

The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Dr. Moulay Tahar University- Saida-
Faculty of Letters, Languages, and Arts
Department Of English



Reader's personality adaptation under the influence of modern and postmodern
works of fiction

case study : Psychological readers-response theory and Narrative transportation theory

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Presented by

Mr. Maachou Zakaria

Ms. Megherbi Nadjat

Advised by

Dr. Hanaà Cheheb Berrezoug

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Abstract

This current study aims to investigate reader's personality adaptation under the influence of modern and postmodern works of fiction. The main problem underlying this work is that readers tend to immerse him-self in a work of fiction and that might have some influence on them. The main cause behind this problem is divided into two assumptions. First is that the reader of fiction unintentionally develops empathy for the protagonist character and this affects his emotions and feelings while and after reading, and the second is that the reader immerses himself in a work of fiction to the point of losing track between reality and imagination. These conditions might cause changes in the reader's personality traits. To carry out this research and confirm these hypotheses, we have set two case studies; the first is the Psychological readers-response theory and the other is the Narrative transportation theory to identify and explore the reader's mindset during the process of reading and its aftermaths. The evidences attained from these case studies shows that fictional narratives are very effective genres at changing reader's personality and might enhance his experiences in life. Finally this study aims at suggesting that reading fiction is a deep life-changing experience.

Dedication

To friends and family

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General introduction

Current philosophical theories are based on the concept that the world of appearances is a delusion that both displays and hides a primary truth. This idea has also been connected to scholars wondering to the fact that a few philosophies view reality as a fabric of fictions portrayed with the assistance of the human mind. This idea is the dominant detail in maximum fields of thought. Within the social sciences, as an example, psychoanalysis sees our aware thoughts as disguises that cover our true fears and aspirations and also saw the self as a delusion wherein we mistake the role we play for an actual personal identification. In essence, these philosophies and disciplines assert that existence, society, cultural creations and thoughts are not what they seem like. They claim that there's a true reality below the surface, different to the typical kind of reality. When we experience merely the surface, they say, we're going through a kind of simulation or confusion, taken in via misrepresented appearances. The fake appearances described by means of those philosophies fall into one of three classes. Foremost, there are the false appearances of nature, which trick us because of our limited senses and cognition. Second, in that respect are the self-deceptions of the brain, the unconscious figments which are defined as kinds of repression or protection inclusive of delusions and hallucinations. And third, there are the cover-ups of intentionally manipulated appearances and absolute lies, consisting of the ones made by using politicians and con artists, and by way of the creators of misleading simulations in addition to through the creators of fictional simulations intended to entertain. Together, these views make up what's often called modernism: the perception that we can realize the world; that we can use our information to critique and analyze the manner things are; and that we can create a better world, as a result. For modernism, knowledge gives power, and while knowledge is guided by reason it can deliver us the strength to create a world that is more humane.

The concept of how a fictional character from a fictional work can affect the reader's mindset was always an ambiguity for the academic community. As for us academic students as well as readers, we have often wondered why we get caught by the fictional characters when reading about them, and what makes them becoming part of our experience. However, what mostly gets our interest at this point is to conduct a study and discover the personal impact of the great characters, in particular, those whom played a major role in the history of human's collective thinking. Therefore, this work is arguing that since life (or much of life) is fiction or since fiction is all we can know, it is proper to join in the fictional personas that are based by the modernist approach to the reader's state of mind and oversee this union. In essence, the principle method of this research recommends that we deal with the human impact of a written work by means of an analytical perception for simply discovering if reality is a creation that could have us consciously take over the procedure of making it, inventing selves, subcultures and alternative realities, during the reading experience.

Technically speaking modern philosophies were deeply affected by a new understanding of psychology and mythology. Their rejection of the values and approach of preceding thinking was allied with a desire to test within the method of writing. They held up an extra flexible and internal approach to characterization and the presentation of character which included the notion of physical and psychological existence. From these components advanced what came to be referred to as the stream of consciousness, later to be absorbed into the mainstream of literature. The real measure of the way a work of imagination can go beyond cultural obstacles should possibly communicate of the test of time and place, as the best works cross boundaries of both kinds. We might not like or enjoy works which include *Heart of Darkness* or *The Waste Land*, however, they're the ideal expression of specific approaches of looking at the world; the author has articulated a view which connects to the reader's search for meaning. It is, of course, perfectly possible for a work of imagination to

make sense of the world or of experience or love, or God, or death while also entertaining or delighting the reader or audience with the detail and expressiveness of the work. However the representation of fictional entities such as Sherlock Holmes, Nathan Zuckerman and Captain Ahab seems to have been exclusively embraced and displayed all the way through the reader's vision of reality as regards, of course, the concept of (literary projection), that is to say, whatever different the reader and the character are in terms of everything. They are connected. Therefore the latter creates an influence, which in some cases is apparent throughout the personality of the reader. The question now is how drastically this influence is demonstrable on the reader's personality?

Upon several assumptions related to this research question, we have narrowed down three hypotheses for this research. First, it is suggested that the reader of fiction unintentionally develops empathy for the protagonist character and this affects his emotions and feelings while and after reading. Second, it is hypothesized that the reader immerses himself in a work of fiction to the point of losing track between reality and imagination, this condition showed more changes in the reader's personality traits compared with readers of nonfiction. Third, it is suggested that the reader who projects himself into fictional stories and the minds of fictional characters, exposes himself up to greater possibilities as to what he may become.

Eventually this research is an attempt to find out reader's personality adaptation under the influence of modern and postmodern works of fiction; connecting this study case to both Psychological readers-response theory and Narrative transportation theory. Basically, it is a three step process, with the intention of examining this relation Literarily, Philosophically and Psychologically.

This thesis is divided into three chapters each chapter holds a deferent approach and an independent study on the main theme, it is presented as follows:

The first chapter is mainly an overview on both Modern and Postmodern experiment in literary fiction. The first section, however, points up the historical emergence of fiction as autonomous genre, and includes an aperçu of authors and scholars that contributed to the evolution of fictional literature. The second section is composed of generic analyzes on fiction in correlation with the reader as well as the character to explain the narrative experience.

Chapter one therefore, is an entrance to this research study wherein the content is directed to understand fiction as a complex set of components all located to make readers granting an exceptional experience from fictional stories.

The second chapter is a collection of contemporary philosophical debates on the nature and foundations of fiction. These debates are collected from diverse accounts in which each one of them provide a theory on the abstraction of fictional entities. Finally this chapter is aimed at affording logical explanations about the believability of characters as abstract beings.

Finally, the third chapter is a grouping of strategic literary theories in addition to a psychological and Neuroscientific references. This chapter exposes number of current notions such as Narrative empathy; Narrative transportation and relate them to empirical research.

The final chapter is the most significant chapter in this thesis. It provides credible academic experiments of the effects of fiction and fictional characters on reader's attitudes.

Literary fiction is a tremendous field of study wherein scholars and intellectuals from different academic platforms have conducted several studies. These studies were primarily deferent in purpose, as they autonomously attempted to cover this topic from explicit angles wherefrom they ushered a set of very important theories which contributed to establishing more valuable readings.

The earliest studies on literary fiction were both historical in essence and analytic in form; such as *The Art of Fiction*, by the British novelist David Lodge. We were intrested in

this book because David Lodge has afforded an essential reading for students of literature, aspirant writers, and any individual who wishes to understand how literature works and build knowledge on the aspects of the art of fiction. Another essential reading was in a book called *Terry Eagleton's Literary Theory: An Introduction*. This book is a critical overview of the history of literary theory beginning just before the rise of the Romantic movement in eighteenth-century England and ending with the post-Structuralists in 1970s and 1980s. Through this authentic approach, Eagleton explores the questions "What is literature?" and "What is literary theory?" . Apart from books we have studied articles and thesis including *The Narrative Art of Modernist Fiction: A corpus stylistic and cognitive narratological approach* by Jian Luo that explores modernist style of constructing narrative fiction and analyses the construction of characters in three deferent novels. then we have studied some other helpful references about the cognitive value of fiction and its emotional impact; like *Why Fiction May Be Twice as True as Fact: Fiction as Cognitive and Emtional Simulation* by Keith Oatley and *Cognitive Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience* publised by Wikibooks.org. what distinguish all the abovementioned studies is that they treated fiction from an exact point. But what identifies our work is that we have gathered all these fields Literature, philosophy and psychology and merge them toghter and by that, we have bridged gaps between them. Now fiction became an interdisciplinary topic wherein all disciplines contributed together and came up with a more reinforced evidence of its influence in every aspect of life.

In this study we are going to follow the Systematic review and meta-analysis methodology. It suits our study since that there is a common truth behind all conceptually similar academic studies on fiction and its confluence. This methodology provides a body of texts that aims to review the critical points of current knowledge on fiction including essential

findings as well as theoretical and methodological contributions of philosophy and psychology to both readers and fictional characters.

Because our case study deals with only two points the Psychological readers-response theory and Narrative transportation theory. We can never be sure whether the conclusions drawn from these particular cases apply elsewhere. The results of the study are not generic because we can never know whether the cases we have investigated are representative of the wider body of similar frameworks.

Chapter One

An overview on modern and postmodern literature upon the representation of fictional characters in the novel

General Introduction

4. An introduction on Modern and Postmodern literature

4.1. Modernism

4.2. Postmodernism

4.3. Postmodern characteristics

5. A Critical analysis on the authorship of modern and postmodern era: theory and literature

6. The Influence of Fictional Narrative on reader's mindset

6. Characteristics of the modern and the Postmodern character in fiction

7. Prototypical characters in modern literature

Conclusion

1. An introduction on Modern and Postmodern literature

1.1. Modernism

The history of twentieth century literature is written in two broad epochs: Modernism and Postmodernism, two large periods of the 20th century experiment. They were and are still an extremely vital periods in the history of writing, a time of great literary power and considerable innovation, experiment and the revival of serious fiction. Modernism was a revolt against the conservative values of realism. There was a need for the novel to discover the world, thus it evolved as a self-questioning form, and new forms of exploration, and enquiring modes of knowledge.

Embracing change and the present, modernism includes the works of thinkers who rebelled against nineteenth century academic traditions, believing the "traditional" forms of art, , architecture, literature, religious faith, social organization, and daily life were becoming outdated; Modern scientific methods of analysis have been established; linguistics and philosophy and anthropology, psychology and sociology, Marxism and feminism and structuralism as well as deconstruction have proved the complete total picture of narrative techniques which are capable of integrating all the new relations created in the world. Historically speaking the modernist novel was obviously quite different from the Victorian, the Romantic, or any of its predecessors in several aspects. Some characteristics of modernist novels are fragmentation, complexity, free indirect style, lack of a coherent plot, inconclusiveness, and very often a pervasive pessimism. In the words of Edward Mozejko:

“In a most general way it can be said that in modernism, the world is perceived as being problematic, that is, while posing epistemological questions, the artist does not provide any valid answers as to how to solve or remedy them.” Thus, we may deduce from this that there probably existed a wider gap between modernist fiction-writers and their readers than had been the case with earlier writers, and that authors neither felt a need to moralize in their novels, nor make a point to educate the public and consequently set guidelines for behavior. Whereas certain Victorians may have asked the question of what was then left to do in a novel. Modernist writers certainly produced such stories, but as the abovementioned gap states: if the authors are alien, chances are that their characters are, too. Not only are they alien because their creators insisted on their own uniqueness; they are also often depicted as aliens in a broken post-war society. Added to this is the pessimism of the authors; the inability or lack of enthusiasm to suggest acceptable solutions to their character’s problem. Furthermore, modernist writer had the desire to change old conventions of writing, rejecting for example the traditional notion of plot with beginnings, middles, ends as well as the unwillingness to introduce clearly defined heroes and villains. Keeping in mind that most readers of the time had experienced unprecedented turmoil, tragedies and instability, it is possible that they did not wish to see the same features in literature, at least not when reading for recreation .Whereas previously literary characters may have provided such stability, with their often clearly defined place in society, accepted, mainstream opinions, and often implications to the reader for how one should conduct one’s life, modernist characters seemed to be victims of unfavorable circumstances with an undefined role in the world. Novel readers accustomed to works by authors who took it upon themselves to educate, offer solutions to moral questions, and provide characters who live happily ever after may have found the reading of modernist novels a somewhat frustrating experience.

The modernist movement, at the beginning of the 20th century, marked the first time that the term "avant-garde", with which the movement was labeled until the word "modernism" prevailed, it was used for the arts (rather than in its original military and political context). Avant-garde writers involved such authors as Knut Hamsun (whose novel *Hunger* (1890) is considered to be the first 'modernist' novel), Virginia Woolf, T. S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein, H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), and others. In general modernism elevates the individual and the inward over the social and the outward, and it prefers the unconscious to the self-conscious. It has radically boosted leverages in the new economic, social, and political conditions of an emerging fully industrialized world.

1.2. Postmodernism

Like modernist literature, postmodern literature is part of socio-cultural and historical development and can be seen as a specific way of a depiction of the postmodern life and culture. Postmodernism is a cultural phenomenon embodied in areas such as art, literature and so on, which is becoming increasingly dominant in contemporary society, like Murfin (2003, p. 297) takes it as "certain radically experimental works of literature and art"; however, postmodernism did not gain widespread attention until the 1970s, during which the postmodern challenge to modernism infiltrated into mainstream culture. At the beginning it denoted a new style of architecture, and then it invaded academic circles, originally as a label for theories developed in college English and philosophy departments. Eventually it surfaced as the description for a much broader cultural phenomenon including literature, art, and other forms of thinking and expression. No matter what else it might possibly be, as the name suggests, postmodernism signifies the quest to move beyond modernism. Specifically, it involves a rejection of the modern mind-set, but still carries on underneath the conditions of

modernism. With the affix “post-”, postmodernism suggests a time after modernism, or the future of modernism, so postmodernism follows modernism as both a succession and an anti of it¹. Modernism, therefore, was the product of Protestantism and Capitalism which puts forth the tendency that gives privilege to human being as a separate entity where individual rights, individual psyche and individual personality exist in. These forces establish individual’s relationship with God as well as develop his tendency to earn money. Postmodernism undermines this ideology of modernism to expose its hypocrisy. It rejects the ideology of liberal humanism, its literature and culture which privileges an individual to express his personal opinions about the world in his unique and authentic style. The literature produced during this period is ironic and disillusioned about its own nature. It acknowledges its own futility as a form of literature which breaks off from the traditional values of modernism. It recognizes the purposelessness of the traditional ways of making sense of the world out of reality.

Postmodern fiction, however, presents its readers with a challenge: instead of enjoying it passively, they have to work to understand it, to question their own responses, and to examine their views about what fiction is. Yet accepting this challenge is what makes postmodern writing so pleasurable to read and rewarding to study. The writers who write in this period are commonly supposed as postmodernists. Their works share some common characteristics of the period such as paradox, questionable narrators, metanarrative, pastiche etc. Unlike modernists’ quest for meaning in this chaotic world, postmodernists avoid the possibility of meaning. Such a feature creates the satire in their work. They use metafiction to sustain the narrative authority of the author. They write fiction about the fiction. The distinction between high and low culture is also attacked with the employment of pastiche. They employ the free

¹**Li Ma**, *Indeterminacy in Postmodern Fiction* available from
<http://ojs.academypublisher.com/index.php/jltr/article/viewFile/jltr040613381342/7947>

play of structure into the narrative. During the post war period, several movements like Absurdism, the Beat Generation, and the Magic Realism are emerged as a result of socioeconomic milieu. Many writers from various sectors write in response to the contemporary condition. Among them the works of Samuel Beckett are often seen as marking a shift from modernism to postmodernism. He is closely related with modernism because of his friendship with James Joyce, on the other hand his works helped to shape the development of literature away from modernism. He has experimented with the narrative form in his fiction to depict the characters that are trapped in inescapable situations of life and helplessly try to escape from that chaos.

Postmodernism can be seen to have a distinct nature of its own; its literature has been influenced by literary criticism, beside this definition; it is essential here to take a brief review of the postmodern characteristics and literary devises in order to comprehend the term itself.

1.3. Postmodern characteristics

Postmodern authors were certainly not the first to use irony and humor in their writing, but for many postmodern authors, these became the properties of their style. Postmodern authors will often treat very serious subjects such as World War II, the Cold War, conspiracy theories from a position of distance and disconnect, and will choose to depict their histories ironically and humorously. Writers like Vonnegut and Pynchon depict the serious events of World War II in a comic manner. These novelists name their characters by the names of the political and historical figures, philosophers, actors in order to mock their ideologies. For instance, Salaman Rushdie in his novel *The Midnight's Children* uses the

political leaders of India as his characters and fictionalizes the history of Indian Freedom Fighting².

Many postmodern authors combined, or “pasted” elements of previous genres and styles of literature to create a new narrative voice, or to comment on the writing of their contemporaries. William S. Burroughs narrates his stories by combining science fiction with the features of detective fiction. Thomas Pynchon, one of the most important postmodern authors applied pastich, he uses elements from detective fiction, science fiction, and war fiction, songs, pop culture references, and well-known, obscure, and fictional history.

