On Being a Homeless Work of Fiction
Narrative Quests and Questions

Andrew F. Herrmann

Abstract In this piece the author takes a journey into the meaning of quests through the philosophical terrain of existential phenomenology and authenticity. Unlike quest narratives in literature and popular culture, our life narratives are not yet finished, but ongoing. Comparing the idea of existential homelessness with its undeniable and constant change to that of autoethnographic writing, he examines narrative and memory and how current life events change our understandings of past narratives and our sense of identity. Our life narratives are made up of fragmented thoughts and ideas, the stories others told before we were born—and will tell about us after we are gone.

Keywords: existentialism, homelessness, narrative, phenomenology, Heidegger, Kierkegaard, Sartre

Monsieur, I believe the word adventure could be defined: an event out of ordinary without being necessarily extraordinary. (Sartre, 1965, p. 52)

There’s a photograph in my album of a surprise birthday party for me at my Grandma and Grandpa Herrmann’s house in the back yard. I look about 6 or 7 years old. It’s a sunny day. All my friends are there: Craig, Tommy, Judy, my cousins Paul and Barbie, and my puppy-love crush Jennifer Johnson. However, despite the fact that the photograph proves that this surprise party happened, I don’t remember any of it.

I wish I did.

Do you know what I remember about that day? I remember being mad. That no one mentioned that TODAY, August 17, was my birthday. I remember being really, really angry that it was my birthday and no one had said “Happy Birthday” to me yet. I wasn’t only mad, I was hurt, and because I was hurt, I was furious on the inside.
I will return to the theme of memories, but I want to use them as a jumping off point. Just as my memory is problematic, I have a problem with some of our generally accepted ideas about quests as an underlying theme for our autoethnographic and personal narrative works. Quest narratives have to do with adventure, and thrills, and accomplishment, fulfillment, and an eventual returning home. I have no problem with those themes. What bothers me is that in the case of some scholarship, these types of quest narratives become a stand-in for our personal identities. According to MacIntyre (1984), our personal narratives are like these works of fiction, and along the way these narratives also become a quest about an authentic identity, who the characters (we) are, what motivates them (us), and what helps to define what their (our) expectations about life are supposed to be.

Quest narratives are contained within our most popular forms of entertainment, on television, in movies, and in literature. A few examples will suffice. In The Lord of the Rings, Frodo returns “the one ring to rule them all” to the fiery underbelly of Mordor. And goes home to the shire. Luke Skywalker redeems his father, the black enveloped Lord Darth Vader, at the end of Return of the Jedi. And goes back to his friends. Buffy Summers, the cheerleader heroine of Buffy the Vampire Slayer, defeats the demigod Glorificus. And then dies and goes to heaven. In Raiders of the Lost Ark, Indiana Jones finds, loses, and again finds the Ark of the Covenant. And then goes back to his job as a university professor. Quests, inevitably it seems, mean returning home, whether that home is an actual physical place or a metaphysical one. All quests have an endpoint.

We, however—no matter how we narratively understand our lives—are not embedded in works of literature and popular culture. Our endpoint may not finish with “They lived happily ever after,” or “He rescued the princess,” or as Buffy’s tombstone read, “She saved the world. A lot.” (Of course, her quest didn’t end there, because her friends in The Scooby Gang brought her back from the dead.) The dilemma about talking of a quest is that quests come to an end, narratively. We come to an end as well. While we might be gone, our narratives continue in the conversations, remembrances, and writings of others. For example, we continue to write about our departed friends, Nick Trujillo, Bud Goodall, and John Warren (de la Garza, Krizek, & Trujillo, 2012; Fassett, 2012; Herrmann, & DiFate, 2014). They are gone, but their narratives continue through our stories and our writing. We are, in
effect, continuing their quests for them, continuing their narratives in ways they might appreciate—or might not. Our narratives too will likely not be wrapped up in a neat little package and tied with a bow. We go on after we are gone, just as our identities began before we actually arrived at birth through the stories our expectant parents and relatives told about us.

