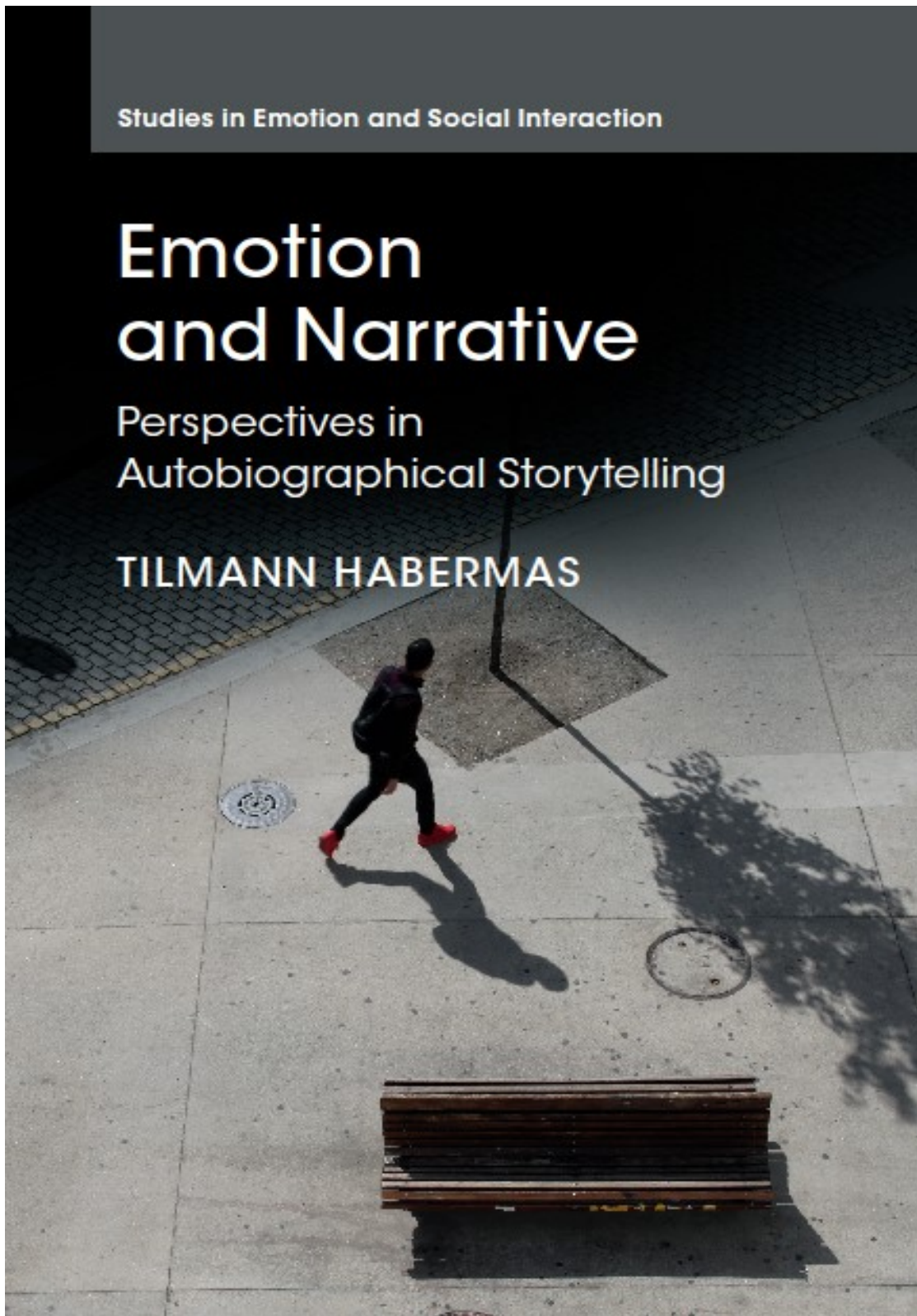


Studies in Emotion and Social Interaction

# Emotion and Narrative

Perspectives in  
Autobiographical Storytelling

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## Preface

“Tell me about it” – the background to this book is an interest in how sharing emotional experiences with others helps dealing with them, emotionally, intellectually, and practically. Emotions provide a fine system of signals to oneself. They call for turning our attention to something that we need to deal with. Often it is not quite clear why a situation makes us feel uneasy or arouses a specific emotion. Often we only notice them only later on and wonder what they are about. Strong emotional experiences as well as unclear emotional experiences motivate us to share them with others. To share experiences we use the text format narrative.

Sharing experiences is a frequent everyday activity. A specialized professional context has emerged at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century which has specialized in this activity, psychotherapy, and especially the talking cures that focus on understanding experiences. My clinical background is psychoanalysis, and although this book does not focus on psychopathology or clinical processes, writing the book is motivated by the wish to understand some of the mechanisms by which psychoanalytic and similar insight-oriented psychotherapies work. Psychoanalysis has little research to offer that actually studies the moment-to-moment mechanisms of change. Studying the uses of narratives is one possible access to therapeutic processes.

