

British Broadcasting Corporation). But Freddie, unlike Currie, has revealed something ethically unattractive about himself: he fails to be carried along by the real-life narrative not because he is invited to respond emotionally in a way that he considers to be ethically inappropriate – in a way that goes against his ethical values; rather, he fails to be carried along because, selfishly, he does not want to be drawn into action. One might put it like this: merely *thinking* that his cousin needs help puts less psychological pressure on Freddie to help than if he were genuinely emotionally engaged. The thing about Freddie is not only that he does not really care about his cousin; he does not really care about Mark Hebden's friends either – he only *pretends* to care, indulging himself in an overly sentimental way, because he knows that they are not real-life characters, so there is no risk of being drawn into action.

But remember the point that the connection to action is not *necessarily* less direct where fiction is concerned than it is in comparable real-life narratives: fictional and real-life narratives could have the same sort of content *and* the same sort of connection to action. For example, we might resist entering very far into the emotional responses encouraged by Leni Riefenstahl in *The Triumph of the Will*, her documentary of the 1934 Nuremberg rally; but I dare say we would be just about equally resistant to a fictional movie, set roughly in the present day, involving the same sort of people as Hitler and his followers, and inviting the same sort of response as Riefenstahl did to Hitler. In both these cases, there is clearly a direct connection between emotional response and action, for the characters portrayed could so easily have their counterparts in present day real life. In contrast, we might not resist being carried along by a narrative that sought to get us to see that there was something glorious about Aztec human sacrifice, in spite of our considering human sacrifice to be terrible, and this would be equally the case whether the narrative was a work of fiction set in those times or a historical account of what actually happened. In both these non-actual narratives, fictional and real life, the connection to action is, one hopes, remote: a real-life world, with me in it, containing racist National Socialists is a much closer one than a world containing organized rituals of human sacrifice.

Thus, by considering three aspects of our emotional responses to narratives of non-actual events – the connection to belief and to action, our willingness to be emotionally carried along by the narrative, and our emotional resistance – I hope to have bolstered my thesis, with which I began this chapter, that the notion of narrative, and the narrator's external perspective that is involved in narrative, have a centrally important explanatory role.

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IN SEARCH OF A NARRATIVE

Matthew Kieran

What's involved in the appreciation of narrative artworks? How do we come to understand characters, what they are thinking, feeling, what their underlying attitudes are, what the nature of their character is? In virtue of what do we come to care about them? In trying to address these questions I will go some way toward articulating a conception of narrative understanding. Part of the thrust of the argument is negative since it aims to show that imagination, construed in terms of simulation, cannot be as central as some recent authors have suggested. Through showing how and why this is so, we will arrive at a more complex grasp of the nature of narrative appreciation. But I will also go on to give a more positive characterization of the ways in which we arrive at a deep and full understanding of fictional characters in artistic narratives. In seeking to distinguish and clarify some of the ways we do so I will discuss notions of narrative understanding, character, empathy, sympathy, imaginativeness and expressive qualities.

Expressivity

In relation to narrative appreciation it has been claimed that simulation, which involves taking on pretended or simulated beliefs, is fundamental (Currie 1995a; Feagin 1996; Oatley and Gholamain 1997). The claims made for simulation theory are most clearly articulated by Gregory Currie who holds that simulation is central to both working out what is fictionally the case, primarily with respect to a character's experience, and with regard to how and why we care about and affectively respond to fictional characters (Currie 1995a: 153–4). Of course there are many cases where we do not use simulation, since we are told what state a character is in or the type of character, and we can understand our responses to those passages without taking into account simulation (Carroll 1998a). Furthermore it seems unproblematic to grant that some degree of narrative understanding is required for simulating a character or the sort of beliefs and feelings a character is represented as having. So I take the simulation thesis really to be the more nuanced claim that:

- (1) When I want to really understand the nature of a character's experience and their attitude toward their own experience (what their character is really like),

then I need to simulate. A deep understanding of fictional characters requires simulation, though a shallow understanding of them need not.

- (2) In order to capture the full nature of our affective responses to a narrative, we must understand the simulation process that we go through as readers – because that simulation process is central to our acquiring an understanding of characters.

Now we are often told much about a character or they are represented as being certain types of people. With respect to situations, characters and allusions we have a stock of schemas, often based on certain prototypes, which enables us to recognize certain states, characteristics and make assumptions about various interrelations therein (Carroll 1998a). There is a fair amount of psychological evidence to support the claim that we standardly employ prototypes, schemas and general categorization in making sense of the states people are in and attributing certain characteristics to them (Farr and Moscovici 1984; Fiske and Taylor 1984). Thus rhetorical devices, drawing the readers attention to particular features of the character, their behavior and the use of both direct and indirect discourse enables us to identify characters as being certain types of people. The representation of actions, facial expressions, gestures, body language and tone of voice characteristic of certain states are all used in ways that, given what we discern about the context, give rise to a recognition of the state the fictional character is in. Importantly such characterization is often used to help the reader identify more fundamental features of a fictional person's character. For example, when the reader first encounters the Steele sisters in Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* they are represented as paying an overly felicitous attention to Lady Middleton's spoilt children. Their endurance and excessive affection are clearly marks of fundamental features of their character: prudential self-interest allied with a craven willingness to be sycophantic. Furthermore, the imagery and allusions deployed by an author may intimate to the reader what type of person they should recognize the fictional character to be. In *Anna Karenina* Vronsky is characterized as a splendid animal, much given to affected physicality and the self-admiration of his physical features. Thus we are already given a fair idea of the kind of person Vronsky is, the kind of charm he possesses, the ways in which he loves athletic games, his regiment and St Petersburg society. For, amongst other things, he is the kind of narcissistic person who loves things, activities and people by virtue of the way they reflect his own self-adoration.