An important element of postmodernism is its acknowledgment of previous literary works. The intertextuality of certain works of postmodern fiction, the dependence on literature that has been created earlier, attempts to comment on the situation in which both literature and society found themselves in the second half of the 20th century: living, working, and creating on the backs of those that had come before. The only difference is in fact a message of the text which is explored by displacing other works in a different literary context. Kathy Acker’s *Don Quixote: Which Was a Dream* is a classic example intertextuality which takes references of Cervante’s *Don Quixote*, a medieval romance. Other examples of intertextuality in postmodern literature are John Barth’s *The Sot-Weed Factor* (1960), Robert Coover’s *Pinocchio in Venice* (1991) and Umberto Eco’s *The Name of the Rose* (1985)³.

Many postmodern authors feature metafiction in their writing, which, essentially, is writing about writing, an attempt to make the reader aware of its fictionality, and, sometimes, the presence of the author. Authors sometimes use this technique to allow for deliberate shifts in narrative, impossible jumps in time, or to maintain emotional distance as a narrator or to

²**MARCO GIUSTI**, *A List Of Postmodern Characteristics*, available from <http://postmodernblog.tumblr.com/post/106532710/a-list-of-postmodern-characteristics>

³ <http://postmodernblog.tumblr.com/post/106532710/a-list-of-postmodern-characteristics>

comment on the act of storytelling. Italo Calvino's novel *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* (1979), for instance, is about a reader attempting to read a novel of the same name.

Historiographic metafiction is a term created by Linda Hutcheon to refer to novels that fictionalize actual historical events and characters. Such works are always based upon textual play, parody and historical re-conceptualization. For example Julian Barnes' *Flaubert's Parrot* gives references of Gustave Flaubert. E. L. Doctorow's *Ragtime* (1975) refers to the historical figures like Henry Ford, Booker T. Washington, Sigmund Freud, and Carl Jung. Rabi Alameddine's *Koolhaas: The Art of War* makes references to the Lebanese Civil War and various real life political figures. Thomas Pynchon's *Mason and Dixon* gives references of George Washington. John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman* deals with the Victorian Period.

Temporal distortion is a literary technique that uses a nonlinear timeline. The author may jump forwards or backwards in time, or there may be cultural and historical references that do not fit. Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five* (1969) is a best example of such a fragmented structure and non-linear narrative. Robert Coover's *Pricksongs & Descants* (1969) presents the occurrence of various events at a time which creates a fragmented structure of the narrative. This technique is frequently used in literature, but it has become even more common in films.

In his essay of the same name, Frederic Jameson called postmodernism the "cultural logic of late capitalism." According to his logic, society has moved beyond capitalism into the information age, in which we are constantly bombarded with advertisements, videos, and product placement. Many postmodern authors reflect this in their work by inventing products that mirror actual advertisements, or by placing their characters in situations in which they

cannot escape technology and this notion was often identified as Technoculture and hyperreality⁴.

‘Paranoia’ is a one more attitude shared by the postmodern authors. This is a psychological disorder which generates an abnormal suspicion and mistrust. Many postmodern authors write under the assumption that modern society cannot be explained or understood. From that point of view, any apparent connections or controlling influences on the chaos of society would be very frightening, and this lends a sense of paranoia to many postmodern works fiction such of Thomas Pynchon’s (*The Crying of Lot 49*), and Kurt Vonnegut (*Breakfast of Champions*)⁵.

“*Maximalism*” Belittled by its critics for being in turns disorganized, extensive, overly long, and emotionally disconnected, maximalism exists in the tradition of long works like *The Odyssey*. Authors that use this technique will sometimes defend their work as being as long as it needs to be, depending on the subject material that is covered. However, maximalism is successfully used by the writers like Thomas Pynchon (*Mason & Dixon*), James Chapman (*Stet*), and David Foster Wallace’s (*Infinite Jest*)⁶.

Minimalism is a style of writing in which the author deliberately presents characters that are unexceptional and events that are taken from everyday life. It is not an exclusively postmodern technique, as many writers, most notably Ernest Hemingway, wrote in a similar style, but some critics claim that Samuel Beckett, one of the most important postmodern authors, perfected minimalism⁷.

Faction is very similar to historiographic metafiction, in that its subject material is based on actual events, but writers of faction tend to blur the line between fact and fiction to

⁴ <http://postmodernblog.tumblr.com/post/106532710/a-list-of-postmodern-characteristics>

⁵ <http://postmodernblog.tumblr.com/post/106532710/a-list-of-postmodern-characteristics>

⁶ <http://postmodernblog.tumblr.com/post/106532710/a-list-of-postmodern-characteristics>

⁷ <http://postmodernblog.tumblr.com/post/106532710/a-list-of-postmodern-characteristics>

the degree that it is almost impossible to know the difference between the two, as opposed to metafiction, which often draws attention to the fact that it is not true⁸.

Magical realism is Arguably the most important postmodern technique, magical realism is the introduction of fantastic or impossible elements into a narrative that is otherwise normal. Magical realist novels may include dreams taking place during normal life, the return of previously deceased characters, extremely complicated plots, wild shifts in time, and myths and fairy tales becoming part of the narrative. Many critics argue that magical realism has its roots in the work of Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel García Márquez, two South American writers, and some have classified Gabriel Marquez's novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is a famous example of magic realism. Salman Rushdie, Italo Calvino, and Gunter Grass are some of the postmodern writers who have employed the technique of magical realism in their works⁹.

Participation is literary technique applied Many postmodern authors, as a response to modernism, which frequently set its authors apart from their readers, attempt to involve the reader as much as possible over the course of a novel. This can take the form of asking the reader questions, including unwritten narratives that must be constructed by the reader, or allowing the reader to make decisions regarding the course of the narrative¹⁰.

Aforementioned methodological devises point out that postmodernism is a cultural and literary movement born out of its predecessor modernism and carries certain tendencies of modernism to its extreme stage as well as rebels and challenges to these tendencies at other context. It is both a continuation as well as a break from modernism, and is marked by the characteristics such as fragmentation, discontinuity, irony, ambiguity, time, chaos, scepticism

⁸ <http://postmodernblog.tumblr.com/post/106532710/a-list-of-postmodern-characteristics>

⁹ <http://postmodernblog.tumblr.com/post/106532710/a-list-of-postmodern-characteristics>

¹⁰ <http://postmodernblog.tumblr.com/post/106532710/a-list-of-postmodern-characteristics>

etc. Each definition mentioned above throws light on the nebulous nature of the concept of postmodernism.

2. A Critical analysis of the authorship of modern and postmodern era:

theory and literature

The past century has seen an explosion of narratives wherein the literary greats contributed to the evolution of literature, recreated and embodied toward new textual genres. Their works project a rigid understanding of the author as a historically and culturally dependent membership constructed along the lines of gender, sexual orientation, class, and nationality. Authors of fiction have self-fashioned original revolutionary works, affirming and celebrating human creativity as the best means of illuminating and exploring the human, a new obsession with ingenuity spills over into fiction, the past blends with the present, history with imagination. Thus, they articulate, reflect on, and can be read through both modern and postmodern concerns.

Directly or indirectly, a work of literature opens a window on the culture in which it is produced. Whether the work is T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) or William Burroughs's *Naked Lunch* (1959), the study of its author, of the circumstances of its composition, of the work itself, of its audiences, and of its reception and critical interpretation offer a deeper insight into the cultural moment in which it was written. Hence it is common sense to refer to Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), Henri Bergson (1859-1941) and William James (1842-1910). The three greats that contributed to the development of the Modern novel, which was deeply influenced by the theories of those thinkers:

Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* (1899) proposed a theory of human consciousness as composed of different levels. Of these levels the most radically significant was the unconscious, which could be accessed through dreams and had a great influence on man's conscious behaviour. Freud's theories suggested that man organize the information he received from the outside world according to his own interior experience and desires, and that his perception of reality was fundamentally subjective. It is exactly this interior world that Modernist writers often try to explore in their writing. Another thinker who influenced the techniques of Modernists was Henri Bergson. Bergson argued that time could not be measured according to the units (such as hours, minutes, etc.) because it is a flow, a 'duration' and not a series of points. Instead of perceiving time as linear, we experience a mixture of past, present and future at the same moment. The theories of Bergson contributed to the Modernist challenge to the traditional idea of a linear story. Linked to Bergson's notion of time is the psychologist William James's notion of 'stream of consciousness' which again had a great influence on the development of the Modernist novel. Consciousness, James said, cannot be divided up in different parts or units, but it is something fluid which 'flows' just like a 'stream'. These, and other, theorists have continued invariably to influence, however, the most influential theorists of Postmodernism are the French Jean-François Lyotard for his concept of the "meta-narrative" and "little narrative", Jacques Derrida's concept of "play", and Jean Baudrillard's concept "simulacra" of his expressions claiming that "every thing has already happened... nothing new can occur," or that "there is no real world" (Rosenau 1992: 64, 110). Baudrillard is said to break down modernity and post modernity in an effort to explain the world as a set of models. He identifies early modernity as the period between the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution, modernity as the period at the start of the Industrial Revolution, and post modernity as the period of mass media (cinema and photography). Baudrillard states that we live in a world of images, but images that are only

simulations. He implies that many people fail to understand this concept that "we have now moved into an epoch... where truth is entirely a product of consensus values, and where 'science' itself is just the name we attach to certain modes of explanation." (Norris: 169); these names have contributed immensely to the principles of the Postmodern novel. Accordingly each of the two conventions (i.e. Modernism, Postmodernism) employs its formal techniques and carries a corresponding set of theoretical assumptions¹¹.

The essential thing about the postmodernist and modernist literature is that both of them represent a break from the 19th century realism. Both movements away from the apparent objectivity provided by omniscient third-person narrators, fixed narrative points of view, and clear cut moral positions. Another factor is that both postmodern and modern literature search into the problem of subjectivism in character development, as a result turning from external reality to examine into the inner states of consciousness. In many cases, both attach on modernist tradition of the stream of consciousness styles developed by Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, or the explorative poems style developed by T. S. Elliot in *The Waste Land*; these and other examples of various connections between modernist and postmodernist novels by different authors shows that the narrative art of fiction is many-faceted. Such an aesthetic, thematic, and narrative stylistic multiplicity invites explorations from different angles and issues a chain of high aesthetic literary properties.

¹¹ **Dr. Michael D. Murphy**, *Anthropological theories*, available from <http://www.anthropology.ua.edu/cultures/cultures.php?culture=Postmodernism%20and%20Its%20Critics>

3. The Influence of Fictional Narrative on reader's mindset

Fiction permits individuals to venture into different worlds, as considerably as to experience those worlds, to do what they can't over the span of an ordinary day, and to feel past their typical emotions. Since readers need to submerge themselves in different universes and different lives, writers can make that experience conceivable, by creating a bridge into the fictional realm and allow them (i.e. readers) to go on inside. One method the writer can make use of to make reality out of fiction is to impel feeling in readers, make them feel something of what the characters are encountering. Writer and reader know the fictional events aren't genuine, however the feeling can be. Readers can fear and experience joy and be excited and know the grief. They can laugh and cry, chill and rage, all from reading a narrative¹². We thus read fiction not to gain new information so much as to encounter the thoughts and emotions a story rouses inside us. No matter if it's *Oliver Twist* or *Harry Potter*, *Hester Prynne* or *Katniss Everdeen*, literary characters offer us a chance to eventually experience lifestyle in all its situation, humor, mystery, and adventure. Through *Atticus Finch*, we fight a moral cause in the face of prejudice. Through *Lizzy Bennet*, we defy class boundaries to find romantic happiness. Through *Ralph Ellison's invisible man*, we lament society's refusal to recognize our individuality.

With fiction, the significance is dependent on the perceptions, imagination, and feelings of the reader. But, it needs that an interpretation be primarily based on proof on the self. And in this case, part of understanding ; is knowing one's own interests, values, and desires and the way they regard what one seems for and the way one thinks about what one reveals from a character. Fiction does mold us. The deeper we are thrown under a story's spell, the more efficient its impact. In fact, fiction seems to be more efficient at modifying

¹² **Beth Hill**, *Creating Emotion in the Reader*, available from <http://theeditorsblog.net/2011/01/30/creating-emotion-in-the-reader/>

values than nonfiction, which is designed to persuade through argument and evidence. Research has shown that when we study nonfiction, we study with our shields up. We are critical and doubtful. But when we are consumed in a story, we drop our intellectual guard. We are moved emotionally, and this seems to make us uncovered and easy to be transformed. Moreover, it's clear that fiction really can change our views. As the psychologist Raymond Mar writes, "Researchers have repeatedly found that reader attitudes shift to become more congruent (similar) with the ideas expressed in a fictional narrative." History, too, reveals fiction's ability to change our values at the collective level, for better and worse. For example, Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" helped bring about the Civil War by convincing huge numbers of Americans that blacks are people, and that enslaving them is a mortal sin and *Animal Farm* by George Orwell strongly affected readers' views of government and politics. Hence, narrative experiences provide personal insights such as reflections on life, and therefore are important for people in order to learn about themselves¹³. A frequent feature of fiction is that it enables readers to identify and sympathize with characters, either in relation to the protagonist or the other characters, and this is part of emotional appeal. By doing so readers create such rich representations in their own minds about characters in a novel that they create their own expectations about their behavior based on what they know about them.

To sum-up this narrative mode of thinking is great represented through fictional literature. Fiction specializes in believability; a fictional textual content isn't assessed on its consistency as is the case in non-fiction, however as an alternative on whether or not it establishes virtuality, or simulations. A reader will be moved by a fictional narrative only when it creates a narrative world that is real within its context, and more importantly, when it is realistic for the reader, thereby creating an opportunity to be drawn into the story. The

¹³ **Jonathan Gottschall**, *Why fiction is good for you*, available from <https://www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2012/04/28/why-fiction-good-for-you-how-fiction-changes-your-world/nubDy1P3viDj2PuwGwb3KO/story.html>

successful fiction moves one emotionally, and regularly it permits readers to take on the mindset, goals, and purpose of a protagonist, in a mode of identification or experience-taking. The concerns and situations of characters stimulate emotions in the reader, however, it's no longer the feelings of the characters one feels. The emotions are one's very own.

4. Characteristics of the modern and the Postmodern character in fiction

The rise of fiction in the 19th and 20th centuries brought a range of various characters that had gradually going more and more individual and unique. Their uniqueness changed into based totally on ever richer descriptions in their nature that absolutely abandoned the romantic functional notion and began to assemble characters that resembled their readers within the complexity of their inner mind and feelings. This resemblance gave beginning of a trend in literary research often called mimetic or psychological, which abstracts literary characters from the textual material and sees them as much like real-life styles humans, which is taken into consideration a sincere natural way of approaching a story while reading it as a common reader. Even though these human-like characters inhabit an ontologically distinct world, readers and theorists alike generally tend to get into account them in overtly realistic ways.

For most readers, characters are one of the maximum crucial factors of a story. How readers relate to a character is an issue of realistic analysis, but it's significant to bear in mind that the way the textual content presents a character is highly influential at the relation between individual and reader. Three elements mainly are applicable in this respect. First is the transfer of perspective; the reader's affective tendency towards the character itself prompted by the character's feelings, whether or not explicitly described or implicitly conveyed. Second the reader's response to the mental stimulation of the character's position; third the expression of emotions within the presentation and assessment of characters within

the textual content. Most of the common labels for character in use refer to the role a character has in the story. “Protagonist,” in use since Greek antiquity, refers to the main character of a narrative or a play, and “antagonist” to its main opponent. However; in modern high-culture narratives, there is more often an anti-hero or no single protagonist at all, but a group of characters¹⁴. Fortunately, some fiction writers have given a good deal of thought to their craft. They’ve created a body of literature on technique, and a large part of that deals with techniques for building character. Among the best are Robie Macauley and George Lanning’s “Technique in Fiction,” John Gardner’s “The Art of Fiction” and Janet Burroway’s “Writing Fiction.” What follows is a summary of what they have to say about the fine art of characterization.

The first point almost all of them make is that the most fully crafted characters are round, rather than flat. Janet Burroway draws the distinction this way: “A flat character is one who has only one distinctive characteristic, exists only to exhibit that characteristic, and is incapable of varying from that characteristic. A round character is many faceted and is capable of change.” Many of the Romantic writers of the 19th Century looked back to elements of the heroic myth. New kind of hero emerged in their writings the word “protagonist” was often used to replace the word “hero”, and because there had been a change in the nature of the leading character. The “protagonist” was now much more complex. With writers like Henry James and Joseph Conrad, the hero, or protagonist was now a psychologically much more complex character. In the 1950s, a new genre of literature appeared where the “protagonist” is the opposite of the hero; in fact, he is called the “anti-hero.” Antiheroes are a quintessential element of Modernism, postmodernism and existentialism. Although the breed of anti heroes came into focus and entered the main stream of literature in large numbers roughly during and after the period of Modernism, the concept

¹⁴ **Fotis Jannidis**, *the living handbbook of narratology*, available from <http://wikis.sub.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/index.php/Character>

was present even before. The idea of a hero who is flawed, weak, and possesses humane insecurities rather than epic virtues has fascinated many writers and readers alike. What is an Antihero?

An Antihero is the prime character of a modern literary or dramatic work that lacks the attributes of the conventional protagonist or hero. The anti-hero's loss of braveness, honesty, or grace, his weaknesses and confusions, regularly replicate modern man's response towards traditional ethical and social merits. in keeping with the Wikipedia- In fiction, an anti-hero is a protagonist who's lacking the conventional heroic attributes and characteristics, and rather possesses person traits which are opposing to heroism. The word *anti-hero*, itself, is fairly recent; its principal definition has changed through the years. The 1940 edition of Merriam-Webster New International Dictionary listed *anti-hero*, but did not define it. Later sources would call the anti-hero a persona characterized by a lack of "traditional" heroic qualities.

