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Narrative as an interpretation of self-pattern

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My focus in this chapter is on self-narratives, their interpretation and use, not only in self-understanding but in how others come to understand who we self-narrators are as existing subjects and agents. I will argue that self-narratives reflect or mirror all other aspects of the self, understood as a self-pattern. My aim is not to reduce the notion of self to a narrative self, but to take narrative practice as one aspect of a self-pattern that plays a special role in an integration process that involves identity formation and social understanding.

Although my focus will be on the more positive elements of this integration process, I do not deny that there are also circumstances in which narratives can be inadequate or involve misinterpretation, and lead to disruptions of the self-pattern. This may happen not only in cases of psychiatric disorders, but also in cases of social pathologies and prejudices where, as in cases of hermeneutical injustice (Fricker 2008), they may be shaped by others or by institutions in problematic ways. As Hanna Meretoja (2018, p. 50) indicates, narratives can "perpetuate and transform social structures, including structures of violence and unequal distribution of vulnerability and privilege." These are issues that I don't address here (but see Gallagher 2020, Ch. 9 for discussion and the notion of critical narratives; also see Gallagher & Tollefsen 2019).

I'll first outline the pattern theory of self and the idea that narrative is one element of that pattern. I'll then explain how narrative plays a hermeneutical role that helps us to understand all other aspects of the self. In this respect, narrative can create an interpretive window that opens onto an understanding of the various components that make up the self-pattern. On the view that I defend here, narrative processes can contribute to, but not fully constitute the integration of elements in the self-pattern. There are other dynamical forces in the self-pattern that also contribute to this integration.

The pattern theory of self

Debates about the notion of self can be found in various philosophical traditions. The self is either a metaphysical substance (e.g., Descartes 1641), or a psychological identity contingent on processes of consciousness or memory (e.g., Locke 1690), or an illusion or fiction generated by one's imagination (Hume 1739), by narrative (Dennett 1991), by neuronal processes (Metzinger 2004), or as a Buddhist perspective might claim, an illusion (constituting *miccha-ditthi* or the wrong view). According to the pattern theory of self (PTS), however, the self is neither substance nor fiction. Nor is it reducible to any one set of processes, whether neuronal, cognitive or narrative. Rather, PTS offers a pluralist account which defines self as a pattern of diverse elements (Gallagher 2013; Gallagher & Daly 2018; Newen 2018).

Although I won't try to say everything that needs to be said about the concept of pattern, I note that the type of pattern at stake in PTS is generated from the integration of a heterogeneous collection of processes, elements or factors related to one another in a dynamical fashion: bodily, experiential, affective, behavioral, cognitive, narrative, social, ecological and normative processes.

1. **Bodily processes:** core bio-systemic and autopoietic processes related to motoric, autonomic, interoceptive, reafferent, and other functions, which also allow the overall system to maintain homeostasis necessary for survival, and to distinguish between itself and what is not itself – an extremely basic set of functions that both enable and constrain all kinds of animal behavior.

2. **Prereflective experiential aspects**: Includes prereflective self-awareness, a structural feature of first-person consciousness constrained by bodily factors; one's experiential life includes the sense of ownership (mineness) and the sense of agency, which can involve various sensory-motor modalities, such as proprioception, kinaesthesia, touch and vision. These aspects form the experiential core of what is sometimes called the minimal self (Gallagher 2000; Gallagher & Zahavi 2021; 2019; Zahavi 2007).

3. **Affective processes:** The fact that someone manifests a certain temperament or emotional disposition reflects a particular mix of affective factors that range from very basic and mostly covert or tacit bodily affects (e.g., hunger, fatigue, libido) to what may be a typical emotional pattern (Newen et al. 2015).

4. **Behavioral/action aspects:** Behaviors and actions make us who we are –

behavioral habits and skills reflect, and perhaps actually constitute, our character. This is a classic view that goes back at least to Aristotle. John Dewey (1922, p. 24), for example, holds that habit forms our effective desires, furnishes us with working capacities, and rules our thoughts because "it is so intimately a part of ourselves. It has a hold upon us because we are the habit" – a view reflected in Pierre Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* (1977)

5. **Social/intersubjective factors**: humans (possibly some non-human animals) are born with a capacity for attuning to intersubjective existence (Reddy 2008; Rochat 2011; Trevarthen 1979). At a certain point in social relations a more developed self-consciousness arises – a self-conscious recognition of oneself as being oneself as distinct from others, a sense of self-for-others (Mead 1913; Sartre 1956). As Charles Tayler puts it: 'One is a self only among other selves. A self can never be described without reference to those who surround it' (1989, p. 35).