Even if we assume claims (1) and (2) are perfectly true there is a question to be asked about how important they are. Most fiction bestsellers can be read without having to simulate much because the authors often do not set up situations or characters in such a way that simulation would be profitable or interesting enough. Simulation hardly seems to offer much in relation to works such as *Harry Potter* or the works of Jeffrey Archer. So even if the forementioned claims are right and simulation is required for a deep understanding of characters in say the novels of Henry James, for most narrative reading simulation is probably quite worthless.

Furthermore, to see why these claims cannot be right consider the opening to Dickens' *Hard Times*:

"Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, Sir!"

The scene was a plain, bare monotonous vault of a schoolroom, and the speaker's square forefinger emphasized his observations by underscoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster's sleeve. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for its base, while his eyes found commodious cellarage in two dark caves, overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's mouth; which was wide, thin, and hard set. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's voice, which was inflexible, dry and dictatorial. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's hair, which bristled on the skirts of his bald head, a plantation of firs to keep the wind from its shining surface, all covered with knobs, like the crust of a plum pie, as if the head had scarcely warehouse-room for the hard facts stored inside. The speaker's obstinate carriage, square coat, square legs, square shoulders – nay, his very neckcloth, trained to take him by the throat with an unaccommodating grasp, like a stubborn fact, as it was – all helped the emphasis.

"In this life, we want nothing but Facts, Sir; nothing but Facts!"

The speaker, and the schoolmaster, and the third grown person present, all backed a little, and swept with their eyes the inclined plane of little vessels then and there arranged in order, ready to have imperial gallons of facts poured into them until they were full to the brim.

Our understanding of Gradgrind, arrived at via the prescribed imaginings, is not a function of imagining myself to be in the schoolmaster's position, imagining myself to be him in what I imagine or indeed imagining myself to be anyone at all. So even if what is going on here is a case of imagining myself to be in the fictional world it does not seem that it is or must be a case of simulating any of the characters, whether it be the schoolmaster or one of the onlookers, since I may imagine that I am peripherally observing the scene. Furthermore, it does not seem as if any form of imagining concerning myself is prescribed or required – I may just imagine that the scene unfolds as it is characterized. In either case no fictional character is being simulated in any way. It might be objected that even where we are just imagining the scene nonetheless we are simulating – we are not imagining the scene from the perspective of one of the fictional characters but from that of the implied narrator. So centrally imagining a character is not notably

required to grasp their experience and we need not advert to the simulation of such a narrator as opposed to recognizing the state Gradgrind is represented as being in and what his putative attitudes are. Thus central imagining, whether of a fictional character or narrator, is just not required to both grasp and affectively respond to the character of Gradgrind as portrayed. Furthermore, and just as crucially, I need not imagine “being someone” in the weak sense of just “taking on” the sorts of thoughts and responses Gradgrind is portrayed as having in order to understand him.

What information is unavailable to us without simulation here? Here’s a case where we can arrive at a deep understanding of a character. When I read the opening passage of *Hard Times* I pick up on Gradgrind’s harsh, brutal and emphatic tone, his austere, rigidified, overly rationalistic conception of education and his underlying attitude of commercialism. In part apprehending the way Gradgrind is portrayed as being expressive of these attitudes is a function of the other possible ways in which Gradgrind could have been portrayed. His tone of voice could have been represented as being tentative, wavering and mournful. He could have been represented as saying that it was unfortunate that the school system required the drumming in of facts. He could even have been represented as being somewhat sanguine about this form of education. Whereas what Gradgrind does is identify himself wholeheartedly with the application of the conception of education represented. Furthermore had the manner of Gradgrind’s behavior been different, though the same beliefs and desires might have been expressed, we would have a different understanding of him. So what Gradgrind’s actions are expressive of is partly a function of what other actions and manner of so doing he could have been represented as enacting but did not. If he thought this form of education inhuman or harmful to the children then his tone and choice of words would not have been eulogistic but sorrowful. If he had thought that “possession of facts” were by no means what was required for life he would have been derogatory or perhaps even abusive of the school before him. By contrast if he were merely sanguine about the state of affairs he might merely have shrugged the scene off and not bothered to comment on it. Given the conventional artistic devices used, and the expressive tone and tenor of the representation, I come to see that Gradgrind is proud of the school system, its application, underlying ideals and identifies wholeheartedly with a broadly utilitarian attitude toward life and others. Already we have a deep and sophisticated grasp of Gradgrind. But in no way was simulation required to arrive at such an understanding. I’m not simulating Gradgrind or an observer or a narrator or even just simulating holding the kind of thoughts Gradgrind is represented as having. In the very first few paragraphs we feel as if we have got into Gradgrind’s mind and character very deeply indeed without any simulation.

No doubt someone might be tempted to claim that we still rely on simulation here in the following way. Even in cases where the author writes “Gradgrind is proud” or the expressive tone and tenor of the characterization suggests this, if we had not done some appropriate and quite specific simulating in the past we would not understand the author. So though there may be no present simulating, past

simulation is required. To understand “is proud” we have to simulate it. So later on when we encounter the term or its associated expressive aspects we do not have to simulate just because we already have some simulation-based understanding to hand. But not only does the simulation account now rest on speculative child psychology but, more importantly, it is uninteresting. For the interesting and robust claim was that the process of simulating the beliefs, desires and attitudes of a character or, more minimally, simulating the same sort of beliefs, desires and attitudes that such a character has, was required in engaging with the work in order to understand and appreciate the narrative.

Blocking simulation and the role of memory

At least in certain kinds of cases it is important not to simulate. For simulating a character’s states may not only be unnecessary but may actively distort our understanding of them. One might be tempted here, as an obvious example, to cite instances where we are prescribed to imagine that a character is subconsciously motivated or self-deceived. It is common in narratives for fictional characters to be mistaken about their own mental states, dispositions and character whereas it may be clear to the reader exactly what is motivating the character and why. But, one might think, were one simulating the character this would not be the case. Why? Because a reader’s successful simulation of a character would mimic the structure of the unconscious motivation or self-deception and the reader would thus arrive at the same mistaken self-understanding that the fictional character has. But this is standardly not the case precisely because the reader appreciates the character in ways they themselves do not – and this cannot be a function of simulating them.

