Csaba Pléh

Narrative Identity in its Crises in Modern Literature*

I. IN THE BEGINNING: TWO DECOMPOSITIONAL APPROACHES TO THE HUMAN SELF NOTION

The modern romance of narrative theories and selfhood goes back to an initial dual attitude in European modernity of anchoring our self-related notions into human experience. Both created alternatives to the stability and indivisibility of the Cartesian Ego as a starting point. One started from body image centered conceptions, being *centripetal* in this sense, while the other one started from the role relations of persons, and was *centrifugal* in this regard as summarized in Table1.

Table 1 Two decompositional theories of the self

Centripetal	*Centrifugal*
Inner Ego: essence is inner coherence	Outer ego: consensual validation
Starting to build from body image	Starting from interaction
Constructing objects and reference frames	Constructing role repertories
Condillac, Mach, Head	G. H. Mead, Vygotsky Tomasello, Gergely – Csibra

In the 20th century, due to moves in empirical psychology and philosophical and literary theories, an especially victorious version of centrifugal theories would identify the 'outer layers' of selfhood as patterns of stories tolled to others and to ourselves. This narrative turn was embedded within psychology first into issues of memory schematization.

II. RELATING STORIES TO THE NOTION OF SELF

Narratives, as we call them today, have become central to psychology as part of the general efforts towards a more meaning and schema, rather than association-based theory of memory in the mid-20th century. The main actor, Frederick Bartlett (1932), had shown that our understanding and memory processes are always contextualized. Recall is not a passive process, but a result of active schematization as his monographer Wagoner (2017) analyzed in detail. From the 1970s on, the schema theory of Bartlett was rediscovered as part of the ancestry of modern cyclic schema theories (Rumelhart 1980). One trend of these new schema theories used story like narrative materials. The narrative pattern ideas were imported to contemporary cognitive psychology from other social sciences, from folklore, from anthropology and literary studies, and while they infiltrated psychology, they soon reached a level of generality touching upon philosophical issues such as the use of anthropomorphic schemata, and the relationships between story telling practices and our naive notions of Self (Pléh 2020). The rediscovery of the Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp (1928/1958) was a central step in this process. Propp was working at the same time Bartlett was experimenting with his diffusionist ideas in story schematization. Propp realized that strict rules or regularities are hidden behind the fantasy-rich world of our European folktale heritage. Folktales have a skeletal underlying structure, and they are characterized by a limited number of 'roles' and 'functions.' We can see these 'roles' in recent cultural theories as special attractors that are related to our folk psychology notions regarding human agency and its underlying motivations. This attitude was rediscovered and taken over into modern narrative research by Colby (1973) analyzing the corpus of Eskimo folktales. Colby modernized the conceptual approach and proposed a generative grammar for the corpus of Eskimo tales. From repeated patterns, we extract schemata and templates – among them the story templates – and use these to interpret new events. The construction of cognitive templates is based both on subliminal perceptions of human life and on experience with the array of cultural models available. The cultural models themselves, being patterned and 'ready-made' in a coded, condensed form, yield information for the anthropologist on the nature of these templates (Colby 1966). Thus, in this vision, story structure tells us about the structure of mundane social reality and the place of self in it (Colby 1966, 1975).

Dozens of cognitive psychologists starting from Rumelhart (1975) have taken up these ideas to see how can we build story grammars and how they help to operationalize the concept of schemata. After a short excursion into strictly formal models, these efforts turned to theories of naive social psychology, specifically theories of attributed intentional action as the explanation for schematization effects. In direct comparison, the predictions derived from the Schank and Abelson (1977) Causal Chain model had the most explanatory power in predicting

recall patterns (Black and Bower 1980, Pléh 1987). Graesser (1996) showed that in text understanding the causal and intentional naive attribution models are used in a complementary manner, and for human actions, we use an intentional frame. In understanding and recalling stories, we mobilize our naive social psychology about the structure of human action and about the usual motives for action. The coherence is found by the hearer–reader through the projection of these motivated action schemata to the story (Pléh 1987, 2003, László 2014).

Stories as a special type of narration require a hero, who has a system of goals, as well as a perspective. The hidden coherence of stories is provided by the problem-solving path of the hero (Black and Bower 1980) within a motivational field that is created by the goal system of the hero, such as the motives of hunger and the like, as Bartlett (1923, 1925) was already aware of.