6. **Cognitive and psychological processes and states**: These are aspects emphasized in traditional theories of personal identity highlighting psychological continuity and memory (e.g., Shoemaker 2011), including one's conceptual understanding of oneself, beliefs, cognitive dispositions, as well as personality traits.

7. **Reflective capacities:** The ability to reflect on one's experiences and actions -- closely related to notions of autonomy and moral personhood, including the capacity to evaluate and form second-order volitions about one's desires (Frankfurt 1982; Taylor 1989).

8. **Narrative aspects**: Self-interpretation has a narrative structure and recursively reflects (and often reinforces) the self-pattern. On some theories, selves are inherently or constitutively narrative entities (Schechtman 2011). The conception of this narrative aspect ranges from an abstraction (Dennett 1991b) to a complex accomplishment (Ricoeur 1992).

9. **Ecological relations:** According to William James (1890) we identify ourselves with our stuff – physical pieces of property, clothes, homes, and various things that we own, the technologies we use, the institutions we work in, etc. Our embodied-situated actions engage with (and sometimes incorporate) artifacts, instruments, bits and structures of the environment in ways that define us and scaffold our identities. Situations shape who we are, and affordances define our possibilities.

10. **Normative factors**: Since our extensive engagements with the environment also include social and cultural practices, they are permeated with value-determining norms. These specify not just what we do, but involve what we ought to do, and obligations that we keep or not. Constraints (and sometimes well-defined roles) imposed by social, cultural, institutional factors shape our habitual behaviors, and our self-conceptions of who we are, and who we think we should be. Christine Korsgaard (1996, p. 101) calls this a 'practical identity' – 'a description under which you find your life to be worth living, and your actions to be worth undertaking'. As Paul Ricoeur puts it, 'To a large extent, in fact, the identity of a person… is made up of these identifications with values, norms, ideals, models, and heroes in which the person… recognizes [him- or herself]' (1992, p. 121).

This is not meant simply as an additive list of disparate elements (see Kyselo 2014; de Haan et al. 2017), but a set of component processes or factors dynamically interrelated in a pattern or gestalt organization (Gallagher 2013; Gallagher and Daly 2018). Newen, Welpinghus and Juckel (2015) have suggested that a pattern of this sort is constituted by several jointly sufficient conditions from which a particular phenomenon will be realized. Accordingly, a token instance may lack one or more aspects and still be considered a self-pattern. In a related fashion, a psychopathological disorder may be understood as involving disruptions or the elimination of one or more processes in a continuing self-pattern (Gallagher & Daly 2018).

A more specific question is how heterogeneous elements or processes can be coherently integrated. Are these diverse factors integrated in a hierarchical scheme of levels? One could imagine the normative floating on top of the behavioral, for example. What I'm calling a pattern, however, is better described as a dynamical gestalt rather than a hierarchy of levels. The idea that all of these factors are or involve *processes* may provide a common denominator (Kelso 1995). Furthermore, processual elements are dynamically integrated in a gestalt arrangement such that a causal intervention on any one element/process, above a certain threshold, will have an effect on the others and on the whole. As in a living organism, such complex adjustments tend to maintain the whole as a continuing (albeit changing) pattern. As the phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty put it in discussing the nature of a gestalt, "what happens at each point is determined by what happens in all the others" (1983, p. 131).

In this chapter I want to focus on the role of narrative processes in the self-pattern. In philosophical discussions the concept of self remains disputed; some philosophers may insist on the necessity of a particular element, or even reduce the self to just this element,

while others may resist the idea that a particular process is necessarily included in the self-pattern. For example, numerous philosophers, representing a spectrum of perspectives, agree that narrative is essential to the constitution of the self (Schechtman 1996; Dennett 1991; Ricoeur 1992). Others, in contrast, argue that narrative is not a necessary component of the self (Strawson 2004). On this contrasting view one can argue that a self-pattern still exists even in particular psychiatric disorders that lead to dysnarrativa. The concept of self-pattern resists reducing the self to any one element or process, but at the same time allows us to ask what narrative processes might contribute to self-constitution or what might be missing in cases of dysnarrativa.

