of intentionally deliberating while being aware that she is doing nothing to save the child qualifies as an intention with relevant content for her omission. If Clarke is right about deliberation being intentional, then Eda's control over her omission could still be grounded in an intention after all. If this is the case, then akratic omissions are reducible to intentional omissions.

But is the process of deliberation typically intentional in akratic cases, as Clarke suggests? Probably not. There is no denying that deliberation is itself an activity, but it is unusual for us to call our deliberating process intentional in akratic situations. I argue that in order for an activity to be intentional, the agent has to possess an intention beforehand. When we judge a crime to be intentional rather than out of passion, the person who commits it has to possess an intention first and commits the crime later after deliberation. It might be true that most intentional activities involve a process of deliberation, but it is not necessarily true that the deliberating process itself is intentional. In the akratic case of the drowning child, it seems that Eda has no such premeditated intention existing within her mind. Even if Eda is torn between two options, Eda's deliberation about them does not come from any prior intention. Rather, it happens while she is struggling with the dilemma. In akratic omission cases, agents often feel trapped by the dilemma, rather than intentionally conducting a deliberation. While their deliberation is intense, it is not necessarily intentional. As argued with regard to side-effects in chapter 2, I adopt a strict standard of what qualifies as intentional here. The deliberating process is known to the agent but not intentional so long as she does not set her mind on doing it. So, it seems that there is no hidden intention in those akratic omissions that involves deliberation, at least in my sense of the term.

Moreover, even if the process of deliberation were intentional, the intentionality of a deliberation does not entail the intentionality of the corresponding omission. In other words, if we take the process of deliberation to be a separate act, we have no guarantee that this intentional act has to generate another intentional act (or omission). In Eda's case, she is aware during her deliberation that her not doing anything will lead to the death of the child. Her deliberation is supported partially by her reason to save the child and partially by her desire to not do anything about it, and this desire (in part) grounds her control over her omission. Eda eventually gives in to her desire without making up her mind about doing so. Throughout the process, even if Eda's deliberation about what to do is intentional, she does not therefore generate or maintain a rational intention not to act.

Furthermore, some philosophers adopt a broad sense of what qualifies as "intentional," such that even if there is no hidden intention present, akratic omissions are still intentional. For instance, Davidson (1969) defines akratic actions as intentional:

> In doing x an agent acts incontinently if and only if: (a) the agent does x intentionally; (b) the agent believes there is an alternative action y open to him; and (c) the agent judges that, all things considered, it would be better to do y than to do x. (p.21)

For Davidson, though it is irrational for the agent to betray his better reason, an incontinent (akratic) action is still an intentional action that he chooses to perform. This account, which collapses incontinent action and intentional action, could be inherited by cases of omissions:

> In omitting to do x an agent *omits* incontinently if and only if: (a) the agent omits to do x intentionally; (b) the agent believes there is an action x open to him; and (c) the agent judges that, all things considered, it would be better to do x than omit to do x.

In this way, even without the presence of a hidden intention, akratic actions and omissions would still be intentional to the agent. To this I reply, this account does not directly threaten our belief that an agent's akratic omission is motivated by her desire. Again, Davidson's account would not work if one adopts a rather narrow/strict requirement about what kind of actions/omissions are intentional, as I do. According to my sense of the term, only the possession of an intention not to act throughout suffices to satisfy the mental condition of intentional omissions, and thus excludes akratic omissions from being a species of intentional omissions.

To summarize, I respond to the first concern by illustrating that there is no hidden intention, but only desires, to ground an agent's control over akratic omissions. For instance, in the akratic case of a drowning child, in which Eda is busy deliberating about her moral dilemma without making a decision, there is no intention present to ground her control over omitting to save the child. What is more, though the broad sense of intentional actions or omissions does not threaten my account that desires could ground an agent's control, it is incompatible with the narrow/strict sense of intentionality that I hold. According to the strict requirement of intentionality, intentional agents act according to their rational capacity, while akratic agents betray their rational capacity and follow their irrational desires.

Second, philosophers that lean towards a stricter view of intentions do not consider actions that issue from non-intentional sources, such as desires or beliefs, to be under the agent's control. For instance, according to Buckareff (2008):

> Merely being caused to A when one wants to A or wants some end E and believes that by A-ing one can achieve E absent having the proper intention to A that guides and monitors the agents A-ing are not by themselves sufficient for controlling behavior in the way necessary for action. (p.10)

That is, though an agent seems to have access to multiple choices at the moment, her akratic action is under the influence of a desire or a belief and cannot properly be deemed to be under her control. If this statement were true, it would undermine an agent's ability to be properly held morally responsible for non-intentional conduct, at least for those of us who hold the control account of moral responsibility.

In reply, although I adopt the intellectualistic position to the extent that I see intentional actions as being under the agents' direct guidance, I reject the idea that non-intentional sources such as desires and beliefs could not also provide sources of voluntary control. Even if non-intentional sources do not provide the kind of power that "monitors and guides" the agent as directly as intentions do, they could still provide the volitional power to initiate the agents' path. Admittedly, desires and beliefs do not reliably provide voluntary control for agents. As indicated by the comparison between addicts and akratic agents, the control condition differs between an agent who is led astray by his own resistible desire and a person who is abducted by a compulsive urge. Instead of abandoning all non-intentional sources of control, my focus in examining akratic actions and omissions is to discern the difference between those desires that suffice to satisfy the control condition from those that do not.

3.4 Concluding Remarks.

In brief, although not as directly as intentional cases, agents express voluntary control over both akratic actions and omissions. Specifically, as we established when we compared akratic cases to cases of addiction, akratic agents possess voluntary control over their actions and omissions by possessing a recalcitrant but resistible desire. In other words, an akratic agent's possession of a certain desire at least partially suffices to ground her voluntary control over akratic actions. What is more, in what I call akratic omissions, agents have voluntary control over their omissions without possessing any relevant intentions. So, even if both intentional omissions and akratic omissions are voluntary to the agent, akratic omissions are not reducible to intentional omissions. That is, having an intention is one way to satisfy the mental condition of providing voluntary control for an agent, but having a resistible desire may very well be another.

Chapter 4 Control over Unwitting Omissions and Implicit Moral Attitudes.

I have previously examined omissions that are voluntary to agents, i.e. intentional omissions and akratic omissions. Comparing them with voluntary actions, I argued that possessing a certain mental state satisfies the mental condition for an agent to possess control over her voluntary omissions and thus to be held morally responsible for them. There are, however, cases in which agents tend to be held responsible for omissions concerning which they have no intentions, desires, or even awareness while they occur, non-voluntary omissions, unwitting omissions being one of the representative cases.[56] These non-voluntary cases raise a new challenge to the control account of moral responsibility. If the agent lacks the common motivational mental state or even awareness while the omission occurs, in what sense can we say that she has control over it and can therefore be properly held responsible for it?

Let us say that Cain brings home a goldfish in springtime. After the first stage of excitement, he starts to forget to feed the fish or change the water in the tank. Sadly but expectedly, at the end of summer, Cain finds that his goldfish has perished. Intuitively, we would blame Cain for his omission of not taking care of his pet goldfish even if it occurs unwittingly. According to the control account of moral responsibility, however, Cain has to possess control over his omission in order to be properly held responsible. The problem is, even if Cain has control over his omission of not taking care of the fish, he clearly does not intend or desire to omit. In this way, the previously established requirements for satisfying the mental condition needed for intentional omissions, i.e. possessing a relevant intention or desire not to act, cannot

[56] There are philosophers who term omissions that are done non-voluntarily or unwittingly as negligent omissions. I do not inherit the usage here in order to avoid a misleading implication, unless I need to imply a sense of blame. For "negligence" has been adopted in legal contexts, and implies a sense of "guilty". In order to better conduct the philosophical inquiry on the issue, I instead take the more objective phrases of "non-voluntary" and "unwitting" omissions.

apply in these unwitting cases. In other words, besides voluntary omissions, there are other, puzzling cases of omissions that occur unwittingly, and yet we also tend to hold agents responsible for them.

The challenge to the control account is similar in cases of possessing and exercising implicit moral attitudes, e.g. implicit bias. As we know, we do not always have voluntary control over what we believe and how we respond to moral issues. For instance, many people, including law enforcement officers, exhibit implicit biases towards certain races of people without knowing that they are doing so. These agents are not aware of their morally biased beliefs, nor that they issue unjustly harsh verdicts based on those beliefs. These agents, however, are not totally relieved of their moral responsibility for holding biased moral attitudes and the resulting behaviors, simply because they occur unwittingly. This, again, raises questions about how we hold agents responsible for such failures, e.g. unwitting omissions and implicit moral attitudes, in which agents are not aware of and thus possess no voluntary control over.

Some philosophers wonder whether we are culpable for these non-voluntary failures, or, even if we are, whether we possess any kind of control over them. In the next chapter, I will argue that the alternative explanations of non-voluntary culpability are not sufficient to replace the control assumption. Here, I defend the control account of non-voluntary culpability and argue that we are morally culpable for those non-voluntary failures that we do have control over. Specifically, I argue that agents possess a kind of *retrospective control* over non-voluntary yet culpable failures. Retrospective control is not a direct and voluntary kind of control that agents exercise in initiating their failures. It is a *passive* kind of control in the sense that the agents at fault are not lacking control over their failures. Moreover, the source of this passive control traces back to a *state* in which we can reasonably expect the agents to avoid those failures.

4.1 Unwitting Omissions.

Specifying what kind of control, if any, agents have over their unwitting omissions demands a close examination of the term. As Murray and Vargas (2020) suggest, "The term 'unwitting omission' refers to failures to act where the agent is unaware of the fact that she will fail and is failing to act during the duration of her failure."[57] Unwitting omissions, which I take to be a typical case of non-voluntary omissions, occur when agents lack awareness of what they are omitting to do at the time as they are omitting. Agents that omit unwittingly lack the basis—awareness—to generate any motive for action, and thus lack voluntary control over their omissions. And yet, under certain circumstances (e.g. the goldfish case), we tend to hold agents responsible for their unwitting omissions.