There was an interesting meeting of paradigms when the structure-hungry cognitive psychologists themselves had to turn to theories (and even naïve, folk) theories of human action to account for what Bartlett labeled as schematization. A search for coherence underlies our schematization of stories, and this coherence is basically found by "turning on" our machinery of intentional attributions, and thereby reconstructing a causal chain that consists of causes and reasons that lead to these events.

III. SELFHOOD IN ELABORATED NARRATIVE THEORIES

The entire notion of schematization and the uses of stories to prove it (narrativity) have already suggested for Frederic Bartlett (1935. 311) a constructive approach to the issue of self as well. "There may be a substantial Self, but this cannot be established by experiments on individual and social recall, or by any amount of reflection on the results of such experiments."

In contemporary psychology there was a move towards interpreting narrative schematization as based on the use of the naive theories of intentional action. Parallel to this development, there were moves in three domains towards a more elaborate narrative interpretation of the Self.

- The theory of narrative and descriptive knowledge forms proposed by Bruner.
- Philosophical theories of narrative self by Dennett and Ricoeur.
- Literary theories on the relations between the modern novel and the modern Self.

1. Narratives as primary organizations of knowledge (Bruner)

The narrative approaches in contemporary psychology show up as *flexible models of the world opposed to essentialism*, as phrased by one of the leaders of the new movement, Jerome Bruner (1987, 1990, 1991). Essentialisms in this sense relates to the idea of a stable Cartesian Ego. The new model of the world contrasted with this in psychological narrative theories consists of a socially constructed world, and a socially constructed Ego, where the work of our self-narratives, or life stories, would be central to this constructive process. Bruner postulated two basic different approaches to the world. There is an intention and goal-based narrative, and a descriptive agentless approach to the world.

The duality shown in Table 2 gives an interpretation regarding the classical hermeneutic and causal duality dividing psychology and gives a primacy for narratives. Narratives treat events in an anthropomorphic way, in this regard hermeneutically.

Table 2 The narrative and paradigmatic modes of cognition proposed by Bruner (1985, 1990)

Cognitive mode	Narrative	Paradigmatic/descriptive
Organization	temporal, sequential, human action based	timeless, categorical, logical (Platonic) hierarchical
Discourse types	story: intentional teleology	description: relationships
Ideals	uniqueness, episodes	impersonal validity
Embedding	context: personal and social	decontextualization
Disciplines	humanities	sciences

In the vision of Bruner, children are attuned to these two ways of organizing knowledge. The narrative one is the personal, the paradigmatic (descriptive, theoretical) one is the categorical, scientific one. The narrative approach is always more primary, more elementaristic, and more readily available. This is the primary way to approach anything to make it meaningful. The Hungarian social psychologist János László (1999) pointed out that these attitudes do vary even within a single culture: we can approach, for example, a historical event as an embodiment of categories, and as a representation of individual fates and events.

Narrative metatheory assumes that the coherence of our internal world is provided by storytelling. There is a further question regarding the origins of these interpretation patterns. The initial questions regarding what gives pattern to simple stories, found an answer in "naive social psychology." One has to somehow answer the following question: where do patterns of naive social psychology originate from? There are two rival solutions here. The modular vision would basically state that some kind of intentional and even teleological attribution is a modular feature of the human mind developing very early on (Csibra – Gergely 2007), and this makes our narrative patterns coherent. Bruner and his followers

would claim, on the other hand, that the naive teleological theory itself unfolds as a very result of experience with narrations (Bruner 1985, 1990, 1996), carrying a strong social emphasis about the origin of our attributing schemata.

From a developmental perspective, Bruner suggests that by distinguishing between outside ("real life") events, the inner life of the hero, and the reactions of the narrator, storytelling practices foster the distinction between objective reality and mental reality. This aspect of stories has the challenging implication that narration is somehow intimately tied to our models of personhood and self as well. The world of narration would be making the connection between the real world and our inner world (our Self). Narratives provide us with perspectives to help to "give meaning" to whatever happens to us (Bruner – Lucariello 1989).

The concentration on actual stories as intellectual and cognitive organizing tools as interpreted by Bruner (1985, 1987, 1997), has become part of the modern anti-essentialist movement. Self as a safe Cartesian starting point and the world of stable objects is replaced by a world socially constructed through narratives and a Self that is as well constructed by narration. The world of narration relates the social world and our inner world. This bridging would be a crucial anchoring point for the centripetal, interactionist world view.

> The difficulty lies in the fact that life is lived forward, encounter by encounter, but Self is constructed in retrospect, meta-cognitively. [...] Our self-concepts are enormously resilient, but as we have learned tragically in our times, they are also vulnerable. Perhaps it is this combination of properties that makes self-such an appropriate if unstable instrument in forming, maintaining, and assuring the adaptability of human culture. (Bruner 1997. 159.)