Hermeneutical reflection in narrative

Narrative processes in the self-pattern constitute a hermeneutical dimension of the self. As Paul Ricoeur has argued, narrative facilitates an important form of personal identity. This is not to deny the hermeneutical relevance of other factors. Dilthey, for example, placed significant emphasis on situated (ecological) and normative factors, which he associated with Hegel's notion of objective spirit, and also related to intersubjectivity.

> From earliest childhood, the self is nurtured by this world of objective spirit. It is also the medium in which the understanding of other persons and their life-manifestations take place. For everything in which spirit has objectified itself contains something that is common to the I and the Thou…. The child grows up within the order and ethos of the family that it shares with the other members, and in this context it accepts the way the mother regulates things. Before the child learns to speak, it is already wholly immersed in the medium of commonalities. (Dilthey 1988, §3).

Likewise, Gadamer emphasized the role of social and normative factors in self-understanding and his concept of the hermeneutical situation.

> Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society, and state in which we live. The focus of subjectivity is a distorting mirror. The self-awareness of the individual is only a flickering in the closed circuits of historical life. That is why the prejudices of the individual, far more than his judgments, constitute the historical reality of his being. (Gadamer 2004, p. 278).

The notion of hermeneutical situation (which is not reducible to simply being in a particular environment, but includes the interpreter) reflects the link between narrative in general (e.g., cultural narrative) and self-narrative – something which is also demonstrated in developmental studies that show the emergence of the capacity for self-narrative at around age 3 years when children begin to appropriate the narratives of others as their own (Bruner 1996; Legerstee 2005; Nelson 2003). "My" story starts out as "our" story, and we continue to incorporate into our self-narratives the vocabulary and the values of a rich and diverse store of narratives derived not from just my narrow set of personal experiences, but from a vast variety of resources contained in cultural narratives, starting with bed-time stories and fairytales, and moving on to novels, movies, theater, television, etc. (Gallagher 2014; 2020; Gallagher & Hutto 2008; Hutto 2008). The argument I will make here is that the individual self-narrative is not only one element in the self-pattern, but reflects all the other processes and elements in the self-pattern, including intersubjective and normative factors. In this regard it plays a hermeneutical role in so far as it facilitates an integration of the other elements of the self-pattern in a sense-making self-understanding. This is what Catriona Mackenzie calls the "narrative capacities for self-interpretation," which contribute to an "integration of the self over time," – a "narrative integration [that] is dynamic, provisional and open to change and revision" (2008, pp. 11-12).

My self-narrative can track a variety of features or processes in the self-pattern, including, of course, an individual's actions and experience of agency. On some theories, the sense of agency that we have for our actions is bound up with our self-narrative (Graham & Stephens 1994; Meretoja 2018; Ricoeur 1992). If an action I perform is inconsistent with how I understand myself, the sense that I am the agent may be less than if that action is consistent with my self-narrative. Although it is possible that I can be engaged in action while on automatic pilot, which may still involve a prereflective experience of agency for that action, it is also possible that this sense of agency may be modulated by an ongoing evaluative reflection about what I am doing or how I am doing it that either fits or does not fit with my self-narrative. I might be considering, for example, whether I ought to be doing what I'm doing, or what the implications of my action are. Do my intentions and actions and their consequences line up with the type of person I am? Do they fit the self-conception I develop in my self-narrative? This type of reflection may happen *retrospectively*. I may engage in some action spontaneously and then consider whether I should have done that, a process that may lead to regret. It is also possible to engage in a narrative reflection *prospectively*, prior to action, either for pragmatic (strategic or planning) purposes or for purposes closer to moral reasoning and intention formation. In that case, engaging in an action after reflecting on it is likely to strengthen my pre-reflective sense of agency for that action, something that will be reflected in my self-narrative. We could add to this the long-term sense of one's capacity for action over time, which Elisabeth Pacherie identifies as related to self-narrative "where one's past actions

and projected future actions are given a general coherence and unified through a set of overarching goals, motivations, projects and general lines of conduct" (2007, p. 6).