Nevertheless, in the here and now we are questers: to find ourselves, to find our place in the world, to find our home. From an existential phenomenological standpoint, we are questers because we have no choice (Abbarno, 1999; Heidegger, 1962). We are, according to many of the philosophers of Being, existentially homeless. That sounds horrific at face value, because the two terms come with so much baggage (Guignon, 2003). When we think of existentialist philosophies, we think of anxiety, despair, inauthenticity, being part of “the herd,” Kierkegaardian ängst, Sartre’s nausea, and Nietzsche’s void that stares back at us. (Damn thing.) For the more psychologically inclined, Freud’s (1955) conception of “the uncanny” possesses an uncannily similar meaning. As he wrote:

What we clearly want is to find something that will tell us what anxiety really is, some criterion that will enable us to distinguish true statements about it from false ones. But this is not easy to get. Anxiety is not so simple a matter. (1959, p. 58)

Add homeless to existential and... well... you get the idea. It’s an idea that needs exploring if we are to understand why questing is so important to us as homo narrans.

According to Martin Heidegger (1962), Dasein, the human individual, is never at home. “Being” at home would be a place of stasis, of inertia, of stagnation. Rather, according to Heidegger, we exist in a space of “unheimlich,” which literally means “unhomelike,” a place of “not-being-at-home” (p. 237). Heidegger doesn’t mean being in a strange place unaware of one’s surroundings. Rather, he is talking about a feeling of deep-seated noncomfort, dis-ease, or uncanniness with our own existence. It’s what Sartre meant by the queasy nauseousness we feel, or the Kierkegaardian ängst we have about our own existence. As Sartre (1965) wrote, “I build memories with my present self. I am cast out, forsaken in the present; I vainly try to rejoin the past: I cannot escape” (p. 49). We as individuals are not at home—we are homeless—because we are always sent forth or pushed forward. We live in “thrownness,” from the past and into the future by the simple facticity of our existence, which will eventually come to an end (Heidegger, 1962, p. 237).
Even the past is in motion as it is recounted, recollected, and recalled. As Søren Kierkegaard (1959) notes, “life in the temporal existence never becomes quite intelligible, precisely because at no moment can I find complete quiet to take the backward-looking position” (p. 111). We are ever-changing, transforming, erasing, editing, and rewriting our pasts. Scholars and writers of narrative and autoethnography have observed that the past, rather than being simply historically back there, changes over time, because the past, as part of our narrative, is itself an imaginative act (Atkins, 2004). As Ricoeur (1992) notes, we “emplot” our lives into edifices and latticeworks of narrative that have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Our memories, therefore, are not first and foremost about the facts. Brute facts do not necessarily matter. What matters is our interpretation of the facts, what those facts mean to us, and the fact that those facts change over time (Ellis & Patti, 2014). There’s a quandary. As Bochner (2012) so succinctly writes:

Memory is active, dynamic, and ever changing. As we grow older, or face unexpected traumas or disasters, our relationship to the events and people of the past changes. The past is always open to revision and so too are our stories of the past and what they mean now. (p. 161)

Try as we might, we can never accomplish the quest of getting “home” by going into the past, because the past changed.

Through his storytelling, Kierkegaard (1983) provides a hilarious exemplar of how the present changes the past. In the book Repetition, the pseudonym Constantin Constantius starts an exploration into the possibility of repetition. Constantius attempts to actually relive a part of his life by engaging in a moment-by-moment repeating of a trip he once made to Berlin. While for the reader the results are satirically hilarious, for Constantius his experiment is a disaster. Everything is changed. Nothing has the same veneer. Nothing is where it used to be. None of the people are the same. He is disappointed. Put upon. Disgusted. Frustrated. Irritated. Insulted. Anxious. Aggrieved. Nothing is as it was. Not only was the present trip different than the past trip, his recollection of the past changed in the face of the present. Even worse, when he gets home from his disastrous trip, he expects everything to be exactly the same as when he left. It is not. The present has also changed the recent past. In complete and utter frustration, Constantius despairs.

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The past changing in the face of the present is as true for me, as a narrative writer, as it was for Constantius. And sometimes I despair as well. When I look
back upon my personal narrative and autoethnographic writing, sometimes I think to myself:

*Wow. You missed the point.*

*or*

*That’s not what was really going on there.*

*or*

*That interpretation is no longer valid.*

*or*

*I wasn’t really fair to that person.*

*or*

*Damn. I wish I could rewrite that.*

* * *

All autoethnographies are about the past because narrative is the mainstay of how we make sense of our identities within our social contexts. The stories I tell are fluid, and that fluidity is necessary, for “the more we shrink and harden our ways of telling, the more starved and constipated we become” (Mair, 1989, p. 2). My autoethnographic work about the past, about identity, about *home* is, as Carolyn Ellis (2009) reminds us, always open to revision(s). That doesn’t mean my autoethnographies are lies, or that I am a liar. Rather, it means they are “truth Troubled” (Tullis Owen, McRae, Adams, & Vitale, 2009): that just as I am incomplete, so are they. They are made up of fragments, an idea to which I will return momentarily.