The theory of Bruner is rather abstract in itself and takes narratives as possible organizing tools of experience with no effort to operationalize these proposals. Several lines of research in developmental identity theory and clinical psychology tried to combine this theoretical narrative attitude with actual study of Self-related narratives. In this way, narratives as the basis of our notion of self started to be integrated into data on life stories and on autobiographical memory (McAdams 2001, McAdams and McLean 2013).

2. Philosophical narrative self theories

The narrative trend also emerged as a philosophical proposal that makes *narratives essential for the organization for our notions of Selfhood*. These claims showed up in otherwise rather divergent, partly phenomenological, partly analytic theories (Ricoeur 1965, Taylor 1989, Dennett 1988, 1990, 1992).

From a phenomenological attitude, Ricoeur (1965) started off from a philosophical reinterpretation of psychoanalysis. The talk of the patient was no longer seen as a symptom of the unfolding of some internal essences, such as the natural processes of libidinal development, but as text, and he interpreted the work of the psychoanalyst similar to the work of a literary scholar, as text interpretation. In later elaborations of his narrative theory towards issues of identity, Ricoeur (2004) holds narrative identity responsible for mediating the two poles of personal identity, the pole of sameness (idem), referred to by what we call character, a set of innate or acquired attitudes and capacities, and the pole of selfhood (ipse), including trustworthiness and faithfulness to oneself, despite all the deviation and transformations which mark the path of the Self.

In the analytic corner of philosophy, Dennett (1991) in his anti-Cartesian view on consciousness and Selfhood – treating them in tandem – started from a narrative metatheory. Dennett basically claims for a soft and constructed theory of the Self.

> A self, according to my theory, is not any old mathematical point, but an abstraction defined by the myriads of attributions and interpretations (including self-attributions and self-interpretations) that have composed the biography of the living body whose Center of Narrative Gravity it is. (Dennett 1991. 426–427.)

In the view of Dennett, there is no internal agent in a Cartesian Theater who would make things coherent. Coherence comes as a relaxation point in forging intentional sequences out of the events coming to us. We make Multiple Drafts of every incoming event (another narrative metaphor), and there is one of these that under normal circumstances is treated as being a conscious stage in information processing for the same sequence of events; that is, several "stories" are created.

The novelty of Dennett's theory is twofold. For him, the level providing us with meaning and coherence, does not require a disembodied mind. This level is set into a narrative and intentional model that in principle will have an evolutionary story to it (Dennett 1994). Our self-notions are related to the fact that we are at the same time authors and audiences of our self-narratives. "People constantly tell themselves stories to make sense of their world, and they feature in the stories as a character, and that convenient but fictional character is the self" (Dennett 1992. 24).

3. Narrative selfhood and literary theory

Both Ricœur and Dennett made excursions in their narrative theories of the self toward literary narratives. In the mid-20th century, explicit theories of literature also spelled this out. The life philosophy embedded in classical narration is the

idea that there is a continuous, intelligible life with initiatives that is full of Plans. These Plans give coherence of the narrator and of narration. As Kundera, the Czech-French writer (1986. 58) expressed it: "Out of the mysterious and chaotic fabric of life, the old novelists tried to tease the thread of a limpid rationality; in their view, the rationally accessible motive gives birth to an act, and that act provokes another. An adventure is a luminously causal chain of acts."

Seen from this perspective, traditional *narrative schemata* with their mobilization of intentional action interpreting modules are powerful coherence building devices. The specificity of traditional simple stories lies in the fact that due to the prototypical motivations in a given culture, and due to the simple transparent narrative point of view, this action organization can be revealed easily and unequivocally on the part of the understander. One of the clearest aspects of the transformation of these patterns in modern "high literature" concerns the changes in the comprehensive Plans of action from the point of view of the Hero and/or the Narrator. Its presence gives coherence to classical narratives, be it fairy tales – the youngest boy wants to marry a king's daughter, sets out into the world, and through many obstacles gets her – or the bourgeois novel where the young hero comes to the big city, wants to make a career, relying on relatives and women reaches these goals. The comprehensive message of the work is tied to the intentional system of the hero (Pléh 2003, 2019).

Traditional European fiction has become a central effort towards this cultivation of Self through cultivation of narratives. As the writer and literary theorist David Lodge (1992, 2002) claimed in detail, the modern self and the modern novel were born together.

