The Paradox of Teaching Fiction in French Educational Contexts

JEAN-FRANÇOIS VERNAY

Introduction

Non-professional fiction readers largely follow the so-called "impulses of the heart" when it comes to selecting a book, being immersed in its reading, and judging its content. Professional readers — whom I shall define later — seem to act differently, or at least to overlook the importance of the seduction scene between readers and fiction, especially in educational contexts. Even if the scientific approach to the humanities partakes of a need to objectify the assessment criteria within the educational sector, turning critical practices into some form of science will surely not help reinstate the place and value of emotions in relation to reading.

My article will explore the various forms of attachment and emotions that come into play when choosing, purchasing, reading and interpreting fiction by contrasting the different responses from non-professional and professional readers. Ultimately, my argumentation will reveal the strange paradox which affects literature in educational context.

1. The Book as an Object of Appeal: Aesthetics and Emotional Attachment

If we are to discuss books as objects of appeal, it is crucial to make a distinction between the professional reader, namely anyone *under an obligation to read*, and the nonprofessional reader.[1] For professional readers, reading is more driven by necessity than by desire and so the appeal of books will be of little or of less importance. This is why my discussion of the significance of the aesthetic appeal in selecting a book will be contained to the nonprofessional reader.

Drawing a parallel between consumerism and interpersonal relationships to define the rules of attraction, Erich Fromm cunningly observes that "Our whole culture is based on the appetite for buying, on the idea of a mutually favourable exchange. Modern man's happiness consists in the thrill of looking at the shop windows, and in buying all that he can afford to buy either for cash or on instalments. He (or she) looks at people in a similar way."[2] To be coveted as rewarding prizes, objects must be desirable and offer good value in return. Therefore, if books are not cognitively engaging, they are at least expected to be aesthetically attractive. In our digital age, there is precious little discussion about the sensuality of the book as object — the allure of the cover, the touch and smell of the pages, the whisper of the words — pleasures that electronic reading devices will soon obscure if not entirely oust. There is little doubt that the physical book with its full identity (ISBN, aesthetics, size, shape, texture and odour) remains an object crafted to trigger emotion-induced desire.

Most contemporary publishing houses in the English-speaking world[3] which are serious about sales tend to signpost the aesthetic appeal of books with eye-catching idiosyncratic cover designs meant for scopic pleasure, luring readers into taking an interest in the contents of the books. I say "idiosyncratic" because a same book produced in several editions is very likely to be re-jacketed from one publisher to the next, according to their personal sense of aesthetics. With this marketing-oriented strategy, book designers play on various incentive-generating emo-

Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics Vol. 47, No. 4, Winter 2024 [53-61]

tions related to object properties such as interest, curiosity and attraction. These desire-driven emotions build up anticipatory pleasure, namely "the experience of pleasure related to future activities".[4] What most publishers are essentially trying to avoid is producing books that would elicit aversion, disgust, and indifference — emotions which would be perceived as essentially negative in this particular context.

Nowadays, paperbacks and soft-cover novels are advantaged by luxury packaging quite unlike, say, the sobriety of books in Australia during the 1970s with their fragile binding, monochrome covers and poor quality paper. In this new marketing strategy where being engrossing is just not good enough a quality for narratives to sell successfully, praise for the book on the dust jacket might convince readers that it is worthwhile the attention and the effort of reading while publicity photos on the back cover or on the spine of the book are likely to familiarize readers with authors. More often than not, the front cover purports to be artistically attractive[5] and the well-spaced text that comes in a generous reader-friendly font is meant to enhance the pleasantness of reading. Far be it from me to argue that storytelling is less important than its aesthetic presentation because form and content are equally decisive factors when it comes to assessing the book as an object of appeal.

