

Reading from the Middle: Heidegger and the Narrative Self

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Abstract. Heidegger's *Being and Time* is an under-appreciated venue for pursuing work on the role narrative plays in self-understanding and self-constitution, and existing work misses Heidegger's most interesting contribution. Implicit in his account of Dasein (an individual human person) is a notion of the narrative self more compelling than those now on offer. Bringing together an adaptive interpretation of Heidegger's notion of 'thrown projection', Wolfgang Iser's account of 'the wandering viewpoint', and more recent Anglo-American work on the narrative self, I argue that we read our ongoing existences in the same way that, mid-story, we read a narrative. Reading is a better master metaphor than authorship, narration, plot, or character to guide investigations of narrative's relation to the self. It is not merely a metaphor, however, as the hermeneutic structures involved in interpreting existence and a narrative from the middle are the same.

Narration is not only a mode of discourse but more essentially a mode, perhaps *the* mode, of life.

David Carr (in Wood, 1991: 173)

Narrativists such as Alasdair MacIntyre, Paul Ricoeur, Charles Taylor, Jerome Bruner, and Marya Schechtman hold some version of the view that narrative is central to our psychology or, more broadly, our manner of existence. While I am not going to attempt to offer a taxonomy here, according to some narrativists, we naturally think of our lives as stories. According to others, such thinking is a result of (non-pernicious) habituation, due to our notion of persons. We thus need, perhaps, to understand our lives as stories in order to understand who we are, or in order to live well. Or, stronger, we need to understand our lives as stories to constitute ourselves as full persons at all. Just as there is variation in the views of different narrativists, there is variation as to what master metaphor is taken as a guide. Lives are stories. Persons are, or have, characters. We author our lives. We narrate our lives. One finds all of these metaphors, often intermixed, in the work of MacIntyre, Ricoeur, Taylor, et al.

Critics of narrativity are quick to point out the ways in which these metaphors can be

misleading. Peter Goldie, sympathetic to more restrained narrativist views, describes the idea that our lives *are* stories as ‘a particularly post-modern sort of exaggeration’, one which confuses fiction and reality (2003a: 215). ‘To elide the notion of narrative and the notion of what a narrative is about’, he writes, ‘is to lose the distinction between language (and thought) and the world—between representation and what is represented’ (2003b: 303; see too 2012: 153-154). Samantha Vice, less sympathetic, writes that ‘the view just seems obviously false—we are clearly not characters and our lives are not stories and it is a blatant category mistake to think so’ (2003: 100-101). The metaphors that guide narrativists are merely metaphors, Vice thinks. Taken literally, they are false, and taken as metaphors, they make only indistinct claims inadequate for the purposes of theory building. Thus, in a deflationary move, John Christman writes that ‘narrativity collapses into a capacity for self-interpretation’ (2004: 709). When one cashes out the metaphors of narrativity in literal (but less exaggerated and therefore defensible) terms, nothing distinctively narrative is left. Lives aren’t stories, we aren’t characters, and we don’t author or narrate our lives. Rather, all of these claims, properly deflated, point to the much less dramatic one that we are able to interpret our lives and selves.

I aim here to rebut these powerful criticisms of narrativity and to begin to put in place a different foundation for a fuller narrativist theory. I’ll do so by making use of a different master metaphor than those mentioned above: we are the *readers* of our own existence. This claim is not merely a metaphor, however, and it says more than that we have a capacity for self-interpretation. We understand who we are now by casting larger hypothetical arcs of plot in the same way that readers, when in the middle of a story, project where that story is going in order to understand the identity and situation of its characters. The hermeneutic structures are the same, and different from those brought to bear in other forms of interpretation. I will develop and defend this view by

presenting an account, motivated by the desire to adapt his thought to a narrativist model, of Heidegger's notion of 'thrown projection', a basic structure of our way of existing. I will then argue that it is the same as Wolfgang Iser's literary-theoretical notion of 'the wandering viewpoint', the structure by which we read literature. While I can put only the first piece in place here, I think that *Being and Time* offers a conception of the self's narrativity, and one markedly better than other conceptions currently available.

Heidegger's name for the kind of being which each of us is—Dasein—normally refers to existence (*menschliches Dasein*, for example, means 'human existence'). Most literally, it is composed of linguistic elements which mean here-being or there-being. His initial and general characterization for our manner of being is being-in-the-world. Our situatedness, in space but even more so in time, is basic to our way of being. We cannot be properly understood as isolated entities, as animals of a human form, for example. This is why Heidegger uses the term 'Dasein', rather than more familiar ones like 'person' or 'human being'; because they are familiar, such terms encode too many assumptions about how we are to be understood. Dasein exists not as an isolated and self-standing thing, but as being-in-the-world. The first division of *Being and Time* elucidates this notion. My guiding claim is that this structure amounts to a narrative conception of the self. The most important part of Dasein's being-in-the-world is the structure of 'thrown projection'. We exist always on the cusp between actualities and possibilities. I'll begin by explaining Heidegger's notion of projection, the form of our understanding of our possibilities. I'll then add thrownness, the form of our facticity. Finally I'll argue that, when fitted together, they amount to the same hermeneutic structure we use when interpreting a narrative when in the middle of it.

1. Projection

‘Higher than actuality stands *possibility*’, Heidegger writes (1962: 38).¹ What any one of us is presently is only part of the story. We are always ahead of ourselves, awaiting, expecting, and anticipating future possibilities.² The most famous consequence of this within *Being and Time* is that no one can ever grasp his or her entire life in its actuality—whatever time remains between now and one’s death remains always only a matter of possibilities, and it is possible that one will die at any moment (1962: 231ff). Our necessarily futural orientation toward possibilities has much more immediate consequences, however. At every moment, to have an implicit understanding of what is and is not possible isn’t an ‘optional extra’,³ what the prudent do in contrast to the adventurous or ‘fully present’, those who live in the moment. Living in the moment is, strictly speaking, impossible by Heidegger’s account, an experience unfamiliar to beings like us: a being that was fully present would not be the kind of being that we are.⁴ One can live without obsessing over one’s death, worrying about one’s career prospects, or even thinking about what’s for dinner. But if our manner of existence weren’t structured by expectations concerning the future, we couldn’t be surprised, understand jokes, hear a melody, or, probably, make it down a staircase without falling on our faces.⁵

What we possibly are is a part of what we are, so central is this futural orientation to Heidegger’s analysis: ‘Dasein is constantly “more” than it factually is, supposing one might want to make an inventory of it as something-at-hand and list the contents of its Being, and supposing that one were able to do so’ (1962: 145). No account of me restricted to a moment in time, no matter how exhaustive, would explain my manner of being, and thus what I am. Heidegger co-opts the slogan ‘Become what you are’, but rather than meaning that we have a *telos* or determined fate, this means that we are what we will be (or will fail to be), because we are always ahead of ourselves (1962: 145). Indeed this is the underlying reason for Heidegger’s distinction between ontology as it is traditionally practiced through categorical analysis and his approach to fundamental ontology

through an existential analysis of Dasein. What it is to be, for Dasein, is to be more than what one actually is, is to be ahead of oneself in possibilities. '[P]ossibility as an *existentiale* [a form of existence, the existential equivalent of a category] is the most primordial and ultimate positive way in which Dasein is characterized', Heidegger writes, signaling this theme's central import to *Being and Time* (1962: 143-144).