The Antiheroes often possess some criminal behavior and are both self-absorbed and depressed. Mid-20th century playwrights such as Samuel Beckett and Tom Stoppard showcased anti-heroic protagonists recognizable by their lack of identity and determination. Yet his truthful portrayal resonates with many people, despite the lack of any last-minute salvation or even a final resolution of his many conflicts. In short it can be said that an Antihero is anything but a simple life like character. In works featuring these types of protagonists there usually is no ordinary, good-or-evil characters. Yet this type of characters achieved something unprecedented in the mainstream of modern literature. It identified modern readers in much closer way then its precedent modern narrative characters. It has been argued that the continuing popularity of the anti-hero in modern literature and popular culture may be based on the recognition that a person is filled with human vices, unlike the archetypes of the 'white-hatted' cowboy and the noble warrior, and is therefore more

accessible to readers¹⁵. All anti-heroes are flawed in some way, either because they have bad purposes and good methods, or bad methods and good purposes. The anti-hero protagonist might be bad in both his methods and his, objectives, but still draw sympathy from the audience because the modern audience has found it easier to relate to a more humane, earthy hero than the previous larger-than-life heroes.

5. Prototypical characters in modern literature

One of the most archetype protagonist figures in literature is Captain Ahab. The significance of Ahab is as archetypal whaling captain. Melville describes Ahab's presence as a leader and whaling captain in both glorious as well as threatening terms. He appears primarily as intelligent, alert, highly skilled and knowledgeable, and in absolute command at all times. In Ahab's first appear on deck, the primary time he's determined by Ishmael and the gentlemen of the *Pequod*, the power the person initiatives, the sensation skilled by using Ishmael, is all electric and terrifying. Ishmael says, "As I leveled my glance towards the taffrail, foreboding shivers ran over me. Reality outran apprehension; Captain Ahab stood upon his quarter-deck" (108). Ahab is a petty dictator, tyrant, a monomaniac dedicated only to killing the whale that attacked him. Ultimately, he's a mass murderer who drags dozens of sailors to Davy Jones' Locker. But under that exterior madness, some see a man of surprising talents a man destined for greatness, then damaged by destiny. He's a wounded man, haunted not just by his loss, but by the image of the wife and child he's left behind. There's humanity to him and he's his own worst enemy. Captain Ahab is more modern character than his 1851 vintage might suggest. He convinces a bunch of seamen to join his suicidal mission. In some

¹⁵ Thomson Gale e-research and educational publishing: Glossary A , available from <http://antihero.askdefine.com/>

sense, he's every modern day leader of every country who asks the population to trust him, follow him wherever¹⁶.

Sherlock Holmes is the Archetype fictional detective created by Scottish Author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at some phase in the 19th century. One of the maximum recognizable figures in English literature, Holmes is a consulting detective who lives at 221 B Baker Street in Victorian London. Every time the police have trouble solving a case, they come in search of his advice. He additionally assists clients privately with the assistant of his buddy and roommate, Dr. John H. Watson. Conan Doyle based totally the character of Sherlock Holmes on Dr. Joseph Bell, a surgeon at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, beneath whom Conan Doyle had labored as a clerk, even though Bell is frequently cited as having written to Conan Doyle that 'you are yourself Sherlock Holmes, and properly you comprehend it. Conan Doyle additionally drew inspiration from Sir Henry Littlejohn of the college of Edinburgh medical faculty. As a police, health care provider, Littlejohn created for Conan Doyle a link between Holmes is well-known for his effective competencies of the statement and deduction, which allow him to identify clues left out with the aid of the Scotland Yard detectives he often assists. For example, in *A study in Scarlet* (1887), the first Holmes tale Conan Doyle wrote, the detective is capable of describing a murderer via measuring the distance of his stride primarily based on his footprints and through the brand of tobacco he makes use of. It is sometimes believed that real Scotland Yard detectives were advocated to examine the Sherlock Holmes stories to observe his techniques. Conan Doyle is often credited with producing the character whose work inspired modern-day forensic technology, the detection of drugs and the revealing of crime. The Sherlock Holmes stories have also served as a kind of layout for the genre of detective fiction in trendy¹⁷.

¹⁶ **Larry Abramson**, *Was Captain Ahab Ahead of His Time?*, available from <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=88074943>

¹⁷ **Francesca Marinaro**, *Sherlock Holmes: Books, Characters & Author*, available from <http://study.com/academy/lesson/sherlock-holmes-books-characters-author.html>

People can learn lots from the hardships and accomplishments of fictional characters. Those imaginary personalities are created by actual humans, after all. Fictional characters can be brilliant role models. They train morals, existence instructions, human nature, and hardships. Thru fictional characters, and via most of these fictional characters, and through all these fictional realms, readers create secure havens for them to develop.

Conclusion

Nowadays, fiction is a very significant genre, not because of the amount of productions from the 1920's to the present day. But as this chapter suggests, is due to its capacity to generate life within the actual life. What changes now is our perspective about the value of literary fictions, and our way of going through stories which has become more intimate than any time before.

The second chapter is entirely different from this one. It suggests a series of philosophical debates on the nature fiction. It also might help to afford a logical perspective on factious realms and fictional beings that inhabits our stories.

Chapter two

Philosophical debates on fictional entities: fictional realism theories

Introduction

5. Approaching fictional entities

6. Literary cognitivism

7. Fictional realism

7.1. Meinong's Realism: (nonexistent objects)

7.2. Fictional possibilism: (possible objects)

7.2.1. Lewis's Modal Realism (possible worlds)

7.2.2. Kripkean theses of fictional characters (possible world semantics)

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7.3.1. Artifactualism

8. Fiction and imagination

8.1. Imagination

8.2. Relation between fiction and imagination

Conclusion

Introduction

Many of the maximum intensely discussed issues in contemporaneous analytic philosophy are those related to the nature and foundations of fiction. One of them details the distinction between fiction and non-fiction, which identifies with the area of aesthetics. Another respects the nature of the cognitive and linguistic resources required to create and acknowledge fiction, which extends to the area of the philosophy of mind and cognitive science and the philosophy of language. One further issue observes the subject of whether there are fictional entities as the objects of our thoughts and if there are any such entities, what their nature really is. This, which refers to the area of metaphysics, will be the focus of this chapter.

Philosophical issues encompassing fiction have pulled in expanding consideration from scholars in the course of recent decades. What takes after is a talk of one commonplace and very crucial point in this area: fictional entities (both the issue of what such entities may resemble and whether there truly are such entities). By ‘fictional entities’, scholars basically mean those substances starting in and characterized by myths, legends, tall tales, books, dramas and different works of fiction. In these sense unicorns, legendary Gods, Pegasus, the Time Machine and Sherlock Holmes are all imaginary creatures. The discourse will be additionally about the emotional responses to fiction; and how could it be that we can be moved by what we know does not exist, in particular, the situations of people in fictional stories? The answer to this paradox is to be narrowed in three possible arguments: First, in order for us to be moved (to tears, to anger, to horror) by what we come to find out about

different individuals and circumstances, we should trust that those individuals and circumstances truly exist or existed; Second is that such "existence beliefs" are lacking when we deliberately engage with fictional texts; and third is that fictional characters and situations do in fact seem capable of moving us at times. Various clashing answers for this mystery have been proposed by philosophers of art. While some contend that our evident emotional responses to fiction are only "make-believe" or pretend, others claim that existence beliefs aren't essential for having emotional responses (at least to fiction) in the first place. What's more, still others hold that there is nothing particularly tricky about our enthusiastic reactions to works of fiction, since what these works figure out how to do (when effective) is make in us the "illusion" that the characters and circumstances portrayed in a work of fiction really exist.

Philosophical curiosity in fictional entities, therefore, covers a shockingly wide range of the subject, including ontology and metaphysics, epistemology, logic, philosophy of language, and aesthetics. The primary question that emerges is the manner by which the distinction should be described between fictional and nonfictional entities. The following inquiry concerns what to do with fictional entities once they have been popular. Here the essential philosophical task has been to attempt to contain two effective yet obviously clashing appreciations from one perspective,, "anti-realists" see that there are no such things as fictional entities, so that any appearing reference to them must be dismissed; then again, "Realists" contend that since "things" like Sherlock Holmes and Harry Potter are so clearly drawn, so apparently 'genuine', objects of thoughts and emotions, they should, after all, have some sort of reality.

1. Approaching fictional entities

It is an ordinary that fictional characters, for example, Sherlock Holmes are not real. If you ask a non-philosopher regardless of whether Holmes truly exists, you will be told either that he doesn't, or that he exists "in our imagination". However, various scholars defend a position at odds with common sense, and as of late this number has been developing. According to these logicians, if an account of pure fiction lets us know that a character exists, then there truly is such a person. According to these Realists, fictional characters, such as, "Sherlock Holmes", "Scarlett O'Hara", "Charlie Brown", "Sonic the hedgehog", "Batman", "Superman" are not unconscious terms, but rather names that have to do with people who exist "outside" our intellect.

A well-known trait of works of fiction is that they include fictional characters: individuals whose chronicles are told in works of fiction and who show up in a work of fiction. Shakespeare's Hamlet, for instance, includes the fictional character Hamlet; Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* includes Sherlock Holmes, J. k. Rowling's Harry Potter series includes Harry Potter, and so on. All these works include various other fictional characters; they are characterized they are portrayed by the enormous amount of their characters. However, fictional characters have a place with the class of entities differently known as fictional entities or fictional objects or "Ficta", a class that incorporates not simply living objects of fiction (fictional persons, animals, monsters, and so on) but also non-living objects of fiction such as fictional places like (J. k. Rowling's *Hogsmeade Village* and Lewis Carroll's *Wonderland* in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*). However, it does exclude entities situated in the real world, although real entities do have an imperative part to play in works of

fiction. In this manner, neither London nor Napoleon is a fictional entity, despite the fact that the first is the entirely fundamental setting to what goes ahead in the Holmes stories while the second assumes a vital part in the events described in *War and Peace*. While London and Napoleon are not fictional entities, some have suspected that the London of the Holmes stories and the Napoleon of *War and Peace* are fictional entities¹⁸.

The abovementioned characterization suggests that fictional entities constitute a special type of being. As anyone might expect, then, one key philosophical interrogation one can ask about fictional entities is a question concerning their “nature”: what sort of thing is a fictional entity? This question is particular from what appears a considerably more principal question: why assume that there are any fictional entities in the first place? After all, our reality never contained a Sherlock Holmes or a Wonderland these intended entities show up in works of fiction, not works of actuality despite being fictional, they can show readers important things about the real world as much as influencing their lives at the same time.

2. Literary Cognitivism

Literary Cognitivism is the perspective that literary works, including fictional narratives such as novels and plays, and fictional characters can contribute cognitive enhancement and that the degree to which they do as such, depend on their worth as literature. Supporters to this perspective can vary as far as the extent to which they think literary value is subject to the cognitive value. This may clarify why we esteem the experience of great literature as much as we do; only for the reason, that great literature can stimulate and move us.

Cognitivism has pulled in numerous supporters among thinkers; essential philosophical talks and defenses of cognitivism are found in the works of Morris Weitz,

¹⁸Kroon, Fred and Voltolini, Alberto, *Fiction* available from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/fiction/>

Martha Nussbaum, and Eileen John, among others. They express that Literary Cognitivism clarifies the imperative part of literature in education. Literature is one of the essential means by which we look to teach our minds, and as a standard part of the language educational programs, it is frequently a required subject of study all through all scholastic levels. In this last regard, it appreciates the same status as Science, Mathematics, and History whose commitments to knowledge few would question. If literature can't moreover contribute to our comprehension of the world, our regard for it as a fundamental piece of one's source of knowledge may appear to be hard to legitimize.

The most effective theory in literary cognitivism is The Subjective Knowledge Theory. According to it literature's cognitive value lies predominantly in its ability to give knowledge of what it feels like to be caught up in certain situations. Through reading literature one may learn, for instance, what it resembles to be a fighter in the heat of battle, to be stuck in a cold marriage, or to be a casualty of prejudice, sexual abuse, or lethal disease. Obviously, fictional literature is by all account not the only approach to discover what it resembles to encounter these things; one could likewise discover by encountering them, in actuality. However, if one needs to recognize what it resembles to experience, say, war and witness the chaos, disorder, companionship, and so on. There are several of advantages to reading a work of fiction, for example, *War and Peace*, *The Red Badge of Courage*, or *All Quiet on the Western Front* over really putting oneself on the front lines of a battle. Not just do the virtual encounters managed by such fictions clearly include less hazard, but, unlike the temporary experiences of real life, they can likewise be comeback at, repeated, and shared, thus lending themselves more profitably to reflection and discussion. In addition, literature allows for many types of experiences that we can't have, in actuality, such as the experience of historical epochs or events and the experience of having distinctive convictions, longings, memories, or deferent perceptions from one's own. In the meantime, literary cognitivism has

attracted several criticisms from philosophers. One philosophical anti-cognitivist argument calls attention to that literature is not some special source of knowledge, since the majority of the "truths" apparently found in fiction can be effectively gained from non-literary sources. But what is most likely the most grounded philosophical contention against cognitivism is additionally the simplest one. As indicated by this line of argument, the fundamental motivation behind why we can't learn anything about the real world from reading literary works is because literary works are imaginary. Fictional characters do not exist, the things that fictional characters say and do, don't really happen, and every one of the things that are achieved from this i.e., the significant truths about the human condition we as far as anyone knows gain from literature are based on nothing real. How then are readers expected to learn anything significant about the nonexistent actions of nonexistent beings? There is an unbridgeable gap between the nonexistent realm of fiction and real life. In light of this, argues the anti-cognitivist, there is no motivation to consider in any lessons, bits of knowledge, truths, or ethics supposedly accomplished from fiction could be appropriate to real life concerns and issues. Since cognitivism about literature is such a broadly held and vital insight within the humanities, it is significant considering how to respond to this philosophical dispute. Curiously enough there is another perspective that has developed in contemporary philosophy of literature known as "fictional realism" that, at first look, shows up impeccably set to reply to the anticognitivist complaint just talked about. Fictional realism is the claim that fictional characters, things like Hamlet, Shere Khan, the city of Minas Tirith, so forth really do exist. According to a Fictional Realist, fictional characters are full-developed, metaphysically respectable entities. Ophelia and Minas Tirith are as existent and as much a part of the real world as Napoleon and London are. It must be noted that fictional realism did

not develop as a specific response to anticognitivism about literature. As a philosophical position, it grew totally autonomously from debates over cognitivism¹⁹.

Fictional realism came out of a late nineteenth-century debate about how to understand sentences like “Pegasus is a winged horse” that seemed to attribute properties to nonexistent (and occasionally fictional) objects. Almost all contemporary philosophical discussion of fictional realism has likewise regarded it as autonomous and particular from issues surrounding cognitivism. Regardless, it creates the impression that fictional realism should be perfectly set to respond to anti-cognitivist concerns; that lays on the supposition that fictional characters, the universes they occupy, and the things that they say and do, are not real at all. The challenge for Cognitivists then gets to be clarifying how regardless we can learn something about this real world from these nonexistent things, and it turns out that it is exceptionally hard to build up contact between the domain of the nonexistent and this present reality; yet fictional realism effectively connects this divide. It demolishes the distinction between real life and fiction. According to fictional realism, fictional characters are authentic objects, as much a part of this present reality as numbers, atoms, trees, and individuals. If fictional characters are part of the real world, then without a doubt, we can learn things about this present reality from them. So at first it gives the idea that fictional realism could give strong backing to cognitivism. Nonetheless, it is contended here that in spite of these promising appearances, fictional realism is, truth be told, not able to exist together with artistic cognitivism. Treating fictional characters as developed real entities actually, makes it more troublesome for anybody to learn anything significant about the nonfictional world by

¹⁹**Allison Jill Hepola**, *The Reality of Fictional Characters and the Cognitive Value of Literature: Some Surprising Insights from Philosophy*, available from <https://expositions.journals.villanova.edu/article/view/1840>

reading works of literature. Therefore, the individuals who are occupied with a philosophical defense of literary cognitivism must search somewhere else for assistance²⁰.

3. Fictional Realism

Fictional Realism, obviously, brings up an issue, if fictional characters are real things just what sorts of things are they? Regardless of the possibility that we agreed that Hamlet and Oliver Twist exist and are as true as Tokyo city and George Washington, the previous still appear to be altogether different sorts of things from the last mentioned. Among fictional realists there is significant difference of opinions about exactly what sort of object fictional characters are. The most conventional and compelling positions on the matter have been to view fictional characters as Meinongian non-existents, alongside different perspectives to be talked about in details below. Sufficently speaking now, is that all philosophers who adopt a fictional realist position seem to agree upon that fictional characters are abstract objects that are, non-physical, non-spatial, non-concrete objects. Fictional characters would fall generally into the same classification as other abstract objects like numbers, frontiers and laws. In spite of the fact that they have no mass or physical expansion in space, these things are still taken to be real, existing items that are generally as true as physical things like a book or the tree itself. So accordingly the same standards apply to Hamlet, Captain Ahab, Ahab's Moby Dick, and other fictional characters.