Now the example here will not quite do the work. For, it may be replied, this is to confuse what is being simulated with the object of the simulation. Consider, for example, Olivier’s famous portrayal of Hamlet. Hamlet, who for the sake of argument is the object of our simulation, is portrayed as being unconsciously motivated for Freudian reasons. Of course, if we were seeking to simulate that which Hamlet is conscious of, in terms of his thoughts and desires, we would not simulate the darker Freudian drives Hamlet is portrayed as having. But precisely because Hamlet is portrayed in a manner that suggests an overweening dependence on his mother, an overly felicitous attention to her every state and whim, apparently jealous overreactions to her sexual affections placed elsewhere and a sensual attention to the look and feel of her, the performance prescribes us to imagine that he is so unconsciously motivated. And, the thought goes, just as we can make sense of someone acting out the part of someone so unconsciously motivated so we too can simulate such unconscious motivation. And a veridical simulation would indeed do just that. The difference lies not in what is being simulated and the state the fictional character is portrayed as being in but, rather, the asymmetry between what we are aware of informationally regarding what gets factored into the simulation and what, fictionally, Hamlet is aware of as shaping his beliefs and desires.

Notice, first, that the reply relies on us already having grasped much about the character, including that they are self-deceived in certain ways, so it is far from clear that simulation is required to understand the character rather than attention to the expressive aspects of the work and performance. Second, despite the simulationist reply, if I am too successful in simulating the states of characters represented then I may not be in an appropriate position to discern their important features.

The parallel with acting here may be instructive. I once heard recounted the following tale: Dustin Hoffman and Laurence Olivier were acting together on *Marathon Man* and Olivier was beginning to grow impatient with Hoffman continually delaying shooting because he felt he could not quite get “inside” the skin of his character. After one interminable delay Olivier finally asked Hoffman what his problem was and Hoffman duly replied that he could not “feel” what the character was supposed to be feeling. To which Olivier rather acidly replied “Well, my dear boy, you could always try acting.” The sharp point of the barb is that what is crucial in acting concerns whether or not the manner of acting is appropriately expressive of certain states and cognitive-affective attitudes. And not only need this not but often had better not involve simulation.

Simulating Hamlet’s states may preclude the actor from acting – Daniel Day Lewis’s famous walk out halfway through a performance of Hamlet followed by his absconding from the production as a whole might be a salutary lesson here. For Day Lewis, renowned for his emphasis on method acting, apparently could not cope with playing Hamlet precisely because it paralyzed his capacity to perform the play. Less dramatically, simulations of the states of dramatic characters would often preclude actors from performing as they are required to in order to convey or express the characters’ thoughts and feelings. Just consider, for example, how common it is for characters represented as being in a state of uncontrollable grief to articulate in complex verbal form the nature of their grief, enunciated clearly, with rhetorical repetition of key words for emphasis. Yet uncontrollable grief (and presumably any veridical simulation thereof) is usually manifested in sobbing and wailing that muffles speech and paralyzes complex verbal thought in the face of sheer horror at the loss of whatever or whomever is being mourned – it is uncontrollable. In these kinds of cases simulation is not merely unnecessary but serves to preclude the appropriate dramatic expression of the characters’ states and attitudes required by the play. Now just as an actor’s simulation of the state of a dramatic character may preclude them from enacting the requisite expressive aspects of their performance, so too the simulation of a character by a reader may preclude them from being able to discern features that are crucial to their understanding of the character and their situation. If one were to simulate certain states of characters, such as blind terror, utter subsumption of self in sexual ecstasy, sheer panic, uncontrollable grief, blind anger or all consuming fury, then presumably it would be very difficult indeed if not nigh impossible to switch attention to other features of the narrative. For the point about such states is precisely that they are supposed to be all consuming and uncontrollable.

Hence in such cases simulating the particular character’s experience is neither required, since one can grasp the characteristics of such states without simulation, nor sufficient for understanding the character since the reader would then be blocked from attending to other crucial expressive aspects of the text.

Perhaps this is to overstate the case somewhat. After all the simulationist could acknowledge that if one were to spend the whole time simulating such states then one would get nowhere. But surely the point is that to really understand the rage or grief of a character some simulation has to be undergone but this is consistent with my being able to read on with a vivid, tangible sense of the relevant state. So I start to feel something akin to rage or grief building up in me, identifying the states ostensibly, and am thereby reminded as to what states in that locale really are like without thereby delving too deeply into them. Now I know the types of feelings involved and what the character is feeling since I’ve just been subject to something like it myself. If I had not simulated then I would not understand the depth or true nature of the state the character is in. So simulation here may be required only to “tease” oneself with such emotions or ones in their locale and then read on with the vivid memory of them at hand. But without the vivid memory all I’d have is a very shallow understanding indeed. But if this is the response I do not see what the appeal of simulation is here. First, the claim has been weakened from simulation of the sort of states the character is subject to being required, to the simulation of states that are in the same sort of locale or region. Thus simulation of the same sort of state is not now required to ostensibly identify it. Second, and more significant, simulation is not required to do this. Indeed more often surely we advert to memory. In the case of familiar emotions we just remember what they are like – I might recall the feeling of betrayal say in which case I am not simulating an emotion but recalling it. In the case of unfamiliar emotions we grasp the contours of the state from the description and the way in which it is thus relatable to those emotions we are familiar with and have been subject to.

