Emotion and narrative fiction: Interactive influences before, during, and after reading

Raymond A. Mar
York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Keith Oatley and Maja Djikic
University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Justin Mullin
York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Emotions are central to the experience of literary narrative fiction. Affect and mood can influence what book people choose, based partly on whether their goal is to change or maintain their current emotional state. Once having chosen a book, the narrative itself acts to evoke and transform emotions, both directly through the events and characters depicted and through the cueing of emotionally valenced memories. Once evoked by the story, these emotions can in turn influence a person's experience of the narrative. Lastly, emotions experienced during reading may have consequences after closing the covers of a book. This article reviews the current state of empirical research for each of these stages, providing a snapshot of what is known about the interaction between emotions and literary narrative fiction. With this, we can begin to sketch the outlines of what remains to be discovered.

Keywords: Reading; Emotion; Memory; Literature; Media; Imagination.

Reading narrative fiction can be a profoundly emotional experience (Oatley, 1994, 2002). A good novel will often elicit real sadness, even tears, when a character dies or encounters hardship. The same book might make one smile or laugh out loud upon encountering a startling slice of absurdity or at a redemptive conclusion. Emotions and literary fiction interact in ways far more complicated than these examples might imply, however. Emotions are not, for one, limited to reactions to the events portrayed in a book. Mood, or emotional state, has an influence before one even engages with a story, biasing the choice of what to read. This can be seen in the common experience of not being "in the mood" for a particular type of novel. Emotions continue to play a role after one has chosen a book and begun to read, with characters and situations eliciting affect in a number of ways, including the evocation of personal, emotion-filled, memories. These emotions, once evoked, in turn influence engagement with the text. Once one has finished reading, these emotions don't simply dissipate but

may have an impact that lasts hours or days, long after closing the covers of the book, perhaps re-emerging whenever the book is brought to mind. This article reviews empirical research on the dynamic interaction between emotion and literature at each of these stages, tying it to current theoretical conceptions. As it would be impossible to provide an exhaustive treatment of all of these topics in a single article, our goal is more limited. What we hope to provide are some signposts so that an interested reader can, with some confidence, begin a journey into this fascinating body of research. Although our intent is to focus on the reading of literary fiction, examples from other narrative media (e.g., film and television) will be included insofar as they inform our understanding of literary matters. Lastly, in reviewing these areas of research, we aim to reveal the shape of promising domains of interest that research has yet to explore in the hopes of motivating further research.

EMOTIONS AND THE SELECTION OF A BOOK

The interaction between emotions and literary narrative fiction begins with the decision to seek out a novel or short story (see Vorderer, Steen, & Chan, 2006, for an overview of entertainment motivations). One's choice of fiction is a product of many things related to emotion, including: (1) current emotional state or mood; (2) an appraisal of what emotions will result from reading a particular text; and (3) personal goals with respect to felt emotion. Appraisals and motivation with respect to emotion are related to the conception of meta-emotions and meta-moods, or the thoughts and feelings directed toward personal affect (Mayer & Gaschke, 1988; see Bartsch, Vorderer, Mangold, & Viehoff, 2008, for a review and new conception). People can, for example, be afraid to feel anxious or think that their own feelings of happiness are inappropriate, adding another level of evaluation to affective experiences.

The influence of mood on the selection of media has been extensively studied by Zillmann (1988), who proposed a theory known as mood-management (see Oliver, 2003; Schramm & Wirth, 2008, for critical reviews). Mood-management theory is essentially a hedonic explanation for media choices. It proposes that readers and viewers select entertainment media that will promote or maintain positive moods, or those that will help to reduce or circumvent negative moods. From this we would predict that a reader who is happy and in a good mood should seek out books that don't interfere with this emotional state or that help to promote it. Similarly, readers who are unhappy and depressed should select a book that will turn this mood around. Empirically, research on television (Bryant & Zillmann, 1984; Zillmann, Hezel, & Medoff, 1980) and music (Knobloch & Zillmann, 2002) has been consistent with mood-management predictions, with participants induced to feel bad moods choosing media to alleviate them, and those induced to feel positive moods choosing media to sustain these feelings.

Narrative fiction and negative emotions. One possible criticism of mood-management theory is that it seems to provide little explanation for the existence (and popularity) of tragedy within narrative fiction. Why would anyone enjoy reading something like Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1599/2000) or a horror story by Stephen King? Zillmann (1998) has argued that viewers enjoy suspenseful films because the anxiety induced by this form of entertainment magnifies the relief felt upon a happy resolution of the narrative. In this way, the hedonic theory of mood management can still account for these forms of media. Sad films tend to have happy endings in Zillmann's estimation and the negative emotions felt throughout the entertainment experience serve to make these positive endings all the more satisfying.

Oliver (1993; Oliver, Weaver, & Sargent, 2000), however, has conducted a number of studies that question this conception. Focusing on the pursuit and enjoyment of sad films, this researcher has demonstrated that, in general, the more a film makes a person feel sad the more they report enjoying it (Oliver, 1993). More importantly, these

same individuals do not require the presence of a happy ending in order to enjoy these sad films. Oliver (1993; Oliver et al., 2000) also discovered that a gender difference exists, with women seeing more sad films and reporting more enjoyment of these "tearjerkers" than men (see Oliver, 2003, for important qualifications of this observation). Individual differences also play a role, with viewers who are more empathetic (particularly with regard to feeling involved in fiction), more feminine, and who have a positive orientation toward sadness more likely to enjoy sad films (Oliver, 1993). There is also evidence that an attraction toward media that promote negative emotions is more prevalent in younger, as compared with older, adults (Mares, Oliver, & Cantor, 2008), and that a very specific emotional state, tenderness, is a good predictor of attraction to sad films (Oliver, 2008).

Although women appear to be more likely than men to select media that elicit or maintain negative emotions, this phenomenon may be moderated by the type of negative emotion in question. Knobloch-Westerwick and Alter (2006) conducted a very clever experiment in which some participants were provoked by an experimenter who gave rude and negative feedback on a task, evoking feelings of anger and aggression. Some of these participants were also led to believe that they would be able to retaliate against this experimenter later on. When given the opportunity to read a number of articles in the intervening time, females from this group spent an increasing amount of time reading positive articles, ostensibly in an effort to dissipate their negative mood. Males, on the other hand, spent less and less time reading positive articles, presumably in an effort to maintain their negative mood in anticipation of the possibility for revenge. Thus, in this case, it appears that men selected media to enforce and maintain a negative mood (i.e., anger) whereas women used media much as Zillmann (1988) hypothesised, to alleviate or extinguish their negative feelings.