To get a fuller sense of what narrative encompasses, however, we can pursue the idea that the concept of self-narrative addresses the issue of *ipse* identity (Ricoeur 1992), or what Marya Schechtman calls the characterization question. *Ipse* identity is contrasted with *idem* identity, where the latter concerns reidentification or numerical identity – that which makes something, in this case a self, one and the same thing, over time (Ricoeur 1992, p. 116). Schechtman (1996, p. 67), for example, makes a good case for bodily continuity as the criterion of reidentification. In terms of a self-pattern, it's the body that operates as the principle of individuation, a kind of ontological anchor that allows us to say this is the same self from one time or context to another, even when some other aspects of the self-pattern change. The idea is more nuanced than that, but for our purposes we need not enter into questions of *idem* identity.

Both Ricoeur and Schechtman point to narrative as a way to answer the question of *ipse* identity. Narrative addresses the characterization question: what is it that makes a person who she is, even as she changes over time. This is a question about a person's identity, and Schechtman's view is that 'a person creates his identity by forming an autobiographical narrative – a story of his life' (p. 93). If narrative is the answer to this question, as both Ricoeur and Schechtman suggest, what does that tell us about narrative in the context of the self-pattern? Let me note that Ricoeur presents a nuanced view of the distinction between *ipse* and *idem* questions about identity insofar as they can be seen to overlap with respect to the notion of temporality. The concept of character, as it pertains to personal identity, is seemingly something that involves an idemic persistence over time, and a kind of ipseic consistency over time. Narrative, he suggests, operates as a mediator in this overlapping aspect, contributing to what he calls self-maintenance or self-constancy and the capacity to make a promise (1992, pp. 118-119). In terms of the self-pattern, I think what's true about this is that narrative reflects all the other aspects of the pattern, not in a passive way, and certainly not in a complete way, but in a way that in some sense mediates across their dynamical relations. We should not read this as suggesting that narrative solves the reidentification question, or that it constitutes the self. If we pursued that line of thought there is a way to put Ricoeur's position together with Schechtman's such that narrative is doing all the work. I don't want to go that way. My focus will be to show how narrative works to answer the question about *ipse* identity by reflecting all other aspects of the self-pattern. In this respect narrative creates an interpretive window that opens onto the self-pattern and offers a way to map the dynamical relations among the various factors in that self-pattern.

Narrative and self-pattern

As a first point we should consider our corporeal anchoring in the world. This is reflected in narrative insofar as narrative is primarily about action, that is, it makes sense of action, and action is something accomplished bodily. Furthermore, as Mackenzie and Poltera (2010) argue. the body plays a significant role in the ongoing process of self-narration. “Our bodies anchor our subjective, first-personal points of view, mediate our relations with others, and are the means by which we exercise our agency” (p. 34). My body thus plays a critical role in the composition of my narrative; as a body, I am engaged in action and am susceptible to the environment, and thus prone to change, some of which is willful (revealing my agency) and some of which is imposed (beyond my control). These elements of change are incorporated into self-narrative, making them intelligible and potentially part of a “flourishing life” (Mackenzie & Poltera 2010, p. 41). Paul Ricoeur, in his analysis of narrative and personal identity, makes this clear: “in virtue of the mediating function of the body as one's own in the structure of being in the world, the feature of selfhood belonging to corporeality is extended to that of the world as it is inhabited corporeally” (1992, p. 150). This linkage between body and world, between action and context, is part of what narrative reflects. It tracks that linkage in a way that bestows on action the status of genuine action (i.e., as more than mere movement or behavior) – action, especially as it is tied to a practice. Action is never just bodily movement or “basic action” (as defined in action theory [see Gallagher 2020]; it’s a complex embodied performance situated in circumstances that define its meaning. Precisely in this respect, the intersubjective, extended and normative features of the self-pattern are not isolated realms separated from embodied action. “Practices are based on actions in which an agent takes into account, as a matter of principle, the actions of others” (Ricoeur 1992, p. 155). Actions are often interactions that involve other agents. Moreover, anything that might count as an individual practice is always derived from the practices of others.