In psychology, the sharing of emotions is often considered as mere remembering or sharing, but not as a linguistic communication with others in time. Emotions are often conceptualized predominantly from evolutionary, biological, and cognitive perspectives. However, I argue in this book, emotions are communications, to others and to ourselves. Because emotions react to and evaluate events, to understand them we need to understand the sequence of events and their implications. I argue that this requires a narrative format. It allows making sense of emotions and communicating them. The narrative format requires spelling out the relevant background which is necessary to understand the meaning of events for a given individual, it relates the events, and it allows to transport, to interpret and to evaluate anew the events. Therefore the emotion process has a narrative quality. And narrating the emotional experiences has the power to transform them and the emotions they engender.

Emotion shares with narrative the basic temporal structure. In addition, emotion and narrative are structured by social perspectives. For narrative this has long been recognized, but not so for emotions. In this book I spell out which are the emotional consequences and the antecedents of different perspectival architectures of narratives. It remains an open task to detail the perspectival nature of not-yet-narrativized emotions.

Because narrative is a complex linguistic product and communication and is not easily quantified, psychology has been slow in understanding its integrative potential. Besides offering a model for a different, namely hermeneutic and ideographic psychology (termed *Narrative Psychology*), narrative has become the object also of mainstream psychology in the fields of cognitive, memory, developmental, personality and clinical psychology. In this book I argue that also emotion psychology could greatly profit from acknowledging and studying the narrative form and function of emotion and of the process of coping with emotions.

## Chapter 1

### Emotions

Emotions have long been neglected by psychology, at the times of behaviorism and also after the cognitive turn. Emotions were and still are a central concern of psychoanalysis. This began with the early cathartic method of re-experiencing traumatic events and thereby releasing pent-up emotions. It continued with Freud's basic assumption that although emotions appear to be unmotivated in the neuroses, "the emotional state as such is always justified" (Freud, 1896, p. 346). Freud was saying that emotions can appear outside the context in which they made sense. He did, however, never develop a specific theory of emotions. More recent developments in psychoanalytic emotion theory do make use of psychological emotion theories (e.g., Benecke & Damann, 2003; Benecke, Peham & Bänninger-Huber, 2005; Döll-Hentschker, 2008).

On the shoulders of important forerunners from the 1960s such as Silvan Tomkins and Richard Lazarus, emotion psychology began to emerge as a vibrant field in the 1970s with Paul Ekman and Carroll Izard. It evolved into a broad and established field in the 1980s. The important contributors include Klaus Scherer (1983), who developed a taxonomy of situation features which are used in appraising situations. This appraisal determines the quality of an ensuing emotion. Andrew Ortony, Gerald Clore, and Allan Collins (1988) proposed a more theory-driven systematization of appraisal features. Nico Frijda (1986) reviewed the entire field to propose a model of emotion process. Keith Oatley and Philip Johnson-Laird (1987) proposed a model of emotions as signalling the progress of goal-directed action sequences at certain plan junctures, negative emotions signalling specific plan failure, positive emotions success. Emotion psychology continues to be one of the fields of psychology that values theory most. Therefore, emotion psychology can easily communicate across otherwise seemingly unsurmountable disciplinary boundaries. Its reach extends to the humanities such as philosophy, sociology, and literary studies, and also to the sciences such as physiology and neurology.

This book is about the central roles of narrative and emotions for each other. This first chapter provides a basic conception of emotions. It contextualizes the topic and thesis of this book in emotion psychology. I will argue in this chapter for an understanding of emotion as a communicative phenomenon, which places narrative in a central position in the emotion process compared to individualistic conceptions of emotion. This idea goes back to the pre-history of modern emotion psychology, to Charles Darwin's (1872) book on the expression of emotions and its elaborations by Wilhelm Wundt and George Herbert Mead. From there I will use Richard Lazarus' theory to embed emotions in social relationships. Finally, writings by Keith Oatley (and later on Peter Goldie) will serve to introduce narrative as the ideal format for understanding emotions. The basic thesis of this book is that human emotions are intricately structured by social perspectives, which in turn, I will argue in this chapter, follows from the communicative nature of emotions. I will unfold the details of this argument throughout the main body of the book.

## Emotion as pre-reflective communication: *Darwin, Wundt, Mead*

Charles Darwin (1872) framed emotions from an evolutionary perspective, constructing parallels between human facial and gestural emotional expressions and behaviors of animals in specific situations. He argued that human expressions of emotions were inherited remnants of the initial phases of actions that once served to prepare the ensuing actions. The snarling of dogs and baring of their teeth serves to prepare an attack by biting the other. Similarly, humans bare their teeth when they get angry, although they only bite metaphorically by using language. Darwin argued that these habitual preparatory, truncated actions expressed the underlying emotion that motivated the action. The forms of emotion expression were passed on to the next generation, which is actually a rather Lamarckian argument. Due to their inherited basis these forms are universal.