4.1.1 Nonvoluntary Omissions and Awareness.

Before I pursue this further, it is important to describe what non-voluntary omissions are and how they differ from voluntary omissions. Non-voluntary omissions are omissions with respect to which agents do not possess any motivational mental states, e.g. intentions or desires, when they omit, and they thus appear to lack voluntary control over their omissions. As mentioned above, I consider unwitting omissions to be a typical case of non-voluntary omissions, in which agents lack awareness of what they omit to do. Awareness plays a fundamental role in motive generation, since an agent has to be aware of a situation beforehand

[57] It is worth mentioning that Murray and Vargas take unwitting omissions to be under the column of unintentional omissions, as he continues, "Unwitting omissions are a species of unintentional omissions, where an unintentional omission is any failure of an agent to act or refrain that is not the upshot or result of a relevant intention. An unwitting omission is any unintentional omission where the agent is unaware at every relevant moment that she will omit and is omitting" (Murray and Vargas, 2020). Since I expand the scope of the question to include akratic omissions that we also possess voluntary control over, I adopt the distinction between voluntary omissions (including at least intentional omissions and akratic omissions) and non-voluntary omissions, rather than between intentional omissions and unintentional omissions. In this way, I claim that unwitting omissions are a species of non-voluntary omissions.

in order to generate any motive for doing or omitting to do something. The problem is: Could an agent be aware of her omission and yet omit non-voluntarily? In other words, is lacking awareness a necessary condition for non-voluntary omissions? I would argue not. On the one hand, there are trivial cases of negligent omissions in which agents knowingly omit but do not settle their minds on omitting, which is unlike the mental states they possess in cases of voluntary omissions. They are more like cases of non-voluntary omissions than voluntary. On the other hand, there are also cases of voluntary omissions in which agents have settled their minds to omit but are unaware of their omissions at the time of omitting.

For instance, suppose Finn is in the middle of playing a video game when his mother asks him to take out the trash. He is aware of what his mother is asking him to do throughout the time but pays very little attention to this assigned task. So he omits to take out the trash. It is not the case that Finn intends or wants to not take out the trash out of a rebellious spirit. Nor does he intend to not play the video game, like an addict who acts against his intentions. Rather, under the circumstances, he simply neglects to take out the trash and carries on playing the game. There are other circumstances in which he might omit to take out the trash voluntarily—if, for instance, his mother asked him again to take out the trash, but he refused and carried on playing the game anyway. Finn's awareness of his mother's request for help *ought* to generate a motive to either act or omit voluntarily, but it is not always sufficient to do so. That is, even though Finn is aware that he is ignoring his mother's order throughout the time, he does not omit to take out the trash voluntarily. Unlike cases of voluntary omissions, Finn is not motivated to either act or omit by the reasons presented to him.

Compared with unwitting omissions, such as forgetting your friend's birthday or omitting to bring home milk that your family asked for, omissions like not taking out the trash for your mother are clear-eyed omissions, for agents know what they are omitting to do. Just because agents are aware of these omissions, however, does not necessarily render them voluntary. Rather, they can be classed as voluntary or non-voluntary according to how much is at stake. Low-stakes, or trivial, clear-eyed cases should be considered non-voluntary, while high-stakes cases should be considered voluntary. For one thing, in these clear-eyed, non-voluntary cases, the things that agents omit to do should be trivial. They may occur frequently but should not have a tendency to result in any serious consequences. For instance, suppose someone is in charge of inspecting the environment for safely storing nuclear bombs and she negligently omits to do so. In this sort of high-stakes case, an agent's negligent omission should be considered to be a case of voluntary omission. One *prime facie* rationale for this restriction is that, while we cannot reasonably expect an agent to fulfill all her duties, she should pay diligent attention to fulfilling crucial or serious ones, especially those that may lead to life or death situations.[58] That is, negligently omitting to do things, where the omission could result in serious consequences, seems to involve the agent voluntarily abandoning her role of acting properly, so they are more like cases of voluntary omission.

Moreover, it is important to note that voluntary omission could take place such that agents are not aware of them at the time. Suppose that you promise your neighbor to mow his lawn every few days during the summer as he travels abroad. But you get lazy and firmly decide not to do it as promised. You do not abandon or forget your decision, but you regularly omit

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[58] Of course, people would debate about how to distinguish between trivial or low-stakes cases of omission and serious or high-stakes ones. I will not dig deep into the issue, but although we seem to have a common understanding about most of the scenarios, we should leave each individual to decide how to judge and react if her significant other forgets about her birthday or anniversary. Also, high-stakes cases of negligence, such as leaving a baby or a dog in the car, are widely discussed in the literature about unwitting omissions. According to my standard, it seems that I have to bite the bullet and state that they are more like voluntary omissions, not in the sense that the agents planned ahead, but in that they neglect to pay extreme attention and take extreme measures to avoid these tragedies.

mowing your neighbor's lawn throughout the summer without actively revisiting that decision or having any related motive. If your neighbor sends you a message, you could recall that decision with no hindrance. Under such circumstances, even if the agents' omissions happen when they are not aware of their motive, those omissions are still voluntary to the agents.

In brief, there are two things that we need to bear in mind while distinguishing between voluntary and non-voluntary omissions. First, agents could be aware of their omissions but still possess no voluntary control over them, so long as they truly lack any motivational mental states concerning the non-occurrences. In other words, knowingly omitting to do a thing, especially in low-stakes cases, could very well be non-voluntary omissions. Second, in order to render an omission voluntary, a motivational mental state should not be abandoned or forgotten by the agent, but the agent need not be constantly aware of what he is omitting to do. That is, the conditions of voluntariness are closely related but not identical to those of awareness. In some cases, even though agents are not immediately aware of what they are omitting to do at the time, they are still omitting voluntarily.

4.1.2 Conditions of Unwitting Omissions and Moral Responsibility.

Having elaborated on the role that awareness plays in omissions, I now turn to examine the conditions that render an omission unwitting. Most philosophers who work on the subject suggest that there are ability and cognitive conditions for unwitting omissions. For instance, according to Clarke (2017):

> The agents (we may suppose) are able to do certain things, they should do them, but they don't. And the omissions are what I'll call unwitting: the agents aren't aware on these occasions that they aren't doing the things in question. (p.2)

Accordingly, the conditions for unwitting omissions seem to be, first, that the agents meet the ability condition: that they be able to do certain things. Second, that they meet the cognitive condition: that agents are not aware that they aren't doing the things in question. Regarding this second condition, Clarke argues that "the proposed condition requires not that the agent was aware but that, if she was not, then it was reasonable to expect her to have been aware that she was wrongly omitting to do the thing in question" (Clarke 2017:66). That is, it is not only that agents are not aware of their omissions, but also that they are reasonably expected to be aware of those failures. In addition to the conditions related to the relationship between awareness and motivation discussed in the previous section, an extra requirement has to be added to the cognitive condition of unwitting omissions. Namely, that the agents not possess any active motive regarding the things that they omit to do.

In this way, I propose that there are also three conditions required for unwitting omissions:

(i) it meets the *reality* condition (i.e., the thing did not happen),

(ii) it meets the *ability* condition (i.e., the agent could have done the thing), and

(iii) it meets the *cognitive* condition (i.e., the agent did *not possess any motive* of not to act throughout and was *not aware* of her causing the corresponding omission).

Now, we have a set of conditions that could distinguish unwitting omissions from other omissions. The next pressing issue is to examine whether agents should be held responsible for their unwitting omissions, and if so, what the basis of their culpability would be.

As we know, unwitting omissions often happen due to the agent's ignorance, obliviousness, or negligence. Intuitively, we think that agents are not responsible for omissions that occur due to reasons like these. For instance, Bob promises to pick up his friend Cora from the airport, but Cora accidentally sends her flight schedule to the wrong phone number. So Bob ends up not picking up Cora as promised, for he never receives the message from Cora. Bob seems to bear no moral responsibility for this omission since he could only be aware of it telepathically. That is, if it is reasonable to expect agents to be ignorant of their situations, they should not be held morally responsible for the unwitting omissions which result.

In other cases, moral responsibility for agents' unwitting omissions could be properly attributed to them. For instance, Dan the plumber agrees to fix a family's pipes before six o'clock. But Dan forgets about this job and omits to do it throughout the relevant time. Intuitively, Dan should be held culpable for his omission. When agents like Dan and Bob are not even aware of their omissions at that time of omitting, either through forgetting or being ignorant of the situation, their omissions are unwitting. The reasons that make agents unaware of their situations, however, do not always free them from being held morally responsible for their omissions. While we do not blame agents whose ignorance is reasonably to be expected, like Bob, we do blame agents like Dan.

Specifically, when unwitting omissions take place due to negligence or forgetfulness, we blame agents for what they omit to do. As a matter of fact, just as in Dan's case, we tend to attribute moral responsibility to the agent when she commits a bad act or omits to fulfill her duty negligently, if it is still within the agent's capacity and duty to do the right thing. Cases of unwitting omissions, however, pose a particularly tricky problem for the control account of moral responsibility. Specifically, though agents might feel regret about their omissions, since they fail to fulfill their duty, they do not have voluntary control over their unwitting omissions. In other words, in order to defend a control-based account and explain an agent's moral responsibility for her unwitting omission, the pressing questions at hand are: When we blame agents for their unwitting omissions, do we still suppose that they possess control over them?

And if we do, what kind of non-voluntary control do agents possess over their unwitting omissions?

4.2 Implicit Moral Attitudes and Moral Responsibility.

The possession and expression of moral attitudes are not things that agents can always control at will. For instance, Galen is raised in a family that is filled with racists, so he observed and absorbed their racially discriminating expressions and behaviors throughout his childhood. Not surprisingly, he adopts his family's way of "viewing" things and fails to treat other people as equals even when he is an adult. Considering the way that he was raised, Galen seems to possess no voluntary control over growing up to be a racist. And yet people tend to hold agents like Galen responsible for being racists.

As the previous case indicated, it is not just actions and omissions that we hold agents responsible for, but they are also condemnable when they possess deviant moral attitudes or fail to exhibit proper attitudes. As Zimmerman (2016) states:

> According to some philosophers (e.g., Smith 2005; Scanlon 2008:192f.), one can also be retrospectively responsible for one's attitudes (whether or not they result in behavior). These philosophers may also hold that one can have a prospective responsibility to see to it that one has or lacks certain attitudes, although this is a matter that is seldom addressed explicitly. (p.249)

According to the control account of moral responsibility, in order for an agent to be responsible for her attitudes, she has to possess a certain kind of control over them. The question is: Do agents possess control over their moral attitudes? In some cases, it seems that agents indeed possess control over whether to possess and express certain moral attitudes. Some beliefs or attitudes are actively grasped, such that we can choose to adopt a certain way of thinking and then stick with it in our moral practice. For instance, most environmentalists do not grow up believing that people should protect the environment carefully. Rather, they often adopt these thoughts later in life and change their lifestyle accordingly. Things are similar for most people who work to support women's rights or fight for the rights of LGBTQ people. That is, it seems that agents actively take on certain moral attitudes or beliefs, and then choose to express them in their behavior. What is more, it seems that agents can express voluntary control over their moral attitudes or beliefs no less than they do over their actions and omissions. According to Buckareff (2008):

> It may be argued that one's belief that p could be caused by an intention to make up one's mind about p. I will grant that this does sometimes occur. But in such cases coming to believe is the intentional outcome of one's agency and so it is the consequence of one's action and not under one's control in the same way as an action. Specifically, coming to believe is under one's indirect voluntary control in such cases. (p.11)

It seems that when we voluntarily take on a certain attitude or voluntarily "come to believe," such attitudes or beliefs are also under the control of our agency. In this way, we encounter few problems with explaining how, under the control-based account, agents should be held responsible for their voluntary moral attitudes.