How emotions influence the selection of narrative media has proven to be a complex phenomenon, with people choosing genres of fiction they know will alleviate negative moods or maintain and promote positive moods, but also choosing to interact with media in a way they know will evoke or maintain negative moods. Others have begun to examine more differentiated explanations for the pursuit of seemingly negative media. Turner and Silvia (2006), for example, have conducted research demonstrating that interest and unpleasantness are unrelated. This means that a novel that contains unpleasant situations or characters (e.g., the writings of Hubert Selby, Jr.) can hold a great deal of interest for a reader and influence the selection of a book. Interest has been described as a type of emotion by Tan (1994), an anticipatory emotion like hope and desire that he argues is the primary motivation behind viewing films. Vorderer and Ritterfeld (2009) have begun to take this idea further, identifying higher-level goals and motivations related to interest and appreciation that predict media-use behaviours in a manner distinct from more immediate affective goals. These immediate emotional goals likely drive the hedonic predictions of mood-management theory. In contrast, higher-level goals might inform cognition more than emotion, specifically the acquisition of insight and meaning from a piece of narrative fiction (Oliver, 2008). Our motivations for selecting media, with respect to the emotional experiences they offer, appear to be multifaceted (Bartsch, Mangold, Viehoff, & Vorderer, 2006).

Emotion and anthropomorphisation. So far we have primarily focused on how emotions may influence one's media choices, but emotions such as loneliness may also predict whether one pursues any media entertainment at all. Epley, Waytz, and Cacioppo (2007) have hypothesised that a primary determinant of anthropomorphisation, or the tendency to see nonagentic targets as intentional, is a desire for social contact. Anthropomorphisation probably supports the ability to see fictional characters as if they were real, with real human psychologies, perhaps allowing these characters to provide social comfort in ways similar to real peers. Consistent with this idea, researchers have found that the presence of a fictional television character can evoke the same psychological phenomenon found when in the presence of real social peers (i.e., social facilitation), but only if the character is

favoured and seen as "real" (Gardner & Knowles, 2008). If desire for social contact drives anthropomorphism, then people who are feeling lonely may be more likely to engage in media. Research on television has so far confirmed this intuition (Derrick, Gabriel, & Hugenberg, 2009; Jonason, Webster, & Lindsey, 2008), although the same may not be true of literary fiction. Frequent readers of fiction, for example, are no more lonely than individuals who report less exposure to fiction (Mar, Oatley, & Peterson, 2009).

Emotions, meta-emotions, and literary fiction. Only a minority of the work described above has been conducted on literary fiction. Unfortunately, to our knowledge, work on how mood influences the selection of narrative media has not been undertaken with respect to fictional literature. While literary fiction shares some similarities with other narrative media like television and film, enough differences exist that it would not be surprising if studying novels and short stories yielded some unique results.

Distinct cognitive processes are required for the comprehension of literary fiction compared to television and film. While television and film present dynamic audiovisual information that depicts events and characters, text provides more minimal information: mere words that must then be transformed into characters, perceived events, and situations in our mind. Literature appears to involve more cognitive participation than television or cinema, and one might hypothesise that escapist and entertainment-oriented motivations are less likely to influence the selection of literary fiction. One can imagine approaching television and film from the standpoint of simple hedonic management, and literature from the perspective of interest and appreciation.

Although this is one possibility, such a characterisation might be too simplistic. The most popular genre of fiction is the romance novel, which appears to have clear associations with entertainment and escape. With a romance novel, readers know precisely what sort of emotional experience they are going to have, how the book is likely to make them feel, and thus choosing books of this

genre might reflect very simple hedonic motivations. Similarly, some films are also just as complex as the best novels, and the decision to engage with these films is likely to be driven by interest and appreciation motivations, particularly if the director has a reputation for producing challenging work. Moreover, Green and colleagues (2008) found that people were as engaged or absorbed by a text version of a narrative as a film version, indicating that cognitive participation might be equivalent for these two genres. While there are some clear differences between media, the content of a particular book, film or television show is likely to play just as an important, albeit separate, role in influencing meta-emotional concerns.

Another matter to consider is that in literary fiction events are presented symbolically (through language) rather than representationally (through images and sounds), so readers may have more control over emotional distance than viewers (Cupchik, 2002). In a frightening book, one can choose to imagine what a monster looks like, to some degree, whereas in a frightening movie one can't help but see the dripping fangs and gaping maw. This does not necessarily mean that movies are more frightening than books, of course, as one may well tend to imagine the monster in a book as precisely the sort of monster that scares one the most. What this does mean, however, is that people are more in control of the representation of characters, objects, and events in a book and this may have implications for anticipated emotional reactions. Control over the representation of a book's contents may translate into control over emotional distance while reading, and this may in turn mean different predictions for how mood influences the selection of books compared to television and film.

Another aspect of reading that pertains to emotional distance is our ability to control the pace of literary narratives. While digital video recorders and DVD or Blu-ray players may allow us to pause and rewind television and film, viewers rarely employ these options unless they have to get a drink, use the washroom, or miss something that has been said. Reading, on the other hand, is frequently marked by regressions to

earlier parts of the text, re-reading a portion of the text to clarify or re-experience what is described, and almost always by pauses. Thus, if a book begins to become emotionally overwhelming, it is very easy to take a break to absorb these events. While people can close their eyes and plug their ears in the movie theatre, or perhaps even walk out, this is less common than putting a book down for a moment or for the day. Although changing the channel on the television is certainly easy, it's not commonly performed in response to feeling emotionally overwhelmed. Once a person has made a choice of film or television show, he or she typically watches it to the finish. Foreknowledge of these differences in media usage could mean different meta-emotional predictions for different media.

Reading also typically takes place over a longer temporal span than watching. While a person might read a short story in the *New Yorker* over the span of a half hour, no longer than the length of a television episode, a novel might be enjoyed over the span of weeks with individual reading episodes lasting for hours. This means that we are often likely to be in the midst of a book and our motivation to finish this book might influence our selection of reading material as much or more than any mood-management impulse.[1] The length of exposure to a book would seem to argue that literary fiction has greater emotional consequences than media with shorter durations of engagement, unless the person is willing to abandon a novel before finishing it.[2] Television and film are in many ways better designed for escapist entertainment, being cheaper and easier to access. So again, the idea that literary fiction might be a better match for appreciation and interest reappears, with insight and the derivation of meaning as its goals. This hypothesis remains untested to our knowledge, and on the face of it involves a number of complexities (e.g., interactions with content), so for these reasons it appears to be much deserving of future investigation.