Heidegger calls our way of existing as possibilities 'understanding': 'Understanding is the Being of such potentiality-for-Being' (1962: 144). As an ontological term, descriptive of our manner of existence, 'understanding' is to be contrasted to the way we normally use it, as naming a mode of cognition (1962: 143). To speak, in the language of psychology or even the philosophy of mind, of my understanding something is already to conceive of me as a kind of entity set against and in a certain relation to other entities. It is thus an ontic claim, certainly related to, but 'derivative of that primary understanding which is one of the constituents of the Being of the "there" in general' (1962: 143). Let's not lose sight of what Heidegger means by a claim like this, which would seem to denigrate psychology, and why it is important to his project. Psychology, like all individual sciences, is guided by a conception of what sort of entities exist—it articulates its part of the world according to this underlying regional ontology, and it can't comment on those aspects of our experience that fall outside of its purview. Psychology, as the study of minds, can't say anything about rocks or furniture. In and of itself, that's not a bad thing at all. Individual sciences can achieve rigor and specificity only because they're systematically guided by some conception of the world. Of necessity, they can no longer grasp what it means to be, rather than to be *as* a cognizing subject, or *as* a collection of material particles, etc. This is especially important to keep in mind when talking about something like ourselves. Many sciences—psychology, physiology, anthropology—overlap in trying to explain what we are, but each is guided by a competing regional ontology of what exists,

and so they disagree about what terms are relevant to explaining what we are. If we mistake any individual science, or even all sciences in conglomeration, as that which offers the final account of what we are, or what the world is, then we ‘forget’ being (1962: 2ff). So, here, understanding as an ontological notion is meant to account for our way of existing in possibilities—our very manner of being—unsorted by any standard of what sort of entities exist. Lest we fall back into a derivative, ontic account of understanding, Heidegger reminds us not to take ourselves as something present-at-hand at the given moment, which might or might not encounter other things ‘*not yet* actual’ but ‘*merely* possible’ (1962: 143). Possibilities, properly conceived, are neither that which is present-at-hand now, but only contingently, nor that which might be later. We ourselves are our possibilities.

This language remains dangerously abstract. Heidegger thus introduces the term ‘projection’ (*Entwurf*): ‘the understanding has in itself the existential structure which we call “*projection*”’ (1962: 145). This term describes the specific form of our existing always not as what we merely are in a given moment, but ahead of ourselves in possibilities. ‘*Entwurf*’ relates to the verb ‘*entwerfen*’, which itself comes from the root ‘*werfen*’, to throw. ‘*Entwerfen*’ means to sketch or draft. ‘Projection’ thus suggests throwing oneself forward in existence, sketching possible projects.⁶ Heidegger offers an immediate qualification, however:

Projecting has nothing to do with comporting oneself towards a plan that has been thought out, and in accordance with which Dasein arranges its Being. On the contrary, any Dasein has, as Dasein, already projected itself; and so long as it is, it is projecting. As long as it is, Dasein has always understood itself and always will understand itself in terms of possibilities. (1962: 145)

Commentators tend to take this warning as equivalent to just its first part—projection has nothing to do with a plan.⁷ Arguably, however, Heidegger’s point is only that projection does not comport itself toward a *thought-out* plan; hence he writes ‘*ausgedachten Plan*’, where ‘thought-out’ directly precedes and modifies ‘plan’. Indeed, it would seem counterintuitive for projecting to be unrelated

to planning some of the time, in some sense. To be sure, much hinges on how Heidegger conceives of the relation between projection as existential and planning as merely existentiell. On my reading, he takes projection to be the underlying basis for planning (along with all the other ways we can be oriented toward the future). Planning is derivative of projecting, in Heidegger's terms.⁸ That is, even though projection does not, as planning does, aim at 'a "now" which has *not yet* become "actual" and which sometime *will be* for the first time' (1962: 325), it would seem to be the *existentiale* that most explains how we can have such an everyday orientation.⁹ Moreover, just as the fact that we experience moods is evidence for our disposedness (1962: 134), planning is ontic evidence (1962: 13-14) for projection, especially since, in thinking through the phenomenon, we notice that we sometimes have 'plans' we aren't even aware of until they are upset. The point of Heidegger's warning is that projection is not normally or necessarily a cognitive activity. 'Plan' is a word that is to be avoided if it is taken to be based in explicit and conscious intentions. Even saying we comport ourselves *as if* we had a plan is misleading if it suggests that cognitive states, reconstructed afterward, are the proper explanation of normal behavior. But we shouldn't abandon the connection between planning and projection entirely. A projection is a sketch, not a hard and fast design.¹⁰

Heidegger's claim is this, then. We always have an understanding of our existence. This understanding is likely, in some measure, to be a misunderstanding.¹¹ 'Understand' as Heidegger uses it doesn't mean to fully grasp or to be able to explain something. Rather, it is contrasted to whatever (seemingly unimaginable) confusion—non-understanding rather than misunderstanding—would ensue if we weren't always situated in some basic way. Our understanding takes the form of projecting possibilities. We understand what is and is not possible for us. In temporal terms, which Heidegger introduces only later (1962: 334ff) but are here rather obviously implicit, we project possible futures for ourselves. These future possibilities needn't (and, if Heidegger is right, most of

the time don't) take the form of explicit plans, even if they might. Instead, our bearing—our existential posture—demonstrates an orientation toward what we implicitly take as possible. When I stand on a high balcony, my body tense and my hands gripping the rail tightly, I may not explicitly fear falling, nor do I expect someone to push me. But, in my bearing, I understand that falling is possible. Though you show up on time for work on a daily basis, you might not think often, or indeed ever, about what would happen if you weren't so punctual. Such is what one does if one wants to keep one's job—and you understand this even if you never experience or articulate a desire to keep your job. Projection is the form our expectations take. What is projected is our very being or existence. We have always already 'imagined' possible futures for ourselves, only such futures needn't have been explicitly posited or daydreamed.

Let me briefly contrast this treatment of projection to two competing accounts, by Hubert Dreyfus and Stephen Mulhall. As is well known, Dasein is by Dreyfus's reading characterized essentially by its know-how: we move through the world as skilled copers. He states, quite bluntly, 'For Heidegger primordial understanding is know-how' (1991: 184). And also: 'We have a skilled, everyday mastery of equipment and ourselves. [...] Moreover, we *are* such skills' (1991: 185). In his conjunction of equipment and selves and in his emphasis on the ready-to-hand, Dreyfus loses much of Heidegger's account of the self. Dasein differs from all other entities because it is a 'who', not a 'what' (Heidegger, 1962: 45). This 'who' remains the target, even as understanding it necessitates understanding a myriad of other structural conditions: 'Here we are seeking that which one inquires into when one asks the question "Who?"' (1962: 53). Within the details of Heidegger's analysis, inasmuch as Dasein understands itself as a 'who', it is asking about its self: 'The question of the "who" answers itself in terms of the "I" itself, the "subject", the "Self"' (the scare-quotes remind us not to take these terms to be transparent, or as they are conventionally understood; 1962: 114). This

