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	Address	Chicago, IL, USA
Abstract	Authors who have focused on the limitations and biases of empathy are reviewed. A critique of the critique of empathy as limited and biased is provided from the perspective of a rigorous and critical empathy. Thinkers engaged include Bloom, Breithaupt, Gaines, Graham, and Carpio, Serpall, and Zunshine. The classical philosophical problem of other minds has been replaced with the cognitive task of mindreading—simulating other minds or inventing an account of theory of mind (ToM). ToM is close to cognitive literary criticism. The relation between cognitive literary criticism and empathy is debated. Cognitive (science) literary criticism is derivative on the folk definition of empathy, taking a walk in the Other’s shoes. Empathy intersects with mimesis, and by engaging mimesis in relation to other minds, a fourth aspect of Ricœur’s threefold mimesis emerges, call it “mimesis₄.” “<i>Mimesis</i> of other minds” means “<i>simulating</i> other minds.” In the process, the empathic response to the literary text is completed. In every case, the answer of a rigorous and critical empathy to its critics is to refuse the choice between empathy and compassion, empathy and defeating empire, empathy and enlarged thinking from the perspective of the Other. The world needs expanded empathy as well as more compassion, enlarged thinking, and less empire.	
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Empathy and Its Discontents

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EMPATHY VERSUS LITERATURE

3

A rigorous and critical empathy knows it can be wrong, and falsification and correction are an essential aspect of valid, correct, and accurate empathy. Nevertheless, I boldly assert that most people, who are not suffering from delusional disorder or political pathologies of being *The True Believer* (Hoffer 1953), are generally able to make this distinction. A rigorous and critical empathy creates a safe zone of acceptance and tolerance within which people can debate and listen to a wide spectrum of ideas, positions, feelings, and expressions. For example, empathy and critical thinking support maintaining firm boundaries and limits against actors who would misuse social media to amplify and distort communications. This work focuses on literary artworks, not political dynamics, though much literature engages with important issues of social justice, to which the empathic response may be a political one. Much of what Jürgen Habermas (1984) says about the communicative distortions in mass media, television, and film applies with a multiplicative effect to the problematic, if not toxic, politics occurring on the Internet and social networking (for further on the intersection of empathy and politics (the latter narrowly defined) see *Empathy Lessons*, 2nd Edition, “Empathy Application: Rhetorical empathy—speaking truth to power in politics” (Agosta 2024)). In so far as individuals skeptical of empathy are trying to force a decision between critical thinking and empathy, the choice must be declined. Both empathy

and critical thinking are needed; hence, a rigorous and critical empathy is included in the definition of enlarged, critical thinking (and vice versa). (On critical thinking, see Mill 1859; Haber 2020; “enlarged thinking” is engaged below (Kant 1791/93: AA 159; Arendt 1968: 9.)

EMPATHY VERSUS COMPASSION

Celebrity academics (Bloom 2016) have argued that empathy is partial and parochial and inevitably so, thereby making empathizing a subset of “chauvinistic” empathy (my term, not Paul Bloom’s). Rather what is needed (argues Bloom) is rational compassion. The counter-point is direct—as if the world did not need both expanded empathy and compassion. This is a choice—between compassion and empathy—that must be declined. Such a gesture of refusal to choose between two good choices is radical—as in radical empathy—as it does not occur to most readers at first, but makes sense to them once called out.

Another thinker who emphasizes “the dark side” of empathy, Fritz Breithaupt (2017: 8), states that the goal of his work is to debunk those who “uncritically embrace empathy without caveats.” Who proposed uncritically embracing empathy—or uncritically embracing anything? This critique is at best naïve and at worse itself lacking critical thinking in imagining practitioners of empathy are uncritical or lack rigor. Breithaupt’s book (as he acknowledges on p. 8) does not use literary examples. Yet on p. 172, Breithaupt calls out Hölderlin, Goethe, Flaubert, Fontane, Hawthorne (one page total!), before turning to an in-depth engagement with the execution of the notorious domestic terrorist, Timothy McVeigh, the Oklahoma City bomber. The devil may quote scripture, and anti-social personalities may pretend to be empathic, the better to manipulate the Other. That empathy can be misused is like blaming the practice of carpentry because the Romans executed those condemned as criminals by using hammers to nail them to a cross. Heinz Kohut’s (1981: 529, 580) distinction of “fiendish empathy” is relevant here and further engaged in Chap. 14, Section: “Empathy Discloses What the Other Experiences, Morals, What to Do About It.”

The grain of truth in the grievances against empathy expressed by Bloom and Breithaupt is most effective against those empathy advocates that promote taking the easy way out in engaging with empathy. As in Philip K. Dick’s (1968) celebrated science fiction novella, the Voight-Kampff Empathy Test device (similar to a lie detector), makes it easy to

distinguish empathic humans from rogue androids. Just hook the would-be human (or android) up to it, and empathy shows up (or not). Would that it were so easy! As noted in the Preface, Section: “Empathy the Hard Way,” such an empathy device is no longer fictional. A startup corporation, Empathetics, Inc. (Riess 2018), has propriety (i.e., confidential) intellectual property that uses bio-feedback to train MDs in getting in touch with their states of arousal to expand, disinhibit, or inhibit their reaction in interacting with patients. “Never say never,” and in the war against pain and suffering, if a tool works to expand empathy, use it. Yet this does have aspects of a gimmick.

Thus, the battle is joined against the resistance, prejudices, and obstacles to empathy, to which humans are vulnerable in overcoming aggression, hostility, and the darker aspects of our biological dispositions. This is empathy the hard way.

What is characteristic of those against empathy (Bloom 2016) is that they engage with the weakest version of empathy not the strongest. They engage with the breakdowns and misfirings of empathically relevant phenomena such as emotional contagion, projection, conformity, and communications getting lost in translation. All these misfirings are real enough occurrences, but they are not empathy.

The tactic of the anti-empaths is to roll these misfirings (emotional contagion, projection, conformity, etc.) up into the definition of empathy, and then invalidate empathy. In contrast with this argumentative lack of charity (see Davidson 1973, 1974, 1993), the sound practice of empathy “gets it” that, yes, empathy can fail. If empathy could not fail, it could not succeed; if empathy was always valid, it could not be validated; if empathy were always accurate, it could never be inaccurate, and it is precisely in overcoming these failures, inaccuracies, and resistances that a rigorous and critical empathy comes forth and is implemented. Much remains to be said about this, but, for present purposes, the point is to decline the false choice between more compassion and expanded empathy. Both are needed.

FAKE EMPATHY FOR A DAY

In a fascinating social psychology narrative by Alisha Gaines’ (2017) *Black for a Day*, several nonfiction narratives of individuals, born Caucasian, who go “under cover” as black people, are critically examined. These individuals change the color of their skin cosmetically and chemically from white to black (and brown), in order to “pass” as African American while

traveling in the American south (or, in one case, Harlem) in the late 1940s and 1950s. Ray Sprigle, John Howard Graham, and Grace Halsell, the cast of a Fox Reality TV show called *Black.White* (an exception in premiering in 2006), engage in what may be described as a bold, though misguided, experiment in social psychology (my terms, not Gaines'). Gaines was recommended by an anonymous reviewer as a "must include" to restore the balance of a realistic appraisal of empathy.