EVOCATION OF EMOTION DURING READING

Emotions play a large role in how involved we feel while interacting with media (Wirth, 2006), although the type of media we choose moderates this influence. When one reads a piece of non-fiction one wants to be informed, but when one reads a novel, short story, or poem, one wants to be moved; emotions are central to the experience of fiction. Theories on how emotions are evoked, such as the discrepancy/evaluation theory, can be usefully applied to our experiences with media (e.g., MacDowell & Mandler, 1989). Here we approach the topic by way of Oatley's (1994) taxonomy of emotions of literary response along with an account of the psychological processes of their evocation. Emotions can arise from an encounter with a work of art (including literary fiction) as if from the outside; they can also arise specifically from entering a narrative world. When we encounter a work of art from the outside we can hold it at a certain distance (Cupchik, 2002) and evaluate its properties as a whole: its craft, its proportions, its style, its place in a tradition, and so on. Emotions that arise in this way can be called aesthetic emotions and they include admiration and appreciation. A different set of emotions is evoked when entering the narrative world of a story, known as narrative emotions. Miall and Kuiken (2002) argued that aesthetic emotions can combine with narrative emotions to modify them and that this is important to the sense of satisfaction in literary reading. In his taxonomy of emotions of reading fiction, Oatley (1994) described three kinds of narrative emotions, to which we have now added a fourth (emotions of empathy) and a fifth (remembered emotions; Oatley, 2004); we describe each of these below.

Emotions of sympathy. The simplest idea about the evocation of an emotion in fiction is that a

---

[1] We thank a generous anonymous reviewer for this idea.
[2] This willingness to leave a book unfinished is likely an individual difference, perhaps related to the construct Need for Closure (Webster & Kruglanski, 1994).

writer offers what T. S. Eliot (1953) has called an objective correlative:

The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an "objective correlative"; in other words a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula for that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked. (pp. 107–108)

Eliot's idea is that an external pattern of events is communicated to the audience member or reader by "a skilful accumulation of imagined sensory impressions" released by the words, so that there is a "complete adequacy of the external to the emotion" (p. 108). Someone meets a new friend, or suffers a loss, or is confronted by a danger, and this pattern is recognised by the reader. Eliot does not say how the pattern becomes a psychological process in a reader or audience member, but from the last 50 years of emotion research, we can say that the idea is equivalent to appraisal patterns, which Frijda (2007) also calls "patterns of information that represent the meaning of eliciting situations" (p. 4). Tan (1994) has offered an idea of how this happens based on Frijda's approach. Tan says that a reader or audience member recognises such a pattern, sees how it concerns a story character and then feels sympathetically for that character. He argues that people are privileged witnesses to exactly those events that constitute the plot, an account broadly consistent with that of Zillmann (1991; cf. Tan, 1994). The result is a set of what Tan calls witness emotions, based on appraisals. You may think of these emotions like this. Imagine you see a car accident. You are simultaneously fascinated and sympathetic for the occupants of the car because of their predicament (the appraisal pattern). You don't, however, feel as you would if you were in the car, and you don't feel as you would if one of your own children were in the car.

Emotions of identification. When we identify with a character we imagine ourselves to be in his or her position. For example, Dixon and Bortolussi (2004), in reply to a critique by Diengott (2004), discuss research showing that

identification is greater when readers make inferences about a character. Identification can result in the evocation of emotions. Cupchik, Oatley, and Vorderer (1998b), for example, gave people different instructions during reading and asked them about their emotional response. With instructions to imagine what it was like to be the protagonist (identification) readers were more likely to experience fresh emotions (emotions arising from novel experiences and realisations based on the narrative) when reading. In contrast, instructions to be a spectator (sympathy condition) resulted in readers being more likely to report remembered emotions (emotions driven by personal recollections). Other research ties identification to fresh emotions, such as the work of Gholamain (1998), who found that the intensity of fresh emotions was higher when narratives were rewritten to create a closer aesthetic distance (e.g., use of first-person narration; see also Kerr, 2005). This work provides a nice demonstration that the emotions of sympathy and the emotions of identification are not identical. Identification and the emotions surrounding it remains an active area of research, most recently with regard to the affect that arises with the dissolution of parasocial relationships to television characters, for example (Cohen, 2003; Eyal & Cohen, 2006).

Emotions of empathy. Closely related to feelings of identification and feelings of sympathy, are feelings of empathy. Although Oatley (2009) has previously argued that identification is explained by empathy, here we propose that a theory-neutral taxonomy would be best served by discussing empathy separate from identification. To clarify the distinction, identification in fiction describes wanting to be (or be like) a protagonist (Oatley & Gholamain, 1997), but we can also engage in empathy for fictional characters that does not entail becoming that character (Keen, 2006). This empathy for characters has emotional consequences, and can also be seen as separate from sympathy. Whereas sympathy is feeling for someone in a particular predicament and, for instance, feeling that one wants to help them, empathy is having an emotion that is somewhat like the emotion

experienced by the target person. Empathy has been described by de Vignemont and Singer (2006) as involving: (a) having an emotion; which (b) is in some way similar to that of another person; which (c) is elicited by observation or imagination of the other's emotion; and that involves (d) knowing that the other is the source of one's own emotion. Importantly, because empathy as defined by these authors can entail the imagination of another's emotion, rather than strictly the observation of an emotion, empathy can easily be applied to fictional characters created through our imagination in interaction with a narrative.

Both empathy and identification can be thought of in terms of the theory with which we work, of fictions as mental simulations of the social world (Oatley, 1999). In this theory the mental means by which people accomplish actions in the real world is achieved through a planning processor. This provides the cognitive mechanism by which people select goals, form specific intentions that derive from the goal or goals (i.e., make plans), and direct their actions to accomplish their plans. In reading a piece of fiction one withdraws from one's immediate world, and uses this same planning processor to empathise and identify with fictional characters, suspending one's own goals, plans, and actions. Instead, one makes the processor available to the goals, plans, and actions, of a protagonist. It is such goals, plans, and actions that form the threads woven together in the plot of a story, as Aristotle (330 BCE/1970) has put the matter for tragedy. He points out that plot is the "heart and soul" of tragedy, because it is a *mimesis* (representation) of action. The same is true of other kinds of stories. The author tells the reader what a character's goals, plans, intentions, and action are, and the reader enters them into his or her own processor. This process can be thought of as an extension of the idea of mental models.[3] Mental models have been used to explain how scenes in a fictional text are imagined. In the process described here, it is the protagonist's mind that is modelled (including goals, beliefs, emotions; Mar & Oatley, 2008;

Oatley, 1999). In sympathy, we feel bad for a character whose goals are not being met, but we do not need to model these goals on our planning processor in order to do so. In identification, we take on these goals and plans as our own, and see ourselves as the character feeling what he or she feels. In empathy, we understand a character's goals through our model of his or her mind, and feel something similar to what the character feels, but we do not see ourselves as that character and identify these emotions as our own rather than as the character's.