Contrasting the still popular assumption that emotions are irrational and dysfunctional, Darwin closely linked them to our inherited outfit that, at least, originally had been functional, and is still mostly functional. The evolutionary and situational usefulness of emotions as preparation for action is the cornerstone of functional theories of emotion (e.g., Izard, 1991). Secondly, linking emotions to inherited bodily movements stresses the involuntary and bodily aspects of emotions. Thirdly, relating specific facial expressions to specific emotions implies that emotions differ qualitatively, and not only quantitatively from each other, which is a position held today by various theories of basic emotions. Darwin laid the basis, but stopped short of developing a communicative theory of emotions himself (Ekman, 1998).

In contrast to Darwin's view of emotions as qualitatively distinct, Wilhelm Wundt (1887) defined emotions in his early, physiologically oriented phase as differing quantitatively from each other on the three subjectively perceived dimensions of valence, arousal-inhibition, and tension-relaxation. Turning towards a psychology of culture and society, Wundt later postulated language to be a necessary element of emotion. To phylogenetically reconstruct the transition from instinctually regulated animal interaction and intentional human communication, Wundt (1900) linked instinctually guided actions to an accompanying emotion. Following Darwin, he suggested that emotions, or what he termed affect, is expressed through physiological innervation and expressive movements of the early phases of these instinctually guided actions. Wundt suggested that the expressive innervations and movements that most form the basis of language are facial and gestural affective expressions of emotions, because they not only express the intensity of emotions, but also qualities. Subsequently, these movements may also express ideas that accompany emotions (Wundt, 1900, p. 238ff.). According to Wundt, the qualitative transformation of a merely expressive movement into a sign that means something to an other is made through the imitation of the expressive movement by that other, which evokes the same emotion and idea in that other. To this the other may associate related ideas. When these are expressed, they no longer solely constitute an imitation, but an answer. The initially individual affect is transformed into a shared affect through the ensuing back and forth of expressive facial and gestural movements, which keeps changing as the dialogue of gestures continues. Because ideas begin to prevail affects, this affective sharing turns into shared thinking, or a dialogue of ideas (Wundt, 1900, p. 240). Consequently, Wundt identified interjections, vocatives, and imperatives as the first vocal

expressions carrying meaning, followed by imitative sounds, onomatopoeic words, and vocal gestures.

Thus, Wundt followed Darwin in conceiving facial movements and gestures as expressions of emotions. Similar to Darwin, he considered them to be derived from the initial phases of truncated actions. Wundt used this conception to construct a theory of the origins of language as the basis for culture. He shared Darwin's idea that facial and gestural emotional movements primarily served to express emotions and had originally been the initial part of an action. Going beyond Darwin, Wundt suggested that in a second phylogenetic step emotional expressive movements, especially vocal gestures, signalled an emotion and the corresponding ideas to another organism who would then respond. Emotional expressions thus secondarily turned into signs used for communication.

George Herbert Mead (1904) revised Wundt's phylogenetic reconstruction of how the expression of emotions turned into communication and then into verbal communication by reversing their order. Mead (1910) argued that the transition of gestures from mere expression of the physiological arousal to becoming signs carrying meaning, presupposed that they had evolved in a preceding social interaction with others. To liberate interaction from being guided by instinct-guided stimulus-response sequences, the other had to understand the beginning of an action as signalling an action readiness and the complete action to come. Even animals react to each others' action tendencies and change the course of their own actions in response, such as when fighting or courting.

Mead (1912) proposed that vocal gestures were ideal for rendering the meaning of one's own gestures accessible to oneself, because only they could be perceived by the self as easily as by an other. Adopting another's reaction to one's own gesture would enable the individual to gain consciousness of the meaning of a gesture and turn it into a (verbal) symbol that could be used with conscious intentions to communicate (Mead, 1925).

Three aspects of this reconstruction are important for understanding emotions. Firstly, emotions can only arise once social interaction is no longer dictated by stimulus-response sequences, but becomes open to a negotiation of gestures, in which beginning actions are accompanied by sensations at the fringes of the field of consciousness (James, 1890). Neither these pre-reflective feelings nor their facial and gestural expressions are self-conscious in the sense that they could be perceived by oneself as by an other. Therefore, they cannot easily be expressed linguistically by naming them. Rather, as in social interaction of mammals, human emotions usually evoke pre-reflective reactions from others in a communication of non-verbal emotional expressions (Mead, 1934, p. 147ff.). This communication is based on the objective, that is, pragmatic meaning of initial phases of acts. Thus, emotions are basically a communicative phenomenon that serves to coordinate members of the same species. This model implies that actions need to remain incomplete so that there is room for emotions in the wake of actions. Mead (1910) attributed the incompleteness of actions to conflicts arising within the course of action. He argued that conflicts would most likely arise when interacting with other organisms, but not when interacting with the natural environment. In social interactions, the other's reaction to the individual's beginning action motivates a change in the course of action.