According to Gaines, these undercover "empathic racial impersonations" are white fantasies that are supposed to produce empathy between the races or in white people for black people, but, and most would agree with Gaines, they do not work.

Now these examples of curious white folks between 1947 and 1964 (and in one case 2006 on a Fox reality TV show (which means there was nothing real about it)) using chemicals to dye their skin brown and black and attempt to "pass" as "black for a day" makes for an engaging misadventure. My take on it (not necessarily Gaines' position) is that these are wild social psychology experiments. Gaines does not make the connection with social psychology, nor does she necessarily need to do so. John Howard Graham (the racial impersonator arguably with the strongest integrity) was more than curious about what it would be like to be black. Graham sent out a survey to black people in the late 1950s. The responses to him from black people strongly suggested that he could *never* know the black person's struggle without literally getting inside the skin of a black person. Perhaps Graham was too literal in "taking the coaching," yet getting inside the skin of the black person was precisely what he tried to do.

On background, Gaines notes that John Howard Graham studied medicine in France and personally rescued Jewish children from the Nazis by pretending that the children had a diagnosis of mental illness and sending them abroad—a righteous use of deception if I ever heard of one. In addition to going to France to study psychiatry, this man, Graham, was a kind of would-be saint of empathy (my term, not Gaines').

Graham's misadventures were made into a major motion picture, for which he was also the writer (among others) and directed by Carl Lerner (1912–1973; best known for directing *Twelve Angry Men* in 1957). *Black Like Me* (premiering in 1964) starred James Whitmore. Whitmore really does look in some scenes like he is wearing black face, an escapee from a minstrel show. Still, not surprisingly, changing one's exterior color and working for a few weeks on changing the interior conversation about race makes great headlines. Yet, as Gaines argues, changing the color of one's

skin cosmetically does not work as well as one might hope in establishing empathic relatedness. With the benefit of 20–20 hindsight, this is no surprise. How could it possibly work?

Empathy is based on being authentic about who one is as a person in relating to another person. Empathy is based on integrity and being straight with the other person to and with whom one is trying to relate. So the idea of starting off by pretending to be someone who one is not—impersonating a person one is not—is *not* going to produce empathy. One cannot start out by being a fake and expect to produce an authentic relationship.

These experiments, including Gaines’ own book, provide engaging adventures and misadventures that demonstrate that when one starts out by faking solidarity, integrity, relatedness, and empathy as input, then one gets fake solidarity, fake integrity, fake relatedness, and fake empathy. What going undercover and trying to pass as black—“empathic impersonation” (Gaines’ key term)—actually produces is fake empathy. Key term: fake empathy (my term, not Gaines’). Staring with the integrity outage of impersonation does not create integrity—or empathy. It does not make a difference if one adds “race” to the mix. Empathic racial impersonation still results in fake relatedness and fake empathy.

At every turn—I counted them—sixty-five times, the reader gets “empathic racial impersonation” (curiously not in Gaines’ index), and, the steady drum beat of invalidation of empathy. Empathy goes off the rails as projection, conformity, bad faith, conscious and unconscious bias, communications lost in translation. Indeed, empathy is a most imperfect practice, nor are these struggling and misguided impersonators given the benefit of the doubt.

Why in over 200 pages is there not a single example of empathy producing understanding, relatedness, or cooperation between the races (actually between anybody of even the same race!)? Not a single successful empathic encounter in over two hundred pages. I assert that is because, *Black for a Day* does not engage with the strongest version of the argument that empathy is beneficial and useful. Though imperfect like the humans who use it, empathy both succeeds and fails. Instead, empathy is represented in the weakest, watered-down, or distorted way—“eating the other” (bell hooks (1992)) or being a fake medical actor (Leslie Jamison’s (2014) humorous, even hilarious, account of her misadventures as a medical actor). A rumor of empathy is not validated in *Black for a Day*. Empathy does not live there, instead empathy occurs as fake empathy.

EMPATHY VERSUS EMPIRE

We now turn from fake empathy to mutilated empathy. *Migrant Aesthetics* (2023) by Glenda Carpio sets up an either/or choice between ending empire (e.g., colonialism, ethnic prejudice, prejudice toward migrants, imperialism, racism, and sexism) and expanding empathy. The book then mutilates empathy by confusing it with projection, emotional contagion, conformity, and other forms of miscommunication. The result is some 285 pages of penetrating analysis in which the reader does not get a single example of the practice of empathy resulting in a successful or satisfactory empathic encounter in literary fiction. Not one single example of empathy that works—that makes empathy present—is to be found. *Migrant Aesthetics*'s forcing of a choice between expanding empathy and ending (or limiting) empire must be declined. Both results—ending (contesting) empire and expanding empathy—are needed.

Granted that empathy does not always succeed, the issue is that in 285 pages of penetrating, incisive analysis of migrant aesthetics (the category, not the title), the reader is not given a single example of a healthy empathic relatedness that works, so that one could identify it if one happened to encounter it. None. What empathy looks like when it succeeds in producing empathic relatedness does not show up. This bears emphasizing: in some 285 pages of summary and analysis of the literary fictions of Dinaw Mengestu, Teju Cole, Aleksandar Hemon, Valeria Luiselli, Julie Otsuka, Junot Diaz, and some nonfiction, too, *Migrant Aesthetics* does not cite a single example of empathy that works right or functions as designed. This must give the reader pause.

For example, Junot Diaz's "The Curse" may be read as an encounter with all kinds of violence, especially sexual, culminating in soul murder, murdering the capacity for empathy. "Dominicanness" (from the Dominica Republic, the country) with the protagonist's (Yunior's) experience of "The Curse," and his compulsive promiscuity is the legacy of a long history of colonial misogyny and violence, culminating with the story "A Cheater's Guide to Love." As noted, Yunior has probably never seen an example of a healthy relationship nor will the reader find one here in Diaz—though obviously *Migrant Aesthetics* does not advocate for the violence, misogyny, and misguided genetic fallacy that two wrongs make a right.

My interpretation (not Carpio's) is that Junot Diaz's "The Curse" is Medusa's snake-haired Gorgon—the monstrous that turns one to

stone—literally in the story and emotionally in one’s reading. The reader is at risk of empathic distress, and the encounter with trauma, complex trauma, and moral trauma (Junot is both a survivor and a perpetrator) cannot be transfigured by Diaz’s literary art without radical empathy (see Chap. 9, Sections: “A Short ‘Ted Talk’ on Trauma and Radical Empathy” and “Medusa and the Mirror of Art as Transfiguring Trauma” and Chap. 13, throughout, for exemplification in Morrison’s *Beloved*).