> In the reading of novels, the already existing narrative self concept was individualized. The idea of the omnipotent writer developed together with the idea that there are three layers to a novel – the layers of external actions, internal plans, and feelings. The mutual relating of these three layers has provided for classical developmental novels and the integrity of the novel. Everything was seen in the unfolding of the hero. The unfolding of the hero gives a model for our own unfolding. (Pléh 2019. 245.)

This has interesting implications about the relativity of the narrative approach regarding the Self.

> We have to acknowledge that the Western humanist concept of an independent individual self is not universal, not eternally valid for all places and times, but is a historical and cultural product. That does not necessarily mean that it was not a good idea and its time is over […] We also have to acknowledge that the individual self is not a fixed and stable entity, but is always created and modified in our consciousness during interaction with others. (Lodge 2002. 91f.)

The entire issue of narrativity and the connections between self-narratives and the notion of Self has become central in the general cultural discussion regarding the "disappearing self".

IV. DISSOLUTIONS OF THE SELF, THE MIND AND OF THE NOVEL

The issue of modern novel organization is the point where the narrative frame issue becomes intimately tied to the crisis of modernity and to the problem of the relations between the changes of narrative patterns and a crisis in our view of ourselves. There is a remarkable similarity in the way narratives become central in experimental psychology, in the study of development and in the cultural and philosophical theorizing about the centrality of narration in our self-image, as we have seen above. A similar affinity appears in issues of dissolution. Our present intellectual world in the early 21st century can be characterized by two types of dissolutions (or, if you prefer, crises). Similar crises went on several times during the 20th century. The first crisis is the dissolution of the stable Ego, which was already characteristic of the late 19th-century philosophy and psychology that became, with the words of the Hungarian philosopher Kristóf Nyíri (1992), "impressionistic" in its search for stable reference points.

The other, parallel dissolution or disintegration, went on in the realm of culture. One dominant aspect of this in the early 20th century was a dissolution of traditional patterns of narration. There are interesting parallels here between artistic practice and philosophy. Kristóf Nyíri (1992) analyzed the affinities between the elementaristic theory of mind proposed by Ernst Mach (1897), and the school of impressionistic painting. The strong drive to liberate yourself from anything secondary, knowledge-based (top-down), anything schematic, and a search for undeniable, original certainty lead to pictorial and epistemological impressionism: the real raw stuff of both would consist of patch-like pieces of experience. There was a similar trend in questioning the validity of traditional narrative schemata and the underlying naive application of the intentional stance to narrative agents as well. There are interesting parallels between giving up the idea of a causal chain in the outside social world of the novel and questioning the presence of an integrative Ego in the inner world of the novel (Kundera 1986).

As the Italian editor and cultural philosopher Scalfari (2012) pointed out, there were tensions in European criticisms after the great works of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. Is the novel dead? These death calls were however followed by works of Marcel Proust, Joyce, and Kafka. "What was finished was the romantic and naturalist novel. The novel which described the bourgeoisie with its tropes, passions, hypocrisies and vices" (Scalfari 2012. 207).

In the new types of narrations taking shape in the 20th century, the godlike image of an author with all-encompassing knowledge is replaced by either a

direct presentation of the inner world, or with a description of external behavior with no pre-assigned perspectives. The great discovery of Proust was to turn towards the inner life. "The striking innovation was to accomplish a travel inside the self rather than in the social world of the times" continues (Scalfari 2012. 209), at the same time realizing that the essential point is the loss of the plot.

Narration dominated by the intentional stance in the sense of Dennett (1990) is replaced by a presentation of internal mosaics, which could already be observed in Virginia Woolf, Proust or Joyce, or half a century later, in the French *Nouveau Roman* and the French absurd, like Beckett or Ionesco. Likewise, this model of internal mosaics was also present in the theoreticians and practitioners of postmodern literatures. Woolf herself made the new ideas very provocative, referring many times to the writing practice of James Joyce and Proust (Lewis 2008). Writers spend too much time in recreating a plot. Virginia Woolf campaigned for a new style of writing. For her, "[to] provide a plot, to provide comedy, tragedy, love interest" is all artificial, and a tyrannical obedience to tradition (Woolf 1925. 160). If the

> writer were not a slave but free […] there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe […] let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall. […] the point of interest lies very likely in the dark places of psychology (Woolf 1925. 161, 162).

With the advent of the 'no story stories,' different versions of new narration emerged as variations on defocusing:
  – we do not know who we are (Musil)
  – we do not go anywhere (Camus)
  – heroes are not lords of their fate (Kafka)
  – heroes are slaves to forces beyond reach of their consciousness (Proust).