Character traits

We often apprehend the character or personality traits of fictional characters in what we imagine but it would be odd to think these are simulated. The logic of character traits is not susceptible to simulation. For character traits as such are not experienced since, minimally, they are dispositions to act in certain ways. Now it could be objected that character traits can be simulated since though they are dispositions, they are dispositions to have certain emotions or respond emotionally in certain ways. But this cannot be right. At best one can simulate emotional states consistent with certain character traits, but then there are many emotions consistent with a particular trait, and any given emotional state is consistent with many character traits. So we need to say more about the relations between traits and emotional states.

First, not all character traits are even in the first instance reducible to the disposition to feel certain emotions. A considerate person is one who is disposed to take care to register and treat as important the feelings, thoughts, needs and

desires of others. Such a disposition does not connect to or have any internal connection to any particular emotional state. Someone can be considerate without feeling any particular way about the state of affairs or person their attention is directed toward. And clearly one can be considerate whether one feels sad, angry, sanguine, resentful or a whole host of other emotional states. Second, even those character traits that look as if they are amenable to being treated as temperaments cannot be so characterized. Pride, for example, looks as if it is a disposition to feel self-satisfied. But being disposed to feel self-satisfied is not the same kind of thing as pride. One can, after all, be self-satisfied without being proud in any way. Pride, rather, is constituted by a tendency to overestimate or over value the nature of one's achievements or character. And one can be proud without feeling self-satisfied, be proud whilst yet feeling unhappy at what one has failed to achieve or proud without any concomitant affective feeling whatsoever. Character traits are, minimally, internalized dispositions to act, respond or apprehend in cognitive-affective terms in accordance with a regulative principle. From the third-person perspective the character trait of pride may be captured in terms of someone who always overrates their thoughts, actions and achievements. The content of the injunction from the character's viewpoint, which is internalized and regulates a proud man's thoughts, actions and attitudes, might then be captured by something like the principle "always value highly your character and achievements". And the internalized disposition to regulate oneself thus cannot be simulated. One can only come to the appropriate judgments concerning what traits a character possesses, and their particular nature, by coming to grasp certain narrative relations that obtain as their character is shown to develop.

Consider, for example, Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Thematically the book develops from a scenario where both Elizabeth and Darcy are proud in different respects and are prejudiced against each other as a result. Their characters develop from the various injuries to their pride and the subsequent insight afforded them, ultimately leading to the restoration of a less partial pride to each other. From what we are told about Darcy, his behavior and manner of expression we learn that Darcy possesses highly idealized standards of propriety and has received unqualified approval and admiration from his parents. Hence we come to see his pride. But as the story develops we discern that his pride is both narcissistic and insecure. His defensive manner, his habit of scorning others and solicitations of praise suggest the particular nature of his pride. Hence it is intelligible just why he should both assume Elizabeth would admire him as all others apparently do and why it is a severe blow to him that he should be rebuffed. Only by coming to see his behavior as Elizabeth has viewed it does he come to the self-realization that he has failed to live up to his high ideals and only when he reshapes himself accordingly and wins her approval does his pride come to be better founded. Simulation is neither necessary nor sufficient for grasping the fundamental traits of Darcy's character, since traits cannot themselves be simulated, and yet understanding his traits is crucial to our grasp of particular episodes, his character development and the thematic development of the novel.

Narrative appreciation

How do we arrive at narrative understanding then? In a molecular and symbiotic way that makes use of many of the features I've adverted to. First of all we are guided by what states the work explicitly tells us a character is in, the type he is identified as being and what we are prescribed to imagine about them. In imagining a character's behavior, their facial expressions, gestures, intonation we come to an initial judgment. For example, that Gradgrind is feeling bullish or that Othello is horrified. Any deeper understanding requires a grasp of what the objects of their cognitive-affective thoughts, feelings and attitudes are and the ways in which they think of and respond to them. There are many ways in which a work can do this but we should at least consider a few.

A work may prescribe us to imagine a character in terms of certain expressive qualities we relate to concepts we already possess. For example, we know that people are animals, and as such are partly driven by animalistic drives and appetites, but this is not always at the forefront of our apprehension of people or characters. An author may seek to make this vivid in the apprehension of a character's behavior, as animalistic, in order to give us a deeper understanding of the base drives or vulgar aspects that dominate him. In portraying the behavior of a character as bestial, say, we may be prescribed to imagine him as being akin to a leader of a pack of dogs on the prowl, to imagine his glances as wolverine, to imagine the deference of others in terms of the recognition of a pack leader and so on.

Second, a work may seek to extend or modify our initial apprehension of the states of a character. For example, as the narrative structure of *Othello* progresses I come to see Othello's reactions in certain situations as being crucially inter-related. I see his slowness to anger, his romantic and trusting nature, his horror at Iago's initial speculations, I see his increasing agitation as being related to a personal sense of insecurity that Iago cultivates and exploits and as I come to see how he descends into jealousy proper I come to understand the interrelations therein that explain the highly noble nature of both his jealousy and his actions. Hence it is a great tragedy.

Our narrative understanding can also become increasingly refined by coming to apprehend expressive qualities in terms of newly acquired concepts or ever finer distinctions amongst concepts we possess. For example, we imagine Darcy's reaction to Elizabeth's rebuff as one of anger but are only later struck by the particular kind of anger involved and what it stems from – the way in which his sullen pout, glowering facial expression, arms crossed and body deliberately turned away are expressive of a petulant anger, which is the mark of injured pride.

Our narrative understanding of a character can be further deepened by the sudden apprehension of new connections between and interrelations amongst expressive features. Austen, for example, often represents a character glancing elsewhere whilst conversing as being expressive of a desire to seek socially significant people out. She also tends to represent over solicitous flattery as being expressive of a yearning desire to please or be well thought of and overly felicitous shows of

thinking and feeling? For one can recognize the nature of a character's plight as represented, care for them and thus respond sympathetically, without having simulated the same sort of suffering or feelings the character is represented as having. I sympathize with the children in Gradgrind's school, for example, but I do not imagine myself experiencing the same sort of pain, deprivation and suffering. For what is crucial is not that I simulate their experience as represented but that I care about it.

