THE NARRATIVITY CONDITION AS A NECESSARY

CONDITION OF PERSONAL IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT

The thesis enters the contemporary philosophical debate about personal identity. Based on the traditionally neglected phenomenology of self-experience, I argue for a specific necessary condition of diachronic identity. I believe that there are three intricately entangled concepts that can provide a starting point. I discuss consciousness, self-interpretation, narrative and their interconnections, taking into account other disciplines of the social sciences (such as narrative psychology) that help phenomenology in making sense of self-experience. The condition I suggest is "the narrativity condition": if there is personal identity through time, then there is a semi-conscious self-interpretation in the form of a narrative. This condition is informative regarding synchronic identity (the individuation or characterization of persons), and it is also a necessary condition of personhood. Instead of relying on metaphysical answers to the question: "what are persons?", I approach the issue from the other way around: the actual self-experiences and practices of people through which they acquire and keep their identities shed light on the nature and criteria of personhood.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Three Questions of Personal Identity

I am concerned with three main, interconnected questions regarding personal identity. First, diachronic identity: what makes a person at time *t1* identical with a person at time *t2*? Diachronic identity is about survival, persistence and identity through time (and I use these expressions interchangeably). Philosophers have answered the diachronic question with "nothing" (e.g., Lowe, 1996),[1] "psychological continuity" (e.g., Lewis 1976/2003), "consciousness and memory" (e.g., Locke, 1690/1999), "bodily continuity" (e.g., Ayer 1936/1971), "same life" (e.g., Olson, 1997) and so forth. Following theorists of narrative identity (e.g., Ricoeur, 1992), I argue for the narrativity condition. On first approximation, a narrative is a selection and presentation of certain events and actions in a meaningful temporal structure. If a person at *t1* and a person at *t2* are identical, then the person at *t2* is in principle be able to tell a narrative in which he or she is the protagonist referred to as "I" and in which he or she refers to both the person at *t1* and the person at *t2* by this "I". If I am the same person as the ten years old boy in primary school then I can say: "I had been ten years old and in primary school, but now I am older and went to university". There is a wide-ranging debate about narrative conceptions of identity, their values and applicability (e.g., Strawson, 2004 vs. Schechtman, 2007), and I suggest a conception that can deepen the understanding of personal identity and also overcome certain shortcomings of previous accounts.

Second, I take the question of synchronic identity to mean what makes a particular person that particular person. What is the best way to individuate persons and how can persons be characterized as individuals? Trivially, I am this particular person and not another one because I have this particular body. Also, I occupy a particular spatiotemporal point and have a particular spatiotemporal trajectory that no one else does. However, this is not terribly informative, and it is

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[1] The thesis follows the 6th edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) in referencing and format (where the format is not prescribed by the Central European University).

also true for rocks and animals. What rocks and animals lack are life narratives. I suggest that persons can be individuated and characterized by their individual life narratives. I believe that no one else has the same life narratives that I do and those narratives communicate my individual characteristics that make me the particular person I am.

Third, the question a personhood: what is it that makes a person a person? The nature and criteria of personhood has been debated since Plato. For instance, Locke (1690/1999), who is credited to be the founding father of contemporary psychological approaches to diachronic identity, famously stated that a person is "a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places" (p. 318). So far, the most popular contemporary answers consider persons to be unities of material and immaterial substances (Swinburne, 1984), psychological substances (Lowe, 1996), connected mental states (Parfit, 1984/2003) or phases of human animals (Olson, 1997). In contrast, I believe that persons are a subset of human beings: persons are human beings with semi-conscious life narratives.[2] In saying that persons are a subset of human beings, I intend to avoid the issue whether non-humans can be persons and use the term person restricted to human persons. I do not deal with the issue of human beings, but I assume that human beings are complex psychophysical entities that belong to the biological species of *homo sapiens*. I do not mean to confer these as uncontestable claims, but I want to make clear some assumptions that assist in narrowing my topic of inquiry.[3]

A Phenomenologically-based Narrativist Approach

I take a phenomenologically-based approach to the issues at hand. By "phenomenologically-based", I mean that the central methodological stage in my thesis is taken by the description and analysis of experiences (cf. Pawlowski, 2010, p. 9) and not by metaphysical

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[2] In general, this conforms to Hutto's (2007) assertion that connects selfhood and personhood: personhood is not automatically granted to human beings but is tied to selfhood which is a product of hermeneutic and interpretive activity (p. 7).

[3] Thus, I go against prominent thinkers such as Harré (1998), who believes that every human being is a person (p. 69) and Garrett (1998) and DeGrazia (2005), on the opposing side, who considers non-humans to be potentially persons.

thought experiments, for example. I believe that the most fundamental problem with numerous approaches is exactly the ignorance with respect to the phenomenological dimension – insofar as this ignorance applies, I call these approaches "traditional". What they neglect is that persons persist while they have experiences about themselves and their persistence. I review and criticize these approaches in Chapter 1 in detail.

I take self-experiences to be constitutive. In partial agreement with Heidegger (1927/1962), I believe that persons are beings for whom their own being is an issue (p. 32).[4] What I take Heidegger's famous dictum to mean in the present context is very close to Baker's (2000) assertion (even though she does not acknowledge it): it is a deep fact about the nature of persons that they can ask the first-personal question "what am I?" I think that traditional approaches to the issue of personal identity have neglected this deep fact. If persons are distinguished by the ability to relate to and experience themselves, then the inquiry into personal identity has to proceed by making sense of this ability. Otherwise, the notion of personhood and the conditions of persistence are impoverished, lacking explanation for why persons are able to do this and what this ability entails.

My thesis represents a first step on my part towards incorporating the phenomenological dimension in addressing issues of personal identity. Besides accounting for the personal relationship to one's own identity, phenomenology has other advantages: unlike most traditional approaches, it can engage in a mutually informative discourse with psychology and other social sciences that deal with the issue of personal identity.[5] Moreover, sharing Schechtman's (1996) disappointment with traditional theories of personal identity, I propose a phenomenological approach to be able to get closer to the practical and everyday concept of person and personal

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[4] My agreement is only partial because Heidegger (1927/1962) says: "Dasein is an entity which does not just occur among other entities. Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an *issue* for it" (p. 32). However, I do not necessarily subscribe to the ontic distinction for reasons to be outlined later in different terms.

[5] "cross-disciplinary dialogues are essential as a counterweight to over-specialisation" (Hallam, 2009, p. 18).

persistence.[6] Lastly, despite Jopling's (2000) arguments to the contrary, I argue that a phenomenologically-based narrative approach can and does account for the social and interpersonal aspects of personal identity and self-knowledge. Thus, I accept the argument of a good number of thinkers that there is an essential social and interpersonal dimension to questions about and theories of personal identity (e.g., DeGrazia, 2005; Flanagan, 1992; Hallam, 2009; Harré, 1998; Jopling, 2000; Zahavi, 2005, 2007).

The Narrativity Conditon

My main thesis is a conditional:

> If a person at *t1* and a person at *t2* are identical, then the person
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> at *t2* is in principle able to tell a narrative in which he or she is
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> the protagonist referred to as "I" and in which he or she refers
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> to both the person at *t1* and the person at *t2* by this "I".[7]

What is required for a person to be able to tell the narrative mentioned above? Firstly, for a person in principle to be able to tell life narratives, there is a need for a semi-conscious registering of events and actions (that I call experiences for the sake of convenience) as happening to and as done by the person. By semi-conscious, I mean that there are conscious experiences and unconscious experiences. I suppose that the former involve a minimal self-awareness: one is aware that one is having experiences. The latter lack this awareness, but I believe that they are still registered and affect the person. I return to the issue in Chapter 2.

Secondly, it is not enough to register the experiences, moreover, it is not enough to remember them. In order to be able to tell a narrative, one has to recognize oneself as the same

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[6] "Understanding the self as a developing narrative is more than simply an academic exercise; it has real implications for real people – probably more than we care to realize" (Hardcastle, 2008, p. 146).

[7] I do not address issues of self-reference and the indexical in the thesis due to constraints of scope. The "in principle" modifier should be read as "under ideal circumstances", which means that the person at *t2* is able to recall memories about the experiences of the person at *t1* or does not have late-stage Alzheimer's for example.

as the one who had the experiences at the earlier time. I argue that this requires self-interpretation. I use the term self-interpretation to mean a certain stance adopted towards oneself as if one is the object of one's interpretation and understanding. It is hard to find an illustrative example because I think this process is never this explicit, but consider the following. I have experienced how beautiful the ocean is when I was fifteen years old. I remember it. Was I the same person? I argue that in order to understand myself as the same person, I need to interpret myself as being the same person. I think self-interpretation takes the mere sequentiality of experiences and creates an organized autobiographical structure out of them. This is taken up in Chapter 3.

Thirdly, I think that this organized structure is best described as a narrative. A narrative is distinct from the mere sequentiality of events. Consider the timespan of my existence: between 1983 and 2012, countless events and actions have happened and I have had countless experiences. Some of them could be displayed like the following: "1988.11.30, 1.30pm: I was learning to swim. 1995.10.20, 4.30pm: I was looking at far away places on a map. 1998.04.03., 5.30pm: I saw the ocean. 2012.05.31, 9am: I am painting a picture." Such a chronicle of experiences in my life is not informative by itself if I intend to understand myself. In order to understand myself, I have to engage in self-interpretation. How does a self-interpretation in this sense look like? I argue that it is a narrative presentation in which I make sense of the experiences, choosing them and organizing-structuring them into a coherent organic whole. For example: "My fascination with water stems from my childhood experience of loving to swim. When I had become older, I had spent a lot of time admiring how much of the Earth is actually water and later I got to actually see the ocean that amazed me and to this day, one of my favorite pastime activities is creating terrible neo-Romanticist paintings of seas and oceans." This is a narrative that presents and explains my experiences in a way that assists in understanding myself. If I interpret myself this way, I interpret myself as the same as I was before. In literary studies, there is a significant difference between plot and narrative. A narrative has a plot which is the

temporal skeleton of events selected for the narrative, while the narrative is a way of presentation (cf. Bruner, 1990). A narrative is a sense-making structure that consists in selected events (the plot) and in a specific way of presenting them. All in all, in self-interpretation, I presents my experiences as experienced by me and not as mere happenings but in a meaningful structure of temporality (Ricoeur, 1991, 1992). Chapter 4 develops the notion of narrative and describes how it relates to questions of personal identity in detail and also addresses worries raised about narrativity.

By outlining the requirements for my thesis above, I arrive at the condensed form of the thesis that I refer to throughout the paper:

> The Narrativity Condition (**NC**): If there is personal identity
> through time, then there is a semi-conscious self-interpretation
> which takes the form of a narrative.

I argue that **NC** is special in the sense that it is illustrative of first-personal self-experience of persisting through time.[8] I also argue that if this is so, then its consequent is informative about synchronic identity (individuation or characterization) and also necessary for personhood. Why do I suggest *only* a necessary condition (and not a necessary *and* sufficient one)? Firstly, I think that my necessary condition is not sufficient because diachronic identity might require true narratives, embodiment and a host of other necessary conditions that might be jointly sufficient. For instance, I could provide a narrative self-interpretation if I had implanted false memories of the experiences of an earlier person. However, I would not be identical to the earlier person because the memories are false and not mine.