The grievances against empathy begin early and often in *Migrant Aesthetics* as the author writes (2023: 4):

More broadly, the genre of immigrant literature depends on a model of reading founded on empathy—a model that my book takes to task. Literature promotes empathy, we are told, but empathy can easily slip into a projection of readers’ feelings and even into outright condescension.

As a reader, I am holding my head in my hands and rocking back-and-forth quasi-catatonically. Strictly speaking, projection is a breakdown of empathy, not empathy. I am in disbelief at the lack of common sense, lack of critical thinking, and, concerning, absence of argumentative charity in confusing empathy and projection. Projection is a misfiring and/or going off the rails of empathy. Projection is a “getting lost in translation” of empathy. Now attribute these to empathy and dismiss empathy. Once again, this must give one pause.

As regards “a model of reading founded on empathy” (2023: 4), please stop right there. Reading the story would not work—would not make any sense—would, strictly speaking, be unintelligible without empathy (as demonstrated above in Chap. 2: Section: “Empathy, a Way of Being, Not a Psychological Mechanism”). Without empathy, the actions and contingencies, the struggles and high spirits, setbacks and successes, that are represented in the story would be strange sounds and gestures appearing to an anthropologist from Mars or on her first day in an alien culture, prior to marshaling her empathic skills.

Never underestimate the power of storytelling, but absent empathy, it does not get traction. Reading is founded on empathy. Reading teaches one to walk in someone else’s shoes. Reading takes one to worlds that don’t exist, like the world of Hobbits, magicians, time-travel, or Junot Diaz’s “The Curse.” This calls out the convergence of reading and empathy—both open up new worlds, both provide vicarious experiences of the lives of Others, both point to possibilities that had not previously been

imagined. In both reading and empathy, we relate to an Other—in the one case in-person, in the other case, in-fiction, which subserves the vicarious presentation of imaginative narrative. The choice between expanding empathy and contesting empire is false, and an engagement with both is needed.

Carpio continues (2023: 8): “[...] [T]he writers I examine reject empathy as the main mode of rationality, opting instead for what Hannah Arendt called ‘representative thinking’ that is, they urge the reader to think, as themselves, *from the position of another person* and thus to call into question their own preconceptions and actions” [italics added]. Thus, *Migrant Aesthetics* rejects empathy while calling out “the position of another person,” which is precisely the folk definition of empathy.

On background, Hannah Arendt’s (1906–1975) reference here is to a single line in Immanuel Kant’s *Third Critique* (1791/93: AA 159) about “enlarged thinking” [*erweiterten [...] Denkungsart*], that is, to think from the perspective of the Other. This is the folk definition of empathy. This cipher of a single line, which remains unintegrated in Kant, became the inspiration for Arendt’s incomplete third volume of the *Life of the Mind* on political judgment. Once again, it is the folk definition of empathy. The fan out is challenging at this point. This single quote from Arendt plays such a significant role in *Migrant Aesthetics* that there is no avoiding a deep dive into Arendt scholarship.

THE BANALITY OF RADICAL EMPATHY

The challenge to empathy (and by implication to radical empathy) fans out in Namwali Serpell’s “The Banality of Empathy” (2019). This is a reference to Hannah Arendt’s book *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1971). One of Arendt’s recurring themes is that evil is a consequence of thoughtlessness. According to Arendt, Adolph Eichmann (1906–1962) was a simpleton, a “*Hans Wurst*” from the folktale, who did not think and just followed orders. The wanted-dead-or-alive poster for *Thoughtlessness* has Eichmann’s photo on it. The result of thoughtlessness was catastrophe. Demoralizingly, Eichmann had many “fellow travelers” in genocide.

This brings one to what has been in the background of this analysis—the intersection of empathy and radical evil. The evidence gathered by Arendt in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* supports the conclusion that Heinrich Himmler, Leader of the Nazi SS, used empathy in order to take good care

of his men, Nazi soldiers. Arendt does not use the word “empathy” here, although she describes a mechanism that provides input to empathy—emotional contagion and “the animal pity by which all normal men are affected in the presence of physical suffering” (Arendt 1971: 105–106). The parallel with empathy is striking, though, once again, empathy is not reducible to emotional contagion or animal pity.

The Holocaust is the very paradigm of an extreme situation. It represents a challenge to one’s radical empathy as one tries to grasp the meaning of historic events from afar in anguished, benumbed remembrance of trauma within trauma. Still, if one is willing to risk an encounter with empathic distress, it is found down this path. One can grasp the killing of a single individual as a heinous crime. One is challenged to grasp the mutual slaughter of uniformed soldiers on fields of battles in the blood-bath known as “history.” However, the systematic, bureaucratized, automated destruction of the Jewish people (and other minorities) of Europe by the Nazis between 1938 and 1945 is an unconditional challenge to one’s empathy. If one is defensively split off from it, one cannot empathize with it. If one cannot empathize with it, one cannot imagine it. If one cannot imagine it, one cannot punish it. If one cannot punish it, one cannot forgive it. This is the burden of empathic distress. One is stuck with empathic distress in a way that strangles what is possible for human beings; but in the face of which one has nonetheless to try to go forward into possibility. This is empathy the hard way—the challenge to work through the empathic distress—to attain radical empathy, which empathizes in the face of empathic distress. (Further on this in Chaps. 12 and 13.)

By invoking the formidable name and work of Hannah Arendt, who was herself a migrant refugee (note well!), a Jewish person fleeing from the Nazis, Serpall continues the thread started by Carpio (2023). Arendt rarely uses the word “empathy,” though, as noted, “animal pity” gets called out in the context of Himmler’s fake empathy (Arendt 1971: 105–106; see also Agosta 2010: 71–73). Arendt is not thought of as an advocate for empathy, though, in its own Kantian way, her work is rich in empathic understanding. In one of her few uses of the word “empathy,” cited immediately below, the otherwise astute Arendt implies that “empathy” requires becoming the Other in a kind of merger. Yet this would be the breakdown of empathy into emotional contagion. Other than this terminological slip, Arendt’s analysis is an incisive application of empathy to politics in “Truth and Politics” from *Between Past and Future*:

I form an opinion by considering a given issue from different viewpoints, by making present to my mind the standpoints of those who are absent; that is, I represent them. This process of representation does not blindly adopt the actual views of those who stand somewhere else, and hence look upon the world from a different perspective; this is a question neither of *empathy*, as though I tried to be or to feel like somebody else, nor of counting noses and joining a majority but of being and thinking in my own identity where actually I am not. The more people's standpoints I have present in my mind while I am pondering a given issue, and the better I can imagine how I would feel and think if I were in their place, the stronger will be my capacity for representative thinking and the more valid my final conclusions [...]. (Arendt 1968: 9; italics added)

Even in a thoughtless moment, more thinking occurs in Arendt's casual, throw-away use of a word—"empathy"—than in the entire dictionary. The word "empathy" is in principle dispensable here, and Arendt's lovely phrase "one trains one's imagination to go visiting [the Other]" is an exact description of empathic understanding (on imagination (fantasy) and empathy see Stotland et al. 1978; Margulies 1989). If necessary, Arendt may be read against herself. The simple introduction of the distinction "vicarious experience" of an Other's experience, which Arendt did not mention but which she might well credit, is sufficient to clarify the puzzling cases about becoming someone else. One does not blindly adopt the Other's point of view—one takes off one's own shoes before trying on the Other's. As an unrepentant Kantian, Arendt would align with Kant's *sensus communis* ("common sense" as an instrument of judgment), Kant's (1791/93: AA 159) "enlarged thinking," taking the perspectives of diverse Others. This is what enables judging by means of feelings as well as concepts (Kant's aesthetic judgment). This is not loss of one's self in projection and merger, but rather a thoughtful shifting of perspectives between self and Other. It is a false splitting to force a choice between feeling and thinking—both are required to have a complete experience of the Other—and complete empathy.