For philosophers, an imperative factor of entity's being an actual object is that it definitively has and lacks certain properties. New York, for example, has the properties of being 1,214 km² long and being made of asphalt and lacks the property of being made of

²⁰**Allison Jill Hepola**, *The Reality of Fictional Characters and the Cognitive Value of Literature: Some Surprising Insights from Philosophy*, available from <https://expositions.journals.villanova.edu/article/view/1840>

cotton candy. As a result, statements of predication referring to real entities have truth values; the sentence “New York is made of asphalt” is a true sentence and the sentence “New York is made of cotton candy” is a false sentence. Under fictional realism, the same applies to fictional characters. Hamlet, for example, has the property of being a prince and does not have the property of being a unicorn. The sentence “Hamlet is a prince” is a true sentence and the sentence “Hamlet is a unicorn” is a false sentence. This simple and a rather uninteresting perception is entirely essential for fictional realism. Both historically and today, fictional realists have backed up their position by appealing to commonly held intuitions about sentences like “Hamlet is a prince” and “Hamlet is a unicorn.” Most individuals would concur that the main sentence is valid and the second sentence is false. However, if one is an anti-realist about fictional characters and says that things like Hamlet don't exist by any means, these two sentences would never again be valid and false; they would turn out to be totally good for nothing (meaningless). For what amount, can something that is mere nothingness truly be or not be a prince or a unicorn? The notion that sentences like “Hamlet is a unicorn” are not just false but completely meaningless seems to contradict common convictions and regular intuitions about fiction. Fictional realists argue that the only way to account for our intuitions that sentences like “Hamlet is a prince” and “Hamlet is a unicorn” have truth values is by accepting fictional characters as existent objects²¹.

Thinkers of Fictional Realism confront a complicated case that fictional entities do not exist as ordinary physical objects. For instance, we say that Hamlet does not exist and that Middle-earth is only a fiction. Depending on the interpretation that they give of this case, they partition into two inverse class of thought. Fictional irrealists consider that there are no such beings and hold that the general space of what exists does not contain them. Subsequently, they give a negative response to the ontological question and for this reason do not even try to

²¹**Allison Jill Hepola**, *The Reality of Fictional Characters and the Cognitive Value of Literature: Some Surprising Insights from Philosophy*, available from <https://expositions.journals.villanova.edu/article/view/1840>

answer the metaphysical question. Fictional realists instead believe that there are such entities. Consequently, they give a positive response to the ontological question and offer a variety of answers to the metaphysical question, which can be related to three principle metaphysical theories: fictional Meinongianism, fictional possibilism, and fictional creationism²².

3.1. Meinong's Realism: (nonexistent objects)

Philosophical compositions on nonexistent objects in the twentieth and 21st century normally take as their beginning stage at the so-called “theory of objects” of the Austrian rationalist Alexius Meinong (1853–1920). Thusly, it is proper to give an idea about the basic principles of this theory.

Meinong's Realism, likewise called Meinongian Realism, is the contemporary Meinongian view which begins with Kripke's possible worlds and attempts to make metaphysical sense of non-actual worlds and their occupants. The name "Meinongian", though, is dated following Alexius Meinong was writing years before the arrival of Kripkean worlds. However, Meinong's perspective about non-actual objects is one position to take regarding non-actual worlds. Alexius Meinong's theory of objects is recognized by the blend of the coming two theories:

- Ontological Thesis (Realism) that expresses the existence of fictional entities.
- Metaphysical Thesis (Meinongianism) that says that Fictional entities are non-existent objects.

The ontological thesis measures up fictional realism in general by saying that fictional entities are a component of the ontological structure of the world. The metaphysical

²²**Fiora Salis**, *Fictional Entities*, available from http://www.compendioemlinha.com/uploads/6/7/1/6/6716383/fictional_entities3_salis_fiora_companion2013.pdf

thesis rather separates Meinongianism from alternate theories of fictional realism by stating that there are fictional characters, yet that they don't exist. Meinong was occupied about the issue of intentional states which are not directed at anything existent. The beginning stage of this issue is the so-called “principle of intentionality”, which says that mental phenomena are characterized by an “intentional directedness” towards an object. Case in point, to love is dependable to love something, to envision is dependable to envision something, and so forth. In other words, every intentional act is “about” something. The issue is that occasionally individuals envision wish or fear things that don't exist. Some individuals fear Aliens, in spite of the fact that Aliens doesn't exist. Numerous individuals trust in peace in the Middle East, though, there is no peace in the Middle East. Indeed, history witness such marvels of “intentional directedness” when Ponce de León hunt down the “Fountain of Youth”, despite the fact that it doesn't exist. It is easy to imagine a golden mountain, regardless of the fact that no such thing exists. Meinong also distinguishes two ontological notions: subsistence and existence. Subsistence is a broad ontological category, containing both concrete objects and abstract objects. Concrete objects are said to exist and subsist (live). Abstract objects are said not to exist but rather to subsist (to be). Thus for Meinong, the nature of an object does not rely on upon its being real. This appears to give objects reality that is autonomous of actuality²³.

Simply speaking, Meinongianism is the view that some objects do not exist, but one can generally refer to them, quantify them, and state true things about them.

3.2. fictional possibilism: (possible objects)

²³ **Reicher, Maria**, *Nonexistent Objects*, available from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nonexistent-objects/>

Another approach representing the nonexistence objects is the “Possibilist theory of fictional entities”, which holds that fictional entities do not exist in the actual world don't exist in the real world yet only in some other possible worlds. In this appreciation, fictional entities are thought to resemble other just other merely possible entities, for example, talking Animals. As indicated by standard adaptations of the “Possible Worlds” framework, a few things not present in the real world exist as talking Animals at merely possible worlds. Also, the Possibilist theory holds that Sherlock Holmes does not exist in the real world, in spite of the fact that he exists at some just conceivable worlds: worlds in which the Holmes stories are a certainty.

According to this version of the metaphysical thesis, fictional entities don't exist in the genuine world however they do exist in some other conceivable world. Fictional entities are objects that exist in those possible worlds that realize the story. For instance, in spite of the fact that at the real world Conrad told *Heart of Darkness* as fiction, there is a possible world in which everything that is expressly recounted in the story is realized, and subsequently, where Marlow, Kurtz, and alternate characters exist and will be and do as the story tells²⁴.

Possible objects are objects whose existence is metaphysically possible. Upholders of possibilism hold that there are possible objects, which don't exist in the real world however that could exist in some other alternative world. The perspective is generally contradicted from Actualism, as indicated by which there are only actual objects, to be specific those objects that exist in the real world. Assume that, creatures of any given species could exist merely as members of that given species. Because creatures of some other species than those existing could have existed, creatures that really don't exist could have existed. If there are these are these possible creatures, then possibilism is valid. According to Actualism, in this

²⁴**Fiora Salis**, *Fictional Entities*, available from http://www.compendioemlinha.com/uploads/6/7/1/6/6716383/fictional_entities3_salis_fiora_companion2013.pdf

context the expression ‘these possible animals’ is void since it has no referent. However, in the event that these creatures that don't really exist could have existed, then the expression ‘these possible animals’ might have referred. Thus, in the same way to Meinongianism, possibilism recognizes two faculties of being, “Actual Existence” and “Possible Existence”. Differently from Meinongianism however, possibilism is not devoted to the perspective that any referring or meaning expression refers or indicates something. Upholders of possibilism can deny that the expression ‘winged horses’ refer because the description is just void. If there could have been winged horses then, as indicated by possibilism, something could have been a winged horse. Yet, it doesn't correspond from possibilism that if there could have been winged horses then something is a winged horse²⁵.

David Lewis is often thought of as a typical, perhaps even the quintessential, Possibilist. David Lewis (1941–2001) was a standout amongst the essential thinkers of the twentieth Century. He made critical contributions to philosophy of language, Philosophy of Mathematics, Philosophy of Science, Decision theory, Epistemology, Meta-ethics and Aesthetics. In most of these fields, he is an essential reference in many of them; he is among the most important figures of recent decades. His largest contribution in metaphysics was his “Modal Realism”²⁶.

3.2.1. Lewis’s Modal Realism (possible worlds)

David Lewis characterizes the "world" as complete in both time and space. That is, the world contains everything that is spatiotemporally identified with us regardless of how

²⁵ **Fiora Salis**, *Fictional Entities*, available from http://www.compendioemlinha.com/uploads/6/7/1/6/6716383/fictional_entities3_salis_fiora_companion2013.pdf

²⁶ **Weatherson, Brian**, *David Lewis*, available from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/david-lewis/>

separated we are from these things by time and space. Lewis states “There are ever so many ways that a world might be; and one of these many ways is the way that this world is” (Lewis, 1986, 1–2). To discuss ways the world may have been is to talk modal terms. Explicitly, it is to discuss possible ways the world could have been. But it is not instantly clear what it means to say that something is possible. Lewis tries to clear up this issue by proposing a convention of ‘modal realism’. Modal realism is the proposition that our world is essentially one amongst numerous. There exist a tremendous yet a limited number of conceivable universes that are spatiotemporally and causally isolated from each other. Amongst these universes is the world that is more or less identical to our own aside from that in this other conceivable world things go on differently. There is another world that is pretty much identical to ours except that in this other possible world we do not exist. In fact, there exist just as many possible worlds as there could be. Actually, there exist pretty much the greatest numbers of conceivable universes as there could be. Now it is sensible to ask what benefits our world the one we know and exist in have over these other conceivable realms. In response to this question one could answer that this world is not any more privileged over other possible worlds. Hence, we are a piece of this world and are not related to any spatiotemporal or causal way with any other world, thus this world appears to us to be very special, after all, it is the only one that influences us.

It appears to be logical to respond by saying that merely things that exist in this world truly exist. The modal realist is perfectly accepting of such contention yet expresses that such talk is implicitly limited similarly that saying “all the paper is in the printer” is restricted to, for instance, all the paper in the room – the vast majority of the paper on the planet is disregarded. In this case, we are measuring over less than all (unrestrictedly speaking) there is. The modal realist debates that things from other world do truly exist however it frequently makes a lot of sense to overlook these other things. So to say “just

things that exist in this world truly exist" is to limit our quantification of 'things that truly exist' to things that actually exist, where actual is used as an indicator term to quantify over things that exist on the planet we populate. For Lewis, other conceivable worlds and their occupants exist in exactly the same sense as well as the actual world and its inhabitants. Lewis does, nonetheless, differentiate existence from actuality:

- Possibility: The worlds are possible worlds. The existences of which we are not a part are the other ways the world might have been. All people that involve those existences are equivalents of things in other worlds.
- Actuality: This world is the actual existence. The other worlds are non-actual existences. Yet each world is actual at itself.

In any case, His explicit support of this suggestion is most likely the central reason why he is considered to be a Possibilist.

3.2.2. Kripkean theses of fictional characters (possible world semantics)

Saul Kripke is a logician and professor of philosophy best known for his contributions to logic, epistemology and philosophy of language. He helped changing the discipline of analytic philosophy in the last half of the century. Kripke semantics is a technique for giving meaning to non-classical logical systems. Kripke created the possible world semantics, which described the modal operators of necessity and possibility with regards to truth of multiple possible worlds.

. The general thought is that by using possible world semantics, one can state counterfactual statements using proper names that can in principle deny all the properties that an object has in the actual world such as in saying: "Sherlock Holmes is a prominent crime detective". Those statements would be meaningful on the grounds that names really do refer

specifically to the objects they are attached to through a causal chain of uses from the initial naming of that object. The concept is that the meaning an appropriate name is defined by the property or set of properties represented by the object to which that name refers. So Kripke initiated his 1973 “Reference and Existence” lecture series, and it certainly seems like he has a point. The apparent reference to fictional characters and other nonphysical objects brings up numerous issues concerning how naming happens and how such things could exist, if at all. Kripke states that once an object is named, that name is carried on by a group of speakers, each of whom, significantly, must intend to refer to the same object. When an author creates and names a fictional character. As a rule, the naming of a fictional character coexists with its creation: an author describes a fictional character, imputing certain properties to it in that way settling the name’s referent. As Kripke argues, the creation of fictional characters is typically a linguistic act²⁷.

Kripke discusses something that is called “the semantics of pretense”. He’s perspective goes this way: As an author writes, he doesn’t generally utilize the proper names in his book to refer. He simply pretends to use the proper names to refer. When applying the names, he additionally doesn’t really express any propositions. He merely pretends to state propositions. In this way, readers will utilize names that they pretend to have a reference and they will be using pretend propositions. It all starts with something he calls “the pretense principle”: A work of fiction, generally speaking of course, is a pretense that what is occurring in the story is truly going on. What happens in a work of fiction is a pretense that that the actual conditions take place as he personally declares that: *“The fictional character can be regarded as an abstract entity which exists in virtue of the activities of human beings, in the same way that nations are abstract entities which exist in virtue of the activities of human beings and their interrelations”* (Kripke 1973, 63.). This means that readers cooperate

²⁷ **katherine Tullmann**, *Dulling Ockham’s Razor: Initial Baptism, Creation and Reference to Fictional Characters*, available from <http://myweb.brooklyn.liu.edu/mcuonzo/tullmann.htm>

with the author of the work of fiction they're enjoying and pretend that what he or she is recounting them has truly happened

3.3. Fictional creationism

Creationists are all those scholars who believe that fictional characters are abstract artifacts created by authors in the process of the creations of their stories. Fictional objects are residents of dimensions of worlds just like non-fictional ones. On one hand, they are manifestations or more exactly, artifacts like seats, structures, constructions and on the other hand, they are abstract creations such as rituals, universities and theories. Yet, Fictional objects are bounded to the everyday world, in other sense; their existence is limited by dependencies on books, readers and authors.

Creationism holds that if something is a fictional object, then it exists as a result of being created through the imaginative activities of the author's work in which the object appears and exists, among the fictional objects, there are objects designated by fictional names (personas). Once it is accepted that fictional characters are objects of our ontology, their nature may be then defined in terms of abstract entities, abstract cultural artifacts or roles, whose names are introduced by authors in the relative fictions and from the works of fiction the use of their name is exported to talk about the fictions, to compare different characters, to speculate in literary criticism about the moral or aesthetic values those works and those characters bring forward.

A fictional character is then abstract, can be representative of a certain set of values or maybe a historical period or a way of thinking, is created by a certain author in a certain story, and yet often fictional characters are in love, live somewhere, seek something and sometimes they die. Fictional creationists claim that by pretending to refer to fictional people and fictional places, events etc, in the act of reciting a story, authors really bring fictional

entities into existence. In this sense a fictional character is created by an author who constructs sentences about it. Therefore, fictions have an immediate reliance on their makers, yet it is kept up in its existence thereafter not by the imagination of individuals, but by the words and sentences. The fact of the matter is that fictional character such as Holmes is ontologically and historically dependent on Conan Doyle and that Holmes as an artifact or creation can survive even after Conan Doyle's passing as an independent object i.e. a genuine individual. Additionally, the ontological reliance is, in this case, a rigid one: Holmes depends historically on a fixed object that is Conan Doyle. Now, after Conan Doyle's death Holmes survives as an artifact because it is ontologically sustained by duplicates of the writings of Conan Doyle. In fact, while the historical dependence relates to the creation act, the role of the constant ontological dependence is to guarantee that the artifact Holmes, once made by Conan Doyle, is still here despite that his maker is most certainly not. As such, the consistent ontological dependence ensures that artifacts, such as Holmes, are inhabitants of our world. Moreover, if likewise the object on which Holmes always depends vanishes, automatically Holmes will vanish or at least be inaccessible. Imperative for these sorts of cases is to permit the constant ontological dependence relation to be regenerative, that is, Holmes is not always subject to one specific duplicate of the writings, however at every time, he is continually reliant on one of the copy of the texts, but at each time he is constantly dependent on one of the copies or memories. The historical dependence relation is transitive²⁸.

As said over, this sort of connection is vital for the “existence” and “death” of the fictional characters as relying upon the duplicates of the correspondent works. However, some duplicate is in charge of this ontological reliance and not every one of them. Let us once more quote Thomasson:

²⁸**Matthieu, Shahid**, *Fiction, Creation and Fictionality : An Overview* available from <http://methodos.revues.org/2343>

“A literary work is only generically dependent on some copy (or memory) of it. So although it may appear in various token copies, it cannot be identified with any of them because it may survive the destruction of any copy, provided there are more. Nor can it be classified as a scattered object where all of its copies are, because the work itself does not undergo any change in size, weight, or location if some of its copies are destroyed or moved.

But copies of the text are the closest concrete entities on which fictional characters constantly depend. ... Because they are not constantly dependent on any particular spatiotemporal entity, there is no reason to associate them with the spatiotemporal location of any of their supporting entities.” (Thomasson 1999, 36-37).

However, the perception that story-tellers have some kind of creative role to play is explained by the so called *artifactualist* accounts of fictional entities.

