OUP UNCORRECTED PROOF – FIRSTPROOFS, Fri Oct 07 2016, NEWGEN

PART II
The Ethics of Narrating Life

acprof-9780190256654.indd 73 10/7/2016 12:51:50 PM

OUP UNCORRECTED PROOF – FIRSTPROOFS, Fri Oct 07 2016, NEWGEN

acprof-9780190256654.inddd 74 10/7/2016 12:51:50 PM

CHAPTER 5

On the Use and Abuse of Narrative for Life

Toward an Ethics of Storytelling

HANNA MERETOJA

Echoing Friedrich Nietzsche's analysis of how history can be either beneficial or harmful for life, the title of this chapter indicates my aim to delineate a framework for an ethics of storytelling from the perspective that narrative in itself is neither inherently "good" nor "bad" for life—but it *can* be either or both. Over recent years, the debate on the ethical significance of narrative for human existence has been one of the liveliest in the field of interdisciplinary narrative studies, but, as several theorists have argued "for" or " 'against" narrativity, the debate risks suffering from a dichotomous framing that neglects the complexity of the ethical issues involved in the relationship between life and narrative. Against the backdrop of this debate, I would like to argue here for the need to acknowledge *both* the ethical *and* the violent potential of storytelling and be as attentive as possible to their different dimensions.

In order to adequately take into account the complexity of these ethical issues, it is important not only to reflect on them in theoretical terms but also to consider the ethical dimension of narratives in the concrete situations in which they are used and abused. Every ethical situation is singular; hence, there are limits to the extent to which they can be considered in abstraction. This is one major reason why "the imaginative variations

proper to fiction" are a crucial form of ethical inquiry: "The thought experiments we conduct in the great laboratory of the imaginary are also explorations in the realm of good and evil" (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 148). By creating literary worlds in which moral agents act in concrete situations in relation to others, novels have the specific means to explore the ethical complexities of the impact of narratives on our lives. Accordingly, after delineating a theoretical framework for an ethics of storytelling, involving a discussion of the interconnections between the ethical and ontological aspects of conceptualizing narrative in relation to life, I will develop my argument in the light of a recent novel on World War II, Julia Franck's (2007) *Die Mittagsfrau* [The Blind Side of the Heart]. I aim to provide a framework for analyzing both the ethically valuable and the violent effects of narratives on our lives, particularly in relation to a dialogical conception of the subject, which allows us to acknowledge the way in which we are constituted by sociocultural dynamics of power and yet are still capable of moral agency.

FOR AND AGAINST NARRATIVITY

Due to Galen Strawson's (2004) influential article "Against Narrativity," scholars are today frequently grouped into two antithetical slots: proponents and opponents of narrativity. In this article, he draws a dividing line between those who are for and against what he calls the "ethical Narrativity thesis," according to which "experiencing or conceiving one's life as a narrative is a good thing . . . essential to a well-lived life," which he sharply distinguishes from the merely descriptive "psychological Narrativity thesis," according to which "human beings typically see or live or experience their lives as a narrative or story of some sort" (p. 428). Much has been said—and remains to be said—about this conceptual scheme, but, for the purposes of my current argument, two crucial problems need to be singled out. First, I want to argue that the ethical and the descriptive are not as separate as Strawson claims; in order to understand the ethical criticism against narrativity, it is particularly important to pay attention to the often tacit ontological commitments and presuppositions that underlie such criticism. Second, Strawson's conceptual scheme does not allow for the position that I am proposing here: namely, that narratives in themselves are neither "good" nor "bad" but have both ethical and violent potential. In fact, his dichotomous scheme risks obscuring the very complexity of this issue.

Before elaborating on these criticisms, I want to briefly draw attention to an additional problem in Strawson's way of presenting narrativity as an ethical issue. His account—narrative in itself, albeit a fairly playful and

entertaining one—suggests that there were first narrativists whose excessive enthusiasm for narrative then gave rise to a skeptical countermovement (the "against narrativity" movement). In fact, however, there is a long tradition of criticism of narrativity. This criticism gained unprecedented impetus in modernist and avant-garde literatures, and it was continued by an entire array of post-war intellectuals, from Sartre to the *nouveaux romanciers*. These thinkers argued that our experience of the world is fundamentally non-narrative, so there is something profoundly false and dishonest in the way we retrospectively force our experiences into narratives. As Roquentin, the protagonist of Sartre's (1938/1965) *La Nausée* [Nausea] puts it, "you have to choose: to live or to recount" (p. 61); ["il faut choisir: vivre ou raconter" (1938/1978, p. 62)]. Similarly, Roland Barthes and Emmanuel Levinas rejected narrative, regarding it as an ethically questionable mode of appropriation. According to Barthes (1966/1982), narrative presents historical phenomena as if they were natural and necessary and hence speaks the language of "Destiny" (p. 94), and Levinas (1948/1998) describes narrative as that which turns temporal beings into fixed, frozen images and lends an air of inevitability to the events recounted, "reverting freedom into necessity" (pp. 138–139). For Levinas (1961/1991), otherness is "unnarratable," "indescribable in the literal sense of the term, unconvertible into a history" (p. 166); in narratives, the essences of beings are "fixed, assembled in a tale" (p. 42).[1] Galen Strawson (2004) and Crispin Sartwell (2000), who currently epitomize the "against narrativity movement", repeat—like Louis Mink (1970) and Hayden White (1981) before them—many arguments already presented by the aforementioned French writers and theorists, among others. These early twentieth-century and post-war criticisms first made the problem of narrative visible, and this problematization was crucial in making possible both the return of storytelling in the self-reflexive forms of the "literary narrative turn" and the "theoretical narrative turn" of the human sciences. These turns, integral to which was the articulation of the significance of narrative for human existence, then provoked the Strawsonian attack "against narrativity."[2]

In understanding both narrativist and anti-narrativist positions, it is essential to see that the way in which one approaches the ethical question concerning the value of narrative for human existence is crucially affected by one's ontological assumptions concerning the nature of human existence, experience, and what one considers to be "real" in general. Those arguing for and against narrativity have very different tacit presuppositions concerning these ontological questions. Most thinkers who emphasize the ethical questionability of narrative see the relation between life and narrative as one of *imposition*—of imposing order on something that

acprof-9780190256654.indd 77 10/7/2016 12:51:50 PM

inherently lacks it. Contemporary anti-narrativists usually see life as a temporal process, flow, or flux on which narrative imposes order, meaning, and structure, and they regard this imposition as problematic on both ontological and ethical grounds. Hayden White (1981), for example, moves swiftly from the ontological assertion that the logic of reality is non-narrative to the normative claim that "real events should simply be; . . . they should not pose as the *tellers* of a narrative" (p. 4). The same applies to Strawson (2004), whose ontological argument (masked as a purely descriptive one) clearly has a normative undertone and pathos; for example, he asserts that modern neuroscience has shown that the reminiscence of one's past and the telling of it necessarily leads to its distortion; hence, "the more you recall, retell, narrate yourself, the further you risk moving away from accurate self-understanding, from the truth of your being" (p. 447).[3]

