

## **AFFECT AND NARRATIVE**

### **A Model of Response to Stories**

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Literary narratives are primarily about people, their experiences, behaviour and goals, and about relationships between people. Recent studies in social cognition have suggested that affect is the primary medium in which social episodes and information about the self are represented. It is argued that theories of text processing that adopt an information processing model are overlooking a key component in how we respond to narrative. The affective modes by which we understand people and ourselves may direct the information processing aspects of story response. An affect-based model of literary narrative is outlined in this paper, in which it is argued that three properties of affect are implicated in story understanding: self-reference, anticipation, and domain-crossing. By their means, affect plays a constructive role in guiding response to ambiguities and conflicts at the level of schemata. Two empirical studies are reported which provide support for the model.

### **1. Introduction**

For the reader literary stories usually seem polysemous, rich in implications, ambiguous, and indeterminate. To the extent that such prose is complex a wide variety of interpretations is likely from different readers. Despite an increasing sophistication in theories of story structure, accounting for the processes involved in understanding stories at the highest literary level is still problematic. Script and schema theories or story grammars are effective in analysing only relatively simple material, such as newspaper reports (Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983)), children's stories (Mandler and Johnson (1977)), or folk tales (Beaugrande and Colby (1979)). The approach is less convincing or breaks down when confronted with complex literary examples. It will be suggested in this paper that other principles are at work during comprehension of literary stories which are prior to the processes embodied in schema theory or story grammars.

Literary stories are generally about people in social situations. It seems likely, then, that readers will draw on their normal modes of understanding

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people and encoding social episodes when reading stories. Although social cognition has tended to draw on an information processing model, in which prototypes, scripts or schemata have provided an explanatory framework (for a representative selection of papers, see Wyer and Srull (1984)), this approach has been criticized for being too cognitive. Forgas (1981) has shown the primacy of affect in modelling social situations; from a different standpoint, Figurski (1987) and Miall (1986) demonstrated the key role of the self, experienced directly as a source of affects and attitudes, in person perception and memory. If understanding of the self and perception of social episodes involve a central role for affect, it seems likely that affect also plays a significant part in response to narrative.

Stories, it is true, are intended to entertain, to excite interest and to arouse various types of affective response (Brewer and Lichtenstein (1982)). It is also possible to map affective events and relationships in terms of the content or plot of a narrative (Dyer (1983); Anderson and McMaster (1982); Lehnert and Vine (1987)). But is affect more than content, and more than an accompaniment or outcome of the process of understanding? The proposal made in this paper is that affect plays the primary role in understanding literary stories, governing the cognitive processes of comprehension which have been described in the story grammar or schema theory approach.

I shall be pointing to three aspects of affect which offer a framework for understanding response to narrative. Affect is self-referential, it enables cross-domain linking, and above all it acts in an anticipatory manner – it is the vehicle for predictions. It will be shown how each of these features casts a useful light on questions of interest to a theory of narrative. In addition, since narratives involve characters, we should expect to find that a reader's interpretive strategies will demonstrate features in common with what we know about interpreting real characters and social episodes. If, as research shows, affect plays a central role in social understanding, then it makes sense to suppose that affect is central to reader response too. An appropriate context for such a view lies in what I will call the defamiliarization model of response.

This alternative approach to narrative derives from Romantic theory, reappears with the Russian Formalists, then underlies models such as those of Perry (1979) and Iser (1978). It assumes that there is a set of norms and conventions which a literary text calls into play, only to unsettle them in some way and point to an alternative interpretation of reality, or (in some modernist texts) the impossibility of a definite interpretation. This model of narrative provides a framework for the present study, although some of its features will be called into question, in particular its reliance on cognitive explanations.

What are readers doing in affective terms when they read? In the account of Perry (1979), response takes place on two levels. Comprehension involves relating the text to existing knowledge of the world, which can be described as codes, frames, schemata, etc.; but there is also the sequential, experiential

