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## Emotional effects of reading excerpts from short stories by James Joyce<sup>☆</sup>

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### Abstract

This study examined emotional responses to excerpts from short stories by James Joyce. Forty-eight introductory psychology students, including 24 males and 24 females, read four short story excerpts from James Joyce's *Dubliners* each divided into four segments of equal length. Two of the short story excerpts had unifying Emotional themes, while two others were Descriptively dense. Readers were instructed either to be spectators and feel sympathy for the protagonist (Spectator Set) or to imagine what it is like to be the protagonist (Identification Set). Set and story type were factorially combined in a within-subjects design. After reading each segment, subjects indicated whether they felt a 'fresh emotion' and/or an 'emotional memory', rated each kind of experience on 11-point scales measuring Pleasure, Intensity, and Tension, and also indicated if they experienced specific Primary Emotions (e.g., happiness, anger). Afterwards, they were given a two-choice recognition memory task pertaining to setting and person-oriented details. Results showed that 'fresh emotions' were elicited more frequently than 'emotional memories', though the memories were rated as more Pleasant, Tense, and Intense. The Emotional excerpts prompted fresh emotions and emotional memories almost equally, whereas Descriptively dense passages evoked more fresh emotions than memories. The results show that identification makes readers experience 'fresh emotions' in the moment in response to the Descriptive texts, while being a spectator directs readers toward their 'emotional memories'. Overall, differences in the kinds of emotional effects (tendencies towards fresh emotions versus emotion memories) arose both with variations in textual properties and in the reader's psychological set.

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## 1. Introduction

The reading process, indeed any aesthetic encounter, can be understood as a flow in which people sometimes focus on the work itself and sometimes on other own personal reactions. When focusing on a literary work, readers can attend to the ‘landscape of action’ – the plot – or to the ‘landscape of experience’ (Bruner, 1986) in which the worlds of characters unfold. This yields a coherent ‘situational model’ that accounts for actions, events, and states in the story (Graesser et al., 1994). As they make meaningful sense of the work, readers can also respond emotionally to it, experiencing ‘fresh’ emotions in the moment (Larsen and Seilman, 1988) or emotional memories that resonate to thematic elements (Scheff, 1979). The author Tom Wolfe (1975), too, has remarked that literary texts may work best via the prompting of memories, and Larsen and Laszlo (1990) found that stories prompted memories in readers for whom the events were historically and personally meaningful. How do textual properties affect emotional and related cognitive processes, and what role is played by the reader’s aesthetic distance from the story?

In an initial examination of these problems (Cupchik and Laszlo, 1994), a comparison was made between texts that focused on the ‘landscape of action’ and others that emphasized the ‘landscape of experience’. The ‘experience’ texts were liked more and elicited more intense feelings than did the ‘action’ texts. Although judged more difficult to understand, these texts were also rated as more interesting and richer in meaning about life. Generally speaking, segments which ‘provided insight’ were read more slowly, while ‘surprising’ segments were read more quickly. This indicates that ‘insight’ required a more careful and in-depth reading of the text, while ‘suspense’ stimulated readers to move ahead quickly and reduce suspense (Cupchik, 1996).

In this new study, excerpts from two short stories by James Joyce emphasizing detailed descriptions of characters, settings, and events were contrasted with two others that focused on emotional experiences of the main characters. Joyce thought that each of these textual properties had a specific role. He said that he aspired to write so that for any object or event “its soul, its whatness, leaps to us” (Joyce, 1977: 289); the descriptive scenes in our study exemplify this kind of writing and are rich in connotative language. Joyce also said that he wanted his prose to be supple enough to follow “the curve of an emotion” (Joyce, 1965: 60) which the emotional scenes in our study represent. These materials were first tested in a study where descriptive passages produced text-centred effects, while emotional passages favored self-oriented processes (Cupchik et al., 1997). The emphasis here is on the way that these two types of texts evoke fresh emotions in the moment and personal memories that resonate to themes in the works.

These effects are mediated by the ‘aesthetic distance’ (Bullough, 1912) between readers and the central story characters. Aristotle (ca. 330 BCE) proposed in his *Poetics* that the emotions associated with reading or watching tragedy are ‘pity and fear’: pity is an emotion on behalf of somebody else and fear is an emotion relevant to oneself. This shift between attention to other and self underlies ‘aesthetic distance’ according to Scheff (1979). In a properly constructed drama, readers are “both participants in, and observers of, the dramatic scenes” (Scheff, 1979: 155). As

participants they are “included in shared awareness with one or more of the characters ...” (Scheff, 1979: 157), while as observers from an optimal aesthetic distance, they may benefit from the catharsis of unacknowledged emotional memories.