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Precisely because the home touches so centrally on our personal lives, any attempt to develop a dispassionate social scientific analysis inevitably stimulates emotional and deeply fierce argument and disagreement. (Saunders & Williams, 1988, p. 91)

What exactly does questing about home and identity actually signify? When I am homesick, I long for a place to which I cannot return. As a recent trip back to Middlesex, New Jersey, the town I grew up in, reminded me, there’s no “there” there (Herrmann, 2014b). Looking for home in the past is not possible. As Heidegger (1962) noted, both the past and present are inhospitable, always in motion, being pushed forward by my being in time. This is what it means to be *Dasein*, and *Dasein’s* task—my task and your task—is to live and make a path through the inhospitality
where there is no sanctuary. We are like Antigone, who was “never at home with the living nor with the dead” (Kierkegaard, 1944, p. 159).

Questing, accordingly, is part of our being, because we are always looking for a place called home, a place of rest, a place where everything would just stop. It is not, however, to be found. This questing is never solely an intellectual or rational task. It is also an emotional, meaning-making, and essential existential task. Every instant can potentially awaken us to our own existence, to our homelessness. We are caught in a dilemma. We can be awakened to and made aware of the limits of our own existence and yet wish to escape the anxiety that comes with constant change and our eventual finitude. Yet, every instant also allows the possibility of transformation. As Hoffman (2004) notes,

From an existential perspective, what becomes important is learning to sit with the anxiety and listen to it. This is not easy and takes time, but with work anxiety can be changed from something to be feared to something that is welcomed as an opportunity for learning and growth.

This is another connection between existential anxiety and autoethnographic and personal narrative writing. They can be epiphanal. They are places of possibility, of change, and of conversion.

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This is what I thought: for the most banal even to become an adventure, you must (and this is enough) begin to recount it. This is what fools people: a man is always a teller of tales, he sees everything that happens to him through them; and he tries to live his own life as if he were telling a story. But you have to choose: live or tell. (Sartre, 1965, p. 56)

Sorry Jean-Paul, you’re wrong. This is not an either/or. We can choose to live and tell. As Kierkegaard (1959) notes in his journals, “The beauty of a good story is its openness – the way you or I or anyone reading it can take it in and use it for ourselves” (p. 164). Thinking with and through stories is to experience the illumination of emic and tacit knowledge, verisimilitude, resonance, and dialogic understanding as we relate the stories of our identities within the cultural surround in which we are embedded with our fellow travelers and storytellers (Goodall, 2004; Krizek, 2003; Poulos, 2010, 2014).

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A quest. A mission. A search. An expedition. We are, whether we want to admit it to ourselves or not, “laying down a path in walking” (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991, p. 214). This is not just the impetus for our individual lives, but how I write every time I sit to start a personal narrative or autoethnography. (Now I am lying). It is how I sit down to write anything. I never know where the writing quest ends when I first sit down and stare at the cursor on the blank page. This piece, for example, started as a personal narrative, but as I wrote and thought, it morphed into this philosophical inquiry about narratives and quests. (Sorry!) The moment I sit in front of that blank page, I am unmoored. I am anxious. I am angst-laden. Yet I write. As Varela et al. (1991) note, “we are always constrained by the path we have laid down, but there is no ultimate ground to prescribe the steps that we take” (p. 214.) When I write, I traverse and wander and wonder, far from where I started, and I cannot go back. I can edit, but I cannot go back. There is not a “back” to go to. Writing exacerbates my sense of homelessness. For me, being homeless feels like home.

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I am a homeless person.

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That’s seems like an odd and perhaps insensitive thing to say, especially when we consider that 1,750,000 Americans are homeless, that 40% of those are veterans, and that worldwide 100,000,000 people are homeless (National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, 2013; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2013). Let me be clear, I am not houseless, but I have yet to find a home. One identifying summary of my life, since my family lost our home in Middlesex, NJ, in 1991, is being transient. I’ve moved a lot.