Secondly, for necessary *and* sufficient conditions, I would have to engage in metaphysical arguments about the relationship between human beings and persons in detail, which, I believe,

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[8] "Self-experience—at its most primitive—is simply taken to be a question of having first-personal access to one's own consciousness" (Zahavi, 2007, p. 188).

would require me to have a clear view on the hard problem of consciousness. For tackling the hard problem, phenomenology alone is not sufficient (cf. Flanagan, 1992). Philosophers of mind have been struggling for a long time with reconciling the fact that conscious experiences have a qualitative "feel" with the scientific facts that changes in a person's physical make-up (more specifically the brain) can affect conscious and mental states. Some have even proposed that the connection will remain mysterious forever (e.g., McGinn, 1999). If it turns out in the future that the qualitative feel of experiences and consciousness can be explained by referring to neuron firing and brain mechanisms, then the metaphysical status of human beings has to be similar to that of other animals. On the other hand, if consciousness cannot be reduced to anything physical, then the metaphysical status of human beings has to be exceptional in the natural world. If I have no systematic view of these matters, then, based on phenomenology, I can offer only necessary conditions.

Therefore, I do not directly argue that there has to be personal identity through time. In fact, I know of convincing (but intuitively implausible) metaphysical theories that deny identity while retaining persistence (Sider, 2001). What I argue for is **NC**. From **NC** being a conditional, it follows that even if there is no personal identity through time, one could have a narrative self-interpretation due to the paradox of implication. For instance, based on my self-experience, I could say that it appears to me that I am a persisting thing that is identical with its past and future selves. Despite this experience and appearance, the metaphysical reality might be that persons persist through instantaneous person-stages being connected by temporal counterpart relations (Sider, 2001). On this theory, the person stage that I am in 1999 is not identical to the person stage that I am in 2012, but there is a person-counterpart relation between them. I persist through causally and spatiotemporally connected instantaneous person-stages without identity.

In spite of this possibility, I can argue for something based on the fact of appearance and the phenomenology of experience: how persons experience themselves and why do they experience themselves the way they do? Any metaphysical theory that does not accommodate the

common experience of persisting as persons has to account for the discrepancy between the metaphysical reality and the way it appears to actual persons. If I am correct, persons experience themselves as persisting and identical through time because their experience takes the form of a narrative through self-interpretation. Furthermore, I take this experience seriously because my thesis is a phenomenologically-based study. Going back to Heidegger's (1927/1962) and Baker's (2000) views, if persons are distinguished by their ability to relate to the way they are and to ask the question "what am I?", then this distinction might be carried on to the diachronic identity issue and the way persons experience their persistence might be an indication for the way they actually persist.

CHAPTER 1: THEORIES OF PERSONAL IDENTITY

Complex views regarding personal identity analyze identity through time by offering components and conditions. The main complex views are psychological approaches and somatic approaches. Psychological ones argue for a sort of psychological continuity and connectedness between mental states, while somatic approaches take physical or biological continuity to ground diachronic identity. There is also an increasingly popular stance called the simple view, which considers personal identity to be a brute fact. The narrative approach that I am proposing is closest to neo-Lockean psychological theories,[9] however, I believe that there are important differences, which are the most visible in the methodology. The most famous theories of personal identity might also be called "traditional" in the sense that they neglect the phenomenological dimension (the self-experiences of persons as persisting persons) and develop their metaphysical arguments through thought experiments. I minimize the role of thought experiments in the thesis because I take a phenomenologically-based approach that deals with experiences and everyday phenomena.[10]

Complex psychological approaches do not address the way persons actually experience themselves as persisting. Schechtman's (2003) concept of "emphatic access" is useful for illustration. Arguing against psychological theories, Schechtman says that they assume that for a person to be the same person at a later time, there needs to be an orderly and gradual line of changes between atomistic psychological states. Abrupt changes threaten persistence. In contrast, Schechtman argues that the distinction between identity-preserving and identity-threatening changes does not depend on gradualness or orderliness because even slow and regular changes can rob a person of his or her identity (p. 243). What is needed is for the person to be able to actively identify with the earlier person and actively understand him or herself to be the same

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[9] Contra Pawlowski (2010), I do not consider the narrative approach to be a variant of the psychological theories, however, similarly to Pawlowski's methodological starting point, I choose a phenomenological approach.

[10] Also I have a certain inclination to regard the method of doing philosophy by thought experiments with skepticism and find examining real psychological and mental diseases, for example, much more productive (cf. Zahavi, 2005, pp. 140-142).

person as the earlier one ("affective connection" and "behavioral implications" p. 246). In short, psychological theories aim to provide impersonal descriptions of metaphysical relations between temporally remote person-stages or between different manifestations of the temporally extended and enduring person. One of the consequences of ignoring the phenomenological dimension (the person experiencing affective connection, has emphatic access, etc.) is that they cannot plausibly demarcate identity-preserving and identity-threatening psychological changes. In these approaches, self-experience and self-knowledge are idle, so to speak.[11]

On the other hand, the most popular somatic approach is Olson's (1997) animalism that states that personhood is not a substance-concept but a phase sortal. Briefly, substance concepts refer to metaphysically real entities that can go through phases during their existence which are referred to by phase sortals. If one treats "person" as a substance concept, one argues that persons are metaphysically real entities that go through phases ("infant", "adult", "parent") during their existence while their persistence conditions are grounded in their metaphysical nature ("personhood"). On the contrary, Olson argues that the survival of what I am depends upon the continuity of my biological life and not the continuity of my personhood. What is missing here is missing on purpose since Olson argues that numerical identity is only relevant in the area of metaphysics. However, ignoring the phenomenological side of the issue results in an isolated metaphysical theory, that is only informed by biology and is cut off from practical, psychological, ethical, political, social, and cultural interests. I believe that this is a steep price for the somewhat trivial assertion that "we are animals".

Traditional simple views focus on the ontology of substances and the criterionless nature of personal identity. As such, I think that they neglect the phenomenology by neglecting the common experience that persons often feel without a stable and substantial core in the face of

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[11] It is interestingly similar to the way Jopling (2000) criticizes external and actual psychological approaches like creating personality profiles: they neglect the constitutive phenomena of being a self and the work that needs to be done by the person in reflecting upon himself or herself. Ironically, my critique of traditional approaches is also analogous to his points against postmodern concepts of the self: "The postmodernist models of the self, however, bear little resemblance to actual human psychology, and to the phenomenology of actual moral experience" (p. 20).

- 10 -

changes that are sometimes even identity-threatening. Consider Damasio's (1999) description of Transient Global Amnesia. Suffering from Transient Global Amnesia that lasts for some hours, a normal person is derived from any experience that has been recently added to his or her autobiographical memory through a violent episode of migraine for example, but he or she retains a basic level of consciousness bound to the "here-and-now". Present experiences are unintelligible for the person without the wider spatiotemporal context. On my view, this makes sense: there is no self-interpretation that would entail the suffering person to be the same as the person before. Right in the middle of an amnesiac episode, the person is actually not the same person as he or she was before. On simple views, such an illness with the unimpaired working of the basic consciousness of "here-and-now" should be seen as the continuation of the uninterrupted psychological substance that is identical with its previous self. In the face of the experiences of the person undergoing the amnesiac episode, I find this implausible and also unaccounted for by simple views. In the following, I turn to the theories in detail.

1.1 Complex Views

1.1.1 Psychological approaches

The origin of the psychological approach to diachronic identity can be found in Locke's (1690/1999) *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Significantly, Locke distinguishes between the identity of person ("thinking intelligent being…" p. 318) and the identity of substance ("man") and argues that personal identity through time is the identity of consciousness (p. 326). Unfortunately, the scope of the thesis does not allow for a thorough explication of Locke's ideas, but along with many neo-Lockeans about identity and consciousness, I found tremendous inspiration in these passages. Developing the Lockean theory, most contemporary advocates of the psychological approach are four-dimensionalist: generally, they theorize that things do not endure the passing of time that is analogous to a dimension of space. Instead, things "perdure" by having "temporal parts" (analogous to spatial parts) that are connected by relations conceived differently by different philosophers. My approach develops the Lockean theory by requiring

more than continuity of consciousness based on memory: a narrative self-interpretation not only requires continuity of consciousness (with possible breaks) and memory but an active interpretive relationship to one's own self and experiences.

One of the most famous proponents of the psychological approach is Lewis (1976/2003). According to Lewis, mental continuity and connectedness accounts for personal identity through time. Lewis is a four-dimensionalist, he believes that a person is an aggregate of his or her temporal parts and diachronic identity that matters in survival is the relation connecting these temporal parts. Nozick (1981/2003) is also a four-dimensionalist, however, his is a "closest continuer" theory (a "best candidate" approach cf. Noonan, 2003, p. 210). Nozick's theory is schematic and admittedly so: if *x-at-t0* and *y-at-t1* are identical, then *y-at-t1* is the closest continuer of *x-at-t0* and there is no *z-at-t1* that is closer to *x* than *y*. A continuer's properties have to be causally produced and explained by the properties of the earlier thing, and this causal dependency in conjunction with qualitative similarities provides us with criteria for determining closeness.[12]

Parfit's (1984/2003) theory is self-labeled as reductionism. Reductionism here refers to the process of finding criteria for identity through time in subpersonal, basic facts that can be described in non-personal terms. His main and famous conclusion is that identity is not what matters in survival: the relation of psychological continuity contains everything that is required for survival. Strictly speaking, Parfit's view is not a view about personal identity, instead it is a pragmatically-grounded view about personal survival, where survival is achievable without identity. On the other hand, Perry (1976) develops a four-dimensionalist psychological approach that takes practical concerns as a starting point and argumentative foundation. Practical concerns include responsibility, survival and anticipation that would be meaningless if persons did not consider themselves to persist through time. Perry states that identity does matter because of certain self-interested concerns, however, "the importance of identity is derivative" (p. 81)

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[12] Interestingly, Nozick (1981/2003) admits that self-conceptions actually influence personal identity and continuation that varies from person to person. However, this aspect of his theory is underemphasized next to the metaphysics of "closest continuer".

because it is given weight by the private projects that people carry out and which characterize them. These private projects offer motivation for persons to identify with their own past and future selves. According to Perry, this is supported by an adjusted neo-Lockean memory-theory in which memories that are caused in the right way are important indicators of the identity relation obtaining between the one who actually experiences and the one who remembers having the experience. In normal cases and under normal circumstances, Perry considers bodily continuity to be the most straightforward indicator of diachronic identity. However, thought experiments such as teletransportation and brain transplant that constitute abnormal or special cases create the need for the theorist of personal identity to describe a relation between person stages that can account for certain intuitions regarding personal identity in these cases: a modified neo-Lockean memory-relation.

Shoemaker (1975, 1984) offers a materialist account of personal identity which raises influential criticism against memory-theories. According to Shoemaker, memory cannot be a criterion of personal identity through time because that would involve a vicious circularity: a memory-based criterion needs to assume that the same person had the experience as the person who has the memory. However, this assumption is exactly what is under investigation in issues about diachronic identity. Shoemaker believes that a general psychological continuity with the appropriate cause-and-effect relations should serve as a foundation of diachronic identity. Also being a four-dimensionalist, Shoemaker's criterion for diachronic identity is: two person stages are directly connected psychologically if the later of the two has a psychological state, causally connected to a psychological state of the earlier one in an appropriate way. Person stages belong to the same person if and only if they are connected by a chain of person stages that are directly connected psychologically and there is no branching. Branching would occur in the imaginary case of fission where the left hemisphere and the right hemisphere of a brain are transplanted into two different empty heads and both would be psychologically continuous with the original possessor of the whole brain. Without the branching disclaimer of Shoemaker (which is actually

quite typical in the literature) the fission case would threaten either the transitivity of identity or the principle that at a certain definite point in time, one person is only identical with himself or herself.