However, Darwall argues that sympathy should properly be construed as an emotion of a particular form that depends upon empathic simulation. Darwall's characterization of sympathy is as follows:

It is a feeling or emotion that (a) responds to some apparent threat or obstacle to an individual's good or well-being, (b) has that individual himself as object, and (c) involves concern for him, and thus for his well-being, for his sake. Seeing the child on the verge of falling, one is concerned for his safety, not just for its (his safety's) sake, but for his sake. One is concerned for him. Sympathy for the child is a way of caring for (and about) him.

(Darwall 1998: 261)

Darwall claims, with reference to C. D. Batson's experimental psychological work on the "Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis", that sympathy naturally arises from the capacity to empathize (Batson 1991; Batson and Shaw 1991). In one of Batson's experiments students are played an audio tape of "Carol" who they believe to be one of their class members. They hear that Carol has missed a month of term because she's been in hospital as the result of an accident. The subjects of the experiment are then asked if they will help. There's a "difficult escape" scenario where Carol will return to class next week and an "easy escape" scenario where she will be studying at home. According to Batson, where the subjects are drawn into empathizing by imagining what Carol is feeling the tendency to help shown even in the "easy escape scenario" is markedly high. The likely explanation, according to Darwall, is that the high empathy subjects feel vicarious distress as a function of their empathic reenactment of what Carol is feeling. They thereby come to be distressed not merely at Carol's plight but on her behalf, that is, come to desire relief for her sake. Thus empathy gives rise to sympathy; the latter is a higher-order emotional response dependent on the former. An important feature of Darwall's characterization of sympathy, with which I agree, is that the form of sympathy is individual-regarding. The desires and feelings bound up with sympathy do not just have propositional objects, for example, that Carol gets better and makes up her classes. Rather the form of sympathetic concern is partly constituted by the non-propositional "indirect objects" it takes, for example, I desire for Carol's sake that she get better and make up class. We can see how easily this kind of explanation in the ordinary case smoothly transfers across to the case of fictional characters. Where a work manages to get me to empathically reenact the

plight of a fictional character I am more likely to be distressed for them as opposed to merely recognizing that a fictional character is in a dire state of affairs.

Darwall is not alone in characterizing sympathy as an emotion. For example, Peter Goldie has argued that sympathy is a basic emotion, though he does not claim that sympathy depends upon empathy (Goldie 2000). However, it strikes me as odd, to say the least, to conceive of it thus. Sympathy seems more like a standing state or condition that is constituted by an attitude toward someone, albeit one where we are concerned for another person for their own sake. The assumption that sympathy is an emotion seems to rest on a conflation of sympathy with compassion or the occurrent emotional response of pity. But that it is a conflation can be shown by the following considerations. First, there is no distinctive phenomenology that constitutes the affective aspect of sympathy. My sympathy for someone can be concomitant with the affective phenomenology of fear, since I am afraid for them, sadness, since I am sorry for them, anger, since I am enraged on their behalf. It's not even obvious that being sympathetic for someone precludes certain more positive emotional responses such as feeling delighted for someone. After all, I might be sympathetic for someone because they find it hard to choose between living in London or Rome. I would truly sympathize if a friend of mine had to make such a decision but the sympathy would be concomitant with delight for them that they are faced with such an enviable (though I believe a rather difficult) choice. Second, having sympathy for someone does not entail feeling pity, compassion or fellow feeling for them. A friend tells me of their romantic troubles and I may be moved to intercede on their behalf. I am disposed to take pity on them because I recognize their plight and they are my friend. But this does not depend upon my having any occurrent emotional response whatsoever. I may neither feel the desperation they themselves are subject to nor sorrow at their desperation and yet may still be strongly moved to act because I desire what is good for them and recognize their plight. Indeed, I may even have sympathy for their plight and not act at all if I judge that continuance of their romantic entanglements would clearly be bad for them. The crucial point here though is that having sympathy for someone is conceptually independent of occurrent emotional responses. Sympathy is thus better characterized as a standing state or condition constituted by an attitude of concern for someone for their own sake (one desires what is best for them), which disposes one to act in their interests. As such it is conceptually independent of rather than constituted by any occurrent emotional response.

Still, it might be asked, why does it matter that sympathy proper is a standing state rather than an occurrent emotional response? The form of Darwall's argument seems unaffected and the claim, that sympathy arises as a function of the empathic reenactment of a person's or fictional character's pitiful plight, still stands. But this is not the case. If sympathy were an emotion then Darwall's claim would have more plausibility than if we construe it, as I have argued we should, as a standing state. Consider the following contrast between sympathy proper and an emotion such as fear. If I am normally afraid of being threatened with physical

formality and manners as expressive of a particular kind of vulgarity of mind. But in reading *Sense and Sensibility* one is suddenly struck by the way in which Lucy Steele is portrayed as exhibiting all these qualities and the ways in which they are all interconnected; how her seeking out of others whilst in conversation stands in stark incongruity with the showy drawing of attention to formal courtesies, how the highlighted show of manners serves to block rather than ease social interaction and how the insensitivity to ease social interaction expresses a vulgar lack of interest in and respect for others.

This is not to mention the figurative, symbolic and metaphoric allusions that are commonplace or the many uses of different perspectives on a character's actions which serve, indirectly, to afford the reader a much deeper grasp of character. Whether episodic or over a more extended range, our grasp of a character gives rise to and symbiotically interacts with our narrative understanding. For understanding is not merely a matter of knowing what mental state a character is in at t_1 , followed by knowing what mental state they are in at t_2 and so on. It requires, furthermore, some degree of overarching understanding as to how and why those states are connected with each other and thus make sense in relation to one another. I do not deny that simulation may play a role here – imagining that I am in a character's place or that I am them may aid me in following the kinds of responses that help to make sense of their consequent mental states. But again this already depends upon our imaginative apprehension and understanding of the particular character and the kind of person they are or are likely to become.