Under other circumstances, however, if an agent does not voluntarily come to possess certain of her moral attitudes, then it seems to be more of a matter of luck regarding what kind of moral agent she turns out to be. As in Galen's case, his moral attitude is deeply rooted in the way that he was raised. If it is by bad luck that Galen turns out to be a racist, then how could we hold him accountable for something that he possesses no voluntary control over? In order to answer the question, I first examine the phenomenon of implicit bias. [59]

According to Saul, implicit biases are "unconscious biases that affect the way we perceive, evaluate, or interact with people from the groups that our biases 'target'" (Saul 2013: 40). The term "implicit bias" refers to a cluster of phenomena in which agents make biased associations without being aware of them. These unconscious and biased moral attitudes can generate decisions and/or practices accordingly. As some psychological research indicates, people tend to associate certain races with evaluative terms, and this kind of association can affect how they see and do things.[60] For instance, according to Holroyd and Sweetman (2016),

> An implicitly biased decision or action is one that expresses or embodies implicit features of cognition, which distort or influence that behaviour. For example, the implicit association between the race category 'white' and evaluative term 'good' can influence people to judge more positively a CV with a white-sounding name on it than the same CV with a black-sounding name. (p.80)

There are positive associations and negative associations. These embedded beliefs automatically and unconsciously interfere with our moral decision-making, but are not carefully examined by the moral agents who hold them. Rather, implicit biases shape an agent's decisions and actions extensively, coming to mind and initiating judgments non-voluntarily. Despite the fact that these racists express an implicit bias, rather than one which they intentionally hold, we do not excuse them simply on the basis of their unawareness.

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[59] Though I take implicit bias as states where agents are unaware of their harbored attitudes, there are interesting debates about whether agents are genuinely unaware of these implicit associations. For details, see De Houwer 2006; Fazio and Olson 2003, Hann et al. 2013; Holroyd 2014; Gawronski, Hofmann, and Wilbur 2006.
[60] See Dovidio and Gaertner (2000).

As seen above, the trouble we encounter in cases of implicit attitudes is similar to our difficulty with unwitting omissions, namely, how to account for an agent's responsibility for things that they do not have voluntary control over.

4.3 Towards A Control-based Account of Non-voluntary Culpability.

As mentioned above, non-voluntary culpability poses a particularly tricky problem to the traditional control-based account of moral responsibility. In non-voluntary cases such as unwitting omissions and implicit moral attitudes, agents are not even aware of them, which indicates that they lack the cognitive basis to possess voluntary control over them. We, however, still tend to hold agents responsible for at least some of their non-voluntary failures. The question we are facing is whether possessing control remains one of the conditions necessary to ground our moral condemnations of non-voluntary failures. Despite the apparent difficulties, I argue that it is. Agents can be properly held responsible for non-voluntary failures only if they possess control over them. To do so, I first examine various control accounts that—though somehow unsatisfying—can shed light on my inquiry. Then, I propose that agents possess *retrospective control* over non-voluntary failures. Such control is passive, in the sense that agents do not lack control, rather than active, which is the kind of control we have been considering so far.

4.3.1 Various Control Explanations for Non-voluntary cases.

Philosophers who work on the subject have developed different strategies to answer the pressing question: What kind of control agents do possess over their non-voluntary failures such as unwitting omissions? *Basic control* theorists and *tracing control* theorists debate about the kind of control and moral responsibility that such agents possess. For instance, Clarke (2017), one of the basic control theorists, defends an ability view and argues that agents are *directly* responsible for those actions or omissions that occur unwittingly. Other philosophers, e.g. Nelkin

(2017) and Murray (2017), however, support a tracing view and argue that agents are only *derivatively* responsible for non-voluntary failures.

There is a long tradition of defending non-voluntary culpability in terms of tracing. According to Murray (Forthcoming), "theorists use tracing to explain why agents that lack control are still responsible for what they do by connecting (i.e., tracing) lack of control back to some earlier possession of control that explains the later lack of control." That is, the reason that agents are properly held responsible in non-voluntary cases, such as unwitting omissions and implicit moral attitudes, is *not* that they have control over the event *per se*. Rather, it is that they possessed control over a relevant incident when it occurred at a previous time.

Those philosophers who support the tracing explanation, however, disagree about exactly what source we are tracing back to. As Nelkin (2017) nicely puts it:

> Wallace (1994), Rosen (2004), and Levy (2009) trace back to a previous action or choice at a time when the agent was aware of the possible consequences that in fact come to pass at T2. Others, such as FitzPatrick (2008) and Shabo (2015), trace back to one or more previous exercises of agency that do not necessarily include such awareness of unwitting omissions, those agents also possess this traceable kind of control over what they omit to do. (p.110)

These tracing theorists tend to identify a previous moment in which an agent exercised voluntary control (a decision or a failure to perform), and posit a causal link between that moment and the later, unwitting omissions. These tracing approaches, however, attract more and more objections. People realize that not all culpable unwitting omissions can be traced back to a moment in which agents clearly exhibit a relevant voluntary control. For instance, some philosophers support the view that an agent's culpability for unwitting omissions must not only be traced back to a moment in which she was aware of her possible failure, but also to a moment in which she clearly *decided* to not do anything to prevent her omission. This decision tracing view could account for our culpability in cases of unwitting omissions that involve such a decision. It fails, however, to explain cases of unwitting omissions that do not involve such conscious decisions. Also, recall the cognitive condition of unwitting omissions that I proposed earlier: those omissions that involve a clear decision are more voluntary to the agent.[61] That is, it seems that due to the difficulties of tracing an omission back to a conscious decision or a previous voluntary failure, these various tracing views cannot account for all cases of culpable unwitting omissions.

Clarke rejects the common tracing view and instead defends an ability view, which is a control-based account of moral responsibility that does not depend on voluntariness.[62] Specifically, according to Clarke (2017):

> The Ability View offers a solution here. An agent satisfies the control condition, the account says, if she has the ability and opportunity to perform the action that is omitted. She is then free to so act. Further, there is, I think, good reason to hold that an ability of a familiar kind, as well as an opportunity to do the thing in question, is required if one is to be directly blameworthy for an unwitting omission. (p.76)

That is, an agent's control may be based upon something other than a voluntary mental state. Specifically, the agent possesses control so long as she has had the ability to do a certain thing, or at least has been able to think about doing it. Unlike the kind of active voluntary control we exercise over intentional omissions, an agent possesses a passive voluntary control over unwitting omissions in that she fails to exercise control, even though she could have. In other

[61] See p.63 for the car accident case.

[62] Clarke further develops Sher's (2009) account of unwitting culpability that does not rely on voluntariness.

words, according to Clarke, there are at least two ways—the volitional way and the ability way—to satisfy the control condition. Even if an agent lacks awareness or active, voluntary control over her unwitting omissions, she still could possess passive, non-voluntary control so long as she has the *ability* to omit.

Besides the non-voluntary control condition, Clarke states that moral responsibility for unwitting omissions also requires a cognitive condition. Namely, "if one wasn't aware of the conduct's moral significance, then it must be that one could reasonably have been expected to be aware of that significance"(p.67). This cognitive condition, however, is not meant to be independent from the control condition. Rather, this cognitive condition helps to assure that an agent could have realized that his omission was wrong. Moreover, according to Clarke, the ability view supports the conclusion that agents should be held directly blameworthy for unwitting omissions. Just as in cases of voluntary omissions, where agents are at fault and should be held directly responsible for omitting to do a particular thing, agents that omit unwittingly should also be held responsible for their omissions *per se*.

This ability view, if it works, provides an attractive solution to the problem that surrounds non-voluntary culpability. That is, if we could explain an agent's control over her unwitting omissions on the basis of her ability and opportunity, we would not need to appeal to a previous moment of voluntary control in order to hold her accountable. The problem is, given the conditions that Clarke lays out, we have not yet reached an account that explicitly and correctly captures the realm of culpable unwitting omissions. That is, there are significantly more scenarios of unwitting omissions that we could have exercised control over than there are scenarios which we hold agents responsible for. The ability view, however, does not provide a way to discern between these two kinds of scenarios. For instance, at any given moment, an environmentalist fails to perform a series of actions that could make our planet a better place. It is reasonable to expect her to be aware of the significance of these potential actions, and she "might be able to exercise, and have the opportunity to exercise" (p.70) control over the related unwitting omissions. She satisfies the conditions for being directly responsible for unwitting omissions, and yet we intuitively know that she is not culpable for this enormous number of omissions, at least not in a serious way. So, even if the ability view can provide a control account of non-voluntary culpability, it cannot reliably capture the right kind of culpability.

This kind of criticism could also apply to Vargas' agency cultivation account. In his attempt to rescue the control-based account of moral responsibility, especially in non-voluntary cases, Vargas (2017) defends an agency cultivation model of responsibility. This new model understands control as "a product of the interaction of psychological and social pressures." Also, it eases the tension between reason-responsiveness and attributionist approaches to moral responsibility:

> What is central to my account is that certain forms of apparently non-voluntary behavior are culpability-bearing, so that failures to recognize and respond to relevant moral considerations constitute a fault of the agent. The explanation for why is tied, in part, to failures to exercise our rational capacities in a sense that is tied to both our own individual interests as agents but also tied to the conditions of shared, cooperative life with other moralizing creatures. When we judge that someone has failed to self-govern in ways sensitive to the moral concerns that figure in our social world, we typically go on to blame then. (p.26)

As we can see above, the agency cultivation view shares striking similarities with Clarke's ability view. In both views, agents that commit non-voluntary failures are culpable for their non-volitional dispositions, since they had an unexercised capacity to respond to suitable reasons. In this way, an agent should be held culpable for her failure to exercise control. Furthermore, according to Vargas, this unexercised control explains why the agent could have done otherwise, and indicates that agents do not lack control over their unwitting omissions.