Ricoeur (1992), arguing against Parfit's reductionism asks: "Would the question of what matters arise if there were no one to whom the question of identity mattered?" (p. 138). What Ricoeur is getting at here is something that I consider to be a paradigmatic problem with psychological approaches to diachronic identity: the move to reduce questions about diachronic identity to continuity between mental or psychological states strips the issue of its essential phenomenological and practical dimensions. Schechtman (1996) argues that the psychological relations of such theories are extraordinary in the sense that they are philosophical constructs and that is why they do not have any connection to what persons usually experience as psychological connections.

Furthermore, there is a standard objection against naïve psychological theories that the danger of circularity haunts them: if *person-at-t1* is the same as *person-at-t2* because they have psychological-mental continuity between states, then the psychological-mental states must be identified and individuated. However, the states cannot be identified and individuated without referring to the person to whom the states belong (Lowe, 1996 uses this objection against all complex theories). What this means is that the psychological state of being tired at *t1* might be causally related to being sleepy at *t2*, however, this causal connection cannot account for diachronic identity because for that it has to be assumed that the tiredness at *t1* belongs to the person at *t1* and the sleepiness at *t2* belongs to the same person at *t2*.[13] The circularity does not apply to my account because I only propose a necessary condition of diachronic identity: if the tired person at *t1* is identical to the sleepy person at *t2*, then the sleepy person at *t2* can in

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[13] Actually, Zahavi's (2005) main argument rests in part on the coined term "subjectivity of experience" that does not posit a subject of experiences outside the experiential flow but in the minimal or core sense of the self, it is constituted in and by the experiences and cannot be isolated from them (p. 126). Flanagan (1992) argues for a similar thing with his provocative assertion that "Individual thoughts are the thinkers" (p. 185). Dainton (2008) posits phenomenal-experiential continuity that binds together streams of consciousness, and he also thinks that it is a mistake to propose a subject of experiences that unifies them when the appropriate unifying relationship is co-consciousness.

principle say something like this: "I was tired before, so now I am sleepy" in which the person himself or herself ascribes the states of tiredness and sleepiness to himself or herself. The phenomenological approach takes the person's experiences not to be abstract and atomic states of psychology but phenomenal ones. Beginning with the person's experiences excludes the threat of circularity.

On my narrativist view, experiences of phenomenal consciousness are bound up with the way they feel qualitatively. This entails that there is no abstract "tiredness" and "sleepiness" distinct from the consciousness experiencing them (I return to phenomenal consciousness in detail in the next chapter). The psychological-mental states can only be separated from the one who undergoes these states by artificially creating the abstract entities of "subjects" and the abstract "states" that can be distributed among them. This also implies that Parfitian reductionism does not work because even if Parfit sweeps the "subjects" part of the separation under the rug (it does not matter whether the person at *t1* and the person at *t2* are the same person) and gives impersonal psychological continuity as the criterion for a conceptual unification that results in "person", the crucial error of Parfit is conceiving of impersonal psychological and mental states separated from the one who has them. On the contrary, consciousness is phenomenal and mental states are irreducibly personal.

This also supports what Schechtman (1996) and Ricoeur (1992) aim for in criticizing these theories: since the states and the subjects are only separable conceptually, the entities that result from the separation seem like philosophical constructs that unsurprisingly have little bearing on practical matters and actual experiences. All in all, it seems to me that psychological approaches rely on the sharp distinction between "subjects" and "experiences" and even if they leave off the "subjects" part (like Parfit in positing reduction to mental continuity), they still end up with the abstract notion of "experiences" or "mental states", ignoring the inherent phenomenological dimension (the qualitative feel in consciousness) of these experiences or states that in turn makes them neglect the practical issues involved.

1.1.2 Somatic approaches

In general, somatic approaches consider a basic physical relation to account for personal persistence through time. There are differences in conceiving which physical relation should one favor. Those proposing a bodily criterion suggest that persons are identical to their bodies, grounding their persistence through time (e.g., Ayer, 1936/1971). Similarly, the brain criterion proposes that "a person is identical to the physical seat of his mental life, which we have discovered to be the brain and central nervous system" (Garrett, 1998, p. 9). Lastly, the most popular somatic approach is animalism: human beings are human animals and thus have the persistence conditions of animals. The defenders of animalism maintain that persons are human beings, that they are a type of organism which survives through time in the same way as organisms generally do, and they operate with the notion of life: the unity and continuity of the life of an organism is necessary and sufficient for its survival. I take an in depth look at animalism.

Olson (1997) is probably the most notable current advocate of animalism. In *The Human Animal*, he declares the whole tradition of psychological approaches irrelevant to the question of persistence. Olson's main thesis is that personal survival consists in inheriting "biological life", that is, just as any other organism, a human animals persist as long as its animal functions are carried out, even if there is no continuity of consciousness, for example. The criterion of identity is called the "same life" criterion. As a person once was a fetus, he or she can also suffer being in a persistent vegetative state and be the same person in all these three stages of his or her life. As Olson controversially describes, "in a sense, then, there is no such thing as personal identity" (p. 27), meaning that persons do not have persistence conditions in virtue of being persons, but they have persistence conditions derivatively - in virtue of being human animals.

The metaphysical view behind Olson's (1997) provocative claims is the following: Olson denies that "person" is a substance concept. According to Olson, "person" is a phase sortal, like "student" or "philosopher". Metaphysical entities, like human animals, are persons only insofar as

they go through a person-phase in their existence. Since persons are animals fundamentally, they can exist without being persons and continue existing while ceasing to exist as persons. For instance, no one would deny that I can cease to be a student and still continue existing. In Olson's view, the same is true for personhood: personhood is merely a capacity or ability, and as such, it cannot determine persistence conditions for metaphysical entities.

Addressing practical concerns (anticipation, responsibility, etc.), Olson (1997) says that they have been associated with numerical identity because it typically and contingently coincides with psychological continuity. However, the metaphysical reality of identity through time should have nothing to do with practical concerns. On Olson's view, practical matters are either tied to numerical identity or to psychological continuity but not both (p. 70). For example, since any organism persists as long as its capacity to direct its vital functions that keep it alive is not disrupted (p. 135), a human animal in a persistent vegetative state should either be thrown in jail for the crimes that he or she committed before entering this state or practical issues should have nothing to do with numerical identity. Olson favors the latter option. All in all, Olson's biological approach, same life criterion and the view of persons as fundamentally human animals is the most well-argued, controversial and provocative form of the somatic approaches that I have encountered.

Against the animalism of Olson (1997), my main claim is that it trades the practical dimension of personal identity for unreflected scientism. I do not dispute that persons are in some sense animals, but I mean to argue that this is merely the beginning of a theory of personal identity and not the end. The knowledge that persons are animals comes from biology that categorizes human beings in the species of *homo sapiens*. However, I believe that this categorization leaves ample room for interpretation, and it does not uniquely determine the metaphysical theories of personhood and persistence. For instance, Shoemaker (1975) considers persons to be animals but not identical with animals: persons and their animal bodies share the same matter. Baker (2000) in her constitution view expresses a similar thesis, namely that persons

are not identical to animals but are constituted by animal bodies ("constitution without identity"). In arguing that persons are animals and have the persistence conditions of animals, Olson (1997) accepts the scientific fact about our nature without further ado, while I believe that the scientific fact should be made sense of, and it is possible to make sense of it in a number of different ways metaphysically.[14] Consequently, if there is a metaphysical theory that makes sense of the fact that persons are animals and which also addresses practical concerns in connection with the issue of personal identity, then it should be preferred.[15]

DeGrazia's (2005) hybrid somatic account sets out to develop Olson's (1997) animalism this way. DeGrazia (2005) rejects what he terms as "person essentialism": in his view, human beings are not essentially persons but they are human animals. Personhood is no more than a possible and typical phase of human lives. DeGrazia offers a two-level theory based on a distinction between numerical identity and narrative identity, stipulating a narrative conception of identity because of animalism's uninformative relation to practical matters. Numerical identity refers to what philosophers usually mean when discussing personal identity, personal persistence through time and its criteria. Also, numerical identity is strongly connected to the question of what we are essentially. Narrative identity, on the other hand, is concerned with answering the question: "who are we?" DeGrazia's hybrid conclusion combines his theories on both types of identity: "Human persons are (1) essentially human animals and (2) characteristically self-narrators and (where circumstances permit) self-creators who care about continuing as such" (pp. 114-115). Following Olson, DeGrazia's account divorces practical concerns from issues of numerical identity and also goes further: numerical identity is necessary but not sufficient to ground what matters in survival, thus there is a need for a single self-narrative that connects the person at different points in time. Moreover, a person's sense of oneself is intimately related to

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[14] Non-rhetorical question for future reference: is there any scientific fact or theory that uniquely determines the philosophical view dealing with it?
[15] Such as Baker's (2000) practical realist view that is not disconnected from other forms of inquiry and it is claimed to be grounded in the world of common experience (p. 24). Interestingly, Baker's view is also narrativist to a degree: a self-concept depends on a "coherent and comprehensive story of your life, of which you are the subject" (p. 81).

who one is, so a first-person point of view is necessary in order to address the question: "who am I?" (p. 84) DeGrazia argues that the first-person answer takes the form of a narrative, which narrative accounts for what persons value in survival. Thus, while survival in the sense of numerical identity depends on persons being human animals, the normative-evaluative dimension of survival is grounded in the "mental autobiographies" (p. 80) of persons that provide a self-concept as an enduring protagonist.

The main question about this theory is that whether the distinction between the two aspects of identity is warranted. I do not believe it to be so. More specifically, I do not believe that merely adding a new, narrative level to numerical identity can be a solution for the neglected dimension of practical concerns. DeGrazia's (2005) move fails not in distinguishing the numerical and narrative aspects of identity but in ignoring the connections between them. On DeGrazia's view, numerical identity has nothing to do with narrative identity. This basically implies that it does not matter for persons' narrative self-conceptions what their metaphysical nature is and also that persons' self-conceptions have nothing to do with their metaphysical natures. I find this highly implausible. Again to cite Baker's (2000) Heideggerian assertion: it is a deep fact about persons that they are able to ask "what am I?" Self-conceptions are metaphysically significant.

1.2 Simple Views

The main unifying argument of simple views is that diachronic identity has no informative non-circular criteria (cf. Noonan, 2003, p. 16; Olson, 2003, p. 358; Pawlowsi, 2010, p. iii). The danger of circularity haunts any complex theory of diachronic identity: if *person-at-t1* is the same as *person-at-t2* because they have psychological-mental continuity between states, then the psychological-mental states must be identified and individuated. However, the states cannot be identified and individuated without referring to the person to whom the states belong (Lowe, 1996). Thus, following Bishop Butler's (1736/1975) and Thomas Reid's (1785/1975) criticism of Locke's account, simple views argue that diachronic identity is not fully analyzable in terms of conditions and criteria. Swinburne (1984) argues that due to the possibility of false memories and

disembodiment, for example, memory and brain continuity are evidence but only fallible evidence of diachronic identity, therefore diachronic identity has to be distinct from both. On such accounts, persons exist as ultimate metaphysical components of reality and diachronic identity is a primitive or brute fact. Lowe (1996) describes selves and persons as mereologically simple psychological substances and argues that any informative criterion would have to refer to the parts of which it is a criterion for. Since the self is seen as a mereologically simple substance without substantial parts, there can be no such informative criteria. Persons cannot be reduced to psychological or mental states or to any underlying components for that matter: persistence is ungrounded and irreducible.