A study by Trabasso and Chung (2004) illustrates how identification and empathy might arise through the engagement of a planning processor. These researchers had 20 people watch two commercial films that were stopped at 12 separate points. Ten of the viewers rated whether, at each of these points, the protagonists and antagonists were succeeding in their plans. The other ten reported on their own emotions at each point. At points where liked protagonists were rated as succeeding, the viewers who reported on their emotions felt happy, relieved, and other positive emotions. At points where the protagonists' goals were rated as being impeded, the viewers who reported on their emotions felt angry, sad, anxious, and other negative emotions. Unfortunately, from this study, it is difficult to determine whether these were emotions of identification or empathy, or perhaps some blend of both. Future research should consider situations in which empathy and identification would result in divergent emotional experiences, or ask more directly whether the emotions felt are one's own or those of the protagonist. This is a sticky issue that will require some clever thought to tease apart.

Relived emotions. Emotions can also be elicited by a narrative in the form of affect that accompanies the recollection of personal experience (emotions of the personal past). Scheff (1979) has proposed that in the ordinary world one does

---

[3] We thank a generous anonymous reviewer for this idea.

not always experience emotions as they happen. Although one does experience and assimilate some of them, others overwhelm us: emotions of grief or other losses, for instance, and emotions of shame not admitted to ourselves or others. Drawing on the theory of emotional distance, mentioned above and reviewed by Cupchik (2002), Scheff calls these emotions "underdistanced." So, one remembers aspects of the events that gave rise to them, but not in a way that personal emotions are fully assimilated into one's autobiography, or one's understanding of oneself. At the far extreme of underdistanced emotions are symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, when whole lives are overturned as a result of being in military combat, or being in a civil disaster, or being criminally assaulted or raped. In this syndrome, people are flooded by the emotional content of memories, experiencing flashbacks and nightmares, but cannot tell a coherent narrative of the events (van der Kolk & Fisler, 1995). Another way of not assimilating emotional experience is to block it out altogether. Scheff calls the resulting emotions "overdistanced." This effect can occur, for instance, when a person has been very hurt in a relationship and vows never to be hurt in that way again. The function of drama and other kinds of fiction, says Scheff, is to enable people to relive, and hence assimilate unassimilated emotions from one's past, which although they are not fully conscious, continue to have damaging effects on a person's life, and particularly on his or her relationships. According to Scheff, people's experience of emotions in a piece of fiction, a reliving of emotions from their own past, allows them the possibility of assimilating these emotions more fully. When people cry at the fates of Romeo and Juliet, really they are re-experiencing a loss of their own with which they have not fully come to terms. But, as Miall and Kuiken (2002) have put it, such emotions are not purely replicative. In the literary setting they can be modified, and perhaps become more fully understood and assimilated.

As with many of the ideas mentioned in this review, there has not been a great deal of research on remembered emotions evoked by literature. One exemplary exception is the study by Cupchik and colleagues. (1998b) mentioned earlier. These researchers found that, in comparison with the fresh emotions of sympathy and identification, remembered emotions were most often evoked by reading passages that were descriptively dense. It is possible that these descriptions helped the reader create a richly imagined model of an evocative situation or scene, prompting personal recollections emotional in nature.

Remembered emotions. The oldest ideas of emotions in literature come from Indian poetics and the best expositors of this theory are Anandavardana and Abhinavagupta (Ingalls, Masson, & Patwardhan, 1990). Writing 1000 years ago they distinguished between everyday emotions (*bhavas*), and literary emotions (*rasas*), which are experienced in engagement with literary art. *Rasas* differ from *bhavas* principally in that one can experience them with deeper insight. As the Indian theorists put it, understandings of everyday emotions are often hidden because our eyes are covered with a thick crust of egoism.

The idea of *rasas* is closely linked to those of relived emotions, but they are not identical. The Indian theorists argue that *rasas* can derive from awareness of emotion-memories from a wide range of past lives. We might now take this as meaning that people can recognise emotions derived from evolutionary and cultural kinship with the rest of humanity, similar to Jung's (1954/1981) collective unconscious. In this way, we might think of *rasas* as emotions of the collective past. Individuals might also recognise emotions that they observed in others (e.g., watching a woman grieve the death of her son on television), or had told to them by an acquaintance, as well as emotions encountered in dramas and other fiction. So, to each new work of literature, one can bring a wide range of remembered emotional experience, but these are not limited to recollections of personally experienced events. As one does this emotions are experienced in new contexts, adding to one's understanding of the range of emotional experience. A Western idea that bears some similarity to that of *rasas*, was put

forward by Proust (1913/1987) in the famous scene of *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, when the narrator Marcel feels a profound joy as he tastes a Madeleine cake and herb tea. The joy that occurred for him at this moment was not a reliving of a particular incident from childhood and cannot be accurately defined as a relived emotion. It occurred because a pattern of remembered experience was accompanied by an understanding of its meaning, a meaning rooted in shared experiences of the complex relationships between kin: an understanding that in ordinary life usually passes one by (see also Epstein, 2004). This example, however, is not a perfect illustration of *rasas* as the Indian literary theorists argue that these types of emotions can only be experienced during encounters with art and literature, not during our everyday experiences.

The relations between the various types of narrative emotions. Each idea of emotional evocation presented (emotions of sympathy, identification, and empathy, as well as relived and remembered emotions) was originally put forward as the sole explanation for how emotions occur when reading or attending a drama. It now seems far more likely that these psychological modes are not mutually exclusive (e.g., relived emotions could be seen as a type of remembered emotion), and that different types of emotions could occur simultaneously. Moreover, the separate types of emotions can easily engage in complex interactions with one another. Identification could facilitate sympathy and empathy, for example, and remembered emotions might also increase identification. Although two broad categories appear to exist, for emotions derived from engagements with characters (i.e., fresh emotions of sympathy, identification, and empathy) and those rooted in memory (i.e., relived and remembered emotions), there is no a priori reason to assume that these cannot act together in some circumstances, but also oppose one another in others. Being drawn into your own recollection (relived or remem-

bered) might temporarily pull you away from a story and its characters, for example.

Different aspects of the text are likely to be involved in evoking one or more of these types of emotion (Braun & Cupchik, 2001). Kerr (2005), for example, showed that identification with a character and the emotions that arise from it were more likely with first-person narratives. It was not examined, however, how this influenced emotions of sympathy, empathy, or relived or remembered emotions. Although this is becoming a familiar refrain, future research that directly examines these hypotheses is needed. A set of questions that attempts to distinguish between these types of emotion, allowing for inter-correlations where theoretically supported, would be a useful tool in furthering our understanding in this area.