The reasons and processes surrounding shared awareness have been examined from psychodynamic, functional, existential, and cognitive perspectives. Accordingly, readers might identify because they want to feel temporarily powerful (Hall, 1954), they relate to a character’s goals and plans (Oatley, 1992, 1995) or the character’s life situation is similar to their own (Scheff, 1979) and this might lead the reader to see the character’s physical and social world as if through his or her eyes (Cupchik, 1997). A greater degree of aesthetic distance is experienced by ‘witnesses’ who construe the meaning of a situation for protagonists in a film (Tan, 1995, 1996) and experience sympathetic emotion as spectators (Zillmann, 1995). This permits them to focus more closely on their own reactions to the aesthetic episode which might actually reduce their attention to aspects of the story (Vorderer et al., 1997). By having readers shift between these two modes (identification and sympathetic spectator) a writer could orient readers either outward to situated characters and events or inward to their own personal reactions.

In our study, we instructed subjects to shift between identification and spectator sets in a within-subjects design, and examined how this interacted with ‘descriptive’ and ‘emotional’ short story excerpts to produce fresh emotions and emotional memories. For each kind of emotional experience (fresh emotion or emotional memory), we had subjects rate the three basic dimensions underlying emotional experience: pleasantness, intensity, and tension (Izard, 1971), and indicate the presence or absence of primary emotions such as happiness or sadness. Tension is an important element in stories (Brewer and Lichtenstein, 1981), particularly those involving suspense (Vorderer, 1996). We also examined the accuracy of situational models that subjects constructed by measuring recognition memory for details about the settings and characters in each of the stories. It was tentatively hypothesized that connotative or expressive language in the descriptive texts would facilitate fresh emotions, while the subject matter of emotional episodes would elicit personal memories. The central question concerns whether these effects would be maximized when subjects were instructed to identify with (i.e., imagine being) the main protagonist or to be sympathetic spectators.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants

Forty-eight undergraduates at the University of Toronto, including an equal number of males and females, participated in the experiment.

### 2.2. Design

The between-subjects variable was Gender and the within-subjects variables were Story Type (Emotional, Descriptive), Set (Sympathetic Spectator, Identification),

and Segment (four per story). Story Type and Set were counterbalanced with Order of presentation of the four short story excerpts (forward, backward) yielding 8 subject groups to which 3 males and 3 females were assigned. The dependent variables included frequency of Evoked Emotions (fresh emotions or personal memories) and Primary Emotions (e.g., happiness, sadness) as well as ratings of the emotions on 11-point scales for Pleasantness, Tension, and Intensity. In addition, a 24 item Recognition Memory Index was constructed in which subjects answered three person-oriented and three setting-oriented binary choice questions about each of the four stories.

### 2.3. Procedure

Subjects were run either singly, in pairs, or three at a time. Depending on the assigned group, subjects were given four booklets, each comprising a four line introduction combined with an instructional set indicating how to approach the story and the main protagonist. Under the Sympathetic Spectator Set, subjects were instructed to 'be a spectator' and that the 'reader feels sympathy' for the protagonist. Under the Identification Set, subjects were told 'imagine yourself to be' the protagonist and 'feel what it is like to be' the protagonist.

After reading each of the four segments in each excerpt, subjects indicated whether they experienced 'an emotional memory' and/or 'a fresh emotion' (yes (1) or no (2) for each kind of experience). Then they rated each kind of experience on three scales: Intensity, Pleasantness, and Relaxation-Tension. The scales ranged from 0 (not at all intense, extremely unpleasant, extremely relaxed) to 10 ('as \_\_\_\_\_ as I have ever felt in my life'). Finally, subjects indicated which primary emotions occurred in their Memories or Fresh Emotions. After completing the rating task, subjects were given a 24 item two-choice recognition memory test. Subjects were asked 6 questions about each of the four stories; three questions were person-oriented and concerned the main character and three pertained to the physical setting. Each question was accompanied by two answers, one of which was cited directly from the text, while the other was incorrect. An example of a setting-oriented question is: Mr. Duffy lived in ... (a) an old sombre house or (b) a cold modern flat, and an example of a person-oriented question is: which of the following is true of Mr. Duffy? (a) he was carefully tuned to his body or (b) he regarded his own actions as if at a distance.