Someone who lacks imaginativeness in this sense lacks neither standard powers of observation nor the capacity to imagine they think or feel something – for example, in reading a novel they can adequately imagine a character seeing certain things, where they move their hands when they talk and can imagine holding the beliefs or having the feelings being reported to them. Rather what they lack, or at least possess only to a very low degree, is the capacity to appreciate the *manner* of the portrayal, to see them as an instantiation of finely variegated types of people, to discriminate between the appropriate associations or connotations of different uses of language, to grasp an action in terms of relevant contrasts and metaphorical associations and make the right kinds of judgments concerning the nature and interrelations of character traits to the character's states.

Any kind of understanding of particular characters primarily depends upon the expressive qualities or manner of their behavior and actions as represented. One then attempts to make sense of what one apprehends in their imagined action, what one recognizes it as expressive of and the various associations, analogies, connections, types and what one may metaphorically perceive the action in terms of in relation to some narrative. The narrative understanding arrived at is then assumed as a defeasible explanation that best makes sense of how and why the person's manner is as it is and how their mental states relate both to their situation and their basic character traits. Only then are we in any position to attempt any kind of imaginative simulation or reenactment regarding their mental states with any hope or degree of verisimilitude. Thus it is crucial that we distinguish

imaginative apprehension, where we recognize the expressive qualities of a character's action, from the fictional reenactment of a character's mental states involved in imaginative simulation. The former concerns the different ways in which the propositional attitudes and cognitive-affective states generally may be expressed. Our imaginative apprehension of them is required in order to even be in a position to attempt an imaginative reenactment of the mental states of a particular character in the first place – for such imaginative recognition is prior to, constrains and informs imaginative simulation. Hence someone whose powers of imagination in the sense of entertaining mental states is great may, nonetheless, not be very good at all at understanding particular characters in literary narratives since their powers of imaginative apprehension may be coarse and uncultivated. In such a case the simulation will be insufficiently constrained and informed by a discriminating imaginative apprehension of the manner of the represented actions, behavior and character. Of course, we are sometimes at a loss as to what a character is thinking and feeling precisely because the characterization proffered, deliberately or otherwise, is relatively thin. In such cases we no doubt naturally do ask ourselves “what on earth would I have to think and feel in order to be doing *that*?”. And here the role of simulation may come to the fore. But these kinds of cases do not constitute the norm. What is needed is a rich, complex theory of how the above features of narrative understanding are interlinked and this is something simulation as such cannot provide.

Sympathy for fictional characters

The grounds for skepticism regarding the centrality of simulation to grasping what is fictionally the case regarding characters do not, however, affect the claims that simulation is central to explaining how and why we care about fictional characters. In what follows I shall concentrate on the paradigmatic cases of sympathy and empathy. Stephen Darwall has argued that sympathy generally depends upon empathic simulation and the degree to which one cannot empathize is the degree to which one is unable to be sympathetic toward another (Darwall 1998). If true then empathic simulation must be what explains how and why we are sympathetic with respect to fictional characters. Susan Feagin, in contrast to Currie's more generalist aspirations, claims simulation is merely one of the many processes involved in narrative appreciation (Feagin 1996). Feagin seems undecided as to whether sympathetic or anti-pathetic responses involve empathic simulation but she has argued that simulation gives us an informative account of empathy.

Let us consider sympathy. Initially it may seem puzzling as to why one might think that sympathy for fictional characters should be primarily explained in terms of our empathic reenactment of their states and situation. After all, sympathy seems to involve taking up a cognitive-affective attitude toward a character's situation that involves recognizing and commiserating with their difficulties. Sympathy is thus tightly tied to a concern for the good and well-being of a character. But why think this must be tied to the simulation of what a character is

violence then I both should and will, *ceteris parabis*, feel fear where I empathically reenact the position of another who is so threatened. This is because the emotional response, in both cases, arises as a function of the intrinsic properties of this kind of situation. There is a relation of fit between situations that present themselves as being highly threatening and feeling the emotion of fear. This is not the case with sympathy. If I am normally sympathetic with respect to my friend's romantic entanglements it neither does nor should it necessarily follow, *ceteris parabis*, that I am sympathetic with respect to someone else who is similarly romantically caught up. This is so even were I to pay attention to all the intrinsic properties of the comparative situations and were to find them alike in all respects. It's important to realize that this is not merely a matter of psychology for the difference here is blameless. Why is this? What matters in the case of sympathy, in a way that does not hold true in the case of fear, is what the external relations are that obtain between the person in the romantic entanglements and myself. In the case of my friend I have an attitude of sympathy because I care for him and I care for him because I take certain relations to hold between us – of trust, affection, self-revelation and an overarching attitude of mutual regard. In the case of just anyone such relations do not hold and thus I am neither constrained as a matter of normative or psychological necessity to be sympathetic. Of course, I can come to be sympathetic with respect to someone who is not a friend in such a situation. But what this depends upon is a matter of the relations that are made salient as holding between myself and the other person. So the standing state of sympathy with respect to someone, given they are in a pitiful plight, is a function of the relations perceived to hold between myself and themselves as opposed to being a straightforward function of empathic reenactment.

It is the crucial importance of perceived external relations and overarching attitudes toward those relations that explain why empathy, in and of itself, is neither necessary nor sufficient for sympathy. I can be sympathetic for someone without having empathized with them since my overarching attitude toward them and my perception of their relations to myself may be such that where their plight is made salient to me, for example, I may observe it or it may be reported to me in more or less vivid terms, I am sympathetic toward them. Conversely I can empathize with someone, in the sense of imaginatively reenact what I take them to be thinking and feeling, and yet fail to be sympathetic because of my overarching attitude and how I perceive the relevant external relations to be. Empathizing with an enemy or someone I consider to be feckless may, for example, only serve to enhance my contempt for them rather than inculcating sympathy.