Secondly, consciously taking the perspective of an other requires inhibiting action, which allows looking back onto one's action tendencies and reacting to them as an other would. Only

this enables individuals to identify a vague feeling as a specific emotion. This self-consciousness may accompany acting, but can also disappear when the individual is fully immersed in an activity (Mead, 1912). Thus, for emotions to be reflected-upon and become conscious, they require not only the inhibiting or truncating of a full act, but also the taking of the perspective of a specific or a generalized other.

Third, Mead identified the taking of the perspective of an other onto one's own action tendencies as constituting the perspective from which James' *Me* is constituted, the reflectively conceived and judged own person. In contrast, the *I* represents the spontaneous action tendencies. Insofar as spontaneous action tendencies have an evaluative component towards the situation and its objects, so do the perspectives taken onto one's own action tendencies and emotions, resulting from others' evaluative reactions. If the perspective taken is not that of a specific other, but of a generalized other, then the individual is enabled to judge her or his own tendencies on the basis of impersonal attitudes, rules, and moral considerations (Mead, 1934). Thus, the self-reflective evaluation of emotions also relies on perspective taking. Mead linked both consciousness of one's emotions as well as judgments of their desirability and appropriateness to the taking of perspectives.

This far, emotions are considered an integral part of social interactions, supporting the ongoing mutual accommodation of actions. Therefore, emotions are temporally located and extended. They are motivated and point to ensuing actions. Emotions are structured by social perspectives, indicating one individual's action tendency towards another individual. Consciousness of emotions implies taking the perceptual perspective of the other to whom the emotion is signalled. Finally, judging one's emotions requires also taking the perspective of the others' interests, which determine their significance for others.

### **Situation appraisal and prototypical relational themes: *Lazarus***

The present-day dominant view conceives emotions as resulting from the evolution of a functional system of semi-automatic action tendencies and as consisting of three elements: First somatic, mainly *physiological changes*, second facial and corporal *expressive movements*, and third a subjective *feeling* component (Frijda, 1986). This tri-componential view was already present in Mead's theorizing. It liberates the concept of emotion from relying exclusively on the subjective feeling, and from any one specific element, as it can be signalled by any of the components. This allows a functional interpretation of emotion. Also, together with the two levels of consciousness associated with emotions, this conception allows for only apparently contradictory concepts such as unconscious emotions. However, as emotions were not the focus of Mead's theorizing, he considered them only in their role for the reconstruction of a natural history of symbolic interaction and the self.

What remains mysterious when Darwin's, Wundt's, and Mead's phylogenetic theorizing is applied to fully socialized human beings, is the initial motivation of the inhibited action. Wundt and Mead had rooted motivation in drives. However, it appears implausible that any motivated action involves an initial phase that may turn into an emotion if only the action is interrupted or inhibited. Rather a flow of actions or interactions is usually structured by intentions (Oatley & Johnson-Laird, 1987 – see below), and emotional reactions are evoked if a situation comes up which hinders pursuing these intentions in a specific way. Emotions thus have an intentional

structure in that they always refer to a situation. This insight led Sigmund Freud to revise his early theory of anxiety as automatically resulting from the inhibition of physical (sexual) tension, to which emotion served as an alternative discharge path. In his revised theory, Freud (1926) conceived anxiety as a reaction to interpreting a situation as dangerous based on earlier life experiences. This interpretation generates a weak anxiety signal, which calls for shifting attention to the imminent danger and motivates reacting to it. Only if the signal is ignored, or the danger not removed, does anxiety grow in intensity.

Freud complemented the social communication view of emotion with an intrapsychic communication view. However, in this view emotions signal an aspect of a situation to oneself that urgently requires attention. While emotions communicate pragmatic requirements to the self, they communicate the corresponding action tendencies to others.

In psychology, Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman (1984) elaborated this role of emotions for communicating to oneself evaluations of the present situation. In their model, emotions have a motivational background, termed *personal interests* or *concerns* (Frijda, 1986). Emotions signal a situation in which something happens that affects these personal concerns. Appraisal theories assume that humans continuously scan situations for their relevance to their concerns. Lazarus differentiated two phases of appraisal. *Primary appraisals* regard the relevance of the situation to concerns, specifically whether the situation is congruent or incongruent with these concerns. Primary appraisals also assess, in which way concerns are affected by the situation. This determines which emotion is produced. If the continuous interpretation and evaluation of situations leads to a primary appraisal, a subsequent *secondary appraisal* judges additional aspects of the situation, namely blame and credit, possibilities for coping, and anticipation of how events will turn out, positively or negatively. If this second judgment also fulfills the conditions for evoking an emotion, the three elements of emotions, physiological arousal, corporal expression, and feeling are produced with a specific quality, preparing the individual for the corresponding class of actions. When a situation is judged to be threatening the individual's concerns and cannot be easily dealt-with, fear or anxiety results, which prepares the individual for action directed at escaping or diverting the threat.