The two views also face similar challenges. My critique of the ability view also applies to the agency cultivation view: it is doubtful whether Vargas captures the kind of culpability which we think agents deserve. If he is right about what is needed to explain an agent's control and culpability over unwitting omissions, then no one can be excused from a burdensome kind of life. For these accounts would attribute a never-ending list of culpabilities to any given agent. Besides which, while Vargas' approach to considering non-voluntary culpability is interesting, it is not a genuinely control-based account, as Vargas himself admits. That is, his way of assigning moral responsibility to non-voluntary occurrences does not really depend on agents' having control, but on an agent's reliable rational capacity in daily moral practices. Instead of being described as a control account, the agency cultivation view and, similarly the ability view, would be more properly called unexercised control or *lacking-in-exercising-control* accounts. These so-called control accounts are right to point out that agents fail in exercising control over their non-voluntary omissions. What they neglect to describe, however, is the source of control on the basis of which we could hold agents directly responsible for those failures.

Moreover, it is worth mentioning that even within the general tracing approach to moral responsibility that Clarke rejects, we can find particular tracing accounts that pin our moral responsibility directly on the kind of unexercised control that basic theorists propose. For instance, Nelkin and Rickless (2017) defend the opportunity tracing view. According to them:

What accounts for the fact that these agents are morally responsible for their unwitting

> omissions is that there was a time, prior to the omissions themselves, when they had the opportunity to take measures that (as they know or justifiably believe) would significantly raise the probability of avoiding such omissions, and yet they did not avail themselves of the relevant opportunity. In these sorts of cases, moral responsibility traces back, not (or not necessarily) to a decision to disregard information or to undertake a risky course of conduct, but to a previous witting failure of some sort. (p.125)

Unlike the tracing accounts that we considered earlier, the opportunity tracing account does not try to build a connection to a previous decision, but instead to a more relaxed condition of opportunity. By basing culpability on a previous "witting failures," however, this new tracing view encounters similar problems as the decision tracing views. It still encompasses more unwitting omissions that we care to hold agents culpable for. For instance, most people believe that they should and could donate more money to aid organizations, but they omit to do so. Although it would be good if people contributed more to those aid organizations, we cannot seriously hold them culpable for not doing so.

More importantly, Nelkin and Rickless explicitly include an ability condition: that agents are aware that they could have taken measures to avoid future, blameworthy omissions. In other words, despite the tracing label, the opportunity tracing account calls for similar conditions as Clarke's ability view—which, as you may recall, also requires ability and opportunity to satisfy the control condition. It seems, then, that the ability view does not provide any more reasons for us to believe that an agent should be held directly responsible, rather than derivatively responsible, for their unwitting omissions than the opportunity tracing view does. In this way, the ability view is more similar to the opportunity tracing view than it is different, including that neither traces back to a previous witting decision or failure.

In brief, the traditional tracing accounts that look back to a previous witting decision or failure *cannot* capture all unwitting omissions for which agents are culpable. The control accounts that reject the traditional tracing accounts, e.g. Clarke (2017)'s ability view, Vargas' (2017) agency cultivation model of moral responsibility, and Nelkin's opportunity tracing view, also run into trouble. Specifically, the main issue for these views is that they track *more* unwitting omissions than we tend to hold agents culpable for. That is, by basing an agent's culpability on her ability and/or opportunity, these views entail the existence of far more unwitting omissions than we can properly hold agents responsible for. Moreover, these various accounts, though allegedly control-based, attribute culpability based on ability, agency cultivation (self-governance), or opportunity, and are therefore not genuinely based on having control. Rather, they argue that agents should be held culpable for their unwitting omissions for their lack of exercising control.

4.3.2 A Proposal of Retrospective Control over Non-voluntary Culpability.

In order to resolve the question of how to rightly attribute non-voluntary culpability, in this section, I argue that the kind of control we possess over non-voluntary failures is not direct but *retrospective.* Specifically, it is a *passive* kind of control, in the sense that the agents at fault *do not lack* control over their failures. Moreover, my account of retrospective control is a kind of tracing account that also shares the merits of the basic control condition for non-voluntary culpability. That is, instead of tracing back to a certain witting decision or an opportunity, it traces back to a *state* in which we could reasonably expect agents to avoid committing those failures unwittingly—which is the basis for agents to exhibit control, according to the basic control theorists.

To recap, the various solutions of non-voluntary culpability that Clarke, Nelkin and Vargas propose, though different in the ways they spell out their terms, manage to converge on a similar basis for attributing culpability. That is, when we hold an agent responsible for her unwitting omissions, it is reasonable to expect the agent to *exercise* her control or at least be aware of the situation, even if she does not possess any voluntary control over her omissions. When an agent fails to exercise control over an omission, even unwittingly, she should be regarded as culpable for her failures.

In other words, the ability view, agency cultivation view, and opportunity tracing view identify the basis of control as an agent's failing to exercise control. According to these views, the control condition for non-voluntary culpability is simply that they do not lack control over the relevant event. In cases of voluntary omissions, agents show that they do not lack control by executing their own volitions. In cases of unwitting omissions, culpable agents—though not executing their volitions—have the ability to have done otherwise than omit unwittingly, which indicates that they do not lack control. I agree that the condition of failing to exercise control indeed tracks an agent's failures, whether of commission or omission.

There is something unsatisfying, however, about these strategies of dealing with unwitting omissions. Tracking those unwitting omissions over which agents fail to exercise control is different from tracking culpable unwitting omissions. Simply stating that we can trace agents' omissions back to an ability or opportunity to have exercised their control is not enough to hold agents culpable. At any given moment, an agent is omitting to do an enormous number of things, but agents are not culpable for all of these omissions. For instance, suppose a particular agent is capable of remembering to send her second cousin a birthday card, but she omits to do so. Also, she has a severe heart condition that requires her to take medicine regularly, which she is also capable of performing but omits to do. Despite being capable of doing both, she is not equally culpable for failing to send her cousin a birthday card and failing to take her heart medicine. Intuitively, there should be more restrictions on holding agents culpable for events than merely their ability to commit or omit them.

Having had the capacity or opportunity to exercise control is therefore an insufficient criterion for holding agents culpable. In order to identify those non-voluntary failures for which agents are properly culpable, and *only* those failures, we need to also determine whether they can be traced back to a state in which we could have reasonably expected the agents to avoid committing those failures unwittingly. In moral practice, what factors we adopt for determining this state is sensitive to context, and this is an area where we have to trust the commonly accepted customs. For instance, the significance of the event can be one of the factors that determine whether an agent is in a culpable state. Each moral agent should bear in mind a list of things that are significant to them, such as treating the others as equals, protecting the environment, etc. When agents fail to do these things, they are likely to be condemned morally. In other words, on those occasions when agents can exercise their control and their omissions are traceable to a state in which it would have been reasonable to expect them to avoid committing the corresponding failures unwittingly, they possess retrospective control over their non-voluntary failures.

Similarly, we also hold agents responsible for possessing and exercising implicit moral attitudes, which are also non-voluntary. I propose that retrospective control could also apply to these cases of non-voluntary moral attitudes. That is, although the agents who possess and exercise implicit moral attitudes are not aware of their failures, they do not lack control over them, e.g. whether to see and treat people equally. For instance, unlike people who lived in

Athens 2000 years ago, it is reasonable to expect modern people who live in a civilized society to reject slavery, or at least to be aware of whether they support it. So, agents can possess retrospective control over having and expressing implicit moral attitudes.

In brief, agents have *retrospective* control over their non-voluntary failures such as unwitting omissions and implicit moral attitudes, which is distinctive from voluntary control. Unlike the kind of voluntary control that agents possess and exercise when executing their volitions, retrospective control is passive in that an agent in this state does not lack in control. Once non-voluntary failures take place, we do not need to appeal to a direct causal chain between volition and action in order to hold agents responsible. What it requires is to trace the omission back to a state in which it was reasonable to expect agents to not commit or omit non-voluntarily.

4.4 Concluding Remarks.

In order to better understand how we can attribute moral responsibility in cases of unwitting omissions and moral attitudes, I argue towards a control-based account of non-voluntary culpability. The difficulty mainly lies in the fact that agents do not possess voluntary control over their failures, so we are left to search for a kind of control that is not voluntary to agents and yet attributes deep moral responsibility to them. Having analyzed some control views which are illuminating but not satisfying for explaining non-voluntary culpability, I turned to argue that agents possess control over their non-voluntary failures which does not trace back to a moment of witting failure, but rather, is *retrospective*.

To further recap having examined the conditions proposed for intentional omissions in chapter 2, I support Ginet and Clarke's view that there are three conditions required for an omission to be intentional. I propose here that there are also three requirements required to render an omission unwitting. Specifically, I propose that the three conditions for an unwitting omission are as follows:

(i) it meets the *reality* condition (i.e., the thing did not happen),

(ii) it meets the *ability* condition (i.e., the agent could have done the thing), and

(iii) it meets the *cognitive* condition (i.e., the agent did *not possess any motive* of not to act throughout and was *not aware* of her causing the corresponding omission).

It is important to note that the ability condition could embrace both a strict ability view like Clarke (2017) holds, and also the tracing views which rely on an agent's having an opportunity (see Nelkin and Rickless 2017) to avoid omitting a certain thing. Also, although the agent who omits unwittingly does not possess any active motive, this does not mean that she could not have good reasons to omit. Instead, not possessing an active motive, in my sense of the term, implies that the agent has not made up her mind about omitting to do the thing. That is, when an agent possesses an active motive to omit but is not aware of her omission as it occurs, it is more of a case of voluntary omission than unwitting omission.

Furthermore, when ignorance or negligence causes an unwitting omission, this does not necessarily impute moral responsibility. Rather, they often excuse agents from being held culpable. I argue that the control which makes non-voluntary culpability attributable to agents is retrospective, as I will explain more in the next chapter. Moreover, when agents either do not possess or do not exhibit control, this cannot be reliably traced back to any certain witting decision or a failure. Further, it is not merely in an ability or opportunity sense, nor a self-governing sense that agents possess control. Rather, we determine that agents possess control by tracing their omissions back to a state in which we can reasonably expect agents to not commit certain failures, or in which they could at least be aware of these failures. This kind of retrospective control could also help to explain why we hold agents responsible for their implicit moral attitudes. In brief, in cases of non-voluntary and yet culpable events, such as unwitting omissions and implicit moral attitudes, agents possess a kind of retrospective control.

Chapter 5 The Sufficient Control Account of Moral Responsibility.

In chapters 2, 3, and 4, I examine the kind of control that agents possess in various cases of omissions, *akrasia*, and moral attitudes. In this final chapter, I turn to defend the sufficient control view in more detail. I take it that, contrary to what non-volitionalists claim, possessing control is a necessary condition for moral responsibility. Though different in kind, the control that agents possess is sufficient for them to be held deeply culpable for these failures. Specifically, I start by proposing the sufficient control view, which helps to indicate the threshold or standard for determining whether and how a certain control is sufficient for an agent to bear moral responsibility. Then, I argue that the non-volitional view of moral responsibility is neither an alternative nor a direct threat to the sufficient control view, since it cannot reliably capture deep moral appraisals. Moreover, the sufficient control view is compatible with the stronger form of the non-volitional view. Next, I respond to some possible objections and related issues, which reveal a clearer picture of the sufficient control view. Finally, I conclude with how my inquiry into the difficult cases of omissions, *akrasia*, and moral attitudes serves the aim of further defending the control assumption of moral responsibility.