Darwall himself does concede, with reference to Batson's study, "it might be that the subjects had some standing desire or principle to aid others in need and that empathy simply makes Carol's need more evident than it would otherwise have been." It is just that he thinks the "more likely possibility is that the vicarious distress that high empathy subjects feel comes to have a new object, namely Carol and her predicament" (Darwall 1998: 274). A more adequate way of characterizing the alternative possibility being dismissed is that the subjects may

already have had a standing disposition to be sympathetic with respect to those they perceive to be in bad circumstances and closely related to themselves. Nonetheless, the simulationist may reply, where the subjects empathically reenacted Carol's predicament there was a higher percentage of students who perceived their relations to Carol as being more relevantly close to themselves than in the scenario where they were merely informed of her predicament. Thus, as a psychological rather than a conceptual matter, empathic reenactment of another's plight is more likely to render salient the perception of external relations upon which sympathy depends. There is no conceptual dependence of sympathy upon empathy, nor does sympathy arise as a straightforward function of empathy but empathy is, putatively as a matter of psychological fact, more likely to highlight the kind of external relations required to give rise to (but of themselves insufficient for) sympathy.

It is important to note that the experiments themselves do not justify even this conclusion. Reports of Carol's situation were contrasted with the audio-tape of her. But it does not follow that what does all of the work in the audio-tape case is empathy, since much of the relevant work may just be psychological presentism induced by hearing Carol's voice, the expressiveness in her voice and the expressive characterization of her experiences. Moreover, it's not obvious that a brief second hand report of her condition is the right kind of contrast. If subjects had been presented with, for example, a second hand characterization of her plight in the style of Dickens, say, they might well have showed the same responses or perhaps an even higher response rating of sympathy as those subjects exposed to the audiotape. For the vividness and expressiveness of the characterization of her experience and the ways in which this helped to make salient her relations to the subjects of the experience could be just as powerful without calling upon them to empathize with Carol's experiences. Nonetheless, I think there is some reason to hold that empathy is, as a psychological matter, one way that the perception of relevant external relations required for sympathy can be made salient. To that extent there is some truth in the thought that empathy can help to explain our sympathy for others (whether actual or fictional). Nonetheless, empathizing is neither necessary nor sufficient for sympathy and is merely one way amongst many of making salient the relevant external relations required (but insufficient) for sympathy.

Empathizing with fictional characters

We have seen that empathy at least can play a role in the cultivation of sympathy (though not nearly as strong or direct a role as has been suggested), so now the question arises as to whether the simulationist analysis of empathy is the right one. Feagin's simulationist analysis of empathy is as follows; we empathize with someone (actual or fictional) where we (a) come to "share" the feelings, typically at least, of a reflectively identifiable protagonist in terms of structurally analogous activities or processes and (b) the phenomenological quality of the experience is the same for the protagonist and the empathizer (Feagin 1996: 94–109).

In other words empathy is experiencing the same thoughts and feelings as someone else, where "same" means identical both in terms of kind and felt quality, as a result of the same kind of emotional interactions or thought processes that the other person went through. For example, if my friend tells me of his romantic woes I empathize with him to the extent that I empathically reenact what gave rise to his feeling so sad and the reasoning that gave rise to his despair. It is important to note, as Feagin herself emphasizes, that in the fictional case the simulation of a process can be carried out even though there is not the same "input" for the simulation as there typically is when one participates in "real" life. This is just to recognize the point that ordinarily our empathic reenactment of someone else is based on how we perceive them and their situation to be whereas in the case of literature, for example, it is a matter of what we are told by the words on the page.

As articulated the position requires some slight fine tuning. It is common enough to assume that empathizing with someone requires that there be a reflectively identifiable protagonist (Wollheim 1984). Yet this is too strong. This is not merely because we can and sometimes do find ourselves spontaneously empathizing with someone without already having identified them as someone to empathize with. I may suddenly find myself empathizing with the frustrated person in the queue next to me or may unexpectedly find myself empathizing with a fictional character like Hannibal Lecter. But this is merely to point out that those we empathize with are not always identifiable prior to the act of empathizing. Rather, as Peter Goldie has argued, it is because we sometimes can and do empathize with a *type* of person even though we cannot refer to nor have an identifiable particular individual in mind (Goldie 1999). Goldie's example concerns his experience of walking in the Pyrenees and suddenly imagining what it must have been like for a Roman soldier struggling up the mountains in the heat. As he says, one can think of him empathizing with "that soldier" or "him", whilst acknowledging that one knows nothing particular about him that enables one to individuate him from others of the type; all one needs for the imaginative project is a characterization of the type. Rejection of the reference condition also makes coherent the project of the detective, seeking constantly to build up a substantial characterization of "the murderer", in order to better predict what 'he' will do, and thus to find out his identity and be able to refer to him" (Goldie 1999: 418). Still, this is to quibble about the formulation of the claim rather than a challenge to the simulationist analysis of empathy. So let us take the more appropriate characterization to be cashed out in terms of, minimally, a retrospectively identifiable individual or type. Does the simulationist analysis hold up?