3.3.1. Artifactualism

Artifactualism keeps up that fictional individuals exist; they are not spatiotemporal or concrete entities; it is accordingly often said that they are not “real”, but they are existing bits of abstracta (abstract beings) made by the creators who first composed or talked, etc. about them. Fictional individuals are consequently comprehended as artifacts. They are dependent “Actualia” (considerable beings) whose presence depends on various ways on the aims of different authors; these intentions are present in appropriate audiences, and physical occurrences of story-copies that mention them. That is, there is some plausible consideration

in backing of the case, that fictional objects are actual objects. Readers make different statements about fictional objects outside the stories in which they take place and some of them are true: for instance, that Sherlock Holmes is admired by many readers of the Holmes stories. The least complex and most precise clarification appears to be to suggest Holmes as an actual object having the properties such genuine that credit him to be true. Fictional objects may then be said to be hypothetical objects of literary criticism as much as electrons are theoretical objects of physics. This kind of perspective appreciates shockingly wide acknowledgment: (Searle 1974, van Inwagen 1977, 1983, Fine 1982, Salmon 1998, Thomasson 1999). The scholars in this camp believe that fictional objects are brought into presence by their writers as real objects. Regardless of the fact that this type of view is to be followed, it must still be denied that Holmes is actually a detective, for if one counts all individuals who are actually detectives, Holmes won't be among them. By the same rule, Holmes is not really an inhabitant of Baker Street or even an individual. In spite of the fact that genuine, Holmes is entirely any of those things Conan Doyle's stories depict him as being. Holmes must not be a concrete object at all but instead an abstract object which has the property of being a criminologist according to Doyle's stories, the property of being a resident of Baker Street according to Doyle's stories, , et cetera²⁹.

5. Fiction and imagination

In order to explain the intensity with which readers can lose themselves in fictional worlds in the way that is required to ground their affective responses to them, to properly appreciate works of fiction, and to account for their value, they i.e. (readers) must accept that when they engage emotionally with fiction, and when the fiction deserves it, they commit

²⁹**Yagisawa, Takashi**, *Possible Objects*, available from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/possible-objects/>

strongly to the propositions expressed therein. That is, readers ‘imaginatively commit’ themselves to accepting that fictional truths they provide, where this involves committing themselves to a certain amount of authorial authority and to approve the propositions expressed. Naturally, this commitment is subject to a number of complex conditions involving recognition of authorial intention, genre and other conventional constraints, as well as sensitivity to features such as the coherence and plausibility of the narrative, the reliability of the narrator, and any number of further complex factors involved in understanding and interpretation.

A puzzle for philosophers concerns emotional responses to fiction. The puzzle is this. Start with the point that we respond emotionally to fictional characters and events. We are thrilled when Holmes discovers an important clue, afraid as Dracula captures another victim, sad as Hamlet’s luck takes a terrible turn. These responses can, sometimes, grip us with the same effect as emotional responses to the actual world. Although we know that such characters and events are entirely fictional, “made up”, “not real”, non-actual they are just bits of our pure imagination. Many philosophers believe that emotions are essentially connected to belief, desire, and action; as Kendall Walton (1978, 21, fn. 15) says, “it is plausible that...pity, worry about, hate, and envy are such that one cannot have them without believing that their objects exist, just as one cannot fear something without believing that it threatens them.” Likewise, it might seem that one cannot genuinely hate or fear something unless he is disposed to act in certain ways toward it. But these connections to belief and action are absent in fiction. One solution to this puzzle, advocated most prominently by Walton, is that we merely imagine having emotional responses to fictional characters and events.

5.1. Imagination

Imagination is viewed as a force of the intellect, a creative work force of the mind, the mind itself when being used, and a procedure of the brain utilized for thinking, calculating, setting, recalling, producing, fantasizing, and forming opinion. The term imagination originates from the Latin verb “*imaginari*” meaning “to picture oneself.” As a medium, imagination is the world where thought and pictures are settled in the brain to frame a mental idea of what is not really present to the senses. In the sense of the word as a process, imagination is a type of intercession between what is considered “externalized” reality, and “internalized” man with regard to Manovich and Lacan. The term is considered regularly with the suggestion that the (mental) origination does not compare to the truth of things³⁰.

In correspondence, the idea of imagination as a response to the fictional goes this way: imagination is in play when we say that a reader of a fiction envisions in a way appropriate to the work. Mental imagery is itself confirmation of our ability to disengage from our present surroundings, as when we frame the picture of an absent or invented object. But while fiction relies upon the ability for disengagement, it is not evident that it includes imagery in a necessary way. In perusing a novel, it is imperative to envision things as the novel says they are. It appears more encouraging to pursue the thought that fictions necessitate us to visualize happenings or states of affairs: things we might describe by means of a sentence, for instance: one can envision that it is raining when it is not, or that $1 + 2 = 4$, which is not simply false but rather impossible, or that a pipe smoking detective called ‘Holmes’ lives in Baker Street, when there is no such individual. Imagination and make-believe, along with fantasy, pretence and play, all together appear in theories of art and the aesthetic. Imagination is the central idea; the others usually appear as forms of imaginative activity or as its manifestations. In work on child development, ‘play’ and ‘pretence’ are

³⁰ Katharine Perdue, *imagination*, available from <https://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/mediatheory/keywords/imagination/>

regularly utilized as close equivalent words for ‘imagination,’ while late assumptions of interpersonal understanding speak to an origination of imagination as ‘pretend-beliefs.

A significant part of the most advanced discussion of imagination in recent years has occurred with regards to the connection between imagination and aesthetic experience frequently concentrating on issues of imaginative engagement with fictional content through literature, theater and cinema, and visual art.

5.2. Relation between fiction and imagination

The connection between fiction and imagination has been a quit interesting topic of philosophical study ever since the publication of Walton’s *Mimesis as Make-Believe* (1990), where he contends that what is fictional is what the audience has to imagine or make-believe.

Walton explains fiction as persistent with children’s games of make-believe. He suggests that pieces of fiction serve as supports in games of make-believe, i.e., they create or endorse imaginings, likewise to the conduct in which dolls and teddy bears produce imaginings in children’s games of make-believe. The imaginings are produced by method for restrictive standards of generation, e.g., “let’s say that a rag doll is a baby”; these can be either understood (explicit) or explicit. Subsequently, when we read *Anna Karenina*, the novel recommends that we envision a specific lady with different qualities, who has an affair, is miserable and eventually killed herself. Propositions whose imaginings are prescribed are fictional and the fact that a given proposition is fictional is a fictional truth. Hence, it is fictional in *Anna Karenina* that Anna has an unsanctioned romance with Vronsky; it is fictional that they have a little girl; it is fictional that she commits suicide.

Walton distinguishes fictionality from truth, yet does not interpret it as essentially appeared differently in relation to it: “fictionality has nothing essentially to do with what is or is not real or true or factual” (Walton 1990, 102). He calls attention to that works of fiction might be about genuine things and they may say genuine things in regards to them. What portrays works of fiction over and against non-fiction is that they prompt imaginings and create fictional truths. Histories and biographies, then again, don't naturally endorse imaginings, nor do they produce fictional truths. What is fictional is fictional in a given fictional world. Fictional worlds are connected with assemblages of fictional truths. Walton differentiates the fictional realm of a work of art from the fictional game realm of its appreciator. The work world contains the fictional facts that are generated by the work alone. The game realm of the appreciator comprises, moreover to the fictional facts generated by the work, fictional truths about the appreciator (reader) and his/her connection to the work itself. Therefore, the appreciators' game realm of *Anna Karenina* comprises fictional truths about Anna having an affair and being unhappy, and in addition fictional truths about the appreciator seeing her, stressing over her, and feeling frustrated about her.

Walton emphasizes that our characteristic relation to fiction is that of participants rather than that of distant onlookers:

“We don't just observe fictional worlds from without. We live in them (...) together with Anna Karenina and Emma Bovary and Robinson Crusoe and the others, sharing their joys and sorrows, rejoicing and commiserating with them, admiring and detesting them ... It is this experience that underlies much of the fascination representations have for us and their power over us.” (Walton 1990, 273).

Works of fiction, as indicated by Walton, manage imaginings and attract us to partake in worlds of make-believe. It is by means of our engagement in realms of make-believe that we can come to feel, think and perceive in an unexpected deferent ways.

Conclusion

The philosophical debates on fictional realism suggest the believability of things such as fictional worlds and fictional beings. Models such as Lewis's Modal Realism and Kripkean Model of fictional characters suggest the existence of other possible worlds wherein fictional stories are a reality, But Fictional creationists and Artifactualists propose that these fictional entities are merely abstract objects living through our ontology. At end Walton contends that the act of imagination transports readers into fictional worlds by means of make-believe.

The Next chapter offers psychological analyses on the impact fiction on reader's mind and showcases how the brain processes when reading fictional stories.

Chapter three

Reader's thoughts and feelings under the effects of fictional narratives

Introduction

2. Literature and psychology an interdisciplinary study

10.1. Psychological novel

11. Modern literary theory

12. Psychoanalysis in the school of psychology

13. Literary psychoanalysis

14. Reader's response theory

14.1. Psychological reader-response

15. Neuropsychanalysis: psychoanalysis and neurosciences

16. Cognitive psychology, Neuroscience and reading fiction

16.1. Neuroscience and fiction

17. Neuroscientific Experiments on the effects of reading fiction

17.1. Protagonist perspective

18. Narrative empathy and Narrative transportation theories

18.1. The impact of fiction on readers lives

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18.2. Narrative transportation theory

19. Character Identification and experience-taking

Conclusion

Introduction

Fiction has become a topic of interdisciplinary interest for literary scholars, psychologists, and cognitive scientists. Most psychological researchers now accept the principle that literary narratives have an effect on people's everyday lives. They contend that literary narratives have an essential reason. They offer models or reproductions of the social world by means of reflection, abstraction, simplification, and compression. Narrative fiction additionally makes a profound and immersive simulative experience of social interactions for readers. This simulation facilitates the communication and comprehension of social data and makes it additionally convincing, accomplishing a type of learning through experience. Taking part in the simulative experiences of fiction literature can facilitate the comprehension of other people who are not the same as ourselves and can expand our ability for empathy and social inference. With a conception of fiction as an arrangement of simulations of selves in the social world, new conceivable outcomes have emerged. Works of fiction are currently reviewed on practical testing of literary theory, on the utilization of literary works in psychological investigations of emotion and imagination, on the contribution of cognitive processes, for example, priming and theory of mind to literary effects, on cross-cultural comparisons, and on impacts of fiction that incorporate conceivable change of social capacities and changes in selfhood, including the educational and therapeutic potential of such impacts.

This topic is captivating considering, initially, that we people invest much time engaged with carefully crafted narrative products and second, that while drawing in with such products we undergo a type of experience not found elsewhere, reacting to represented events as if we were a part of them. A story, in any case, is just ink spots on paper until a reader transforms them into an arrangement of meaningful symbols. At the point when these

symbols lead us to live through some moment of feeling, to go into some human identity, or to take part imaginatively in some situation or event, we have made a work of literary art active and livable. Literature provides a living through, not just learning about a story wherein lovers have died young and fair, but a living-through of Romeo and Juliet; not just facts about Rome, but a living-through of the tensions of Julius Caesar or the paradoxes of Caesar and Cleopatra. For the reader, the literary work is a specific and an intimate event; the electric current of his mind and personality lighting up the pattern of symbols on the printed page. His thoughts and feelings have for the time of his reading been channeled by the printed symbols. These printed symbols take meaning from the intellectual and emotional context the reader provides and when so; the result is a motion of exceptional cognitive and emotional occurrences that became part of the reader's experience. Accordingly creating lifelong personal relationships amongst fiction and individuals has turned into relevant concern.

Most importantly, readers need to be helped to have personally satisfying and personally meaningful transactions with literature. Then they will develop the habit of turning to literature for the pleasures and insights it offers. Besides, the sense of the intimate meaningfulness of literature is basic and once a natural relationship has been set up amongst readers and narrative fiction; many kinds of growth are possible³¹. Of course, the ultimate reality that seizes over all the abovementioned explanations is that we all know that these characters aren't real and that the stories they inhabit never really happen. So why is it that we can be so moved and so affected by those characters? What does it tell us about our psychology?

3. Literature and psychology an interdisciplinary study

Literature which links within such fields as history, philosophy, sociology, psychology and so on is a discipline wherein language is used as a medium of expression so as to interpret man, existence and culture, personality and individual differences which have always been studied and discussed by writers, philosophers, artists, psychologists and psychiatrists. However, there is a very strong relationship between literature and psychology for the fact that both of them deal with human beings and their reactions, perceptions of the world, miseries, wishes, desires, fears, conflicts and reconciliations; individual and social concerns, by means of varied concepts, methods, and approaches, as Lodge explained it, “... *We will always learn more about human life and personality from novels than from scientific psychology*” (Lodge, 2002:10)

³¹ **Louise Rosenblatt**, *making meaning with texts*, available from <http://www.heinemann.com/shared/onlineresources/E00768/chapter5.pdf>

A writer represents life according to his/her objectives, perceptions, ideologies, and value judgments and opens the entryways of the obscure and invisible worlds to readers not only by arousing feelings and emotions but also by helping them to discover the meaning of life and existence. Clearly, literature empowers people to know and question their identities by raising consciousness and awareness. It is to be noticed that man and existence have dependably been principal components in most scientific studies, fine arts, and literature.

Of all the critical approaches to literature, the psychological approach has been one of the most controversial and for many readers the most appreciated. Yet, for all the difficulties involved in its application to interpretive analysis, the psychological approach can be fascinating and rewarding. This psychological interpretation is an excellent tool for reading between the lines. Psychoanalytic criticism analyses literature as an imaginative expression of the inner workings of the human mind. It is strongly influenced by the ideas of Sigmund Freud. The basic principle of Freudian psychoanalysis is the tremendous power the unconscious mind has on our conscious life. The conscious mind is only the tip of the iceberg. Our desires are repressed and pushed into the unconscious. Since this analysis interprets the text psychologically, the prominent psychological terminologies have been used to comprehend the behavior of the main characters that are psychologically anatomized.

But first, it would be commonsense to introduce “*psychological novel*” of modern literature as the first known interdisciplinary artistic practice of both mediums, before getting involved in the worlds of literary theory and psychoanalysis.

21.1. Psychological novel

A Psychological fiction is a specific sub-genre of the wide-ranging thriller genre. This genre often incorporates elements from the mystery genre in addition to the typical traits of the thriller genre. Usually, thrillers focus on plot over fictional characters, emphasizing on intense physical action over the character's psyche. Psychological thrillers tend to reverse this formula to a certain degree, emphasizing the characters just as much if not more so than the plot. The psychological novel, also called psychological realism, is a work of prose fiction which puts more than the standard measure of emphasis on interior characterization, and on the motives, circumstances, and internal action which springs from, and develops, external action. The psychological novel is not substance to state what happens but rather goes ahead to explain the motivation of this action. In a psychological novel the emotional reactions and internal states of the characters are influenced by and in turn trigger external events in a meaningful mutualism. This emphasis on the inner life of characters is a fundamental element of a vast body of fiction. In this type of writing character and are more than generally vital, and they frequently investigate more profound into the mind of a character than novels of other genres. The psychological novel can be known as a novel of the "inner man," so to say. In some cases, the stream of consciousness technique, as well as interior monologue, may be employed to better illustrate the inner workings of the human mind at work. Flashbacks may also be featured. While these three textual techniques are also prevalent in "modernism," there is no deliberate effort to fragment the prose or compel the reader to interpret the text³².

22. Modern literary theory

The notion of modern literary theories transcends the motif of age-oriented and movement-motivated principles of the early theories like Classicism, Romanticism, Realism

³²**wikipedia.org**, *Psychological novel*, available from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychological_novel

and the others. Rather, modernity distinguishes those new doctrinal methods adopted to study literature. Such literary theories like Psychoanalysis, Formalism, Structuralism/Semiotics, Post-structuralism or Deconstruction, Marxism, Feminism, and Post-colonialism are predominant in this designation.

Literary theories were developed as a means to understand the various ways people read texts. The proponents of each theory believe their theory is the theory, but most of the learners interpret texts according to the "rules" of several different theories at a time. All literary theories are lenses through which we can see texts. There is nothing to say that one is better than another or that anyone should read according to any of them, but it is sometimes an act of pleasure to "decide" to read a text with one in mind because learner often ends up with a whole new perspective on their reading.

Yet the most important of these theories in correlation to the study of literature and psychology is the Psychoanalytic theory. The psychoanalytic interpretation of literature can provide a valuable basis for the study and analysis of human motivation and behavior as literature and psychology make mutual contributions to the development of both disciplines. What follows is an overview on psychoanalysis in a broader sense.

23. Psychoanalysis in the school of psychology

Perhaps the school of psychology that is most well known for the general public is the psychodynamic approach to understanding behavior, which was championed by Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) and his followers. Psychodynamic psychology is an approach to understanding human behavior that focuses on the role of unconscious thoughts, feelings, and memories. Freud developed his theories about behavior through extensive analysis of the patients that he treated in his private clinical practice. Freud believed that many of the

problems that his patients experienced, including anxiety, depression, and sexual dysfunction, were the result of the effects of painful childhood experiences that the person could no longer remember.

The founders of the school of psychodynamic were primarily practitioners who worked with individuals to help them understand and confront their psychological symptoms. Although they did not conduct much research on their ideas, and although later, more sophisticated tests of their theories have not always supported their proposals, psychodynamics has nevertheless had a substantial impact on the field of psychology, and indeed on thinking about human behavior more generally (Moore & Fine, 1995). The importance of the unconscious in human behavior, the idea that early childhood experiences are critical, and the concept of therapy as a way of improving human lives are all ideas that are derived from the psychodynamic approach and that remain central to psychology.