aspect of reading which uncovers ambiguity, indeterminacy, and conflict between schemata, and these require the reader's interpretative activity, during which schemata are shifted, transformed, or superseded. Iser points to the same process: the schemata of the 'primary code' are transcended through the reader's activity in creating the secondary, or 'aesthetic' code (Iser (1978: 92)), which represents the search for a more adequate framework for relating the given parts of the text. Thus, as Iser puts it, 'As we read, we oscillate to a greater or lesser degree between the building and breaking of illusions'. There is a defamiliarizing, in other words, of the reader's schemata (Iser (1980: 62–64)): such schemata provide an inadequate basis for understanding the text. As Spiro (1982) points out, when schemata are 'overlearned', the comprehension process shifts towards the evaluative components of response. It is where schemata are inadequate or in conflict, therefore, that affect enters as a guiding force. Since the reader's schemata, or norms, have been implicated, his interests are at stake: his motives for holding them are now in question. As other studies have shown (Spiro, Crismore and Turner (1982)), when no coherent schema is available and the reader is in a state of uncertainty, it is the affective response which takes over. This is because of the three aspects of affect I referred to above: self-reference, domain-crossing, and anticipation.

If schema knowledge is inadequate the reader must have recourse to an orienting level which is logically prior. The rationale for a schema lies within what Klinger (1978) has called the current concerns of the self. Where a schema is unavailable or inconclusive as a basis for interpretation, it is the implications for the self which will be consulted. The concerns of the self appear to be instantiated primarily in affective terms (Miall (1986)), thus the response of the reader to uncertainty is to consult the affective significance of the situation for the self. An affective response having been made, affect will then guide the formation or appropriation of a schema adequate to the developing narrative. In this sense, where defamiliarization is taking place, affect is prior to the development of schema-based understanding, and can thus be said to anticipate the formation of an adequate schema; affect will retrieve and direct the necessary information during this process of schema formation.

It is also logical to propose that if the initial schemata of response to a narrative are proved inadequate, a search for alternative concepts beyond the domain of those schemata must be set in motion. The focal material of the story remains unchanged; the task is to construct a more satisfactory interpretative framework. Thus the search which takes place, under the guidance of affect, must extend to domains normally remote from the focal material. It is in this sense that the process of affect is cross-domain: concepts in the focal domain are reinterpreted in the light of concepts from a more remote domain. The role of affect in linking disparate domains has been discussed by previous workers (e.g. Bruner (1966: 12–13); Bower and Cohen (1982: 329)); it has also

been proposed as the basis for understanding metaphors (Miall (1987)). In summary, under the direction of affect, the reading of a literary story will result in the application of an existing schema in an unfamiliar domain or the creation of a new schema. As Meutsch and Schmidt (1985) noted, shifts in readers' frames of reference will take place during reading.

The implications of this sketch for a model of affect will be explored in more detail in the report that follows. Two empirical studies with readers of narratives were undertaken, designed to test certain aspects of the model.

## 2. Experiment 1

If affect is the vehicle for anticipation, being the agent for searching for interpretative concepts and then directing their application to the narrative, a specific hypothesis can be made. The necessity of searching at first in more remote domains means that those parts of the text which are problematic (especially opening sections), arouse an affective response and should be accompanied by a longer reading time. Such longer reading times will be required for mobilizing the resources of the self and to permit the search for more remote concepts. Once this process has resulted in the establishment of an interpretative schema, however, the effectiveness of the schema will be shown by the reverse phenomenon: affective response will now be accompanied by a more rapid reading time. In other words, there will be an initial period of registration, during which affective predictions are being formulated, followed by a period of interpretation during which predictions are efficiently guiding comprehension. A given narrative may exhibit more than one alternation of these phases, if significantly new material is introduced later in the narrative requiring new predictions to be made.

This hypothesis was tested by collecting reading times and affective responses from readers. The opening sections of two short stories provided the experimental material, the stories being selected in order to maximize differences in style and content. The first story was Virginia Woolf's (1944), 'A Summing Up' from *A Haunted House*; the second was 'Cat in the Rain' by Hemingway (1977), from *In Our Time*. In each case the opening section of the story was divided into its constituent phrases. The Woolf material consisted of 81 phrases (mean number of words per phrase: 6.3); the Hemingway had 94 phrases (mean: 8.9). Approximately the first third of the Woolf, and the first half of the Hemingway was used; it was felt that to ask readers to provide ratings for more phrases than this would not be productive. The readers were students enrolled in a Humanities degree; all were studying English literature.

