

Abstract

The main focus of the thesis are emotional reactions to works of fiction in the process of aesthetic experience. As we are talking about emotions evoked by fictional characters and stories, it begs the question of their nature and genuineness. Following the contemporary theories of emotions (in particular those by Antonio Damasio), the thesis deals with our emotional reactions to fiction in the context of aesthetic experience. It does so by exploring important factors that are a part of the experience: imagination, identification, empathy, sympathy, simulation, and their role not only in the narrative comprehension of the fiction, but also in the deeper understanding of the nature of our emotional reactions to the works of fiction. Based on the above aspects, the thesis evaluates the nature of the emotions experienced during the reception of fiction, and it culminates with a review of the contribution of the emotional experience of fiction to the recipient. The thesis debates the emotions as an instrument for recognition and it attempts to look on the emotions as a cognitive-evaluating factor.

Keywords: emotions, fiction, aesthetic experience, empathy, simulation