5.1 A Proposal of the Sufficient Control View.

Failure is a broad term that covers everything from failing to pass a hearing test to failing to win the Nobel Prize. According to the control assumption, agents are at fault for those failures which they possess control over. After all, one cannot blame a butterfly for not flying across the sea. On the other hand, when a person intentionally omits to save a drowning child, we can find ample agential control and thus identify the failure as a fault of the agent. That is, in order for an agent to properly be held responsible for her failure, she has to possess *sufficient* control over it. That leaves us to examine the threshold of sufficiency for deeming these failures to be faults on an agent's part, especially those failures—various cases of omissions, *akrasia*, and moral attitudes—that have been challenging to the control account.

5.1.1 Voluntary Control and Volitions.

Recall the kinds of control that I argue about in previous chapters. In chapter 2, I argue that intentions play symmetrical roles in satisfying the control condition for cases of intentional actions and intentional omissions. That is, just as in cases of intentional actions, agents possess direct voluntary control over their intentional omissions. In chapter 3, I propose that there are cases of akratic omissions in which agents betray their better judgment and yield to their desire to omit, and I argue that agents exercise voluntary control over *akrasia* and akratic omissions by possessing recalcitrant but resistible desires.[63] Then, in chapter 4, I turn to look into cases of unwitting omissions and implicit moral attitudes, for which agents bear non-voluntary culpability. I argue that agents possess a kind of retrospective control over non-voluntary failures. Rather, under circumstances in which agents could exercise their control, and from which we can trace their control back to a *state* in which it is reasonable to expect them to avoid committing certain failures unwittingly, they possess retrospective control over those non-voluntarily failures.

In order to further clarify the kinds of control at issue, I now explain how possessing volitional mental states—such as intentions and desires—serves as the sources of voluntary control. I then explain how voluntary control differs from retrospective control, which does not rely on volitions. Voluntary control, which agents possess over both intentional and akratic failures, is based on *volition,* though the former is direct and the latter is not. Consider McCann's

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[63] Also, in chapter 4 I state that there are cases of moral attitudes, such as being an environmentalist, which agents seem to have voluntary control over.

theory, which helps explain how having volitional mental states such as intentions and desires assures our control over the corresponding failures. Specifically, McCann (1974) argues that:

> Unlike volitions, both intentions and the desires most relevant to action have as their primary content my doing something. When I am in these states, I intend or desire *to perform an action* of a certain sort. Suppose, then, that deeds of the sort in question have results, and that willing the appropriate result is the standard means for performing such actions. If so, volition serves as a conscious, executive act with respect to intention and desire. In it, what is intended begins to come to pass, in that volition constitutes the first step in the process of the action's occurrences…If such a change occurs as expected, the willing will have served as the causally basic act by means of which the intended action is performed. (p. 469)

As it is indicated above, it seems that volition, or willing, differs from mental states such as intentions and desires in the way that volition itself is an act that wills the result, while the content of intentions and desires is mostly constituted by acting on them. As established mainly in chapter 2, mental states such as intentions play symmetrical roles in cases of actions and omissions. That is, volitions serve as the basis of control for both intentional and desire-motivated actions/omissions.

Moreover, volition helps to provide a causal explanation for how mental states could lead to corresponding failures. That is, according to McCann, intentional actions occur when a certain volition—which wills the intended result—enters into an action in a causal way. Just as he further argues, "actions with results would be fully intentional on this account, provided that the result was willed, and was caused in the anticipated way" (p.469). So the volitional kind of control is essentially causal, for when an agent exercises volitional control, any resulting failures are what the agent wills. More importantly, there is an intimate relation between volitions and voluntariness. As McCann argues, “volition can be voluntary in the way water is wet—that is, essentially, in a way that does not require some means as explanation” (p.472). So, it seems that the actions which result from mental states such as intentions and desires derive their sense of voluntariness from volition. That is, it is through volitions that agents possess voluntary control over what they intend or want to do/omit.

In this way, the theory of volition fills the causal gap by explaining how possessing certain mental states such as intentions and desires provides the agent with voluntary control over her actions/omissions. For instance, between an intention and the intended action, there exists a mental act of volition that wills the result of the intention and thus enters into the intended action causally. Intentional actions are thus the results of intentions through the execution of volition, and agents have control over their intentional actions because those actions are willed and caused by their intentions in an anticipated way. In this way, the execution of volition fills the causal gap between an agent’s intention and the corresponding action, and this helps to explain how she possesses voluntary control over her intentional action. Similarly, an agent possesses voluntary control over her intentional omissions, for she executes her volitions and causes what she intends to omit.

As mentioned before, the traditional control assumption is based on the innate relation between volition and voluntariness. Philosophers inherit this tradition from Aristotle, who considers the connection between voluntariness and moral responsibility to be essential. Specifically, according to Aristotle, the realm of praise and blame is for those actions that are done voluntarily by the agent. In other words, one of the preconditions for an agent to be morally responsible for her actions is that they be voluntary. A person acts voluntarily with regard to those things that are *up to* her.[64] For instance, Meyer (2006) states that:

> [T]he 'up to us' locution used by Aristotle implies causal responsibility. Such agents are in control (kurios) of their actions (*NE* III.5.114a2-3; *EE* II.61223a6-7); they are responsible for them: 'A person is responsible for those things that are up to him to do or not to do, and if he is responsible for them, then they are up to him.'(*EE* II. 6. 1223a7-9; cf.1223a15-18). (p.138) [65]

That is, voluntariness and responsibility are both bound up with those actions that are up to the agent. But what does Aristotle mean by "up to?" Aristotle seems to point out that those actions which *originate in* the agent are up to the agent. The state of voluntariness is distinguished from involuntariness based upon whether the origin of the action is within the agent. In this way, an agent is responsible for those actions that are up to her or have their origins within her, which are the same thing.

As shown above, it seems that the terms "control" and "up to us" indicate a sense of *origin.* Namely, unlike those things that happen to people without involving them as agents, possessing control indicates that it is the agent rather than other sources—such as irresistible desires, external force, a manipulative agent, or even luck—which is the origin of certain actions, omissions, or moral attitudes. The most familiar scenarios of agents being the origin of their

[64] There are disputes, however, when we talk about whether an action is up to the agent, or voluntary. Specifically, how do we settle whether an agent knows about what she is doing or whether an action is compelled or not. For instance, if by "not compelled" we mean that an agent has to feel no constraint or resistance or feeling of constraint, then all actions that are done under inner struggles such as enkratic (continent) and akratic (incontinent) action are involuntary, and thus an agent is not morally responsible for them. As argued in chapter 3, *akrasia* is more like voluntary action, thus the above-proposed theory of compulsion is counterintuitive and unacceptable.

[65] Meyer depicts "freedom to do otherwise" as the kind of freedom the agent must exhibit if we are to hold her responsible. It is important to distinguish Aristotle's notion that an action is "up to the agent" from an agent possessing the "freedom to do otherwise," which is probably a more familiar expression to some of us. I, however, will not dig into the comparison here. I suppose Aristotle's notion of "up to the agent" better captures the issue of moral responsibility and control. Also, it dissolves problems that come along with adopting the notion of "freedom to do otherwise."

conduct, then, are those in which they execute their volitions. Moreover, it seems that it is not in the sense of efficient cause that we are talking about origins. As seen from cases of addiction, not all our behaviors originate in us. There is a sense of rationality embedded in origins. It is not to say that all desires have to be rationally regulated, but desires that are too strong and overwhelming to people could rob a person of her agency. For instance, an addict seems to act according to her own desires, but her addictive desires, e.g. for drugs, are irresistible. So, her conduct is not up to her. Rather, she is overwhelmed by her addictive desires and follows them like a puppet. Also, a certain solidified social structure could rob people of their control and prevent them from being the origin of their actions. If a person living in modern society decided to own a slave, this decision would be much more free than the decision to be a slave owner 2000 years ago. The ancient slave owner would have been more or less brainwashed by the social structure that he lived in, unlike the modern would-be slave owner. In this way, he should not be held culpable for his lifestyle to a significant extent.

In brief, it seems that following Aristotle, we could understand control or "being up to us" as an indication of whether failures originate in an agent. It is not challenging to accept those actions, omissions, and moral attitudes that are caused by an agent's own volition as being within her control, or originating from her. The issue is: Are non-voluntary failures, such as unwitting omissions and implicit moral attitudes, up to the agents such that they have their origins within them?

5.1.2 Retrospective Control and Origins.

As stated above, the volition-based control account fits well with the Aristotelian picture of voluntariness. Under circumstances in which agents execute their volitions or willing, what occurs as a result is up to them. In cases of non-voluntary failures, however, agents do not possess the kind of executive volitions as they do in intentional and akratic cases. What is worse, even if agents do possess a certain sort of control, e.g. retrospective control, over their failures *per se*, this kind control is not as direct or causal as voluntary control. The problem is: Despite retrospective control not being voluntary to those agents, could their omissions nevertheless be up to them? In this section, I argue that the key to dissolving the challenges that the traditional control assumption faces is to broaden the term of "control," or how we take things to be "up to" an agent. That is, though different from voluntary control, retrospective control is also a kind of control that indicates that the failures are up to the agents in the sense that the agents are the *origins* of those failures.

As we know, the Aristotelian picture of moral responsibility has been largely adopted and further developed by those who keep enquiring into this subject. Specifically, although we interpret Aristotle's conditions of "up to" as mainly volition-based, there could be space left for certain non-volitional scenarios that are also up to the agent. Recall our analysis of those non-voluntary failures over which agents possess retrospective control, that it is reasonable to expect the agents to be aware of the significance and occurrence of their failures. For instance, we cannot hold a patient who is in coma culpable, no matter how significant her omissions while in that state. Also, agents *qua* agents cannot be forced, either internally or externally, into actions. After all, agents who commit or omit unwittingly are still the best candidates for the origin of their failures. Those failures over which agents exhibit retrospective control are indeed up to them.

What is more, the term "up to" could be understood in a non-causal context. One feature of retrospective control is that agents bear no volitional, and thus no direct causal relation to their failures. Our analysis, however, still indicates that those agents do not lack control over their failures. Such agents should not be excused based on their ignorance of the situation, nor are they compelled by some irresistible compulsion. Their failures are up to them in a passive sense. That is, actions/omissions over which agents exercise their volitional control are up to them in a causal and active way. And in non-voluntary failures, though agents do not bear a direct causal relation to them, their origins do not fall outside the agents.