Regarding Arendt's use of the word "empathy" [*Einfühlung*] itself, it is likely she encountered it in Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1927), which she studied carefully. There Heidegger undercuts the phenomenologist Max Scheler's (1922) use of the term empathy [*Einfühlung*] in criticizing Theodor Lipps (1903), whose uses the term in his (Lipps') *Aesthetics*, in which Lipps defines empathy [*Einfühlung*] as a kind of

aesthetic projection of the subject's feelings onto art and nature (and the Other). (I disentangle this tangle of terms around Heidegger's use of Scheler's reference to Theodor Lipps, who, in turn, is referenced by Arendt (and Freud!)—but it took an entire book to do so (Agosta 2014). Note also that Edith Stein (1917) joins Max Scheler (1922) in criticizing Lipps' (1903) theory of projective empathy.)

The original definition of "empathy" in Lipps' aesthetics is hard to distinguish from projection (Lipps 1903; Lanzoni 2018). The examples of an angry storm at sea or the melancholy weeping willow trees or the smiling clouds and cheerful sunrise come to mind, in which a human emotion is displaced onto nature and seemingly necessarily so. It seems to be a design feature—if not defect—that human receptivity and understanding seem to be unable *not* to apprehend nature in that way.

If one empathizes thoughtlessly, if one applies empathy without thinking, then one gets the banality of empathy of Serpall's engaging title. The result may be unpredictable. One is at risk of empathy misfiring as projection, emotional contagion, conformity, and mistranslation. The parallel with Eichmann's thoughtless claim that he was "just" following orders is unavoidable. No good comes of thoughtlessness. A rigorous and critical empathy is required to guard against these risks, and Arendt, no advocate for sloppy anything, much less sloppy empathy, is halfway, but not all-the-way, there with her invocation of Kant's rigorous and critical endorsement of "enlarged thinking." The above-cited quotation from Arendt and this analysis of terms must count toward a clarification of the nuances of the matter of empathy in Arendt and her consistent dismissal of it. She was relying on Heidegger's deconstructing of Scheler's dismissal of Lipps' initial theory of projective empathy. Even if Arendt is not an empathy advocate, she is not an opponent.

Having profoundly misunderstood Arendt's admittedly complex position, Serpall's article next raises the question about narrative art: "If witnessing suffering firsthand doesn't spark good deeds, why do we think art about suffering will?" Though this may have been intended as a rhetorical question, the answer requires an empirical, fact-based inquiry. The standard Samaritan becomes the Good Samaritan when he stops to help the survivor of the assault, thereby creating neighborliness and community; whereas the Levite and Priest succumb to empathic distress and cross the road, thereby expanding indifference and alienation. These events get "narrativized" in the Parable of the same name, which, in turn, inspires some to good deeds, though Others are left paralyzed by empathic

distress. Contra Serpall, witnessing of suffering and narrating about it spark good deeds.

Thus, the answer to Serpall's question is direct: we think art will inspire good deeds because we find examples of art's doing so. The evidence: that is what happened. As Suzanne Keen (2007: 127–8) points out, some stories such as Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* have an outsized effect on enlarged thinking (Kant's term, not Keen's) and politics, rallying people to the cause of the abolition of slavery; whereas other novels such as *The Turner Diaries* may arguably have given comfort to white supremacy and provided bomb-making instructions to domestic terrorists.

The equally important, but unaddressed, issue is to distinguish how art can transfigure the pain and suffering of the survivor (and suffering humanity at large), overcoming trauma, or how such attempts risk devolving into what is sometimes called "trauma porn," engaging the graphical description of trauma without the "disinterestedness of art," resulting in a kind of "orgasm" of aggressive violent fantasies. (As a benchmark, and acknowledging that reasonable people may disagree, an example of trauma porn (other than snuff videos on the dark web) would be Mel Gibson's film (2004), *The Passion of the Christ*.)

Arendt is sometimes accused, I believe unfairly, of being tin-eared in her statements about US race relations and desegregation, especially in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957. When the 13-year-old Arendt was subjected to antisemitic comments by her teacher at school in Königsberg, Germany, 1919, her mother withdrew her from school under protest protocol and home-schooled Hannah, before sending her off to Berlin for a secondary education. Try to appreciate the picture: young Hannah reading the leather-bound Kantian first *Critique* in her late father's vast library. Arendt adopts a position, not a person, regarding US race relations (circa 1957!), though in Arendt's defense that is not all she does. If Arendt had known about Emmet Till (1941–1955), she might have adopted him. "Positions not persons" is Carpio's slogan (2023: 8, 13, 201). It doesn't work. This presents a false choice between a position and a person, similar to the false choice between empathy and compassion, between expanded empathy and reduced racism. The young black children in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957 needed to get into the white school to get books from the school library as some black families did not own a single book other than the bible (which, in a pinch, is an excellent choice, nevertheless...), nor did segregated black schools have adequate libraries. That Arendt's empathy misfires no more means that she lacks empathy or that empathy

is invalid than that a driver who forgets to use her turn signal does not know how to drive (though she may get a citation!).

What is rarely noted by Arendt scholars is Arendt's own strategic use of empathy in escaping from the Nazis. Having been arrested with Zionist propaganda by the Nazis, she finds herself in the Gestapo *Keller* (basement prison). Arendt builds an empathic rapport with the Gestapo prosecuting attorney, who is interviewing her in the same basement from which other Jewish people are deported to Buchenwald or Dachau. Arendt's predicament does not map directly to the Trolley Car Dilemma (see above Chap. 1, Section: "Connecting the Dots Between Tragedy and Empathy"), but it is parallel in that the agent (Arendt) is confronted with nothing but bad choices. She cannot implicate her Zionist colleagues or they are deported. If she tries to defend herself by demanding an attorney, she also implicates her colleagues, since they would be providing traceable funds, and even worse, she gets entangled in the Nazi system of "justice," and then (high probability) Arendt gets deported. Yet Arendt was released on her own recognizance. This result was not predictable. Years later Arendt speaks of it fondly as an adventure; and indeed it was, in large part, due to Arendt's interpersonal empathy. Now while one will never know all the nuances—in the famous interview with Günther Gaus (1964)—Arendt makes it sound like part of her tactic to save her own life was that she bats her eyelashes and smiles affectionately at the young, naïve Gestapo prosecutor, who has just been transferred from the criminal to the political division—more grim humor—but, don't laugh—it worked. Never underestimate the power of empathy. See Arendt's interview with English subtitles "*Hannah Arendt: Im Gespräch mit Günter Gaus*" (Arendt 1964). Thus, never having used the word "empathy" positively so much as one time in Arendt's life work, the practice saved her life.