The phrases were presented to the readers on a computer screen. The reader first read through the phrases at their normal reading speed, pressing a key to display the next phrase (once past the opening, nine phrases were visible at a

time). The computer recorded times for each phrase, adjusted to allow for the number of words in a phrase. Then the reader was invited to read the printed copy of the text, several times if necessary, and keep it available while rating the phrases. The question for rating was 'Is feeling significant to this phrase?', and ratings were made on a 5-point scale where 5 meant very significant. Readers entered their ratings on the computer. 10 subjects provided data in this way for the Woolf story, 9 subjects for the Hemingway. As the subjects had not read the stories before, no pre-existing interpretations were available to them.

The timing and ratings data were checked for inter-subject agreement. Significant agreement was found for both stories, as shown by Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance: Woolf story, reading times,  $W = 0.503$ ,  $\chi^2(80) = 402.1$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , affect ratings,  $W = 0.507$ ,  $\chi^2(80) = 405.6$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; Hemingway, reading times,  $W = 0.515$ ,  $\chi^2(93) = 431.4$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , affect ratings,  $W = 0.499$ ,  $\chi^2(93) = 417.4$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . The mean data was then examined for the predicted relationship.

The story openings were each divided into four sections, taking as far as possible the main phases of narrative development within the story. It was predicted that data for the the Woolf story would reflect a consistent thread of development, given that the two main characters are presented early on in phrase 5 and that their relationship is followed through with no deviations in the opening section of the story. The Hemingway story section, by contrast, appears to have two stages: first the setting and the wife's wish to rescue the cat in the rain; then the encounter with the hotel owner followed by the failure to find the cat: thus the data should indicate two main phases. The correlations of the timing and ratings data for each section are shown in table 1, from which it can be seen that the correlations across each section largely conform to this pattern.

The openings of both stories show reading times in a positive correlation with affect ratings as expected: according to our model, readers are at first unclear about what meaning to assign the story, and rely on affective response to guide them in locating appropriate concepts. In the Woolf story these

Table 1  
Correlations of mean reading times and mean affect ratings per phrase, across four sections of two stories.

Woolf story		Hemingway story	
Phrases	Correlation	Phrases	Correlation
1-29	$r(27) = 0.321$	1-20	$r(18) = 0.452$
30-49	$r(18) = -0.041$	21-35	$r(13) = -0.483$
50-61	$r(10) = -0.503$	36-61	$r(24) = 0.434$
62-81	$r(18) = -0.498$	62-94	$r(31) = -0.04$

concepts are not yet fully effective in the second section, but in the third and fourth sections the predicted negative correlation is now operative, indicating that the more affect is significant to a phrase the more immediately available are the concepts instantiated by affect, and thus the more rapidly that phrase is understood. In the Hemingway story inferences made in the first section apparently prepare for the immediately following second section; but the introduction of a significant new character in the third section, the hotel owner, requires another search, as the return to a positive correlation indicates. Data for the last section perhaps shows that no important results from this search are as yet guiding the reading, or that this section presents some ambiguities in interpretation.

This pattern in the data may be reflected in readers' informal comments made after the session: these revealed that they found themselves more involved in the Woolf story and more satisfied by it at the point that it broke off; readers of the Hemingway were in general less pleased with the story and more puzzled about what it meant.

In summary, the comparison of reading times for each phrase with affect ratings for the phrases indicates that under the guidance of affect, readers are formulating anticipations about the likely meaning of a narrative in its opening section (registration stage); the anticipations are then available as a set of reference points, orienting comprehension of the section that follows (interpretation stage). This cycle of registration and interpretation may be repeated more than once across a narrative.

Some support for the role of anticipation comes from an earlier study of narrative by Olson, Mack and Duffy (1981), which involved the collection of reading times and talk-aloud data. In studying adult readers' responses to simple children's stories, several factors were found to influence reading times, including the predictions readers made at certain points during the talk-aloud sessions: thus one component of longer reading times was the anticipations being made.

In the Olson et al. study, however, the number of syllables in each sentence and the serial position of the sentence were the major factors influencing reading time. Subjects tended to read faster the nearer they approached the end of the story. The present data was also examined for the effect of serial position of the phrases. In the Woolf serial position correlated with reading times only at a random level,  $r(79) = -0.059$ ; on the other hand a highly significant correlation was found with affect ratings,  $r(79) = 0.418$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , suggesting that readers' affective responses intensified during the story. Perhaps readers became increasingly confident about the affective meaning they saw in the story, as their informal comments after the sessions suggested. In the case of the Hemingway story readers did read progressively faster, since serial position correlated significantly with reading time,  $r(92) = -0.32$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . Serial position also correlated with affect ratings, as in the Woolf

although the effect was less strong,  $r(92) = 0.235$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . A direct comparison of the effect of the number of syllables was not possible, since the number of words per phrase was eliminated from the timing data as a factor. In the case of serial position and reading times, therefore, the data from the present study are equivocal. But serial position, as might be expected, correlates significantly with the strength of affective response, which progressively increases across the story, a finding which is compatible with the role which our model assigns to affect.