> In our experience the life history of each of us is caught up in the histories of others. Whole sections of my life are part of the life history of others — of my parents, my friends, my companions in work and in leisure. What we said above about practices … confirms this entanglement of the history of each person in the histories of numerous others. (Ibid, p. 161)

A practice, according to Ricoeur, may be a set of actions within a context that constitutes a profession or a game – farming or chess playing are the examples he suggests. For example, “shifting the position of a pawn on the chessboard is in itself simply a gesture, but taken in the context of the practice of the game of chess, this gesture has the meaning of a move in a chess game” (Ibid, p. 154). Something similar might be said of a chess piece, e.g., the rook. That is, what makes a rook a rook are the rules of chess and the use to

which it is put in the context of a game (see Haugeland 1998). But in the case of a human agent it is more than norms and the extensive context of action that makes the action and the agent what they are. It is also what we might call the internal relations among the elements of the self-pattern that make the action *my* action. This includes my ability to give a narrative account of that action.[1]

Narrative competency in this regard is not simply the ability to comprehend and produce stories. It includes the reflective capacity to make reports on one's experiences and actions. It includes not just abilities for understanding narratives, but also capacities for narrative understandings, which allow us to frame our understanding of self and others in a narrative way, and thence to form/produce self-narratives and narratives about things, events and other people. We can distinguish between narrative *framing*, as an implicit process or practice of seeing/understanding events in a narrative framework, and narrative *production*, which is the explicit construction of stories or narrative reports (Gallagher & Hutto, 2008). When Jerome Bruner (1990) describes how we come to know our world and construct our representation of reality through the use of narrative, and when he suggests that "we organize our experience and our memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative – stories, excuses, myths, reasons for doing or not doing, and so on" (p. 4), he is describing narrative framing.

We make sense out of our own actions and out of the actions of others by placing them in a narrative framework. This is not a new theory of understanding. It has its roots in hermeneutical traditions. Thus, for instance, Dilthey recognized that, in contrast to the contemporary theory-of-mind approaches to social cognition, it is not sufficient to focus on grasping an abstract or decontextualized set of the other person's mental states in order to understand their actions.

> It is necessary to distinguish the state of mind which produced the action by which it is expressed from the circumstances of life by which it is conditioned. … [In some cases] action separates itself from the background of the context of life and, unless accompanied by an explanation of how circumstances, purposes, means and context of life are linked together in it, allows no comprehensive account of the inner life from which it arose. (Dilthey 1988, p. 153).

Still, Dilthey, in emphasizing the idea that action arises from "inner life", expresses a tension in his own thought that could lead to an overly mentalistic way of understanding

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[1] It includes more than this, as I've suggested. There are, for example, intrinsic bodily processes (such as reafference [see e.g., Jékely, Godfrey-Smith & Keijzer 2021]) that contribute to an integration of experience and action independently of narrative processes.

agency. Keeping the focus on context, which includes intersubjective relations, we can grasp the other's life, as well as our own, in its worldly-everyday situational contexts, which, for practical purposes, is best captured in a narrative form. Narratives recount actions and their reasons as they figure in the context of a local history and a set of personal or interpersonal projects, even if they do not capture all the complex details of that history.[2]

Ricoeur (1992) is closer to the mark: I encounter the other person, not abstracted from their circumstances, but in the middle of something that has a beginning and that is going somewhere, and is part of a shared world. I see other people in the framework of a story in which either I have or do not have a part to play. I see their actions and my own actions, or possible actions, in what Bruner (1986) calls the “landscape of action”, which is constituted by their embodied situation and the rich worldly contexts within which they act -- contexts that operate as scaffolds for the meaning and significance of actions and expressive movements.

Our experience of others transforms our self-experience (the experience of our own possible actions) and narrative has a role to play in this. It is not just, as Alistair McIntyre (1981, 212) puts it, “because we live out narratives in our lives and because we understand our own lives in terms of narratives that we live out, that the form of narrative is appropriate for understanding the actions of others”; it begins by going the other way: because we frame our understanding of the actions of others in narratives, the form of narrative is appropriate for understanding ourselves. As I already noted, this starts when we are young children. Since we develop in social contexts and normally acquire the capacity for narrative in those contexts, then the development of self-narrative obviously involves others. Katherine Nelson (2003) points out that “with respect to the child's own experience, which is forecast and rehearsed with him or her by parents”, competency for self-narrative starts to emerge in 2-year olds. Self-narrative requires building on our experiences of others and their narratives, so “children of 2-4 years often ‘appropriate’ someone else's story as their own” (Nelson, 2003, p. 17). In addition, carving out one’s own character within a set of narratives requires a reflective awareness of having a point of view that is different from others. By the time infants are two or three years of age and well practiced in understanding immediate environments and events as other people