Union City, NJ, to Jersey City, NJ, back to Union City, NJ, to Lookout Mountain, GA, Chattanooga, TN, back to Lookout Mountain, to Hixson, TN, to Saint Louis, MO, to Granite City, IL, to Lutz, FL, to Columbia, MO, to another place in Columbia, MO, to Caseyville, IL, to Johnson City, TN. As I write this, I am moving to yet another place in Johnson City. Fifteen moves in 23 years. That averages out to just about one and a half years per place. I am not indigent, but like the personal narratives and autoethnographies I write, I never know where I will end up.

Moving and writing have another similarity. Sometimes I moved for a job. Sometimes I moved for not having a job. Sometimes I moved to live with an apartment mate. Sometimes I moved to live alone. Sometimes I moved for school. Sometimes I simply moved. I’ll move again. When I write, sometimes I write to explore theories
through personal narrative. Sometimes I write to find out how I could have done a relationship “better” or differently. Sometimes I write to connect with my family. Sometimes I write to explore the quest(ions) that do not have an answer. Most questions, it turns out, don’t have an answer. Most quests about these questions are metaphysically, epistemologically, and axiologically unanswerable. They are partial, incomplete, subject to reinterpretation, and, like me, transient and ongoing.

Transient as a personal signifier means I’m fleeting, temporary, momentary, brief, impermanent, transitory, short-lived, ephemeral, and evanescent. That I do not endure, that I lack gumption, that I am not constant or consistent. That I am not stable, or I do not have endurance. That I am but a fragment. That sounds like a descriptor of an incomplete narrative. That is apropos, because until I draw my last breath, my narrative is incomplete.

Transient also describes my writing. I have half-finished pieces on my computer and on my desk. I have notes and scraps and fragments and scribblings and quotes. They don’t yet have a home. They do not yet have a place. They are homeless. They are unemployed. They are “unemplotted.” And they remain homeless, until like Dash Hammett’s Sam Spade—the Humphrey Bogart version, of course—I pick them up, investigate them, and make them part of my quest to write. These fragments make it all the way to the end, and become significant, finding a home in a larger narrative.

Except that isn’t true.

Some end up dead, like the victims in *The Maltese Falcon*. Not every scribbling and fragment finds a home in a larger narrative. That doesn’t mean they are insignificant. Fragments can be extremely significant. Ask the veteran with fragments of shrapnel near his spine. Ask the woman who went through a double mastectomy and looks at her fragmented body in the mirror. Ask the person in the midst of a fragmented chaos narrative if it is not significant. Ask the people whose fragmented dreams awaken them in the middle of the night in a cold sheen of sweat. Ask the persons with dissociative identity disorder about how insignificant their fragmented memories are. Ask the sufferer of Alzheimer’s disease and their families about how supposedly unimportant fragments are. As Herbig (2014) notes:

I am particularly vested in the notion that fragments circulate within finished pieces of discourse. Approaching a “text” as fragmented implies that the critic adopts the position that people contribute to discourse through the crafting of existing materials. (p. 34)
We too often ignore the fragments, instead looking at and for the larger narrative and discourse in which everything makes sense. Except, like those homeless fragments of writing on my computer, some of our experiences don’t make sense either.

Fragment. To break, shatter, crumble, disintegrate. Fragmented describes our postmodern identity. One ongoing quest is the quest to create and maintain an individual identity, to be an “I” that acts, and thinks, and does. This quest is relatively new. Individuals used to know who they were as part of the great chain of being, embedded in the discourses of community and commonality. While philosophers and psychologists argued about what constituted the self, the existence of the self itself was never questioned. No longer. Our postmodern self is “selved,” protean, improvisational, saturated; it connects at differing intersectionalities and is constructed by different and oftentimes contradictory discourses (Eisenberg, 2007; Foucault, 1993; Gergen, 2000; Lifton, 1999; McCall, 2005). Fragmented.

In ethnography, narrative, and autoethnography, we worry about “othering” a great deal. However, as ethnographers, we only see fragments of people. We may only see one fragment as a person walks by us on the street. We see more fragments with our colleagues, our coworkers, and our students. We see more fragments of our friends, our parents, our siblings, and our children. We see even more fragments of our lovers and partners. Out in the field, our field note scribblings are fragments. Our expanded notes are simply larger fragments. We see roles, functions, and people in social situations. That is all we can attest to.