Underlying much of the anti-narrativist criticism is the idea that, by imposing order, narratives falsify and distort reality and the human experience of the world. Such arguments usually depend in one way or another on the problematic assumption that "pure experience" is immediately given here and now—that is, these arguments ultimately rest on the empiricist-positivistic "myth of the given." Critics of narrativity typically believe that there are "raw," disconnected, immediately given units of experience that are more "real" than experiences that are narratively interpreted or remembered. By contrast, from an anti-positivistic perspective, such as the one represented by the hermeneutic-phenomenological tradition of thought, we are, as Charles Taylor (1985) puts it, "self-interpreting animals," that is, beings who are constituted in a process of interpreting our experiences, and narrative interpretation plays an integral role in this process. Narrative hermeneutics is an approach that shuns a strict opposition between life and narrative and emphasizes that they mutually impregnate each other: there is no "pure experience" untainted by the structure of interpretation. We are always already entangled in stories, and we constantly reinterpret our experiences through them.[4] Acknowledging that narratives affect how we experience things in the first place problematizes hierarchical models of conceptualizing the relation between narrative and experience, models in which experience comes first and narrative afterward. From a hermeneutic perspective, experience and narrative are entangled in such a way that there is no reason to dismiss narrative interpretations as an inherently ethically suspicious matter of distortion.

Those who agree on the ontological significance of narrative for human existence mostly also stress the ethical potential of narrativity, but different theorists foreground different aspects of this potential. For example, Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor, and Paul Ricoeur suggest that narrative

OUP UNCORRECTED PROOF – FIRSTPROOFS, Fri Oct 07 2016, NEWGEN

self-interpretation is the condition of possibility for being able to make sense of one's life as a meaningful continuum for which one can take responsibility. Ricoeur (1992) formulates this idea thus: "How, indeed, could a subject of action give an ethical character to his or her life taken as a whole, if this life were not gathered together in some way, and how could this occur if not, precisely, in the form of a narrative?" (p. 158).[5] In another passage, Ricoeur (1991) identifies "a life *examined*, in the sense borrowed from Socrates" with "a life *narrated*" (p. 435), and suggests that it is only when we do not see our lives as a mere series of events happening to us that it is possible to posit ourselves as the responsible subjects of our lives. Moreover, he suggests that narratives can provide us with "imaginative variations," which allow us to imagine different possibilities of being and provoke us "to be and to act differently" (1988, p. 249; 1992, p. 148).

Other theorists have stressed that narratives allow us to make sense of our experiences in such a way that makes them bearable for us and enables us to communicate them to others. Walter Benjamin (1936/1999), in "The Storyteller" ["Der Erzähler"], was among the first thinkers to conceptualize storytelling in terms of exchanging experiences: "Experience which is passed on from mouth to mouth is the source from which all storytellers have drawn" (p. 84). For Benjamin, however, the rise of the modern novel manifests a crisis of the art of (oral) storytelling, a crisis of the "communicability of experience" that came to characterize the modern age and culminated in World War I and its aftermath (p. 93).

Arendt (1968*a*), in turn, draws on Benjamin's ideas but does not share his belief in the end of the era of storytelling because she does not believe that we could ever get rid of what she sees as a basic human need for stories. She develops the idea that, in storytelling, we make sense of our experiences by linking them together into a meaningful account, by shaping them into an interpretation that can be talked about and shared with others. It is this process of sharing that helps us bear both our painful and joyous experiences:

> Who says what is . . . always tells a story, and in this story the particular facts lose their contingency and acquire some humanly comprehensible meaning. It is perfectly true that "all sorrows can be borne if you put them into a story or tell a story about them," in the words of Isak Dinesen. . . . She could have added that joy and bliss, too, become bearable and meaningful for men only when they can talk about them and tell them as a story. (pp. 261–262)

In addition, Arendt links the ethical potential of narratives to the way in which they allow us to relate ethically to others and to acknowledge them

acprof-9780190256654.indd 79 10/7/2016 12:51:51 PM

OUP UNCORRECTED PROOF – FIRSTPROOFS, Fri Oct 07 2016, NEWGEN

in their otherness. She suggests, drawing on both Benjamin and Heidegger, that only storytelling allows us to acknowledge the lives of others as significant and unique without trying to appropriate them through abstract conceptual schemes. Arendt (1998) famously writes: "*Who* somebody is or was we can know only by knowing the story of which he is himself the hero—his biography, in other words" (p. 186). In her account, acting in the world in relation to other people is the way we reveal our uniqueness to others; whereas conceptual representations and definitions reduce the unique "who" to a "what," she suggests that a story in which the "who" is presented as acting in the world can give expression to the unique, unexchangeable "who" revealed in that action (see pp. 180–181).

Both Arendt and Adriana Cavarero (2000) link the desire for a narrative to this idea; it is a desire to hear others tell stories of us in ways that give us a unique identity and make our lives more than mere empirical existence. They suggest that we are unique first and foremost in the sense that each individual can give birth to the unpredictable; we are unique in our capacity to initiate something new as we act in the world in relation to others, and stories can convey this uniqueness. The key to why Arendt does not see narrative per se as ethically harmful is her belief that narratives allow us to give meaning to things, events, and persons without confining them to a definition. In this respect, her conception of narrative is diametrically opposed to Levinas's (1966/1991) view of narratives as violent, appropriative forms of "fixing" the essences of things and persons (p. 42). According to Arendt (1968*b*), "storytelling reveals meaning without committing the error of defining it" (p. 105). It is far from obvious what Arendt means by this, but she seems to be suggesting that narratives are capable of presenting the temporal, individual subject acting in the world in concrete, complex situations, in a process of becoming, rather than as appropriated and perceived in atemporal, conceptual, abstract terms.

Arendt (1995) believes that the desire for narrative will always remain with us, but she also acknowledges that our capacity to tell stories is not self-evident:

> I wish you would write about What it is in people that makes them want a story. The telling of tales. . . . One can't say how life is, how chance or fate deals with people, except by telling the tale. . . . What made the tales disappear? The overpowering events of this century which made all ordinary events that concerned only you look too puny to be worth being told? (p. 295)

The idea that something is "worth telling" is pivotal to the Arendtian notion of narrative. As she sees it, to have one's story told is integral to

acprof-9780190256654.indd 80 10/7/2016 12:51:51 PM

OUP UNCORRECTED PROOF – FIRSTPROOFS, Fri Oct 07 2016, NEWGEN

human dignity. This mode of thought underpins various emancipatory movements that have insisted that such marginalized and silenced groups as women or the colonized need to have their stories told and heard. It is significant that, in the quotation, Arendt also acknowledges that historical circumstances affect our ability to tell and receive stories.