MIMESIS OF OTHER MINDS: ACCESS TO THE OTHER

This section engages with Lisa Zunshine (2006, 2018), who is not so much a critic of empathy as one who declines to comment on it, so to speak, displaying a-pathic about empathy. Yet Zunshine's commanding position in defining cognitive literary criticism is such that she is regularly cited, at least by my anonymous reviewers, as presenting an alternative to empathy. This is a false choice (nor one that is necessarily invoked by Zunshine, though she is implicated by her fellow-travelers in all things relating to theory of mind (ToM)).

On background, working independently, Robert Gordon and Jane Heal introduced simulation theory, arguably replacing the problem of other minds with mindreading (Gordon 1986, 1995; Heal 1986, 1995; Nichols and Stich 2003; Metzinger 2004; Tomasello 1999).¹ Mindreading has been further systematized and transformed by Alvin Goldman (2006), who this account will take as exemplary. The application to literary criticism (now *cognitive* literary criticism) is elaborated by Lisa Zunshine's (2006, 2018) contribution. (This section is the tip of the iceberg, in spite of its length. For the iceberg itself, see *Empathy Lessons*, 2nd Edition, (Agosta 2024) entitled "Alternative facts, dangerous half-truths, and total nonsense—about empathy.")

The classical philosophical problem of how one knows other minds has largely been replaced with the cognitive science task of mindreading—*simulating* other minds or, alternatively, discovering or inventing an account of how one's approach to the otherness of the Other develops a theory of mind.² The folk definition of empathy as talking a walk in the Other's shoes—perspective taking—is the key distinction to appreciating that Others have a mind—have consciousness—are "minded" with mind—as is the case with oneself. Elaborating an account of this is also called "theory of mind" (ToM) and is used synonymously (and at least overlaps extensively with) *simulating* other minds. ToM is close to the

¹ Strictly speaking Metzinger and Tomasello are not cognitive scientists in the more rigorous sense of the term, but their work is so significant for all matters related thereto, each in his own separate way, that they belong on the list of big ideas in human being in neuropsychophenomenology. See also "Folk psychology as mental simulation," <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/folkpsych-simulation/>

² In the continental tradition, the classical statement of the problem is to be found in E. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, (1929/1931), D. Cairns (tr.), the Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973; Edith Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, (1917), W. Stein (tr.), the Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970, (*Zum Problem der Einfühlung*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Freiburg, 1917); Max Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, (1922), Peter Heath (tr.), Hamden, CN: Archon Books, 1979, (*Späte Schriften in Gesammelte Werke*, Maria Scheler and Manfred Frings (eds.), Vol. 9, Bern: Franke Publishing, 1976); in the analytic tradition, the exchange between John Wisdom, Symposium: Other minds, (1946), in *Other Minds*, (1968), Berkeley: University of California Press: 206–229 and J.L. Austin, Other minds, (1946), in *Classics in Analytic Philosophy*, R.R. Ammerman (ed.), New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965: 353–78 defines the terms of the debate, but did not lay it to rest. For example, see Donald Davidson, The irreducibility of the concept of self, (1998), in *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001: 85–91; Tom Nagel, *The View From Nowhere*, (1986), Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986 and John Searle, *Intentionality: an Essay in the Philosophy of Mind*, (1983), Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983.

heart of cognitive literary criticism and is definitive of why we humans are engaged with fiction, namely, we are engaged in perspective taking.

The existence of so many accounts and theories, ranging from introspective approaches to behaviorist ones, including cognitive literary criticism, is a symptom that the underlying problematic has ambiguities that remain unresolved. The ongoing, vexing debates about one's relation to the Other may well be due to the problem having the form of a single compelling idea from Immanuel Kant (1787). This is what Kant called an "antinomy"—an unavoidable conflict of reason with itself that originates in the structure and application of reasoning to experience—that is, a conflict of reason about the identity and difference of the self and the Other, sometimes also called "dialectical illusion." For those who are not professional philosopher, a useful comparison from the history of science is the extensive documentation of canals on the planet Mars by Percival Lowell (1906) about which much was published. There are no canals on Mars. Lowell was viewing the canal-like blood vessels in his own eyes, anomalously reflected in the lens (Jaroff 2002).

The proposal is not that this problem of access to the Other is so much "solved" in a logical sense, as resolved, dissolved, completed, consummated, finalized, quiesced, contained, and made whole with no loose ends, in and by the story, in its thousands and one versions including alienation and reconciliation, of the Other's relationship with the self. Further examples of this (in addition to Frost's above-cited poem on the "Mending Wall") are provided throughout Chap. 5, "Empathy in the Context of Fiction and in the Folktale" and in Chap. 14, Section: "Empathy and Trembling."

The suggestion is that literary artworks have been providing such "simulations" long before the emergence of cognitive science only calling it "mimesis." Nevertheless, in the spirit of a charitable reading, it is useful to consider the contribution of simulation in the context of "mindreading." It is further challenge that empathy cannot be reducible to mindreading (or vice versa), and the many-to-many relationship between them requires consideration.

However, why use the loaded term "mimesis" as in "mimesis of other minds" rather than simply "representation"? Introducing a term with such a long history incurs the risk that one will never get to the main action of engaging with the consciousness of the Other in the realist novel much less in Beckett or the *Nouveau Roman* authors such as Alain Robbe-Grillet or Nathalie Sarraute. This requires we take a step back to provide context,

granted Sarraute's innovation was to leave context out of her literary contributions.

The risk of introducing "mimesis" must be incurred for three reasons. (1) As introspection was being driven out of philosophy and the science of psychology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by the innovations and ascetic reductionism of behaviorism, literature was welcoming the exiled refuges—the introspective processes of the realist and modernist novelists. (2) Literature had (and has) no problem with exploring, articulating, and voicing introspection and introspective-like reflections of consciousness. Hegelian teleology notwithstanding, no way exists that this welcoming attitude on the part of literary innovators could have been planned, and in a literary context "mimesis" is precisely the proper term for the activity of the poet, characters, and audience. (3) By bringing the term "mimesis" into connection with "consciousness" and "other minds," a definition of "mimesis" for our own age of narrated monologue is brought forth.