Another phenomenon beyond the aesthetic appeal of fiction which would account for the fact that books are unambiguously objects of attraction is man's seemingly natural emotional attachment to objects. For Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986), "[...] a book is more than a verbal structure, or a series of verbal structures; a book is the dialogue with the reader, and the peculiar accent he gives to its voice, and the changing and durable images it leaves in his memory. That dialogue is infinite."[6] It is noteworthy that there is no talk of the book as a conversation between reader and writer as you would half-expect, but rather an exchange between reader and book as an object, which is reminiscent of Serge Tisseron's observation that human beings have a tendency to anthropomorphise objects.[7]

This French psychiatrist also reminds readers that emotional attachment to objects starts at four years of age with the "transitional object"[8] identified in early childhood development by British psychiatrist Donnald Winnicott. This prothetic attachment peaks in adolescence with 'mirror objects' allowing teenagers to construct an identity of their own choosing, distinct from the one imposed by their parents or society. Later in adulthood, it finally morphs into a new level of fetishistic attachment, when adults start accumulating objects for various reasons. People might want to assert their social status, to connect with social groups, to use them as repositories of memories or as testimonies to key moments in their personal lives, or they might simply want to feel a sense of continuity. According to Tisseron, objects tend to fulfil four basic functions, namely servitude, testimony, complicity and partnership.[9]

Needless to say that fiction books are more likely than not to create a collusive relationship, a rapport of complicity with readers especially by allowing them to identify or empathize with intradiegetic (i.e. any character or the narrator if they are not conflated as one entity) or extradiegetic characters (most likely to be the narrator with his familiar voice). This collusive relationship with books might account for the fact that, in the face of a decluttering experience, it is extremely difficult to break the sentimental attachment to books and heart-wrenching to let go of them. All the more so if the books contain an inscription by the author (thus sporting fetishistic value) or if they have been received as special gifts. Eventually, emotional attachment to books enhanced by readers' emotional involvement with characters is likely to morph into sentimental fondness for authors, as Catherine Belsey notes:

> People develop close personal relationships with their favourite authors. We respond emotionally to the insight, the sensitivity, the lyric gift displayed in their work, and in no time at all it seems as if we have a special intimacy with these exceptional beings. Thus elevated, they become objects of desire; their elusiveness, or the mysterious origin of their skill, only enhances their power to seduce; interpretation surrenders to romance.[10]

Emotional attachment, when not stimulated by the multifaceted appeal of a novel or by a collusive rapport with characters and/ or author, is also nourished by the cognitive appeal that underlies the reading process.

2. Reading with Feeling[11]: Cognitive Appeal and Pleasure

When in the shoes of a nonprofessional reader, I usually follow my heart when it comes to choosing my reads. To pause and consider this may seem commonplace, but this amorous encounter with the book is of the utmost importance if we are to discuss further the attractability of books, as I am more and more convinced that the relationship of individuals to literature is what steers the scene of seduction between writer and reader. In order to seduce readers, writers must entertain them to secure their attention. This is one of the basic equations of literature which, in my eyes, allows the reader to give credence to the story.

For attention to be sustained beyond the standard ten-minute span, writers are required to find ways to arouse interest in readers. Not only creative writers are professionals at seduction who use and abuse the imaginary to secure the reader's belief in the story, but emotionally charged situations in fiction are also designed to get the attention of readers and keep them immersed in the stories by isolating them sensorily from their environment. As Adam Philips has it, "The care is taken to keep the reader entertained, to hold her attention; the writer is up against the reader's distractedness, her failing concentration. The wish always to be somewhere else, at least in one's mind. The get-out clause in any act of reading"[12].

Although a recent trend in studies of fiction tend to amalgamate ruminations on novels, TV series, movies, and even video games around the concept of storytelling, it must be noted that literary narratives are not in the business of offering scopic pleasure as visual arts would, but rather *cognitive pleasure*, which finds its source in the satisfaction knowledge provides. I am inclined to believe that the seductive pleasure is not solely derived from the dual aesthetics of the literary text, namely the visual aesthetic related to the descriptive imagery, and the auditory aesthetic that we perceive through the melody of words. Given that seduction also operates on a mental level, it is important to enhance the underlying connections to the text that stimulate a reader's capacity to draw parallels, and to glimpse the networks of ideas suggested by the text.