It is crucial for an ethics of storytelling to be attentive to the ways in which narrative practices always take place in social contexts that are shaped by relations of power. In Amy Shuman's (2005) words, storytelling is "part of cultural modes of communication and social relationships, and no story is told de novo, outside of these modes and relationships" (p. 23). Such a perspective allows us to acknowledge how stories can just as well perpetuate oppressive social practices as they can be empowering tributes to the uniqueness of individuals. Shuman (2005) pays particular attention to the way in which telling the stories of other people's lives involves ethical issues that concern claims of entitlement. When we narrate other people's experiences, there is always the question of who has the right to tell whose story and on what terms. Every version of a story is a different interpretation, and these interpretations and the dialogue and struggle between them take place in social contexts. What I would like to argue here is that conceptualizing narratives as practices of interpretation allows us to see how it is inherent within every narrative that it can be told in different ways and how our condition as "storytelling animals" is one of always being in the middle of a dialogue and struggle of interpretations.

NARRATIVE, LIFE, AND THE TRIPLE HERMENEUTIC

In the debate on the relation between life and narrative, to my mind *both* the tendency to draw a sharp opposition between life and narrative *and* the tendency to equate them are ethically problematic. First, if life and narrative are too sharply separated, inadequate attention tends to be paid to how profoundly narratives affect our whole being in the world with others. Generally, theorists who take seriously the ontological significance of narrative for human existence consider the dichotomous question of whether we "live" or "tell" narratives to be problematic because they believe that living and telling about it are interwoven and mutually condition one another. Even if narration is a matter of *organizing* events and experiences into meaningfully connected accounts, this does not necessarily mean that narratives *falsify* experience or are somehow external or secondary in respect to it. Instead, life and its narrative interpretation are always intertwined.

acprof-9780190256654.indd 81 10/7/2016 12:51:51 PM

As Jerome Bruner (1987) puts it: "life is not 'how it was' but how it is interpreted and reinterpreted, told and retold" (p. 31). If "life in itself" involves a process of constant (re)interpretation and sense-making, it is problematic to posit an opposition between living and telling by arguing that only the latter involves interpretation.

Second, only if we think of narratives as *interpretations* of experience, instead of equating them with experience per se, can we compare different interpretations of the same events, evaluate their validity, and propose alternative interpretations. This becomes impossible if narrative is simply identified with the temporal structure of experience, as David Carr (1991), for example, seems to do when he suggests that "no elements enter our experience . . . unstoried or unnarrativized" (p. 68). In order to preserve the specificity of the concepts of experience and narrative, and to be attentive to their tensional relationship, I consider it important to acknowledge that even if all experience has an interpretative structure and even if narrative interpretation of experience is a crucial aspect of our being in the world, this does not mean that all experience is narrative.

However, hermeneutic approaches to narrative should articulate more clearly the idea that narrative is a matter of interpreting experience. I have sought to do this on the basis of the phenomenological-hermeneutic way of conceptualizing experience as having the structure of interpretation, namely the hermeneutic structure of "understanding-something-as-something" ("das hermeneutische Etwas-als-etwas-Verstehen"; Gadamer, 1993, p. 339). Drawing on the Heideggerian idea of understanding as the basic human mode of being in the world, this tradition emphasizes that even the most elementary perception interprets reality by structuring and giving it shape (see Gadamer, 1990, pp. 96–97). I have argued that cultural (such as literary and historical) narratives can be conceived of as having the structure of a "double hermeneutic" because they concern the interpretation of experiences that are already interpretations.[6] These second-order interpretations weave together experiences by showing how they are related and by creating meaningful connections between them. When we reinterpret our everyday experiences, identities, and life plans in the light of these cultural narratives, this process can be seen to embody a "triple hermeneutic." I propose that narrative hermeneutics based on this idea can articulate how narrative and interpretation are intertwined, why they are not the same thing, and how we are constituted in a dialogic relation to culturally mediated narrative models through which we constantly reinterpret our experiences. According to this approach, the reciprocal movement of reinterpreting cultural narratives in concrete life situations and reinterpreting our experiences in the light of cultural narrative models is

constitutive of what Bakhtin (1984) characterizes as the "dialogic fabric of human life" (p. 293).[7]

The dialogical conception of the subject engaged in a triple-hermeneutic process of narrative interpretation allows us to shift our attention from the argument over whether narrative sense-making is a "good" or a "bad" thing to the complex dynamic in which storytelling has both ethical and violent potential. Whereas narrativists frequently seem to suggest that narrative self-interpretation almost automatically makes life more ethical (Ricoeur, for example, in identifying a "narrated life" with an "examined life"), anti-narrativists tend to suggest that narrative self-interpretation is always ethically problematic because it distracts us from what Strawson (2004) calls the "truth of your being" (p. 447). It seems to me that both the opponents and proponents of narrativity frequently pay insufficient attention to the way in which narrative models of sense-making are always socially constituted and embedded in relations of power and gain meaning only when they are interpreted in concrete life situations. Shifting our attention in this direction allows us to see that the question of the relation between narrative and life is always also a question of the subject's relation to social practices and dynamics of power and that, in this context, the ethically crucial question is not whether narratives are "good" or "bad," but rather how individuals and communities *use, reproduce*, and *transform* cultural narratives in constructing their identities and interpreting their experiences.

Here, I want to draw attention to the relevance of literature as a mode of thinking about the ethics of storytelling in its complexity and to the specific ethical potential of literary narratives in enabling us to imagine different modes of experience, thus opening up new possibilities of thinking, acting, and being. Literature does not merely illustrate or communicate pre-given ethical positions, but instead functions as a medium of ethical inquiry in its own right and explores ethical issues in ways that can provide us with completely new perspectives on them or even change our view of what ethics means.[8] Literature can expand the culturally available repertoire of narrative models in relation to which we can (re)interpret our experiences and lives. It can also function as a form of alternative historiography that provides us with experiential access to the past, thereby helping us to imagine both what has been and what could be. To a certain extent, historiography proper also has the task of making sense of the past from the perspective of human experience, as Arendt (1968*a*) points out: "The transformation of the given raw material of sheer happenings which the historian, like the fiction writer (a good novel is by no means a simple concoction or a figment of pure fantasy), must effect is closely akin to the poet's transfiguration of

OUP UNCORRECTED PROOF – FIRSTPROOFS, Fri Oct 07 2016, NEWGEN

moods or movements of the heart" (p. 262). Literature, however, has even more liberty to venture into the realm of the imaginary as it explores experientially what it was like to live in a certain historical world and, against this backdrop, reflects on the use and abuse of narrative for life.