is something that we shouldn't lose sight of, even as Heidegger downplays, against the philosophical tradition, the role of the self in our existence. It is important to not fall into the wrong ways of thinking about what the self is. But it is equally important to honor whatever phenomenological truth there is in the fact that, asking 'who' we are, we begin to speak of not just ourselves (a merely grammatical reflexive), but our *selves*. How we model our notion of everydayness here is perhaps decisive. To philosophers, the self might seem a kind of thing. To most anyone else, the self, or the person, or even the human being, is to be *contrasted* with a mere thing. Dreyfus risks reducing Dasein to something along the lines of 'the kind of being which experiences other things as ready-to-hand', to the skilled craftsman in his or her workshop, to the expert athlete, those who can act seemingly without thinking. Part of Heidegger's analysis of Dasein is our relation to the ready-to-hand: our relation to tools in use. Another part is our (derivative) relation to the present-at-hand: our relation to things when we merely look at them. Most important, though, is Dasein's relation to *itself*. Remember that, in order to raise the question of being, Heidegger chooses to analyze Dasein exactly because Dasein already has an understanding of its *own* being—not because it understands other entities, tools or otherwise (though it does this as well). Just as I am always in a world, projection is always a projection of this whole—of a future self into a future world.

Alternatively, Mulhall writes that 'Dasein must project itself onto one or [an]other existentiell possibility [roughly: a role, an identity]' (1996: 82). This way of using the term makes projection close to synonymous with acting, and indeed Mulhall writes that the understanding 'corresponds to the active side of Dasein's confrontation with its own existentiell possibilities' (1996: 81). On this account, there are various specific ways of being that are available to me: carpenter, professor, bachelor, father, and so forth. I project myself into one, choosing it and identifying myself with it (perhaps unconsciously), even before I can say that I've achieved or become it. But projection is not

a matter of authoring or free choice. Even unchosen behavior demonstrates a projection of possibilities. Projecting sounds active, but in the most important sense it is not. We have always already projected an understanding of possibilities as part of our reading of our existence. Furthermore, Mulhall's way of explaining projection minimizes Heidegger's claims about possibility. Projection becomes our means of actualizing one possibility. Heidegger's handling of possibility is, at least apparently, more radical than this, however. Existentially, can one coherently speak of *a* possibility? Must not any possibility at a bare minimum include one other, that it might fail? To honor possibilities *as* possibilities, they must remain plural. This is the form our expectations familiarly take. I hope that I'll be left alone in my office this afternoon and get some writing finished. I might even plan and conspire to make this happen, closing my door and turning off my phone. But I still understand, based on my projected expectations, that someone *might* come by and knock incessantly. Or the power *might* go out, or I *might* get a migraine. Such contingencies will result in disappointment or annoyance, not confusion. I haven't explicitly considered or planned for them, but they too are part of my projection of possibilities. Projection is not what one does on the basis of one's understanding of possibilities. Projection is the structure of understanding, throwing forward possibilities. In any given moment, many possible worlds stand open before us. To understand one's situation, if Heidegger is right, is to project such a multiplicity of possible worlds, of possible futures.¹²

2. Thrownness

Except in its most derivative form as mere confabulation, projection is not a matter of imagining oneself however one will. The possibilities that we project, that we throw ahead of ourselves, are grounded in and limited by the possibilities into which we are always already thrown.

Space precludes me from saying much about thrownness here, but whereas projection is the form of our understanding of possibilities, thrownness (*Geworfenheit*, based on the same root, *werfen*) is the form of our facticity, the way our existence is given over to us without our say or choosing. We can't make ourselves as we will because we are given over to an existing culture, situation, and even personal state of affect. We don't choose or control these, and they determine our range of possibilities, what makes sense and what we can do. Our thrownness is always ongoing: 'Thrownness is neither a "fact that is finished" nor a Fact that is settled. Dasein's facticity is such that *as long as* it is what it is, Dasein remains in the throw' (1962: 179). We are thrown, not just once at birth, but over and over again into new situations.

My favorite image of thrownness, though accidental and exaggerated, comes from an essay by the pop culture critic Chuck Klosterman. He describes his six-year-old niece teaching him to play *The Sims*, a computer game in which one pilots an avatar through the banalities of everyday life: eating, going to work, buying things, even sleeping and going to the bathroom. From a Heideggerian perspective, the game represents something like a complete breakdown of everyday life, which therefore makes conspicuous our normal assumptions. One has to think ahead and explicitly plan to go to the bathroom, for example, in order to make it to work on time. Klosterman writes:

Young Katie couldn't help but notice my ineptitude and immediately tried to show me how the game was played (and—inadvertently—how existence works, although I doubt she would have explained it that way). [...] However, I immediately had dozens of questions for young Katie about my new life: If I don't yet have a job, how could I afford this residence? Who put all of that food in my fridge? Elves, perhaps? Can I trust them? Why don't I need a car? Where did I go to college? Don't I have any old friends I could call for moral support? [...] 'You just live here', she said. 'That's the way it is'. But where did I come from? 'Nobody knows. You're just here'. (2004: 15-16)

What the image exaggerates, of course, is our relationship to our pasts. Unlike his avatar,

Klosterman knows how he got where he is. He doesn't have to reconstruct his past at every moment. We don't just *appear* where we are, we are *thrown* there, thus seemingly from somewhere. Explicitly reconstructing such a path to where we are now and telling a story of our past is a way of coming to terms with our thrownness. Yet considering such a process makes clear that separating thrownness and projection, assigning one to the past and one to the future, is artificial. In taking over my past with respect to a given situation, I don't remember and consider everything. There is a sense in which we do reconstruct our pasts every time we call on them. Considering the relation of my memories to where I am now, I either leave in place my understanding of their meaning or—usually due to some new event—reinterpret my past in terms of it. I tell one possible story among many in emphasizing certain events and leaving others aside. This sounds like a kind of backward-oriented projection.¹³ On the other hand, the further I get myself into a certain situation, the more certain possibilities are foreclosed, such that consequences become determined and thrown, not possible and projected.

In their most fundamental terms—thrownness and projection—the two sides of our situated-being come together as two parts of a whole. *Geworfenheit* and *Entwurf*, thrownness and throwing forward, both play on the same root, the verb *werfen*. I am always in the middle of an arc, according to the compound image, thrown into the world and now projecting where I'm going. Yet due to, as always, the more important place of projection and possibility in Heidegger's account, the notion that I enact *one* story is implausible. Rather, each of us finds ourselves amidst a whole network of possible narratives. These stories aren't *merely* possible, various optional accounts we might offer of our situations. Rather, by Heidegger's analysis of thrown projection, we necessarily find ourselves on an arc from givens to possibilities. The similarity between this image and that of a plot arc is, I suggest, not coincidental.