Most appraisal theories assume a set of basic, qualitatively different emotions. The strong version of these theories assumes basic emotions which are universal and biologically based (e.g., Ekman, 1984). Appraisal theories also differ as to the number and nature of the cognitive processes involved in the appraisal process. Many theories suggest a set of situation components, which are tested sequentially (Ortony, Clore, & Collins, 1988; Scherer, 1984; Scherer, Wallbott & Summerfield, 1986; Moors, Ellsworth, Scherer & Frijda, 2013). Others have proposed more holistic matching processes, comparing situations to prototypical situations (e.g., Russell & Barrett, 1999).

In popular depictions of emotion-eliciting situations, a human encounters a dangerous animal such as a bear (James, 1884) or a snake (LeDoux, 1998). The vast majority of emotional situations, however, involves other human beings with whom one communicates (Scherer et al., 1986). Consequently, Lazarus (1991) defined prototypical emotion eliciting situations in terms of core relational themes.

There are two communicative functions of emotions: signalling others what we are about to do, and signalling to ourselves the presence of a situation that requires attending. Confronting these two functions, it might seem that the taking of the perspective of others appears late in

the emotion process and therefore may not be essential to it. The appraisal of the situation necessary for self-communication logically precedes the expression of the emotion which is necessary for communicating it to others. However, three arguments speak for the essential role of perspective taking in the emotion process.

In concordance with Mead, a first argument is that situation appraisals may lead to physiological and expressive action tendencies which are not inhibited but the action is actually carried out. In that case, the action tendency is communicated to the other while the individual is unaware of the emotion. Often only the effect of the action, the other's reaction, enables the individual to realize the emotion that drove the action. For example, I may raise my voice and attack the other before I become aware of being angry. In this constellation, emotion first communicates to the other, and to the self only secondarily.

Second, physiological reaction and corporal expression are aspects of the same process, and do not follow from feeling, but are, as many theories argue, the immediate object of the sensations that form the basis of feelings (James, 1884; 1890). Identifying a feeling requires understanding the meaning of expressive and physiological reactions for the other. Once learnt, expressive and physiological reactions may be interpreted without taking the perspectives of specific others in a given situation.

Perspective-taking is involved not only in the communication and becoming aware of emotions, but, third, perspective taking is also required by the appraisal process itself, at least in many relevant cases, if not in all cases. In the case of fear, interpreting a situation as threatening requires understanding the intentions of others or anticipating natural events. In the case of self-conscious emotions such as pride, shame, and guilt, the evaluation of oneself or one's acts by others is essential. Appraising angering situations most often requires judging aggressors' intentions and their capability of foreseeing the consequences of their actions. This is necessary to judge their responsibility for the harm they have done. Understanding saddening events often requires comparing past states of having something or being with someone with present or future states in which this is lost and absent.

Furthermore, if emotions are basically part of an ongoing process of negotiation between two or more individuals, the situation to be appraised most often centrally includes others' emotions. Therefore, understanding others' emotions is an essential element of appraisals. Understanding emotions includes the simple identification of others' emotion expressions. A more complete understanding of others' emotions requires understanding the reasons for the emotions, by seeing how others interpret and evaluate a situation. This understanding of others' emotions in turn may motivate an emotional reaction by the individual.

In his later work, Lazarus (Lazarus, 1991; 1999; 2006) argued that the emotion process needs to be extended beyond the immediate situation. While a focus on emotion expression suggests that emotions only last seconds to minutes (Ekman, 1984, cf. Scherer, 2009), Frijda (1986, p. 40f.) discusses a more extended duration of action tendencies, basically binding it to the duration of the eliciting situation. Lazarus argues that the temporal frame for analysing emotions needs to be extended to cover the reasons for different individuals to appraise similar situations differently. Individuals interpret situations on the background of their biographical experiences. These create highly individual expectations, sensibilities, and relationship patterns. A critical remark by a friend may induce fear of what more is to come, anger about the breach of perceived norms of friendship, or sadness about the friend's negative opinion. The emotional



reaction also depends on the emotional dispositions of general anxiousness, irritability, and depressiveness of the individual. Tomkins (1978) speaks of *nuclear scripts* and De Sousa (1987) of *paradigm scenarios* to refer to individual prototypical situations that are extracted from repeated emotional experiences early in life, which are used to interpret the emotional meaning of later situations.

In addition, Lazarus (1999) argues that the concept of emotion process needs to be temporally extended to include the entire process of coping with the emotion-eliciting situation and with the ensuing emotion. If coping is difficult, it may extend for a long time. This is especially true if problem-focussed coping is unsuccessful and individuals resort to assimilative strategies of emotion-focussed coping, trying to adapt to the situation and change their emotional evaluation. These coping efforts may be directed at any phase of the emotion process, by reassessing the situation, reinterpreting the arousal, expression, or feeling, and by altering the action tendency.