Some philosophers, e.g. Fischer (1982), question whether possessing control or being up to the agent is a necessary condition for moral responsibility, as they interpret "up to" as requiring a genuine alternate option to do otherwise.[66] There are no such implications in Aristotle's own work. By "up to," he simply means that the culpable agents are the origins of their own failures. Similarly, I argue that there should be no such requirement for the control assumption in general. Along these lines, Fischer brings up two cases of the evil neurologist and interprets both people under his influence as lacking control. In the first case, the neurologist directly manipulates a person's brain and simply puts volitions and decisions into his mind.[67] Under such circumstances, I agree with Fischer that this person lacks control, for he is manipulated and compelled to act. In the second case that Fischer presents, the neurologist does not actually intervene in the person's decision-making process, but would do so if the person decided to act otherwise. According to Fischer's old understanding of control, an agent possesses control only if there is an alternate sequence open to him, while the control account does not require this restriction. In the second scenario, the neurologist's victim tries to perform an action

[66] It is worth mentioning that Fischer has changed his standpoint and adopted a new account of control, in which he distinguishes between guidance control and regulative control. See Fischer & Ravizza (1998). Here, instead of the updated version, I bring in this old version of Fischer's control mainly for the interesting connection that he made to the term "up to."
[67] The neurologist scenarios have been widely disputed in the discussion of freedom and moral responsibility. As stated in chapter 1, I avoid drawing myself too deep into that fascinating realm of this subject in this project.

according to his own decision. If his decision does not line up with the neurologist's wishes, then he loses control over what occurs because the evil neurologist intervenes. If his decision aligns with the neurologist's wishes, he is nevertheless the origin of his action, and thus that action is still under his control and up to him.

To summarize, it seems that we now have two ways of understanding control or "up to" us. One is a voluntary kind of control that agents exhibit through the execution of volitions. The other kind of control, i.e. retrospective control—which is passive in the sense that the origins of those non-voluntary failures do not fall outside the agents—also satisfies the standard for holding agents responsible. In this way, non-voluntary failures could also be up to the agents and under agents' control, even without the agent executing any volitions.

5.1.3 A Sketch of the Sufficient Control View.

The aim of this project, as I state repeatedly, is to argue towards the sufficient control view of moral responsibility. That is, I argue that various kinds of control seen in cases of omissions, *akrasia*, and moral attitudes, though not all volitional, are sufficient to satisfy the control condition of moral responsibility.

Not everything that we do is up to us. Things like compulsive behaviors could more or less pass through people rather than come from them. After analysis, it seems that we should only be held culpable for those things that are up to us. Things are up to us mainly in two ways, according to the sufficient control view. First, those over which agents possess voluntary control by executing volitions. Second, those through which agents could exercise their control and which we can trace to a state in which it is reasonable to expect them to avoid committing those failures unwittingly—in which they possess retrospective control. Control is a term that encompasses more than only a volitional and causal control, but also includes a retrospective control that does not assume a direct causal relation between the agent and the failure *per se*. Also, in comparison with voluntary control, retrospective control is passive, as it merely indicates that the origins of those failures do not fall outside the agents. Both sorts of control, however, satisfy the control condition and meet the threshold for holding agents morally responsible. See the following diagram of the sufficient control account of moral responsibility:

Sufficient Control Account of Moral Responsibility

Scenario	Intentional Omissions - Actions	Akratic Omissions - Actions	Unwitting Omissions Implicit Moral Attitudes	Failures due to Compulsion, Ignorance, etc.
Source of Control	Intention	Recalcitrant but resistible desire	State (reasonably expect agents to not fail)	/
Control	Direct Voluntary	Voluntary	Retrospective	/
	Volitional (Assume a causal relation between the agent and her failure)		**Non-volitional** (Does not assume such a causal relation)	/
Scale of Control	Full-fledged Control		**Does not Lack Control**	**Lacks Control**

Threshold of Sufficiency

Fig. 1. Summary of the sufficient control account.

The sufficient control account expands the realm of control to include not only voluntary control, but also a kind of retrospective control. Also, the scale of the control that agents possess descends from direct voluntary control to retrospective control. We assume that direct voluntary control is full-fledged in agents who are making up their minds on acting or omitting. In akratic cases, agents are torn between rational considerations and irrational desires. Akratic agents still possess voluntary control over their akratic conduct, for this conduct still originates from agents' own volitions. But such control is not direct, for the decisions that proceed from it are not settled by the agents' rational capacity. Thus, it is worth mentioning that the scale of control does not track forcefulness—the desires that motivate addicts are often much more forceful than the rest of their desires. Rather, it is in a *rational* sense that whatever occurs as intended is that which most authentically and reliably originates from agents.

Also, the threshold of sufficiency separates those actions, omissions, and moral attitudes that originate in agents from those which merely pass through people. Some might still wonder, however, where to draw the line between a state of lacking control and a state of possessing it. We will probably find no absolute answer to this question. But though the exact point of sufficiency may remain a mystery this does not undermine the role that it should play. That is, the threshold of sufficiency—even being theoretical and ideal—still contributes to capturing the difference between the states of having sufficient control and lacking it. According to my analyzes and our daily observations, human motivations are commonly mixed together and complicated by factors such as biases and self-deception. So when agents try to exercise their voluntary control, they often run into obstacles. For instance, *akrasia* is a state of lacking self-control or self-regulation. Akratic agents are suffering from internal conflict. When they act akratically, they exhibit more voluntary control than involuntary control over executing their own resistible desires. The state of lacking control is also not absolute. Addicts are commonly thought to be lacking control over their addictive behaviors, so that they should not be treated as proper moral agents. But, as many philosophers point out that, addicts often exhibit a series of deliberate behaviors while acquiring the addiction that drives them. But though they are not merely puppets of their addictive behaviors, they do not possess enough control to be deemed the origin of their own conduct.

One might also notice that I pay more attention to the various puzzling phenomena of omissions, in comparison with cases of actions and moral attitudes. A rationale for not equally distributing my focus is that omissions have been treated less systematically and thus pose a more pressing challenge to the control account. Also, various kinds of omissions align well with scenarios that are distinct from them but present similar problems for the traditional control account. Through examining cases of intentional omissions, akratic omissions, and unwitting omissions, we get a comprehensive (though probably not exhaustive) picture of the sufficient control account. We can see that it explains not only omissions or actions that are voluntary or volitional to the agent, but also non-voluntary failures such as unwitting omissions and implicit moral attitudes that agents possess retrospective control over. Also, as I point out, the sufficient control view gives us a comprehensive but not complete understanding of the control assumption. The various kinds of control that I present do not exhaust all possible sources of agents' control. Rather, I merely present some plausible ways of explaining how agents possess sufficient control in these challenging cases. And even if the cases that I treat in the previous chapters provide a solid basis for a comprehensive theory, there might be other, complicated cases that cannot be explained by the current model of the sufficient control account.

On a related issue, some might question why, instead of bringing in a discussion of unwitting actions, I introduce cases of implicit moral attitudes in chapter 4. In reply, the rules that I established to explain non-voluntary culpability should, in principle, apply to unwitting actions as well, given the symmetrical roles that control plays in actions and omissions. Moreover, I feel compelled to direct some of our attention to cases of moral attitudes, especially those implicit moral attitudes, while discussing non-voluntary culpability. As we will see in the following section, the pressure to better demonstrate agents' responsibility for their moral attitudes has pushed philosophers to abandon the control account and turn to the non-volitional assumption. In the following section, I bring in a more detailed objection to the non-volitional assumption being a viable alternative to the control account.

5.2 Refuting the Non-volitional Account of Moral Responsibility.

In this section, I argue that the non-volitional view does not provide a better basis to account for an agent's moral responsibility than the control view. Various non-volitional approaches—though they might satisfactorily account for certain aspects of moral responsibility, e.g. attributability—fail to demonstrate that agents should be held culpable for their moral failures. Instead, I propose that in order to hold agents responsible for such failures, the control condition is necessary to show how agents are at fault for them.

As mentioned above, philosophers such as Robert Kane (1996) and John Fischer (1998, 2012) propose the traditional control account, which faces problems, especially in explaining non-voluntary cases. Some philosophers challenge the general principle that it is necessary for an agent to have control over an occurrence in order for her to be morally responsible for it. For example, some philosophers, such as Gary Watson (1975, 1996), Susan Wolf (1987) and Angela Smith (2008), sometimes appeal to features like an agent's *real self* rather than control to explain why agents should be held responsible for their failures. Though differing in how to spell out the details of the real self, these philosophers, often called non-volitionalists, argue that we can hold agents responsible if their occurrences reflect *who they are* or indicate *a failure or violation of moral standard*. In this way, non-volitionalists avoid having to explain how the agents have control over what they do in these cases.

Despite attracting more and more attention as an alternative to the control assumption, especially in difficult cases, the *non-volitional assumption* encounters difficulties, such as providing an account of moral responsibility that is suitably deep. Moreover, I argue that while non-volitionalists can attribute failures to certain people, they nevertheless conflate the notions of failure and fault. Specifically, by pointing out how these occurrences reflect who the agents really are, non-volitionalists merely indicate that the failures are conducted by them. They do not clarify, however, why we should consider these failures to be the agent's *fault*.

5.2.1 Inherited Issues of the Non-volitional Account of Moral Responsibility.

Non-volitionalists suggest that having control is not necessary for moral responsibility. Rather, there is an alternative condition for moral responsibility, according to which an agent is morally responsible for something, whether it is an action, an omission, or a certain moral attitude, only if that thing can be taken as directly *expressive* of an agent's rational judgments or normative commitments. That is, according to non-volitionalists, these failures can be attributed to the agent without the trouble of searching for the source of an agent's control.

Just as philosophers vary in how to elucidate the control-based account of moral responsibility, the non-volitional view also has its variants. Gary Watson (1975) is the proponent of the *self-disclosure* view, which takes John Dewey's "self-government" line of argument as its point of departure. Both of these views argue that "moral capacity," or the ability to take ends as expressive of one's self, is what renders an agent responsible. This kind of view is also called the "deep-self view" by one of its detractors, Susan Wolf (1987).[68] Wolf objects to Watson's self-disclosure view on the basis that it fails to capture the *deep* moral appraisal which calls on the

[68] Philosophers such as Harry Frankfurt, Gary Watson, and Charles Taylor, though differing in how to characterize the wills of responsible agents, all argue that responsibility is grounded in an agent's expression of who she really is. Susan Wolf calls this line of considering responsibility, the deep-self view.

agent to justify herself. Rather, it depicts only the *superficial* kind of responsibility. That is, the self-disclosure view simply censures the agent without further implication of fault.