For my purposes, simple views are unsatisfactory insofar as they treat personhood as a substance-concept. First, I have argued that personhood is an achievement and a construct in a sense.[16] I agree with Hardcastle (2008) that there is something to Hume's (1739/1975) thesis that experience does not give us a substantial self.[17] Experience, as far as I can tell, supports that there are constant physical and psychological changes that befall us. I think that having experiences that are individuated by the self that has the experiences does not give ample evidence to positing a substantial self that is the enduring subject of experiences.[18] If the experiences I have influence and change me, then the possibility of thinking that "this pain is my pain" (Lowe, 1996) on two different temporally remote occasions cannot sufficiently support that that the thinker is the same on these two occasions. Through time I change and I change as the subject of experiences, so my formally being the subject of experiences neglects the issue whether the changes I go

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[16] "I begin by proposing boldly that, in effect, there is no such thing as an intuitively obvious and essential self to know, one that just sits there to be portrayed in words. Rather, we constantly construct and reconstruct a self to meet the needs of the situations we encounter, and do so with the guidance of our memories of the past and our hopes and fears for the future. Telling oneself about oneself is rather like making up a story about who and what we are, what has happened, and why we are doing what we are doing" (Bruner, 2001, p. 210).

[17] Which should not be taken as saying that it does not give us a self at all. Hume is generally considered to be the founding father of no-self doctrines that I do not subscribe to. As Pawlowski (2010) convincingly argues, any theory that would imply the non-existence of persons is a non-starter.

[18] cf. Dainton (2008), Flangan (1992), Harré (1998), Zahavi (2005).

through are identity-threatening or identity-preserving (cf. Schechtman, 2003). Why is the fetus that I was the same subject of experiences as the person that I am now?[19]

Secondly, the central tenet of simple views is that diachronic identity is primitive, unanalyzable and criterionless. There are no informative non-circular criteria for re-identification of a person at *t1* with a person at *t2*. I only have a brief comment about this as an approach. What is strange for me concerning simple views is that they propose to offer a view on personhood and diachronic identity, but they begin with arguing that it cannot be analyzed. True, if thought experiments taught philosophers of personal identity anything, then it would be the fact that any theory of personal identity has to face severe hardships because each criterion or analysis has or can have a respective thought experiment that makes it seem less intuitively or argumentatively plausible. I still think that it is harsh to conclude that personal identity cannot be analyzed. In fact, I believe that it can be analyzed by directing the attention away from the method of thought experiments and towards focusing on experiences. However, I also agree with Olson (2003) that simple views "deserve more attention" and that they are "poorly understood" (p. 359), so I intend to undertake a more thorough examination of them in the future.

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[19] For example, Schechtman (1996, 2003, 2007) argues for the narrative account of selves in which it is not enough to be the subject of experiences on two different, temporally remote occasions. The subject or self must also identify oneself with its actions and experiences. The continuation of the subject or self is dependent upon the story which connects temporally remote experiences and provides the subject or self with emphatic access to them.

CHAPTER 2: CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE SELF

I use the term "semi-conscious" in **NC**. I agree with Zahavi (2005) that any experience that lacks minimal self-awareness is unconscious. Moreover, I also agree with Damasio (1999) that there is a lot that we do not know about how we store and organize memories, how they are reactivated and how dormant dispositions affect us, and so forth. When I use "semi-conscious", I intend to emphasize that there can be a pervasive unconscious aspect of experiencing, which is not reflected on and not thematized.[20] For example, a semi-conscious self-interpretation involves a choice of events, but it need not be reflected why exactly the events that were chosen were chosen. I could take it to be a definitive event of my life that I broke my arm as a child without reflecting on the reason why I take it to be definitive: I was completely ignored by a kindergarten teacher, which also leads me to unconsciously harbor ill-feelings towards authority figures. I use semi-conscious because there are many experiences that are unconscious, because there are ways in which memories are organized that are unknown to the person and these factors influence self-interpretations. However, in what follows I focus on the "conscious" part of "semi-conscious".

When I use the concept of consciousness, I mean phenomenal consciousness, in which states have a phenomenal feel and a "what it is like" to have them,[21] as opposed to "access consciousness", for example, in which states are "cognitively accessible to thought and verbal report" (Thomspon & Zahavi, 2007, p. 74). Phenomenal consciousness is always self-consciousness in a weak sense: since there are no "pure" experiences abstracted from their phenomenal quality and feel, the experiences themselves have an inherent component that refers to the self. As such, experiences are not only "experiencer-related" but by their relatedness, they

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[20] Regarding narratives: "Whether we intend it or not, our stories reflect both what we consciously believe about a situation and how we have reacted to the situation unconsciously. Our stories are not only a product of what we consciously perceive and believe about our world, but also of how we react to information outside of awareness. Our stories are interestingly self-revealing in ways I am sure we never intend" (Hardcastle, 2008, p. 109).

[21] E.g., Dainton (2008), Flanagan (1992), Zahavi (2005). Zahavi (2005) puts the general idea behind qualia nicely: "Experiences are not something that one simply has, like coins in the pocket. On the contrary, experiences have a subjective "feel" to them, that is, a certain (phenomenal) quality of "what it is like" or what it "feels" like to have them" (p. 116).

imply that their conscious apprehension involves self-awareness. It is *like something* to see a red apple, moreover, it is like something *for someone* to see a red apple. Since experiences have an essential aspect that involves the consciousness that apprehends them, there is no need for a robust self-reflective scrutiny for self-consciousness to emerge (Flanagan, 1992; Zahavi, 2005). In agreement with Harré (1998), I think that it is a Cartesian fallacy to posit a substantial self that "stands behind" the conscious flow of experiences. Such a concept of the self is not warranted by the fact that experiences have a certain qualitative feel to them. Instead, in this chapter, I rely extensively on the theories of Damasio (1999) and Zahavi (2005, 2007) to differentiate between two levels of consciousness (core and extended) and two levels of self (core and autobiographical) and explain the relationship between them.

What is the purpose of differentiating between levels? Why is there a need to distinguish between core-minimal and extended-autobiographical notions? I think that it is intuitively clear from experience that consciousness is not monolithic. There are conscious experiences like a sudden onslaught of pain, a momentary sensation of a nice smell or an idle observation of a tree that I cannot see as immediately or directly involving any sort of reflective effort. On the other hand, there are more complicated conscious experiences: reflecting on an episode of one's life, anticipating the occurrence of a significant future event, planning a course of action for an important day. As they involve a temporally and spatially extended horizon, I believe that these types of experiences cannot be supported by a strictly minimal form of consciousness. In order to be conscious of these experiences, there is a need for an organized and structured type of consciousness: extended consciousness.

2.1 Core Consciousness and Core Self

First of all, I outline the relationship between core consciousness and core self. According to Damasio (1999), the scope of core consciousness is the momentary "here-and-now", and it is constantly bound to the current spatiotemporal point. This type of consciousness is stable throughout the lifetime as an inner sense and can also be found in certain animals, since it is

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prelinguistic and preflexive. It emerges when an organism processes an object which process causes changes in the organism. Despite its stability, core consciousness emerges and vanishes in "pulses" relative to the object of it: it is a continuous flow of pulses with which it processes the multitude of varying experiences. As Zahavi (2005) argues this core form of consciousness entails a minimal form of self-awareness. It involves a first-personal access to states in which "being (minimally) conscious of something" is also "being (minimally) aware that one is (minimally) conscious of something".

The first problem is: is there a sense of self that can emerge from this first-personal givenness that is continuously recreated in relation to the variety of objects and experiences? How to answer the Humean skeptic who claims that no self can be found among the flow of experiences and perceptions? The answer is that the self is perfectly intelligible as integral part of the structure of the experiential flow, and there is no need to conceive of it as externally relating to the experiences via ownership as a self-thing at the center of the flow of experiences, owning and regulating it (Zahavi, 2005, pp. 125-126). Assuming that the notion of core consciousness as phenomenal and experiential is intelligible, it follows that any conscious state has a "feel" to them. I am acquainted with the experience from a first-personal mode of givenness: "experiences are not merely characterized by certain qualitative features, they are also characterized by the fact that they necessarily exist for a subject or a self; they necessarily feel like something for somebody" (Zahavi, 2007, p. 189).[22] In other words, there is a sense of self inherent in the process of experiencing because experiences themselves contain reference to the one who undergoes them by having a feel, moreover, by having a feel in relation to the one who undergoes the experience. Therefore, the minimal or core self smoothly emerges because it is integral to the structure of experiencing, and experiencing involves minimal self-awareness.[23] As

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[22] Or consider Flanagan (1992): "Phenomenal consciousness always involves access to whatever we are phenomenally aware of. We are experientially sensitive to what we are phenomenally aware of" (p. 148).
[23] Without going into details about Harré's (1998) self1, self2 and self3, it is worth to mention that this could be supported by one of his major theses: "The self as an expression of the singularity of the point of view of the

Zahavi (2005) says, the core self is "the invariant dimension of first-personal givenness throughout the multitude of changing experiences" (p. 132). This reflects that the core self is indeed a minimal notion: the core self is nothing but the simple awareness that I have a first-person perspective in which my experiences belong to me. However, the core self is a transient entity or a pulse that is re-created for moment-to-moment, object-to-object (Damasio, 1999). This cannot serve as a foundation of diachronic identity.[24]

2.2 Extended Consciousness and Autobiographical Self

The level of consciousness that can accommodate complex spatiotemporally extended experiences, organize and structure the "here-and-now" experiences of core consciousness is called "extended consciousness". It emerges from core consciousness via autobiographical memory (Damasio, 1999).[25] Extended consciousness is built on core consciousness since without the core consciousness doing the "heavy lifting" in appropriating experiences, there would be no memories of past experiences to begin with. The autobiographical structuring of otherwise fleeting experiences is possible through the faculty of memory that opens up the temporal direction to both the past through remembrance and to the future by providing models for anticipation. A useful analogy for thinking about it might be in terms of form and content: core consciousness provides the experiential content upon which extended consciousness can work, structuring and ordering it into complex forms that provide a sense of spatiotemporally extended and continuous existence. As Damasio (1999) puts it:

> The contents of the autobiographical self—the organized, reactivated
> memories of fundamental facts from an individual's biography— are

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embodied person in perception, the unity and structured pattern of the contents of consciousness, is always singular for every human being, in all cultures" (p. 9).

[24] There is a certain point on which I disagree with Damasio (1999) about the nonverbal narratives of core consciousness and prelinguistic storytelling. I believe that Damasio's move to sink narrative into the deepest levels of human consciousness is flawed because doing so extends the notion of narrative beyond breaking point (cf. Zahavi, 2007, p. 196). If any sequence of events can be considered a narrative, then there is no meaningful distinction between sequences and narratives that could sufficiently define the concept narrative.