### 2.4. Materials

The literary texts were approximately two page long excerpts (about 700 words on average) from four short stories in James Joyce's collection *Dubliners* (Joyce, 1976/1914). Two texts were Emotional ('The dead' and 'Araby') and two were Descriptive ('A painful case' and 'Counterparts'). The passages were chosen by Prof. Garry Leonard, University of Toronto, a literary scholar whose speciality is James Joyce. In the Emotional passages, the writing followed 'the curve of an emotion' in an important action or event. In the more static and predominantly Descriptive passages an emphasis was placed by Joyce on the 'whatness' of the persons and

objects described. Of course, it is not possible to separate emotional and descriptive attributes completely in James Joyce's writing, since there is Joycean description in the emotional passages and emotions enter into the descriptive ones, but the following sample passages will give the reader a sense for this distinction. Each text involved a self contained episode which was segmented into four approximately equal parts. Excerpts were introduced by a brief paragraph which summarized what had happened thus far in the story and incorporated the task set (Identification versus Sympathetic Spectator). Samples from the actual passages are presented below in sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 (page numbers from the Penguin edition).

#### 2.4.1. *Emotional excerpt introductions and sample paragraphs*

- (1) 'Araby', from 'When the short days of winter came ...' (p. 30) to '... she would love to go'.

Introduction (sympathetic spectator condition):

"This passage is from 'Araby', which has an adolescent boy as narrator. Be a spectator in this scene. Two rows of respectable houses gaze at one another. In the house in which the boy lives the former tenant was a priest who had died in a back room. The reader feels sympathy for this boy in his desperate longing."

Text:

"One evening I went into the back drawing-room in which the priest had died. It was a dark rainy evening and there was no sound in the house. Through one of the broken panes I heard the rain impinge upon the earth, the fine incessant needles of water playing in the sodden beds. Some distant lamp or lighted window gleamed below me. I was thankful that I could see so little. All my senses seemed to desire to veil themselves and, feeling that I was about to slip from them, I pressed the palms of my hands together until they trembled, murmuring: *O love! O love!* many times."

- (2) 'The dead', from 'She was fast asleep ...' (p. 221) to '... upon all the living and the dead' (end of the story).

Introduction (identification condition):

"This passage is from 'The Dead', about Gabriel. Imagine yourself to be him, full of sexual desire, and finding your wife Gretta abstracted. She remembers the boy who loved her when she was a girl. He had waited in her garden in the rain, and died a week later. Feel what it is like to be Gabriel in this confusion."

Text:

"She was fast asleep. Gabriel, leaning on his elbow, looked for a few moments unresentfully on her tangled hair and half-open mouth, listening to her deep-drawn breath. So she had that romance in her life: a man had died for her sake. It hardly pained him now to think how poor a part he, her husband, had played in her life. He watched her while she slept as though he and she had never lived together as man and wife."

#### 2.4.2. *Descriptive excerpt introductions and sample paragraphs*

- (1) 'A painful case', from 'Mr James Duffy lived in Chapelized ...' (the beginning of the story on page 107) to '... an adventureless tale'.

### Introduction (sympathetic spectator condition):

“This passage is from ‘A Painful Case’, about Mr Duffy. Be a spectator in this scene. Mr Duffy is a cashier in a bank, and he lives on the outskirts of Dublin. One can observe his bare, regimented apartment, notice his intellectual aspirations, and see his obsessional habits. The reader feels sympathy for Mr Duffy in his lonely life.”

#### Text:

“Mr. Duffy abhorred anything which betokened physical or mental disorder. A medieval doctor would have called him saturnine. His face, which carried the entire tale of his years, was of the brown tint of Dublin streets. On his long and rather large head grew dry black hair and a tawny moustache did not quite cover an unamiable mouth. His cheekbones also gave his face a harsh character; but there was no harshness in the eyes which, looking at the world from under their tawny eyebrows, gave the impression of a man ever alert to greet a redeeming instinct in others but often disappointed.”

(2) ‘Counterparts’, from ‘When that round was over ...’ (p. 94) to ‘... the conversation of his friends’.

### Introduction (identification condition):

“This passage is from ‘Counterparts’, about Mr Farrington. Imagine yourself to be him. You work as a clerk in a Lawyer’s office. You had a humiliating day, with a threat of dismissal. Short of money, you have pawned your watch chain on the way to the pub. Feel what it is like to be Mr Farrington as the frustration mounts.”

#### Text:

“Farrington’s eyes wandered at every moment in the direction of one of the young women. There was something striking in her appearance. An immense scarf of peacock-blue muslin was wound round her hat and knotted in a great bow under her chin; and she wore bright yellow gloves, reaching to the elbow. Farrington gazed admiringly at the plump arm which she moved very often and with much grace; and when, after a little time, she answered his gaze he admired still more her large dark brown eyes.”