In our study anticipation is inferred from the affect and timings data – an inference which is supported by the study of Olson et al. But if the inference is correct it leaves affect-based prediction as the main explanation for the variance in reading times in both the stories studied. This in turn indicates that the experience of reading literary stories possesses some qualitative differences from reading the relatively more simple narratives used by Olson et al. The reading times study points to the role of affect in first directing the search for meaning, then maintaining that meaning as an affective guide to further interpretation. This process can be envisaged as a progressive formulation and bringing to consciousness of an adequate schema for the narrative. In this respect also reading can be seen as the emergence of cognitive material which will more or less fulfil, and thus displace, the earlier affective predictions.

If this is correct, another specific hypothesis can be made. If readers are asked to read the opening part of an unfamiliar story and decide on the relative importance of the phrases, phrases that describe or point to affective states will be given a higher importance at first reading than when the story is read a second time. By the second reading a schema for the story has been elaborated, and the reader is therefore less dependent upon those phrases which carry an affective weight. Such phrases will now be seen as less important.

### 3. Experiment 2

The second experiment was designed to test this hypothesis. A control text was also used, a prose article, where the supposition was made that comprehension would primarily be a schema-directed process. Thus it was expected that no special importance would be assigned to affective phrases and that no shift in their importance would take place at a second reading. It was also expected that the process of schema-formation would continue beyond the opening section of the story, and that more revision in schemata would take place in the story than in the article, in accord with the defamiliarization model; thus the relative importance assigned to the phrases could be expected to shift more in the story at second reading than in the article.

Two texts were chosen which were equated as far as possible, in order that

differences due to the reading process rather than to content might be more easily identified. Data were also sought which would allow examination of process differences between the two types of text, and differences in the processing strategies of individual readers in the case of the story. With these ends in view both rank order data and free written responses were collected.

Both texts were by Virginia Woolf. The story chosen was, once again, 'A Summing Up' (Woolf (1944)); the article was 'The Patron and the Crocus' (Woolf (1929)). The article was chosen to match the story closely in terms of a balance of affective and non-affective phrases. The first section of each text was divided into 44 phrases of approximately equivalent word length. 13 phrases in each text were identified before the experiment as referring explicitly to affective states, the remaining 31 as neutral. (This classification of the story phrases, done without knowledge of the results of the first experiment, was checked against the affect ratings of the same phrases in experiment 1: a Biserial Correlation showed a close similarity,  $r = 0.456$ ,  $t(47) = 3.51$ ,  $p < 0.005$ .) There were 319 words in the opening section of the story, and 305 in the article. The mean number of words per phrase was 7.18 and 7.07, respectively.

15 readers worked on the story, 17 worked on the article. The readers were assigned at random to either the story or the article, and were run in two groups. Each subject was given a booklet, together with an envelope containing the 44 phrases of the first section of the text typed on separate slips of paper. Readers worked through the booklets individually at their own pace, following the instructions on each page. First they responded to the opening section of the text, writing notes in response to a request for 'any ideas and feelings you have in response to the story [article] so far', and 'any thoughts about how the story [article] might continue'. They were then requested to open the envelope and put the 44 phrases in a group ranked order in order of importance: *importance* was chosen, since the word could be applied to the cognitive or affective salience of phrases equally well. The instructions asked readers to form six groups on the table: any number of phrases could be assigned to each group, but the readers were to try to divide the phrases fairly evenly across the six groups. The number of the group to which each phrase had been assigned was recorded on a phrase list in the booklet. The phrases were returned to the envelope. Students then read the rest of the text. Finally they made another written response to the text as a whole, after which they again reordered the phrases of the first section into six groups. The average time taken for the task was 65 minutes. In reporting the findings of the study I look first at the difference between the story and the article, then at the evidence for the role of affect in response to the story.