[25] Cf. McAdams (2003): "An emerging theme in the study of memory for real-life and personal events is that autobiographical memory helps to locate and define the self within an ongoing life story that, simultaneously, is strongly oriented toward future goals" (p. 194).

> prime beneficiaries of core consciousness. Whenever an object X provokes a pulse of core consciousness and the core self emerges relative to object X, selected sets of facts from the implicit autobiographical self are also consistently activated as explicit memories and provoke pulses of core consciousness of their own (p. 219).

The sense of the self that corresponds to extended consciousness is the autobiographical self. It is only through the workings of autobiographical memory and extended consciousness that persons can acquire a sense of persisting through time. While core consciousness is bound to a single spatiotemporal point, extended consciousness can organize a whole spatiotemporal trajectory by structuring experiences that characterize the trajectory. Thus, when I consciously think about the lunch I had yesterday, I also have a sense of how I had gotten there and what has happened since then. Consequently, while the core self is recreated with each new object it experiences, the autobiographical self is modified and adjusted by the new experiences that the extended consciousness appropriates.[26] This happens through the process which autobiographical memory goes through, namely that it constantly extends, but it is also remodeled based on new experiences.

I believe that this is the self that many thinkers[27] consider not as a given substantial entity that is the owner of experiences but as a flexible and evolving construction that depends on self-knowledge, self-interpretation and reflective self-awareness. Unfortunately, I have no means to address the widespread discussion about the fictional status of the self (e.g., Dennett, 1992 against Velleman, 2006). Entering this discussion would require me to address the difference between fiction and reality, between epiphenomenal and functional entities, and so forth, thus I only say that my position about autobiographical self is sympathetic to Velleman's (2006) 'fictive *and* factual' conception.

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[26] Relying on Jamesian psychology, Flanagan (1992) says that the subjective streamlike feel of consciousness can be reconciled with the fact that it objectively seems to be episodic, full of gaps and hiatuses. Considering the pulses of core self and the continuity of the autobiographical self, I agree.

[27] E.g., Bruner, (2003), Hallam (2009), Hardcastle (2008), Jopling (2000), Zahavi (2005, 2007).

How does this relate to **NC**? To reiterate, my main thesis is that if there is diachronic identity then the person concerned is, in principle, able to provide a semi-conscious interpretation of self-experience in the form of a narrative. In terms of experiences, if I experience a nagging headache and then I experience a nagging toothache and the experiencers are identical, then there must be a semi-conscious interpretation of self-experience saying "bloody hell, I had a headache a couple hours ago and now I have a toothache". In this case, the core self is the immediate first-personal givenness of the headache and the toothache as well. However, since the core self is continuously recreated and transient, it is true that it is necessary for diachronic identity, but it is not terribly informative. It is indirectly necessary for diachronic identity insofar as it grounds the autobiographical self, that allows for the "bloody hell" component in my imaginary story: the "bloody hell" means to illustrate that in this sentence, the utterance implies that the self is conscious that unfortunately it has to undergo a painful experience *again*, meaning that the self realizes it to be the same self that underwent a painful experience not long ago (which is impossible in cases of Transient Global Amnesia described in Chapter 1). The self that has the capacity to do this is the autobiographical or extended self, which is directly necessary for diachronic identity.

The second type of self, the extended-autobiographical self presents a systematized order of memories and dispositions and provides the self-experience of persistence through time. As the use of autobiography indicates, it is intimately tied up with the notion of narrativity: the autobiographical self is a crucial concept behind being able to provide **NC** for diachronic identity. While both autobiographical self and personhood are constructs, their difference can be formulated in the following way: they are two sides of the same coin. A human being "has" an autobiographical self from a mainly psychological perspective and it is a person from a mainly socio-cultural one. I am a human being with an autobiographical self which accounts for my experiences "hanging together" in a unified psychological whole, and I am a human being who is

a person insofar as I live in a society and culture where "having" an autobiographical self that is a

semi-conscious self-interpretation in a narrative form is necessary for personhood.[28]

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[28] I believe that Zahavi's (2007) distinction between person and self is meaningful. Taking the Latin root of person that is "personae" meaning mask of a character in a play or story, Zahavi argues that the self is not completely a narrative construction but the person could be seen as such.

CHAPTER 3: INTERPRETATION AND SELF-INTERPRETATION

3.1 Hermeneutical Foundations for Self-Interpretation

From the long history of hermeneutics, I here intend to focus on two highly influential 20th century theorists of interpretation: Heidegger and Gadamer. For obvious reasons, I cannot do justice to their masterpieces in this paper, but I do my best to explicate some aspects that are essential for my own project. For convenience's sake, I use the terms understanding and interpretation interchangeably. Heidegger (1927/1962) considers understanding to be a fundamental characteristic (an "existentiale") of human beings or persons ("Dasein").[29] I take Heidegger's theory of understanding to mean that it is a meaning-giving activity. Significantly for my concept of self-interpretation, Heidegger conceived of persons that they understand objects and relate to the world not in an abstract theoretical subject-object relationship, but being immersed in their project, being engaged in the world and their own possibilities. This way of "being-in-the-world" offers a "fore-structure" of understanding in which persons make sense of what is to be understood through their own first-personal, limited and biased perspective.

Based on Heidegger's insights, Gadamer (1960/2004) proposed a complex and comprehensive theory of interpretation. For Gadamer, understanding and interpretation are not special activities but are active in all areas of human life and cognition. Gadamer also developed Heidegger's concept of the fore-structure of understanding in arguing that there is no understanding without prior and productive prejudices, as persons are involved in and affected by history that shapes their perspectives. Not only is having pre-judgments a necessary condition for understanding, it is an enabling condition: pre-judgments are active and productive and take their place in the process understanding and interpretation, described as a "fusion of horizons". The notion of horizon is meant to indicate both the specific limited perspective of the interpreter and the contextualized-situated position of the object of interpretation in history. Both the

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[29] Taylor (1989) derives a model of narrative understanding from Heidegger's remark: "making sense of present actions requires a narrative understanding of one's life" (p. 48).

interpreter and the interpreted object participate in a shared historical continuum that connects and influences them. Understanding is not a passive discovery of the meaning hidden in the object, rather, as in Heidegger, the meaning is co-produced and co-constituted by the interpreter and the object (cf. Weberman, forthcoming). Based on Heidegger and Gadamer, I argue that self-interpretation is the process whereby one takes oneself as an object of interpretation: I have to make sense of myself and my experiences. However, the way I make sense of my experiences is conditioned by my first-person perspective, influenced by the experiences. My self-interpretation does not take place in a vacuum. Considering an example: suppose I interpret myself as a good person (synchronic identity) because I recall doing a large number of good deeds (diachronic identity). In turn, what I believe to be a good deed and a good person are actually influenced by what I have come to experience as good deeds and good persons. Thus, my self-interpretation connects being good right now with good deeds in the past, conditioned by past experiences of goodness.

3.2 The Autobiographical Self as a Product of Self-Interpretation

Following Shusterman (1991), I briefly state that I stand opposed to the universality of interpretation. I differ from Heidegger, Gadamer and Taylor (1985, 1989) in believing in a prelinguistic, prereflexive and preinterpretive dimension of human life and consciousness along with Zahavi (2005, 2007). I think that there are meaningless conscious experiences that are neither understood-interpreted, nor need to be. However, I think that language, reflection and interpretation play a crucial role in the autobiographical self that emerges from the core-minimal self of first-personal givenness. There is a reflective form of self-awareness attached to extended consciousness that is thematic, articulated and intensified (Zahavi, 2005, p. 54). The autobiographical self involves a selection and organization of experiences in meaningful thematic patterns that can be articulated which gives rise to an intensified awareness of myself as myself with a particular and extended spatiotemporal trajectory.

At this point I want to argue that extended consciousness is, in a sense, an interpretation of core consciousness. I disagree with Hardcastle (2008) that "[o]ur conscious experiences are always meaningful" (p. 93). True, one cannot experience something without experiencing something *as* something. However, I think that this "*as*" is not sufficient to endow the experience with meaning. I think that there are meaningless episodes of conscious mental life. Evoking Weberman's (forthcoming) usage of the metaphor of "skeletal", what I mean to establish here is that the experiences of core consciousness provide the skeletal material for extended consciousness to work on interpretively. Discussing historical interpretation, Weberman says that there are purely intrinsic properties of the physical states and movements of past objects which can be called the "skeletal past". I think that there are early forms of consciousness which precede interpretations and inferences and that the experiences of core consciousness are, in themselves, form skeletal experiences that are devoid of meaning. I think that these episodic and skeletal experiences are given meaning in the interpretative work of extended consciousness. Extended consciousness selectively organizes the experiences into spatiotemporally extended structures with the help of autobiographical memory. I think that providing the experiences with meaning by contextualizing them in relation to other experiences can be legitimately called a process of interpretation in the Heideggerian-Gadamerian sense that I have outlined above.[30]

Based on Taylor's (1985) thesis that "human beings are self-interpreting animals" (p. 45), I argue that there is a strong connection between personal identity and self-interpretation. Standing on the shoulders of Heidegger and Gadamer, Taylor is an advocate of the view that I have already outlined earlier, namely that the way human beings interpret themselves is constitutive of what they actually are. In his magnum opus, *Sources of the Self*, Taylor (1989) expressed this thesis in the following way: "The self is partly constituted by its self-interpretations" (p. 34). I take this to apply to the autobiographical self. In this framework, synchronic identity is defined by commitments and identifications that partly constitute the

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[30] In terms of narrative: "People select and interpret certain memories as self-defining, providing them with privileged status in the life story" (McAdams, 2003, p. 196).

person's horizon (as I can tell, in a Gadamerian sense).[31] Consequently, during his extensive overview of historical, cultural, religious and philosophical developments, Taylor criticizes the theories of Locke, Hume and Parfit, among others, for conceiving of the self in a disengaged and objectifying way that grounds the erroneous modern understanding of the self. The only constitutive property of the modern self is self-awareness.[32] On the other hand, I too have aligned myself with Heidegger and Gadamer, who conceive a self that is not only aware of itself and the world but is engaged in the world of projects, possibilities and history and actively relates to itself through self-interpretation. Siding also with many theorists on the importance of the social and the interpersonal dimension, (e.g., Brinkmann, 2008; Bruner, 1990, 2001, 2003; Flanagan, 1992; Hallam, 2009; Hardcastle, 2008; Harré, 1998; Jopling, 2000; Nelson, 2003; Oatley, 2007; Taylor, 1985, 1989; Zahavi, 2005), I see the autobiographical self as an interpretive, significantly social and interpersonal construction of personal psychology.

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[31] As one of the most important subjects of Taylor (1989) is morality, I think it makes sense to see his work partly as extending Gadamer's theory to the conceptualization of agency.

[32] For example, the Lockean self is labeled as a subjectivist, anti-teleological and "punctual self" that distances itself from itself through the power of self-remaking and self-objectification. The illusion of the punctual self assumes implausibly that consciousness can be clearly distinguished from its embodiment.