3. Thrown Projection

Writing recently (2010), Tony Fisher divides Heidegger's interpreters into narrative and anti-narrative camps. Charles Taylor and Charles Guignon represent the narrative camp. Fisher describes them as holding the 'final configuration view', in reference to a quotation from Guignon: 'in taking a stand on its own life, Dasein takes over some range of possibilities as definitive of its identity—some set of personality traits, life-styles, roles, or attitudes—and exists as "being-toward" the realization of a final configuration of possibilities for its life overall' (Fisher, 2010: 248; Guignon, 2006: 278). The idea here is that, in order to take responsibility for who we are, each of us must commit to an identity. It's not simply given to us, and we may not successfully achieve it, but we're oriented toward it and by it, and it thus shapes our particular actions and the overall form of our lives. On the other side, Dreyfus, Taylor Carman, and William Blattner represent the anti-narrative camp. Fisher (2010: 248) describes them as holding the 'unattainability view': if Dasein is a nullity, defined always by open-ended possibilities, then it can never be 'a finished or in principle finishable self, an integrated whole' ('unattainability' is from Blattner, 1999: 82; the quotation is from Carman, 2003: 266). Or, as Fisher puts it himself, 'Ecstatic temporality *prohibits* the traditional ontic characterisation of the person, and it is precisely this which the narrative view appears to tacitly sanction' (2010: 248). The idea here is that in stressing the way that a person is 'ecstatic'—stretched out in time, especially toward the as yet undecided future—Heidegger has no notion of a whole or finished person, whose life is unified like a well-wrought story. A characterization of a person as honest, for example, or successful, or happy, or a characterization of someone's life as tragic or picaresque, is strictly speaking impossible if she remains unfinished, such that she could still betray any pattern of behavior so far established.

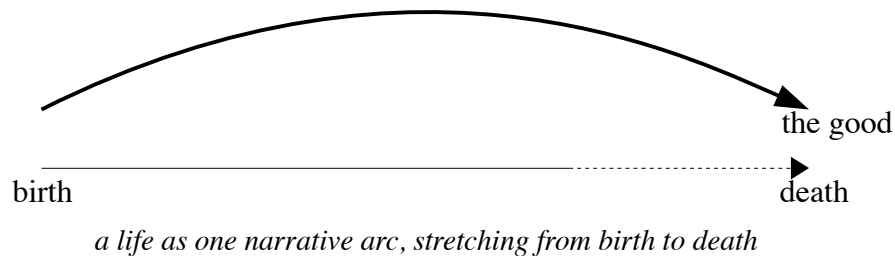
Fisher attempts to offer a ‘middle course’ between these two views. His discussion, like all treatments of Heidegger and narrativity so far, focuses on historicity, authenticity, and the second division of *Being of Time*.¹⁴ Thinkers like Taylor and Guignon are interested in how we assemble our lives as wholes (Guignon, 1983: 93 and 1998: 567-571). My own interpretation of Heidegger in narrativist terms operates at a level underlying such concerns. We might call my target fundamental narrativity (mimicking Heidegger’s fundamental ontology), as my goal is to show that the very structure of being-in-the-world is narrative in form.¹⁵ Taylor comments on this underlying, situational level of narrativity, but only very briefly, before proceeding to his larger concerns (1989: 47). I thus take myself not so much to be building on Taylor’s and Guignon’s excellent work, but rather putting firmer foundations in place for it.

On the other side, Carman emphasizes the unfinished nature of Dasein’s being as always ahead of itself. But rather than prohibiting narrative self-understanding, as he thinks it does, this is exactly what I take to be responsible for our fundamental narrativity, from which any higher-order configuration would have to grow: the unfinished parts of ourselves are filled in by projected narrative. Blattner emphasizes that a for-the-sake-of-which like ‘being a professor’, unlike a discrete action or a mere social role, is ‘unattainable’, as ‘it does not have intrinsic closure’, such that one could ever say of being a professor: ‘Been there, done that’ (2000: 194-195; see too 1999: 102-110). I agree, but am offering a broader notion of narrative than the one informing his analysis. From Blattner’s notion of narrative—‘goal-directed patterns whose structure is clearly that of beginning-middle-end’—he concludes that ‘One of Heidegger’s principal aims is to argue that there is a form of purposive unity to the longer stretches of our activity that is not narrative’ (2000: 193). But on my view, narrative is not so restricted (see note 29); just as we read narratives before knowing how they end, we read ourselves in an open-ended fashion, in light of possibilities that may or may not

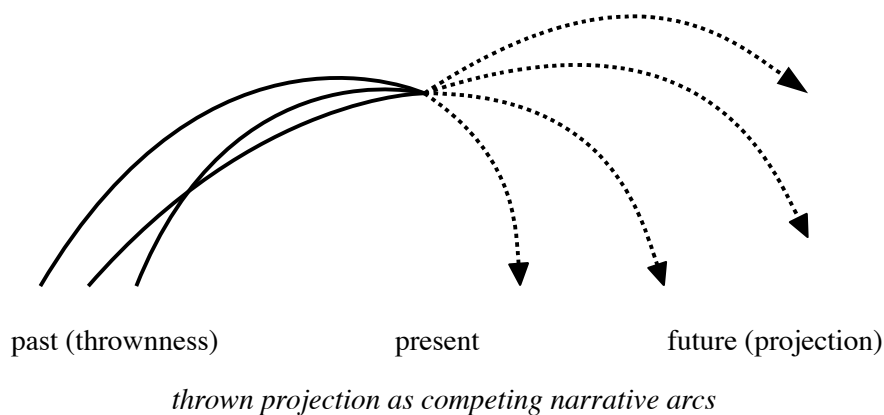
unify our lives into purposive wholes.

Thus where Guignon writes of Dasein ‘tak[ing] over some range of possibilities as definitive of its identity’ and existing toward this ‘final configuration’, I suggest instead that Heidegger’s analysis holds us as, by our very comportment and thus aside from conscious identity-making, orienting ourselves *provisionally* (not definitively or finally) against a *multiplicity* (not one configuration) of possibilities for our existence. This set of possibilities is constantly evolving, constituting a network of narratives, possible arcs of plot we might play out in our existence. The self is to be found where these various plotlines intersect. As we will see, this same multiplicity is found in the way we read a story when still in the middle of it.

MacIntyre writes that ‘I can only answer the question “What am I to do?” if I can answer the prior question “Of what stories do I find myself a part?”’ (2007: 216). He famously concludes that ‘The unity of a human life is the unity of a narrative quest’ (2007: 219). But his basic image of a life is too simple:



According to Heidegger’s conception of thrown projection, even one moment is far more complicated:



According to MacIntyre’s ideal conception, the arc of a quest oriented toward the good captures an entire life. In contrast, my revised image represents the competing narrative arcs that even one moment is constituted by. Our understanding of the possibilities of our existence, through Heideggerian projection, involves many implicit futures, and none are certain (hence the dashed lines). Meanwhile, when we look back on our pasts, we don’t always see the same fixed arc, even though we’re already thrown. Depending on where we are now, and what we’re considering, we’ll see different parts of our pasts (and thus different arcs) as relevant. We don’t experience our pasts as contingent, however (hence the solid lines), even as we can interpret them in various ways. The range of interpretations available is narrower than it is for our futures, which remain open (hence the varying size of the cones, past versus future). Carman is right that a ‘traditional characterization’ of Dasein is precluded—if this means a final and stable identification of the self with a set of traits, or the mapping of a life as one unified arc. But ‘traditional characterization’ need not be central to any narrative conception of the self. By my revised narrativist view, we understand ourselves by provisionally projecting the possibilities of our existence. Properly thematizing such an understanding (understanding self-understanding) will involve reconstructing and making explicit a whole network of narratives, as well as tracking their evolution as one’s comportment and

expectations change.