Furthermore, Watson's self-disclosure view provides only a necessary but not sufficient condition for moral responsibility, according to Wolf. Specifically, Wolf argues that the deep-self view cannot always properly assign moral responsibility by developing the JoJo case. JoJo is the son of a dictator, and he is educated from childhood to be just like his father. He grows up to be a cruel person, unsurprisingly. He acts on what he has learned according to his own will. And he probably believes that this is who he really wants to be. According to the deep-self theory, he seems to be free and thus should be held morally responsible for his actions. But as we know, he has no control over the forming of his deepest real-self, and it is not quite intuitive that we should hold him fully responsible. So the deep-self view that Watson proposes cannot provide a suitable explanation for our moral intuitions, according to Wolf.[69]

What must be added to the self-disclosure view in order for it to be sufficient, she suggests, is a *sanity* condition. Specifically, Wolf understands sanity "as the minimally sufficient ability cognitively and normatively to recognize and appreciate the world for what it is, i.e., the ability to appreciate the True and the Good." In this way, Wolf's *sane deep-self view* could separate the kind of responsibility attributable to an "insane" agent from that of sane agents. For instance, it could separate the kind of responsibility that JoJo could bear from ours. Though his actions come from his own will, JoJo should not be held deeply responsible, since he has been deprived of his chance to develop a sane deep-self.

[69] The JoJo case might strike us as similar to racist scenarios that I present in implicit moral attitudes, which I have deemed as fault-bearing on the agent's part in the previous chapter. One rationale for this "counterintuitive" response is that I do not presume a problematic social structure as Wolf does in JoJo's case. I would not condemn a racist that lived 2000 years ago, at least not the same level as I would blame a typical 21st century racist who simply pretends that she does not know what is right and wrong.

Wolf's sane deep-self view seems to solve the problem of distinguishing the moral responsibility of sane people from that of morally unfortunate agents like JoJo. But as Wolf herself realizes, it also opens a door of moral skepticism that she cannot close. That is, if we can excuse the slave owners of the 1850s, then we may never be justified in holding one another responsible, since we can never know for certain that we have a deep-self which will appear sane to the world 10 years from now. Wolf's excuse that we are sane "as far as we know "could not justify our moral censure of sexists or racists of our generation, for they are also victims of some previous problematic social structure. One could safely assume that some aspects of common practice today will turn out to be insane from the perspective of a later time. In this way, due to the obscurity and uncertainty of sanity, it seems that the sane deep-self view does not bring us a more solid non-volitional account of moral responsibility.

What is more, Watson (1996) himself responds to Wolf's superficiality charge by distinguishing between *attributabilit/aretaic* appraisal and *accountability* appraisal.[70] Accountability rests on a deep moral appraisal which demands an agent's justification or entitles us to treat her with moral sanction. The other face of responsibility, attributability, also plays a significant role in our moral practice, what Watson calls "what it is to lead a life"—and thus is also called *aretaic* appraisal. Watson uses Peter Van Inwagen's stolen book case to make his distinction between aretaic and accountability appraisal clear. In that case, a philosopher who denies the reality of moral responsibility comments that the event of book stealing is "shoddy," to which Van Inwagen (1980) says "no one can consistently say that a certain act was a shoddy thing to do and say that its agent was not morally responsible when he performed it" (p.270). Van Inwagen argues that the philosopher's harsh critique of the thief's behavior indicates that he

[70] I have elaborated on the details of these two faces of moral responsibility in chapter 1.

believes in moral responsibility, and is thus a direct contradiction to his denial of it. But Watson's self-disclosure view could accommodate this contradiction by suggesting that the philosopher assigns attributable appraisal to the "shoddy" behavior, but does not necessarily admit the justification for accountability appraisal. That is, the philosopher might say that some responsibility is present in this case, but not in the sense that he is censuring the thief with a moral sanction. Rather, in calling the thief's behavior "shoddy," he merely attributes blame to the thief as the conductor of this behavior. What is more, Watson claims that *aretaic* assessments (or attributability) also capture the deep sense of responsibility. That is, *aretaic* appraisal derives its distinctive moral significance from accountability. It reflects one face of moral responsibility, since it evaluates the agent as the conductor of her acts. Though different in kind, aretaic appraisal is also a deep kind of moral appraisal, according to Watson.

Watson's defense of the non-volitional approach of responsibility, however, is incomplete even from a non-volitional perspective. Angela Smith (2005) argues that the *aretaic* appraisal cannot help Watson to shake off the superficiality charge. Although Watson argues that *aretaic* appraisal is deeper than "mere grading," the fact that he suggests that it "might be as deep as accountability" indicates that his self-disclosure view is not the kind of responsibility that we tend to take seriously. Smith (2008) offers an alternative, the *rational relations view,* as a stronger challenge to the control view. In it, she contends that "a person's judgment must be reflected in an action or attitude in order for her to be responsible for it" (p.371). The rational relations view, as Smith intends, aims to expand the realm in which we assign deep moral assessments:

> Many philosophers seem to think that it is only appropriate to direct moral criticism (as opposed to mere unwelcome evaluation) to features of a person that reflect a voluntary

choice of some sort (See, for example, Levy (2005); Wallace (1996), pp.128-133). Thus, unless we can show that a person's bad attitude reflects or is a result of her own choices, (though we can say that it is a "bad" view, by contrast, moral criticism person that can be said to reflect her of whether we think those features reflect on her part. (pp.381-2)

Here, Smith argues that voluntary control is not the only proper object of moral attribution. Rather, those attitudes which either directly or indirectly reflect an agent's rational judgments or evaluative commitments—volitional mental states such as desires, beliefs, and what we notice or neglect—should also be taken as objects of moral attribution.

Ultimately, however, Smith's rational relations view does not save the non-volitional approach, for at least two reasons. First, it may confuse what is morally bad and morally blameworthy.[71] Let us suppose that an agent has negative moral attitudes toward certain groups of people. It is bad for the agent to have these negative attitudes. We do not, however, have sufficient grounds to assign moral blame unless we also know if the agent has control over whether he possesses these attitudes. So while the fact that an agent fails to meet certain moral standards itself indicates that she is morally *bad*, in order to reach the conclusion that she is morally *at fault* for that failure, we have to further establish that she is the origin of, i.e. has control over, the failure. In this way, in order to claim that she is responsible for her failures as a moral agent, we do have to appeal to some sort of control and not merely attribute the failures to that agent.

Second, the notion of the "real-self" is obscure and under-defended. Smith takes an agent's unreflective attitudes as reflecting her real-self, rather than the conscious choices that she acts upon. This supposition is, admittedly, a common one. Yet, it is far from clear why we should

[71] See Levy (2005) .

adopt this conception of the real-self. Smith's rational relational view does not fully account for how and why an agent's unreflective moral attitudes, rather than her conscious choices, should be the objects of deep appraisal.

In brief, having looked at the representational views of real-self or non-volitional assumption—Watson's self-disclosure view, Wolf's sane deep-self view, and Smith's rational relations view—it seems that while these provide a new way to attribute moral responsibility, they cannot satisfactorily replace the control account in assigning deep moral appraisals.

5.2.2 Rejecting the Alleged Opposition between Non-volitional and Control Account.

Having demonstrated that the non-volitional view alone is not enough to justify deep moral appraisals, I now argue that it is not a direct threat to the control account either. Rather, variants of the "real-self" view could complement, or at least be compatible with, the control account, as it applies to actions/omissions that are not merely volitional or voluntary to the agent.

To begin with, there is an alleged opposition between the control account and non-volitional accounts. As Vargas states, "volitionalists are those who identify the exercise of conscious, intentional control as the centerpiece of moral responsibility. In contrast, attributionists are those who reject such requirements, and instead ground moral responsibility in appraisal of some privileged attitudes of the considered agent" (Vargas Forthcoming: 17).[72] The alleged opposition lies in whether volition is necessary for assigning moral responsibility.

It is worth mentioning that not all non-volitionalists or attributionists support such a direct opposition. For instance, though Watson sees the connection between a person's failure

[72] Those philosophers who defend the traditional control account have often been referred to as volitionalists, since they base control on volitions.

and a person's moral responsibility as attributive, he claims that control is relevant to attributability—at least in the sense that an absence of control predicts that an action will not be attributable to the agent. Thus, Watson is not wholly rejecting the control or volitional view of responsibility. Watson's self-disclosure view attempts to expand the realm of responsibility without questioning the relation between accountability appraisal and voluntary control. In other words, the attributability view of responsibility is not an alternate view to the control-based view. Rather, it is a *supplementary explanation* concerning the kind of responsibility that an agent possesses as the executor of her "real-self," which is distinct from being held accountable for voluntary actions.

Unlike Watson, when Smith further develops the non-volitional approach, she argues that attributionist and volitionalist views are actually in opposition. She contends that the rational relations view does not rely on volitional or voluntary control in order to account for an agent's moral responsibility. She exhibits more ambition by proposing that a strong non-volitional view such as hers could be more than a supplement but instead be an *alternative* to the control account. The rational relations view, however, fails to fulfill this ambition. It not only inherits the inner issue of superficiality, but also it is not a threat to the new control account proposed in chapter, which expands the notion of control to include more than merely volitional control.

I agree with Smith that there is a direct opposition between the volitional or traditional control account and the attributional account. The opposition will dissolve, however, if we adopt the sufficient control account, which does not restrict itself to volitional or voluntary control. As we can see, regardless of whether attributionists accept that such an opposition exists, they still offer accounts that could either complement or replace a control account based on only volitional or voluntary control. If we accept that in addition to volitional control, agents also possess a kind of retrospective control over non-voluntary failures—failures such as the moral attitudes that pose a tricky problem for the traditional control assumption—then we do not need to appeal to a non-volitional or attributional approach for a satisfactory explanation of moral responsibility.

What is more, the alleged opposition between volitionalists and attributionists would also dissolve for those philosophers who extend the realm of control based on rational ability. For instance, Vargas (Forthcoming) proposes that:

> The relevant ground of culpability is not choice, but rational capacity. Once we allow that control can be had in light of a rational capacity, the operations of which the agent need not always be conscious of, and once we see how we can make sense of the idea of an unexercised capacity, and once we acknowledge that both individuals their communities have an interest in being prepared to blame agents with such capacities, the puzzle about non-volitional culpability evaporates. We can explain this as the triumph of the core idea of the Reasons view, or as a vindication of a suitably sophisticated volitionalism, or as a concession to attributionist concerns about non-volitional acts and omissions, or even as the collapse of a meaningful distinction between attributionists and volitionalists. Which we choose is mostly a matter of labels. (pp.26-7)

Here, Vargas implies that the traditional control account is too strict for a comprehensive account of moral responsibility. In order to properly explain not only that a person is the conductor of certain failures, but that she is also the agent at fault for them, we have to demonstrate that she possesses control over them, one way or another. What is more, the non-volitional view does not explain non-voluntary failures any better than does a control account which expands its realm beyond mere voluntary control.