One way to improve our understanding of these five types of emotions and their inter-relation is to consider each in light of the two major motivations discussed above: enjoyment and appreciation.[4] The fresh emotions derived from one's inferences and understanding of story characters would appear best mated to an enjoyment motivation. Drawing our own minds into the world of the narrative and the minds of its characters is likely to result in a pleasurable loss of self, linked to narrative transportation (Gerrig, 1993). In contrast, relived and remembered emotions seem most likely to spur introspection, reflection and personal insight, and appear best suited for appreciation motivations. These preliminary hypotheses are easily amenable to empirical research and appear to form highly tractable questions for anyone interested in this area.

To summarise, here we have updated Oatley's (1994) taxonomy of the emotions of fiction. The first distinction made in this taxonomy is between aesthetic emotions that are achieved with a view of the whole from a certain aesthetic distance, and emotions that occur with entry into an imagined narrative world. Within the narrative world, we can experience two kinds of emotions derived from patterns of appraisal offered by the author. The first

---

[4] We thank a generous anonymous reviewer for this idea.

is fresh emotions dependent on our perception of a protagonist or character and his or her goals and mental state (i.e., emotions of sympathy, identification, empathy). The second are emotions derived from memories evoked by reading, and this can occur either as described by the Indian theory of *rasas*, where we bring the range of our remembered experience to bear on a text, or because the text has produced a particular resonance with a piece of personal autobiography, so that the reader relives emotions associated with it.

All of these emotions should be considered in the context of Frijda's (2007) laws of emotion, specifically his proposal that emotions are "elicited by events appraised as real" (p. 8).[5] In his discussion of this law, Frijda says "drama, novels, paintings—may have strong emotional impact while one is perfectly aware of their fictive nature" (p. 10). This happens, we propose, because the patterns that artists offer elicit sympathy and empathy for characters in situations that would elicit sympathy and empathy in real life. As Tan (2008) has pointed out, we are affected by certain emotion-eliciting patterns and when we encounter them we are indeed affected. Tan goes on to point out that fiction derives from play, which we enjoy precisely because of its emotions. So, in both play and fiction we enjoy the sequence of emotional experience and derive social benefit from the social practice that results. As to memories, when they are prompted they are real memories. Recent work has shown how our ability to make detailed imaginings of the future (another adaptational advantage) is closely linked to the detail with which we remember incidents from our past (Schacter, Addis, & Buckner, 2007; Spreng & Levine, 2006).

Measuring elicited emotions. Emotions elicited by narrative fiction can be measured using a wide variety of methods. These include psychophysiological means such as heart rate (Bar-Haim, Fox, VanMeenen, & Marshall, 2004), and neuroimaging techniques like electroencephalography (Nell,

1988) and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI; Berthoz, Armony, Blair, & Dolan, 2002). One shortcoming of these methods is that they require costly equipment. Here we describe some research using the much simpler, and less costly, approach of self-report. We hope that these studies will help to convince readers that the relation between emotions and literary fiction is a highly tractable question.

Self-probed retrospection is a self-report method used to monitor the emotions people experience as they read short stories. It is an adaptation of Larsen and Seilman's (1988) method in which people were asked to read a passage of text, and to mark the margin whenever a memory occurred. This was adapted to suit the purposes of emotion research, so that people were asked to write an E in the margin when an emotion occurred and an M in the margin when a memory occurred (Eng, 2002). Participants were then asked, after they had finished reading, to go back and report aspects of these emotions and memories. Readers name and rate the intensity of each emotion (E) after reading, describe the memory (M) that was most significant to them, and name and rate the intensity of any emotion associated with this memory. People often say that these memories were emotional (Eng, 2002).

A second way in which emotions have been monitored during reading with self-report is a before-and-after method. People are given a list of emotion words before they read a text and asked to rate the intensity of each emotion they are then experiencing. Then, after reading, the same list is given and they are again asked to indicate the intensity of each emotion currently experienced. Other methods that have been employed include asking people to sort cards with emotion words after they have read a story (e.g., Goetz, Sadoski, Olivarez, & Calero-Brockheimer, 1992), and asking people to say aloud what emotions they felt while reading (Cupchik et al., 1998b).

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the studies that have relied on self-probed

---

[5] We thank a generous anonymous reviewer for this idea.

retrospection and before-and-after ratings (Biason, 1994; Djikic, Oatley, Zoeterman, & Peterson, 2009a; Gholamain, 1998; Kerr, 2005; Nundy, 1996; Oatley, 2002). First, almost every reader (from high-school and university students to people in reading groups) has given evidence of emotions occurring in the course of reading. Second, the occurrence of emotions corresponds to points at which the writer presents particular appraisal patterns (objective correlatives) in the text. Third, different kinds of emotion occur while reading, and the range of these emotions is comparable to that of emotions encountered during everyday experience (Oatley & Duncan, 1994), though narrative emotions tend to be of less intensity. Fourth (as mentioned above) emotions occur both freshly during the course of reading and as aspects of memories evoked by the narrative.

Influence of emotions during reading. When emotions are evoked during reading they are likely to have an immediate influence on the reading process. The simplest outcome may be a cessation of reading, if the emotions evoked are not what are desired. This can occur regardless of valence; there are times when one is not in the mood for a happy story and also times when a sad story is not congruent with one's emotional goals. Emotions evoked by a narrative may also colour the interpretation of subsequent narrative events. Ambiguous situations may be seen in a manner congruent with the current emotional state. Having already evoked sadness in a reader, a writer need only describe a character looking off in the distance for the reader to infer a sense of forlornness, for example. That same scene, preceded by a different emotional cue, could be interpreted quite differently, as thoughtfulness for example. This is somewhat similar to the Kuleshov effect in film, whereby preceding shots provide an interpretative frame (at times emotional) for subsequent shots (cf. Mobbs et al., 2006).

A study by Nundy and Oatley (Nundy, 1996; see Oatley, 2002) illustrates a striking effect of how emotions can affect thinking. Participants read the short story "Sarah Cole" by Russell Banks. The narrator is a man who thought himself very handsome, and the story is about an affair with a woman whom he thought homely. The man ended the affair in a cruel way. People's emotions on reading the story were different, with a majority becoming either angry or sad. Readers were asked three interpretative questions about the story, and these responses were classified into forward chaining (reasoning forward from a premise towards conclusions) and backward chaining (starting with a conclusion and then giving reasons for it). People who became angry as they read the story were significantly more likely to reason about the questions by forward chaining, and those who became sad were more likely to reason by backward chaining. So, the two different emotions had characteristic and different cognitive effects. Anger prompts one to think forward from a wrong that has been done towards what to do about it. Sadness prompts one to think backward from a loss to how it came to be.