The desire to seduce readers is often consubstantial with a *mimetic desire* that responds to a concern to strive for realism, to show the world as it is, unvarnished and without ornament. But then how is it that science fiction stories, where imitation is less conspicuous, still manage to attract a wide readership? The answer may lie in the ability fiction has in encouraging the reader's brain to play two of its most natural roles: seeking psychic pleasure and filling in the blanks of perception. Readers' compulsion to make sense out of the lacunary is fulfilled when processing data and connecting the dots with their imagination. As Siri Hustvedt has it, "Meaning itself may be the ultimate human seduction."[13] So there is no denying that fiction seduces readers and that the psychic pleasure derived from its cognitive appeal manifests itself in at least two different ways: *jouissance* and consummatory pleasure, which are obtained through aesthetic experience.[14]

In her essay on contemporary art titled *The Revenge of Emotions*, Catherine Grenier sees in French literary theorist Roland Barthes the harbinger of the affective turn in France which she makes it coincide with the publication of his *Camera Lucida* (1980).[15] But seven years earlier Barthes published his seminal book on emotional hedonism, *The Pleasure of the Text* (1973), in which he makes the clear-cut distinction between texts from which readers would derive pleasure and those from which they would derive a form of *jouissance* (translated as bliss), therefore endorsing fiction's capacity to provide psychic pleasure.[16] *Jouissance* is to be understood as the climactic moment in reading for pleasure when readers are caught in a state of loss, what we call immersion nowadays. This state is mainly obtained through "writerly texts" (*des textes*

scriptibles), texts with which readers break out of their passive reading and collaborate with the author for meaning. A concept which is not dissimilar to the theses of Stanley Fish and Wolfgang Iser propounded in their reader-response criticism as soon as the early 1960s.

But jouissance appears to be concomitant with "consummatory pleasure [which] refers to the 'in the moment' pleasure experienced by the subject directly engaged in an enjoyable activity"[17]. Such consummatory pleasure is the physiological result of "the release of endorphins, which are related to opiates and give a peaceful, euphoric bliss."[18] For French University Professor Alain Vaillant, it seems that consummatory pleasure, which he feels people often seem to mistake for aesthetic pleasure, takes place in the act of imagining, in the filling of these cognitive gaps while reading, while reconstructing the story in one's mind. To him, literature

> designates all discursive productions of which the principal object, for the author and/or the reader, is pleasure born from the exercise of the imagination. This pleasure arises from specific cognitive mechanisms that set imagination in motion through language: imagination exercises in a specific way human mental and emotional faculties, and the consciousness of this intellectual activity is accompanied, whether the mental images be painful or happy, by euphoric sensations—as one can experience in sporting activity, at the very moment when pain is endured through effort. What we are labelling with the misnomer of aesthetic pleasure, produced by literature, is therefore nothing other than the jouissance born from this application of the imagination to the words—whatever the object and the nature of the words.[19]

The "euphoric sensations" in question, which occur through consummatory pleasure, are the work "of a wizard brain, or a conjurer in us who decides at any moment what part of reality to use as the basis of our dreams, and to what extent our imagination must embellish reality, lighten it or fake it. This wizardry, second nature to us, has an adaptive role: giving minds the means to produce psychic pleasure" declares French psychiatrist Roland Jouvent in his 2009 book written from a Darwinian perspective.[20]

Because creative writers are naturally attuned to their emotions as Daniel Goleman once observed,[21] storytelling — which requires them to tap into the reservoir of emotions — can be likened to an alchemy process whereby "deeply emotional material [is transmogrified] into meaningful stories".[22] It is therefore fair to see fiction books as capsules of linguistically processed emotions, an aspect which deserves to be treated with more consideration in educational contexts.