## 3. Results

### 3.1. *Emotional responses: Fresh emotions and personal memories*

The primary purpose of the study was to examine how literature evokes fresh emotions and emotional memories. Fresh Emotions are spontaneous responses to the text, while Emotional Memories are personal and episodic or anecdotal. If subjects experienced a Fresh Emotion during each of the four segments in a short story excerpt, they circled ‘yes’ and received 1 point, or circled ‘no’ and were given a 0 for that segment. The same scoring procedure was applied to the presence or absence of Emotional Memories. Similarly, subjects received a score of 1 if they reported feeling a Primary Emotion (e.g., happiness, fear, anger, or sadness) after each of the four segments or 0 if they did not experience a Primary Emotion. Readers also rated the Pleasantness, Intensity, and Tension of their emotional responses

on 11-point scales ranging from 0 (not at all) to 10 (as \_\_\_\_\_ as I have ever felt in my life).

Analyses of variance were performed on the Emotional Responses data, treating Gender as a between-subjects variable and Story Type (Emotional, Descriptive), Segment (four parts), Set (Sympathetic Spectator, Identification), and the two Types of Emotional Responses (Fresh Emotions, Personal Memories) as within-subjects variables. The dependent measures included: frequency of Evoked Emotions (Fresh Emotions or Emotional Memories) and Primary Emotions, along with ratings on the Pleasantness, Intensity, and Tension scales.

### 3.2. Type of emotional experience

Results in Table 1a show that Fresh Emotions were elicited more frequently per trial than were Emotional Memories,  $F(1, 46) = 8.00, p < .007$ . However, the Emotional Memories were more potent than the Fresh Emotions and received higher ratings on the Pleasantness,  $F(1, 46) = 9.08, p < 0.004$ , Tension,  $F(1, 46) = 10.05, p < 0.003$ , and Intensity,  $F(1, 46) = 6.30, p < 0.02$ , scales (see Table 1a). Together the findings show that the short story excerpts generally evoked Fresh Emotions, but that when Emotional Memories were elicited they tended to be more powerful. Another feature of the data was that Fresh Emotions could be more unpleasant, mirroring the actual themes of the texts. Emotional Memories tended to have a positive bias, reflecting either the relative availability of positive and negative memories or the reporting biases of the subjects.

Table 1  
Main effects for Experience Type (a) and Story Type (b)

#### (a) Evoked emotional responses main effects

	Memories	Fresh Emotions
Evocation of Memories or Fresh Emotions	0.32	0.43**
Intensity	5.28	5.07**
Pleasantness	5.11	4.88**
Tension	5.14	4.92**

#### (b) Story Type main effects

	Emotional	Descriptive
Recognition memory for details	2.38	2.20*
Evocation of Memories or Fresh Emotions	0.40	0.32**
Intensity	5.35	5.00***
Pleasantness	5.17	4.81***

\*  $p < 0.05$

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

A significant interaction of Type of Emotional Experience and Segments,  $F(3, 138) = 6.73$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , showed the time course of Evoked Emotional responses to the texts. Memories were evoked more frequently during the early compared to the late segments ( $M = .35, .31, .25, .28$ ). Knowledge of the emotional content of the scenes, available here in the first segment, appeared sufficient to elicit memories. Fresh Emotions were elicited more frequently during later segments ( $M = .40, .31, .47, .53$ ), implying that they occur in response to the cumulative effects of language.

### 3.3. Type of short story

A series of significant main effects presented in Table 1b show that Emotional excerpts generally Evoked more Emotions (i.e., Emotional Memories or Fresh Emotions) than did the Descriptive excerpts,  $F(1, 46) = 23.03$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , and also elicited experiences that were more Pleasant,  $F(1, 46) = 28.20$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , and Intense,  $F(1, 46) = 15.41$ ,  $p < 0.001$ .

The results of a significant interaction of Story Type and Experience Type on the Evoked Emotions measure,  $F(1, 46) = 33.02$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , showed that Emotional segments were equally evocative of Fresh Emotions or Emotional Memories (see Figure 1a). However, fewer Emotional Memories were evoked by the Descriptive segments. Thus, Emotional passages that provided direct accounts of emotional experiences generally facilitated emotion, while Descriptive passages that were loaded with connotative language tended to evoke Fresh Emotions rather than Emotional Memories. These results reinforce the finding reported above that Emotional Memories were elicited early on in encounters with the short story segments.

The same interaction was obtained for the Recognition Memory measure, the accuracy with which subjects recognized Person and Setting-oriented details drawn from the short story excerpts. For each of the four short story excerpts, subjects were asked three person-oriented and three setting-oriented questions. Accordingly, subjects received a score ranging from 0 to 3 for the each kind of answer from each short story excerpt. An analysis of variance was performed on this recognition memory index, treating Gender as a between-subjects variable with Set (Sympathetic Spectator, Identification), Story Type (Emotional, Descriptive), and Detail Type (Person, Setting) as within-subjects variables.