Freud's ideas were extended by other psychologists whom he influenced, including Carl Jung (1875–1961), Alfred Adler (1870–1937), Karen Horney (1855–1952), and Erik Erikson (1902–1994). These and others who follow the psychodynamic approach believe that it is possible to help the patient if the unconscious drives can be remembered, particularly through a deep and thorough exploration of the person's early sexual experiences and current sexual desires. These explorations are revealed through talk therapy and dream analysis, in a process called psychoanalysis³³.

literature is certainly the interest in "psychoanalysis," which was perfected by Sigmund Freud's analysis of human consciousness in all particulars. Many authors and theorists were inspired by Freudian psychoanalysis and its application, so they accepted it as Freud had intended. They have chiefly oversimplified it by their research. The Freudian

³³Charles Stangor, *Introduction to Psychology*, v. 1.0, available from http://catalog.flatworldknowledge.com/bookhub/127?e=stangor-ch01_s02

"psychoanalysis" begins its literary life with the appearance of psychological novels, initially expressing superficially, and then going deeper into the psyche of characters with new achievements in literary prose, to finally mature as a highly complex psychoanalytic method in the stream of consciousness novels.

24. Literary psychoanalysis

Psychoanalytic criticism believes that literature provides a fruitful and complex source for the analysis of the human mind. It helps to reveal to us things about the relation between the conscious and the unconscious mind, language and reality. A psychoanalytical interpretation of a work can help to solve the mysteries involved in complex and symbolic themes.

Psychological criticism examines the behavior of characters within the text in order to expose its deeper meaning. Just as the economic theories of Karl Marx engendered Marxist criticism, the psychological theories of Sigmund Freud inspired psychoanalytic literary interpretation. Psychological criticism is usually applied in different ways. For instance, a work of literature can be viewed as a "dream", the expressive manifestation of the subconscious. Freud, for example, contends that dreams are "the guardians of sleep" where they become "disguised fulfillments of repressed wishes." *Sigmund Freud, the Interpretation of Dreams in the Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay, (New York: Norton, 1989). To Freud, dreams are the "royal road" to the personal unconscious of the dreamer and have a direct relation to literature, which often has the structure of a dream. By interpreting the symbolic nature of the work, we gain insight into the psyche of the author. Psychological criticism can also focus on the characters of a work, analyzing their motives, desires and conflicts even though these characters are fictional. Characters, as well as their underlying traits, are often drawn from

real people and therefore can display some of the same psychological patterns. The psychological theory also influences authors as they utilize these new ideas to create more complex characters. In addition, psychological criticism can also be used to interpret the relationship between the text and the reader. In this approach, the critic acknowledges that a work of literature functions as the secret expression of what the reader wants to hear. It is this aspect that creates our enjoyment of a book³⁴.

According to Psychoanalytical theory, different characters represent the Id, ego, and superego, unconscious, subconscious and conscious mind. Symbolism, dreams, and strange character behavior are used in order to understand characters, motifs and imagery. Fictional characters are representations of life and, as such, can only be understood if we assume they are real. In this case, readers are looking at characters as flawed and as people, rather than as figures or props.

25. Reader's response theory

The reader-response theory focuses on readers' reaction to literary texts. Where New Criticism focused exclusively on the text itself, reader response acknowledges the interaction between the text and a reader. Its many advocates include Kenneth Burke, Wayne Booth, Stanley Fish, Louise Rosenblatt, and Walker Gibson. Although these thinkers disagree on many of the features of reader response criticism, they agree that reader response criticism should pay attention to the areas of psychology, history, and sociology. In so doing, these critics make reading an interdisciplinary activity. This theory did not receive much attention until the 1970s, at which time there was awareness that the role of the reader cannot be omitted from our understanding of literature and readers do not passively consume the meaning presented to them by an objective literary text: rather they actively make the

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Airdnaxela Aruks, *Psychological lense ppt*, available from
<http://fr.slideshare.net/missalexandria83/psychological-lense-ppt>

meaning they find in literature. Each person may read the same text differently based on the uniqueness of that reader, in fact, reader-response theorists believe that even the same reader reading the same text on two different occasions will probably produce different meanings because so many variables contribute to our earpiece of the text. Theorists disagree about how our responses are formed and what role, if any; the text plays in creating them, opinion range from the belief that the literary text is active as the reader in creating meaning to the belief that the text doesn't exist at all as it is created by readers³⁵.

During the late 1970s and 1980s, reader-response criticism, influenced in part by trends in other disciplines, especially psychology, and psychoanalytical theories extended to incorporate a study of the reader as subject, a blend of different social practices, characterized and situated socially by his or her surroundings. This shift from the relationship between reader and text, and their shared effect, to a focus on self-knowledge and observation, has been summarized in anthologies, including Jane Tompkins's *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Poststructuralism* (1980). Recent works by critics including David Bleich, Normal Holland, and even Stanley Fish have likewise extended the center of reader-response theory to include the validity and significance of interpretations guided by the environments or communities inhabited by the readers. This is a departure from their earlier-held position, which emphasized the primacy of the relationship between reader and text, regardless of environment. Fish, in particular, laid out his theories regarding interpretive strategies, which, he stated, are shared by "interpretive communities" in several essays during the 1980s and later. In his study of the history of reader-response criticism, Terence R. Wright explains that while the field has expanded its boundaries to include numerous approaches, the concern reader-response critics have with the act of reading remains constant. What has changed is the awareness these theorists now have of the ways in which environment, history,

³⁵*Reader Response Theory*, available from
<http://eprints.binadarma.ac.id/1768/1/LITERARY%20CRITICISM%20materi%203.pdf>

politics, and even sexual orientation, can affect a reader's response to a text. This expansion of criteria has led many contemporary critics to refer to this type of critical theory as reader-oriented criticism rather than reader-response criticism³⁶.

However, Reader-response strategies can be categorized, according to Richard Beach in *A Teacher's Introduction to Reader-Response Theories* (1993), into five types: textual, experiential, psychological, social, and cultural. Amongst all approaches of this theory, one approach has succeeded to create a direct relation among readers and characters. Psychological reader response approach holds that the psychological, subjective, reader's thoughts, beliefs, and experiences play a greater part in shaping work's meaning than the text. Its exponents, like Holland, Bleich believe that we shape and find our self-identities in reading process, merge our dreams and fantasies with elements in the text, producing an interpretation acceptable to the members of a particular culture.

25.1. Psychological reader-response

Norman Holland, one of the eminent theorists in Readers response criticism, contends that individuals deal with texts the same way they deal with life. Holland would say that we gravitate toward particular literary works because they address to our inner psychological needs. In other words, each reader has an identity that it can be analyzed, which will open up the literary text to personal interpretation based on a reader's identity. Thus, scholars use the term "identity analysis" to describe the form of psychological reader-response criticism that suggests that readers are drawn to literary works that speak to their psychological needs on the contrary; they are repelled or troubled by works that do not meet their needs.

³⁶Linda Pavlovski, *Reader-Response Criticism*, available from <http://www.enotes.com/topics/reader-response-criticism>

These identity needs are often repressed in the unconscious and are in need of an outlet, which is provided by reading. When reading, then, readers can engage their repressed desires or needs. That is why they read fantasy literature, Romance literature, Thrillers, Self-help books, Science fiction; Reading becomes a personal way to cope with life.

This coping process is interpretation, for literature exposes more about the reader than about the text itself. Holland believes that each reader has an “identity theme,” a pattern of defense that he or she brings to a text. In turn, they gravitate to texts that tend to reinforce their identity themes and their needs. The contrary is also true: readers will avoid texts that challenge their identity or threaten their psychological needs. When readers read a text, they see themselves reflected back at them. Holland calls this transactional process DEFT: we read in **d**efense (a coping strategy that aligns with our **e**xpectations) that leads to **f**antasy (our ability to find gratification) and finally to **t**ransformation (that leads to a total unifying effect for the reader)³⁷.

Psychological reader-response theory looks at the motives and what interpretation reveals about the readers themselves. Readers’ responses to characters are based on their interpretations, which are products of their personal fears, defenses, needs, and desires they project onto the text. When they read, they are continually connecting the text to their lives, almost as if the literary work is speaking to them personally.

³⁷ **Andy Schmitz**, *Writing about Readers: Applying Reader-Response Theory*, available from <http://2012books.lardbucket.org/books/creating-literary-analysis/s10-writing-about-readers-applying.html>

26. Neuropsychanalysis: psychoanalysis and neurosciences

Neuropsychanalysis is an attempt to integrate the neurosciences with psychoanalysis; Based on the assumption that they, fundamentally, study the same subjects. Psychoanalysis studies the human mind and tries to understand what the underlined principles are that govern its behavior. Neuroscience, especially in the recent decade, has been studying behaviors and trying to understand the human mind from the point of view of brain science. Therefore, Neuropsychanalysis is a formalized attempt to connect the mind with the brain.

The first formal use of the term ‘neuropsychanalysis’ was in 1999, in a journal titled *Neuropsychanalysis*. After the word ‘neuropsychanalysis’ was first used, it has been employed in a number of different ways, for different purposes, by different people. Neuropsychanalysis seeks to understand the human mind, especially as it relates to the first-person experience. It recognizes the essential role of neuroscience in such quests. However, unlike most branches of neuroscience, it positions mind and brain on the same basis. It recognizes that the brain is not only an information processing device for behavior but also the source of the dynamics that is called ‘mind’, from happy and sad feelings to ordinary cognitions and acts of imagination. It is impossible to explain complex behaviors without reference to neural networks that mediate subjective mental events: that is, the causal effects of thoughts and feelings.

One of the benefits of neuropsychanalysis is, therefore, its attempt to reach across different disciplinary boundaries; it gets so far as to connect between the sciences and humanities. Hence, it became possible to bring advanced perspectives from psychoanalytic literary criticism into the neuropsychanalytic project and to connect psychoanalytic literary theory with modern brain research.

27. Cognitive psychology, Neuroscience and reading fiction

Literature has always been centrally concerned with characters such as Odysseus: clever, loyal, very stubborn; Don Quixote: chivalrous, honorable, slightly crazy; Hamlet: noble, bitter, deeply conflicted; Satan: proud, rebellious, grandly wicked; Elizabeth Bennet: bright, witty, affectionate; Mrs. Dalloway: so changeable, so psychologically rich, she can barely be contained within the novel. As readers, we know the characters in stories and novels better than we know our friends and family, better, sometimes, than we know ourselves. A cognitive approach to literature attempts to account for this and other miracles of reading. This title examines fiction from a cognitive perspective, informed by a background in psychology, neuroscience, and literature, to explore discoveries in neuroscience that shed light on how readers read and interact with fiction and fictional characters.

Psychology arose in the late 19th century and was the first discipline in which the scientific method was applied exclusively to the study of mental phenomena. Early psychologists established experimental laboratories that would enable them to catalog mental ideas and to investigate various mental capacities, such as vision and memory. Psychologists apply the scientific method to both mind and behavior. That is, they attempt to understand not just internal mental phenomena, such as thoughts, but also the external behaviors that these internal phenomena can give rise to.

Cognitive psychology is the study of thinking and the processes underlying mental events. This field uses sophisticated research methods, including reaction time and brain imaging to study memory, language, and thinking of humans. The most important fact is that cognitive psychology over the past decade examined the cognitive processes when experiencing fictional works and associated it to brain functionality. Combining humanities with scientific studies; cognitive psychologists, therefore, have built research projects around the investigation of such literary topics as reader response to narrative fiction, our

understanding of the cognition of literature and the impact of fiction on readers. Addressing questions such as why we care so deeply about fictional characters, what brain activities are sparked when we read literature, became subjects of the empirical study of neuroscience.

27.1. Neuroscience and fiction

Cognitive neuroscience is the field of a study linking the brain and other aspects of the nervous system to cognitive processing and, ultimately, to behavior. The brain is the organ in our bodies that most directly controls our thoughts, emotions, and motivations. Cognitive neuroscience encompasses a broad range of questions about how nervous systems are organized, and how they function to generate behavior. These questions can be explored using the analytical tools such as behavioral biology, and psychology. The major step now is to integrate the diverse knowledge derived from these various levels of analysis into a more coherent understanding of brain structure and function when perceiving fiction. But before diving deep into cognitive neuroscience studies on the mental and the emotional impact of fiction and fictional characters on readers, it is a must that we provide a concise definition of this field of study, its tools and its relation to the field of humanities.

Brain anatomy and physiology have been studied for quite some time. Recent times, however, have seen tremendous advances in our understanding of the brain, especially in terms of how neuronal processes can account for cognitive phenomena. The general study of the brain and endocrine system is called neuroscience. The attempt to explain cognitive processes in terms of underlying brain mechanisms is known as cognitive neuroscience. Neuroscience, first and foremost, provides a description of mental events at the implementational level. It attempts to describe the biological “hardware” upon which mental “software” supposedly runs. However, there are many levels of scale when it comes to describing the brain, and it is not always clear which level provides the best explanation for any given cognitive process. Neuroscientists, however, investigate at each of these levels.

They study the cell biology of individual neurons and of neuron-to-neuron synaptic transmission, the patterns of activity in local cell populations, and the interrelations of larger brain areas. A reason for many of the recent developments in neuroscience is, again, the development of new technologies. Neuroscientists employ a wide variety of machines to measure the performance of the brain at work. These include positron emission tomography (PET) scanners, computerized axial tomography (CAT) scanners, and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machines. Studies that use these devices have participants perform a cognitive task; the brain activity that is concurrent with the performance of the task is recorded. For example, a participant may be asked to form a visual image of a word that appears on a computer screen. The researchers can then determine which parts of the brain became active during imagery and in what order.

We are living in a time when the activation of mirror neurons in the brains of onlookers can be recorded as they witness another's actions and emotional reactions. Contemporary neuroscience has brought us much closer to an understanding of the neural basis for human mind reading and emotion sharing abilities and the mechanisms underlying empathy. The activation of onlookers' mirror neurons by a coach's demonstration of technique or an internal visualization of proper form and by representations in television, film, visual art has already been recorded. Simply hearing a description of an absent other's actions lights up mirror neuron areas during fMRI imaging of the human brain. The possibility that novel reading stimulates mirror neurons' activation can now, as never before, undergo neuroscientific investigation. Neuroscientists have already declared that people scoring high on empathy tests have especially busy mirror neuron systems in their brains. Fiction readers are likely to be among these high empathy individuals. For the first time, researchers might

investigate whether human differences in mirror neuron activity can be altered by exposure to art, to teaching, to literature³⁸.

The “neurohumanities” are largely traditional fields of humanistic study prominently including literature and related arts, such as film that have taken up findings or methods of neuroscience to advance their research. Literature, in fact, has looked to the technology of brain imaging and the principles of evolution to provide empirical evidence for its theories. Literary neuroscience is an emerging field that examines readers reading samples from novels while they are having their brains scanned. Later these students are going to be tested on what they read and then the scans will be compared. The results of the scans show different areas of the brain lit up according to what kind of reading a person did. Natalie Phillips, the literary Ph.D. leading this kind of experiments, believes that the use of neuroscience can “*give us a bigger, richer picture of how our minds engage with art – or, in our case, of the complex experience we know as literary reading.*” These experiments detect what areas of our brains we use when performing the task of close reading and pleasure reading. Neuroscience pretty much offers what the brain is doing when reading fiction and this can give readers additional insights into the fiction itself or literature in general.

³⁸Suzanne keen, *A Theory of Narrative Empathy*, available from http://brainnarratives.qwriting.qc.cuny.edu/files/2012/12/keen-a_theory_of_narrative_empathy.pdf

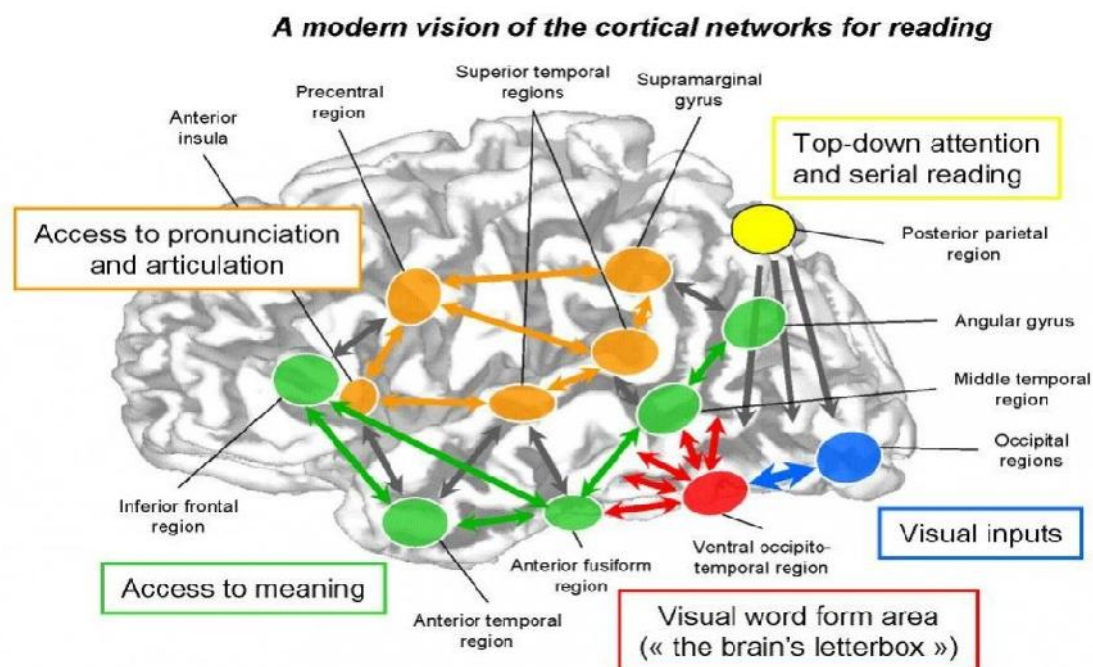
28. Neuroscientific Experiments on the effects of reading fiction

Figuring out how to read involves what Stanislas Dehaene, a French cognitive neuroscientist, calls “neuronal recycling.” Neuronal recycling comprises of a procedure through which vast areas of our brain begin to perform functions for which they were not initially developed. Our brain, at birth, does not have areas or neuro-circuits especially designated for reading; learning to read alters the cerebral architecture and generates new connections in areas, which, before learning this new skill, did not communicate with each other.