I can now return to and rebut Christman's deflation of narrativity. In opposition to his claim that there is nothing distinctively narrative about the form of our self-understanding, I argue that the place of Dasein amidst its thrown projections and the place of a reader mid-story are structurally isomorphic. My account is one of self-interpretation, to be sure. Against Christman, however, these structures are not *merely* ones of self-interpretation. They are specifically narratively structured forms of self-interpretation. Consider Julio Cortázar's story 'Continuity of Parks' as a formal example of the way in which our interpretive expectations are structured by thrownness and projection:

He had begun to read the novel a few days before. He had put it down because of some urgent business conferences, opened it again on his way back to the estate by train; he permitted himself a slowly growing interest in the plot, in the characterizations. That afternoon, after writing a letter giving his power of attorney and discussing a matter of joint ownership with the manager of his estate, he returned to the book in the tranquility of his study which looked out upon the park with its oaks. Sprawled in his favorite armchair, its back toward the door—even the possibility of an intrusion would have irritated him, had he thought of it—he let his left hand caress repeatedly the green velvet upholstery and set to reading the final chapters. (1985: 63-64)

As readers, we are thrown into the story's plot. Initial details are given to us and structure our expectations of what is to come. But we can begin to make sense of those given details only by positing—by projecting—a set of hypotheses about how they will find a place in a finished story-arc. Cortázar's story moves through three sections, in a way that makes unusually transparent how our projected expectations structure our understanding of the progressing story. First, we are given the situation of the estate owner and the contrast between his business and readerly life. Perhaps we expect this to be a story of thwarted artistic ambitions. Or of the consolations of aesthetic consumption. Early on in any story, the possibilities still open are many. But then the story continues:

He remembered effortlessly the names and his mental image of the characters; the novel

spread its glamour over him almost at once. He tasted the almost perverse pleasure of disengaging himself line by line from the things around him, and at the same time feeling his head rest comfortably on the green velvet of the chair with its high back, sensing that the cigarettes rested within reach of his hand, that beyond the great windows the air of afternoon danced under the oak trees in the park. Word by word, licked up by the sordid dilemma of the hero and heroine, letting himself be absorbed to the point where the images settled down and took on color and movement, he was witness to the final encounter in the mountain cabin. (1985: 64)

As we keep reading, we are thrown into a new story as the frame of the estate owner is revealed to be merely a frame. As he gives himself over to the novel he is reading, so too do we. Now we follow the developing plot of a man and woman's secret rendezvous at a mountain cabin. Here our expectations sharpen dramatically. In not only its plot, but its very language, this new story quickly establishes its genre, foreclosing many possibilities from our expectational apparatus. We understand that they are planning a murder, and the story, of necessity, moves toward the deed:

Not looking at one another now, rigidly fixed upon the task which awaited them, they separated at the cabin door. He ran [...] crouching among the trees and hedges until, in the yellowish fog of dusk, he could distinguish the avenue of trees which led up to the house. The dogs were not supposed to bark, they did not bark. The estate manager would not be there at this hour, and he was not there. He went up the three porch steps and entered. The woman's words reached him over the thudding of blood in his ears: first a blue chamber, then a hall, then a carpeted stairway. At the top, two doors. No one in the first room, no one in the second. The door of the salon, and then, the knife in hand, the light from the great windows, the high back of an armchair covered in green velvet, the head of the man in the chair reading a novel. (1985: 64-65)

Finally, just as it seems only one possibility remains—the scene of the murder—Cortázar marvelously upsets our expectations. The frame of the estate owner, all but forgotten, returns. Cortázar's story is an elegant allegory for the way in which we are trapped within reading. The text read eventually reveals itself to be the story of the reader's own life and fate. In a metafictional strange loop, Cortázar's reader is reading the account of his own murder. By upsetting our expectations, Cortázar makes them conspicuous. We realize, in a way we rarely attend to, how our expectations about where a story is going structure our understanding of where, at any moment in

the middle, a story is. The twist of the thriller (Kevin Spacey is Keyser Söze; Bruce Willis has been dead the whole time) only highlights the manner in which our expectations are always, though usually unnoticed, the basis for our understanding of a developing narrative.

We can now notice a few things about such interpretive expectations. For starters, they are uncertain. Mid-novel, or sitting in a darkened movie theater, one does not know how the story will play out. (This obviously changes in rereading, which I will discuss momentarily.) One has only beliefs, opinions, assumptions. Further, such expectations need not be conscious—we ‘read’ in this way all of the time without our doing so needing to rise above the pre-theoretical level. I don’t need to formulate the thought ‘the action hero will prevail’ or ‘they’ll get together in the end’ to be surprised if these or other conventions are transgressed.¹⁶ Additionally, such expectations are multifaceted. Even if I become wedded to a particular hypothesis, I’m equipped to rank the implausibility of competing theories. Should my favored hypothesis prove incorrect, I’ll be more or less surprised by other possibilities, depending on how they had fit into my expectational apparatus.¹⁷ In Heideggerian projection, we see the same structure. Just as we understand an ongoing narrative on the basis of a hypothetical completed plot, so too do we understand our lives now on the basis of projected future possibilities for our existence.

The parallel can be extended to thrownness. Lives begin, as MacIntyre puts in, ‘*in media res*’: ‘We enter upon a stage which we did not design and we find ourselves part of an action that was not of our making’ (2007: 215, 213). By the time a child is equipped to understand (or misunderstand) his or her life, countless things about that life will have been determined. One is always already in the middle of an interpretive situation. One cannot stand prior to one’s experience, ready to choose every aspect of it. It might seem that the analogy to aesthetic experience breaks down here. Is not the moment one first cracks open a novel, or the moment the house lights go down, one of pure

possibility? Projection without thrownness? It is not. Consider all the rituals of pre-reading most of us observe. Backs of books are read, blurbs consulted, commitments quantified by flipping forward to see just how many pages we're talking about anyway.¹⁸ Occasionally we might even consider introductions, prefaces, and criticism to facilitate our approach to a daunting tome. The very fact that we feel the need—that we can characterize an unread book as daunting—demonstrates expectations preceding even our pre-reading. Just to take a novel as a novel, a film as a film, is to embrace a host of assumptions and expectations.¹⁹ In the same way, Richard Wollheim suggests that our answer to the question 'What is it to lead the life of a person?' will underlie most of our assumptions about identity (1984: 20).