Subjects were much more accurate at recognizing Person ( $M = 2.45$ ) than Setting ( $M = 2.13$ ) oriented details,  $F(1, 46) = 20.68$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , and it was somewhat easier to recognize details (either Person or Setting) from Emotional compared with Descriptive excerpts,  $F(1, 46) = 4.84$ ,  $p < 0.05$  (see Table 1b). A significant interaction was also found involving Detail Type and Story Type,  $F(1, 46) = 10.78$ ,  $p < 0.002$ , (see Fig. 1b). Subjects were equally accurate at recognizing Person and Setting-oriented details from the Emotional excerpts. However, Setting-oriented details were much more difficult to recognize in the Descriptive excerpts compared with Person-oriented-details. This suggests that subjects were less attentive to specific details in stories that were rich in connotative description.



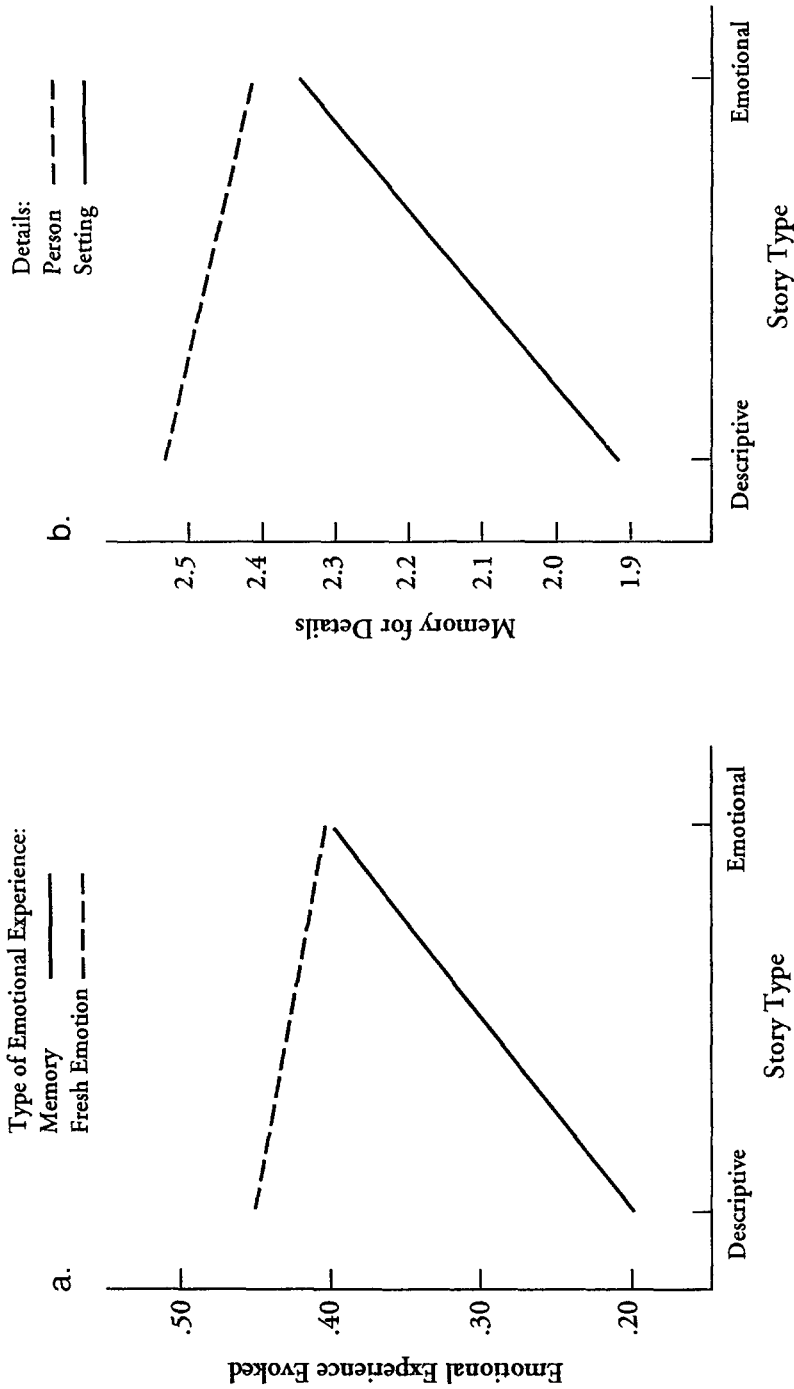


Fig. 1. Effects of (a) an interaction between story type and type of emotional experience on the evocation of emotional experiences and (b) an interaction between story type and type of details on memory for details.