[2] The claim is not that narrative can capture the full detail of larger historical/cultural phenomena. As Hanna Meretoja points out, in most contemporary studies narratives are taken to have a self-oriented experiential dimension (they are told from someone’s point of view and/or foreground someone’s experiences). Complex historical contexts include many aspects that are irreducible to an individual perspective. “The fixation on the conventional narrative model that involves a central subject of experience and a linear plot that ends in closure may hinder the understanding of complex phenomena—such as climate change— that have no single agent and/ or involve a time span that fits uneasily with traditional human-scale, experientially-driven storytelling.” (2018, 106)

understand them, the acquisition of language, plus the capacity to recognize their own image in the mirror, feed a developing conceptual understanding of themselves that is essential to the onset of autobiographical memory.

> By 18-24 months of age infants have a concept of themselves that is sufficiently viable to serve as a referent around which personally experienced events can be organized in memory…. The self at 18-24 months of age achieves whatever 'critical mass' is necessary to serve as an organizer and regulator of experience…. This achievement in self-awareness (recognition) is followed shortly by the onset of autobiographical memory …" (Howe 2000, pp. 91-92).

Autobiographical memory is one aspect that shapes narrative competency – an ability to see things in a narrative framework. Along with a growing linguistic competency, a developing conceptual sense of self, and the pragmatic social interactions that start with joint attention and joint action, autobiographical memory helps to kick-start narrative abilities during the second or third year of life. Two-year olds may start this process by working more from a set of short behavioral scripts than from full-fledged narratives; initially their autobiographical memories have to be elicited by questions and prompts (Howe 2000; Nelson 2003). From 2-4 years, children fine-tune their narrative abilities via further development of language ability, autobiographical memory, and a more stable self-concept.

When children listen to stories, or play-act (and the same continues in adulthood when we are exposed to parables, plays, myths, novels, films and other media) they become familiar with characters in a range of ordinary or extraordinary situations, and the sorts of actions appropriate to such characters, all of which helps to shape their expectations about others and about themselves (Richner and Nicolopoulou 2001; Nelson 2003). Narratives thus contribute to our normative understanding of what others can expect from us, and what we can expect from others in certain situations. In that regard, narratives may be part of the structure that shapes social and cultural institutions (Gallagher and Tollefsen 2019), as well as our social and cultural practices (Gallagher and Hutto 2007) all of which, in turn, can inform (or distort) our intersubjective interactions. Through them we learn the norms associated with social roles that pervade our everyday world in homes, schools, playgrounds, shops, restaurants, etc. As children discover why characters act as they do in particular cases, they become accustomed to standard scripts, scenarios, characters, plots, etc., and these begin to structure their own actions and their understanding of those actions.[3]

[3] Here one could start to explore the more negative aspects of narrative practices that involve misinterpretation, and disruptions of the self-pattern due to social pathology, hermeneutical injustice (Fricker 2008), or distortions introduced by institutional arrangements (Gallagher 2020).

> Developmentally, in our narrative understanding of others, we begin to shape our own self-narrative, registering not only their actions and attitudes but also our own experiences and, at the same time, in a way that differentiates self and other. Other larger, cultural narratives that help to constitute a community's shared normative practices and our commonsense understandings also shape our self-understandings and our understanding of others.

To summarize:

(1) Narrative is primarily about actions, which are often intersubjective interactions, and often involve social-cultural practices;
(2) Actions and interactions are embodied;
(3) Because our bodies are always in-the-world, our actions are always situated;
(4) Action-situations involve extended, worldly aspects, but especially other people and social practices constrained in a normative fashion;
(5) Narrative reflects such structures and allows us to frame our understanding of both our own actions and those of others in ways that recursively shapes those actions and our own experiences;
(6) The development of narrative competency and self-narrative begins at a young age reflecting and contributing to the development of our linguistic and cognitive abilities, fostering the development of episodic-autobiographical memory and self-concept.