The hermeneutic standpoint I'm considering here privileges middles, reading over having read, to say nothing of rereading. A standard approach to narrative texts will find it natural to privilege endings. After all, the story of *King Lear* or *Hamlet* would be quite different if their respective protagonists did not die in the end. Bernard Williams writes of fictional characters that 'their wholeness is already there' while it is 'essential to ours that it is not' (2007: 311). Goldie extends this thought, writing that even a character like *Nausea's* Roquentin, mired in contingency, is essentially whole (2012: 165).²⁰ From the standpoint of reading, rather than having read, I think these claims are false. Halfway through a novel, or at least a novel that avoids foreshadowing,²¹ a character remains unfinished, just as we remain unfinished halfway through life.²² As Goldie writes, when we engage with a story, 'we not only grasp the narrative, but we also often envisage alternative narratives—branching possibilities—of how events might unfold' (2012: 92). That we should downplay endings in our literary hermeneutics is a thesis to be defended another time.²³ It is enough here to note that an approach of privileging endings can't be extended to self-interpretation. As Williams writes, 'the idea of a completed, unified, or coherent narration is of no help in leading a life'

(2007: 312). Lives can't be reread, at least by those who led them. Neither can I finish reading my own life even once. As Heidegger famously notes, I can never stand outside of my life and grasp it as a whole:

But as soon as Dasein 'exists' in such a way that absolutely nothing more is still outstanding in it, then it has already for this very reason become 'no-longer-Being-there'. Its Being is annihilated when what is still outstanding in its Being has been liquidated. As long as Dasein *is* as an entity, it has never reached its 'wholeness'. But if it gains such 'wholeness', this gain becomes the utter loss of Being-in-the-world. In such a case, it can never again be experienced *as an entity*. (1962: 236)

As Epicurus put it for quite other reasons, 'when we exist, death is not yet present, and when death is present, then we do not exist' (1994: 4.125). My life will be whole only at death, when I can no longer look back over it, like I look back over a book I've finished reading.

None of this means that narrative is irrelevant to lived experience, however. *Reading*, rather than having read, models lived experience. Peter Brooks offers the 'anticipation of retrospection' as a model for how we interpret narrative, from the middle. Questioning (rightly, I think) whether we imagine novelistic events, conventionally narrated in the past tense, as past, he writes:

If on the one hand we realize the action progressively, segment by segment, as a kind of present in terms of our experience of it [...] do we not do so precisely in anticipation of its larger hermeneutic structuring by conclusions? We are frustrated by narrative interminable [...] If the past is to be read as present, it is a curious present that we know to be past in relation to a future we know to be already in place, already in wait for us to reach it. Perhaps we would do best to speak of the *anticipation of retrospection* as our chief tool in making sense of narrative, the master trope of its strange logic. (1984: 22-23)

We provisionally project wholes of meaning, even when we know they will eventually be revealed to us.²⁴ The case for lives is rather more straightforward, though structurally similar (assuming one doesn't believe in fate). MacIntyre makes the same point:

But it is crucial that at any given point in an enacted dramatic narrative we do not know what will happen next. [...] This unpredictability coexists with a second crucial characteristic of all lived narrative, a certain teleological character. We live out our lives, both individually and in our relationships with each other, in the light of certain conceptions of a possible shared

future, a future in which certain possibilities beckon us forward and others repel us, some seem already foreclosed and others perhaps inevitable. (2007: 215)

Here MacIntyre comes close, in his own way, to Heidegger's concept of projection: 'our lives have a certain form which projects itself towards our future' (2007: 216). We should notice, however, that if Heidegger is right concerning the centrality of possibility to our existence, then projected possibilities are not merely replaced by actualities. My self-understanding is always constituted by a range of future possibilities. It is thus inadequate to look back at merely the choices I actualized to understand where I've been.²⁵ Rather, Brooks's structure will have to be reversed and the *retrospection of anticipation* will be central to understanding one's past. To recover a sense of a person's past self-understanding, one would have to recover the structure of assumptions, expectations, and alternative possibilities that then guided her—and these existed aside from whatever explicit worries, insecurities, hopes, dreams, and fears she might have had. They are present, if Heidegger's treatment of projection is right, in our very existential posture. The arc that any of our lives happens to actualize is criss-crossed at every point by competing possibilities, now lost, that have to be understood in order to truly trace where a person has been.

In his *The Act of Reading*, Wolfgang Iser introduces the concept of the 'wandering viewpoint' (1980: 108). Ricoeur explains: 'It expresses the twofold fact that the whole of the text can never be perceived at once and that, placing ourselves within the literary text, we travel with it as our reading progresses' (1988: 168). Unlike some other forms of art, a narrative text is never fully present to us. Rather, to experience such a text, we must give ourselves over to it and move through it. Furthermore, our path through a text is carefully, though not completely, controlled by the text itself. 'The relation between the text and reader', Iser writes, 'is therefore quite different from that between an object and observer: instead of a subject-object relationship, there is a moving viewpoint

which travels along *inside* that which it has to apprehend' (1980: 109). One can see the parallels between Iser's literary-theoretical approach to narrative and Heidegger's to Dasein's being. The relation of an individual to his or her life is not that of a subject to an object. Neither can a life be made fully present to the person who lives it. Rather, we move along or through our lives, and our mode of apprehending them is structured in regular ways. Iser references Husserl's *Phenomenology of Inner Time-Consciousness* and takes over its vocabulary: 'The reader's position in the text is at the point of intersection between retention and protention. [...] Each new correlate, then, will answer expectations (either positively or negatively) and, at the same time, will arouse new expectations' (1980: 111). Husserl's explanation of the structure of time-consciousness obviously influences Heidegger's conception of temporality—for which thrown projection is the underlying existential basis. From Heidegger's perspective, the terminology of retention and protention makes too many psychological assumptions, however.²⁶ Substituting in Heidegger's vocabulary, the reader's position in the text is at the point of intersection between thrownness and projection.

Iser concludes that 'This mode of grasping an object is unique to literature' (1980: 109). This claim is made against the wrong background taxonomy, however. An object does not require the wandering viewpoint because it is a work of literature rather than a painting, sculpture, or piece of architecture (nor because it is literary rather than lowbrow). Rather it is the *narrative* quality of a text, inextricably temporal, that requires the wandering viewpoint. Reading, by its very nature, is a temporal experience, which might seem to suggest that any form of writing will require Iser's approach. We don't read textbooks by projecting larger structures of plot, however.²⁷ We don't necessarily read poetry or literary prose this way either, even when they are about life or lived experience.²⁸ Only narrative requires the projection of larger temporal patterns of events. Narrativity, as I have argued elsewhere, escapes the confines of a formalist typology.²⁹ It is typical of

fiction, film, and a kind of history.³⁰ But most aesthetic forms, especially when hybridized, can realize some version of it. The wandering viewpoint is not unique to grasping literature rather than painting, film, architecture, etc. It is unique to grasping narrative, no matter whether it comes in the form of a novel, a film, a play, a comic strip, or otherwise. On the basis of what I've argued here, we can see that Iser's wandering viewpoint applies to our grasp of our lives as well. We move through our lives in the same way that we move through narratives, according to the structures of thrownness and projection, hypothesizing larger temporal patterns of events.

If we read our lives, does that mean that our lives are texts? To my ear, the word 'read' no more implies a textual object than the word 'interpret' does. One can read—that is, interpret—a painting, for example. It might be thought that this begs the question, however, that to speak of 'interpreting' a painting similarly treats a painting as a textual object: it begins to 'mean' something only when we start to talk and write about it. Even if the most immediate layer of our self-experience isn't structured by language, it is still ordered by thrownness and projection, and thus narrative in form. According to my account, the narrativity of our self-experience is itself pre-thematic, not necessarily realized explicitly in language. Worries like Goldie's, then, that narrativists confuse life for a text, are overstated.