3. Fiction in French Educational Context: Detachment versus Attachment

In an essay entitled "Literary Pleasure", Jorge Luis Borges claims that, though he was "a hospitable reader" who had experienced "the greatest literary joys" in his early days, pleasure was much harder to find in reading once he became a critic:

> [...] I must confess (not without remorse and conscious of my deficiency) that [...] new readings do not enthrall me. Now I tend to dispute their novelty, to translate them into schools, influences, composites. I suspect that if they were sincere, all the critics in the world (and even some in Buenos Aires) would say the same.[23]

In other words, Borges is telling us how he has evolved from nonprofessional reader to professional reader and how literary pleasure has faded in the course of his change of status. The conclusion to draw is that reclaiming the right to venting emotions during the act of reading or interpreting fiction is a non-issue for nonprofessional readers. We shall therefore focus on professional readers and situations in which emotions would be suppressed or envisaged with suspicion.

In *Creativity*, Kevin Brophy highlights the analogy between poetic creation and free association which both require "the suspension of critical judgement",[24] unlike critical practice whose discourse aims at expressing channelled thoughts and sharp cognition-based analyses to which the judgement — that some might deem uncreative — will be faithful. The necessity to draw

a line between literary theory and creative writing may account for the fact that reason has become the bedrock of scholarly theory and critical practice while emotion has met less with opposition in the field of literary creativity.

More generally, the reason/ emotion divide can chiefly be accounted for by our strongly ingrained tradition of dichotomies in Western culture which tends to assess objects and phenomena in terms of polar opposites. Although some researchers now start talking about "the cognitive-emotional brain" as just one entity, most people (scientific circles included) seem to perceive the mind as a split object. There would be an emotional brain constituted by a specific brain circuit which would be pitted against the rational mind. It is fair to say that the latter is generally most trusted when it comes to analysing and assessing material — literary fiction included.

Within French academia, emotional attachment is frowned upon chiefly because emotions are credited with a capacity for being corrosive and for clouding reason, for impacting on mental clarity, in short — for overpowering the rational left hemisphere. As Daniel Goleman puts it,

> The extent to which emotional upsets can interfere with mental life is no news to teachers. Students who are anxious, angry, or depressed don't learn; people who are caught in these states do not take in information efficiently or deal with it well. [...] [P]owerful negative emotions twist attention toward their own preoccupations, interfering with the attempt to focus elsewhere. Indeed, one of the signs that feelings have veered over the line into the pathological is that they are so intrusive they overwhelm all other thought, continually sabotaging attempts to pay attention to whatever other task is at hand.[25]

This distrust of emotions is all the more surprising as man responds emotionally to things *before* they even get cognitively assessed, conceptualized, or figured out.

Reason, which enables professional readers to reach some form of detachment, has all too often been equated with dispassion and disinterestedness, because dispassionate readers feel they can achieve a fair and balanced interpretation of a work of literature only if they successfully manage to elude the sway of suspicious feelings.[26] The academic stance is likely to seek an objectifying distance bereft of affects and of a rapport of complicity with the literary text: otherwise put, it is academic criticism told through a flat voice reflecting a flatlined electrocardiogram. And yet, literary texts are already subject to a set of various influences such as our cognitive baggage, our biases, our ossified critical practices, and perhaps our fixed mindset, all of which shape our subjectivity and do not meet as strong an opposition as emotions. The difference may lie in the fact that, unlike emotions, cognition, prejudices, critical practices, and mindsets — being acquired over time — are not uncontrollably instinctive, though they may have become automatic responses to literary assessment.

In French educational contexts, emotions are also dealt tentatively with because they are largely *terra incognita* at this stage given the scientific limitations of technology-based investigative techniques such as fMRI neuroimaging procedures. As a result, many emotion-related aspects remain pure speculation,[27] making it difficult to substantiate theories with solid evidence. Besides, the plurality of views among emotion researchers in the affective sciences makes cross-disciplinary discussions fraught with imprecision and ambiguity,[28] not to mention the conceptual muddle which distinguishes fake emotions and false emotions, from quasi emotions and real-life emotions, to which literary scholars gleefully add "aesthetic emotions" of which "literary emotions" are a subcategory, "literary emotions" being themselves subdivided between "fiction emotions" and "artifact emotions"[29]. And when one wishes to discuss the hypernymic emotion of empathy,[30] the sheer variety of approaches by disciplines defining empathy through their very lens sometimes lead to aporia and paradoxes. For instance, psychoanalysis stresses the reciprocity and therefore intersubjectivity of empathy.[31] But if we were to transpose this definition to literary matters, how is intersubjectivity possible between reader and character? Not to mention the fact that scholarly emotion-focussed research in literary criticism is yet to reach

full maturity, despite the dynamic research undertaken by scholars in cognitive literary studies and affect studies.[32]