You might think at this point that with the concept of narrative we've hit on every other aspect of the self-pattern – bodily, experiential, behavioral/action-related, intersubjective, psychological/cognitive/reflective, extended and normative – except one: the affective. Schechtman (1996, p. 97) makes it clear, however, that affect is in this mix of elements: 'We expect a person's beliefs, desires, values, emotions, actions and experiences to hang together in a way that makes what she says, does, and feels psychologically intelligible'. Schechtman introduces the idea that affect is something like the glue that keeps the various elements hanging together, and she does this through her interpretation of John Locke's classic account of personal identity. In contrast to interpretations that emphasize the role of memory, i.e., psychological continuity, as the basis for personal identity, Schechtman argues that Locke stresses the *affective* side of consciousness. He paints a picture of consciousness as the faculty whereby we experience pleasure and pain, happiness and misery. He tells us, for instance, that '*Self* is that conscious thinking thing … which is sensible, or conscious of Pleasure and Pain, capable of Happiness or Misery,

and so is concern'd for it *self* as far as that consciousness extends', thus emphasizing the definition of identity in terms of sameness of consciousness precisely because it is in consciousness that we experience the affect that underlies self-interested concern, compensation, and justice of punishment. (Schechtman 1996, pp. 108-109). It's clear that the affective dimension is crucial to the hermeneutic conception of understanding as our mode of being-in-the-world (Meretoja 2018, pp. 46, 76)

Schechtman also makes it clear that affect does not always work in a conscious way. The affective associations connected with past actions condition our current actions, sometimes even if we do not have explicit memories of those past actions. More generally, Schechtman points out, the affective dimensions that are part of the way we have been raised, may contribute to our feelings of worthiness and self-esteem. 'It is no great revelation that a person who feels loved and valued by a stable family in childhood is more likely to grow up feeing worthy, entitled, and secure than a person who is made to feel worthless and incompetent' (1996, p. 111). Importantly, this general orientation toward the world will affect a person's interactions with others, her choice of action, and her specific dispositions in various situations. All of this, in turn, is reflected in one's narrative.

> [These affective experiences] give us a "script" – a sense of self, an idea of who we are and what kind of story we are living…. This, then, is how Locke's insight can be used to yield a helpful understanding of what is involved in having a narrative self-conception…. To have a narrative self-conception ….is thus to experience the events in one's life as interpreted through one's sense of one's own life story, and to feel the affect that follows upon doing so (Schechtman 1996, pp. 111-112).

I interpret Ricoeur to be offering a similar conception of the relation between self-narrative and affect (or what is personal about self-narrative). Ricoeur makes it clear that there is an unusual causal relation between narrative and the events narrated. It's possible, he suggests, to give a causal, impersonal account of a series of events or actions. A narrative, on its own, does not add extra causal forces to the series of events. At the same time, however, a narrative can transform the meaning of an event. Narrative provides extended context, and for that reason, the event narrated can take on a certain personal (and this means 'affective') significance that it otherwise would not have. More specifically, 'by entering into the movement of a narrative which relates a character to a plot, the event loses its impersonal neutrality. By the same token, the narrative status conferred upon the event averts the drift of the notion of event which would make it difficult, if not impossible, to take the agent into account in the description of the action' (1992, p. 142n1).

Conclusion

Ricoeur understands plot/emplotment, as involved in narrative identity, "in dynamic terms [as] the competition between a demand for concordance and the admission of discordances which, up to the close of the story, threaten this identity" (1992, p. 141). Concordance, for Ricoeur, is "the principle of order that presides over what Aristotle calls 'the arrangement of facts'" (p. 141). This is a "synthesis of heterogeneity"; an "unstable structure of discordant concordance" (p. 142). I think the idea of the integration of diverse elements in the self-pattern is less about synthesis and more about dynamical instabilities which importantly keep the processes going. The formation of self-narrative is one part of an integrative process that pushes for a hermeneutical coherence and against the discordances that threaten the stability of the self-pattern. In this respect narrative provides some resources to deal with just the kind of dialectic of coherence/dissipation involved in dynamic patterns (Kelso 1995).

If the self is, in effect, a self-pattern, it can be more or less discordant, especially since a self-narrative is not just about a character *simpliciter*; rather, through my actions, which are always contextualized (and are such that they always carry along their circumstances [Gallagher 2020]), I am connected with others. My self-narrative reflects the fact that I am situated in a set of "action dynamics" (Ricoeur 1992, p. 144), and the situation always involves others who are not just action observers, but interactors and evaluators; this introduces a normative structure in which agents are "raised to the rank of persons and of [responsible] initiators of action" (p. 145).

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