CHAPTER 4: THE NOTION OF NARRATIVITY

It might be the case that narrative conceptions are a "sure bet" when it comes to theorizing the self in the social sciences (Hardcastle, 2008), however, narrative is sometimes taken for granted as a primitive notion that is not in need of definition. Theorists usually take it to mean story, which is partly adequate, but the problem is that story (with a beginning, middle and ending) is an equally vague concept (DeGrazia, 2005 for example does not have a sufficient distinction). In the Introduction, I have attempted to give a working definition of narrative: among the multitude of events and actions, a narrative is a selection of events ("the plot"), presented in a meaningful structure (cf. Bruner, 1990). Thus a narrative consists of a plot and a mode of presentation. The notion of story can easily obscure this dual nature since it sometimes means plot, sometimes the encompassing narrative.

Consider the year 2012. This is the material that the narrative has to work on. A chronicle of events could look like: "January – heavy snow in Berlin; February – a woman cooks dinner in Sao Paolo; March – a train stops between India and China; April – a kangaroo jumps funnily near Sidney". This is a chronicle of events that are selected from the multitude for the purposes of narrative presentation. A narrative could be a story of my traveling around the world that makes sense of these events and explains them through a specific presentation: "From the cold winter of Germany, I escaped to Brazil to visit a friend's aunt who cooked me dinner, but by March I was halfway around the world in Asia, travelling by train to China that broke down. I didn't want to take a train for a while again, so I flew over to Australia where I could see a kangaroo roaming free which was one of the funniest animals I've ever seen." The narrative encompasses the plot, and it communicates my intentions of telling it through structuring, modifications and a specific way of presentation ("a framework of preferred emotional and evaluative responses" Currie, 2007, p. 19). Furthermore, on part of the interpreters of the narrative, they not only reconstruct the sequence of events but get immersed in a world of the story in which they are cognitively and emotionally respond to the framework (Herman, 2009, p. 119). In this framework, time, change

and stability become explained and intelligible. Generally, then, narrative is indeed "a basic human strategy for coming to terms with time, process, and change" (Herman, 2007, p. 3). The interpretive process through which narrative achieves this is Ricoeur's (1992) "emplotment" (connecting the individual, disparate entities, events and actions into a meaningful temporal unity) that can be considered as a form of explanation (also cf. Polkinghorne, 1988; Ritivoi, 2009).[33]

Circumscribed this way, I think it is clear that the notion of narrative can be used to illuminate the social and interpersonal dimension of personal identity. There are two interrelated aspects of narrative presentations that direct attention to this dimension: first, simplistically, narratives are told by someone to someone.[34] The narrator and the audience should not be conceptualized in a trivial way: I can narrate stories either to myself or to a fictional audience, for example. However, since narrative is a form of communication and explanation, as such, it is structured interpersonally. Secondly, as many have argued, narratives are not completely individual. In the form of myths, stories, tales, movies, novels, and so forth, human cultures and societies have an extremely rich repertoire for narrative forms.[35] As McAdams (2003) describes, "[p]eople tell stories in all human cultures. They tell them to other people. The very concept of a

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[33] The exact definition of narrative is a tricky business. Ryan (2007) considers narratives to be a fuzzy set defined by eight conditions:
"**Spatial dimension**
(1) Narrative must be about a world populated by individuated existents.
Temporal dimension
(2) This world must be situated in time and undergo significant transformations.
(3) The transformations must be caused by non-habitual physical events.
Mental dimension
(4) Some of the participants in the events must be intelligent agents who
have a mental life and react emotionally to the states of the world.
(5) Some of the events must be purposeful actions by these agents.
Formal and pragmatic dimension
(6) The sequence of events must form a unified causal chain and lead to
closure.
(7) The occurrence of at least some of the events must be asserted as fact for
the storyworld.
(8) The story must communicate something meaningful to the audience" (p. 29).
[34] Concerning self-narratives Bruner (2003) makes the following point: "Our own self-making narratives soon come to reflect what we think others expect us to be like" (Bruner, 2003, p. 11).
[35] In telling stories, people imitate the cultural forms of art and the stories they tell belong to well-defined genres (Bruner, 1990, 2003). Also cf. Gergen & Gergen (1986).

story is inherently social in that stories exist to be told in a social context" (p. 200).[36] Consequently, in telling stories, people use the repertoire of their cultures and societies to present them (p. 202).[37] Probably the most notable analytic philosopher who traces the historical emergence of narrative identity is MacIntyre (1981/2007), and he argues that persons are characters in the stories of their lives and the character roles they take on are inherently social.

Narrative is a privileged form of self-interpretation.[38] Quoting Schechtman (2007): "When I have a self-constituting narrative, what happens to me is not interpreted as an isolated incident, but as part of an ongoing story" (p. 162).[39] As I have presented, the autobiographical self involves semi-conscious selection, structuring and organization of experiences that can be rightfully called self-interpretation.[40] These processes are very similar to how one can select and present a number of events and actions narratively. Similarly to Turner (1996) and Polkinghorne (1988), Jopling (2000) writes: "the creation of a self-narrative involves the selection, simplification, and abstraction of narratively relevant materials, directed to the goal of creating a unique synthetic whole" (p. 51). For my present purposes then, a self-narrative (which expression I favor to the "narrative self") is a semi-conscious form of self-interpretation in which the experiences appropriated by core consciousness are selected, organized and structured by extended consciousness and autobiographical memory that gives rise to the autobiographical self. The autobiographical self is self-narrative. The self attains meaning not as a core-minimal self (which is immediately available in the first-personal givenness of experiences), but as the autobiographical self that acquires meaning through being a self-narrative. Arriving at **NC**, this explains what it is to have semi-conscious self-interpretations in the form of narratives. Figure 1

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[36] Analogously, Flanagan (1992) states: "Evidence strongly suggests that humans in all cultures come to cast their own identity in some sort of narrative form" (p. 197).

[37] Also cf. Nelson (2003) who says that narratives emerge as social forms, narrating is a characteristic human capacity and a socio-cultural one. Further supporters of the view include Flanagan (1992), Hardcastle (2008), Harré (1998), and Zahavi (2007), among others.

[38] For which Bickle (2003) claims to mount evidence from cognitive psychology and neuroscience.

[39] Cf. Zahavi (2007): "Stories are not simply records of what happened, but continuing interpretations and reinterpretations of our lived lives" (p. 182).

[40] As Flanagan (1992) says: "there is self-representing for the sake of self-understanding. This is the story we tell to ourselves to understand ourselves for who we are" (p. 195).

illustrates the summary of the process in which experiences are consciously and unconsciously apprehended (please note that I have only included the unconscious part in striving for some sort of simplified but complete picture). Conscious experiences are worked on interpretively by extended consciousness and autobiographical memory that gives rise to the autobiographical self (self-narrative), influenced by unconscious experiences and processes.

Figure 1: From Experiences to the Autobiographical Self (based on Damasio, 1999, p. 200, Table 7.1)
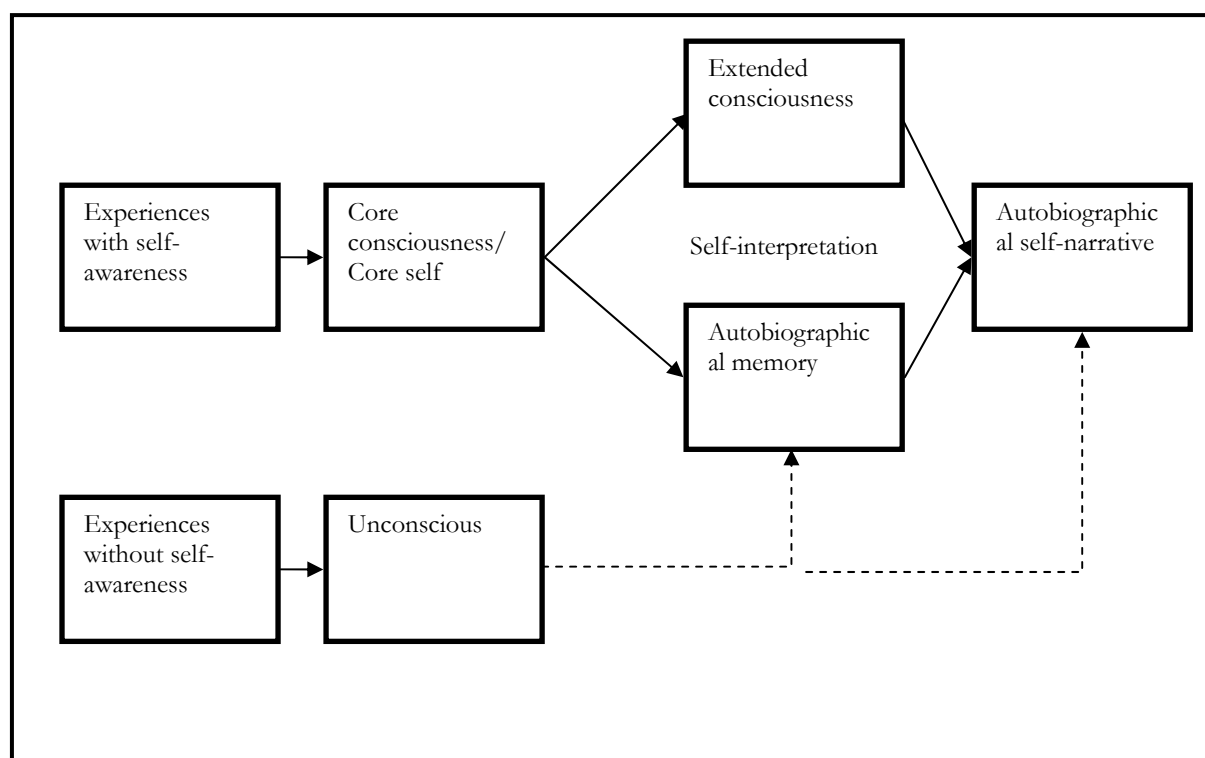
4.1 Self-Narrative as Necessary for Diachronic Identity

A theory of diachronic identity is an answer to the following question: what makes a person at *t1* identical to a person at *t2*? My main thesis is that if there is personal identity through time, then there is a semi-conscious self-interpretation which takes the form of a narrative. Strictly speaking, and for reasons mentioned earlier, I do not provide a theory of diachronic identity, but what I do provide is a necessary condition for it. For the sake of illustration,

consider a brief thought experiment: I have implanted memories that I was a well-behaved student in high school. Now, as university student, I have a self-interpretation that goes like: "in high school, I was a well-behaved student that established my appreciation for education, giving me a reason to go to university where I am now". I am not identical to the non-existent well-behaved high school student, but I still have a narrative self-interpretation. Therefore, narrative self-interpretation is not sufficient for diachronic identity.

I consider narrative self-interpretation to be an essential and highly informative criterion. A great number of theorists outside philosophy even go further. Similarly to Brockmeier and Harré (2001), László (2008) argues that there is a special kind of correspondence between manifest narratives and the organization of experience (p. 65). Based on cognitive theory, Turner (1996) describes "story, projection and parable" to be at the root of human thought, and Jackson (2003) states that "narrativity would be the *urschema* of apprehending identity, including self-identity in time" (p. 128). Carr (1986) argues for continuity between narrative and everyday life and for a narratively organized world. Similarly, in Kerby (1991) identity is gained through self-narrative, and Polkinghorne (1988) considers self-identity to be essentially connected with life story. Bruner (2003) takes self-making to be a narrative art (p. 210), and the strong conclusion of Brockmeier and Carbaugh (2001) is that the idea and the possibility of human identity are "tied to the very notion of narrative and narrativity" (p. 15). Sarbin (1986) goes even further: "human beings think, perceive, imagine, and make moral choices according to narrative structures" (p. 8).[41] What I mean to indicate with this brief literature review is that my thesis makes quite a modest claim inspired by these theories. My reason for doing so is that I am aware of the serious challenges to narrative approaches, and this is how I retain a narrative approach in face of the challenges.