It has also been found that emotions can slow or increase the pace of reading depending upon the emotions elicited and characteristics of the reader (Cupchik, Leonard, Axelrad & Kalin, 1998a; László & Cupchik, 1995). Becoming deeply involved in characters and their emotions tends to slow reading, creating a deeper engagement with the text and thus a more elaborate simulation of the events depicted. In this way, the emotions evoked and experienced during reading can moderate psychological distance and also affect the impact of the text.

The emotions evoked by a piece of literary fiction will also impact the reader in ways consistent with previously researched implications of emotional arousal. A reader who has become anxious in reaction to reading a suspenseful thriller, for example, will exhibit the typical responses associated with anxiety such as heightened alertness. We would expect such a reader to startle more easily, for example, when the family cat knocks over a shaker of salt. Research on how emotion influences the mind during reading is severely lacking. In the absence of established work, some tentative hypotheses might be put forward. For example, it might be useful to

examine past work on how emotions influence those processes that seem related to reading, including directed attention, working memory, long-term memory, and autobiographical recall.

INFLUENCE OF EVOKED EMOTIONS AFTER THE READING EXPERIENCE

Alterations in cognitive processing. The emotions evoked by literary fiction also have an influence on our cognitive processing after the reading experience has ended. Novels can act as a powerful emotional prime and once an emotional state has been induced we would expect to see differences in cognitive processing associated with this new emotional state. Effects on cognition, perception, and action would be expected, in agreement with the wide range of influences demonstrated by emotion researchers (Izard, 2009; Oatley, Keltner, & Jenkins, 2006). At the moment, it is not clear whether the emotions primed by narrative fiction would alter cognitive processing in ways identical to other primes, or perhaps in slightly different ways.

It could be the case that novels and short stories act as particularly powerful emotional primes in the real world, perhaps more influential than those typically studied by emotion researchers. For one, the length of the dose provided by stories is typically far longer than the brief manipulations used in emotion research (e.g., short pieces of sad music or short videos). This extended exposure may mean that the effects of emotions evoked by narratives will last longer than the effects seen with briefer manipulations, or perhaps be more pronounced. Readers often speak of how a really good book left a feeling that lasted for days after finishing it. Aside from temporal dose, the deep simulation of experience that accompanies our engagement with literary narratives (Mar & Oatley, 2008; Oatley, 1999) would also predict more profound effects of evoked emotion compared to typical emotion primes. Employing narrative fiction as emotional primes would provide a more ecologically valid examination of how emotions operate in real-world settings. Sadness

does not typically arise in our lives as a result of listening to a snippet of Wagner played at half-speed. People do, however, often become sad after reading a particularly moving piece of literature or watching an emotional full-length feature film.

Transformations in personality. The emotions evoked by narrative fiction may not only alter the way we think, but may have more wide-ranging transformative influences. This idea has been around for some time, at least as far back as the writings of Iser (1978), who proposed a widely regarded framework for thinking about how fiction can have transformative influences on readers. In this section we consider evidence that the emotions evoked by reading a novel or short-story can influence personal transformation. Sabine and Sabine (1983) interviewed 1,843 library patrons as a part of the "Books that Made the Difference" project, and found that books were powerful instigators of self-change. Similarly, Ross (1999) found that of 194 individuals who read for pleasure, 60% found reading to be a personally transforming experience. This phenomenon has also been observed using experimental methods. In one study, people were asked to read either a short story (Chekhov's "The Lady with the Toy Dog") or a control text with the same content, length, complexity, and interest level, but lacking the artistic quality of Chekhov's story (Djikic et al., 2009a). People who read the short story experienced significantly greater change in personality than the control group and individuals in this group also reported being more emotionally moved. Further analyses indicated that their change in personality was mediated by the emotions evoked by the text. Emotion, therefore, was central to the experience of change in the ways in which they viewed themselves, that is to say in their personality.

This experiment supports the idea that feelings experienced while reading literature may have a transformative or self-modifying effect (Kuiken, Miall, & Sikora, 2004; Miall & Kuiken, 2002). It should be kept in mind, however, that the fluctuations in traits seen after reading a literary text may not result in long-lasting changes. As

Miall and Kuiken (1995, 2002) suggest, longer lasting changes perhaps occur mainly for readers engaged in deeply experienced readings of texts. Unfortunately, in the context of an experiment with volunteer participants, this type of deep engagement might be difficult to replicate. Although transformation through emotional engagement with literature is at the moment only a potential, it is a potential worth exploring.

The possibility that exposure to literature may induce self-change is particularly compelling if it could be of use to those who are habitually resistant to experiencing emotion, such as defensive individuals who avoid or reduce painful emotions (Paulhus, Fridhandler, & Hayes, 1997). In the experiment by Djikic and colleagues (2009a) described above, the evocation of emotions was particularly strong for individuals who were habitually avoidant in their attachment style, and who usually reported diminished emotionality (Djikic, Oatley, Zoeterman, & Peterson, 2009b). This ability of literature to move even those who are usually resistant to emotion may mean that literary narratives could provide a method for circumventing a person's natural defences (Dal Cin, Zanna, & Fong, 2004) and provide a useful tool for studying those with affective disorders (e.g., alexithymia).

Finally, there is evidence to suggest that writers themselves explore their own emotion in their writing, thus encoding the process of emotional exploration that is explored, in turn, by their readers. When interviews of nine award-winning writers of fiction were compared to those conducted with nine award-winning physicists, a greater use of emotion words (and negative emotion words in particular) was found among writers (Djikic, Oatley, & Peterson, 2006). The result implies a greater preoccupation with emotion among writers than among physicists, and this focus on emotional issues is perhaps passed on to readers. This result connects with the large body of work initiated by Pennebaker (e.g., 1997), in which it has been found that writing about emotionally significant events in one's life can produce therapeutic changes (see Frattaroli, 2006, for a meta-analysis).[6]

CONCLUSIONS

Emotions are central to the experience of reading literary fiction, not just during reading but also before and after reading. Our review of the empirical research on this topic has hopefully provided some indication of the wealth of fascinating issues that underlie the interplay between emotions and narrative fiction, while also highlighting some key areas that could use further investigation. Researchers should begin to examine whether many of the interesting effects found for film and television also hold true for literary fiction. Emotion researchers, similarly, would benefit from incorporating literary fiction into their designs as these stories may provide more powerful and more ecologically valid methods for eliciting emotions. Lastly, studies of reading and of emotion tend to examine short-term outcomes; it is time to begin looking at whether profound and long-lasting changes can occur after engagement with meaningful narrative fiction.

REFERENCES

Aristotle. (1970). *Poetics* (G. E. Else, Trans.). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. (Original work c. 330 BCE)

Bar-Haim, Y., Fox, N. A., VanMeenen, K. M., & Marshall, P. J. (2004). Children's narratives and patterns of cardiac reactivity. *Developmental Psychobiology*, *44*, 238–249.