- (1) As behaviorism was driving introspection out of philosophy of mind (and psychology (Lyons 1986)), introspection was simultaneously emerging in the nineteenth-century realist novel as a significant, if not dominant, presence in the character's interior conversation and "voice over" of the narrator. Now fast forward from the realist novel to the modern novel such as emerges in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* or in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. This is not merely a matter of replacing "She said" with "I thought" or "She said to herself" with "I thought to myself," but of representing the grammatical abridging, syntactical abbreviation, semantic conciseness of verbal thought itself. The language of the text of the *Nouveau Roman* (defined expansively to include Joyce, Woolf, and Beckett) becomes telegraphic as pronouns are omitted as being obvious (since the thinker knows who or what she is talking about) and words are used idiosyncratically. For example, nouns are used as verbs and vice versa. The color "grey" is used as a verb participle, "greying," to become gray. (Examples might be multiplied.)

The issue of the transparency of consciousness by which mimesis may reach an Other is useful, in turn, to integrate the cognitive innovations provided by simulation, and the work of Dorrit Cohn is a powerful pace to start. Cohn (1978: 99) innovates with the distinction narrated

monologue and its diverse forms. She explicitly claims to provide a “mimesis of consciousness” (1978: 7), and Paul Ricœur honors Cohn by attributing to her the distinction “mimesis of other minds” (1983: 45) even though the phrase does *not* occur in Cohn. Arguably this distinction is implied in Cohn, but not the exact phrase. We engage both phrases—mimesis of other minds and mimesis of consciousness.

This “mimesis of other minds” (Dorrit Cohn (1978)) does not map directly to empathy, for “mimesis of other minds” is initially a “one body” problem—not a conversation in the first person that the writer is having with her- or himself, but a description of the “movements of the mind”—including images, feelings, fragments of verbal thinking. However, this material swirling around in one’s consciousness of oneself is significant as input to the empathic process. The “movements of the mind” so powerfully captured by narrated monologue are precisely the source of judgment, evaluation, pre-judice (in the sense of pre-understanding) that one has to set aside or quarantine to appreciate the Other’s perspective and access the Other with empathy.

- (2) Introspection gains a new, radical intensity and depth, not only in quoted monologue, but in “narrated monologue” (Cohn 1978: 99–140), which however, is a linguistic, not a psychological, distinction. This is not the character talking to herself, within quotation marks, but rather the narrator describing what it is that the character is thinking, experiencing, and considering with and to herself.

On background, Cohn claims that the “narrated monologue” of the character in a story has been relatively neglected in English literary criticism, and, is best known as *style indirect libre* [free indirect style/discourse] in French, or *erlebten Rede* [experienced/lived discourse] in German. “Narrated monologue” is a form of discourse, both expressed and silent, enabling a linguistically based approach that avoids the traps of psychology that motivated the behavioristic excesses and reaction in the first place.

What seemed to readers of the novels of Dickens and Tolstoy (as these readers encounter Joyce’s *Ulysses*) to be a highly unconventional and reality bending stream of consciousness, was an increasingly accurate approximation to how most people actually do in fact think when they are not over-intellectualizing. The reader encountered the expression of highly condensed and telegraphic fragments of words, feelings, and images—a

translation on the part of the author of preverbal movement of thought into “narrated monologue” of unspoken, noncommunicative, abridged, abbreviated quasi-verbal thinking. Cohn writes (1978: 92–93):

The monologues of [Joyce’s] *Ulysses* may be regarded as a particularly clear instance of the historical dimension of realism Roman Jakobson defined in his essay “On Realism in Art”; the revolutionary artist deforms the existing artistic canons for the sake of closer imitation of reality; the conservative public misunderstands the deformation of the canon as a distortion of reality. The first generation of *Ulysses*’ readers, conditioned by a long tradition of monologues modeled on dialogues, could only have experienced Bloom’s and Molly’s mental productions as radical departures from realistic representations. [...] Yet it seems likely that Joyce himself aimed at an accurate representation rather than an artful stylization of mental language. Today’s reader is more likely than his grandparents to take Joyce’s conception of verbal thought for granted, to accept the notion that it differs from communicative speech [...] as supremely convincing achievements of formal mimeticism.

The telegraphic, concise, seemingly truncated utterances lack parts of normal written syntax, because the thinking person already knows what s/he is thinking about in the immediate moment and context. The resulting stream of consciousness is a radical ellipsis (Cohn 1978: 96), in which the subject or context need not be specified to communicate with a second or third person for whom the context must be recreated. Thus, what seems to be unrealistic psychobabble is actually the most accurate representation of what really occur in life—but readerly convention, accustomed necessarily to having everything unpacked for it, has not yet caught up with the microscopic analysis of moment-by-moment thought being represented on the written page. The thinker in the text knows what she is thinking about and need not specify all the details such as pronouns and subjects that the writer has to add if the character’s thought is to make sense with a conversation partner. (See also Lev Vygotsky (1934), the psycholinguist, student, and critic of Jean Piaget (1934), whose work on inner speech as highly telegraphic, condensed, abbreviated, and implying the context, inspired generations of thinkers, including Cohn.) Thus, the risk to the reader is that the more accurate the representation of inner speech (Cohn’s “supreme achievement of formal mimeticism”), the less readable the text is. What is missing is the context with which the character was engaging or

to which a character such as Joyce's Bloom was referring. Arguably supplying the context is the literary critic's full employment program.

- (3) Paul Ricœur (1983: 45–46), closely following Aristotle's *Poetics* (330 BCE), distinguishes three aspects of mimesis (see Chap. 2, Section: "The Speech Act of Storytelling: Empathic Responsiveness") reviewed briefly here. Mimesis₁ is the distinction that breaks opens the space of artistic performance for the possibilities of human action, for fiction, for the "as if." The ensemble of actions that traverse the space of possibilities for triumph and tragedy connect the work and form the plot (*muthos*) or mimesis₂. The breaking open of action on the stage and the plot requires a receptivity and that, according to Ricœur, is what the attentive looking and listening of the reader or audience bring to the artwork, mimesis₃.

By bringing mimesis (in any aspect) into the vicinity of engaging other minds and other individuals, a fourth aspect of mimesis (in addition to Ricœur's three) emerges—mimesis₄. "*Mimesis* of other minds" means "*simulating* other minds." Key term: simulation. For "simulation," the etymological dictionary (Partridge 1958: 584) sends the reader to the "same," which includes "simulacrum"; "dissemble," "pretend," and by implication "make-believe" (see Walton *Mimesis as Make-Believe* (1990)); "imitation"; and, in our own time of computer simulations, producing the same result by other methods (e.g., silicon chips vs. biological neurons vs. ropes and pulleys). In a famous example, Lord Kelvin devised a method of *simulating* the actions of the tides using ropes and pulleys (see Craik 1943: 51).

In this engagement with mimesis of other minds, the simulation is a complex coordination game (e.g., Pavel 1986: 124) that, in addition to shifting perspectives, interweaves three aspects of empathy: communication of affect between self and Other, relatedness to the Other as possibility, and an integrating responsiveness to the Other by the self, based on the previous two factors. Simulation is not a mere transfer or displacement of sense, but producing a qualitatively identical result using a different method, media, and/or means. The imagination is the simulator.