However, as Sartre (1965) points out, “The function explains nothing” (p. 129). We know individuals are not reducible to the fragments that we observe. Nor are we reducible to the fragments we call our own memories. Our memories and recollections—these brain droppings—are the fragments that “stick out.” (If I asked you about what you had for lunch two Tuesdays ago, you would likely respond with, “I have no idea.” Or to put it another way, as my 85-year-old stepfather Charles Cromeans says, “Life is one crisis after another.”) Likewise, individuals are not reducible to the narratives we write about them, just as we are not reducible to the narratives we write about ourselves. All we have are fragments.

Still, even as a fragmented self, I want my writing—and I want—to be authentic. What does authenticity mean in a world of fragments? Can I write fragmentedly? A conundrum. As de Freitas and Paton (2009) ask:

Is there any way of writing the “fragmented self”? That is, can we represent a conflicted identity, a self with multiple affiliations, a self that is transient, a self whose shape is contingent on the given contexts in which it emerges, without,
in the same pen stroke, confirming or consolidating some kind of wholeness or unity associated with that self or identity, and thereby undermine our attempt to depict or portray the fragmentation? (p. 487)

The idea of authenticity is not, of course, new. Conceptually, it can be traced back to the ancient Greek Temple of Apollo in Delphi, which bore the inscription “Know Thyself” (Parke & Wormell, 1956). In fact, the Greek authento (to have full power over oneself) is the root of our word authentic (Trilling, 1972). According to Aristotle, self-realization is tied to our “eudaimonia,” a form of happiness that results from our performing activities that reflect our true callings, which are aligned with virtue (Kernis & Goldman, 2006). The idea of authenticity means owning one’s personal experiences, including one’s ideas, feelings, needs, wishes, and opinions, and acting in a self-aware manner that expresses one’s true self (Guignon, 2003).

With the ideas of questing and authenticity come another set of questions. A hashtag I often see on Twitter is #firstworldproblems. “My new sneakers hurt my feet. #firstworldproblems.” “I am having a frizzy hair day. #firstworldproblems.” The hashtag represents dilemmas that are often frivolous compared with the serious plight of people without shelter, or in war-torn areas, or places with severe famines. Questing and authenticity are two aspects of our Western, sociohistorical surround, particularly the commonly held narrative of The American Dream, with its rugged individualism and public, and particularly, economic success (Nelson, 1993; Thio, 1972). “Tales of heroes who succeed by single handedly overcoming obstacles and realizing individualized dreams,” Herrmann and Herbig (2015) note, “have become the standard for recounting the successes of Americans both male and female, but those tales reflect a standard for success that is largely based in masculinity” (p. 93). Rather than simply an individualized characteristic, questing is one into which we are socialized: to strive, to accomplish, to succeed, and to be authentic while doing so.

This idea of authenticity, however, puts us on dangerous ground. First of all, do we ever “have full power over” ourselves? That would ignore much of our facticity, as well as the idea that we exist within a sociohistorical surround. Authenticity is also a dangerous idea because it sounds like what religious individuals name “a calling” (Bochner, 2008). Indeed, Weber (1958) described the early construct of a calling as doing morally responsible work through divinely given inspiration. We abandoned the religious overtones of a calling, now characterized by an individual doing work out of a strong sense of inner direction (Davidson & Caddell, 1994; Wrzesniewski, 2003).
Implicit in the concept of authenticity is unity, either with God, or with our inner nature, or with our calling, or with our self, all composed within our own narrative. In our search for authenticity, what we appear to be striving for is narrative unity.

Even in the deepest recesses of our psyches there are no experiences which, if evoked, will reveal our true identities. But the quest for the self is itself a form of self-care . . . we are condemned to a quest for meaning whose meaning is that our human nature is continually being reconstituted by the forms that we create along the way. (Foucault, as cited in Hutton, 1988, p. 140)

Herein lies a dilemma. To go back to the quest stories I recounted at the beginning, the main proposition made popular by MacIntyre (1984) is that living a life is like living a unified literary narrative with a beginning, a middle, and an end. MacIntyre took cultural stories, literary stories, including popular culture stories, and based his idea of life narrative upon them.