Understanding how the literary text operates does not mean reconstructing its main elements with factual accuracy. Generations of teachers demanded of their students this limiting performance, an exercise that was mainly a response to a fantasy — that of seeing literary analysis elevated to a science. Formerly, as Tzvetan Todorov pointed out, literary history was confined to "a study of the causes that lead to the publication of the work: social forces, political, ethnic, psychological, of which the literary text was supposed to be the result." This student exercise was also meant to analyze the "effects of this text, its distribution, its impact on the public, and its influence on other writers. The insertion of the literary work into a causal chain was thus given preference."[33] These were the beginnings of a scientific process that saw a text as causing certain effects to be analyzed, or inversely as an effect for which one had to find the cause. Parallel to these investigations, for decades French literary theorists tried to outperform scientists with their Cartesian way of approaching literature through theorizing schemas (the hobby horse of Russian Formalists such as Vladimir Propp and Tzvetan Todorov); through the release of conceptual structures (see for example narratology, invented by structuralism, led by figures such as Roland Barthes, A. J. Greimas, and Gérard Genette), and prioritizing analytical approaches based to a certain extent on scientific principles.[34] Exactly what these theorists sought to do was neither more nor less than to objectify interpretation. However, as D.H. Lawrence wisely puts it, "Criticism can never be a science: it is, in the first place, much too personal, and in the second, it is concerned with values which science ignores. The touchstone is emotion, not reason ..."[35]

Conclusion

Even if the scientific approach to the humanities partakes of a need to objectify the assessment criteria within the French educational sector, turning critical practice into some form of science will surely result in an asymptotic enterprise in which professional readers will systematically miss the goal, no matter how close they manage to get. And close enough will never be good enough. Clearly, the objectives of science and those of the humanities are as contrasted as those of the brain's left and right hemispheres: While the left hemisphere, like science, aims at thinking about our world as analytically and objectively as can be, the right – very much like the arts – favors a synthetic perspective based on intuition and emotions. The challenge is therefore to solve the paradox which aims at acknowledging and reinstating the subjectivity of reading practices by taking into account the plasticity of interpretation and its emotional aspects within secondary and tertiary education, systems that for the most part still require objective analyses. The paradox could therefore be formulated in the following terms: How can an object charged with affect like a book, which creates several forms of attachment through its aesthetic, cognitive and emotional appeal be dealt with unflinching detachment?

UNSW College, Australia

Acknowledgements

This article is an expansion of some ideas that I have developed in *Plaidoyer pour un renouveau de l'émotion en littérature* (Paris: Complicités, 2013), and so partly relies on Dr Carolyne Lee's translation which was released by Palgrave Macmillan in October 2016 as *The Seduction of Fiction: A Plea for Putting Emotions Back into Literary Interpretation.*

Notes

[1] The professional reader is not a reader who makes a job out of reading books, but a reader on a mission, with a set purpose. He cannot but read a book for a particular project: a summary for a class presentation, a discussion for a book review, an in-depth analysis for a PhD, you name it. Reading for pleasure is often associated with no officially set purpose, which also means that non professional readers can drop the book if the reading is becoming tedious or boring, which will bear no consequence as there is no set task at stake. Among professional readers, you will find festival artistic directors, journalists, booksellers, librarians, literary critics, editors, proofreaders, teachers; or students required to study a work. See the opening chapter of J.-F. Vernay, *The Seduction of Fiction.* Trans. C. Lee (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

[2] E. Fromm, *The Art of Loving* (London: Thorsons, 1995), 2.