"Mindreading" (also called "theory of mind (ToM)") is now one of those dynamic terms that has become, as Kant wrote in a related matter of dialectical illusion, "a battle field of endless controversies," a specific drill

687 down on this approach is useful. In *Simulating Minds*, Alvin Goldman
 688 (2006) writes:

689 [S]imulation theory ... says that ordinary people fix their targets' mental
 690 states by trying to replicate or emulate them. It says that mindreading
 691 includes a crucial role for *putting oneself in other's shoes*. It may even be part
 692 of the brain's design to generate mental states that match, or resonate with,
 693 states of people one is observing. Thus, mindreading is an extended form of
 694 empathy (where this term's emotive and caring connotation is bracketed).
 695 (2006: 176fnt; italic added)

696 This raises several nice points. In its most straightforward form, citing the
 697 folk definition of empathy, simulation of the Other enables access to the
 698 Other's mental life without inference or introspection, an extended form
 699 of empathy, relying on "mindreading." In its basic form, simulation
 700 involves the transmission of affects via a subpersonal neurological mecha-
 701 nism, resembling emotional contagion, possibly implemented by a mirror-
 702 ing system; in its higher form, simulation requires decoding the facial
 703 expressions of Others and the integration of these into a model of
 704 the Other.

705 Without wishing to be argumentatively uncharitable—but if I am, so be
 706 it—most students of the humanities do not "fix targets," we relate to
 707 other human beings. One sees the problem with the entire project. At
 708 times, the simulation involved comes perilously close to the discredited
 709 argument by analogy to the access and existence of other minds. As a solu-
 710 tion to the problem of other minds, the argument from analogy has been
 711 debunked early and often. It is the position of this work that analogical
 712 reasoning is what is most valuable about simulation; but that analogy, in
 713 its diverse forms, is most useable in the context of an already ongoing
 714 social, intersubjective, communal interrelation, that is, empathic context.
 715 In contrast, analogy is of limited value, indeed it is misleading, if used as
 716 an argument to try to establish the relationship between oneself and the
 717 other individual in the first place.

718 Separating empathy into cognitive, emotive (affective), and caring
 719 dimensions, as accomplished in Goldman, is a useful move. "Divide and
 720 conquer" is a powerful tactic for managing complexity. It would be a sepa-
 721 rate debate that what Goldman is here alluding to as the "caring" dimen-
 722 sion of empathy already has a name, "altruism," and it is controversial to
 723 attribute caring (or altruism) to empathy, notwithstanding an interesting

relationship and dynamic between the two separate phenomena. (Note that Goldman makes caring a part of empathy, under this reading, whereas I do not. See Chap. 14, Section: “The Natural Empath Encounters the Good Samaritan.”)

“Bracketing” empathy’s “emotive” aspects, as proposed by Goldman, brackets the better part of what empathy is about. Separating out the emotive dimension throws out the empathic baby with the emotional bath water. Empathy is *not* limited to emotional experiences, either by Goldman or anyone; and individuals empathize with a wide variety of feelings, physical sensations, moods, felt affects, itches, tickles, desires, coughs (Chap. 2, Section: “The Intersection of Empathy and Mimesis”), and stimuli that Others experience. Still, if this reading of Goldman is accurate, then none of his examples instantiate sexual desire, the will to accumulate power, or any complex conative goal, which are the major themes of literary art. Note that Alvin Goldman (2006) is used as a representative example of the cognitive science of interest to cognitive literary criticism, though some cognitive scientists and literary critics disagree with him (perhaps even more after reading this). In any case, Goldman is a good example of the attempt of neuroscience to colonize the Humanities, against which I am pushing back. Back to literary texts!

Writing at about the same time as Goldman (2006), Lisa Zunshine (2006) also bracketed the emotive dimension in favor of perspective taking, resulting in leaving out “empathy” altogether. There are three mentions of “empathy” in Zunshine’s (2006, 2018) indexes and all take distance from it. Zunshine endorses the position that theory of mind (ToM) is what brings literature to life, enables readers and writers to “get it,” namely, why we read literature in that the characters (the Others) are being represented as minded like oneself. People are endlessly curious and interested in what their neighbors are thinking and doing—and for so many reasons—and literature addresses that desire to know, among other methods, by shifting perspectives, by taking a walk in the Other’s shoes, regardless of whether one takes off one’s own shoes first.

On background, according to Zunshine, theory of mind (ToM) is defined as the capacity to explain people’s behavior as caused by their unobservable mental states, thoughts, feelings, and intentions. In this context of embeddedness, Zunshine provides a formidable and rich reading of world literature. For example:

They [texts] all do [i.e., use ToM] insofar *as every single act of writing and reading fiction deploys our ToM*, and the overall cognitive outcome of such deployment is never fully predictable. Thus when I refer to Woolf's or Richardson's or James's experimentation with their readers' ToM and/or metarepresentational ability, what I really claim is that they push to their limits certain aspects of the general, constant, ongoing experimentation with the human mind that constitutes the process of reading and writing fiction. (Zunshine 2006: 73; italics added)

Every single one of our interpretations, honest mistakes, willful inventions, disagreements, and historical groundings will be imperceptibly but inescapably enmeshed with our ability to keep track of who in this novel think what and when. (If you doubt it, try making a single argument interpreting Clarissa [Dalloway (Woolf 1925)] within any framework of your choice without implicitly relying on such source monitoring!) Because of its obsessive, unrelenting focus on people's representations of other people's mental states, Clarissa continues to structure our interpretations in this particular way. (Zunshine 2006: 100; ["thinks" = "experiences"])

What is hidden in plain view is the folk definition of empathy. What has been overlooked is that this definition of mindedness (Theory of Mind (ToM)) is identical with the folk definition of empathy, talking a walk in the shoes of the Other (whether or not one remembers to take off one's own first (to avoid projection)). What Zunshine says about ToM—namely, “Theory of mind makes reading fiction possible” (2006: 36)—is a special case of the folk definition of empathy—what this work calls “empathic interpretation”—walking in the shoes of the Other and may usefully have been said by her about empathy). Lest any doubt persist about which function is derivative—ToM or empathy, one may quote Zunshine. She points out that ToM (theory of mind) is a *second-order* intentionality (2006: 28):

For example, ‘I believe that you desire X,’ or Peter Walsh thinks that Clarissa ‘would think [him] a failure’ (43)—the levels of intentionality can ‘recurse’ [become recursive] further back, [...] as in ‘I believe that you think that she believes that he thinks that X’.

The answer is direct. In so far as empathy directly relates to the Other, empathy is a first order intentionality—not a second order one (regarding ToM) as Zunshine accurately notes. ToM is thus derivative—the act of

empathy directly intends a relatedness to the Other. For example, the individual is present to, related to, aware *of*, the Other. “The boss’s anger could be felt”; Dr. Lygates’s pain mingled with his awareness of Rosie’s (Eliot 1871: 593); the Samaritan experienced the survivor’s suffering vicariously (and decided to get involved); Hanno “got it” that his father (Thomas) was experiencing longing like his own; listening to Natasha, Prince Andrei was filled with vitality and aliveness. This is the return of “empathy degree zero” at the heart of mindedness, and it is empathy that makes ToM tick (see Chap. 8, Section: “A Stress Test for Empathy: Other Minds”).