Argumentatively, existing versions of the narrative self tend to be motivated by a master metaphor. We are the authors or narrators of our lives, or our lives are stories, or we are characters within them. Such an approach is hampered by the limitations of metaphor: two things are alike in some respects, but not others, not all. A metaphor succeeds only insofar as the similarities are especially revealing. If they don't strike you as revealing, then the metaphor has little argumentative weight. It makes no claim on you: that I find a metaphor revealing doesn't necessitate that you should. You can always insist that the dissimilarities between lives and stories, or authors and selves,

outweigh the similarities, and thus that talk of a narrative self remains unjustified. Theories of the self's narrativity can thus appear as so much preaching to the choir. *If* one already finds the proffered master metaphor compelling, or at least intriguing, *then* further elaboration of its details might yield new insights. It is unclear how, proceeding in such a manner, one could convince a skeptic, however.³¹ My own argumentative approach has sought to avoid these difficulties. I have claimed not just that there are similarities between the way we read narratives and our lives, but that the essential structure is the same. The hermeneutic stance that Iser names 'the wandering viewpoint' is brought to bear on both lives and narrative (and nothing else). As a result, there is indeed an important metaphor, and one which differs from those on offer: selves are readers (in the middle). But my argument is not grounded in it as a metaphor. So whereas skeptics, if unmoved, can merely shrug off existing conceptions of the self as narrative, my revised conception attempts to make a clearer claim on them. To falsify it, skeptics would need to demonstrate that the hermeneutic stance brought to bear on lives and stories is not in fact the same.

4. Fundamental Ontology, Philosophical Anthropology, and Narrativity

Interpreting Heidegger as I do is tangential to his own project in (at least) two ways. First, for Heidegger, the existential analysis of Dasein is not intended primarily as a philosophical anthropology, but as part of the path to the *Seinsfrage*, or question of being. Heidegger's goal is to recover the sense of what it means to be, rather than to be as this or that particular kind of entity. In order to do so, he analyzes Dasein, our way of being, because our way of being includes a pre-theoretical understanding of what it means to be. We know how to use the word 'is', for example, even if we can't exactly define it. Thematizing our manner of existence might allow us to make this understanding explicit, which might in turn allow us to formulate and answer the question of being.

The main part of the first division of *Being and Time* consists of Heidegger's existential analysis of Dasein, which amounts to a partial philosophical anthropology. He then goes on, in the second division, to begin to interpret that analysis, against the horizon of time, as part of his larger project. I'm concerned with Heidegger's existential analysis of Dasein merely as a philosophical anthropology, leaving aside his grander ambitions. This means that the emphases of Heidegger's analysis change, however. Philosophical anthropology is an account of our being, whereas fundamental ontology investigates specifically our pre-thematic understanding of our own being, with an aim at understanding being in general. Fundamental ontology isn't interested in everything that philosophical anthropology is (Heidegger has little to say about our bodies, for example). In turn, philosophical anthropology needn't necessarily stress, as fundamental ontology does, those parts of our being that make it conspicuous to us. Since I'm concerned with our temporal, ultimately narrative, self-understanding, Heidegger's analysis of our spatiality can be left aside. Since I'm concerned with our ordinary self-understanding, his account of *Angst*, and the way it throws us back on ourselves, taking us out of our everydayness, can be left aside as well. Perhaps most prominently, I have said little about Heidegger's account of authenticity, focusing instead on the account of our everyday manner of being. For the purposes of narrativity, Heidegger's philosophical anthropology is an especially relevant one, because temporality and self-understanding are central to his conception of what we are.

My purposes are also tangential to Heidegger's in that 'narrative' is not a term he uses. Nowhere does he suggest explicitly, as I have, that our temporal condition is usefully understood in terms of narrative.³² In his later thinking, Heidegger turns to poetry (*Dichtung*) as a privileged site for investigating being. I don't have space to develop these thoughts here, but it seems to me that this turn can be made sense of, in part, as a turn away from the implicit narrativity of our everydayness.

If our ordinary understanding is ridden through with narrative conventions, poetry might allow us more authentic, primordial access to being. But if we're interested in our ordinary understanding, and not, with Heidegger, recovering the meaning of being, then attention to narrative will be of great importance.

Halfway³³ through *Being and Time*, Heidegger comes to a provisional conclusion. Dasein's manner of existence has been defined as being-in-the-world. This structure, though holistic, has been divided into constitutive parts, each thematized in turn. Now Heidegger is able to offer a definition of our manner of existence which is rich in content:

Dasein's 'average everydayness' can be defined as 'Being-in-the-world which is falling and disclosed, thrown and projecting, and for which its ownmost potentiality-for-Being is an issue, both in its Being alongside the "world" and in its Being-with Others'. (1962: 181)

Shortly thereafter, he offers a synonymous though differently articulated definition:

the Being of Dasein means ahead-of-itself-Being-already-in-(the-world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world). (1962: 192)

These definitions are not nearly as opaque as they might appear. By this point in the book, every component term has been explained at some length. The density of hyphens in Heidegger's definitions, especially the latter, is meant to emphasize that our manner of being is a holistic phenomenon. We can explain, by itself, what it means to be 'thrown', as Heidegger does and I have (if only briefly), but it is never the case that Dasein is merely thrown. We are always thrown *and ...* everything else in that whole structure. Keeping the entire structure in one's head all at once is no easy task. It is essential to Heidegger's project, however: to lose the unity of being-in-the-world is to fall back into thinking that I am a kind of being—an animal, an individual, an atomistic self, a consciousness—that is self-standing and merely happens to encounter objects, other people, and a world beyond myself.

Heidegger writes that ‘the totality of the structural whole is not to be reached by building it up out of elements’. Instead, ‘The Being of Dasein [...] becomes accessible to us when we look all the way *through* this whole *to a single* primordially unitary phenomenon’ (1962: 181). To this single phenomenon, Heidegger gives a one-word name: ‘care’ (1962: 191ff). The second division of *Being and Time* quickly explains how we don’t yet have a whole (in a different sense) and authentic version of Dasein before us. The sense of wholeness at stake in the second division is that of Dasein’s life as a whole. Because my life will be whole only when I’m dead, I can never grasp it in its full actuality, from birth to death. Whether and how our lives are unified is a central question of narrativity. I haven’t taken it up yet, not because it is unimportant, but because, in order to even broach this question, I think narrativity needs more carefully defended foundations. By focusing on Heidegger’s first sense of wholeness—the wholeness of being-in-the-world—I have argued that our local, situational self-understanding is already narrative in form. From such foundations, one might be able to assemble an account of how we organize our entire lives in time (a project I hope to take up in the future).³⁴

My focus has thus been Heidegger’s provisional stopping place, the care-structure as Dasein’s everyday manner of being. If Heidegger can contribute something to narrativists, the inverse is also true. Despite his never using such terminology, my contention is that Heidegger conceives of our everyday understanding as narrative in form: we are selves at the center of a fabric composed of numerous narrative threads. Such a notion, I think, helps us see the care-structure as a whole and thus understand Heidegger better. Heidegger implicitly offers a theory of the narrative self, related to but better than those found in work by MacIntyre, Taylor, Schechtman, and others. The claim that we read our ongoing existences using the same hermeneutic structures we do to read narrative from the middle is the most important piece of such a revised narrativist theory.