Bartsch, A., Mangold, R., Viehoff, R., & Vorderer, P. (2006). Emotional gratifications during media use:

---

[6] We thank a generous anonymous reviewer for this idea.

An integrative approach. *Communications*, *31*, 261–278.

Bartsch, A., Vorderer, P., Mangold, R., & Viehoff, R. (2008). Appraisal of emotions in media use: Toward a process model of meta-emotions and emotion regulation. *Media Psychology*, *11*, 7–27.

Berthoz, S., Armony, J. L., Blair, R. J. R., & Dolan, R. J. (2002). An fMRI study of intentional and unintentional (embarrassing) violations of social norms. *Brain*, 1696–1708.

Biason, A. (1994). *Adolescents' personal responses to reading literature*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto.

Braun, I. K., & Cupchik, G. C. (2001). Phenomenological and quantitative analyses of absorption in literary passages. *Empirical Studies of the Arts*, *19*, 85–109.

Bryant, J., & Zillmann, D. (1984). Using television to alleviate boredom and stress: Selective exposure as a function of induced excitational states. *Journal of Broadcasting*, *28*, 1–20.

Cohen, J. (2003). Parasocial breakups: Measuring individual differences in responses to the dissolution of parasocial relationships. *Mass Communication & Society*, *6*(2), 191–202.

Cupchik, G. C. (2002). The evolution of psychical distance as an aesthetic concept. *Culture and Psychology*, *8*, 155–187.

Cupchik, G. C., Leonard, G., Axelrad, E., & Kalin, J. D. (1998a). The landscape of emotion in literary encounters. *Cognition and Emotion*, *12*, 825–847.

Cupchik, G. C., Oatley, K., & Vorderer, P. (1998b). Emotional effects of reading excerpts from short stories by James Joyce. *Poetics*, *25*, 363–377.

Dal Cin, S., Zanna, M. P., & Fong, G. T. (2004). Narrative persuasion and overcoming resistance. In E. S. Knowles & J. A. Linn (Eds.), *Resistance and persuasion* (pp. 175–191). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

de Vignemont, F., & Singer, T. (2006). The empathetic brain: How, when, and why. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, *10*, 435–441.

Derrick, J. L., Gabriel, S., & Hugenberg, K. (2009). Social surrogacy: How favored television programs provide the experience of belonging. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *45*, 352–362.

Diengott, N. (2004). Some problems with the concept of the narrator in Bortolussi and Dixon's psychonarratology. *Narrative*, *12*, 306–316.

Dixon, P., & Bortolussi, M. (2004). Methods and evidence in psychonarratology and the theory of the narrator: Reply to Diengott. *Narrative*, *12*, 317–325.

Djikic, M., Oatley, K., & Peterson, J. (2006). The bitter-sweet labor of emoting: The linguistic comparison of writers and physicists. *Creativity Research Journal*, *18*, 191–197.

Djikic, M., Oatley, K., Zoeterman, S., & Peterson, J. (2009a). On being moved by art: How reading fiction transforms the self. *Creativity Research Journal*, *21*, 24–29.

Djikic, M., Oatley, K., Zoeterman, S., & Peterson, J. (2009b). Defenceless against art? Impact of reading fiction on emotion change in avoidantly attached individuals. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *43*, 14–17.

Eliot, T. S. (1953). Hamlet. In J. Hayward (Ed.), *T. S. Eliot: Selected prose* (pp. 104–109). Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.

Eng, A. (2002). *Learning and processing non-fiction genre*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto.

Epley, N., Waytz, A., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2007). On seeing human: A three-factor theory of anthropomorphism. *Psychological Review*, *114*, 864–886.

Epstein, R. (2004). Consciousness, art, and the brain: Lessons from Marcel Proust. *Consciousness and Cognition*, *13*, 213–240.

Eyal, K., & Cohen, J. (2006). When good friends say goodbye: A parasocial breakup study. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, *50*, 502–523.

Frattaroli, J. (2006). Experimental disclosure and its moderators: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, *132*, 823–865.

Frijda, N. H. (2007). *The laws of emotion*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Gardner, W. L., & Knowles, M. L. (2008). Love makes you real: Favorite television characters are perceived as "real" in a social facilitation paradigm. *Social Cognition*, *26*, 156–168.

Gholamain, M. (1998). *The attachment and personality dynamics of reader response*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto.

Goetz, S., Sadoski, M., Olivarez, A., & Calero-Brockheimer, A. (1992). The structure of emotional response in reading a literary text: Quantitative and qualitative analyses. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *27*, 360–372.

Green, M. C., Kass, S., Carrey, J., Herzig, B., Feeney, R., & Sabini, J. (2008). Transportation across

media: Repeated exposure to text and film. *Media Psychology*, *11*, 512–39.

Ingalls, D. H. H., Masson, J. M., & Patwardhan, M. V. (1990). *The Dhvanyaloka of Anandavardhana with the Locana of Abhinavagupta*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Iser, W. (1978). *The act of reading: A theory of aesthetic response*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Izard, C. E. (2009). Emotion theory and research: Highlights, unanswered questions, and emerging issues. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *60*, 1–25.

Jonason, P. K., Webster, G. D., & Lindsey, A. E. (2008). Solutions to the problem of diminished social interaction. *Evolutionary Psychology*, *6*, 637–651.

Jung, C. G. (1981). *The archetypes and the collective unconscious* (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Originally published 1954)

Keen, S. (2006). A theory of narrative empathy. *Narrative*, *14*, 207–236.

Kerr, A. (2005). *Towards a therapeutics of reading literature: The influence of aesthetic distance and attachment*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation., University of Toronto.

Knobloch, S., & Zillmann, D. (2002). Mood management via the digital jukebox. *Journal of Communication*, *52*, 361–366.

Knobloch-Westerwick, S., & Alter, S. (2006). Mood adjustment to social situations through mass media use: How men ruminate and women dissipate angry moods. *Human Communication Research*, *32*, 58–73.

Kuiken, D., Miall, D. S., & Sikora, S. (2004). Forms of self-implication in literary reading. *Poetics Today*, *25*, 171–203.

Larsen, S. F., & Seilman, U. (1988). Personal meanings while reading literature. *Text*, *8*, 411–429.

László, J., & Cupchik, G. C. (1995). The role of affective processes in reading time and time experience during literary experience. *Empirical Studies of the Arts*, *13*, 25–37.

MacDowell, K. A., & Mandler, G. (1989). Construction of emotion: Discrepancy, arousal, and mood. *Motivation and Emotion*, *13*, 105–124.