Zunshine makes good use of the “embeddedness” of relative (“that”) clauses, one of the recursive features of syntactical languages that elevates human language above the signaling systems such as employed by great apes and other mammals. The “secret life” of cognitive literary criticism (Zunshine 2018), including social neuroscience and cognitive psychology, is that human grammar allows recursive “that clauses,” embedding propositional attitudes within propositional attitudes at a degree of nesting limited only by the limits of working memory—about seven plus or minus two levels.

Contra Zunshine, literature is not uniquely definable by the number of embeddings, though literacy fiction contains many. The grain of truth here is that “that clause” embeddings are a candidate measure of complexity in both spoken and written language. The “that clauses” form a “push down stack” that is theoretically unlimited, though practical limits of short-term memory apply. In a line made famous by Richard Feynman, “there’s plenty of room at the bottom” (see Berwick and Chomsky (2016) where this is quoted along with a proper explanation of recursion). The secret life of literature—the actual secret, not the title of the book (2018), is no secret—both written and the commonest everyday spoken language multiply levels of recursion without prior constraint.

It is very compelling to show the reader a picture of what area of the brain “lights up”—that is, the neurons are activated by blood-rich oxygen because they are working hard—when one is reading a given text. Indeed much of the work done under the label of “empathic interpretation” in this work can be redescribed without remainder by cognitive literary criticism perspective taking (see also Zenko (2015) and Baron-Cohen (1995) on “top down” empathy). However, what cannot be redescribed is empathic receptivity, empathic understanding of possibility, and empathic responsiveness. In addition, as the always astute Suzanne Keen (2007: 13)

notes the functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) apparatus is a rather blunt instrument. It indicates quantitatively that a given person is more activated, stimulated, engaged, for example, by reading white supremacist Andrew MacDonald's *The Turner Diaries* than by George Eliot's *Middlemarch*. However, the qualitative expansion or contraction of one's empathy (or cognition) remains in doubt. The neuro-hype has become so extensive that a concise take-down of the colonization by neuroscience of various disciplines, including the humanities, is needed. One is available (consult Sally Satel and Mark Lilienfeld on *Brainwashed: The Seductive Appeal of Mindless Neuroscience* (2013)).

One dismisses empathy at one's peril. Asserting that embeddedness is a differentiator of fiction from history, ordinary conversation, etc. is not accurate. Understanding the vast majority of the third-level embeddings of mental states (and linguistic clauses) that form the heart of Zunshine's (2018) work would be impossible unless the reader had a refined capacity for empathy. Third-level embedded mental states are *pervasive* in historical, journalistic, or political narratives as well as every day, common spoked language, all of which involve human conversations. For example, the Watergate transcripts contain many examples of embeddedness in everyday conversation (people tying themselves up in verbal knots to the effect that the president did not know that John knew that Gordon believed that the break-in occurred). The formidable reading of world literature based on embeddedness itself has a secret within the secret—the reading uses a derivative subset of empathic interpretation (my phrase not Zunshine's), which relates empathy to perspective taking (theory of mind, broadly understood).

One key distinction that differentiates a rigorous and critical empathy from cognitive literary criticism's perspective taking is joint attentionality. In understanding joint attentionality (and intentionality) the placing of the parenthesis is crucial. It is *not*: I experience fear of the boss and you experience (your own) fear of (the same) boss. Rather: I experience (you are afraid of the boss (but, on the contrary, I like the boss)). My awareness of fear is mediated by vicarious awareness of your fear. In joint intentionality, the one person "gets it" that the other person is engaged in relation to an object; but the one person is engaged with the relation the Other has to the object, not with the object itself. Similar examples of what is called "joint attentionality" are abundant in reading narratives, going to the movies, and attending theatrical performances. The experiences of the audience are vicarious ones. It is a further point beyond the scope of this

book, but one easy to establish, that the joint *attentionality* is supported 875
 by a joint *intentionality*, intentionality being the mental act favored by 876
 phenomenologists. There is something new under the sun after all, and 877
 those readers interested in joint intentionality and social referencing may 878
 usefully follow up the references to Simon Baron-Cohen (1995), Peter 879
 Hobson (2005), and Michael Tomasello (2014). 880

Notwithstanding Lisa Zunshine's (2006, 2018) dismissal of the term 881
 "empathy," her work is rich in it, but, as noted, does not engage aspects 882
 of empathy other than perspective taking (those other aspects being 883
 empathic receptivity, empathic understanding, and empathic responsive- 884
 ness). On background, Boris A. Uspensky (1970/74) developed an entire 885
 poetics based on the dynamics of perspective taking in literature, and, 886
 given Zunshine's background in all things relating to the Russian lan- 887
 guage and literature, it is likely that she is familiar with it. This fundamen- 888
 tal work of Uspensky may usefully be explored as the "secret" of Zunshine's 889
 own (though I do not find it in a footnote or index entry). Going forward 890
 (further on Uspensky in Chap. 5), Uspensky will be given historical, devel- 891
 opmental preference. Following our own good advice, no need exists to 892
 force a choice between empathic interpretation and perspective taking. 893
 The embeddedness of alternate points of view in the multi-dimensional 894
 definition of empathy is pervasive and derivable from it. One cannot but 895
 wonder if the neglect of empathy is a function of resistances to it. Interested 896
 readers may explore the motivations for and transformations of resistance 897
 to empathy in a separate argumentative treatment (Agosta 2015: 14–64). 898
 Consistent with the position of this work, that stories provide resolutions 899
 (if not solutions), an empathic humanism declines the false choices 900
 between empathy and compassion, empathy and enlarged thinking, empa- 901
 thy and (contested) empire, and now empathy and mindedness. (This is 902
 elaborated in Chap. 14: "Concluding Thoughts: In Search of an Empathic 903
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Uncorrected Proof

Author Queries

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Queries	Details Required	Author's Response
AU1	Ref. "Hoffer 1953" is cited in text but not provided in the reference list. Please provide details in the list or delete the citation from the text.	
AU2	As per inhouse style, bold formatting has been removed from the text " Reading teaches one to walk in ... ". Please confirm.	
AU3	Please check if "talking a walk" in sentence "The folk definition of empathy ..." is correct as is.	
AU4	Ref. "Piaget (1934)" is cited in text but not provided in the reference list. Please provide details in the list or delete the citation from the text.	
AU5	Please provide the opening parenthesis for the closing parenthesis ending with "... have been said by her about empathy)".	
AU6	Ref. "Tomasello (2014)" is cited in text but not provided in the reference list. Please provide details in the list or delete the citation from the text.	
AU7	References "Aristotle (1951), Barthes (1968), Descartes (1641), Karpeles (2008), Piaget (1930), Scheler (1913), Wittgenstein (1921), Wittgenstein (1945), Zaki (2019)" were not cited anywhere in the text. Please provide in text citation or delete the reference from the reference list.	