

By taking an interdisciplinary approach – with methods drawn from narratology, aesthetics, social psychology, education, and the empirical study of literature – *The Art of Sympathy in Fiction* will interest scholars in a variety of fields. Its focus is the sympathetic effects of stories, and the possible ways these feelings can contribute to what has been called the “moral imagination.” Part I examines the dynamics of readers’ beliefs regarding fictional characters and the influence of those impressions on the emotions that readers experience. The book then turns its attention to sympathy, providing a comprehensive definition and considering the ways in which it operates in life and in literature. Part I concludes with a discussion of the narratological and rhetorical features of fictional narratives that theoretically elicit sympathy in readers. Part II applies these theories to four stories that persuade readers to sympathize with characters who seem unsympathetic. Finally, based on empirical findings from the responses of adolescent readers, Part III considers pedagogical approaches that can help students reflect on emotional experiences that result from reading fiction.