Elsewhere I've started to extend this treatment to other parts of the care-structure: to Heidegger's analyses of understanding and interpretation, falling and *das Man*, and disclosiveness.³⁵ When we make our understanding explicit in interpretation, doing so in narrative form (if not necessarily traditional narrative form) best preserves the structure of our pre-thematic understanding, since both are guided by the wandering viewpoint. But in our self-understanding, both implicitly and when spelled out, we all too easily fall into received, familiar, clichéd patterns; we understand ourselves merely as one, anyone (*das Man*), might. And according to Heidegger's notion of Dasein's disclosiveness, our understanding is what first opens up a world. Our self-understanding is thus selective and filtered, just as a narrative is, including only some events, not every last possible detail. There is a lot more work to be done in fleshing out a Heideggerian theory of the narrative self. Here, I've offered the first piece, with the aim of showing the promise of that work, and motivating the idea that narrativists should pay more attention to *Being and Time*. From the foundations of a narrativist understanding of the care-structure, one could turn back to the traditional, larger-scale questions of narrativity, but approach them on more solid footing: How do we understand our lives in their entirety? In what sense do we author them? Is it necessary, or beneficial, to explicitly understand one's life as story? To put that understanding into words? Approaching these questions guided by the notion that we read our existence according to the same structures that we read narrative specifically, will, I think, lead to more compelling answers.³⁶

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1 Citations to *Being and Time* are made by the original German page number (which are included marginally in both English translations).

2 Heidegger distinguishes between awaiting (*gewärtigen*) and anticipating (*vorlaufen*) as, respectively, inauthentic and authentic orientations toward the future (1962: 336-337). As I am bracketing Heidegger's treatment of authenticity, my use of these various terms follows no technical distinction.

3 1989: 47 and *passim*. Taylor argues further that we are always oriented toward moral goods.

4 Strawson, 2004 famously attacks any view such. See Roth, 2014, Chapter 2, for my rebuttal.

5 Daniel Dennett, in a very different register, writes that 'the fundamental purpose of brains is to produce future', that 'all brains are, in essence, anticipation machines' (1991: 177).

6 See too Macquarrie and Robinson's gloss (1962: 185n1). Projection should not be mistaken for psychological projection, when something is merely a creation of one's thoughts. For this Heidegger uses the term "*Projektion*" (1962: 124).

7 See, for example, Dreyfus, 1991: 187.

8 This is emphatically not to say that planning—even in the loose, not necessarily cognitive sense I point to here—is the only form that projection can take. Still, it might be objected that I am making projection and planning sound too similar, especially if one holds originary temporality (toward which projection is oriented) and world-time (according to which planning takes place) far apart, as Blattner does (1999, Chapter 2). See too Carman, 2003: 271n7. I bracket Heidegger's deeper account of temporality and bring projection and planning closer together in order to adapt his thought toward offering a better conception of the narrativity of the self.

9 Only in explicit thematization can one separate the *existentialia*: any act of planning is possible also only because of discourse as well, for example, and has its own mood. But Heidegger of course does isolate them to some degree in thematization, associating certain ontic phenomena most closely with certain existential analyses.

10 '*Entwurf*' can mean 'design', however. A porcelain mug, for example, might be stamped

‘*Entwurf*: Walter Gropius’. At the extreme, planning can be fully reified, and a plan turned into a self-standing object: a book of blueprints, e.g. But that’s not a representative case of planning, much less projection.

11 See Taylor, 1985: 3.

12 In Roth, 2014, Chapter 7, I examine a number of forking-path narratives (stories, films) at length as examples of the form of our self-understanding.

13 Heidegger only takes up such a theme with respect to ‘repetition’ and an authentic engagement with one’s past, which is why I leave the details aside.

14 See too Kevin Vanhoozer’s ‘Philosophical Antecedents to Ricoeur’s *Time and Narrative*’ on projection and narrative (in Wood, 1991: 34-54), as well as Bordwell, 1985: 29-47.

15 If one takes Division II to fundamentally alter (in addition to deepening and interpreting) Division I (Blattner, 2006: 13; Carman, 2003: 271ff), my limited focus will appear hermeneutically dubious. Dreyfus of course treats Division I in isolation in 1991, relegating discussion of Division II to an appendix after criticizing it in his prefatory comments, though he has subsequently admitted the limitations of this approach (2000).

16 Lives have conventions as well, of course, as Heidegger discusses under the heading of ‘*das Man*’, and Sartre does as ‘bad faith’.

17 See too Carroll, 2001: 130-133.

18 Calvino’s *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveler*: ‘you open the book to page one, no, to the last page, first you want to see how long it is. [...] You turn the book over in your hands, you scan the sentences on the back of the jacket, generic phrases that don’t say a great deal. [...] Of course, this circling of the book, too, this reading around it before reading inside it, is part of the pleasure in a new book’ (1982: 8).

19 Kendall Walton: ‘Even the ability to see paintings as paintings had to be acquired’ (1970: 366).

20 I argue against the standard reading of Sartre’s *Nausea*, with respect to narrativity, in Roth, 2015.

21 Peter Lamarque’s attack on the conflation of literature and life (2014) leaves open the possibility that lives are narratives, just not the kind of well-wrought literary ones that most interest him.

22 Once one stops taking literature seminars, opportunities for discussing a novel with someone when both of you are in the middle largely disappear (though they have perhaps reemerged with the rise of prestige, non-episodic, television shows). Remind yourself of how these conversations play out, and the role in them for questions of where a character might be going.

23 If one thinks the value of literature is not in whatever messages or morals it might encode, but in its ability to focus and direct attention, then how a story unfurls—and the experience of following it do so—is far more important than how it happens to end.

24 See too Joshua Landy’s use of the future perfect in reconstructing Proust’s conception of the self (2004: 123ff).

25 ‘Autobiographical discourse tends to promote an illusion of disarming simplicity when it comes to self and self-experience’ (Eakin, 1999: ix).

26 David Carr’s excellent *Time, Narrative, and History* (1986) approaches these issues

through Husserl instead of Heidegger. Heidegger's thought offers a better basis, I think, by avoiding limiting psychological assumptions.

27 'Non-narrative text types do not have an internal time sequence, even though, obviously, they take time to read, view, or hear. Their underlying structures are static or atemporal' (Chatman, 1990: 9).

28 Other forms of reading require interpretation and the hermeneutic circle, but not the same version relevant to narrative, by which we cycle between understanding an event and its place in a larger plot.

29 Roth, 2014, Chapter 3.

30 See Barthes, 1977: 79.

31 I'm sympathetic to the view that much of any conceptual system is metaphorical through and through, a view defended by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) or, for that matter, Nietzsche (in 'On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense'), but avoid appealing to it exactly to make clear claims against skeptics.

32 In two of the explicit references to narrative in *Being and Time*, Heidegger rejects a particular kind of 'telling a story' (a causal account) as relevant to the problem of being (1962: 6) and includes biography among the 'many ways in which [Dasein] has been interpreted', and which are at our disposal, yet are insufficiently 'primordial' (1962: 16).

33 As we have it, uncompleted (1962: 39-40).

34 I acknowledge again the objection in note 15, and also admit that, in carrying my narrativist reading of Heidegger forward to authenticity, it would become not just adaptive, but fully revisionist.

35 Roth 2104, Part II: A Narrativist Interpretation of Heideggerian Everydayness.

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