The strongest argument for extending the temporal frame of the emotion process is that emotions are usually embedded in an ongoing communication, in which emotions mutually influence each other. Communication tends to be more emotional when it is with significant others with whom we share relationships which extend back in time and have developed specific expectations and obligations.

These considerations led Lazarus (1999) to suggest that emotions might best be studied by using narratives. Narratives provide a background in terms of pre-history, characters, and context; they provide a provocation of the emotion, and a story of the attempts to cope with it. Lazarus conceived prototypical narratives for each of the most important emotions. Indeed, appraisal theorists use autobiographical narratives to study the kinds of situations and their aspects that tend to evoke specific emotions (e.g., Scherer, Wallbott, & Summerfield, 1986). However, Lazarus stopped short of suggesting that narratives might play a role in the emotion process itself, limiting its use to serving as a tool for research, but not for the individual confronted with an emotional situation.

## **Fictional narratives form sensibilities and help understand *emotions*:**

### ***Oatley***

Among emotion psychologists, Keith Oatley (1992) has most explicitly attributed narrative a genuine role in the emotion process. This derives from his conception of emotions as action-sequences which are structured by intentions and their outcome. Oatley and Johnson-Laird (1987) couched their emotion theory in terms of goals and plans, emotions serving to evaluate the progress of goal pursuit at junctures of the path towards goal fulfilment. Junctures are points in the quest for reaching a goal where there is a significant change in the assessment of the outcome of the plan.

True to the computer metaphor of cognitive psychology, Oatley conceived reading fictional literature as a simulation of real life, the only simulation that can match the complexity of real life. Oatley followed Rumelhart (1975), Stein and Glenn (1979), and Trabasso (Trabasso & van den Broek, 1985) in conceiving stories as being constructed like a plan. Thus, stories are the natural medium to explore the intricacies of human intentions and wishes, how they interact

between individuals over the course of time. And they are the ideal medium to understand emotions. Emotions require an effort to understand the personal meaning of experiences, because they are, more often than not, oblique to us. Although we have a hunch how we feel, we often do not know why, or what the object of our emotion is.

For Oatley (1992), sometimes feelings are experienced without knowing why. He suggests conceiving of emotions without necessary reference to an object, or eliciting situation. Feelings, he argues, may be identified without their object, and then the individual may ask for the matching object. We may feel sad or happy without knowing the reason. But this way of speaking suggests that we have a hard time thinking of emotions without thinking of what they evaluate. When we are sad we look for what we have lost or what we have been disappointed by. If we do not succeed, we think of the emotion as unjustified. We may try to suppress it, and may even think that we are too sensitive or that we are distorting reality by reacting, for instance, with sadness to experiences which do not justify being sad. But I will discuss the need to justify emotions later in chapters 7 and 11. Of importance at this point is that fictional narratives which we read in books or watch as films, offer plots that lay out complex webs of wishes and their progressive interweaving, the success of which is only known in the end.

Fictional narratives offer a playground on which we can exercise appraising, interpreting, or simply understanding complex situations that elicit complex emotions. To understand these emotions one needs to understand not only the immediately preceding situation, but the entire story. The only apparently old-fashioned conclusion by Oatley (2011) is that reading novels helps promote understanding of social interaction, relationships, other people and oneself, especially their emotions (cf. e.g., De Mulder, Hakemulder, van den Berghe, Klaassen, & van Berkum, 2017; Mumper & Gerrig, 2017)

Keith Oatley propagates a central role of narrative in eliciting, processing, and communicating emotions. However, he is exclusively concerned with fictional, literary narratives which we consume. The objects of this book, in contrast, are personal *autobiographical* narratives. One difference to novels is that they are told with a claim for truthfulness and authenticity. Another difference is that individuals not only listen to, but also actively produce these narratives. People narrate emotional and problematic experiences frequently (Rimé, 2009), to express emotions, to understand emotions, and to share the experience in the hope that it will help them to cope with the event and the emotions it elicits. The literature concerned with this function of everyday narrating, mostly ignores the specific structure and potential of narratives, treating them as an emotional outlet or cognitive device.

## ***Overview of the argument***

My central argument is that narrative is central to emotion, that emotion in turn is also for making a point in narratives, and that perspectives are a central structuring device for both. After I have outlined three elements of narratives, specifically, narrative sequence, evaluation, and perspectives, the argument will take three steps. I will start with the relation of recipients' emotions to qualities of the narrative text, moving on to the narrators' emotions prior to, during, and following the narrative process and their relation to the narrative text, and finish with the active contribution of listeners to narrating emotions.