On the simulationist account of empathy the phenomenological quality of the experience shared by the person (or type) being empathized with and the empathizer must be the same and the upshot of structurally similar reasoning and emotional processes. But this cannot be right. For example, shame and horror loom large in Anna Karenina's emotional narrative. The two-page chapter following the scene of Anna's seduction uses the term horror ten times or more. Yet one need not "feel" horror nor have reenacted the same emotional narrative and reasoning

processes as she is represented as having gone through in order to empathize with her. We need only recognize that horror is what she is represented as feeling, grasp how and why this is so and identify with her situation. And, in light of the above considerations, it does not seem as if simulation is required to do that. A weak way of making the objection is to advert to phenomenological differences within the same emotion type. I may "feel" the same emotion type as Anna Karenina in empathizing with her and yet there may be phenomenological differences since the intensity of Anna's felt emotion and its overall shape, the depth and permeation of the feeling in relation to her mental economy, may be markedly different from that which I empathically reenact. But such differences are ones of degree rather than kind and as long as simulation of the same emotion type is involved that is all that the simulationist needs. A more profound way of making the point is to show that empathy as such does not require the empathic reenactment of the same type of emotion, hence one can empathize with someone and yet the phenomenological differences can be ones of type rather than just matters of degree, nor need it depend upon having reenacted the same mental narrative. If true, then the simulationist's identity claim must be false.

Many cases of empathy seem to arise from the perception and characterization of someone and their situation in terms that are related to our own thoughts, emotional responses, attitudes and past experiences. Consider the following varied kinds of cases: someone describes their psychological unease at rejecting their religious beliefs; someone describes how they were humiliated by a rude customer in a shop; someone expresses how unutterably bored and frustrated they are with the pettiness and fecklessness of certain people they work with; someone describes how nice it was to be on holiday in Italy; how let down they feel after being betrayed by a friend; how annoyed they feel at being taken for granted by someone. Ordinarily it is easy to empathize with someone describing such states of affairs precisely because we can relate them to similar, though not necessarily the same, types of experiences we ourselves have had. But though we might empathize, in the sense of sharing fellow feelings with the person, none of these cases need depend upon or be a function of having simulated what the person "must have" thought and felt. Furthermore, the better and more informative characterization of the experience afforded the less likely it is we would need to do so given the expressiveness and salient relations highlighted. Indeed some of my reasoning may well be highly disanalogous. For example, reflections about my own experiences or those of my friends, parents and relations may be brought to bear in a way that leads me to have similar kinds of responses to the situation as represented and identify them with hers. Hence, to return to the case of Anna Karenina, I may well empathize with her because I relate her experiences to those of my own or perhaps even those of my friends and family. I have some sense of what it is like to be treated coldly, to give in to temptation and to be betrayed and may come to share the feelings she is represented as having to the extent that I relate her experiences as represented to my own or those of others I care for. Thus I may empathize without having structurally mirrored the mental narrative and

processes she is represented as having undergone. Furthermore, for similar reasons, we often can and do empathize with someone though we are not simulating the same type of feelings they are experiencing. After all, we can empathize with someone in the sense of extending our fellow feelings toward them without it being the case that we are simulating the pain, horror, shame or guilt we take them to be subject to.

Empathy, I would suggest, is more appropriately characterized as involving the recognition of the states and situation a character is represented as being in, a grasp of what this may be like and an identification with the desires, aspirations and attitudes of the character. All that is required here is aversion to features of our own past experience, familiarity with the experience of others and an ability to extrapolate and interrelate from such experiences as they are thought to hold with respect to the character one identifies with. I am not denying that an empathic reenactment of the mental narrative of someone is sufficient for empathy. The problem is that the simulationist analysis conflates a typical means of empathizing with an analysis of empathy itself.

So simulation is *a* typical and important means of empathizing with people (rather than being constitutive of empathy). The further question remains. How does the simulative means of empathizing help, if at all, to explain how and why we care for fictional characters? It follows from the argument thus far that it cannot be the only mechanism that explains the phenomenon. Characters can be made vivid, we can come to identify with and care for them just in virtue of the imaginative way they are described to us, how their situation is relatable to our own past experiences and our cognitive-affective attitudes. Nor is empathy achieved via simulation a sufficient condition for caring for or indeed hating them. After all, I may simulate the mental narrative of a character and remain bored and indifferent to them precisely because I find there to be nothing of interest or value therein. Nonetheless, at least where the mental narrative of a character is of interest to us and where the nature and plight of a character is either beyond our own experience or difficult to see how it is easily relatable to our own experience, simulation can have *a* role to play in bringing home to us their plight, the nature of their experience and thus engaging our cognitive-affective responses with respect to them. We should not underestimate the extent to which we can easily be made to love, hate, admire, loathe or simply be beguiled by fictional characters based on the same kinds of concerns we are moved by in real life. We are interested, for example, in those who are exceptional, witty or who resemble ourselves in some respect. Furthermore, the kinds of situations, conflicts and choices facing the characters serve to heighten our interest and care for them. To return to Othello, we care deeply for him because he is represented as being of such an exceptionally noble and admirable character and is drawn into a situation where any ordinary person would have felt jealous long before he succumbs.

On the basis of the above considerations it seems we have little reason to grant either that simulation is standardly required for the deep apprehension of

character or that it is the canonical ground for grasping the experiences, states and traits of dramatic characters. This is not to deny that simulation has a role to play. Given a rich narrative understanding of a character simulation may help deepen our understanding in terms of what our expectations about that character's dispositions are likely to be. It is just that, as I have argued, simulation cannot be the central process by which we come to understand particular characters. For deep understanding can be achieved without simulation, necessarily depends upon the possession of a rich narrative understanding and makes use of many narrative features with respect to which simulation is otiose or inapplicable. Simulation cannot be the central mechanism that affords narrative understanding. Furthermore, empathizing is neither necessary nor sufficient for sympathy and is merely one way amongst many of making salient the relevant external relations required (but insufficient) for sympathy. As *a* typical means of realizing empathy simulation does have *a* role to play in engaging our cognitive-affective concerns for fictional characters, but it is neither the only nor *the* central psychological mechanism required to do so. Narrative appreciation and understanding is far more rich and complex than aversion to simulation theory seems to allow.

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