[3] I need to specify that the scope of my analysis does not take into account the top French publishing houses, which seems to resist the marketing appeal of packaging novels with alluring front covers, though they are gradually warming up to this trend. Gallimard, Grasset, Seuil, and P.O.L, still produce in their selected series minimalistic monochrome covers with nothing more on them than the publisher's and author's names and the title. Jackets and covers are meant to encapsulate the essence of the book, and in this instance the focus seems to be on the words per se and not on their imaginative interpretations.

[4] G. Loas, A. Verrier and J.-L. Monestes. "Relationship between Anticipatory, Consummatory Anhedonia and Disorganization in Schizotypy." *BMC Psychiatry* 14 (2014). *PMC*. Web 1 May 2016. URL: http://bmcpsychiatry.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12888-014-0211-1 accessed on 01/05/2016.

[5] The protagonist Liesel Meminger in Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief* gives an accurate rendition of the haptic and scopic pleasures derived from books. For a full discussion, see J.-F. Vernay, "Bibliophilia, Bibliomania or Bibliokleptomania? Liesel's Passionate Love Affair with Books in Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief*." *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies: A Journal of Criticism and Theory* 23: 1, March 2021, 130-146.

[6] J. L. Borges, *Other Inquisitions 1937-1952* (Texas: Texas University Press, 1964), 163-4.

[7] S. Tisseron, *Le jour où mon robot m'aimera. Vers l'empathie artificielle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2015), 28 & 95.

[8] The transitional object was famously illustrated in comics by Charles Schulz's character Linus van Pelt who constantly drags around what he likes to see as his "security and happiness blanket". Siri Hustvedt reminds us that "The transitional object — that bear or bit of blanket — is a real object in the world, but also a 'symbol' radiant with the infant's fantasies of union with his mother that helps ease his separation from her. It is at once 'a piece of real experience' and a fiction." S. Hustvedt, "Freud's Playground", *Living, Thinking, Looking* (London: Septre, 2012), 200.

[9] S. Tisseron, *op.cit*., 83-92 and 97-116.

[10] C. Belsey, *A Future for Criticism* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 52.

[11] "To appreciate a work is not merely to recognize that a work has certain properties, aesthetic qualities or artistic virtues, nor merely to be able to recognize what it is about a work that gives it these qualities or its value. To appreciate a work is, in part, to get the value out of it, and 'getting the value out of it' involves being affectively or emotionally moved. It is to experience the work in certain ways; it involves reading 'with feeling'." S. Feagin, *Reading with Feeling : The Aesthetics of Appreciation* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1996), 1.

[12] A. Phillips. *Missing Out: In Praise of the Unlived Life* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2012), 109.

[13] "Desire is the engine of life, the yearning that goads us forward with stops along the way, but it has no destination, no final stop, except death. The wondrous fullness after a meal or sex or a great book or conversation is inevitably short-lived. By nature, we want and we wish, and we assign content to that emptiness as we narrate our inner lives. For better and for worse, we bring meaning to it, one inevitably shaped by the language and culture in which we live. Meaning itself may be the ultimate human seduction." S. Hustvedt, "Variations on desire: a mouse, a dog, Buber and Bovary", *op.cit*., 10.

[14] In his book *Brief Apologia for Aesthetic Experience* (*Petite apologie de l'expérience esthétique*, 1972), H. R. Jauss ardently defends the thesis that "the attitude of jouissance, which art suggests and triggers, is the very basis of aesthetic experience; it is impossible to ignore this, and on the contrary we must take it as an object of theoretical reflection, if today we want to defend in the face of its detractors — well-read or otherwise — the social function of art and of the scientific disciplines at its service". H. R. Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception.* Trans. T. Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 137.

[15] C. Grenier. *La revanche des émotions: essai sur l'art contemporain* (Paris: Le Seuil, 2008), .23: "Ardent défenseur de la distanciation brechtienne, Roland Barthes réintroduit cependant dans *La Chambre claire*, qu'il écrit en 1980, une dimension affective et personnelle qui constitue le signal d'une réorientation de l'ensemble de la communauté intellectuelle française."