On the receiving side, the reader/listener co-determines which emotions she or he experiences by taking a specific perspective, like that of a protagonist, for example, an art consumer who judges the aesthetic qualities of the narrative, or a moral stance. The *first thesis* of the book is that readers'/listeners' emotions are influenced by which perspectives narratives offer and which they do not offer. This applies not only to readers of fiction, but also to listeners of everyday autobiographical accounts. I propose a rough tripartite categorization of degrees of perspective representation in texts. First, a diversified representation of different temporal and personal perspectives (comprehensive perspective representation) evokes more overall empathy and a moderate emotional reaction. Second, restriction to a partial subjective protagonist perspective (dramatic narration) elicits stronger emotions of empathy and sympathy with the past protagonist. Third, a behavioral perspective without subjective perspectives (impersonal narration) tends to elicit interactional rather than empathic emotions that are directed not empathically at a protagonist, but directly at the present narrator.

Narrating emotional experiences may help the narrator to master the narrated situation and its emotional impact. The *second thesis* of the book is that the degree to which the narrator succeeds in taking a variety of perspectives in narrating an event reflects the maturity of defense mechanisms used and indicates how well the narrator has coped with the event. This implies that narrating experiences is more helpful when diverse perspectives are represented in the narrative. This resonates with clinical theories of impaired empathy and mentalizing in more severe psychopathology (Kernberg, Fonagy) as well as with theories of the use of emotion and insight in narratives for coping (Pennebaker, Stiles). Thus, it is the more or less partial exclusion of perspectives from narratives that communicates to the listener the emotions that the narrator has defended against.

While the first two theses abstract from the interactional nature of narrating by focussing on the relation between text and recipient and text and narrator, the third thesis regards listeners' role in the shaping of the narrative text and in influencing narrators' abilities and proclivities. Listeners not only facilitate narrating by demonstrating interest and accepting and reinforcing narrators' emotional stance and evaluations of events. There are special asymmetrical situations in which a more mature or a professionally skilled listener aims at not only emotionally supporting the narrator, but at modifying the narrator's story so as to help with coping with the event and to improve the narrator's narrative and coping abilities. The *third thesis* of the book is that in socializing interactions between parents and children or adolescents, and therapy talk between narrating patients and co-narrating psychotherapists, listeners influence both the narrative and narrators abilities by challenging parts of the narrative and complementing perspectives. In both cases, co-narrators focus on the processing of emotions through the building of narratives. However, they also differ in the degree to which listeners challenge narrators' perceptions. Thus, this section pursues the idea that narrative co-construction is not only one possible, but *the* decisive communicative process through which emotion-regulation is learned and through which insight-oriented psychotherapies may heal mental disorders.

The book is divided into four sections. *Part I* provides an overview of how emotions are represented in narratives, providing a toolkit for later parts to relate perspectives in narrative texts both to recipient and producer emotions. It also provides an overview of useful concepts for the formal analysis of autobiographical narratives.

Chapter 2 presents the overall structure of narratives, especially oral narratives (Propp, Todorov, Labov, story grammarians), and the place of emotions in narratives. The kind of situation narrated may more or less resemble the prototypical situation for one emotion or another.

Chapter 3 deals with ways to represent emotion in narratives. Some are not perspective-related, such as nonverbal means, evaluative devices such as adverbs, intensifiers, lexicon (Labov), figurative language (Kövecses) and other rhetorical means such as repetition and ellipsis. Narrative focus is perspective-related (Genette, Bal, Schmid) and is implied by the information listeners are provided, ranging from a behavioral (no perspectives) to a subjective (one protagonist perspective) to an omniscient perspective (all perspectives).

Chapter 4 is more formal, and introduces linguistic means to convey explicit perspectives, such as general evaluations, naming emotions and mental verbs (perceptual, emotional, cognitive, volitional), which may refer to different temporal and personal perspectives. In addition, dramatic narrating is presented as inducing emotions in the listener by pulling her or him into the perspective of a specific protagonist (historic present, shift of *origo* of deictic terms, direct speech).

*Part II* is dedicated to the narrative emotions of recipients in relation to the formal properties of narratives. This part introduces various narrative emotions (chapter 5) and discusses thesis 1 that perspective representation is a central narrative mechanism of eliciting emotions (chapter 6), and complements it with other mechanisms (chapter 7).

Chapter 5 introduces six kinds of recipient emotions, including direct reactions to the narrated scene and protagonists, aesthetic emotions, empathetic emotions, interactional emotions directed at the narrator, and emotions stemming from personal autobiographical memories that are elicited by the narrative. Narrative emotions will be differentiated from non-narrative emotions in terms of perspectives involved. Then psychological theories of empathetic narrative emotions, involving concepts of empathy, sympathy, identification, immersion, transportation, and distance (Oatley, Green) will be related to text qualities and transferred from fictional narratives to autobiographical narratives.

Chapter 6 introduces the emotional effects of different kinds and degrees of emotion representation in narratives. Differences between everyday oral narratives and cultural products such as literature and film are spelled out to prepare the grounds for the global thesis that the degree and diversification of perspectives represented in a text influences recipient emotions. This will be exemplified by autobiographical narratives. Other aspects of narratives that also influence recipient emotions such as the severity of the complication, the moral evaluation of characters and the general liking of characters are complemented.