The phrase rank order data were examined first to test for differences between the two texts. It was expected that the story phrases would show a greater shift in judged importance than the article phrases, comparing the



second ordering with the first. For this analysis the mean rank of each phrase (story or article) was computed for first and second ordering. A shift in order for a phrase was taken as a measure of shift in importance, ignoring for this measure whether the shift was up or down. As expected the story phrases were found to show a significantly greater overall shift ( $M = 6.19$ ) compared with the article phrases ( $M = 4.43$ ): Mann-Whitney  $U(44,44) = 685$ ,  $Z = 2.372$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . This points to the hypothesised revision in schemata that takes place when reading a story.

It was predicted that the phrases classified as affective would (a) be ranked higher in the story than in the article, but (b) show a shift downwards in the second ranking; whereas the affective phrases in the article would be given the same ranking as the neutral phrases and show no consistent shift between orderings. These predictions gained partial support.

The mean ranks of the phrases classified as affective and neutral were computed for each subject for each text (two subjects were dropped at random from the article group to obtain equal numbers). These were then analysed by a three-way Anova, with variables text (between subjects factor), phrase type (affect and neutral phrases; within subjects), and first and second rankings (within subjects). A significant main effect for type of phrase (affect and neutral) was obtained,  $F(1, 28) = 41.31$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , but this was due to the story rather than the article since there was a significant interaction between text and phrase type,  $F(1, 28) = 23.97$ ,  $p < 0.001$ .

Inspection of the means, given in table 2, shows as expected that affect phrases were ranked higher in the story than in the article: pre-planned  $t$  tests showed the comparison to be highly significant,  $t(28) = 5.55$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . In the story affect phrases were also ranked higher than neutral phrases,  $t(28) = 8.0$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . The main hypothesis of the study was not supported, however: while there was a tendency for affect phrases in the story to decrease in importance, this effect did not reach significance,  $t(28) = 0.588$ .

Readers of the story thus paid more attention to phrases giving information about the affective meaning of the opening episode. This accords with the hypothesis that, compared with an article, a story generates greater uncertainty in the reader; as a result the reader is impelled to develop a representation of

Table 2

Mean rank position of phrases for importance, comparing a story and an article by Woolf. (Ranks are: 1 = most important, 6 = least important.)

	Story		Article	
	Affect	Neutral	Affect	Neutral
1st order	2.6	3.81	3.4	3.49
2nd order	2.71	3.62	3.37	3.58
Mean	2.66	3.72	3.39	3.53

story meaning to guide response which depends primarily on affective cues. A relation between affect and the making of predictions can be observed in readers' written responses to the opening of the story.

In order to gain an impression of the qualitative nature of the responses to the two texts, an informal count was made of each idea unit in the responses, classified according to several categories. These included affective and conceptual responses, and type of predictions made. Some major differences between responses to the two texts emerged: the story protocols showed a mean of 2.4 affect units and 2.9 conceptual units per reader, but the article protocols yielded 1.5 affect units and 5.2 conceptual units. There were 1.3 units indicating motivation of the reader in the case of the story, but none among readers of the article. The story also resulted in more predictions than the article, where readers forecast specific events or outcomes not mentioned in the text (story: 1.5, article: 0.6); the article, by contrast, elicited inferences that only extended the given material (of this type of prediction, story: 0.2, article: 1.5). Most of the story predictions concerned an expectation that the relationship of Sasha and Bertram, the only two characters in the opening section, would develop towards some degree of intimacy (what might be called the relationship schema).

As might be expected, therefore, responses made to the article tended to be predominantly conceptual compared with the story, and no overt sense of motivation was apparent among readers of the article, whereas a number of readers of the story mentioned their awareness of being motivated for or against the story. Among the remarks showing motivation were 'one's inquisitiveness is aroused', 'an enthusiasm for the description', 'one wants to know more', or one 'feels frustrated at lack of information regarding the plot'. It seems probable from inspecting the protocols, that readers of the article alluded to their motivation covertly in several instances by references to the style of the article. But in general, the story readers were more aware of themselves during the response: they used the pronoun 'I' more frequently, two thirds using 'I', compared with only one third of the article readers.

In the story protocols affective responses and predictions appear to be linked, as would be expected if predictions are based on affect. If the various responses made by readers in each category are correlated with the number of predictions, the highest correlation is with affect,  $r(13) = 0.5$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , whereas the correlation with conceptual responses is not significant,  $r(13) = 0.24$ . In other words, the more affective responses made by the reader, the more likely it is that predictions will also be made. No such relationship was obtained in the article responses.