Except life is not a unified (literary or otherwise) narrative. As Ricoeur (1992) notes:

There is nothing in real life that serves as a narrative beginning; memory is lost in the hazes of early childhood; my birth and, with greater reason, the act through which I was conceived belong more to the history of others – in this case, to my parents – than to me. (p. 60)

This is not unusual. However, for autoethnographers and narrative life writers, this is problematic, for at some point the beginning of the narrative vanishes, fades, and memory becomes a nothingness (Sartre, 1993). For example, I am unable to recall my surprise birthday party, although I have evidence that this party happened. As Bochner (2014) notes about writing his own life narrative,

Every time I thought I had located the starting point I recalled a meaningful event that had preceded it. I felt as though I were in the middle of an infinite regress. The apparent certainty with which I had begun turned swiftly into a muddle of confusion and uncertainty. (p. 14)

Few of us know exactly where our narrative and our narrative identity begins.

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I am 5 years old, and I am playing in the side yard of my great-grandpa’s three-story farmhouse. Suddenly, out of the blue, I am attacked by a blue jay. The blue jay bombards me over and over like some crazed kamikaze. I’m running, crying, my hands
seemingly covering my head and flailing simultaneously as I try to protect myself and swat the bird. It isn't until I run onto the porch of great-grandpa's home that I find sanctuary.

* * *

This is my story. However, I am not positive if I remember it. I am not certain if it is a “real” memory. It’s been told to me, and told about me (while I was in the presence of others) so many times that I am unsure if this is actually my memory. It might be my mother’s story, or my Nanny’s story, or even my great-grandfather’s story about me. This is what psychologists label a quasimemory or retrocognition (Shoemaker, 1970). Quasimemories are similar and sometimes indistinguishable from ordinary memories, but they originate in someone other than the individual who remembers. (I, of course, want to ask these psychologists that if a quasimemory is indistinguishable from a real memory, how the hell can we know, and does it matter?) Yet it is now, 40-something years later, indelibly my memory. It feels like my memory. I remember it as it happened to me. It has the same veracity and authenticity as any of my memories do. I tell the story from my memory. It is a fragment from my past. It is my story even if I am not its author.

Death also poses a problem for MacIntyre’s conception of the unified narrative self, and for all life writers. “As for my death, it will finally be recounted only in the stories of those who survive me. I am always moving toward my death, and this prevents me from ever grasping it as a narrative end” (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 160). My death is not an event in my life. My death happens at the exact point where I am incapable of narration. As Lippitt (2007) notes, “My death can be experienced only from a perspective outside my life: it can be an event in the lives of the descendants and friends I leave behind . . . but not in mine” (p. 45). Like the beginnings of our lives, the ends of our lives are fragments. They become stories told by others (see Bochner, 2002; Ellis, 2008; Herrmann & DiFate, 2014; Krizek, 2014).

Our life narratives are not unified but rather are bracketed at the beginning and at the end by other peoples’ narratives about us. Other individuals are involved in writing our narratives with us, for us, and sometimes in contradistinction to us. For a contemporary polymediated example, how many times has part of your narrative, which you posted on Facebook, Twitter, or other online spaces, suddenly been “liked,” complimented, attacked, disregarded, contradicted, or disconfirmed by someone posting in your comments section (Herbig, Herrmann & Tyma, 2015)? And what about the annual memorials that appear on social media pages of the deceased on what would have been their birthdays (Herrmann, 2014a)? Individuals
help write our narratives for us, not only in the now, but before we existed as separate
individuals, and they will write our narratives after we die. Given this, perhaps as
Herrmann (2012) suggests, the term interpersonal narrative seems more appropriate
than personal narrative.

Our unified life narratives are fragments. They consist of the stories others told,
and will tell, about us. They are created from the fragmented bits and pieces of our
own memories. They are fragmented by and through the various roles we play in
postmodern society. Our past is changed, and revised, and fragmented by the present.
In a world where identities are fragmented, perhaps that disavowed and disgraced
idea of modernity, the existential subject—one who acts, and thinks, and moves, and
creates—is a useful fiction after all.

And as in fiction, perhaps the best we can do is gather up our fragments, put
them carefully in our satchels, and quest through our homelessness.

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**About the Author**

Andrew F. Herrmann (PhD, University of South Florida) is an assistant professor of communication studies at East Tennessee State University, where he teaches organizational, group, and leadership communication.