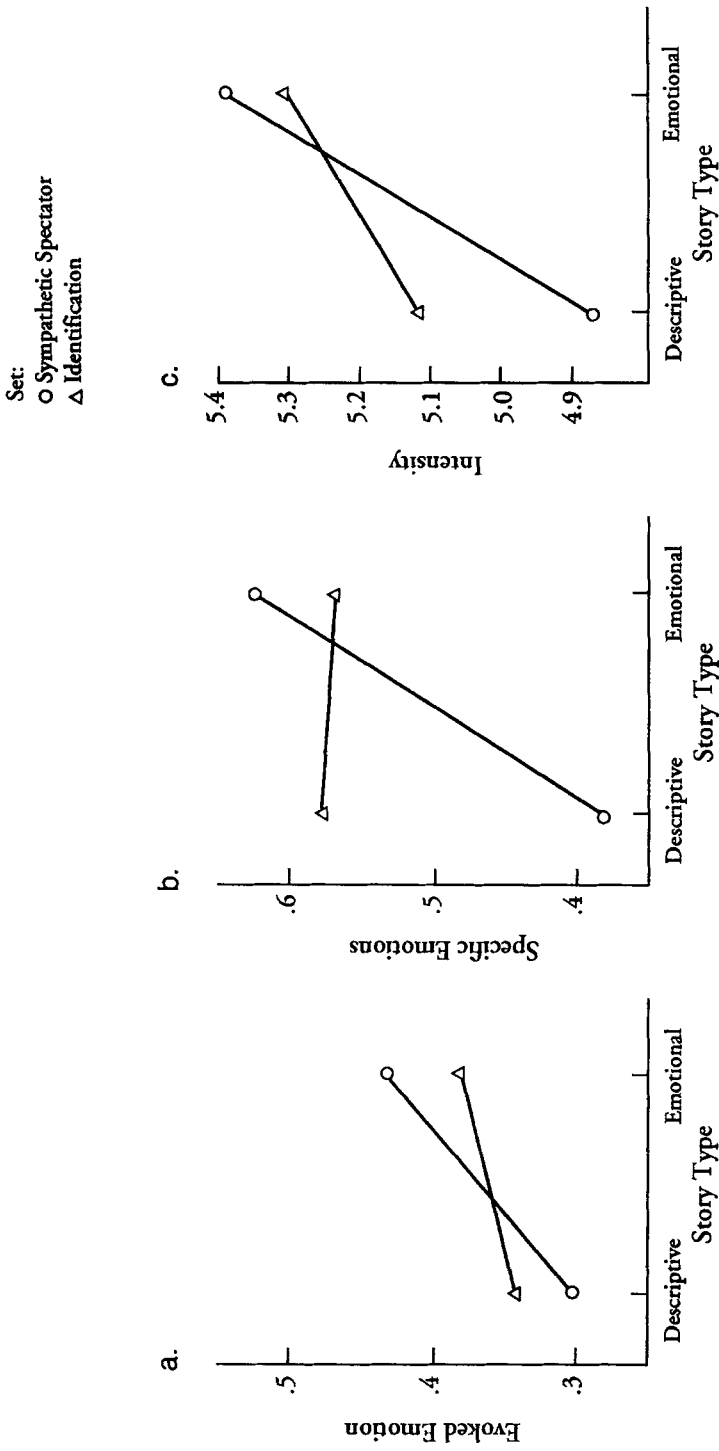


Fig. 2. Effects of an interaction between story type and set on (1a) evoked emotions, (1b) specific emotions, and (1c) intensity of emotions.