Having found affect at work in structuring response to the story, it is also possible to make a more detailed analysis of the shifts in the importance of the phrases for evidence that schemata postulated at the first reading of the story had been jettisoned by the end. This was done by undertaking a cluster

analysis of the first and second rankings for importance, then examining differences in the two phrase clusters. The evidence is too detailed to be reported here, but the main conclusion that can be drawn is that the relationship schema, which most readers imposed on Bertram and Sasha at the outset, had been replaced by one relating to Sasha's isolation and loneliness at the end. It was notable, however, that three readers were unable to make this transition: they wrote in their final comments of being confused or disconcerted, which suggested that their attempts to elaborate a schema for the story as a whole had been frustrated.

While the main hypothesis of the study was not supported, and only a trend towards the decreased importance of affective phrases in the story was found, other findings provide evidence in favour of the model. Process differences as expected were found between the story and the article, and various aspects of the data point to the anticipatory function of affect and its role in guiding response to the story. The shifts in the phrase ranks also point to a defamiliarizing process as an initial schema is replaced by one which is more appropriate.

The data from both studies show that affect remains a significant component of response both beyond the opening sections of a narrative (affect actually intensifies further into the story) and during a second reading. Once a story is known well, the question arises whether the overall organization of response is taken over by a dominant schema, or remains to a significant degree under the control of affect. To the extent that the story has raised issues of relevance to the self-concept of the reader, it is probable that affect will continue to dominate response at second and subsequent readings. This question remains for a future investigation.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The affective organization of response to a story has several further and more general implications. First, considering the role of memory in response, affective coloration of certain episodes should lead to more immediate retrieval for those episodes in contrast to neutral episodes. Many previous studies have shown that under a range of conditions affect enhances memory (Strongman (1982); Bower and Cohen (1982)). This points to a model of how readers come to represent story structure which, in the case of literary stories, will show significant differences from the structures predicted by schemata or story grammar models (cf. Martins (1982)). Second, the evidence that affective responses encode the concerns of the self (Miall (1986); Bock (1986); Bock and Klinger (1986)) provides a way of formalizing the common experience of readers that they 'identify' with one or more of the characters in a narrative. Indeed, narratives manipulate point of view in order to obtain this response to

a given character. Different features of a story will be remembered according to the point of view that is induced at the outset, as studies that have varied point of view experimentally have demonstrated (Anderson and Pichert (1978); Wegner and Giuliano (1982: 174)). Both these implications argue for an alternative approach to story structure, based on a better understanding of the self concept and the role of affect.

One key to an understanding of response to literary narrative probably lies in the response to character, if this is construed as being informed primarily by the concerns of the self and motivated by the anticipatory function of affect. In social situations, when we are not concerned simply with others' appearance or behaviour, we project affective, self-referential information onto understanding others. How then is information about characters in a story encoded? What is recalled about a character who reappears halfway through a story, or after we have finished reading? Chatman's (1978) influential thesis is that what we extract is traits. I suggest it is motives. This allows us to encompass several alternative ways of understanding character, such as Greimas's actants (Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 34–35)) or traits: motives explain behaviour, that is, what characters do as actants and why; and traits are the relatively enduring style, the how, of what is done. But in the last analysis it is motive which is more important than traits.

In this respect two senses of motive come together in the reader: characters have motives; events in a narrative and defamiliarizing shifts in schemata need to be motivated. What is being appealed to in both senses is the reader's own motives, the self which is implicated in the reading process through affect. The second study reported above pointed to the structural role of the reader's sense of motivation; a similar finding has been reported in previous studies. Motivation was a significant variable in two studies of response, in which high school and freshman responses to novels were studied. Statements of self-involvement were found to correlate with statements indicating literary judgement and evaluation: this suggested that self-involvement was a necessary prerequisite to interpretation (cited by Bleich (1980: 140)).

Thus events in a story need to be 'motivated' in order to be assimilated, and if motives are not self-evident, they must either be supplied by the narrator, or their discovery is the focus of narrative interest. Here, the reader's own motivational system will supply the cues for interpretation. But it is affect in the first place which organizes the resources of the self, which provides links between different parts of the narrative, and which sets an agenda of anticipated outcomes to guide the process of response. The empirical studies reported here provide evidence to support this model. It is to be hoped that other workers will be interested in replicating and extending such studies of the role of affect.

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