I explicate the main connection between narrative and diachronic identity along two interconnected lines. First, self-narratives are often seen as organizing experiential life. Second,

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[41] Sarbin (1986) and Brockmeier and Harré (2001) even talk about a narrative turn or paradigm in social sciences, most notably in psychology with the development of narrative psychology.

self-narratives also make lives, choices, decisions and actions intelligible and explain them. I consider the autobiographical self as a self-interpretation in a narrative form. The experiences appropriated by core consciousness are structured by extended consciousness and autobiographical memory. This structuring takes the form of a semi-conscious narrative. The autobiographical self can be made explicit by telling stories about ourselves: "It was painful but I decided to the take the job because I was raised to be a responsible person". In this story, the selective set of reactivated memories is about the upbringing in childhood, presented in a narrative that explains present actions and experiences. The experiences are organized in a way that they constitute a single narrative about a single autobiographical self.[42] If the child raised to be responsible is identical to the person taking the job, then the person taking job is in principle able to tell the mini-narrative above.

Secondly, following the famous and controversial arguments of MacIntyre (1981/2007), it can be argued that there is "mutual presupposition" between the concepts of narrative, intelligibility, accountability and personal identity (p. 218). The reason is that "man is […] essentially a story-telling animal" (p. 216). According to MacIntyre, persons are characters in their life stories, which characters are circumscribed by social roles. Through social roles, a society and culture expresses types of morality. In this framework, utterances and actions can only be intelligible if they take their places in narratives that are unpredictable and teleological. Correspondingly, any intelligible concept of the self has its unity in the life story, in the narrative "which links birth to life to death as narrative beginning to middle to end" (p. 205). Therefore, people understand their lives as narratives ("stories are lived before they are told" p. 212) and so they understand the utterances and actions of others in narrative structures. Life stories provide individual lives with an intelligible unity: "the unity of a narrative embodied in a single life" (p. 218). I find MacIntyre's account to be problematic because of its pervasive and universal

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[42] "In telling meaning-making and meaningful stories about our thoughts and behavior, we draw past experiences into our present deliberations and then use them both to predict our future. Our narratives are about a subject, us, who existed before, continues to exist now, and will exist later" (Hardcastle, 2008, p. 91).

application of narrativity (it can easily fall prey to Strawson's, 2004 and Lamarque's, 2007 counter-arguments, for example). For instance, I have employed the term "semi-conscious" in describing narrative self-interpretations (or self-narratives). I believe that there is no need for a full-scale reflective autobiography told consciously for persons to have autobiographical selves.[43] MacIntyre's requirement is too strong: intelligibility can be maintained by episodic, semi-conscious narratives,[44] and in the end, lives cannot be reduced to such meaning-giving structures as life narratives (Flanagan, 1992, p. 197). All in all, supported by results in other areas of the social sciences, with **NC** I have proposed an intuitively appealing and informative necessary condition of diachronic identity that helps in understanding the organization of experiences and the intelligibility of lives and actions.

4.2 Self-Narrative as Informative for Synchronic Identity

"What I am has to be understood as what I have become" (Taylor, 1989, p. 47). Taylor's statement indicates an important facet of narrative approaches to personal identity, namely that they offer a plausible connection between synchronic identity and diachronic identity. To recall, synchronic identity is about individuation. What makes a particular person that particular person? Now, there are uninformative criteria of synchronic identity: it is sufficient for individuation to say that the space-time region occupied by a person individuates the person since two persons cannot occupy the same space-time region. However, this criterion is equally true for any spatiotemporal object. Specifically regarding persons qua persons, the first-personal givenness of experience is similarly uninformative, purely formal individuating criterion. Thus to characterize individual persons, the best approach is to refer to their individual life stories (Zahavi, 2007).

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[43] In agreement with Schechtman (1996), Bruner (2003) and Hardcastle (2008).

[44] "Most people never get around to composing a full-scale autobiography. Self-telling, rather, is mostly provoked by episodes related to some longer term concern. Although linked to or provoked by particular happenings, it ordinarily presupposes those longer term, larger scale concerns—much as history writing where the annales record of particular events is already somehow determined or shaped by a more encompassing chronique, which itself bears the stamp of an over-arching historie. An account of a battle takes for granted the existence of a war which takes for granted the even larger notion of competitive nation-states and a world order" (Bruner, 2003, pp. 215-216).

To escape the debates in the analytic philosophy of personal identity that are deemed futile, Schechtman (1996) distinguishes between the reidentification question and the characterization question. The first one is the traditional question of diachronic identity and the second one asks how one can ascribe genuine characteristics to a particular person. On Schechtman's view, only answers to the characterization question can accommodate self-regarding and other-regarding practical concerns. Schechtman's answer to the characterization question is the narrative self-constitution view: a person creates his or her identity by forming an autobiographical narrative within the limits set by specific constraints.[45] In this way, one can attribute past actions and experiences to the present person as well as genuine characteristics. I disagree with Schechtman on the hard distinction between the questions. Since I believe that narrative identity is "an internalized and evolving story of self that integrates the self synchronically and diachronically" (McAdams, 2003, p. 190), I think it also provides evidence for reidentification. True, most third-personal reidentifications in everyday life proceed by considering bodily similarity. However, there are well-known problems with bodily criteria, and it breaks down in a large number of cases. Thus, for instance, if I want to know that a person who stands in front of me is my long-lost uncle or a con-man, I cannot rely exclusively on bodily similarity (possibility of plastic surgery, etc.). What I can rely on more is him telling me the story that establishes him to be the same person that I saw twenty years ago (even if it is possible for the con-man to tell a fictive story that convinces me that he is my uncle).

I see synchronic identity to be fundamentally connected with diachronic identity. The narrative self-interpretation that is a necessary condition for diachronic identity also illustrates the characteristics that individuate me at any point in time: the characteristics that make me the person I am. Ricoeur (1992) argues that the identity of one's "character" ("the set of distinctive marks which permit the reidentification of a human individual as being the same" p. 119) is

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[45] The articulation constraint restricts the self-narrative similarly to my semi-conscious modifier: an identity constituting narrative should be capable in principle of local articulation. Secondly, the reality constraint demands that a self-narrative should fundamentally cohere with reality (with which Plantikow, 2008 takes issue).

comprehensible through the emplotment of character. This means that the things that characterize me to be the particular individual that I am can only be comprehended and explained through the stories in which I am the protagonist. Thus, one's character, features and characteristics can be understood and explained based on the stories of one's life.[46] Consequently, my concept of narrative self-interpretation is not only a necessary condition for diachronic identity but also illuminates synchronic identity and the connections between them. Who I am depends on the stories that I tell about myself (cf. Zahavi, 2005, p. 105). In a sense, I am my autobiographical self.

4.3 Self-Narrative as Necessary for Personhood

The last question of personal identity that I mean to address is about personhood: what makes a person a person? Are we essentially persons or human animals? Is there a connection between who I am and what I am? It needs to be pointed out that due to limitations described in the Introduction, I cannot answer all or even most questions about personhood. I argue for the thesis that persons are human beings with semi-conscious life narratives. First, therefore, I argue that "what am I?" and "who am I?" are inextricably interconnected (contra DeGrazia, 2005).

Arguing for the connection between "what am I?" and "who am I?" brings me back to the importance of phenomenology and Baker's (2000) Heideggerian thesis (also supported by Taylor, 1985, 1989 and Schechtman, 1996, 2003, 2007) that it is a deep fact about person that they reflect on what they are. The answer to "who am I?" is the autobiographical self, and I maintain that one of the important answers to the "what am I?" is that "I am a person". The autobiographical self is a construction based on the first-personal givenness of experiences, extended consciousness and autobiographical memory. The autobiographical self is not a given but an interpretive achievement through the first-person perspective. In contrast, the "what am I?" is usually thought to be a third-personal question (Zahavi, 2005, p. 108). Now, if persons can be said to be self-creators (DeGrazia, 2005) or self-constitutors (Schechtman, 1996, 2003, 2007)

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[46] Or as Harré (1998) puts it briefly: "My life story is a story about me" (p. 137).

and if the experiences and the phenomenology of selfhood cannot be ignored when it comes to personal identity (again the Heidegger-Baker assertion), then it must follow that the answers to "who am I?" have impact on "what am I?". I see myself as a particular person based on particular stories of my life, so my personhood is influenced by my individuality and particularity. Consequently, I see autobiographical self and person as two sides of the same coin: considered from a mainly psychological and first-personal perspective, I am an autobiographical self. Considered mainly from a socio-cultural and third-personal perspective, I am a person. Furthermore, I am only a person insofar as I have life narratives, which is influenced by my socio-cultural context. My conclusion is that similarly to autobiographical selfhood, personhood is an achievement: persons are human beings with semi-conscious self-narratives. Following Schechtman (1996), I think that persons organize their experiences and constitute themselves as persisting persons. Narrative self-interpretations that are necessary for diachronic identity and which individuate persons are also necessary for belonging to the category of persons.[47] In other words, in order to be a person it is necessary to have an autobiographical self that individuates persons and that is also necessary for their persistence through time. I think that this is a formal criterion of personhood: the set of persons is defined by the mere having of life narratives that can be manifested in a number of ways. The category of persons is conceived as formally unified but actually pluralistic in individual life narratives.

Garrett (1998) provides a "short answer" to the "satisfaction question" (conditions to satisfy in order to belong to the category of persons): "persons are self-conscious mental beings" (p. 5). The reason why I believe my condition to be better is that it gives a more informative sense to what it is to be a person through phenomenology, integrates the definition with the concepts of synchronic and diachronic identity and also signals a theory about the relationship between person and human being (thus avoiding "person essentialism" DeGrazia, 2005, and being able to accommodate insights of animalism). Consequently, answering the "nature

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[47] Or to soften the thesis: "at least the vast majority of (non-pathological) human persons have narrative selves" (Hardcastle, 2008, p. 32).

question" ("what are persons?" in Garrett, 1998), I see personhood as a socio-cultural construct that is achieved by human beings who have a semi-conscious self-interpretation in the form of a narrative. Unfortunately, my approach excludes human beings who do not have such a self-interpretation (infants, vegetative state patients, etc.) from personhood. However, I think it is better to circumscribe the limits of a Western moral-legal concept than to extend it for universal application to all human beings.[48]

4.4 Against Narrativity

Before the conclusion, I address some worries regarding "narrativity" that Strawson (2004), Lamarque (2007) and Stokes (2011) have recently raised. I show that their worries are unwarranted and that they do not apply to **NC**. Strawson's (2004) "Against Narrativity" provoked a healthy debate regarding narrative theories of personal identity. Schechtman (2007) addressed Strawson's worries explicitly, developing her view and responding convincingly. With respect to my account, Strawson's arguments do not apply.