THE ETHICAL AND VIOLENT POTENTIAL OF NARRATIVE

In Germany, literature has played a major role in dealing with the traumatic legacy of World War II, and each new generation of writers has brought new perspectives to the negotiation of this legacy. Many contemporary novelists acknowledge that it is ethically important to try to imagine the experience of both the victims and the perpetrators in order to avoid black-and-white constellations of thought that brush away evil by demonizing the Nazis and by refusing to recognize in them anything similar to us. Julia Franck is one of the most interesting of the younger generation of contemporary German novelists, and *Die Mittagsfrau* [The Blind Side of the Heart] (2007/2009), in particular, has received high critical acclaim, including the prestigious German Book Prize. In this novel, Franck explores women's experience of the war, a realm of experience that, she believes, novelists have either largely neglected or dealt with through strategies of victimization or glorification. She asserts that in the process of trying to understand the Holocaust through the means of literary imagination, it is necessary to think beyond the dichotomous categories of the "good victim" (typically a Jew) and the "evil perpetrator" (typically a Nazi).[9]

The central questions underlying *Die Mittagsfrau* include the following: What role does storytelling play in our lives and how do narrative practices affect us in different historical and cultural situations? What does war do to us, and, in particular, how did women in different positions experience World War II? How was it possible that, after the war, there were women who felt that they were no longer able to be mothers and ended up abandoning their children? Julia Franck's own father experienced such an abandonment. Franck's grandmother survived the war with her son (Franck's father), but when the war was over, she left her 7-year-old sitting on a bench at a railway station, told him to wait, and never returned. Franck wanted to try to imagine how this was possible: how could anyone arrive at such a desperate and destructive decision? Her grandmother was by no means alone in her actions. Not only after World War II, but also after other military conflicts, such as those in Bosnia and Rwanda, war babies in particular have frequently been abandoned, including children who were not born out of direct sexual violence.[10]

acprof-9780190256654.indd 84 10/7/2016 12:51:51 PM

Franck's novel begins with a prologue in which the protagonist, a young half-Jewish woman called Helene, abandons her 7-year-old son, Peter, at a railway station (along with the address of his relatives, as the reader later finds out). What follows is the story of Helene's life up to that point, a story through which the novel asks whether or not it is possible to understand such a decision by following her preceding traumatic experiences in the given historical context. Helene's father is fatally wounded in World War I, and her mother is traumatized by having lost four sons, whom she mourns so much that she fails to be emotionally available to her two daughters who are still alive. She remains unstable, locked in her room, and refuses to talk to anyone. The nanny, Marie, who takes care of the daughters, keeps telling them an old Slavic legend according to which Lady Midday, or the Noonday Witch, "appears in the harvest fields at noon and can confuse your mind or even kill you, unless you hold her attention for an hour" (p. 136) by telling stories to her. Marie explains to the girls that their mother just refused to talk to the Noonday Witch:

> Her lady, as she called the girls' mother, just wouldn't speak to the spirit. . . . There was nothing to be done about it . . . although all her lady had to do was talk to the Noonday Witch. . . . Just passing on a little wisdom . . . Martha and Helene had known the tale of the Noonday Witch as long as they could remember; there was something comforting about it, because it suggested that their mother's confused state of mind was merely a curse that could easily be lifted. (p. 136)[11]

This mythical narrative functions for the girls as a model for interpreting their experiences, and, at the same time, it has a consoling effect, helping them to bear a painful experience.[12] Their childhood and youth is also structured in other ways by the stories that surround them; novels from their father's library in particular provide them with mirrors in which to reflect on their own being and imagine different courses of life. They secretly steal "treasures" from there, such as Heinrich von Kleist's *Penthesilea: A Tragedy*, which Helene tucks under her apron; in her room "her familiar friends were waiting, Young Werther and the Marquise of O." (p. 120).[13]

Literary narratives play a crucial role in opening up new worlds for Helene and in helping her imagine a future for herself in a dialogue with others. Especially at bedtime, Martha tells Helene stories about people she knows, including young women who have studied to become teachers or other professionals. These stories lead them to imagine a future in which Helene, too, will study at the university: "When Martha painted such a picture of her future, Helene held her breath, hoping Martha wouldn't stop telling that story, would go on and on, and picture Helene

OUP UNCORRECTED PROOF – FIRSTPROOFS, Fri Oct 07 2016, NEWGEN

studying human anatomy some day in a huge lecture room at Dresden University" (p. 49).[14]

Hence, *Die Mittagsfrau* agrees, to a certain extent, both with the Arendtian idea that narratives can make painful experiences bearable and with the Ricoeurian idea that narratives may help individuals to imagine different possibilities of being. What it also indicates, however, is that narratives do not necessarily make a life ethical in the way that Ricoeur seems to suggest when he identifies a narrated life with an examined and hence ethically superior life. Helene is highly self-reflective, but this does not save her. From early on, she knows that there is something very wrong with her mother, but the story of the Noonday Witch is also a way of avoiding proper engagement with the unbearably painful experience of being emotionally abandoned. Occasionally, she acknowledges her fear that one day her own heart, too, may "go blind": "Her mother could no longer recognize her younger daughter, her heart had gone blind, as Martha said, so that she couldn't see people any more. . . . Helene felt the old fear that some day her heart might go as blind as her mother's" (pp. 114–116).[15] This is what eventually happens to her, and the stories of Lady Midday and the blindness of the heart are of no avail in preventing that. On the contrary, they may even unconsciously lead her to repeat a destructive emotional pattern and to follow her mother's path when the situation becomes desperate enough.

FROM DIALOGUE TO MUTENESS: STORYTELLING AS AN ART OF SURVIVAL

What emerges as ethically decisive in *Die Mittagsfrau* is whether or not it is possible to share experiences with others through storytelling. The novel suggests in a variety of ways that people become who they are in a dialogic relation to others. First, Helene mainly shares her experiences with her sister, but, even more emphatically, the love story between Helene and her fiancée Carl brings out the fundamentally temporal dimension of the process of becoming oneself through exchanging stories with others. Storytelling emerges not only as a way of making the past intelligible to others in the present but also as a way of orienting oneself to the future and imagining possible futures with others. For Helene and Carl, stories expand the present moment both into the past and into the future. They come to know each other by exchanging stories about their pasts and by planning possible futures together, imagining what they can become together and reinventing their lives in relation to the stories they have read. They develop a shared, dialogic narrative imagination, but their sense

acprof-9780190256654.indd 86 10/7/2016 12:51:51 PM

OUP UNCORRECTED PROOF – FIRSTPROOFS, Fri Oct 07 2016, NEWGEN

of "we" (p. 227) not only allows for but celebrates difference: "it was a sense of closeness that did not merely admit or allow little secrets or differences; it unconditionally celebrated those secrets" (p. 261).[16]

However, the dialogic nature of human existence also implies fragility. When Carl dies in a car accident, Helene's sense of the possible is radically diminished, and her experience of time shrinks to the present: "Helene wasn't waiting for anything now. . . . Time contracted, rolled itself up, folded itself" (p. 275):[17]

> Her wonderful idea of studying had now moved into the remote distance; it seemed to Helene as if that wish had belonged to another, earlier life and was not her own any more. Helene no longer wished for anything. The visions that they had developed, discussed and conjured up together were all gone, had vanished with Carl. The man who shared her memories no longer existed. (pp. 281–282)[18]