[16] "Text of pleasure: the text that contents, fills, grants euphoria; the text that comes from culture and does not break with it, is linked to a comfortable practice of reading. Text of bliss: the text that imposes a state of loss, the text that discomforts [...] unsettles the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis his relation with language". R. Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text,* trans. R. Miller (London: Cape, 1976), 14.

[17] G. Loas, A. Verrier and J.-L. Monestes. *Id.*

[18] N. Doidge, *The Brain That Changes Itself* (Melbourne: Scribe, 2007), 108.

[19] A. Vaillant, *L'histoire littéraire* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010), 358. Quote translated by C. Lee.

[20] R. Jouvent, *Le cerveau magicien. De la réalité au plaisir psychique* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2009), 9.

[21] "Some of us are naturally more attuned to the emotional mind's special symbolic modes: metaphor and simile, along with poetry, song, and fable, are all cast in the language of the heart. So too are dreams and myths, in which loose associations determine the flow of narrative, abiding by the logic of the emotional mind. Those who have a natural attunement to their own heart's voice — the language of emotion — are sure to be more adept at articulating its messages, whether as a novelist, songwriter, or psychotherapist. This inner attunement should make them more gifted in giving voice to the 'wisdom of the unconscious' — the felt meanings of our dreams and fantasies, the symbols that embody our deepest wishes." D. Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* (London: Bloomsburry, 1996), 54.

[22] "Fictions are born of the same faculty that transmutes experience into the narratives we remember explicitly but which are formed unconsciously. Like episodic memories and dreams, fiction reinvents deeply emotional material into meaningful stories, even though in the novel, characters and plots aren't necessarily anchored in actual events." S. Hustvedt, "Freud's Playground", *Ibid*., 195.

[23] J. L. Borges, *On Writing* (New York: Penguin, 2010), 72-3.

[24] K. Brophy, *Creativity: Psychoanalysis, Surrealism and Creativity* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1998), 143.

[25] D. Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* (London: Bloomsburry, 1996), 78-9. The view that emotions would affect reason and cognition was already expressed almost 50 years earlier by W. K. Wimsatt Jr. and M. C. Beardsley in "The Affective Fallacy", *The Sewanee Review* 57: 1 (Winter 1949), 38: "Emotion, it is true, has a well-known capacity to fortify opinion, to inflame cognition, and to grow upon itself in surprising proportions to grains of reason".

[26] For J. Robinson, "dispassion and disinterestedness in criticism should not mean lack of feeling or personal interest, but rather a fair, balanced (cognitive) assessment of the many different emotional reactions provoked by the work and the various personal interests we feel to be at stake in it". In *Deeper than Reason: Emotion and its Role in Literature, Music and Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 133-4.

[27] In his latest philosophical investigation on the role of emotions in the context of aesthetic experiences, J.-M. Schaeffer's last chapter remains speculative. See *L'expérience esthétique* (Paris : Gallimard, 2015).

[28] See S. Keen's long-winded footnote in "Introduction: Narrative and the Emotions", *Poetics Today* 32:1 (Spring 2011), 6. She lists the various and numerous aspects on which emotion researchers differ.

[29] P. C. Hogan, *Literature and Emotion* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 98.

[30] For a discussion of empathy as a hypernymic emotion, see "When Fiction Boosts the Social Brain: Empathy, Ethics, Aesthetics and the Enhancing Power of Literary Fiction" ("Quand la fiction dope le cerveau social: empathie, éthique, esthétique et le pouvoir mélioratif de la fiction littéraire") in D. Mistreanu & S. Freyermuth (eds.), *Explorations cognitivistes de la théorie et la fiction littéraires* (Paris: Hermann, 2023), 41-59.

[31] S. Tisseron, *op.cit*., 33.

[32] For the most recent publications at the intersection of emotions and literature, see for instance P. C. Hogan, B. J. Irish, L. P. Hogan's (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Emotion* and Suzanne Keen's *Empathy and Reading: Affect, Impact, and the Co-Creating Reader*.