The brain utilizes a complex web of circuits to read, located predominantly in its left hemisphere. The reading process starts in **the occipital lobule**, the region responsible for perceiving visual stimulations, such as faces and shapes. This is the area where the first big neuronal changes occur, as **the visual cortex** starts to further specialize and to wind up more exact, permitting it to recognize letters. The visual input then passes to a region, designated by Dehaene as “the letterbox,” where knowledge of learned letters is stored. From that point, the input travels to, at least, two neuronal networks: one which allows ascribing meaning to the word, and another which enables the pronunciation and articulation of words. Reading consists of recognizing letters and how they are combined into words, and, thereafter, how they are connected with the sounds they produce and their meaning. Therefore, reading is not only a visual process, as it was once believed to be. It’s also an auditory process.

An important change that occurs in the brain is in “**the letterbox**,” an area that only activates in people who know how to read. And it is only activated when the person reads letters which they recognize as belonging to their language. Dehaene explains that, for example, this area of the brain will not activate when a person that only reads in English, “reads” characters of another language, like Korean. In the following diagram, Dehaene explains how the brain areas responsible for oral language and recognizing visual stimulus are interconnected bi-directionally. The green and the orange areas of the diagram already exist in

the brain of a child, that doesn't yet know how to read, and are used for oral language. Learning to read consists of establishing bidirectional interfaces between the areas of oral language and the areas in charge of visual processing³⁹.



⁴⁰ <http://blogs.iadb.org/education/files/2014/03/BrainEnglish.jpg>

Reading a story is a highly complex cognitive task that combines the low-level perception of individual words, the representation of their meanings and parts of speech, the understanding of the grammar and meaning of entire sentences, and finally the tying of these individual sentences together into a coherent understanding of the story plot and the evolving beliefs, desires, emotions, and actions of story characters.

Neuroimaging studies of single-word reading have also provided some initial support for the hypothesis that readers' representations of word meaning are grounded in visual and motor representations. These studies have demonstrated that brain regions involved in reading action words are some of the same regions involved in performing analogous actions in the

³⁹ **Horacio Álvarez**, *How our brain learns to read*, available from <http://blogs.iadb.org/education/2014/03/14/how-our-brain-learns-to-read/>

⁴⁰ <http://blogs.iadb.org/education/files/2014/03/BrainEnglish.jpg>

real world. For example, reading verbs such as “run” or “kick” activates brain regions that are selectively activated when moving one’s foot (Pulvermüller, 2005). One limitation of these studies is that they have used restricted lists of single words or phrases. The processing of such stimuli may differ substantially from the processing of meaningful stories. However, these results do suggest a strong but untested prediction about the brain regions that should be active during story reading: The brain regions involved in tracking different dimensions of a reader’s situation model should correspond to regions that have a role in seeing and acting out similar activities in the real world.

This latest study, on the other hand, takes an entirely different approach. Researchers scanned the brains of volunteers as they read a chapter of an exciting novel and then broke down their brains’ reading comprehension into its component parts. The result, they say, is the world’s first integrated model of how our brains process written words, grammar, and stories. The researchers started by gathering a group of eight volunteers and recorded their brain activity in an fMRI scanner as they read Chapter 9 of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* (the scene where Harry and his friends take their first flying lesson) for 45 minutes.

In the second phase of the study, the investigators fed the volunteers’ fMRI data into a computer program they’d written. They’d designed their algorithm to look for patterns of brain activity that appeared when the volunteers read certain words, specific grammatical structures, particular characters’ names and other aspects of the story and a total of 195 different “story features.”

The researchers had their program make predictions about which parts of the chapter a person was reading based solely on his or her brain activity. In order to make these predictions, the program used the patterns of activity it had learned to associate with each of the different story features. When the researchers used all the 195 story features they had

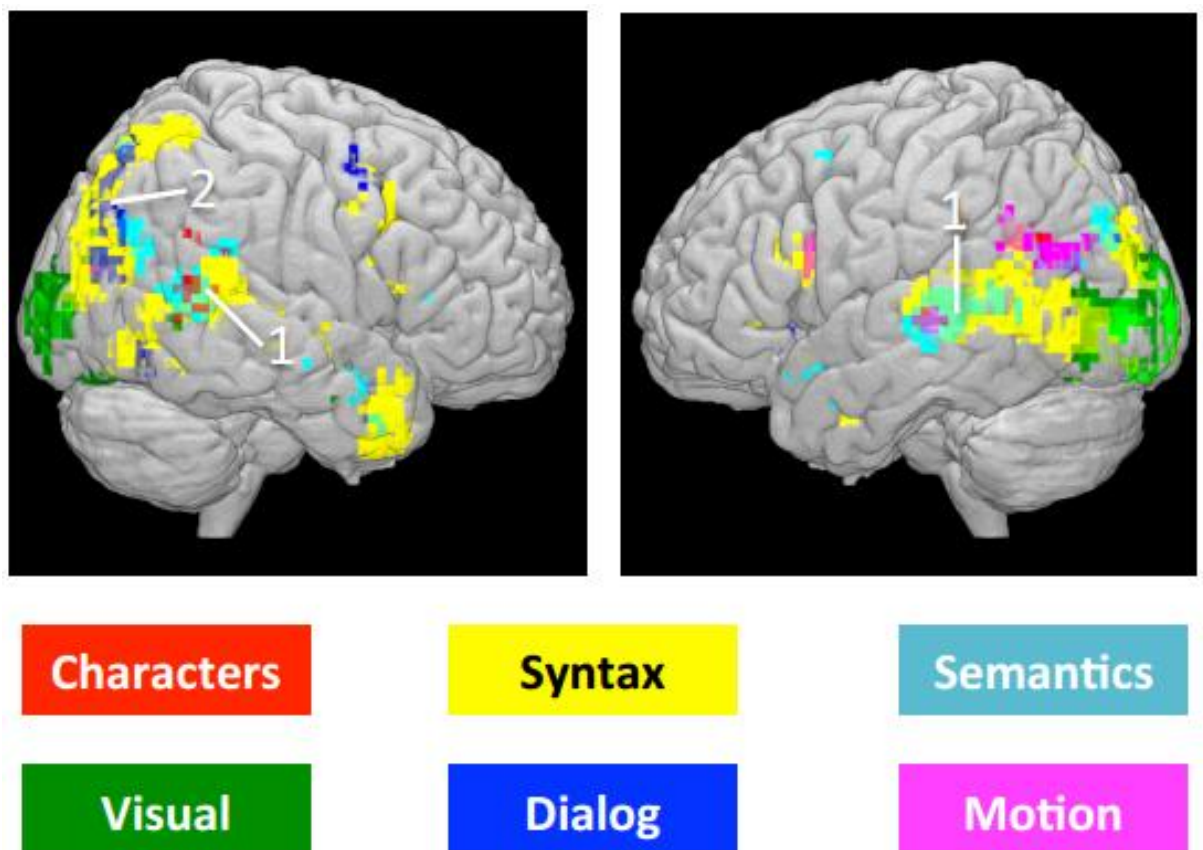
derived, the program was able to guess which of two passages were being read with an accuracy of 74 percent, significantly higher than mere chance prediction could score.

Finally, the researchers repeated the prediction test at every brain region, for each of the different types of story features. This allowed them to find associations between story features and the activity of different brain regions – enabling them to pinpoint which brain regions are processing which types of information. While those findings fit expectations in some ways, they were highly surprising in others.

28.1. Protagonist perspective

As the researchers expected, our brains run individual words through an initial round of processing in **the visual cortex**—the brain area that processes all visual input—and through higher-level processing areas like **the left inferior frontal gyrus, the bilateral angular gyri, the left pre-central gyrus and the medial frontal cortex**. But that’s only part of the story.

When the volunteers read descriptions of physical movement in the story, the descriptions modulated the activity in **the posterior temporal cortex and angular gyrus**, regions involved in perceiving real-world movement. A variety of characters, meanwhile, were correlated with the activity patterns in the right posterior superior region.



⁴¹<http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/mind-guest-blog/files/2014/11/reading-brain-scan.jpg>

The study revealed specific patterns of brain activity that corresponded to certain words, specific grammatical elements and even particular characters in the story. (credit: Carnegie Mellon university machine learning department).

Dialogue was specifically correlated with the right **temporoparietal junction**, a key area involved in imagining others' thoughts and goals. "Some of these regions aren't even considered to be part of the brain's language system," Wehbe says. "You use them as you interact with the real world every day, and now it seems you also use them to represent the perspectives of different characters in a story." The findings appear today in the journal *Plos one*.

⁴¹**Ben Thomas**, *How Our Brains Process Books*, available from <http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/mind-guest-blog/files/2014/11/reading-brain-scan.jpg>

This all seems to confirm the existence of what researchers call the “protagonist’s perspective interpreter network” in other words, a network of brain regions that enable readers to “become” the protagonist of the story we’re reading.

29. Narrative empathy and Narrative transportation theories

Perusing books and watching motion pictures, plays, and musical shows are exercises that individuals do on an everyday premise in their lives. Activities like these are referred to as the experience of *fictional narratives* and they may give individuals diversion from day by day demands and possibly initiate intellectual inspiration. Fictional narrative experience may have an essential and significant effect on how individuals feel and carry on in their daily lives. For instance, it has been proposed that fictional narratives provide personal insights, and in this way are essential for individuals in order to learn about themselves. One direction that examination on the impacts of fiction experience has taken is whether fiction experience impacts empathy of the reader. It has been suggested that individuals who read a great deal of fiction turn out to be more empathic in light of the fact that fiction is a reproduction of social encounters, in which individuals practice and improve their interpersonal abilities⁴².

Empathy, for instance, is a spontaneous sharing of affect, can be provoked by witnessing another’s emotional state, by hearing about another’s condition, or even by reading. Empathy is controlled by ‘mirror neurons’ in our brain. When we see someone happy, upset, or victorious, neurons fire in our brain in accordance with that and we feel some of those same emotions. This is all part of an evolutionary mechanism that is simply in place

⁴² **P. Matthijs ,Martijn. V,** *How Does Fiction Reading Influence Empathy? An Experimental Investigation on the Role of Emotional Transportation*, available from <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0055341>

to help us work as part of a wider community and to get along with others (which is crucial to our survival). Mirroring what a person might be expected to feel in that condition or context, empathy is thought to be an antecedent to its semantic close relative, *sympathy*. In recent years, a developing field of empathy studies has begun to rise up out of several academic disciplines, including neuroscience, social psychology, and philosophy. Because literature plays a central role in discussions of empathy across disciplines, reconsidering how literature relates to “feeling with” others is key to rethinking empathy conceptually. This gathering challenges common understandings of empathy, requesting that readers to question what it is, the way it works, and who is fit for performing it. This title uncovers the energizing research on empathy that is currently rising up out of from literary studies while also making productive connections to other areas of study such as psychology and neurobiology⁴³.

Narrative empathy is the sharing of feeling and perspective-taking induced by reading, viewing, hearing, or imagining narratives of another’s situation and condition. Narrative empathy plays a role in the aesthetics of production when authors experience it (Taylor et al.2002–2003: 361, 376–77), in the mental simulation during reading, in the aesthetics of reception when readers experience it, and in the narrative poetics of texts when formal strategies invite it. Narrative empathy overarches narratological categories, involving actants, narrative situation, matters of pace and duration, and storyworld features such as settings. The differences of the narratological ideas recommend that narrative empathy should not simply be equated with character identification nor exclusively verified by readers’ reports of identification. (Character identification may invite narrative empathy; alternatively, spontaneous empathy with a fictional character may precede identification; Keen 2007: 169.)

⁴³ **Meghan Marie Hammond**, *Rethinking Empathy through Literature*, available from <http://www.pubgraphicsdirect.com/books/rethinking-empathy-through-literature/>

Empathetic effects of narrative have been theorized by literary critics, philosophers, and psychologists and they have been evaluated by means of experiments in discourse processing, empirical approaches to narrative impact, and through introspection⁴⁴.

Despite the fact that little research has been led on the effects of fiction reading on empathy, there are several researchers who have explained why fiction reading influences empathy. Mar and colleagues argued that fiction reading may have profound effects on empathic skills of the reader. When an individual reads a story, emotions are activated by that story, such that an affective impression is elicited by the narrative. As indicated by Oatley, fiction presents a simulation of real-world problems and thusly has genuine influence on the reader. Frequently when somebody peruses a fictional story, identification with the characters in the story and emotional involvement in the story causes the reader to sympathize with the characters, and perhaps even experience the events in the story as if the reader experiences the events him-/herself. Consequently, the reader practices being empathic while reading a fictional story. Davis defines empathy as: the cognitive and intellectual ability to recognize the emotions of other persons and to emotionally respond to other persons. It includes sympathy and concern for unfortunate others. Study of empathy is important because high empathic persons are more prosocial which is associated for example in the workplace to higher performance, productivity, and creativity. There are several reasons why fiction reading may be related to empathic skills⁴⁵.

First, the simulation of real-world experiences in fiction might be associated with processes that people use in daily life to comprehend what happens in the world. Thusly,

⁴⁴Suzanne Keen, Narrative Empathy, available from
http://wikis.sub.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/index.php/Narrative_Empathy

⁴⁵ P. Matthijs Bal, Martijn Veltkamp, *How Does Fiction Reading Influence Empathy? An Experimental Investigation on the Role of Emotional Transportation*, available from
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235403083_How_Does_Fiction_Reading_Influence_Empathy_An_Experimental_Investigation_on_the_Role_of_Emotional_Transportation

through this sensemaking procedure, individuals gain a better understanding of the world and how they should interact with other people. Individuals gain from fiction about the human psychology and pick up knowledge about how to react to other people in social situations, as argued by Mar et al. When an individual reads a story, he/she predicts the actions and reactions of the characters, by inferring what they are thinking, feeling, and intending. In order to do this, the reader sympathizes with the characters in the story, through taking the perspective of the characters and to experience the events as if it is the reader's own experience. In addition, some stories are able to make sense out of the senseless, and offer possibilities to understand other people across time and space, an opportunity which is not readily available in daily life. The sympathy a reader feels for the characters is then incorporated in the self-concept of the reader, through which the reader accumulates his/her ability to take the perspective of others, and to feel empathy. Moreover, upgrade of empathic abilities through fiction perusing can add to individuals' objectives of who they need to be in their lives, for example, to end up a person that cares for other people's welfare. Hence, sympathetic reactions to fictional characters are integrated into broader response patterns in daily life, and empathic skills of the reader are enhanced⁴⁶.

Second, Mar et al. argued that fiction experiences enhance imaginative thinking. In line with the Immersed Experiencer Framework, fictional words and stories activate neural processes that reflect real-world events which are similar to the story.

Zwaan introduced the Immersed Experiencer Framework to explain language comprehension by three mechanisms. When an individual reads a text, neural webs are activated while reading, through which an event in a story is simulated mentally by the reader.

⁴⁶https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235403083_How_Does_Fiction_Reading_Influence_Empathy_An_Experimental_Investigation_on_the_Role_of_Emotional_Transportation

Finally, the reader integrates that what is read with existing mental models. Hence, this model explains at the language comprehension level that readers actively process texts and integrate these texts in their own human experiences. Indeed, there is evidence suggesting that seeing or reading about another person experiencing specific emotions and events activates the same neural structures as if one was experiencing them oneself, consequently influencing empathy. Thus, by reading a story, people imagine a narrative world that is similar to our own world. In this narrative world, people imagine how it is to see through the eyes of other people, by imagining and actually experiencing the thoughts and feelings of characters in a story. Hence, imaginative processes, evoked by fictional narrative experience, make people more empathic. Consequently, Zwaan argue that the reader becomes more empathic while reading fiction. The question however, is why fiction has such a potential impact on people⁴⁷.

29.1. The impact of fiction on readers lives

Fiction is essentially meant at arousing emotions. To become engaged in a fictional story, a reader suppresses the notion of fictionality of the story and the characters to experience the emotions of the characters. According to Goldstein, anyone reading fiction has a tendency to respond more emphatically towards a story than when he/she would read a non-fictional story, since fiction gives a sheltered ground in which a reader can experience emotions without the need for self-protection. Because fiction does not follow the reader into real life, the reader can permit oneself to freely experience strong emotions, without immediate transfer of these emotions to real life. Moreover, readers can allow themselves to sympathize strongly with a character of a fictional story, because they do not have obligations

⁴⁷ **P. Matthijs Bal, Martijn Veltkamp**, *How Does Fiction Reading Influence Empathy? An Experimental Investigation on the Role of Emotional Transportation*, available from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235403083_How_Does_Fiction_Reading_Influence_Empathy_An_Experimental_Investigation_on_the_Role_of_Emotional_Transportation

towards the characters of a fictional story, while sad reports in a newspaper may cause feelings of obligation towards the victims to help them⁴⁸.