Helene loses her sense of identity even more dramatically when the Nazis seize power. In order to survive as a half-Jew, she agrees to marry Wilhelm, a member of the Nazi Party, who arranges a false identity for her. She becomes Alice, an Aryan woman, who must remain silent about her true past and identity. This leaves her feeling alienated, as if she were no longer living her own life: "Something like me isn't supposed to exist at all. It burst out of her" (p. 312).[19] This experience of not living one's own life is connected to a sense of not being in contact with one's own emotions and experiences, being unable to communicate them to anyone, and to a concomitant sense of being unable to imagine in what direction one's life could develop: "But she lacked any real idea of what life should and could be" (p. 315).[20]

Nazi Germany is a historical world in which the range of culturally acceptable narrative identities is exceptionally limited. The only "narrative identity" offered for Jews is that of the "parasite" that must be annihilated (p. 353). The non-Jewish Germans, by contrast, develop a strong collective narrative identity, a sense of a "we" in the struggle against the forces that supposedly threaten their Germanness. Helene is perplexed by this "we": "The word Germany was like a clarion call in his mouth. We. Who were *we*?"[21] "We'd all die out otherwise, you know. . . . What did the woman mean by we? The Nordic race, humanity itself?" (p. 379).[22] A counterpart of this German "we" is the Jewish "they," in which Helene cannot recognize herself any more than in the German "we." The novel foregrounds how certain people have the power to tell the official stories that define the "we" and the "they." Already as a child, Helene learned that because of her mother's Jewish background people looked away instead of greeting her on the

acprof-9780190256654.indd 87 10/7/2016 12:51:51 PM

street; similarly, Helene's own son Peter learns that "his father was a hero" and that there is "something suspect" in her mother's "background" (p. 21). The novel thereby shows how narrative practices are intertwined with and embedded in practices of power, how they can be used as vehicles of social ideologies and instrumentalized for violent political purposes, and how thoroughly the narratives in which we are entangled shape the way we see ourselves and others, including those closest to us.

Even more importantly, the novel shows how destructive it can be for individuals to be denied the right to tell their own story—their own version of events from their own perspective. As Peter grows older, Helene finds herself in a situation in which she feels she cannot honestly tell her son about herself: about who she is and where she comes from. She asks herself how she could be a mother to him without being able to tell him anything: "What could she be to her Peter? And how could he be her Peter if she couldn't do anything for him, if she couldn't speak or tell stories or say anything to him?" (p. 390).[23] Helene seems to feel that sharing one's life with the other through generosity, compassion, and storytelling is so important to motherhood that, at this point—perhaps worse than death—when she has no more stories left in her and her life has become a series of losses leading to the annihilation of her entire sense of self and identity, she can no longer be a mother. Although she has repeatedly reflected on the "blindness of the heart" of her own mother, in this desperate situation she cannot stop herself from repeating the family history of abandonment and muteness.

The novel elucidates how narratives mediated by culture and family history affect how we experience things in the first place and how they affect our self-interpretations. These self-interpretations shape the way we act in the world, our behavioral and emotional patterns, and our relationships. There is always a multitude of possible ways of interpreting and narrating a particular experience. As Emily Heavey (Chapter 8) puts it, "stories are constructive, not merely reflective of experience." Helene could narrate her difficult situation in a variety of ways, but she interprets it—through one of the most powerful narratives in her life—as her inevitable descent into the "blindness of the heart." This self-interpretation is integral to her desperate decision to abandon her child.

Here, we can see the logic of the triple hermeneutic at work. Experience is always already interpretative. It is never merely the here and now; it always carries traces of earlier experiences, including our earliest experiences of care, love, abandonment, and loss. Cultural narratives give expression to and shape our interpretation of our interpretative experiences—in Helene's case, particularly the mythical narratives of Lady Midday and the

OUP UNCORRECTED PROOF – FIRSTPROOFS, Fri Oct 07 2016, NEWGEN

blindness of the heart—and we use these cultural narratives to reinterpret and renarrate our experiences in ways that have very tangible real-world effects, both on our own lives and on those of others.

THE CULTURE OF REMAINING SILENT

In the epilogue of *Die Mittagsfrau*, Helene returns and hopes to meet her son who has been taken in by his relatives. However, Peter, who is angry, hurt, and determined to punish his mother by never letting her see him, hides in a barn. The ending suggests that the legacy of silence, muteness, and noncommunication is passed on from one generation to the next, as in fact happened in Franck's own family: her father, Peter, traumatized by his early abandonment, later deserted his own family and led a lonely life in silence. Julia Franck got to know her father only as a teenager, shortly before he died. The novel is an attempt to understand her family's history of abandonment and muteness. However, as an exploration of what Franck describes as a "culture of remaining silent" ("die Kultur des Schweigens"; Meretoja, 2010), it also has wider relevance and can be read as a contribution to the cultural narrative memory that addresses the traumatic legacy of World War II and the Holocaust.

When *Die Mittagsfrau* appeared, some critics asserted that Franck, as a non-Jew, had no right to tell such an ethically ambiguous story of a Jewish woman. In response, Franck told about her Jewish background, which she had not previously considered relevant because she had not thought of herself as a "Jewish novelist." Her case is, in a sense, the reverse of the identity hoaxes that Ashley Barnwell (Chapter 6) explores, yet it confirms the cultural logic that such hoaxes make visible as they "reveal a complex social complicity in deciding which stories we as a society want to hear and who we will allow to tell them." Franck needed to come out as a Jew in order to be allowed to tell the story of a Jewish woman who does not quite fit the stereotype of the good victim. This came as a surprise to Franck because, although she attempts to imagine what could have happened to her grandmother, she does not pretend to tell her "true story." Instead, Franck tells a story that, through its particularity, addresses more general questions of what the war did to women, the transgenerational effects of the culture of silence, and the necessity of storytelling for our survival as unique individuals.

As Shuman (2005) notes, one of the reasons we tell other people's stories is that we feel compassion and empathy for them, and the promise of empathy is the creation of a possibility for understanding across

acprof-9780190256654.indd 89 10/7/2016 12:51:51 PM

OUP UNCORRECTED PROOF – FIRSTPROOFS, Fri Oct 07 2016, NEWGEN

differences. However, the critique of empathy is also ethically important because empathy is so often used as an alibi for "the packaging of suffering as sentimentality" (p. 5), and storytelling should "remain a process of negotiating, rather than defending, meaning" (p. 24). *Die Mittagsfrau*'s narration seeks to disrupt the kind of easy empathy that is always a risk when we read about the suffering of others. The narration is dominated by free indirect speech that conveys the thoughts and experiences of the characters, the ultimate meaning of which the narrator does not pretend to know. The narration is laconic, and neither condemns nor idealizes the protagonist; the novel's narrative dynamic thereby invites the reader to engage with Helene's story in its ethical complexity and take part in the negotiation of its meaning.