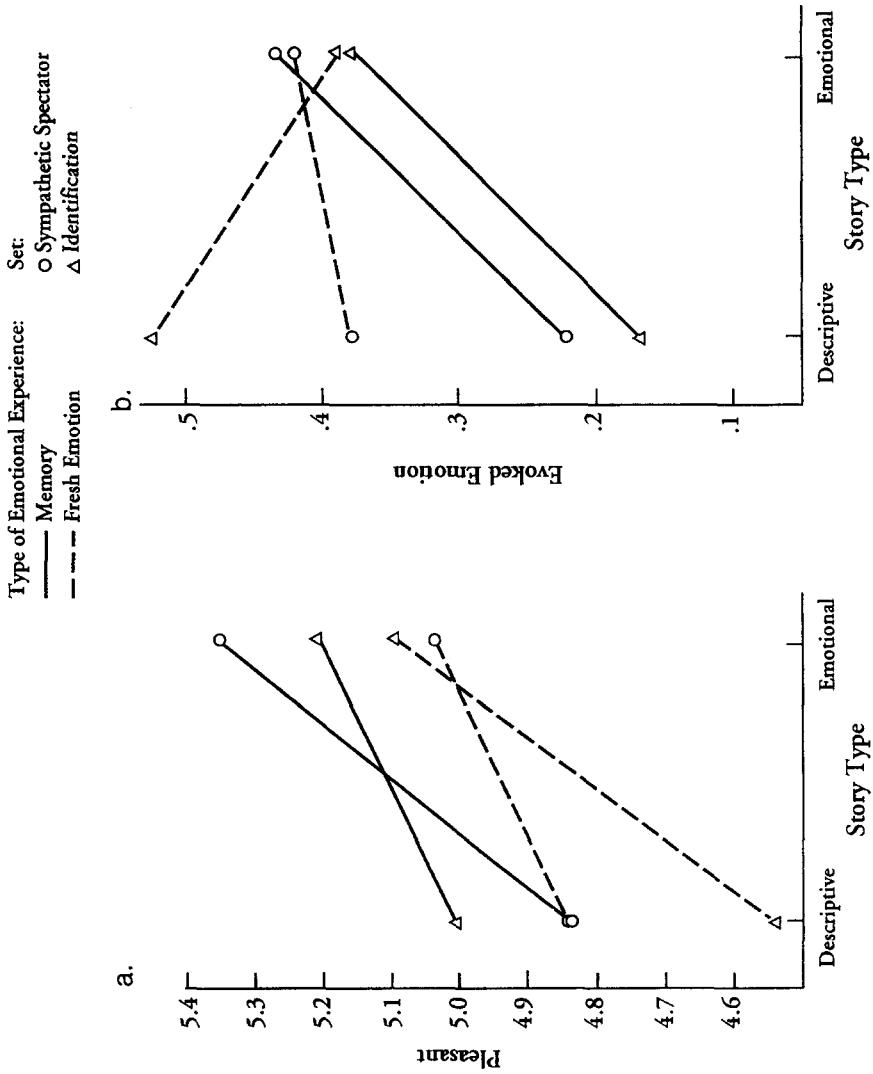


Fig. 3. Interaction between story type, set, and type of emotional experience on (1a) pleasantness ratings and (1b) frequency of evoked emotions.

### 3.4. Type of set

Under the Set manipulation, subjects were encouraged either to ‘feel sympathy’ for the protagonist (Sympathetic Spectator condition) or to ‘imagine being’ the protagonist (Identification condition). This variable interacted with Experience Type (Fresh Emotion, Emotional Memory) for the Evoked Emotions measure,  $F(1, 46) = 5.08, p < 0.03$ , as well as for the frequency of Specific Emotions,  $F(1, 46) = 5.68, p < 0.02$ , and marginally for ratings of Intensity,  $F(1, 46) = 2.92, p < 0.09$ . The results are consistent across the three interactions presented in Figs. 2a–c. When subjects were provided some aesthetic distance as Sympathetic Spectators, they were most responsive to the Emotional excerpts and least affected by the Descriptive excerpts in relation to overall Evoked Emotions, Specific emotions, or in terms of emotional Intensity. The Identification instruction had little or no differential impact for the two types of text. Thus, the narrative content in Emotional episodes stimulates a broad array of emotional responses (fresh emotions and memories) in subjects who possess the distance of sympathetic spectators.

The three variables, Set, Story Type, and Experience Type, interacted significantly on the Pleasantness measure,  $F(1, 46) = 6.79, p < 0.01$ , (see Fig. 3a). The results showed that aesthetic distance encouraged readers to access positive emotional memories. When subjects read Emotional segments as Sympathetic Spectators, their Emotional Memories were more Pleasant than were their Fresh Emotions. On the other hand, Identifying with the main character led readers to experience more negative Fresh Emotions while reading the Descriptive texts. These feelings were consistent with the sombre moods of the pieces and this suggests that readers were responsive to descriptions of the settings as if seeing them through the eyes of the protagonists.

A marginally significant interaction was also found involving Set, Story Type, and Experience Type for the Evoked Emotion measure (Memories or Fresh Emotions),  $F(1, 46) = 3.25, p < 0.08$  (see Fig. 3b). When subjects Identified with the main character, the Descriptive segments were more evocative of Fresh Emotions and less evocative of Emotional Memories. The differential effects were weaker under the Sympathetic Spectator set. For the Emotional passages there were no differences. Together, the two interactions suggest that a Spectator Set leads subjects back into their own personal histories, while an Identification Set makes them responsive in the moment to the affective tone of the texts.