To summarize, I introduce the difficulties facing both the traditional control-based view and non-volitional view of moral responsibility. Specifically, various non-volitional approaches have been criticized on the grounds that they only capture a "superficial" kind of moral responsibility, rather than the "deep" moral appraisals that we care about. Despite the fact that more and more philosophers accept the non-volitional assumption, I argue that possessing control remains a necessary condition for moral responsibility. To this end, I reintroduce the superficiality problem that various non-volitional approaches exhibit. Further, I argue that the non-volitional account is not a direct threat to the kind of control account—e.g. the sufficient control account or Vargas' rational capacity account—that expands the realm of control to more than voluntary control.

5.3 Replies to Possible Issues.

As argued above, having control over her failure is necessary for that failure to properly be the agent's fault, and thus something for which we can hold her morally responsible. In this section, I further defend the sufficient control view by responding to possible objections or related issues that also pertain to the more general picture of control and moral responsibility.

5.3.1 Is the Sufficient Control Account Essentially Disjunctive?

The sufficient control account embraces both voluntary control and retrospective control, which are importantly different from each other. There may be philosophers who will question the sufficient control account based on this seeming disjunction. The challenge of disjunctivism often arises when a theory depicts a hybrid metaphysical picture, as we can see in Nelkin and Rickless's critique of Clarke's account of omissions:

> Clarke argues that some omissions are (negative or positive) acts, while others are non-entities. The category of omission, then, is intrinsically disjunctive. Viewed from one

perspective, this is potentially theoretically unsatisfying, for one might have thought that there is something that all omissions have in common, something that makes them omissions rather than something else. (Nelkin & Rickless 2014)

As this suggests, people might wonder how omissions could rightly be divided into two separate metaphysical categories.[73] What is more, they may reject the hybrid view by dismissing one of Clarke's two metaphysical explanations and insist on a uniform theory of omissions.

A similar, potentially problematic disjunction emerges with the hybrid notion of control. I have proposed while defending the sufficient control account. It seems, then, that we are in a dilemma. Without retrospective control, we cannot reach a comprehensive control account that better explains our culpability for non-voluntary failures. Including it in our picture, however, seems to make this account of control internally disjunctive.

There are two ways to respond to the challenge of seeming disjunctivism. One is to admit that there is indeed an intrinsic disjunctivism within the sufficient control account and argue that, though "potentially theoretically unsatisfying," the disjunctivism wouldn't, all by itself, threaten the legitimacy of my account. The other way to respond is to deny that the sufficient control account is disjunctive. Depending on the perspective one takes, one could defend the sufficient control account against the problem of seeming disjunctivism on either front.

First, I argue that both the voluntary control that we exercise through executing certain volitional mental states and the retrospective control that we exhibit in cases of non-voluntary failures are sufficient to satisfy the control condition for moral responsibility. Some philosophers might, however, not accept that retrospective control is a proper kind of control, because it is not

[73] I do not necessarily share the hybrid metaphysical view of omissions with Clarke. Bringing in this critique does nothing more than introduce the issue of disjunctivism.

as active and causal as volitional control. I maintain that introducing a new kind of control which is distinctive from volitional control has more merits than disadvantages. Besides which, it is not only the sufficient control account, but also the other control accounts that try to broaden the horizon of control, which suffer from inner disjunctivism. That is, the sufficient control account is not alone in adopting a hybrid view of control.

Second, if we shift our focus from whether control is volitional to whether it rightly identifies the origin of failures, the challenge of disjunctivism is no longer compelling. As I argued in previous sections, both volitional control and retrospective control are unified under the Aristotelian notion of "up to" us, or deeming agents as the origins of their conduct. That is, for those of us who can abandon the traditional view that control must be volitional, the different kinds of control are no longer intrinsically disjunctive but are inherently unified within a bigger picture. In this way, whether or not the account is actually disjunctive, its seeming disjunctivism does not threaten the sufficient control account.

5.3.2 Control and Strict Liability.

In arguing for my sufficient control account, I have defended the idea that possessing control is necessary for agents to bear moral responsibility. There are, however, practices in which we hold agents responsible even if they are not at fault. For instance, strict liability is a kind of acceptable legal responsibility, that applies when a person can be held legally responsible for things that she has no control over. Since we allow liability without fault in even legal practices, some philosophers might question whether we should stick with a control condition in an account of moral responsibility. If they are right, this would present a severe threat to any control account and, more specifically, to my own.

In reply, there are two reasons why strict liability is not a direct threat to the sufficient control account. First, my aim here is to depict a theoretical picture for righteously assigning moral responsibility. There are bound to be disparities between proposed theories and common practices. We are searching for a moral theory that all conduct must follow, and the sufficient control account is a result of my own search. In moral or legal practices, however, people have to make judgments or decisions based on factors other than a particular theory, which could render apparent contradictions. For instance, a truck driver could know for certain that it is not his fault when a drunk driver runs into his truck and gets seriously injured. He might, however, still feel guilty for this tragedy which he has no control over. Human feelings or judgments sometimes cannot be explained by the control account.

Second, although they sometimes deliver similar verdicts, moral responsibility and legal liability are not the same. The rightness of legal liability is determined or affected by different factors than moral justifications. In scenarios where agents are held legally responsible for things that were not their fault or over which they possessed no control whatsoever, the lawmaker may have a different goal. For instance, following from the previous truck driver case, we might have to accept that the truck driver will be punished for the mere accident, even if it does not sound "fair." The rationale could be that enforcing strict liability in such scenarios would better serve the order of our society. Since the family of the drunk driver would feel less pain about what they have to go through. Also, enforcing strict liability encourages drivers, in general, to be more cautious when they conduct heavy machinery that can be lethal to human bodies.

It is worth pointing out that considerations of control are not totally abandoned in the enforcement of laws. Indeed, most laws take motive and the level of control to be major factors when they assign different degrees of punishment. Take homicide, for example. There is a graded scale of punishments for intentional killings, impulsive killings, and negligent killings. It turns out that at least in some, if not most, legal scenarios, examining and weighing intentions or the level of control that agents possess while committing crimes is quite essential. Agents possess full-fledged control over their intentional actions and omissions, so they deserve the harshest condemnations in moral terms and worst punishments in legal terms, with regard to those actions/omissions.

Moreover, scenarios like strict liability raise a more general challenge to the control assumption. Namely, why rely so heavily on control, rather than some other source to impute the blame to someone? To that I reply, it might sound bizarre to say that people have control over omissions or non-voluntary failures. But it is even more absurd, at least from my perspective, to assign blame or praise for things over which agents have no control whatsoever. Taking implicit bias as an example: most of us now adopt an openly critical attitude towards racists who *knowingly* discriminate against people based on their race. When it comes to whether we should blame those whose bias is implicit, however, we struggle to come to an agreement. One of the central debates surrounding this issue is whether moral agents have control over their implicit biases. In difficult cases like this one, we need a solid explanation of the control condition if we are ever to resolve this debate. Problems like this one are what motivate me to further defend the control account. Namely, there are more issues to consider than the control and responsibility we have for our voluntary actions. Our understanding of what control and moral responsibility are has to evolve in order to accommodate those more challenging scenarios.

5.4 Conclusion.

Needless to say, moral responsibility is an issue of profound importance in interpersonal and societal ethics. When we hold someone morally responsible for something, we tend to believe that moral agent possesses control over it. In other words, she is free from coercion, ignorance, brainwashing or other influences that would undermine her agential control. Understanding the control an agent has over her conduct is necessary for establishing a proper account of moral responsibility. But the traditional control assumption, which relies heavily on volitions, runs into difficulty when explaining cases such as omissions, *akrasia*, and moral attitudes. In the face of these difficulties, the purpose of my dissertation is to defend a control-based account of moral responsibility that applies, not merely to voluntary actions, but also in these challenging cases. I maintain that, contrary to what non-volitionalists advocate, possessing control is a necessary condition for a person to be at fault and thus to be held accountable for their failures.

In this project, I present a two-pronged argument for revising the control assumption, such that it becomes my sufficient control account. Prong one is that, due to our relatively new realizations about the mysterious nature of omissions, a systematic treatment of how agents possess control and bear responsibility over various omissions is required. Specifically, I examine and settle disputes about the control that agents have over intentional omissions and unwitting omissions. Also, I propose that there are cases of akratic omissions, which are distinctive from intentional omissions and unwitting omissions. Akratic omissions exist widely, and yet people often tend to overlook them. There are also two scenarios—*akrasia* and moral attitudes—that I examine while analyzing omissions, as they have been historically challenging to the control account. I arrange these scenarios in a way that brings in a parallel for us to better comprehend the kind of situations that agents are in. What is more, it is safe to assume that these scenarios deserve a place in any projects that aim to defend a comprehensive control account of moral responsibility.

The other prong is that the sufficient control account introduces a much-needed update to the traditional volitional control account. As we have seen in our examination of both philosophers who defend and those who question the traditional control assumption, it runs into trouble in difficult cases. Our understanding of agential control and moral responsibility has to evolve in order to accommodate cases such as omissions, *akrasia*, and moral attitudes. Specifically, we must resolve the following tensions. On the one hand, the kind of voluntary control commonly exhibited in intentional actions cannot be identified in many difficult cases, and thus cannot be used to ground moral responsibility in them. On the other hand, it is counterintuitive to hold agents responsible for occurrences that they have no control over. The sufficient control account eases this tension by explaining how agents possess control not only over cases of intentional actions, but also over various cases of omissions, *akrasia*, and moral attitudes. This is partly because agents possess retrospective control over non-voluntary failures, even if they do not execute their volitions.

In summary, my examination of the control condition for moral responsibility in these difficult or overlooked cases mainly has significance in two respects. First, it fills a theoretical gap by providing a comprehensive and systematic control-based account of moral responsibility. Second, it provides a basis for dissolving knotty moral problems we encounter in daily practices by demonstrating that having control is the key condition for assigning moral responsibility. For those who have doubts about the metaphysical nature of control, my quest, then, is to search for an account that we can rely on, not only to make theoretical distinctions about whether someone is properly responsible, but also to shed some light on how to deal with control-related issues in our moral practices. Possessing control, one way or another, is a condition that we cannot leave out if we are to properly hold agents morally responsible.

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