As a reinterpretation of the legend of the Noonday Witch, the novel not only engages in a dialogue with the narrative tradition but also unearths the complex ethical significance of storytelling. It suggests that even if, as Mark Freeman (Chapter 2) puts it, "'life itself' may not be quite as narrative-laden as some theorists (including me) have suggested, life without narrative, without some sense of location and rootedness in one's history and story, could be quite horrifying." In Dori Laub's terms, it could be said that Helene cannot even begin to properly process her traumatic experiences because she is denied the possibility of sharing her experiences with others by telling her own story and therefore cannot bear witness to her own experiences. As a result, her whole sense of self begins to collapse to such an extent that she starts to doubt whether she is even capable of love and motherhood. As Laub (1995) writes, this "loss of the capacity to be a witness to oneself and thus to witness from the inside is perhaps the true meaning of annihilation, for when one's history is abolished, one's identity ceases to exist as well" (p. 67). Laub focuses on witnessing, but what also seems ethically relevant in this context is that when we share experiences through storytelling, we often discover new perspectives from which to reorient to our experiences; this may help us come to terms with our experiences and find ways of avoiding the kind of damaging silence that Franck's novel depicts. It is precisely when Helene is cut off from dialogical relationships with others that she fails to stop herself from repeating the family history of abandonment. Her relationship with Carl, in turn, suggests that it is through an intersubjective process of exchanging experiences that narrative understanding can sometimes develop into an empowering process of reinterpretation and dialogic imagination.

The novel develops the view that we are constituted by storytelling, by sharing our lives and experiences with others through stories, and that this is so indispensable for human existence that the inability to engage in

acprof-9780190256654.indd 90 10/7/2016 12:51:51 PM

storytelling—closing up into silence and muteness—can destroy us, leading to the erosion of the self and loss of loved ones. The novel, however, links this problematic to a specific historical context, thereby underlining that our capacity for storytelling is importantly conditioned by our historical situation and its power relations and thus highlighting that storytelling is always cultural. By unearthing the culture of silence and by depicting how being a mother is linked to the possibility of constructing a narrative identity with which one can live, the novel shows how historical conditions in which individuals are violently forced into certain narrative frames can seriously impair their ability to tell their own stories and lead to a damaging loss of identity and integrity—to a blindness of the heart.

The novel therefore suggests that storytelling is crucial for agency and for sharing the world with others, but it also shows that narrative identities imposed on us may lead us to repeat harmful, potentially violent emotional and behavioral patterns. In the light of the novel, it is important to reflect on what kinds of social circumstances enhance and impair our capacities for storytelling and moral agency. *Die Mittagsfrau* shows that the breakdown of narrative identity can be devastating and that narratives have very real, world-constituting effects, as Nazi Germany dramatically illustrates. All of this suggests that narratives in themselves are neither ethically "good" nor "bad"; they can destroy us or they can empower us, but, as ethical agents, we cannot survive without them.

CONCLUSION

In *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*, Nietzsche (2004) asserts that "the understanding of the past is desired at all times only to serve the future and the present, not to weaken the present, not to uproot a forceful living future" (p. 19). In Nietzsche's account, history is good for us when it strengthens us and enhances our ability to express and develop our potential. Similarly, one might say that narratives are good for us when they empower us. From an ethical point of view, however, it is not enough to consider how they affect our self-relation and self-realization; it is also important to look at how they affect our capacity to be affected by others and to engage in ethical relations with others.

As the discussion of Franck's novel has made clear, there is nothing in stories to guarantees their possible ethical potential will be actualized. Narrative form does not make a narrative either inherently harmful or beneficial; instead, its ethical value is contextual: that is, dependent on how the narrative is interpreted and put to use in a particular social, historical,

acprof-9780190256654.indd 91 10/7/2016 12:51:51 PM

OUP UNCORRECTED PROOF – FIRSTPROOFS, Fri Oct 07 2016, NEWGEN

and cultural world. Historical circumstances crucially affect the dialogical process in which individuals interpret their experiences in relation to the narrative models that are mediated by culture and family tradition. The novel depicts this dialogic process in its temporality, without moralizing or categorizing. The task of interpretation and ethical reflection is left to the reader. Its narrative organization emphasizes that individuals always experience the world from their own unique perspectives, and each situation in which they make sense of their experiences and act on the basis of their interpretations raises its own ethical questions. Within the fictive world of the novel, stories console, empower, and enable action and orientation to the future, but they also mutilate, paralyze, and wound.

The discussion suggests that, for an ethics of storytelling that is sensitive to the complexity of the ethical impact of stories upon us, it is paramount to cultivate an awareness of narratives as culturally mediated interpretations that pervade our lives. Narrative hermeneutics emphasizes that we are always already entangled in cultural narratives, and, insofar as we are unaware of them, they affect us "behind our backs," which makes it more likely that we re-enact and perpetuate them (cf. Gadamer, 1993, p. 247; Warnke, 2002, pp. 79–80). From this perspective, critical reflection on how cultural webs of narratives mediate our relation to ourselves and others can expand our sense of the possible and is crucial for our self-understanding and ethical agency.

It is not self-evident in narrative theory that narratives are seen as a matter of (re)interpreting experience. In the classical narratological tradition, narratives are more often seen in terms of representing events than in terms of subjects interpreting their experiences and making them communicable to others. In "post-classical narratology," on the other hand, experientiality has come to be seen as central to narrativity (Fludernik, 1996; Herman, 2009), but narratologists rarely acknowledge the historically constituted and mediated character of experience in the way that the hermeneutic tradition does.[24] Seeing narratives as interpretations of experience, as I have suggested here, allows us to analyze when narratives enlarge the space of possibilities in which we can act, think, and imagine and when they restrain and impoverish those possibilities. Like history, stories of the past should not be merely imitated and repeated; they should help us imagine what is possible and reinvent the world together with others. Alan Badiou (2012) suggests that love is about reinventing the world by looking at it from the perspective of two, of difference. Similar reinvention is integral to the ethical potential of literary narratives; not only can they enrich the variety of culturally available narratives with which we reinterpret and reimagine our lives, but they can also promote awareness

acprof-9780190256654.indd 92 10/7/2016 12:51:51 PM

OUP UNCORRECTED PROOF – FIRSTPROOFS, Fri Oct 07 2016, NEWGEN

of the multitude of perspectives on the world, of how each narrative is told from a limited, ethical, and political perspective and of how every story can be told anew from a different angle.