[33] T. Todorov, *La Littérature en péril* (Paris: Flammarion, 2007), 30.

[34] In *Affecting Fictions: Mind, Body, and Emotion in American Literary Realism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), J. Thrailkill also draws on neuroscience and cognitive psychology to develop

an argument against the New Critics' emotionless interpretations, propounding that feeling should be part and parcel of interpretation.

[35] D. H. Lawrence, "John Galsworthy," in *Selected Literary Criticism*, ed. Anthony Beale (London: Heinemann, 1967), 118.

Works Cited

Barthes, Roland. *The Pleasure of the Text,* trans. Richard Miller (London: Cape, 1976).

Beale, Anthony (ed.). *Selected Literary Criticism* (London: Heinemann, 1967).

Belsey, Catherine. *A Future for Criticism* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

Borges, Jorge Luis. *On Writing* (New York: Penguin, 2010).

_____. *Other Inquisitions 1937-1952* (Texas: Texas University Press, 1964).

Brophy, Kevin. *Creativity: Psychoanalysis, Surrealism and Creativity* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1998).

Doidge, Norman. *The Brain That Changes Itself* (Melbourne: Scribe, 2007).

Feagin, Susan. *Reading with Feeling: The Aesthetics of Appreciation* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1996).

Fromm, Erich. *The Art of Loving* (London: Thorsons, 1995).

Goleman, Daniel. *Emotional Intelligence* (London: Bloomsburry, 1996).

Grenier, Catherine. *La revanche des émotions: essai sur l'art contemporain* (Paris: Le Seuil, 2008).

Hogan, Patrick Colm. *Literature and Emotion* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).

Hogan, Patrick Colm, Bradley J. Irish, Lalita Pandit Hogan (eds.). *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Emotion* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022).

Hustvedt, Siri. "Freud's Playground", *Living, Thinking, Looking* (London: Septre, 2012).

Jauss, Hans Robert. *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception.* Trans. Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

Jouvent, Roland. *Le cerveau magicien. De la réalité au plaisir psychique* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2009).

Keen, Suzanne. *Empathy and Reading: Affect, Impact, and the Co-Creating Reader* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022).

_____. "Introduction: Narrative and the Emotions", *Poetics Today* 32:1 (Spring 2011), 1-53.

Loas, Gwenolé, Anne Verrier and Jean-Louis Monestes. "Relationship between Anticipatory, Consummatory Anhedonia and Disorganization in Schizotypy." *BMC Psychiatry* 14 (2014). *PMC*. Web 1 May 2016. URL: http://bmcpsychiatry.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12888-014-0211-1

Phillips, Adams. *Missing Out: In Praise of the Unlived Life* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2012).

Robinson, Jenefer. *Deeper than Reason: Emotion and its Role in Literature, Music and Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005).

Schaeffer, Jean-Marie. *L'expérience esthétique* (Paris: Gallimard, 2015).

Thrailkill, Jane. *Affecting Fictions: Mind, Body, and Emotion in American Literary Realism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007).

Tisseron, Serge. *Le jour où mon robot m'aimera. Vers l'empathie artificielle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2015).

Todorov, Tzvetan. *La Littérature en péril* (Paris: Flammarion, 2007).

Vaillant, Alain. *L'histoire littéraire* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010).

Vernay, Jean-François. "Quand la fiction dope le cerveau social: empathie, éthique, esthétique et le pouvoir mélioratif de la fiction littéraire". In Diana Mistreanu & Sylvie Freyermuth (eds.), *Explorations cognitivistes de la théorie et la fiction littéraires* (Paris: Hermann, 2023), 41-59

_____. "Bibliophilia, Bibliomania or Bibliokleptomania? Liesel's Passionate Love Affair with Books in Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief*." *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies: A Journal of Criticism and Theory* 23: 1, March 2021, 130-146.

_____. *The Seduction of Fiction.* Trans. Carolyne Lee (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

Wimsatt, W.K. Jr. & M.C.Beardsley. "The Affective Fallacy", *The Sewanee Review* 57: 1 (Winter 1949), 31-55.