**Discussion Group Empathy and Narrative**

**Group 6, Textual Triggers of Narrative Impact on Empathic Abilities**

***22 January 2021***

The Curious Incident of the Dog in Night – an example of a character developing empathy.

What are the characteristics of text that may develop?

Narrative text in children’s literature

**Minds that are different than yours are likely to promote empathy** – empathy versus immersion? If you are different from the mind you are reading about – promotes empathy to higher degree?

Katari *(participant in the discussion)* offered that what may be interesting from a writer’s perspective is how multiple perspectives trigger may empathy and how this can be developed

Question of whether or not one character or multiple characters may provoke empathy

***1st person versus 3rd person*** = different kinds of long-term empathy – immediate empathy versus theory of mind.

Frank *(participant in the discussion)* brought up Effects of Narrative on Social Cognition – ***optimal aesthetic distance*** – you can feel with the character, emotions are triggers, yet can take a reflective stance that can promote empathy.

Writing a process of both trying to feel with and trying to understand without judging

***Compassion versus Empathy building*** --- Compassion may be fruitful to investigate because it encourages this aesthetic distance and cognitive understanding. Also, demarcation of sympathy – how do we distinguish?

Crying versus Crying *and* Thinking and changing your perspective … which is compassion and which is empathy?

Patricia *(participant in the discussion)* - Empathy – a perspective you might not already take. Empathy allows you to change your perspective. The ability to take a perspective you would never take before or even completely dismiss before triggered by the text.

**Trigger - “Gaps” in text** (i.e. not spelling everything out; allowing inferences) to promote a deeper understanding. More gaps in text = more thinking and inferencing = more thinking = more invested in accepting it = more investment = more likely to change your perspective.

Sarah and Patricia *(participants in the discussion)* --- Necessity of cognitive involvement and mapping fictional experience to your own experiences – may speak to why **3rd person may be effective** – more ability to see person from outside and inside.

Kateri *(participant in the discussion)* - Another trigger = **rhythm of the text** = evokes feeling in reader and empathy