Perhaps this could be a regulative idea for an ethics of storytelling: to strive towards dialogical practices of telling, sharing, and reinterpreting stories in ways that help us to look at the world from the perspective of difference and to reinvent it—and our lives—as both individuals and communities. Narratives can enhance our capacity for both critical self-reflection and imagining the perspectives of others, and they can expand our sense of the possible. At the same time, we need to remember that nothing in narratives guarantees the actualization of this ethical potential. Narratives can just as well be abused by framing them as an objective rendering of reality as such; in the guise of the discourse of truth, they can violently categorize people, reinforce the repetition of harmful emotional and behavioral patterns, and shut down conversation instead of opening it up. For this reason, I would argue that a crucial starting point for an ethics of storytelling is the acknowledgment that narratives are (re)interpretations of experience and hence can always be contested and told otherwise. Only narratives that are aware of their own interpretative nature are likely to foster our dialogic narrative imagination by actively welcoming a plurality of interpretations.

NOTES

1. In his later work, Levinas expresses more receptive attitudes toward literature, but he holds on to the view that narrative is necessarily totalizing and violent, whereas poetic discourse can lay bare the possibility of language to "exceed the limits of what is thought" and to overflow "the theme it states, the 'all together,' the 'everything included' of the said" (Levinas, 1966/1991, pp. 169–170; see also Davis, 1996, p. 92).
2. For a more detailed discussion of the interrelations between these two narrative turns and how French postwar fiction and thought precedes and anticipates the problematization of narrative by thinkers like Mink, White, Sartwell, and Strawson, see Meretoja (2014*b*).
3. For a fuller account of the intertwining of the ontological and ethical dimensions of the question concerning the relation between narrative and human existence, see Meretoja (2014*a*, 2014*b*).
4. On narrative hermeneutics, see Brockmeier & Meretoja (2014); Meretoja (2014*b*).
5. See also Taylor (1989, pp. 47, 52); MacIntyre (1984, pp. 204–225).
6. Giddens and Habermas have argued that the social sciences have, in comparison to the natural sciences, "a *double* hermeneutic task" because they interpret interpretations, an object domain that is already symbolically structured (Habermas, 1984, pp. 109–110; Giddens 1976, pp. 146, 158).

acprof-9780190256654.indd 93 10/7/2016 12:51:51 PM

OUP UNCORRECTED PROOF – FIRSTPROOFS, Fri Oct 07 2016, NEWGEN

7. On my model of the "triple hermeneutic" in relation to Ricoeur's mimesis theory and on the dialogical conception of subjectivity in relation to narrative hermeneutics, see Meretoja (2014*a*, 2014*b*).
8. For a fuller discussion of this position, see Meretoja (2015). On how ethical issues are integral to the production and reception of narrative fiction, see Hawthorn and Lothe (2013, pp. 5–6); Meretoja, Isomaa, Lyytikäinen, & Malmio (2015); Lothe & Hawthorne (2013).
9. Franck, in an interview (Meretoja, 2010).
10. See, e.g., Carpenter (2010).
11. "Ihre Dame, wie sie die Mutter nannte, weigere sich einfach, mit der Mittagsfrau zu sprechen. Da könne man nichts machen. . . Dabei müsse die Dame nichts weiter tun, als der Mittagsfrau eine volle Stunde lang . . . zu erzählen . . . Nur ein wenig Wissen weitergeben. Martha und Helene kannten die Geschichte von der Mittagsfrau, solange sie denken konnten, es lag etwas Tröstliches in ihr, weil sie nahelegte, dass es sich bei der mütterlichen Verwirrung um nichts anderes als einen leicht zu verscheuchenden Fluch handelte" (p. 142).
12. For an illuminating discussion of how narratives told by Holocaust survivors show that personal, traumatic experiences are interpreted against the background of collective narratives, see Schiff, Noy, & Cohler (2001).
13. "Wo ihre Vertrauten warteten, der Werther und die Marquise" (p. 126).
14. "Wenn Martha ihr so eine Zukunft ausmalte, hielt Helene den Atem an, sie hoffte, dass Martha nicht aufhören würde, diese Geschichte zu erzählen, sie sollte weitersprechen und davon erzählen, wie Helene eines Tages in einem großen Lehrsaal an der Dresdner Universität die Anatomie der Körper in sich trug" (p. 55).
15. "Ihre jüngere Tochter konnte die Mutter nicht mehr erkennen, eben blind am Herzen, wie Martha sagte, dass sie niemanden mehr sehen konnte. . . . Helene spürte die alte Frucht in sich aufkommen, sie könne eines Tages erblinden wie diese Mutter" (pp. 120–122).
16. "Die Zugehörigkeit, die sie zwischen ihm und sich spürte, war eine, die kleine Geheimnisse und Verschiedenheiten nicht zu gestand oder gestattete, sie feierte die Geheimnisse, unbedingt" (p. 266).
17. "Helene auf nichts mehr wartete, auf den Hunger nicht, nicht auf das Essen. . . . Die Zeit zog sich zusammen, sie rollte sich ein und faltete sich" (p. 280).
18. "[W]ar ihre hehre Vorstellung zu studieren in weite Ferne gerückt, es schien Helene, als gehörte dieser Wunsch zu einem anderen, früheren Leben, nicht mehr zu ihr. Helene wünschte sich nichts mehr. Visionen, da sie gemeinsam entwickelt, gemeinsam erwogen und gemeinsam erkoren worden waren, gab es nicht mehr. Sie waren mit Carl verschwunden. Denjenigen, der ihr Gedächtnis teilte, gab es nicht mehr" (p. 286).
19. "So etwas wie mich dürfte es gar nicht geben, platzte sie heraus" (p. 318).
20. "Allein, ihr fehlte eine Vorstellung vom Leben, von dem, was es sein sollte und konnte" (p. 321).
21. "Das Wort Deutschland klang aus seinem Mund wie eine Losung. Wir. Wer waren wir? Wir waren wer. Nur wer?" (p. 321).
22. "Wissen Sie, wir würden sonst aussterben. . . . Wen meinte die Frau mit wir? Die nordische Rasse, die Menschheit?" (p. 385).
23. "Was konnte sie ihrem Peter sein? Und wie konnte er ihr Peter sein, wen sie ihm nichts sein konnte, nicht sprechen, noch erzählen, einfach nichts sagen konnte?" (p. 397).

acprof-9780190256654.indd 94 10/7/2016 12:51:51 PM

24. Examples of narratological notions that seem to assume the possibility of raw, unmediated experience include Fludernik's (2010) "raw experience" (p. 42) and Herman's (2009) "qualia" (143) and "raw feels" (153). On the hermeneutic conception of experience as always historically mediated, see Meretoja (2014*a*); Brockmeier & Meretoja (2014).

REFERENCES

Arendt, H. (1968*a*). *Between past and future: Eight exercises in political thought*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.

Arendt, H. (1968*b*). *Men in Dark Times*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company.

Arendt, H. (1998). *The human condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Original work published 1958)

Arendt, H. (1995). Letter to Mary McCarthy, 31 May 1971. In C. Brightman (Ed.), *Between friends: The correspondence of Hannah Arendt and Mary McCarthy (1949–1975)*. London: Martin Secker & Warburg.