Mar, R. A., & Oatley, K. (2008). The function of fiction is the abstraction and simulation of social experience. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *3*, 173–192.

Mar, R. A., Oatley, K., & Peterson, J. B. (2009). Exploring the link between reading fiction and

empathy: Ruling out individual differences and examining outcomes. *Communications*, *34*, 407–428.

Mares, M.-L., Oliver, M. B., & Cantor, J. (2008). Age differences in adults' emotional motivations for exposure to films. *Media Psychology*, *11*, 488–511.

Mayer, J. D., & Gaschke, Y. N. (1988). The experience and meta-experience of mood. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *55*, 102–111.

Miall, D. S., & Kuiken, D. (1995). Aspects of literary response: A new questionnaire. *Research in the Teaching of English*, *29*, 37–58.

Miall, D. S., & Kuiken, D. (2002). A feeling for fiction: Becoming what we behold. *Poetics*, *30*, 221–241.

Mobbs, D., Weiskopf, N., Lau, H. C., Featherstone, E., Dolan, R. J., & Frith, C. D. (2006). The Kuleshov effect: The influence of contextual framing on emotional attributions. *Social, Cognitive, and Affective Neuroscience*, *1*, 95–106.

Nell, V. (1988). *Lost in a book: The psychology of reading for pleasure*. Newhaven, CT: Yale University Press.

Nundy, S. (1996). *Effects of emotion on human inference*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto.

Oatley, K. (1994). A taxonomy of the emotions of literary response and a theory of identification in fictional narrative. *Poetics*, *23*, 53–74.

Oatley, K. (1999). Why fiction may be twice as true as fact: Fiction as cognitive and emotional simulation. *Review of General Psychology*, *3*, 101–117.

Oatley, K. (2002). Emotions and the story worlds of fiction. In M. C. Green, J. J. Strange, & T. C. Brock (Eds.), *Narrative impact: Social and cognitive foundations* (pp. 39–69). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Oatley, K. (2004). *Emotions: A brief history*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Oatley, K. (2009). Communications to self and others: Emotional experience and its skills. *Emotion Review*, *1*, 206–213.

Oatley, K., & Duncan, E. (1994). The experience of emotions in everyday life. *Cognition and Emotion*, *8*, 369–381.

Oatley, K., & Gholamain, M. (1997). Emotions and identification: Connections between readers and fiction. In M. Hjort & S. Laver (Eds.), *Emotion and the arts* (pp. 163–281). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Oatley, K., Keltner, D., & Jenkins, J. M. (2006). *Understanding emotions* (2nd ed.). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Oliver, M. B. (1993). Exploring the paradox of the enjoyment of sad films. *Human Communication Research*, *19*, 315–342.

Oliver, M. B. (2003). Mood management and selective exposure. In J. Bryant, D. Roskos-Ewoldsen, & J. Cantor (Eds.), *Communication and emotions: Essays in honor of Dolf Zillmann* (pp. 85–106). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Oliver, M. B. (2008). Tender affective states as predictors of entertainment preference. *Journal of Communication*, *58*, 40–61.

Oliver, M. B., Weaver, J. B., III, & Sargent, S. L. (2000). An examination of factors related to sex differences in enjoyment of sad films. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, *44*, 282–300.

Paulhus, D. L., Fridhandler, B., & Hayes, S. (1997). Psychological defense: Contemporary theory and research. In R. Hogan, J. A. Johnson, & S. R. Briggs (Eds.), *Handbook of personality psychology* (pp. 543–579). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Pennebaker, J. W. (1997). Writing about emotional experiences as a therapeutic process. *Psychological Science*, *8*, 162–166.

Proust, M. (1987). *À la recherche du temps perdu I: Du côté de chez Swann*. Paris, France: Gallimard. (Originally published 1913)

Ross, C. S. (1999). Finding without seeking: The information encounter in the context of reading for pleasure. *Information Processing and Management*, *35*, 783–799.

Sabine, G., & Sabine, P. (1983). *Books that made the difference: What people told us*. Hamden, CT: Library Professional Publications.

Schacter, D., Addis, D. R., & Buckner, R. L. (2007). Remembering the past to imagine the future: The prospective brain. *Nature Reviews: Neuroscience*, *8*, 657–661.

Scheff, T. J. (1979). *Catharsis in healing, ritual, and drama*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Schramm, H., & Wirth, W. (2008). A case for an integrative view on affect regulation through media usage. *Communications*, *33*, 27–46.

Shakespeare, W. (2000). *Romeo and Juliet*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. (Originally published 1599)

Spreng, R. N., & Levine, B. (2006). The temporal distribution of past and future autobiographical events across the lifespan. *Memory & Cognition*, *34*, 1644–1651.

Tan, E. (2008). Entertainment is emotion: The functional architecture of the entertainment experience. *Media Psychology*, *11*, 28–51.

Tan, E. S.-H. (1994). Film-induced affect as a witness emotion. *Poetics*, *23*, 7–32.

Trabasso, T., & Chung, J. (2004, January). *Empathy: Tracking characters and monitoring their concerns in film*. Paper presented at the Winter Text Conference, Jackson Hole, WY.

Turner, S. A., & Silvia, P. J. (2006). Must interesting things be pleasant? A test of competing appraisal structures. *Emotion*, *6*, 670–674.

van der Kolk, B. A., & Fisler, R. (1995). Dissociation and the fragmentary nature of traumatic memories: Overview and exploratory study. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, *8*, 505–25.

Vorderer, P., & Ritterfeld, U. (2009). Digital games. In R. L. Nabi & M. B Oliver (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of media processes and effects* (pp. 455–468). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Vorderer, P., Steen, F. F., & Chan, E. (2006). Motivation. In J. Bryant & P. Vorderer (Eds.), *The psychology of entertainment* (pp. 3–17). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Webster, D. M., & Kruglanski, A. W. (1994). Individual differences in need for cognitive closure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *67*, 1049–1062.

Wirth, W. (2006). Involvement. In J. Bryant & P. Vorderer (Eds.), *The psychology of entertainment* (pp. 199–213). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Zillmann, D. (1988). Mood management through communication choices. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *31*, 327–340.

Zillmann, D. (1991). Empathy: Affect from bearing witness to the emotions of others. In J. Bryant & D. Zillmann (Eds.), *Responding to the screen. Reception and reaction processes* (pp. 135–168). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Zillmann, D. (1998). The psychology of the appeal of portrayals of violence. In J. H. Goldstein (Ed.), *Why we watch: The attractions of violent entertainment* (pp. 179–211). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Zillmann, D., Hezel, R. T., & Medoff, N. J. (1980). The effect of affective states on selective exposure to televised entertainment fare. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *10*, 323–339.