Chapter 7 takes up some of the complications regarding my thesis encountered in chapter 6, expanding the model to sustain the main thesis. Three aspects of oral narratives that may modify the effect of perspectives on emotions are discussed. A lack of plausibility and believability taints possible empathic appeals of narratives. Also, if protagonist or narrator exhibit emotions that are deemed inappropriate on various grounds, recipients may be put off and refuse to react with empathic emotions. Incongruencies in the communication of emotions between verbal, paraverbal, and nonverbal modalities may negatively affect believability and thereby also the emotional reaction to the narrative. Finally, I discuss how some narratives may

appear as a defensive, implausible, or insane story in everyday communication, but in other contexts may actually be appreciated as aesthetically appealing.

*Part III* turns to the psychology of the narrator. The focus shifts from the effects of narrative form on recipients to what different forms of narrating tell us about the narrator and to how the process of narrating changes the form of narrative and what this does to the narrator.

Chapter 8 turns to the influence of the narrator's personality and mental health on the quality of narrative and the narrative representation of perspectives. Besides influences of the narrators' personality and their present emotional state, thesis 2 states that the degree of mental disturbance is related to the degree to which narrative perspectives are excluded from autobiographical narratives for defensive purposes. The background to this contention is the clinical experience that the severity of psychopathology, or the immaturity of defense mechanisms, is related to deficits in the ability to empathize (Kernberg) or mentalize (Fonagy). This is complemented by the clinical experience (e.g., Kernberg) that the patient's severity of psychopathology relates to the strength of emotional counter-transference reactions of the therapist. This is concordant with thesis 1, which proposes that as more perspectives are excluded, involuntary emotional recipient emotions increase strength. I delineate the five most important aspects of narratives that may be affected and distorted by defensive processes.

Chapter 9 reviews theories and evidence regarding the cathartic, cognitive, and social mechanisms of the activity of narrating emotional events that lead to improved coping and beneficial effects on the life of the narrator (Pennebaker, Rimé). Narrating problematic experiences is one of the central mechanisms of change in insight-oriented psychotherapies. I then discuss which narrative form might indicate successful coping with experiences, while considering various aspects of good stories or stories with a closure. Finally, I review evidence on the nature of narratives that help processing problematic experiences, considering the taking of an outside perspective and the switching of perspectives as most efficient mechanisms.

Chapter 10 focusses specifically on the repeated narrating of experiences which is involved in coping with specific experiences. Diverse factors such as memory, social validation, and emotional coping influence how narratives change over repeated tellings. However, the change of narratives in the process of coping through repeated telling is not a linear, but probably a curvilinear process. I borrow Stiles' model of the assimilation of problematic experiences in psychotherapy to suggest that actually narrating an event, then integrating more perspectives to provide a fuller account of the event, and finally reducing the narrative to a simple, straightforward account might be the normative trajectory of narratives in successful coping.

The final *part IV* explores the active role of recipients as co-narrators in changing not only narratives of specific events, but also changing narrators' abilities to narratively process experiences through narrating. Thesis 3 suggests that a major mechanism for the helpful adding of perspectives to narratives (thesis 2) is an active co-narrating by recipients. I then pursue and illustrate the thesis in two contexts that aim at changing narrators' abilities, socialization and psychotherapy.

Chapter 11 reviews the necessary involvement of listeners in everyday narrative practices in experimental and sociolinguistic studies in natural contexts. Building on extensive work on the socializing effects of mothers' co-narrating with their preschool-age children, I propose a

taxonomy specifically of co-narrative interventions aiming at helping narrators cope with their emotions and the experiences which elicit them. Finally, I illustrate some of the co-narrative moves with excerpts from mother-adolescent co-narrations of emotional experiences collected by Alice Graneist (Graneist & Habermas, 2017).

Chapter 12 describes the specificity of narrating in the context of psychotherapy, and more specifically in psychoanalytic psychotherapy and provides an overview of therapeutic interventions described by conversation analysts. These are not specifically described in relation to narrative. To this end, I discuss excerpts from four psychotherapies to illustrate the functions of a variety of therapist interventions. Different kinds of interventions challenge patients' narratives and add perspectives to them.

Chapter 13 summarizes the argument and spells out some implications for the fields of psychoanalysis, emotion, and narrative. I advocate the use of narrative analyses for psychoanalytic research as an objective approach to unconscious defense processes against emotional experiences. Emotion research could profit enormously from studying narratives as they offer an objective empirical approach to naturally occurring phenomena. Narrative theory could benefit from bridging the gap between artistic and everyday oral narratives, as called for by Fludernik in her *Natural Narratology* (2002), and from looking at motivated distortions of narratives to defend against emotions. The book ends with a plea and program for a narrative emotion psychology.