Badiou, A. (2012). In praise of love. (N. Truong, Trans.) London: Serpent's Tail. (Original work published 2009)

Bakhtin, M. (1984). *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*. (C. Emerson, Trans.) Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.

Barthes, R. (1982). Structural analysis of narratives. (S. Heath, Trans.) In *Image/music/text* (pp. 79–124). Glasgow: Fontana. (Original work published 1966)

Benjamin, W. (1999). The storyteller. (H. Zohn, Trans.) In *Illuminations* (pp. 83–107). London: Pimlico. (Original work published 1936)

Brockmeier, J., & Meretoja, H. (2014). Understanding narrative hermeneutics. *Storyworlds*, *2*, 1–27.

Bruner, J. (1987). Life as narrative. *Social Research*, *54*, 11–32.

Carpenter, R. C. (2010). *Forgetting children born of war: Setting the human rights agenda in Bosnia and beyond.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Carr, D. (1991). *Time, narrative, and history*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. (Original work published 1986)

Cavarero, A. (2000). *Relating narratives: Storytelling and selfhood*. (P. Kottman, Trans.) London: Routledge.

Davis, C. (1996). *Levinas: An introduction*. London: Polity Press.

Fludernik, M. (1996). *Towards a "natural" narratology*. New York: Routledge.

Fludernik, M. (2010). Experience, experientiality and historical narrative: A view from narratology. In T. Breyer & D. Creutz (Eds.), *Erfahrung und Geschichte: Historische Sinnbildung im Pränarrativen* [Experience and history: Historical creation of meaning in the pre-narrative context] (pp. 40–72). Berlin: De Gruyter.

Franck, J. (2007). *Die Mittagsfrau* [The blind side of the heart]. Frankfurt: Fischer.

Franck, J. (2009). *The blind side of the heart*. (Trans. A. Bell). London: Harvill Secker. (Original work published 2007)

Gadamer, H. -G. (1990). *Gesammelte Werke. Band 1: Hermeneutik I: Wahrheit und Methode* [Collected works, Vol. 1: Hermeneutics I: Truth and method]. Tübingen, Germany: Mohr.

Gadamer, H. -G. (1993). *Gesammelte Werke. Band 2: Hermeneutik II* [Collected works, Vol. 2: Hermeneutics II]. Tübingen, Germany: Mohr.

OUP UNCORRECTED PROOF – FIRSTPROOFS, Fri Oct 07 2016, NEWGEN

Giddens, A. (1976). *New rules of sociological method: A positive critique of interpretative sociologies*. London: Hutchinson.
Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action, Vol. 1: Reason and the rationalization of society.* (T. McCarthy, Trans.) Boston, MA: Beacon Press. (Original work published 1981)
Hawthorn, J., & Lothe, J. (2013). Introduction: The ethics (re)turn. In J. Lothe & J. Hawthorn (Eds.), *Narrative ethics* (pp. 1–10). Amsterdam: Rodopi.
Herman, D. (2009). *Basic elements of narrative*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
Laub, D. (1995). Truth and testimony: The process and the struggle. C. Caruth (Ed.), *Trauma: Explorations in memory* (pp. 61–75). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
Levinas, E. (1991). *Otherwise than being: Or beyond Essence* (Trans. A. Lingis). Dordrecht: Kluwer. (Original work published 1961)
Levinas, E. (1998). Reality and its shadow. In S. Hand (Ed.), *The Levinas reader* (pp. 130–143). Oxford: Blackwell. (Original work published 1948)
Lothe, J., & Hawthorn, J. (Eds.). (2013). *Narrative ethics*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
MacIntyre, A. (1984). *After virtue: A study in moral theory*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.
Meretoja, H. (2010). Tarinat jotka on kerrottava: Julia Franck ja *Keskipäivän haltija* [The stories that must be told: Julia Franck and *Die Mittagsfrau*]. *Nuori Voima*, *4*, 60–63.
Meretoja, H. (2014*a*). Narrative and human existence: Ontology, epistemology, and ethics. *New Literary History*, *1*, 89–109.
Meretoja, H. (2014*b*). *The narrative turn in fiction and theory: The crisis and return of storytelling from Robbe-Grillet to Tournier*. Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Meretoja, H. (2015). A sense of history—a sense of the possible: Nussbaum and hermeneutics on the ethical potential of literature. In H. Meretoja, S. Isomaa, & P. Lyytikäinen (Eds.), *Values of literature* (pp. 25–46). Leiden/Boston: Brill Rodopi.
Meretoja, H., Isomaa, S., Lyytikäinen, P., & Malmio, K. (Eds.). (2015). *Values of literature*. Leiden/Boston: Brill Rodopi.
Mink, L. (1970). History and fiction as modes of comprehension. *New Literary History*, *1*, 541–58.
Nietzsche, F. (2004). *On the use and abuse of history for life*. (I. Johnston, Trans.) Whitefish, MT: Kessinger. (Original work published 1874)
Ricoeur, P. (1988). *Time and narrative*. Vol. 3. (K. Blamey & D. Pellauer, Trans.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Original work published 1985)
Ricoeur, P. (1991). Life: A story in search of a narrator. In M. Valdés (Ed.), *A Ricoeur reader: Reflection and imagination* (pp. 425–37). New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
Ricoeur, P. (1992). *Oneself as another*. (K. Blamey, Trans.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Original work published 1990)
Sartre, J. -P. (1965). *Nausea*. (R. Baldick, Trans.) Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin. (Original work published 1938)
Sartre, J. -P. (1978). *La Nausée* [Nausea]. Paris: Gallimard. (Original work published 1938)
Sartwell, C. (2000). *End of story: Toward an annihilation of language and history*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
Schiff, B., Noy, C., & Cohler, B. (2001). Collected stories in the life narratives of Holocaust survivors. *Narrative Inquiry*, *11*, 159–194.

acprof-9780190256654.indd 96 10/7/2016 12:51:51 PM

OUP UNCORRECTED PROOF – FIRSTPROOFS, Fri Oct 07 2016, NEWGEN

Shuman, A. (2005). *Other people's stories: Entitlement claims and the critique of empathy*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Strawson, G. (2004). Against narrativity. *Ratio*, *17*, 428–452.

Taylor, C. (1985). Self-interpreting animals. In *Human agency and language: Philosophical papers I* (pp. 45–76). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1977)

Taylor, C. (1989). *Sources of the self: The making of the modern identity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Warnke, G. (2002). Hermeneutics, ethics, politics. In R. Dostal (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Gadamer* (pp. 70–101). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

White, H. (1981). The value of narrativity in the representation of reality. In W. Mitchell (Ed.), *On narrative* (pp. 1–23). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

acprof-9780190256654.indd 97 10/7/2016 12:51:51 PM

OUP UNCORRECTED PROOF – FIRSTPROOFS, Fri Oct 07 2016, NEWGEN

acprof-9780190256654.indd 98 10/7/2016 12:51:51 PM