## 4. Discussion

A primary goal of the study was to examine the evocation of fresh emotions and emotional memories by literary texts. Generally speaking, the four excerpts elicited more fresh emotions than emotional memories. This reflects the expressive quality of Joyce’s writing style and the fact that emotional memories require a resonance between events in the text and the reader’s personal experiences, which is harder to predict. However, the emotional memories were more potent than the fresh emotions

and were evoked almost immediately, while the fresh emotions were more frequent in response to the later segments. These results would appear to be consistent with Scheff's (1979) idea that personally relevant scenes evoke meaningful memories and permit the catharsis of pent up emotions. However, the personal memories were more positive (and therefore not repressed memories) than the fresh emotions, reflecting either their relative availability or a reporting bias in subjects who want to put the best possible face on their reactions.

The strong impact of Emotional scenes was evident in this study as well. Emotional texts evoked both fresh emotions and emotional memories, and created robust situational models incorporating recognizable person and setting-oriented details. Descriptive texts were less effective at evoking emotional memories and it was more difficult to recognize setting-oriented details from them. A parallel can be drawn between these findings and those obtained in a study comparing responses to sculptures by one artist who used narrative to convey powerful emotions and those of another artist whose rhetorical works combined strong design elements with a message (Cupchik et al., 1994). In both the literary and art experiments, the emotional works had an immediate and strong impact. Similarly, it took longer to appreciate the expressive qualities (in terms of fresh emotions) of the descriptive texts filled with connotative language and the rhetorical sculptures that embodied subtle expressive design elements.

These findings are also consistent with another study using the same Joycean reading materials in which subject ratings were compared after first and second readings (Cupchik et al., 1997). In between readings, subjects either generated an interpretation of the meaning of the excerpt or received an expert interpretation of it. Emotional short story excerpts were read more quickly and judged more favorably on both text (i.e., challenging, interesting, complex, richer in meaning, prompted thoughts about other parts of the story) and self-oriented scales (i.e., liking, expressive, personal relevance, personal memories). The fact that Emotional texts were read more quickly than Descriptive texts, even though they were more challenging, shows how stimulating emotion can be when embedded in complex structure.

The set manipulation in this study instructed readers either to identify with the character and imagine being that person or to be sympathetic spectators at a distance. The results contrasted with what might be expected by the psychodynamic model. Subjects had more frequent and stronger emotional reactions to the Emotional texts in the sympathetic spectator condition. This shows that when provided with aesthetic distance, readers can more freely explore their own emotional responses. A similar result was obtained in another study on reader response (Vorderer et al., 1997) in which subjects were explicitly instructed to focus on their own reactions to the materials used by Cupchik and Laszlo (1994). However, when instructed to identify with the protagonist, subjects responded with fresh emotions that reflected the more sombre emotional tone of the Descriptive texts. Together these results suggest that Emotional texts were more completely absorbing compared with Descriptive texts. On the other hand, Descriptive texts were distinctive in evoking fresh emotions in the moment, particularly when readers were encouraged to experience the stories through the eyes of the protagonists. The 'whatness' of descriptive details became

vitalized and evocative when experienced in apposition to the situational realities of the protagonists, and readers responded accordingly.

When considering the findings of the study, it is important to appreciate that subjects were explicitly *instructed* to identify or to be sympathetic spectators; they did not *spontaneously adopt* these vantage points (Cupchik, 1997). At a minimum, the identification instruction should lead readers to see the lived-spaces through the character's eyes. In practical terms, this should be expressed as an appreciation of the physical surround within which the character lives and which the author describes in great detail. It does not ensure, however, that readers will share common concerns with the protagonist, though literature generally depicts themes of common interest. Without additional information about the readers's lives we cannot determine whether or not they naturally resonated to the narrative themes. Alternatively, instructing readers to be distant but concerned spectators permitted them to focus on their own personal reactions, including emotional memories.

We instructed our subjects to adopt one set or the other although normally, of course, set will be determined either by the reader's inclination or personality, or by the discourse structure of the text. It is generally thought, for instance, that first-person narration promotes identification, as compared with third-person narration which promotes a spectator set. If such variations, chosen by the writer, are as effective as the variation of set in our study, the writer has this means, too, of varying aesthetic distance, and hence of varying the mix of fresh emotions and emotional memories. We do not suggest that our results provide bases of technique for writers: rather, we believe writers typically write from points of view suited to their artistic purposes and then, as it were, as they take the role of readers of their own stories, they try out the psychological effects of what they have written on themselves.

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