These changes of motivational structure went together with psychological defocusing from the clear differentiation of Internal Plans and External Actions.
  – Dissolution into memory (Proust)
  – Dissolution into stream of consciousness (Joyce)
  – Dissolution of roles (Musil)
  – Challenges to intentional action (Gide)
  – Presenting only the behavioral skeleton (Hemingway)

With the birth of the modern novel in Proust, Joyce, Woolf, and Musil, writers show that Kundera is right in a central respect: modern writers were experimenting with knowledge structures, and they prefigured a narrative concept of identity (including all of its crises) well before it was formulated as a theory of mind by philosophers, and they give a rational reconstruction to the stream of

consciousness through narration. "All novels, of every age, are concerned with the enigma of the self" (Kundera 1986. 23).

Musil himself, as shown by Freed (2007), tried to combine his philosophical training and dissatisfaction with philosophy by a new writing technique. The essayistic writing was a way to find a compromise between the philosophical decomposition arriving with modernity, and the need for coherence. Samuel Beckett (1931), the later Nobel prize winner master of absurd writing, gives a similar interpretation of the importance of the multiple and non-conscious construction of the Self in Proust: "But here, in that 'gouffre interdit à nos sondes' is stored the essence of ourselves, the best of our many selves and their concretions that simplists call the world." (Beckett 1931. 31) Kundera (1986) sensitively presented how this type of goal-coherence was ruined in the novels and realities of Franz Kafka. The hero is subjected to non-transparent Plans of others, and these Plans do not become clear even till the end of the story. The continuous goal system disappeared before Kafka as well. It was replaced by the world of inner experience in Joyce, and in Proust, as analyzed by Beckett, the action-based logic of narration and the actions of the hero are replaced by an undifferentiated network of experience, imagery, and souvenirs.

> The identification of immediate with past experience, the recurrence of past action or reaction in the present, amounts to a participation between the ideal and the real, imagination and direct apprehension, symbol and substance. Such participation frees the essential reality that is denied to the contemplative as to the active life. What is common to present and past is more essential than either taken separately. (Beckett 1931. 74.)

The comprehensive Plan disappears not only in the impressionistic presentation of the internal world but also on the level of behavior. In this third type of modern writing the external behavior is not characterized by clear Plans. Rather, things just happen to the hero, and he acts reactively, and tries to give meaning to the actions only afterwards.

The continuous world of intentions is replaced not by an inner world of experience, but by the world of behavior. Think of some of the acts of Mersault in *The Stranger*, of another Nobel prize winner, Albert Camus or to the beginning acts of the actor Belmondo in Godard's movie *À bout de souffle*. The reader and the viewer are immediately presented by pieces of behavior, without enough preparation for the setting, and without a possible intentional interpretation. The individual experiences and acts are not presented as parts of an encompassing Plan. They can only be given a local interpretation. He shot the cop asking for his papers, but this happened so fast that neither he (the hero, Belmondo), nor we, the viewers had any chance to build up a plan to motivate the deed *(À bout de souffle)*. In a secondary way, we give interpretation to something that al-

ready happened. We make a story out of it like psychoanalysts, but the unique un-interpreted act preceded the story, while in classical narrative patterns, the starting point is the story with its intentional layout, and unique events fill the slots in a secondary way. Classical narration treated the narrative pattern in an essentialist way, with a belief in the integrative Self, and the events being only manifestations of this. This is in accordance with the top-down style of writing, and with the idea of an omnipotent and omniscient writer.

The key scene from *The Stranger* illustrates this lack of narrative build-up relying on intentions:

> Then everything began to reel before my eyes, a fiery gust came from the sea, while the sky cracked in two, from end to end, and a great sheet of flame poured down through the rift. Every nerve in my body was a still spring, and my grip closed on the revolver. The trigger gave, and the smooth underbelly of the butt jogged my palm. And so, with that crisp, whipcrack sound, it all began. (Camus 1954. 76.)

The murder by Meursault is rather different from that of Lafcadio in the *Caves of the Vatican* by André Gide. His act (throwing a passenger out from the train cabin) is quoted as the classical example of *action gratuite*. This is an act of "no motive," however, only in the sense of bringing no utility to the actor. Otherwise, Gide, writing in classical style, makes sure that we see it as a planned, intentional, premeditated action. Lafcadio even laughs in advance how much trouble the police will have in dealing with a *crime sans motif*, with an unmotivated crime.