Strawson (2004) defines two "Narrativity" theses he is arguing against. One is the "psychological Narrativity thesis" which states "that human beings typically see or live or experience their lives as a narrative or story of some sort, or at least as a collection of stories" (p. 428). The other is the "ethical Narrativity thesis" which sets the norm "that experiencing or conceiving one's life as a narrative is a good thing" (Ibid.). Strawson argues against the universality of "Diachronic" self-experience (a unified self through time, necessary for narrative self-representation). For my purposes, the most significant argument is the possibility of "Episodic" self-experience (that I am not sure how to describe, except for non-Diachronic) that is seen as an alternative to "Diachronic". Strawson argues that he is a paradigmatic example of the "Episodics", which is just as common as the "Diachronics" are. The main underlying theory behind Strawson's (2004) argument is his "Transience View" of the self (Strawson, 1999). Relevantly to my thesis, Strawson denies that selves are persisting entities, rather, selves are

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[48] To make it clear, I do not mean to strip non-person human beings from any moral status or legal rights and obligations that they should have based on more conventional theories.

momentary in "a gappy series of eruptions of consciousness out of non-consciousness" (Strawson, 1999, p. 130). The series is connected by the human being which is the whole of its selves. If this was the metaphysical reality, any "Diachronic" self-experience would be an illusory falsity.

The easy way out would be to state that there is actually no personal persistence through time on Strawson's (1999, 2004) view, thus it immediately validates **NC** which has the antecedent: "if there is personal persistence through time…" I do not take the easy way out, but instead I argue with Pawlowski (2010) that the "Transience View lacks […] any distinctive intuitive support" (p. 234). Generally, while Strawson acknowledges the importance of phenomenology, it seems that he forces the phenomenological picture to fit his metaphysical system. The question is: is the self experienced paradigmatically as momentary and episodic? What evidence do we have for it? The main phenomenological evidence is that Strawson says that he experiences it to be so. In contrast, I agree with Flanagan (1992) that the objective gappy nature of consciousness full of breaks and hiatuses can be reconciled with its subjective streamlike feel. Firstly, I take the subjective streamlike feel to be the paradigmatic conscious self-experience, and I argue that Strawson (2004) has to produce a lot more argumentative work to ground the claim that "Episodic" self-experience is a serious alternative to "Diachronic" one. Secondly, Strawson fails to appreciate the crucial distinction between core self and autobiographical self for which Damasio (1999) not only provides phenomenological support but also evidence from neuroscience and pathological cases. Thirdly, one of the consequences of the transience view is that it divorces practical concerns from questions of personal identity (similarly to Olson's animalism). If my self has no meaningful relationship to my future and past selves, then "no long-term anticipation is appropriate" (Pawlowski, 2010, p. 211), which means that I should not care about what happens to me in ten years from now. Also, I should not care whether I am responsible for a past deed. However, I think it is a fairly common experience to

care about these concerns. Balanced against the common and widespread nature of these experiences, Strawson's (1999) metaphysics appears merely to be a strange and free-floating idea.

The main argument of Lamarque's (2007) essay is the following: there are essential differences between real-life and literary narratives and it is a mistake to project either one onto the other. Projecting real-life narratives onto literary ones results in the impoverishment of literature and our understanding of it, while the reverse creates a dangerous practice in which real lives are fictionalized. The roles of people in real life and of characters in literature are irreducibly different. For my purposes, the most important argument of Lamarque is about the ontology of literary characters and real-life persons based on the "Character Identity Principle" (p. 120). As Lamarque says, the identity conditions of fictional characters are tied to the way they are presented and described. On the other hand, "[n]o real person derives his identity from how he is described" (p. 129). Persons are not "perspectival" entities: their nature does not depend on any identifying descriptions which contain physical and evaluative points of view (p. 121). Examining other related differences between real-life and literary narratives, Lamarque states that he has established that fashionable narrative identity theses are absurdities in their extreme forms (p. 130).

First of all, my main problem with Lamarque's (2007) critique is that I do not see its target. This is a mundane point but in the footnotes accompanying Lamarque's piece, there are no references to any theorists of narrative identity, which is quite problematic when one intends to assess the scope of his arguments. Most advocates of narrative identity do not believe that real-life and literary narratives are the same, nor do they argue that real people are the same as literary characters. Furthermore, most of them are acutely aware that there are interesting differences between fictional and non-fictional narratives (Brockmeier & Harré, 2001; Hutto, 2007; Kerby, 1991; László, 2008; Polkinghorne, 1988; Ricoeur, 1991, 1992). What many theorists of narrative identity argue for is that the way persons *make sense* of their lives and selves has important similarities to narrative techniques that are culturally pervasive (e.g., Bruner, 1990;

Ricoeur, 1992).[49] Secondly, Lamarque argues that real persons are not perspectival and that the privileged first-person perspective only gives a special epistemic access and not a special ontological existence. However, as I agree with Heidegger (1927/1962) and Baker (2000), it is a metaphysically important fact about persons that they relate to themselves by the way of their first-personal access. As I have argued, the autobiographical self is a narrative construction, but this should not be taken trivially. The autobiographical self and the person are the same thing viewed from different perspectives: the former from a mainly psychological one, and the latter from a mainly socio-cultural one. Lamarque (2007) neglects the notion of the self and operates with a concept of person that is taken for granted and that is not differentiated properly from that of human being. Therefore he misses the crucial point that persons in fact exist under a description: "I am a person and I am this particular person because I have these particular life narratives", which is also constrained by the socio-cultural conventions of describing persons. And even if this is questionable, Lamarque still does not provide any arguments for why persons could not be perspectival. I see perspectivalness as major evidence for the claim that personhood is a construction, and that it is constructed based on the variety of modes persons relate to themselves. Of course, human beings (complex psychophysical entities) do not come into the world via descriptions, but their personhood, synchronic and diachronic identities are acquired through, to borrow Velleman's (2006) expression, "fictive *and* factual" self-narratives.

Lastly, Stokes's (2011) article focuses on what he calls "narrative realism" in which selves are said to be narrative constructions distinct from fictions in an "ontologically significant sense" (p. 1).[50] In convincingly arguing against thinkers like Carr (1986), Stokes (2011) intends to establish that these theories of narrative identity involve a four-dimensionalist temporal parts ontology. Four-dimensionalists see time as analogous to a dimension of space, and correspondingly, objects as having not only spatial but temporal parts as well. These temporal

[49] Even MacIntyre (1981/2007) against whom Lamarque's (2007) arguments could be effective talks about intelligibility in connection to narrative and the unity of life and not about literary characters and narratives applied straightforwardly to real life.

[50] In contrast, Dennett (1992) is said to be a narrative constructionist.

parts do not endure the passing of time. Instead, things "perdure" by their temporal parts being connected in a certain way. Narrative identity theorists mean to say something about practical concerns and everyday experiences, thus to involve a four-dimensionalist ontology of temporal parts would alienate them from their practical and everyday field and open them up to Schechtman's (1996) effective critique of four-dimensionalism regarding personal identity. If narrative realist accounts indeed entail four-dimensionalist commitments, then Stokes (2011) rightfully says that they "alienate our metaphysical identity from our sense of what we are" (p. 17).

I find Stokes's (2011) arguments very strong, and since one of my thesis's limitations is that I have not addressed the 'fictional versus real' debate about the self, I only make one, albeit quite technical, point. I think what saves my approach from Stokes's critique is that I have made a distinction between core self and autobiographical self based on Damasio (1999) and Zahavi (2005).[51] According to Zahavi (2005), the core self is "the invariant dimension of first-personal givenness throughout the multitude of changing experiences" (p. 132). On the other hand, I consider the autobiographical self to be a semi-conscious narrative interpretation of the multitude of experiences not only belonging to an invariant dimension but to a fictive *and* factual (Velleman, 2006) self-construction. Now, I think that Stokes's (2011) arguments would apply if I did not accept the concept of the core self. Indeed, in saying that "I am moving to America tomorrow" (p. 17) I do not say that my autobiographical self moves to America tomorrow. Continuing Stokes's example: "*I might indeed be moving to America tomorrow, but my entire narrative is not moving to America*" (p. 13). Instead, I say that the invariant dimension of experiencing the move to America will be the same as the one that experiences uttering the sentence today. This does not mean that the core self is in a temporal part-whole relation to the autobiographical self. Here, the second component of the consequent of **NC** assists in escaping Stokes's arguments: it is not a part-whole relation but a relation between interpreted material and

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[51] Indeed, "I want to suggest that the narrative or hermeneutical take on self must be complemented by an experiential or phenomenological take on the self" (Zahavi, 2005, p. 110).

interpretation. To recall, I have described that core consciousness apprehends a multitude of experiences (with the invariant dimension of the core self) on which extended consciousness works interpretively with the help of autobiographical memory (Damasio, 1999; Zahavi, 2005). This interpretive work gives rise to the autobiographical self in a narrative form. There is no part-whole relationship because I am only a narrative realist about the autobiographical self and not about the core self. In this way, I can resist implying four-dimensionalism. This concludes my review of relevant illustrative counter-arguments to narrative theories of identity. I have demonstrated that either my approach deals with them successfully or that they do not apply to it.

CONCLUSION

My thesis has explored three aspects of personal identity: diachronic identity, synchronic identity and personhood. I have offered a theory based on the phenomenological dimension of the issue that has been neglected traditionally. I have argued for **NC**: *If* there is diachronic identity, *then* there is a semi-conscious self-interpretation which takes the form of a narrative. I have suggested that **NC** is a highly informative, illustrative and well-supported condition. I have outlined the components in the consequent of my main thesis in order to conclude that the autobiographical self is a self-interpretive narrative presentation of experiences appropriated by core consciousness and structured by extended consciousness with the help of autobiographical memory. Through these ideas, I have arrived at my conclusions that **NC** is not only a necessary condition of diachronic identity, but its consequent also illuminates synchronic identity and the connection between the two. Moreover, I have argued that personhood is a socio-cultural construction that depends on the narratives that actual persons tell about themselves and the capacity for individual life narratives. I do not flatter myself by thinking that the thesis offers an "original contribution", however, I definitely consider it to be a novel combination and assessment of ideas that are crucial for the study of personal identity.

I see the thesis as an important step towards a host of issues that can be addressed by future research. Firstly, in the future, I intend to consider the nature of truth in the context of narratives. My thesis has established that narrative is a privileged form of semi-conscious self-interpretation. Based on this, I will inquire how these self-interpretations can be said to be true or false, which is crucial in accounting for pathological cases, self-deception and so forth. This issue will also lead me to theorize the interconnections between real-life and fictional narratives. Secondly, since I have argued that persons are human beings with semi-conscious self-interpretations in a narrative form, I plan to overcome this thesis's limitations and make clear the distinction between human beings and persons by looking at embodiment and the relationship between consciousness and bodily make-up. Thirdly, in narrative self-interpretations the use of

the indexical "I" plays an essential role that I have not explicated in the thesis. Thus, I will attempt to clarify the foundations of self-reference in narrative self-interpretations. Lastly, most of the thinkers see an intimate connection between narrative approaches to identity and ethics (e.g., DeGrazia, 2005; MacIntyre, 1981/2007; Ricoeur, 1992; Schechtman, 1996) that I have avoided here. However, I think that considering **NC** and the social aspects of story-telling and its responsiveness to practical concerns, I have provided a springboard from which I can start to outline consequences for ethical views. All in all, I see my thesis as a modest but significant step towards a number of issues that are important in the philosophy of personal identity.

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