Another motivation behind why fiction may have stronger effects on empathy than nonfiction is that fiction is processed differently than communications that aim to persuade a reader, such as commercial messages, scientific articles, opinion articles in newspapers, et cetera. The effects of persuasive communication are liable to diminish after some time, unless people are highly motivated and hence process the information in a systematic and elaborative way, in line with the Elaboration Likelihood Model. For example, a message about the negative impacts of smoking may just briefly change the convictions of a reader. However, research has shown that individuals may be strongly influenced when they read fictional stories. While readers are likely to read critically within the context of persuasive communication, a fictional narrative is more likely to be read with a willing construction of disbelief: the readers accepts assertions from a fictional narrative unless the reader is highly motivated to reject the assertion and is able to reject the assertion based on available knowledge. Hence, the possible effects of stories on empathy are expected to be greater for fiction readers than for non-fiction readers⁴⁹.

Finally, another reason why nonfiction may have less solid effects on empathy than fiction has been presented by the theory of psychic numbing. Slovic contends that the way a message (e.g., about casualties) is displayed to individuals influences their capacity to experience the affective information in that message and to feel sympathy. In particular, it is

⁴⁸**P. Matthijs ,Martijn. V,** *How Does Fiction Reading Influence Empathy? An Experimental Investigation on the Role of Emotional Transportation*, available from <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0055341>

⁴⁹**P. Matthijs ,Martijn. V,** *How Does Fiction Reading Influence Empathy? An Experimental Investigation on the Role of Emotional Transportation*, available from <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0055341>

less demanding to experience affect if a message presents information about a single, identifiable individual, than when information is presented about entire groups or using statistics (i.e., you can place yourself in the shoes of one other, but not of thousands). As a result, it has been shown in research on donating behavior that people will donate more money after reading information about an identifiable individual that suffered (e.g., one individual faces hunger) than after reading a message showing group statistics (e.g., 3 million people face hunger). In other words, a process of psychological numbing towards stories about large groups of people or objectified or statistically presented facts (which are often presented in non-fiction such as newspapers) is likely to occur, while fictional narratives, which are characteristically about individuals and their personal stories, may influence people to a much stronger degree⁵⁰.

In whole, in light of the fact that the center of fiction is essentially on evoking feelings, rather than on presenting factual information, fiction reading will be more likely influence empathy than non-fiction reading. The question remains, however, how fiction may influence empathy. Gerrig contended that individuals may change as the result of fiction perusing since they turn out to be completely submerged in a story, or as such, they are transported into a narrative world. Gerrig, therefore, presented the transportation metaphor to explain the effects of fiction on outcomes.

29.2. Narrative transportation theory

According to Gerrig, when individuals read a fictional account, they may turn out to be completely immersed into the story, which grants an alternative narrative world that is distant from the real world. While reading, individuals get to be transported into this story world, which frequently has alluded to a 'being lost in a book'. Fiction can be an escape from the present world and by means of reading or watching, one is into the story told in the

⁵⁰ <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0055341>

account. Transportation is defined as ‘a convergent process’, where all mental systems and capacities become focused on events occurring in the narrative’. People lose track of time and fail to observe events going on around them; a loss of self-awareness may take place.

The narrative world is distant from the world in which the reader lives, and makes it possible that the events in the story are perceived as real within the story context, even when events would not be possible in reality. The mental journey elicited by transportation makes it possible for readers to change as a consequence of reading fiction, because it elicits various processes, including emotional involvement in the story and identification with the characters. Numerous studies have demonstrated that when reader get to be transported into a story, personal change is more likely to occur. For instance, Green and Brock demonstrated that when readers got to be transported into a story, their states of mind about themes that were incorporated into the story changed more strongly than those who were not transported into a story. Similar were acquired in studies by Appel and associates who found that transportation into narratives is the main precursor of changes in the individual. Despite the fact that analysts have contended that transportation refer to both cognitive and emotional involvement in a story, consequently, it is essentially through emotional transportation that people may change, because fictional narratives are primarily written to elicit emotions among the readers, such as fear, surprise or joy. In sum, personal change is more likely to occur when a reader is emotionally transported into a story⁵¹.

⁵¹**P. Matthijs Bal, Martijn Veltkamp**, *How Does Fiction Reading Influence Empathy? An Experimental Investigation on the Role of Emotional Transportation*, available from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235403083_How_Does_Fiction_Reading_Influence_Empathy_An_Experimental_Investigation_on_the_Role_of_Emotional_Transportation

29.2.1. Sleeper Effects of Fiction on Outcomes

Narrative transportation seems to be more unintentionally affective than intentionally cognitive in nature. This way of processing leads to potentially increasing and long-lasting influential impacts. Appel and Richter utilize the expression "sleeper impact" to portray this paradoxical property of narrative transportation over time, which consists of a more pronounced change in attitudes and intentions and a greater certainty that these attitudes and intentions are correct.

Finally, in accordance with Appel and Richter, it is normal that the impacts of fiction experience on empathy are guided by an absolute sleeper effect. Absolute sleeper effects occur when the effects of a manipulation do not present themselves immediately but manifest themselves over time. Absolute sleeper effect in fiction research assume the impacts of fiction perusing on empathy will increase over time instead of present itself straightforwardly after the experience. There are two fundamental reasons why these effects occur. Initially, Schank and Abelson contend that when individuals organize information in stories (a process that fiction should facilitate as it consists of stories already), the representations of these stories last better and longer. Thus, the effects of fiction ought to generally last more than in the logico-scientific mode of thinking (like in newspaper reports). Accordingly, when individuals are transported into fictional narratives, they are better in remembering the story, since they were more intensely involved in reading the story, which enables mental representations afterward. Hence, fictional narratives as a mental recreation of real world events deepen the readers' general tendencies to feel empathy with other people. Support for the impacts of story fiction stays consistent or may even increase over time comes from Paluck , who studied how a reconciliation radio program influenced perceptions of social norms in postwar

Rwanda and found that through these radio stories, individuals' apparent standards about how one ought to carry on in social circumstances expanded over the long haul⁵².

Second, for sleeper effects to occur, an incubation period (The period between the unconscious influence of narrative fiction, and the appearance of effects on the reader) is required, in which individuals can in which people can rethink and relive that what has been read. Research on incubation has demonstrated that investing some time on unrelated activities may enhance the effects of resolving problems, because an individual unconsciously connects the information from fictional narratives (e.g., people facing problems in their lives) with daily encounters, and consequently find new solutions through perspective taking and showing sympathy for other people. This process may occur both consciously and unconsciously. As an example of the unconscious influence of narrative fiction, Marsh et al. showed that false statements from fictional stories were used by readers when they had to conduct a knowledge task one week after reading the story. Moreover, Appel and Richter found that the influence of false statements in fictional stories on people's beliefs increased over time. Therefore, it is proposed that the effects of fiction on empathy do not present themselves immediately but manifest themselves over time. According to poststructural research, language's articulation in narrative format is capable not only of mirroring reality but also of constructing it. As such, stories could cause profound and durable persuasion of the transported story receiver as a result of his or her progressive internalization. When stories transport story receivers, not only do they present a narrative world but, by

⁵²**P. Matthijs Bal, Martijn Veltkamp**, *How Does Fiction Reading Influence Empathy? An Experimental Investigation on the Role of Emotional Transportation*, available from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235403083_How_Does_Fiction_Reading_Influence_Empathy_An_Experimental_Investigation_on_the_Role_of_Emotional_Transportation

reframing the story receiver's language, they also durably change the world to which the story receiver returns after the transportation experience⁵³.

30. Character Identification and experience-taking

Literary scholars have used the term character identification to describe the process whereby readers put themselves in the place of a character and experience what the character feels (Altenbernd & Lewis, 1969). There is considerable agreement among literary scholars that the greater the degree of similarity between the reader and the character, the greater the degree of identification that will result (Altenbernd & Lewis, 1969; Perrine, 1959). , identification is defined not as an attitude, an emotion, or perception but, rather, as a process that consists of increasing loss of self-awareness and its temporary replacement with heightened emotional and cognitive connections with a character.

Identification with fictional characters may be usefully defined as an imaginative process invoked as a response to characters presented within fictional stories. Identification is fleeting and varies in intensity (Wilson, 1993), a sensation felt intermittently during exposure to a fictional story. While identifying with a fictional character, an audience member imagines him- or herself being that character and replaces his or her personal identity and role as audience member with the identity and role of the character within the text. While strongly

⁵³**P. Matthijs Bal, Martijn Veltkamp**, *How Does Fiction Reading Influence Empathy? An Experimental Investigation on the Role of Emotional Transportation*, available from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235403083_How_Does_Fiction_Reading_Influence_Empathy_An_Experimental_Investigation_on_the_Role_of_Emotional_Transportation

identifying, the audience member ceases to be aware of his or her social role as an audience member and temporarily (but usually repeatedly) adopts the perspective of the character with whom he or she identifies. As a process, identification culminates in a cognitive and emotional state in which the audience member is aware not of him- or herself as an audience member, but rather imagines being one of the characters in the text. The process of identification may begin because of a production feature that brings the audience member to adopt a character's perspective (Wilson, 1993), an audience member's fondness for a specific character (Cohen, 1999), or a realization that a similarity exists between the audience member and a character (Maccoby & Wilson, 1957). These lead to a psychological merging (Oatley, 1999) or attachment, in which the audience member comes to internalize the characters' goals within the narrative. The audience member then empathizes with the character and adopts the character's identity. As the narrative progress, the audience member simulates the feelings and thoughts appropriate for the events that occur. Identification may be ended or interrupted when the audience member is made aware of him- or herself through an external stimuli (e.g., the phone rings), a textual stimuli (e.g., a direct reference to the reader), or the end of the story. Outcomes of identification may include increased liking or imitation but can also include negative feelings. Identifying with extremely negative characters who are evil or very violent may evoke some understanding or even sympathy for them during reading or viewing but strongly identifying with such a character is likely to cause dissonance, guilt, or even fear⁵⁴.

Experience-taking is a psychological term describing an immersive phenomenon where readers subconsciously transpose themselves onto a character's persona. So much so, readers adopt the character's thought, beliefs, behaviors and internal responses as their own. In

⁵⁴**Griffin Leon Short**, *Audience reactions to media personae: Audience members can react in many ways to media personae* The reaction/perspective will depend on a variety of factor, available from <http://slideplayer.com/slide/4470259/>

order for Experience-taking to occur, readers must be able to completely lose sense of themselves in the story. First-person narratives are more likely to evoke Experience-taking than stories written in third person. When both the character and reader belong to the same social group, Experience-taking can be stronger. The opposite is also true. Experience-taking can have real, lasting effects on a reader's behavior, and could be a useful tool for creating behavioral change. However, readers are less likely to lose themselves in stories that are overly commercial or persuasive. Experience-taking, a term proposed Geoff Kaufman and Lisa Libby (2012) may be thought of as more radical than identification. It's a kind of merging with another: not just thoughts and beliefs, but a state of being. Empathy is an example in day-to-day life. But yet larger effects, perhaps, occur in fiction when we identify with a literary character. So, although we remain ourselves we can become Anna in *Anna Karenina* or we can become Elizabeth in *Pride and prejudice*. Kaufman and Libby say that in experience-taking:

readers simulate the events of a narrative as though they were a particular character in the story world, adopting the character's mindset and perspective as the story progresses rather than orienting themselves as an observer or evaluator of the character ... the greater the ability of a reader to simulate the subjective experience of a character—the greater the potential that story has to change the reader's self-concept, attitudes, and behavior. (p. 2).

The present research introduces the concept of the experience-taking as the imaginative process of spontaneously assuming the identity of a character in a narrative and simulating that character's thoughts, emotions, behaviors, goals, and traits as if they were one's own. Six studies investigated the degree to which particular psychological states and features of narratives cause individuals, without instruction, to engage in experience-taking

and investigated how the merger between self and other that occurs during experience-taking produces changes in self-judgments, attitudes, and behavior that align with the character's.

Kaufman and Libby asked student participants to read a story in which the protagonist was a college student. The story gave the reader information about the protagonist's thoughts, actions, and feelings. The experiments were in two groups. In the first group, the focus was on how far readers thought of themselves as individuals, and what the effect was of such individual consciousness on experience-taking. In their first experiment, Kaufman and Libby found that the more conscious readers were of their own individual experience, the less was their experience-taking as they read the story. In their second experiment, Kaufman and Libby instructed half the readers to think of themselves simply as average students no matter what their background or major, whereas the other half of the readers did not receive this instruction. Those who read the average-student instruction showed more experience-taking when they read the story. In the third experiment, readers were asked either to read the story in a cubicle that had a mirror in it or to read the story in a cubicle without a mirror. Those who didn't have the mirror had higher scores on experience-taking⁵⁵.

The second group of studies involved manipulating the text of the story. In the fourth experiment, Kaufman and Libby used four versions of a story: so the participants read the story with either first-person or third-person narration, and with the protagonist being either at the same or a different university than that of the reader. The first-person story induced more experience-taking when the protagonist was at the same university as the reader. In their last two experiments, Kaufman and Libby compared earlier or later placement in the story of information that the protagonist was a member of a group to which the reader did not belong.

⁵⁵**Keith Oatley**, *Entering Another's Experience*, available from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-psychology-fiction/201208/entering-anothers-experience>

In experiment five, readers were heterosexual and the protagonist was homosexual and in experiment six readers were white and the protagonist was African-American. Later introduction of this information in the story increased experience-taking.

Results from Studies 1-3 showed that being in a reduced state of self-concept accessibility while reading a brief fictional work increased-and being in a heightened state of self-concept accessibility decreased-participants' levels of experience-taking and subsequent incorporation of a character's personality trait into their self-concepts. Study 4 revealed that a first-person narrative depicting an in-group character elicited the highest levels of experience-taking and produced the greatest change in participants' behavior, compared with versions of the narrative written in 3rd-person voice and/or depicting an out-group protagonist. The final 2 studies demonstrated that whereas revealing a character's out-group membership as a homosexual or African American early in a narrative inhibited experience-taking, delaying the revelation of the character's out-group identity until later in the story produced higher levels of experience-taking, lower levels of stereotype application in participants' evaluation of the character, and more favorable attitudes toward the character's group. The implications of these findings in relation to perspective-taking, self-other overlap, and prime-to-behavior effects are discussed.

In experience taking, although in a sense we remain ourselves, we can also become the character about whom we read: the story-character's thoughts and feelings become our own. One might think that he has just one life to lead, but fiction enables us to lead many lives and to experience being many kinds of person.

Conclusion

Readers have evolved a firm bond with fiction. It became their most dependable safe ground where they can transcend from the existent world to their inner worlds. Psychologists, in the other hand, contend that literary fiction is more efficient at prompting our emotions, for them a piece of writing is able to evoke reader's most profound sensations. According to them, every reader relates a story or a character to his identity. Then he tries to place what he identifies the most into his personal life. What is more important is that empirical studies have proved that fiction grants a form of stimulus to readers just as the same real stimulus they got of from real life experiences; These fictive stimulus might actually effect who he might be or how he will live his life, and these effects could possibly be momentary or perpetual.

General conclusion

The study was set out to explore the Modern and Postmodern narrative fictions and to identify the nature and form of fictional characters, and then it sought out to explain the cognitive content of fiction and the role and impact of the fictive representations on reader's experience. The study has also sought to know whether narrative empathy and narrative transportation can result in effective identity transformation, particularly for readers that are immersed and drifted by the story. The general theoretical frameworks on this subject and specifically in the context of nature and foundations of fiction are inconclusive on several vital fields of study. So to guarantee better results, this study contained these disciplines (Literature, Philosophy, and Psychology) under a unified framework in an attempt to answer one major question:

How deep it that we can be so moved by fictional stories and so affected by fictional characters?

The first section of the study maps the basis of modern fiction as a literary genre. It returns to its roots out of the modernist movement and moves forward to the postmodern movement. This section is mainly committed to synthesize the tools and individuals that engineered the literary creations and assays the authorship contributions. What distinguishes the first chapter of this study is that it signals the role of the reading materials (works of fiction) to induce another form of experiences and allow readers to go on inside this experiences. At last this section corroborates that fictional narratives could have some genuine content that draw readers to be touched by.

The second section however, affirms that even though fictional entities are abstract beings but they still make part of our world. Although they live in fictional stories, yet that could also be part of possible realities. They are capable to sustain and survive through time due to their originality and each fictional character is an entity, because it holds a specific set

of prosperities. Fictional characters are abstract individuals in our reality; we could feel them, learn wisdom from them, and live like them.

The last chapter establishes evidences from empirical studies on the effects of fiction on reader's attitudes and behaviors. The studies show that our brain construes actions and from stories to be real, because they comprise the same stimuli as real life events. It also affirms that readers create relations with fictional individuals and associate him-self with them either through identification or experience taking.

Finally we conclude that fiction is not just an assemblage of written woks on imaginary things. Fiction is actually a display of realities where everyone is allowed to take part in. with fiction readers are capable to redefine, reshape, and correct their lives.

Now it is important to bear in mind that this study is only a focus on the effects of fiction on readers. Hence it is possible for everyone who is interested to study fiction to find out other connection such as the effect of fiction on Culture or History or even Arts.

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