> It's not so much about events that I'm curious, as about myself. There's many a man thinks he is capable of anything, who draws back when it comes to the point... What a gulf between the imagination and the deed! [...] And no more right to take back one's move than at chess. Pooh! if one could foresee all the risk, there'd be no interest in the game!" (Gide 1914/1953. 186.)

There are plenty of more recent examples for the dissolution of intentional coherence. In this respect, Christine Brooke-Rose (1986) presented an interesting outline for the changes in writing so typical of modern (and of course postmodern) literature. First came the defocalization of the hero. That was already present in the nineteenth century. Think of the well-known comparisons regarding the Waterloo battlefield descriptions by Victor Hugo in *Les Misérables*, where you have an epic enumeration combined with a panoramic view and a clear presentation of the scenery, with the scene of Fabricio del Dongo being part of the great battle in Stendhal's *La Chartreuse de Parme* without really knowing it. The entire scene is defocused: we see the hero as being entirely out of the intentional plans of the agents, unaware of their plans, and even of them being agents. He

does not even realize he is seeing the great man he came for. He is part of the battle without knowing he is in Waterloo.

This is the defocusing of the intentional plans, indeed. This was further combined with a defocusing of the "survival value" of the hero. Present-day heroes are no more close friends of ours, as were Madame Bovary or Anna Karenina, or Rastignac, to that effect.

There are tragic, ambiguous, and ironical overtones as well in the literature regarding the dissolution of the Self. Both leave one central issue open, however. When we dissect the Self into elementary experiences and their relationships, and narration into narrative morsels, do we make them disappear by this very act? Does the Self really disappear, or do we only claim that compared to the primary stuff of experiences, it is only secondary? (That is the way, for example, how Beckett interpreted Proust.) Does narration disappear, or is it only a secondary organization compared to the primary thread of discourse? Do we manage to radically eliminate coherence, which is usually accounted for by the Self and by narration, or do we only make it secondary rather than using it as a starting point?

Narrative metatheory as a non-essentialist view of coherence takes the second option. Rather than postulating a substantial Self, the coherence of our internal world comes around by milder means, by storytelling.

The issue of coherence in communicative terms implies that the partners, A and B must follow a mutual, joint model. They must allow each other to reconstruct similar relationships between the individual propositions. This is referred to as the maxim of relevance by the communication model of Paul Grice (1975), as well as in the elaborated model of Sperber and Wilson (1995) and as the issue of higher-order models of intentionality by Dennett (1987).

The concept of communicative coherence allows us to look for inner coherence in a non-essentialist way and to avoid the usual pendulum-like shifts between disintegrated and essentialist views of the Self. The notion of coherence might be a help in finding some peace in the chaos of the world, without necessarily committing ourselves to another round of essentialism. As the new theory promoted by Mercier and Sperber (2017) claims, even human reasoning should be interpreted as an evolved tool of making arguments. Narrative patterns in this sense would be coherence building devices, with a high attraction value (Boyd 2009), a peculiar type of argumentation based on cultural expectations.

The system proposed by Daniel Dennett (1987, 1991, 1992, 1994) has some intellectual promise here, especially since he consciously connects the two types of dissolutions, that of the Self and of the narrative patterns. For postulating coherence, he does not need a hypostasized subject. The coherence of inner life (the Self, if you like) will be a "soft notion" for him, a "gravitational point" of all the stories we tell ourselves. It is interesting to see that the dynamic nature of consciousness, and the multiple nature of self, introduced more than a

century ago by James (1890) as a response to the crisis of *fin de siècle* society, and as an application of the evolutionist non-essentialist image of inner life, comes back in different forms over the entire century. The narrative turn is connecting the original association with the stream of consciousness idea with new ways of writing.

These efforts may not bring happiness over the issue of the disappearing Self, but they may contribute to more sensible interactions between philosophy and cognitive sciences. As Galagher put it in a programmatic survey:

> By extending the ideas of a narrative self, we are perhaps coming closer to a concept of the self that can account for the findings of the cognitive sciences and neurosciences, as well as our own experience of what it is to be a continuous, phenomenological self. […] Philosophical ideas about the self can be aligned with, and can inform, current ideas in cognitive science. I also believe that philosophers can learn about the nature of the self from psychologists, neuro-scientists and other cognitive scientists. Thus, collaborative efforts between philosophers and scientists promise to open up more subtle and sophisticated avenues of research, which will define more fully the concept of the self. (Gallagher 2000. 20.)

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